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I Fall Upon the Thorns of Life! I Bleed!

Tracing Ausi's Right to Maim in Omar Shahid Hamid's *The Spinner's Tale* (2015)

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Abstract

Crime fiction has emerged as a developing genre in the literary field of Pakistan. Moreover, Omar Shahid Hamid's fictional works have played a pivotal role in its emergence. The current review of *The Spinner's Tale* (2015) by the above author depicts Uzair, a.k.a. Ausi, as the hardcore terrorist who falls upon the thorns of life and bleeds. His defiance of the essentialist human nature changes his free will into a nexus of obligations. Although he transgresses the prescribed boundaries to achieve his standard of morality so as to make sense of his revenge, his super-humanness as antihuman and disabled otherness are challenged by the state. The current study examines his right to maim in light of Jasbir K. Puar's concept of maiming, disability, debility, and capacity. The insistent need of the time to optimize the level of violence perpetrated by the state and to revolutionize the philosophical standing about antihumanists and isolated figures remain the main aspects of discussion. Problematic characters, such as Ausi, present their defiance as resistance and take revenge from the technologized neo-imperial system for their maimed and disabled bodies. Through the lens of Jasbir Puar, Ausi's right to maim is gauged by deconstructing biopolitical power structures and the shifting of the responsibility of crime and terrorism onto the civilized posthumans who own power, although remain powerless to handle terrorists. The current critical examination exposes Ausi's standpoint of revenge against the posthumanist governmentality of neo-colonial powers and their unjust maiming and disabling of subjectified subjects in the colonized lands of Afghanistan, Palestine, and Kashmir.

Keywords: crime fiction, debility, disability, posthumanism, terrorism, violence

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Pakistani Crime Fiction: Textuality, and Actuality and Global Impact

Crime fiction, as a literary genre that remains a focus of literary research and criticism, has garnered considerable attention of scholars in Pakistan. This is especially true with regards to its orientation in the context of the global ‘war on terror’ and the onslaught of terrorism in Pakistan that has been fostered in the name of Islam. Moreover, as a literary genre, it has significant implications for the global ideation of Pakistan’s position in the ‘war on terror’. Keeping these in view, Cara Cilano examined many works of Pakistani crime fiction as critical sources of the western, specifically the American, post-9/11 literature. In the backdrop of the representation of terrorism, Islamophobia, and the “war on terror” in Pakistani literature, the victimhood of such apparently criminal persons, their debility, disability or inertia, and their capacity to harm others as the conundrums created by these fictional narratives, have not been focused previously with reference to *The Spinner’s Tale*. Owing to this lacuna in literary criticism and research, the current study is significant since it allows the assessment of the combatant characters’ right to maim in contrast with the maiming actions of state apparatuses and neo-imperial powers in the above mentioned work of crime fiction. It does not aim to make sense of terrorist activities as a whole. Instead, it focuses on the specific sufferer’s victimhood and creates a space for revenge in the oppressive and exploitative system.

Nonetheless, Ausi is alienated and othered out by the mafia and also by the state government as a public nuisance. The double folds of debility, indignity, isolation, and penalties garner such criminal activities that warrant space to neo-imperial and exploitative systems and allow them to oppress such problematic characters as a justification of the “war on terror”.

The current study endeavours neither to present a hagiographical account of either Uzair or Ahmad Saeed Sheikh, nor to present him as a caiff or a saint; rather, it aims to depict him as a maimed and psychologically disabled subject. Uzair (also known as Ausi), after bearing unjust torture in the prevailing exploitative political and economic system, snatches the right to maim and transforms his disability into anti-ability. By enhancing his capacity to debilitate the state apparatuses as his revenge, Ahmed Uzair Sheikh also known as Ausi- the son of an impoverished and

honest bureaucrat in *The Spinner's Tale* (2015) escapes decisively as a game-changer due to his spellbound speeches.

While keeping in mind the inception of such criminal characters who are also the sufferers, Omar Shahid Hamid, the renowned Police officer and the crime fiction writer (2015) has brought forward the fictional account of the factual crime story that links Ausi to a real life terrorist Umar Saeed Sheikh who has currently been released by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Hamid's fictional account incorporates the plot to discuss the textuality of the actuality in the crime charge of Daniel Pearl's murder, accepted also by another Pakistani Sheikh Khalid detained in Guantanamo Bay Jail on accusation of supporting Al-Qaeda. Nonetheless, the decision of acquittal in favour of Umar Saeed Sheikh- an LSE graduate- has opened a new debate about the accused or the so-called terrorist Umar Saeed's real life experiences and his right to defend against the Pakistani court's previous decision of "sentence to death", especially after being accused of murdering an innocent foreign journalist.

A plethora of researches on Pakistani fictional and non-fictional writings, making sense of *Islamization* and *Islamophobia*, reveal the reality of many such criminals who follow their personal interests in the garb of jihad. Such vilification and defamation of Islam has been explored also by Hafiz Javed ur Rehman and Mustanir Ahmad, who critically evaluated the (mis)representation of Islamic scholars by the criminal character in *The Spinner's Tale* (2015). In contrast, the current study is designed to evaluate Ausi's right to maim, his paranoia as his psychological disability, his maimed, tortured, and raped body as debilitated and incapacitated, and ultimately the exploitative system capturing and imprisoning him several times without providing him with a proper advocacy facility. Nonetheless, the researcher has focused on the deconstruction method to cater to the need of assessing violence, as well as the crime of murdering an innocent civilian, while taking revenge from exploitative forces, and my argument is hinged in light of Derrida and Puar's assertions, interpreted specifically in the Pakistani context.

Crime Fiction and Pakistani Fictional Authors' Adoption of this Genre

According to John Scaggs, "crime has nevertheless been the foundation for an entire genre of fiction for over one hundred and fifty years" (Scaggs,

2015, p. 1). Many authors have produced fictional accounts in this genre. The researcher has sought the method of deconstruction along with Puar's philosophical concepts that underpin my argument. In this process, I have assessed that crime fiction aids the purpose of highlighting the maiming ability of biopolitical powers, as well as the resultant disability of their villainous characters and their tragedies, as the main causes of their anti-social behavior. The purpose of the current study is not to represent the oppressive system maintained by state apparatuses, Islamophobia or Islamization, nor it is to present Ausi as a chivalrous jihadi. Rather, it highlights the plight of such tragic characters in the twenty-first century, who suffer under the revolutionized neo-imperial system. Afterwards, they react and try to debilitate their powerful oppressors and in this process, even kill the innocent mediators or harm the general public. Consequently, to maintain its central and imperial position, the state designs the justice system according to its standards to cater its utilitarian and totalitarian pursuits as a counterfeiting agency.

Fact and Fiction in Pakistani Crime Novel

Sheikh Ahmed Uzair Sufi, also known as Ausi, is the main character in *The Spinner's Tale*. Tracing his tragedy and disability paradoxically highlights his ability to spin the police department. The failure of the repressive state's apparatuses in controlling and bringing to justice the terrorist, who tops the list of the most-wanted criminals of the world, presents the whole milieu as a competition between neo-imperialism and fundamentalism. The intentional utilization of the fictional setting by Hamid as the main trope of crime fiction in order to maintain its fictional nature deploys his resistance (through writing) towards the neo-imperial and neo-colonial powers of the world. The references of big cities including Lahore, New York, London, Khost (Afghanistan), and Anantnag's prison cell in Kashmir portray the fictional character Ausi as "one superman fitting in all squares of global crises" (Hamid, 2015), and a fundamentalist Jihadi. It also aims to cater (in urgency) to all the problematic conflicts of the world in a single work of fiction. Hence, the study deconstructs the frailties attached with the term "global terrorist", used by the author as well as the manipulative neo-imperial anthropocenes, who believe in disciplining all human beings according to their set criteria. While referring to antihuman

or posthuman jihadis, such as the likes of Osama Bin Ladin, the anthropocenes sacrifice these homosacers- the concept averred by George Agamben- as terrorists.

In the current study, the researcher assessed the tragic villain Ausi. Caught in the nexus of Aristotelian tragedy in the globalized world of twenty-first century, he falls upon the thorns of life and bleeds. He becomes cognizant of his unacknowledged pain after bleeding that is reciprocated by his reaction of maiming others. The main argument of the current study is that he owns the right to maim others. When he bleeds, he chooses to bleed others as his *free will*. His choice of transforming himself into a terrorist is an act of becoming an inhumane posthuman, not harnessing the pain-inscribing biopolitical world. In continuation of Rosi Braidotti's *Posthuman Humanities* (2013) or Donna Haraway's cyborgean philosophy, the current study highlights Ausi as a misfit in the postcolonial world that is economically and mentally colonized by the USA and other western powers.

Posthumanism, according to the *Columbia Dictionary*, is the conceptualization of a human being's nature in the current digital age of scientific technologization or antihumanism (Childers & Hentzi, 1995). Terrorists, as antihumans and "others", subvert the conceptualization of civilized society by using individual or collective power to assert their stance of "difference as inferior" in the posthuman, technologized society (Ferrando, 2013; Braidotti, 2013, p.2), which fails to discipline the productive workers. According to her,

In tune with antihumanism, posthumanism stresses the urgency for humans to become aware of pertaining to an ecosystem which, when damaged, negatively affects the human condition as well. In such a framework, the human is not approached as an autonomous agent, but is located within an extensive system of relations. Humans are perceived as material nodes of becoming; such becomings operate as technologies of existence (Ferrando, 2013).

The antihumans, in the new materialist environment, where their vital social and humanist activities are not disembodied, network with the traditional nature, whereas the part of the system with transgressing natures, are represented as terrorists. Their identity as "terrorists" purports to their non-conformity that does not proceed further and is proclaimed to be fit in

the process of “becoming”. Nonetheless, these antihuman terrorists are disabled by the neo-imperial system because of their incapability to be productive with meaningful existence; while their anti-ability leads to speciesism as different from technologized and productive beings that categorize them as unwanted “terrorists”.

Conceptualization of Debility, Disability, and Capacity

Jasbir Puar describes debility as “injury and bodily exclusion that are endemic rather than epidemic or exceptional, and reflects a need for rethinking overarching structures of working, schooling, and living rather than relying on rights frames to provide accommodationist solutions” (2017). While keeping in mind this framework of reference, those who transgress humanity and approach the threshold of animality, are categorized as those who repress their desire for accommodation in an oppressive system. They rely on their individually-designed solution as they lose trust on the universal system of justice. Puar explored the disabling system that “maintains the precarity of certain bodies and populations precisely through making them available for maiming” (2017). Her examination of the Foucauldian notion of disease, impairment, toxicity, and productivity ascertains the ableist mechanism of powers to disable others as their biopolitical hegemony.

The postmodern world shifts the responsibility of moral values and collective goodness as presented by Rawls in his egalitarian libertarian philosophy towards the neorealist stance of waging war onto others as a concept propounded by Foucauldian proponents in favour of biopolitical power to colonize through debilitation. As profoundly stated by Slavoj Žižek, “In the endless complexity of the contemporary world, where things, more often than not, appear as their opposites — Intolerance as tolerance, religion as rational common sense, and so on and so forth —the temptation is great” (Žižek, 2009). In defiance to the compliant society created by Rousseau’s general *will* and Žižek’s rational thought, where tolerance is actually intolerance and religious sanctity has been altered, sacrificed or violated according to the general will of the repressive state for non-compliant subjects, Ausi’s *free will* subverts the normalization of self-sacrifice by repudiating the general *will*. He complies with his inner voice of conscience as the assertion of his right to harm or injure all those who

fail to understand his mental disability to accept exploitation. Defiant philosophy of *existence is resistance* (emphasis; Puar, 2017) becomes a problem for the powerful neo-imperial structures. To cater it, they need disciplining as a debilitating act to undermine resistance.

Ausi's emotional enthusiasm and irrationality limits his worldview. He focuses on the Afghani Sheikhs' jargon of sacrifice and jihad as his inherent flaw or *hubris*. His *peripeteia* is the consequence of the same *hubris* in Aristotlean conceptualization of a tragedy, which is essential to his transcendental nature. However, in the Christian world, it is termed as the *original sin* that purports the Nietzschean philosophy of equality for all, as well as the reconceptualization of morality to end elitism. If the world is rife with such corrupt elements that affect the nature and development of human beings adversely, then the responsibility of crime shifts towards civilized elements who systematize their maiming action as the need to control social and political systems and not directed towards the maimed and disabled man who himself is a victim.

In the current research, the researcher sought the exploration of tragic incidents that contribute to Ausi's tragedy. What circumstances transform him into a terrorist and how his right to maim is systematized in the posthumanistic world, according to Jasbir Puar's conceptualization of the biopolitics of debility, capacity, and disability, are the focal points of the current study. These aspects are assessed using the deconstruction theory proposed by Derrida. I have taken the title from Shelley's work. It represents the dubious characterization of Ausi as a tragic villain, who in the process of salvation commits the irreversible crime of murder. The quote *I Fall Upon the Thorns of Life! I Bleed!* symbolically represents Ausi's debilitated and maimed body along with psychical aberrations caused by social and political circumstances, so much so that he is unable to comprehend the situation rationally and decides to take revenge.

Research Methodology Adopted for Comprehending the Right to Maim

The qualitative nature of the current research rationalizes it as a factual addition to the onto-epistemological world, in cognizance of the fact that a real life person and his factual representation do not necessarily constitute a contrasting bifurcation. Rather, the fictional account superimposes the real onto the fictional to some extent. It initiates the debate for seeking out the

truth or the reality in a fashion parallel to the real life acquittal of the apparent terrorist after eighteen years of imprisonment, in order to give him space to continue the process of his “becoming or Dasein” in a better environment. The current study has sought a posthumanist stance to underpin its main argument using Jasbir Puar’s theorization from her works *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, and Disability* (2017) and *Terrorist Assemblages* (2018). The theory of deconstruction proposed by Jacques Derrida is used to deconstruct the words and their meaningful binaries in the context of the “war on terror”, as the exploitation of Muslims in Kashmir, Palestine, Syria, and Afghanistan continues. Puar deconstructs the Israeli and American maiming acts as unjust because of their power-seeking strategy of maiming, disabling, and debilitating freedom fighters. Whereas, in my argument, I have incorporated her views along with Slavoc Zizek’s concept of violence to establish a methodology with the objective to assess the maimed terrorist’s right to maim and deactivate the exploitative setup.

The Posthuman’s Right to Maim Due to Disability and Debility

Jasbir Puar’s *The Right to Maim* is an account of the exponential power-seeking act of a posthuman in the contemporary scientific age, in which human beings have been transformed into posthumans or cyborgs. She discussed the case of the Israeli encroachment of Palestinian land with the support of the USA, aimed at its settler colonial occupation (Puar, 2017). According to her, the disability caused by the brutal act committed by the Israeli security forces of shooting bullets into unarmed and subjugated bodies manifests their exasperated attempts of maiming those who have no power. The pressure exerted by the muting or silencing of the Palestinian resistance leads to their mutilation by posthumanist power-seeking soldiers. Jasbir writes, “Shooting to maim in order not to kill might appear as minor relief given the proclivity to shoot to kill” (Puar, 2017). The subtle nuances of *not letting one live or die* (italics for emphasis) dehumanize the inhuman authorities, whose maiming act does not suffice to criminalize them for their abrogation of human rights, rather it creates a nexus for the sufferers. Whereas, the direct act of killing or murdering, whether just or unjust, brings forth the connotation of terrorism. Similarly, conflict of intentions and the illegal use of power to cater personal grievances or revenge does not come into the jurisdiction of terrorism. It so happens when the police

deals with terrorists or innocent and unarmed subjugated people in the anarchic biopolitical system.

Radicalizing such biopolitical logic of deliberate debilitation and maiming, supported by the powerful regime, results into resistive or subjugated utterances of the victims and the innocent non-combatants, such as *Don't Shoot! Hands Up!* and *I Can't Breathe!* (italics in original). The connotations of pain and torture hidden behind these utterances made by the innocent sufferers provide the evidence of the materialization of the disability and debility of the victims, far from seeking power. Such nuances and paradoxes need serious attention to focus on the human rights of the criminals and terrorists, assigned to them not only by the Islamic law (as in case of Pakistan) but also by the Geneva Convention. The exploitative forces have the power to manipulate the circumstances in their favour and harm the whole community on the basis of racialized or religious bias and discrimination. It also provides a tactic to keep oppressing the resistive *others* to continue the process of biopolitical encroachment.

According to Puar, debilitation (of a community) is different from disability in its core meaning of weakening the whole race or colony, aimed to cripple them for life and to destroy their powers. The study hinges on the context of targeting resistive forces or subjugated human beings, who are blamed to act as puppets in the hands of powerful terrorists. The concept of debilitating the objectified subjects, in Puar's view, does not contextualize to make them subjugated. Rather, it rationalizes the need of powerful political subjects to wholly disarm the resistance without ending it by force with an immediate blow.

The critical examination reveals the biopolitics behind the apparent counter-terrorism. Puar writes, "The biopolitics of debilitation is not intended to advocate a facile democratization of disability, as if to rehash the familiar cant that tells us we will all be disabled if we live long enough". The main purpose of disability is to undermine all those subjects who aim to seek physical armament in order to revolt against or defy the current powers, either military or civilian (Puar, [2017](#)). The humanist stance of death is already inculcated among the masses that cannot be diminished but by debilitation, in order to make them urge for death or for perishing. However, the fear of countering a powerful terrorist creates trouble for the

oppressive powers in the government. These fears hovers over them and threaten their governmentality. Jasbir Puar mentions,

Technology acts both as a machine of debility and capacity and as portals of affective openings and closures. I engage technology and slow death as they modulate debility and capacity without relying on conventional and straightforward political cant of a rational public sphere, autonomous political actors, and the binary of resistance/passivity (2017).

The global technologized world portrays the combatants and defendants of their human rights as terrorists and dangerous non-state elements. This bifurcation provides a non-resistive degenerative speciesism on the basis of the individual thinking faculty, and their meaningful existence after the process of becoming *daseins* in Heideggerian terms. These actors are needed to be disabled for the sake of anthropocentric neo-imperial libertarian projects, including colonizing the lands of disciplined subjects where these “terrorists” pose a serious threat to exploitative neo-imperial powers by exposing and dismantling their capitalistic projects. Puar (2017) profoundly elaborates, “The non-disabled/disabled binary traverses social, geographic, and political spaces” (p. xiv) in the posthumanist world, where the internet has made it possible to connect with the global world within seconds. Puar exposes the expense of the common people as ‘others’ to fulfil the political agenda of biopowers as follows, “The relation of disability to U.S. incarceration, settler colonialism, and imperialism; and a systemic critique of the military-industrial complex and its debilitating global expanse” (xx), has brought forward an insight into the matter of fundamentalism associated with the posthumans or antihumans like *Ausi*. Puar avers,

While the rise of digital forms gives control an anchoring periodization and geospatial rationale, a reliance on this narrative obscures the ongoingness of discipline and the brutal exercise of sovereign power, often cloaked in humanitarian, democratic, or life preservationist terms (2017, p. xxi).

According to her, the legalization of the invasion of private spaces has transformed moral values, especially in case of the United States of America, which as a neo-imperial posthuman power reserves all rights of surveillance. The US invades personal spaces either through cyber-security

applications or through hacking, “as a regulatory part of their subject formations while also capacitating bodily habits and affective tendencies” (2017). She (2017) criticizes the evasive nature of digital evidence in the following words, “Events are thus data-driven, informational as well as experiential, the digitalizing of information rotating in the loop between memory and archive” (p.5). This fact is important in conceptualizing the dilemma of impasse between the authorities and the defiant persons. She writes,

Savage’s “retro-homo-reprofuturism,” a term coined by Dana Luciano to describe “the projection of one’s own past self onto the youth of today in order to revise one’s own ordinary life into exceptional progress narrative,” functions to misread the impasse of the present as an inability to imagine the future (2017, p. 7).

Such chronopolitics becomes critically active and forceful to justify the right to occupy and gain territorial control. The US presents the ‘you’ (the terrorist) killing ‘us’ (the authorities) (Puar, 2017, p. 9) binary. Such normalization using the power of their unjust acts as a posthuman requirement of the time to deal with non-compliant subjects is stated by Elizabeth Deviant as *deviant chronopolitics* (2007, p. xxi) and also discussed by Puar in *Terrorist Assemblages* (2018).

U.S. exceptionalism hangs on a narrative of transcendence, which places the United States above empire in these two respects, a project that is aided by what Domenico Losurdo names as “the fundamental tendency to transform the Judeo-Christian tradition into a sort of national religion that consecrates the exceptionalism of American people and the sacred mission with which they are entrusted (‘Manifest Destiny’) (p. 8).

Giorgio Agamben builds a terrorist’s image as a *Homo Sacer*, who is castrated with the society and considered as an ‘othered’ out human being devoid of any ability or humanness. It depicts the nature of violence with subtle nuances. Puar writes,

Visually, the body reclaims the faggotry, the effeminacy, the failed masculinity, always already installed in the naming of the terrorist, staging further defiance in the face of such easily rendered accusations of being a terrorist. The (white) secular norms by which

queerness abides contributes greatly to (racist) Islamo- and homophobic representations of terrorists (2007, p. 14).

Ascertaining Puar's views, it is determined that the neo-imperial power's "politics of sympathy" is the "technique of converting his injury into cultural capital not only through rhetoric of blame, guilt, and suffering but also through those of triumph, transgression, and success" (2017). It leads to the concept of the rebirth or reemerging of the antihuman to counter the oppression, tyranny, and maiming of authorities by retaliating towards them and maiming them. *Reified as the true site of insufficiency and instability* (italics for emphasis), while disability as a consequence of debilitation and injury brings a slow death. The life of a criminal or a terrorist is a practical example of a disable body, seemingly normal but tainted and coded for its recognition as maimed (2017). Temporal extension also brings disability. Puar (2017) describes the process of debilitation as "profitable for capitalism" (p. 13). It demands compliance from the consumers and provides an alternate of maiming their capacity to bring reform. "In neoliberal, biomedical, and biotechnological terms, the body is always debilitated in relation to its ever-expanding potentiality" (p.13) as also presented in *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1979) by Foucault. The body is facilitated in the capitalistic environment according to its increasing use-value. Whereas, those debilitated for life so as to end their use value and to make them posthumans who are liable only to terrorism, is the main policy of posthuman capitalism. Puar devises the standard, "All bodies are being evaluated in relation to their success or failure in terms of health, wealth, progressive productivity, upward mobility, enhanced capacity. And, there is no such thing as an "adequately abled" body anymore" (Maim 15). Such transformation of human beings into posthumans has not been philosophized accordingly to deal with the need of curbing non-compliance to such exploiting systems.

Moreover, justice and equality are not the same (Maim, p.15). Rather, by focusing on the double meanings of these terms as discussed by Derrida in his theory of deconstruction, it becomes evident that justice and equality never pose their literal meanings (Howells, 2013) as far as religious fundamentalism as reactionary act is concerned. Bringing forward the concept of rationalizing new means to devise the legal faculty for dealing

with criminals and terrorists, Puar (2017) expounds, “Rights discourses produce human beings in order to give them rights; they discriminate which bodies are vested with futurity, or more accurately, they cultivate (some/certain) bodies that can be vested with futurity” (p.15). Regulating order and disorder in the age of biological control comprises the regularization of bodies according to their use-value in the future and not their disciplining (Puar, 2017). Nonetheless, discipline is centripetal, while the apparatuses of security are centrifugal (Puar, 2017). Such centripetal forces attract and converge the subjects to be maimed as expounded by Zizek in the following words, “Transgression is more and more directly enjoined by the Law itself” (Zizek, 2009). Althusserian repressive apparatuses act upon the jargon “the power of normalization versus normalization of power” (Puar, 2017, p. 22) and gain benefit from both. Hence, to maim is the right of such victimized terrorists, who are already maimed, disabled, tortured, debilitated, and their capacity contained by neo-imperial biopowers in the posthuman world. Either these subjects’ ancient instinct of realizing the colonial agenda was initiated as a paradox of their powerful posthumanistic essence of optimizing life, or these objectified subjects have become posthumans due to the activated or anti-able essence present in their disabled bodies. Derrida describes their right to maim in terms of the repetition of the language they use, holding the opinion that language is stolen and does not belong to the speaker. Rather, it comprises “repeated speech” with a minor role of the speaker, instead of the constitutive role played by the individual (Howells, 2013).

Analysing Ausi’s Right to Maim because of his Disability and Debility

Michael A. Peters has identified the wounds of a racially segregated society, where ethnic, religious, gender, class, caste, and other differences create backward and forward traumas, which bring human behavior closer to animal behavior. Such animalization of human nature or reversal of civilization becomes the cause of terrorism and moral misinterpretation, where elites attain power to facilitate themselves, while the rest are othered-out as inferior non-humans. Such non-humanization or anti-humanization reverts the values of cosmological and ecological justice and relapses to inhuman essence of animalities. Heideggerian essence transforms into antihumanism through the constant state of “becoming a Dasein” (Peters, 2020). Nonetheless, the onto-epistemological standpoint is that the

antihuman considers him as the embodiment of truth and all others at an essentialistic position. Peters writes,

Poststructuralism questions philosophies of the subject that do not take account of the external conditions of its own possibilities. The emphasis on absolute self-consciousness and its alleged universalism is regarded as socially exclusive and, ultimately, oppressive, of the other – of social and cultural groups – that operate with different cultural criteria. By contrast, poststructuralism emphasizes the discursive constitution of self (and self-regulation), its corporeality, its temporality and finitude, its unconscious and libidinal energies, and the historical and cultural location of the subject (2020, p. 582).

Ausi's constantly changing future or his "becoming" is the urge of Dasein enmeshed in intelligent technological surveillance systems. His relational and distributional standing in the posthuman world provides the justification of his criminal or anti-human essence. His *cognitive efficiency* as a posthuman assists him in devising the game for collecting clues.

Parallel to this, Momina Hafeez narrated state terrorism as a strategy of violence that it uses through repressive apparatuses to normalize Ausi like characters, while promoting their representation as anarchists in the twenty-first century. According to her, Ausi as a Homo Sacer faces oppression and becomes a rebel (Hafeez, 2019) for abducting a female American journalist and beheading her. His brutal treatment transforms him into an antihuman Ooankali, a slaver and a non-viable mutant of human generation (Canavan, 2016), now termed as a *terrorist* in a dystopian world. Moreover, his disposition towards becoming such a disable mutant goes back to his rape by the Indian interrogation officer. It paradoxically has reduced the possibility of his homosexual tendencies and/or castrated personality. Simultaneously, it has also transformed his otherness into anti-humanness as more evident than before.

The police confines him behind bars for disciplining, as described by Foucault in *Society must be Defended* (2003, p. 239-64). The act of disciplining makes citizens behave and help them to become productive workers as compared to biopolitics that manages their use-value in a more capitalistic fashion. In this process, Ausi understands his productive

capabilities and debilitates the police because of his own debility and disability in order to make his voice recognized and heard. Puar writes, “As episteme with operational logics, rather than a system of power wedded solely to specific periodizations and geographies” (2017). Ausi has a specific set of operational logic to justify his right to kill the representative of a particular exploitative system.

To regain his power, Ausi spellbinds the soldiers who snatch his gun, that acted earlier as his prosthetic limb, with the aim to attack the maiming agency. Consequently, gullibility to such spellbinding proffers the soldiers the ability to grasp the maiming hands. In this way, Hamid reveals that systemic neo-imperialism continues for more than seven decades, tracing it back to World War II. The realization of the terrorists or other such antihumans’ actions as just, while they are aimed to resist the powerful biopolitical structures, allows Ausi’s followers to make others disabled and debilitated. His precarity and (un)livability in an otherwise civilized world alienates him. The deliberate act of supporting homonationalism or creating space for his fellow terrorists by spellbinding and maiming all those who oppose his stance is his revenge that presents him as psychologically debilitated and disabled, yet otherwise just.

Furthermore, Ausi is given a slow death by exerting on him a centrifugal decentralizing pressure for his evacuation as a disabled body, such as the Sisyphus. It acts as a metaphorical process of maiming the state apparatuses by snatching their power lying in their guns. Further, he continues his struggle of coming back to the center using force. Nevertheless, as his reaction, he selects the option of giving sudden death by beheading English journalist Rachel Boyd. His kidnapping of her makes her crippled and debilitated and it presents Ausi’s metaphoric killing of the whole system as a consequence of his own fall on the imperial thorns of the life. In Puar’s words, “He is monied, confident, well traveled, and suitably partnered; he betrays no trace of abjection or shame” (2017, p.7). While analyzing Octavia E. Butler’s works, Peter writes, “The existence of boxing and football taught her that “the threat of shared pain wouldn’t necessarily make people behave better toward one another,” while a literally contagious empathy might well destroy any possibility of necessary care work” (2019, p. 122). This is why Ausi rejects empathy for those in power. In liquid modernity, the emergence of a savior who is termed as a terrorist by the

anarchist capitalistic or neo-imperial authorities “often serves the function of mediator figure that enters a community in crisis with the aim of resolving its conflicts and restoring the *status quo*” (Schmeink, [2016](#)). The effect of inherent essence or postmodern civilization brings the chaotic merging of boundaries between the just and the unjust that baffles Ausi. He becomes a Homo Sacer in the posthuman age, who asserts his spellbinding power to keep himself outside the legislative grip because of his crippled humanness. He cannot be trialed on the basis of the law that preserves the rights of all those whose essence is *homo sapien*. Ultimately, he devises his own laws and reserves the right to kill for appeasing his revenge that remains against contemporary human rights in the pre-postmodern world.

The end result of apocalyptic purification often seems of less importance than the narrative pleasure derived from the bizarre and opulent tribulations of the bodies being burnt by fire and brimstone, tormented by scorpion stings, trodden like grapes in the winepress. In this interplay between the incorporeal purity of the ends and the violent corporeality of the means the apocalyptic body is born. It is a body whose mortal sickness is a precondition of ultimate health, whose grotesque and excessive sexuality issues in angelic sexlessness, and whose torture underpins a painless-and lifeless-millennium (Gomel, [2000](#)).

Now, Ausi’s state is like “an image of purity so absolute that it denies the organic messiness of life” (Gomel, [2000](#)). He has made his mind to punish those who conform to the norms and values of the oppressive system. His denial is already incumbent in case of neo-imperial state apparatuses that deny him all his rights to justify his position of killing an innocent woman who transgresses her limits and contacts the terrorist for her journalistic research. The contemporary moral thinking under Kantian philosophization of *free will* or its quality (Taylor, [1988](#) ; Puar, [2017](#)) reverses goodness on mere chance failure. Ausi’s good intentions become criminal. According to Taylor, “Socrates’ argument in the *Gorgias* that it is better to be a just man under torture than a successful wrong-doer. And substantially the same doctrine is defended in the *Republic*” (1988, p. 805). It problematizes as well as solves Ausi’s confusion. There is no apparent and observable guilt felt by Ausi, as described by Hamid, that derogatorily

justifies his position as a victimizer or a terrorist who has become a demagogue against the repressive forces in order to support the marginalized and betrayed common people, symbolically.

Hamid also plays with Ausi's characterization to create the scheme of investigation through tracing the letters, "At first Omar didn't recognize the manacled figure that emerged from the APC. The Sheikh Uzair on television had seemed taller. This figure appeared bent over. He wore a simple prayer cap on his head, and the black, bushy beard had been reduced to a neatly trimmed two weeks' growth. He still looked young, not older than mid-thirties" (2015, p.16). Such conversion from a demonic figure to a normal religious person with "quizzical expression on his face" (2015, p.17) becomes a problem for the police and soldiers who find it difficult to differentiate between the right and wrong. Ausi's submissiveness and debility is visible when he says to Omar, "I acknowledge your power over me and am ready to cooperate with you in any way possible" (Hamid, 2015). The interplay of fate or playing with the fate to face the thorns of life is shown by the author as Ausi's expertise. Moreover, it also represents his tragic flaw of undermining the rights of innocent human beings to live peacefully so much so that his position is questioned paradoxically, despite all his sincerity and effectivity in bringing change in legal faculties.

Tragic Incidents in Sheikh's Life that Convert him into an Antihuman

The burden of racial segregation and religious bind onto Ausi in the racist American society are enough to make him realize that he should return to where he belongs, as enunciated by Puar (2017). Hamid (2015) writes, "Something broke inside him" (p.192). He is a queer subject in an Indian jail where he is considered as the 'other' and marginalized. His (homo)-rape is the act of disciplining him in the racialized queer world. According to Puar, "The "Cripple" toggles a very tenuous line between the "Cripple" as a metaphor of regeneration and the crippling effects of amputation" (2017). Ausi's self-respect is amputated and his concept of justice is shattered. Moreover, the subtle coercive nuances of digital media and the surveillance strategies of spies proves him to be a demonic person with "unwavering... black smouldering eyes that burned with a fire that surely must have been forged in the depths of hell" (2015, p.11). Previous studies presented Ausi as a rebel and Satan like character who uses violence to disambiguate the system and the state. My argument presents him as a

tragic villain who has chosen the maiming strategy to counter the oppression and the neo-imperial project of America and India. The essentialist evil bias towards citizens because of its inherent evil spirit (as a presupposition of the *original sin*) has converted all resistive factions into terrorists who demand a just society for themselves. In such a dilapidated situation, Ausi (being sensitive and compliant to his party's Sheikhs) becomes a pawn in the hands of a terrorist organization and it brings his predicament. He gets injured and maimed by the neo-imperial powers in Afghanistan and in the Indian jail for supporting Osama bin Laden, Kashmiri militants, and Palestinians. His sufferings and traumatic experiences transform him into a rebel who wants to maim all those who have played any part in maiming him.

He joins the party for Sohail, who is a Kashmiri, when he tells him "you can spellbind an audience" (2015, p.79). Hamid mentions that "they suffered harassment" (Hamid, 2015) for not complying to the militant organizations' demands. Afterwards, Ausi finds an anchor to attach with. He "wasn't a pariah anymore" (p.80), he "was sold" (p.81) to the party and couldn't take any action without the party's permission. Police officers kill Sohail. His mutilated body during postmortem debilitates Ausi's mental state (2015, p.95). Consequently, he is arrested by police for supporting Sohail (p.95). Ausi, under Sohail's spell, considers his narration of exploitation as the only truth. It makes him believe the party's intention as right and the police as the repressive power directed to control their capacity and capability. He changes from a disable party worker into an able terrorist. Hamid mentions that even his party does not support him in the case of sabotaging peace and causing destruction in the college (2015, p.98). Sheikh, as Ausi's mentor, also supports him apparently in his struggle to opt for jihad as the final battle to save Muslims all over the world, "Look around you. Kashmir, Bosnia, this place. All these horrible things are happening to good people, just because they are Muslim... Perhaps even the Almighty doesn't want the good ones to be corrupted by this world" (Hamid, 2015). His transformation lessens his humanness and makes him an antihuman without the essential emotions and feeling of pain while killing human beings.

His best friend Sana who once declared “can you believe our best friend is a kidnapper!” (2015, p.180) also supports him so much so that she herself admits, “Ausi is not a terrorist” (p.205) and “He just did what he thought was right... who are you to go around calling someone a terrorist before he has been convicted in a court of law, before he has had any access to any kind of judicial process” (p.205), thus supporting Ausi’s naivety in not understanding the biopolitics because of his rash behaviour. According to Hamid (2015), CID, ISI, Special Branch Corps, Intelligence, and the police department, after the beheading of British journalist Rachel and two attacks on the President’s convoy, arrest Uzair’s two brothers Rameez and Ashfaq and break their bones. “Ashfaq was lucky, he got away with a broken arm and leg. They broke all the bones in Rameez’ fingers” (p.197). The debilitation, disability, and incapacitation of the innocents proves Ausi’s right to maim, so as to cater justice denied by the state apparatuses. It is evident by the fact that Ausi’s father pays for their acquittal each time his sons are arrested without their involvement in any crime (p.198).

Ausi is cognitively disabled at an inert passive position of confinement in jail. Puar (2017) writes, “Because the inability to “communicate” functions as a significant determinant of mental or cognitive impairment (thereby regulating the human/animal distinction, as well as a distinction between humans and objects), thus destabilizing the centrality of the human capacity for thought and cognition” (p.26). Ausi’s disability in communicating his pain is his real ability to manipulate his compliant subjects against the biopowers from the peripheral position of inactivity. Using his language to impose his power of spellbinding as a non-anthropomorph increases his capability of doing harm, thus positioning him as an unmute but heard subaltern. Although he is termed as the hardcore “terrorist” with a spellbinding capability, his speech comprises merely the repetition of words used by the maiming and exploitative state agencies in their defense. This reversal of speech or Ausi’s reply in similar words, as expounded by Derrida (2018), complicates his position as a disciplined subject. Instead, he is posed as a rebel and willful antihuman in his approach.

The anthropocene as a white subject and the antihuman other as a brown terrorist appears as a universal binary that is irreversibly evident in the current work of fiction. Ausi is not a violent character by choice but because

of the developmental flaw that he experiences as a consequence of his social, political, cultural, and religious upbringing. His inherent human attributes make him liable to earn the right to justice, not just as a terrorist but also as a human being who has the ability to correct his disability in moral favour and collective goodness. He uses exploitative means to maim those who report or assist authorities in his surveillance and tracking. The experiences of violation, intrusion, and exposure throughout his life make him a depressed subject who starts to live in a dystopic imaginary world of pain and bloodshed. Mutilation as a war myth terrorizes him and makes him paranoid. He dismantles the myth by snatching the right to maim through his anti-able body in the exploitative system before his physical confinement.

Ausi's Hubris, Defiance, and Revenge as Tragedy

According to Sherryl Vint, "The separation of human from animal was central to the Hobbesian ideal of the social contract" (Vint, [2010](#)), that is reserved for the legitimate state as solely responsible to control other persons' lives and property by limiting their sovereignty. Vint and Hafeez also contend about Agamben's argument of *decisive political conflict* between a man and an animal and the boundaries between them (p.445). Ausi's defiance emerges the moment he is disabled by the able authorities. He rejects the leap of faith and chooses courage as his only option for ending all fears. At that moment of disciplining his body, the birth of prison dismantles the notion of human rights as well as the Hegelian concept of his right to seek fairness, as undermined by the sovereign powers. Ausi's *bios* has been captured and has become a *zoe*. While conceptualizing Derrida (as in *The Beast and the Sovereign*, p.149), who recalls it as a failure of the western philosophy to comprehend the blurred boundary (Vint, [2010](#); Braidotti, 2013), we come across such rare cases of confused and misdirected terrorism or antihumanism that has not been addressed in legislation. In Derrida's words, "A political revolution without a poetic revolution of the political" (290): not a choice between sovereignty and its absence, but merely a struggle to transfer the power of sovereignty" (Vint, [2010](#)), is a failure of biopower to control a terrorist.

Ausi does not disavow his linkages with totalitarian organizations built on the ideological framework of terrorism. Hamid writes, "Sheikh [Ausi]

was unwavering, unblinking, the only visible emotion was in his eyes, those smouldering black eyes that burned with a fire that surely must have been forged in the depths of hell” (Hamid, 2015). Then, after being captured, “Only *he* remained defiant” (p.11) as the antihumanist. Dozens of cameras capture the “ferocity etched on his face” (p.11), which is his hubris to remain resistant against the imperial powers in the digital age.

Hamid’s words “Sheikh had convinced the man to become a suicide bomber and blow up the prisoner” (2015, p.19) comprise the articulation of Ausi’s revenge. However, his unbelongingness to neo-imperialism is the root cause of his becoming a terrorist. Hamid writes, “If it involves Sheikh Uzair, the instructions must have come from the very top” (2015). The system where Rachel Boyd as a neo-imperial agent enters illegally and forcefully to meet Ausi is not questioned because she is a compliant subject of a colonial power. Ausi is made a part of her plan and her killer because of the *war on terror* (Hamid, 2015). Ausi’s defiance is evident when he says, “I don’t think I am scared of dying. After all, a man like me who has cheated death so many times has no excuse to fear it. It’s dying alone that frightens me” (2015). He resists by sacrificing, not by bringing “collateral damage” (p.299). Hamid gives the same defiant voice to Sheikh, “[T]his nation is diseased and needs to be cleansed” (p.228). Whereas, Ausi “never believes any of what he says” (p.228).

Ausi’s oration and spellbinding makes him a powerful man and people follow him blindly. However, his inner wounds are torturous and without any healing when he observes that his ability has been rejected. The label of “terrorist” onto him has transformed him into an anti-able disable. Such a depressed, complying, incapacitated, and objectified subject is symbolically presented as a terrorist as a part of the imitated speech delivered by neo-imperial subjects and not as the original speech. A person who is unable to attend a cricket match without his parents’ permission (p.32-3) is psychologically tortured and appeases his injury by killing others as presented by Hamid. Ausi’s act of killing the journalist is presented as a past event that remains under discussion and not proven yet in the fictional work. On the basis of such repetition and reiterating of the already made speech, as suggested by Derrida, it acts as a metaphor for the legal faculties. However, the real is different from the symbolic and the imaginary on the basis of the letters written in Hamid’s epistolary fictional work.

When Hamid writes, Ausi's allies "had been making plans to blow up the jail" (2015), it is based on the assumptions and possibility of crime, coupled with the fear of Ausi's revenge. The government constantly shifts him into different prison cells to increase his debility; however, paradoxically, he makes his followers everywhere because of his spellbinding power. Hamid mentions this fact about Ausi, "Sheikh can be extremely persuasive. So we don't want him becoming too chatty with anybody" (p.18). The state apparatuses' verticalization of space and earth through confining him from all sides is the aftermath of their fear of Ausi. The soldiers are not naïve to misunderstand Afghanistan, Palestine, and even Kashmir cause. Hamid writes, "The prison guards weren't some green youths on their first job. They were men with fifteen or twenty years' experience, and they had been used to guarding high profile, dangerous prisoners. But he flipped them as if they were children" (p.18). The sarcastic tone of the author depicts his resistance towards the exploitative systems that are unable to differentiate between criminals and bleeding victims on the basis of valueless emotions and feelings, hence providing Ausi the right to maim. Further, it also proves Ausi's understanding of collective debility as the new ability to harm the exploitative systems, especially the capitalistic system where anthropocenes use soldiers merely as labourers with limited use-value. While, Ausi inspires these soldiers through his oratory and flips the coin against the exploitative system.

Assessment of Maimed Ausi's Right to Maim

Hamid's sympathetic tone towards Ausi is evident when he writes, "It bleeds when he shits the morning after the jinn's visit" (2015). Ausi bleeds because "the jinn is his captor's special punishment for him" (2015), who rapes him in the Kashmiri jail, especially after losing a cricket match with Pakistan. Anantnag's massive massacre (p.216) where Ausi killed mercilessly, whether trialed or not, is taken as an excuse to treat him brutally. Sodomy is among the thorns of life on which he falls and bleeds as a symbol of his suffering, debilitation, and maimed status. Hamid also mentions, "Without guns and remote Kashmiri villages and the blood of two dozen soldiers on his hands. A world without Sinha and the Jinn. One day, he reminds himself, he will get his revenge on him. On all of them" (p.237).

He is transformed into a queer terrorist at the time of settler-colonial regime formation after his debilitation in order to disable him for life without pronouncing his death or freedom from life. Such inbetweenness, as a part of the neo-imperial powers' chronopolitics of inflicting pain at the critical time of colonizing marginalized communities in regions such as Kashmir, Palestine, and Afghanistan, while containing Ausi's power by crippling him psychically as mentioned by Puar (2017), brings his tragedy. Nonetheless, the chance to correct his ways from his earlier life is snatched from him. However, he himself never shows any signs of regret or guilt on his *free will* because he was choked several times. He wanted to say *I can't breathe!* His punishment is declared as his choice, where he has the option of remaining silent and passive to become a part of the exploitative system. The timely killings in Kashmir and the blame onto Ausi, the occupation of Palestine, and the meeting with Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan, provide the notable illustrations of the chronopolitics of the exploitative powers. Hamid (2015) mentions,

He [Ausi] thinks about his life, and the choices he has made. He has never regretted coming to Kashmir. He found himself here. He found that he revels in the chaos of conflict. In fact, he thrives upon it. He has also discovered that it is not the call of God that motivates him to violence. He has found it that he has a taste for it. Slitting the throats of those men in Shopian gave him an inner satisfaction. In a strange way, he even understands the violence that is being done to him. After all, if the roles were reversed, this is probably what he would do to them (2015, p.221).

According to Hamid, "An anger" (p.222) within him has risen to the level of hatred because of his Tanzeem that "abandoned him" after maneuvering him (p.222) and that is his predicament. His injured body's "death becomes durational" (Puar, 2017) when he is raped under Indian oppression that forces him to think about his past crimes as the precursor of the maiming project. Although he is backlashed by his own allies, after his rebirth, he gains power to counter the biopolitics of authorities and spellbinds people to make way for his escape. Structural inequalities, as conceptualized by Puar, dismantle his count of time. Puar (2017) writes, "That is to say, slow death is not about an orientation toward the death drive, nor is it morbid; rather, it is about the maintenance of living, the "ordinary

work of living on” (p.12) as the bricolage of suffering, anxiety, revenge, and justice for himself. Ausi is indebted by the maiming agencies and he returns the same debt by putting the same onus onto agent Rachel, who belongs to the exploitative agency that problematizes Deleuzean philosophy “Man is no longer man enclosed, but man in debt” (Puar, 2017). Hence, Puar’s right to maim is allocated to Ausi on the basis of his victimhood in the exploitative state.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Ausi’s revenge, in the form of killing an innocent journalist Rachel Boyd, fails to provide an answer to his right to kill a human being. However, it is also hidden behind the trial and the past debilitation and suffering that he bore, as his family members and he himself were also innocent at the time of their debilitation. It shows that many of the unjustified allegations and disinformation that has maimed and debilitated him have created a difference due to the ambiguity associated with the meanings, as philosophized by Derrida. Ausi’s letters tell his story, taken as the proof of his actions with all possible connotative meanings. Whereas, his own sarcastic tone brings forth his damaged psyche as his real tragedy and not his villainous acts.

The open ended fictional account, nevertheless, conceals the fate of the terrorist Ausi, who remains the tragic villain. The protagonist himself is unaware of his future, especially when the USA and Afghanistan are coming together for the settlement of the dispute through peaceful dialogue. Indian occupied Kashmir has been colonized by India while Palestine by Israel and it proves the chronopolitics of the neo-imperial powers. All these changing scenarios have created more debates on human rights to be pondered on through different philosophical lenses. Ausi’s damaged psyche is value-less in the exploitative system which has compromised his individuality that needs to be reinstated to bring him into the developmental sphere of productivity. Hence, the resolution to his *free willed choice* is that his intelligence and plotting capabilities can be used in several positive ways. However, the lacuna created by the loss of all those maimed, damaged, debilitated, and disabled human beings cannot be filled. The need of the hour is to create a system for such paranoid persons to utilize their exasperation in creative works. The philosophy of justice needs revision in

the post-postmodern posthuman world, especially when Derrida himself comments that every discourse is bricoleur.

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