

Agha Shahid Ali's "Call Me Ishmael Tonight": A Study of Championing Urdu Ghazal in the English Occident

Majid Abas Dar*
M.A (Student), Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University,
Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh.

ABSTRACT

Modern poetry in English, unlike other languages, features poetic genres such as epic, ode, ballad, lyric, sonnet, and other. English as a lingua franca has espoused foreign genres: haiku, tanka villanelle, and Ghazal. However, the institution of "Ghazal" was thoroughly a novel experimentation. As an Eastern poetic form, Ghazal strictly adheres to the conventional pattern of meter, rhythm, refrain, and notably *nom de plume* "takhallus.". Notably, Agha Shahid Ali initiated the ghazalesque tradition in English with the edition of "Ravishing DisUnities". Drawing on the same lines, this research paper will deconstruct the elements concerning Ali's thematic prospects, poetic schematization, pattern formation, and rendering of exotic archetypes in what he calls 'True or authentic Ghazal'. It delves into an extract, "By Exile" from the collection "Call Me Ishmael Tonight - 2003." Displaying how, through his unique artistic inclination & craftsmanship, he added to modern American poetry the charisma of ghazal tradition. Nonetheless, as a poet, Ali's literary accomplishment hinges on introducing the oriental Arabic, Indo-Persian poetic form of Urdu Ghazal to the Occidental galaxy of literature. Skilfully maneuvering the model Urdu as a means for Ghazal, well pioneered insurmountable stature as an ambitious Anglo-Kashmiri poet who revolutionized this conventional form and made it accessible to non-native audiences of English. Indubitably, Ali has firmly established his presence in poetry as a champion of English ghazal, 'not of an age, but for all times' as per (Johnsonian locution).

Keywords: *Agha Shahid Ali, Call me Ishmael Tonight, Ghazal, English, canon.*

Ali's Oeuvre of Collections and an Account of His Poetic Concerns

Agha Shahid Ali, who referred to himself as a 'triple exile,' 'multiple exiles', 'expatriate', and Kashmiri-American English language poet, was born in 1949-2001 as a Shiite Muslim from Srinagar (Kashmir); as he said, in his later life, he could only see in the imagination "... from Midnight at Delhi or through the "Postcard." Spotlighting his rooted, deep identity, Ali writes,

* Author: Majid Abas Dar

Email: majidabas1314@gmail.com

Received 08 Oct. 2024; Accepted 11 Oct. 2024. Available online: 25 Oct. 2024.

Published by SAFE. (Society for Academic Facilitation and Extension)

[This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)



“I was exercising a Muslim snobbery, of the Shiite clan” (Ravishing 1). Recognized as an imminent translator, essayist, and poet, he is famous for his transcultural contribution to rendering Urdu ghazal in English. From the period Ali’s literary career began, a host of canonical writers: Amitav Gosh (Novelist), Edward Said (Theorist), Noam Chomsky (linguist), and Mahmud Dervish (poet), eulogized his literary achievements. As a poet, he flourished with the publication of a free verse collection of *Bone Sculpture* (1972), *The Country without a Post Office* (1997), *Rooms are Never Finished* (2001), and *Veiled Suite* (2009). In the concluding years of his life, he ended up writing ghazis, which is evident in the publication of *Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals* (2003). It was inspired by his translation of Faiz Ahmad Faiz’s *The Rebel’s Silhouette* (1995), about which Ali says, “My first sensuously vivid encounter with Faiz Ahmed Faiz starts with the voice of Begum Akhtar singing his ghazals.” (Rebel’s Silhouette-Introduction). Ali’s works’ oeuvre placed him in a pinnacle position in the modern literary landscape. Ali is a “celebrated and beloved teacher.” The University of Utah Press annually awards the Agha Shahid Ali Poetry Prize.

Ali’s family loved and appreciated poetry and literature, especially in Persian, Urdu, Kashmiri, and English. “The eastern poetic structure”, Ali mentions “whose formal disunity” he first heard from his Urdu-speaking mother in his native Kashmir”. For him, Urdu was his mother tongue, and English was his first language. His novel invention from his mother language (Urdu) to his first language (English) was highly appreciated, and he can be called the ambassador of Urdu Ghazal in the occident. For his unique way of foregrounding homeland and alienation, James Merrill compares Ali’s poetry to “Mughal palace ceilings, whose countless mirrored convexities at once reduce, multiply, scatter, and enchant.” And Merwin has found in them “our own lost but inalienable homeland.” Shahid Ali endeavoured to bridge the gap between two disparate languages and literature. In far America, he felt pledged to blend unfamiliar form into familiar language, not by transcending conventions, but by adding hues, the “colors of imagination,” to it. “Someone of two nearly equal loyalties,” he noted about the two languages, English and Urdu, “must lend them, almost give them, to each other, and hope that sooner or later the loan will be forgiven and they will become each other’s.”

Ali, in his poetry, cleaves hard to tradition by clinging to many publicly demanding poetic forms like Sestina, Canzone, and Villanelle, which conspicuously made his writing more vociferous and echoing in his era hitherto fore. He embroidered the palette-colour paisleys through his verse structure on a plain cloth of English poetry with the tangled string of felt life.

In his Ghazal, to “‘Kashmir’ Shahid refers to ‘paisleys tied into the golden hair of Arabic’ (In Arabic). He blended affection with experience to create a sublime work of art. The experience here refers to, first, his first encounter with Urdu, Persian, and Kashmiri ghazal at home, second, his close affiliation with translating ghazalists like Faiz and Ghalib; and third, his instantaneous attraction to the melodious voice of Begum Akhter. Ali’s experiment with English ghazal did not commence with his original writing of Ghazal but with the anthology of ghazals by 65 American poets, “Ravishing DisUnities: Real Ghazals in English.”. As a Tribute, it traces the history of Ghazal, which Shahid Ali did many times for other subjects. Invoking to lord ‘first, grant me my sense of history’ tracing, “its descendants are found not only in Arabia,” Ali says, but “Farsi, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Pashto, Spanish Turkish, Urdu- and English.” However, even “its history goes back to seventh-century Arabia, perhaps even earlier.” Hence, the poem “In Arabic” can undoubtedly be termed as a preface to his Call Me Ishmael Tonight. To acknowledge his poetic concerns with the ghazal form, ‘I have some business in Arabic,’ Ali writes in the first couplet of ‘In Arabic’ where he advocates the sense of memory and nostalgia for “graceful Arabic.”. He objectified the postcolonial influence through the transcultural fusion of language (English) and form (Ghazal) in a new direction. Moreover, as a poet who writes in English, Ali commenced his career with poetry in free verse. Nevertheless, the mature stage of his career as a grown poet was spent writing ghazal poems, where we find the complex interplay of form and meaning, freedom of ambivalent shift towards hybridity of diaspora and postcolonial subject. Making the matter of writing English ghazals “much too easy for himself” (Ravishing).

Though, until the time of Ravishing DisUnities, Ali had no experience writing ghazals in English, the real spirit and essence of ‘True ghazal’ was deeply ingrained in him. Reflected in his articulation, “Those claiming to write ghazal in English (usually American poets) had got is quite wrong, far from the letter and farther from the spirit” (Ravishing DisUnities 1). Long after its publication, Ali himself took the cudgel into the hands of producing ghazals in English, with his poetics of Call Me Ishmael Tonight. In which he tightly knit the strings of meaning and form to far-fetched themes: memory, return, loss, nostalgia, and cultural trauma. In his tour de force poetry collection Call Me Ishmael Tonight, Malcolm Woodland notes, “Ali questions the return to cultural origins on one level but moves still closer to them on another” (Memory Homeland 3). Therefore, drawing on the lines of form and structural origins, this paper will analyze “By Exile” a poem from his composition of Call Me Ishmael Tonight, to acknowledge

his shifting stance towards materializing the archaic form of Ghazal into the arena of English poetics, concomitant with all its canons.

Ghazal: Meaning and Historical Context

The “Real ghazal” that Agha Shahid Ali, with his unparalleled poetic tendencies, championed in English, arguably finds its roots in pre-Islamic Arabian poetry. As Raymond Scheindlin writes, Ali acknowledges “The typical medieval Hebrew love poems belongs to a genre known in the Arabic literary tradition as ghazal” which “flourished primarily in Andalusia from the 11th to the 13th centuries”. It is said to have originated in “7th century Arabia”, Ali states “and perhaps even earlier” (Ravishing 2 3), evolved from ‘Qasidas’. Ghazal as a conventional poetic form meticulously adheres to its poetic canons, bounded by the metrical pattern “bahar”, scheme rhyme “qafia” succeeded by the recurring refrain (radif). This structural unity in Ghazal is followed to orchestrate a musical symphony with Longinian ‘sublimity’, in poetry which ‘should not only mean but be’. Like English sonnets, these elements are indispensable to Ghazal. Highlighting their essentiality El-Shabrawy ventures to say “meter, which is generally consistent throughout the entire poem, and the rhyme scheme serve as structural unifiers of seemingly disparate images or thought patterns”. Persian ghazalists are said to have added this novelty of form to Ghazal. Among its unique features, Ghazal has “matla”, the first stanza of a ghazal. Subsequently, the last stanza of the same is termed “maqta” where the poet alludes to his name ‘Alias.’ Still, various classical poets follow the same pattern in different languages: Urdu, Kashmiri, Persian, and now in English. In the rendition of the English ghazal, Shahid Ali deftly wielded his artistic hand, defying conventions to incorporate “takhallus” or an alias in the concluding stanza of the poem “In Arabic” which features, “They ask me to tell them what Shahid means: listen,/ It means ‘Beloved’ in Persian, ‘Witness’ in Arabic.”

In older times, the subject matter of Ghazal was, in a narrow sense, confined to the theme of love and longing, hovering around the feminine figure. However, with time, it transcends all conventionalist approaches. It encompasses all human affairs: glee, pain, love, loss, hatred, grief, culture, politics, satire, philosophy, etc. Moreover, on the level of its formal structure, it is made of several “autonomous” couplets that do not follow the law of association with each other. Each of the couplets may differ from the preceding and following ones. Some are tragic without breaching the poetic laws; others may be comic, elegiac, spiritual, mystic, ascetic, aesthetic, metaphysical, satirical, and philosophical. Each of them never leaves the thought

unexpressed completely. Hence, we can claim that every couplet is self-reflexive and self-contained to varying degrees. Ali compares this “autonomous couplet” to:

A string that holds the beads of a necklace together; the couplet stands alone like a precious stone, lustrous in its own right. Thus, one should at any time be able to pluck a couplet like a stone from a necklace, and it should continue to shine in its vivid isolation, though it would have a different luster among and with the other stones (Ravishing 2 3).

The word “Ghazal” itself refers to ‘Flirtation’. In a preface to “Rebels Silhouette”, Ali assumes, the term ghazal is derived from the Arabic word ‘Ghazaal’, which refers to the “whispering words of love”. The word ‘Ghazal’ in fact denotes “the cry of a gazelle when it is concerned in a hunt and knows it will,” says Ali. Hence, it becomes evident that the Ghazal encapsulates the meaning of pain anguish, and suffering. “The ghazal,” Ali asserts, “is not an occasion for angst; it is an occasion for genuine grief,” transcending its conventional association with the natural elements of love and longing. Consequently, the sustained tone of a ghazal is elegiac and pensive. It sometimes may overlap in mood and subject matter with Elegy in English poetry, where the loss or deprivation of the beloved leads to sadness and wailing. In formal structure, it concurs, not entirely to the quintessential English sonnet, which resolutely adheres to rhyme scheme and a pattern of iambic pentameter, is much in similitude with the Ghazal in the Urdu language, which dutifully abides the rhythmic cadence of the “bahar” meter. As Cuddon mentions, “the love described is hopeless. Hence some of the stock characters in the ghazal were the wretched lovers (Ashiq), the merciless beloved (Mashuq), the lovers lustful rival (Raqeeb), and the cup-bearer at the wine party (Saqi).”. Despite its being born in the Arabic Peninsula, refined and nurtured by poets like Hafiz, Sadi, Shirazi, and Rumi in Persia, in its purest form, it is even perceived in the modern literary landscape today.

The heyday of Ghazal in Urdu began neatly in the 18th and 19th centuries in pre-partitioned India, under the reign of the Mughal Empire. Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797-1864), highly acknowledged amongst ghazalists of all times, was the court poet of Bahadur Shah Zafar. However, long before Ghalib, it was a dominant poetic language in Central Asia and India. As the archetypal form of Poetry, Ghazal arguably started evolving in India from stations like Decca, Delhi, and Lucknow. In the 13th century, Amir Khusru played a significant role. In the latter half of the 16th century, Quli Qutub Shah, succeeded by Wali Daccani, led the Ghazal to its current prominence. In the modern literary scenario, the Ghazal, like a sonnet in

the Elizabethan age, is an echoing form of poetry, owing to its association with Galib, Taqi, Iqbal, Faiz, and others.

Bourgeoning of this genre in the West is witnessed with the inclination of the orientalist Fredrick Schegel, who first used his hand at crafting ghazal-like poems. His contemporary Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's translation in German *West-Ostlicher Diwan* (West-Eastern Diwan-1819), though not with the identical spirit of Persian poets, endeavored to hold the essence of true Ghazal in their works. This genre of poetry wielded a profound influence on Fredrick Ruckert, an orientalist whose ghazal collection is even entitled on the name of this specific genre itself as 'Ghaselen'. Followed by Augustus Graf, who strictly followed the qafia and radif in his collection of 'Ghaselen and Neue Ghaselen'. A century later, Frederic Garcia Lorca, a Spanish poet, whom Ali alluded to in the 'In Arabic' poem wrote *Gecelos* in his seminal collection, 'Dewan del tamarit'. Revisiting his devotion, Ali says, "When Lorca died, they left the balconies open and saw/ on the sea, his qasidas stitched seamlessly in Arabic."

As a mouthpiece of the Ghazal, these poets changed the mode of the ghazal form from the Middle East to the center of the West. However, in the modern landscape, we witnessed the tenable practice of this poetic form in English occident. We find Adrienne Rich and John Hollander in America and Judith Wright in Australia experimented with the ghazal form and paved the way for posterity to emulate this form in identical patterns. Notably, the top-notch Canadian poet Jin Harrison, whose profound contribution to English ghazal is the publication of 'Outlyer and Ghazals' 65 ghazals. His experience in writing ghazals was cheerfully appreciated "After several years' Harrison mentioned, 'I've tried to regain some of the spontaneity of the dance, the song unencumbered by any philosophical apparatus, faithful only to its music.'" In status and poetic vigor, Shahid Ali stands in pinnacle possession amongst all practitioners of English ghazal. He championed Urdu Ghazal in English with his vigorous power of poetic imagination. The teaching methods, writing artistry, and sensitivity of collecting ghazals in the English language brought him into the unfading light of familiarity. Ali's contribution is unparalleled in structuring "true ghazals" in English. He endeavored to materialize this genre in the West in a similar design to other alien forms of poetry like tanka, villanelle, haiku, etc. He fought for the Ghazal, its structural conformity, its musicality, and the mortality of form in another language like English. Shahid Ali is said to be the exponent of the authentic English ghazaleaque tradition, who revolutionized its form, structure, and unity as a whole. Like Kashmir, Ghazal to Ali is a homeland and insurmountable reminiscences of early

childhood, inasmuch closer to him as a memory of “Dacca gauze”. In his introduction to Ravishing, Ali declares ghazal “Real or authentic.” Its close couplets are “each autonomous,” underscoring or foregrounding the self-sufficient autonomy Ali resembles it to “stone in a necklace that continues to shine in vivid isolation” (Ravishing 2 3).

Call Me Ishmael Tonight

Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals (2003), by Shahid Ali, is a testament to his consummate artistry of writing ghazals in English. Undoubtedly, it displays his poetic genius and literary consciousness to its best. This poetic collection is based on 32 ghazal-like poems, strictly adhering to the rules and regulations of traditional Ghazal, solely written a ‘form for form’s sake’ identical to the rallying cry of the pre-Raphaelite group ‘Art for art’s sake’. This collection nevertheless rectifies the immature American art mediocrities who undertook the task of producing ghazals in English in America. This work is a key mechanism for understanding Ghazal's formal, structural, and foundation in English. The machination of rhythm and refrain I, e (qafia and radio) along with alias (takhallus) in “Call me Ishmael Tonight” is a novel invention in English poetry. Its publication means to bridge a gap between old and new, culture and geography; it also fills the vacuum of the former erroneous production of ghazals, what Shahid Ali calls are “farther from the spirit” of Ghazal, written in America to a new formation of what Ali calls “Real ghazals”. In Ravishing DisUnities, Shahid Ali refers to the fact that “American poets had got it quite wrong far from the letter and farther from the spirit” when claiming to write ghazals in English. Unquestionably, Ali is the harbinger of modern Ghazal in English. Ali’s ‘Call Me Ismail Tonight’ highly wielded influence on modern poets and scholars. Following Ali’s structural algorithms a huge number of poets wrote ghazals in English for instance Professor Ashiq Hussain an ex-research scholar from AMU produced a boundary-pushing poem “Kashmir: A ghazal in English”. Hence, Ali’s Call Me Ishmael serves as a roadmap to the would-be poets interested in revisiting this genre. Starting with ‘I have loved’ a short couplet poem, In Call me Ishmael Tonight, all subsequent poems are dedicated to different individuals. Transcending the colloquial way of basing Ghazal on twelve to five couplets “shirts” he extended the number into fifteen or more. However, proportionately Ali never breaks himself off from the shackles of past norms of subjecting Ghazal to thematic concerns of love, loss, longing, and nostalgia. However, to a large degree, Call Me Ismail tonight is fraught with other thematic components ranging from art to exile, God to human being, language to loss, and Time and space to metaphysical and transcendental entities. It is

“filled with references to the first Gulf War and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and it confronts ultimate realities of war, faith, and mortality in personal as well as political terms” (David Damrosch 8). Through this tour de force, Ali manifests the “Real or true ghazal” demonstration in English. Proceeding on the lines of explications, I have set to choose one poem from this volume for further reading.

Poem ‘By Exile’: Form and Content

“Everyone is born a king/ and most people die in exile.” (Wilde)

Meaning expel, banish, or drive off are the words “Exile” has its entomological standings in the French word “sillier” which carries the same meaning as aforementioned. Exorcism and diaspora (a society within another nation, but away from its own), isolation, and solitude share nail and skin relations with the term ‘Exile’. It’s a punishment in which a person is subjected to being sent away from their homeland either by force or decree. While, either solely being refused the permission to return or being intimidated with imprisonment or death upon return. Edward Said in his discourse ‘Reflections on Exile’ conceded “Exile is not, after all, a matter of choice: you are born into it or it happens to you”. The loss of homeland, kinship, language, channel of communication, sociocultural milieu, and family are common repercussions of exile. Ostensibly, Jews have long suffered this type of exile (587 BCE; since 70 CE after the rise of Islam in the 7th century, and again during the crusade eleventh-thirteenth century). In the 20th century Eastern and Central Europe, pogroms were perpetrated, culminating with Nazi Holocaust or Shoah 1940. Since immemorial, exile has produced classical writers Thomas Mann, Emile Zola, Joyce, Conrad in Prose and Dante, Ovid, Derek Walcott (The poet of exile), and Agha Shahid Ali (Triple exile) in poetry.

As a postcolonial poet, Shahid Ali ethnically shared his ancestral bonds with Kashmir, lived in America, and ostracized himself from his homeland, living an ambivalent life, as an object of “exile, home, nostalgia and other.” Ali, in his poetry reflects the pangs of exile, sometimes waiting for the Deus ex machine to return, neatly expressed in the “Postcard from Kashmir,” This is home. And this is the closest/ I’ll never be home. When I return.”

Yet, again dextrously dealing with the recurring theme of displacement and imaginary return, the ghazal “By Exile” correspondingly reflects on the postcolonial form of exile, reconsidering the paraphernalia of writing in exile, for exile. Ghazal’s ‘By Exile’ starts with an epigraph of

Mahmood Dervesh, which is a novel invention in oriental poetic form as a source of addition and inspiration. The poem “By Exile” is dedicated to the postcolonial theorist (Orientalism) Edward Said, whose treatise on the same subject, “Reflection on Exile,” shadows the displacement of human beings in the modern landscape? Keeping in mind his concerns, Ali verified the subject as homage to the writer. Following the colloquial style of Arabia and Persia, “By Exile” caricatures the gamut of human emotions the theme of loss, separation, estrangement, disintegration, and love as long stood inseparable component of ghazals “This is a poetry of love’ said Aijaz Ahmad’ not about love but of love’”. “By Exile” poem holds up a mirror to the contemporary societal conditions. Which modern readers may willingly accept and rightly acknowledge with “disinterestedness” and sometimes “suspension of disbelief. Testament of the quintessence of his poetic lushness the persona of “By Exile” presumably finds himself thrice Exiled, From Kashmir, Delhi to America, hence the claiming of being “exiled by exile”. Like Joseph Conrad ST Coleridge and PB Shelly, Ali preferred self-exile, probably for the matter of aesthetic and literary purpose. The sense of nostalgia, loss, and disheart for the persona of ‘by exile’ becomes the key mechanism for poetic imagination.

“You open the heart to list unborn galaxies

Don’t shut the folder when Earth is filed by exile.”

For him, exile not merely afflicted the earth but its expansion wider from “Earth” to “Unborn galaxies”. Ali apostrophizes not only his native Kashmir but goes beyond the realms of expression in realizing human beings are being exiled at numerous places, enumerating “Egypt,” “Jerusalem,” “Hudson,” “Kashmir,” and “Palestine,” the poem reads.

“In Jerusalem dead phones’ dilated by Exiles,

You learn your strange fate; you were exiled by exiles.”

The refrain (radif) of the Poem “By Exiles” foregrounds the single exile and multiple exiles. Going in tandem with, not only his loss of Kashmir and home, sickness but unhesitatingly mapping Palestine as the land of loss and estrangement. As a shittite-Muslim, Shahid Ali had an unparalleled revolutionizing spirit against injustice, probably resulting from the ritualistic belief of lamentation on the prophet’s progeny. Ali embodied Palestinians as a testament to nostalgia, loss, and dislocation. Being a diasporic postcolonial poet, Ali, through this poem mirrors the afflictions of a community of exiles experienced by people like Oscar Wilde, Majnoon, Mansoor, and Saqi. Though strongly persisting with modern Gothic themes of

separation, dislocation, loss, estrangement, and strange fate, Ali engaged with typical Persian images of wine ‘jam’, cup-bearer ‘saqi’, and beloved ‘Mehboob’ as Majnoon in the poem.

“Majnoon (he kneels to pray on a wine-stained rug)

I’ll raise my glass before the wine is defiled by exile”

Logically, Ali shadowed the subject of this poem with the allegorical rendition of the migration of Israelites, the crucifixion of Mansoor, and the frenzy of Majnoon. To issue forth the pangs and afflictions of modern man. Combining the colloquial vigor and cataclysmic emotional integrity, “Ali finds himself emotionally aligned to legendary figure ‘Majnoon’ as a surrogate for his emotions, physical estrangement, social and cultural disintegration from his beloved ‘Kashmir’ metaphorically compared to “Leila”, one slips into frenzy another to the poetry of exile”. Evident from this verse, “Majnoon, by stopped caravans, rips his collars, cries “Laila!”/ Pain translated is O! Much more—not less—in Arabic. Emphatically, concluding his poem with the repetitive use of the word ‘Exile’: “Torn wild by exiles,” “...compiled by exiles,” and “...beguiled by exiles” To display his wildly beguiled existence by repetitive exile.

The Form of “By Exile”

The poem, ‘By Exile,’ conventionally drawn on the patterns of Arabic Ghazal, is a testament to the controlling hand of a poet in structuring poetry, archaic in form and modern in subject matter. “By Exile” is, in a strict ghazalesque sense, structured around twelve autonomous couplets. The first couplet (matla) of this Ghazal machinates the overall pattern that follows. (Radif) scheme rhyme in this couplet entangles with words:” Dilated” in the first line, followed by “Exiled”. Blend it with the (qafia) refrain ‘By Exile’, the end word that pervades throughout the whole Ghazal in the second line of each couplet. Moreover, repeatedly use the disyllabic and trisyllabic words: “filed,” “child,” “mild,” “Wilde,” (disyllabic) and “compiled,” “beguiled,” “defiled,” “styled,” “compiled”, (trisyllabic) forming the rhyme scheme (qafia) of the Ghazal. Subsequently, scheming the matter of rhyme it follows aa, ba, ca, da, and so on as its rhyme scheme. Ali’s acumen in employing the Persian literary device “qafia” also identified him as a champion of English ghazal.

Conclusion

As, in the aforementioned analytical discourse, we unravelled Ali’s phenomenon of schematizing the ghazal technique in occident, deconstructing his ghazal “By Exile”, was

successful experimentation from his mother language to another language. Ali's hybridity of cultural experiences and multi-lingual setting well-nigh aided his memory of the rail of literary consciousness, which shaped the framework or methodology of his career as a ghazalist in English. Not sticking to the traditional theme of love, loss, and longing, his ghazals reflect the intrapersonal and political phenomena of exile, nostalgia, subjugation, belief, and so on. Likewise, the form and subject matter of 'By Exile' former is traditional, later modern in temperament, showing Ali's prowess in weaving true ghazals. This poem portrays the postmodern trauma of exile in the traditional Persian style. As a postcolonial poet, he breaks off from the traditional subject of Ghazal and refurbishes its themes with the hue of contemporary discourses. Therefore, the form pervaded in Call Me Ishmael Tonight is indo-Persian, but the theme is in flux, and it almost centers on exile and estrangement. Defying all exotic forms of poetry in English Ali set the tradition of producing Urdu ghazals in English. Like all other genres; sonnet, haiku, tanka, and Bakhtin, Ghazal direly needs some modern treatment to rejuvenate its lost spirit, it was a conscious practice to safeguard the Ghazal from falling into a swamp of decadence. Consolidating this form of poetry we can regard Ali as a savior of modern Ghazal in English poetry.

Works Cited:

- Ali, A. S. (2000). *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English*. Wesleyan University Press.
- Faiz, F. A. (1991). *The Rebel's Silhouette: Selected Poems*. Univ of Massachusetts Press.
- Ali, Agha Shahid. *The Veiled Suite: The Collected Poems*. WW Norton & Company, 2009
- Woodland, M. (2005). Memory's Homeland: Agha Shahid Ali and the Hybrid Ghazal. *English Studies in Canada*, 31(2), 249–272. <https://doi.org/10.1353/esc.2007.0036>
- Ali's, Agha Shahid. "Writing/Adapting Ghazal in English: A Select Study of." *Dialog* 37 (2021): 123-136.
- Werner, Louis. "A Gift of Ghazals." (2002).
- Zaidi, Nishat, and Agha Shahid Ali. "Centre/margin dialectics and the poetic form: The ghazals of Agha Shahid Ali." (2008).

Ali's, Agha Shahid. "Writing/Adapting Ghazal in English: A Select Study of." *Dialog* 37 (2021): 123-136.

Abidi, S. A. R. "AGHA SHAHID ALI: A TRUE CHAMPION OF ENGLISH GHAZAL." *International Journal of English Learning & Teaching Skills* 1.4 (2019): 342-346.

Sarker, Asima. "Home, Exile and the 'Other' in Agha Shahid Ali." *The Literary Criterion* (2019): 1-2.

Said, Edward W. *Reflections on exile: and other literary and cultural essays*. Granta Books, 2013.

Volková, Bronislava. "Introduction: A General History of Concepts of Exile". *Forms of Exile in Jewish Literature and Thought: Twentieth-Century Central Europe and Migration to America*, Boston, USA: Academic Studies Press, 2021, pp.1119. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781644694060-002>

Damrosch, David. "Foreword: Literary Criticism and the Qur'an." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16.3 (2014): 4-10.