Unit 2 - Brief 5 / Week 5
Positions Through Triangulating

A New Map (نیا نقشہ)

Recap?

Enquiry

Updated

How can I leverage stories, like folklore, to highlight cultural exchanges in the context of my identity?

Folk Music?

- Existed for centuries
- Continues to defy lines
- Storytelling

Punjab (India - Pakistan)

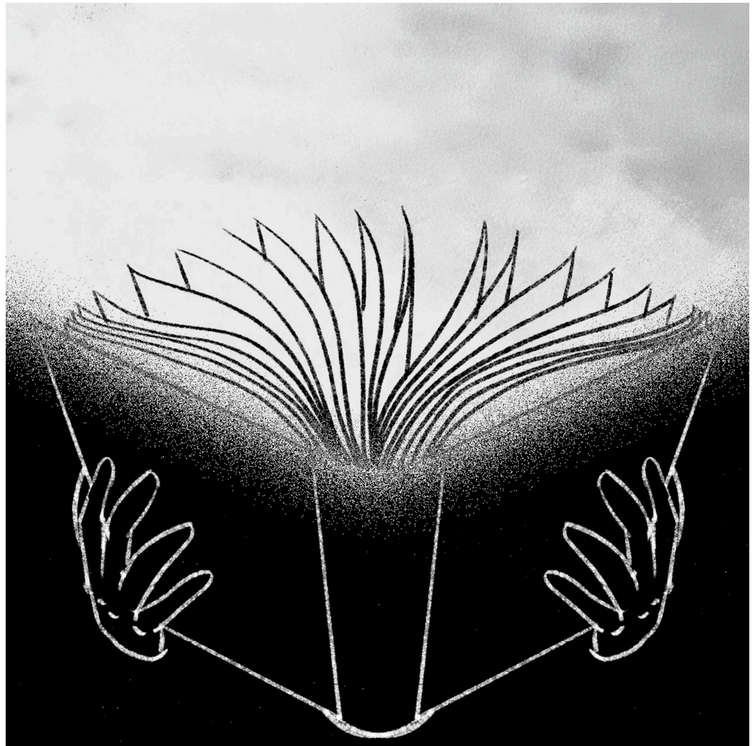
- Madhaniya
- Aaj Aakhan Waris Shah Nu
- Poems by Bulleh Shah at Allpoetry
- teddys-sideblog Parh parh ilm hazaar kitabaan, Kadi apnay aap noun parheya n...

Sindh (Pakistan - India)

- Ek Daal Do Panchi
- Prem Nagar mat Jana

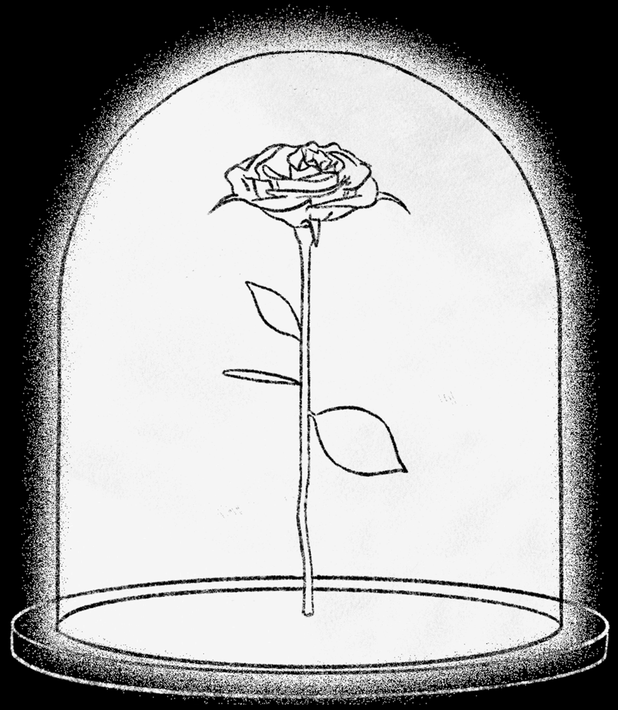
Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (Pakistan-Afghanistan)

- Adam Khan ao Durkhanai
- Yusuf ao Sherbano



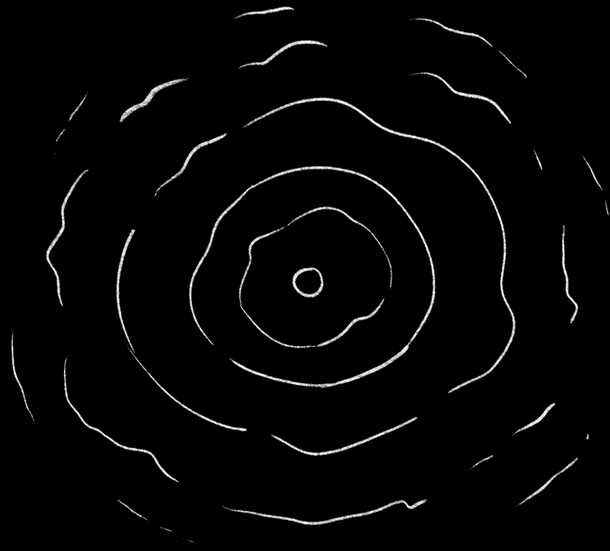
پڑھ پڑھ عالم فاضل ہویا
کدے اپنڑے آپ نوں پڑھیا نہیں

You read so many books to know it all,
yet fail to ever read your heart at all



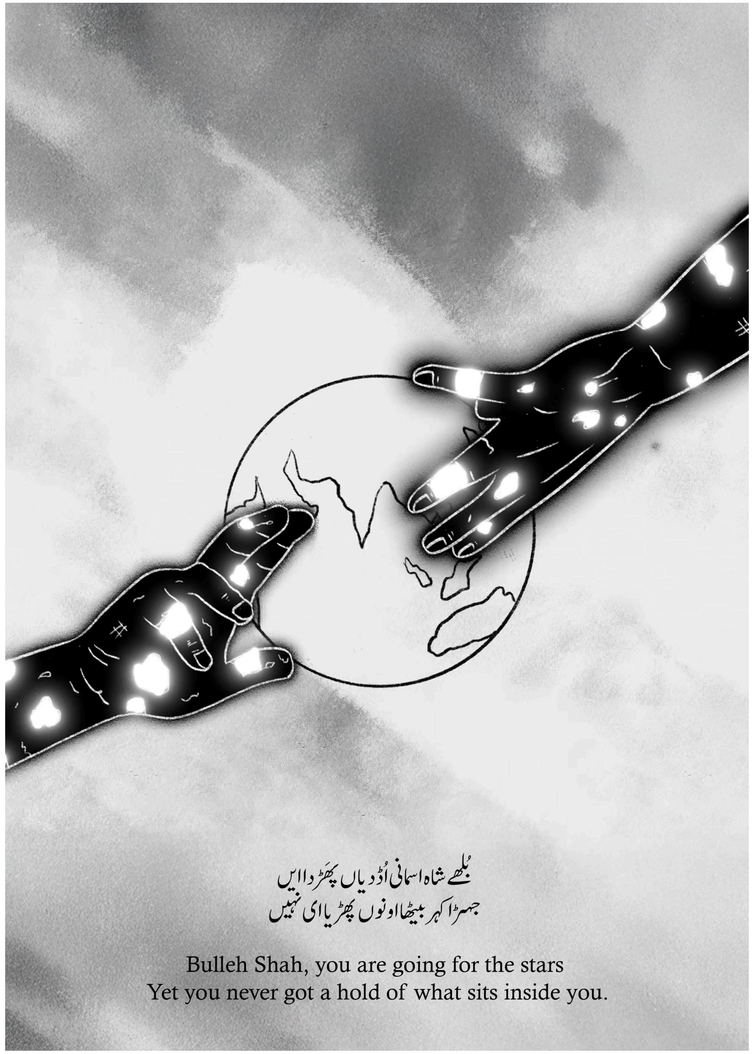
جا جاوڑ دا مسجداں مندراں اندر
کدے من اپنے وچ وڑیا ای نہیں

You run to enter temples and mosques,
Yet you never entered your own heart

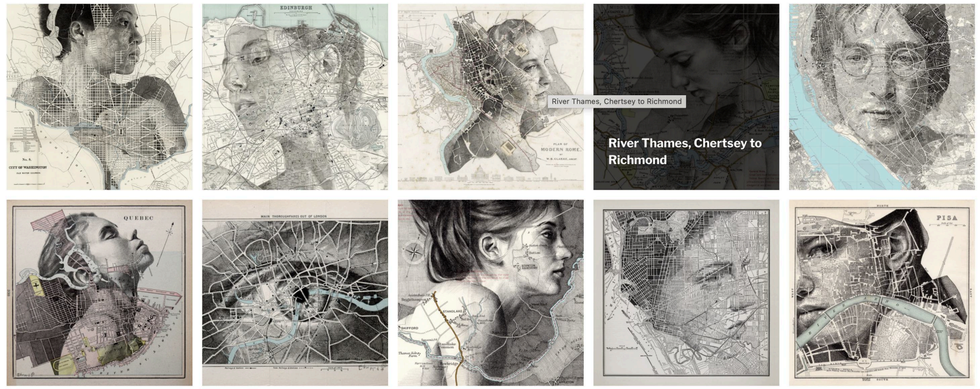


ایویں روز شیطان نال لڑدا
کدی نفس اپنڑے نال لڑیا ای نہیں

You continue fighting futile battles with Satan,
Yet you have never fought your own ego/desires

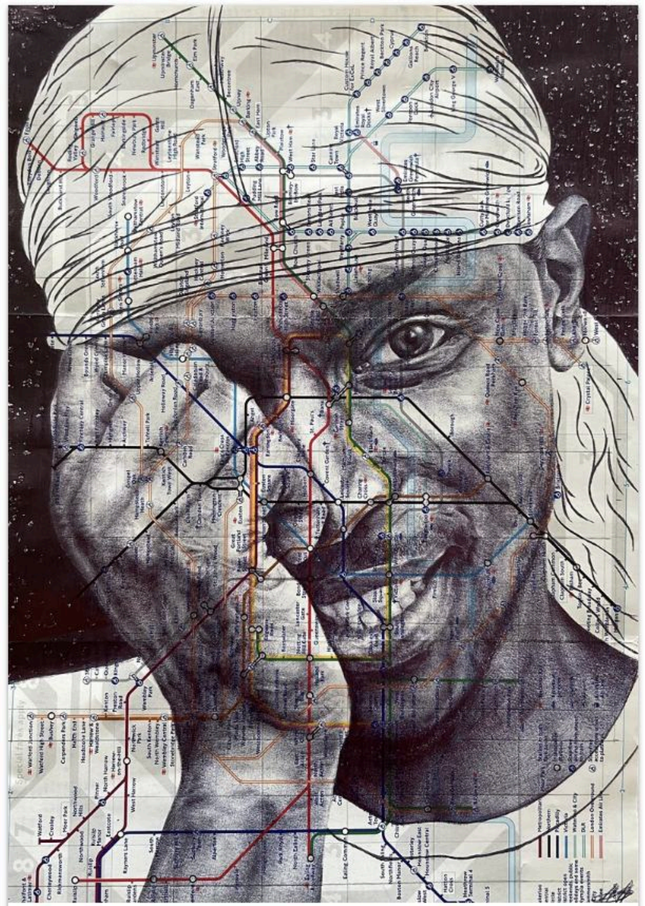

بُلھے شاہ اسمانی اُڈیاں پھَڑدا ایں
جہڑا اکھر بیٹھا اونوں پھڑیا ای نہیں
Bulleh Shah, you are going for the stars
Yet you never got a hold of what sits inside you.

Stylistic Exploration



Vanitas

Pioneers



Grime Portraits

- Ed Fairburn | Habib Hajallie

Further Exploration

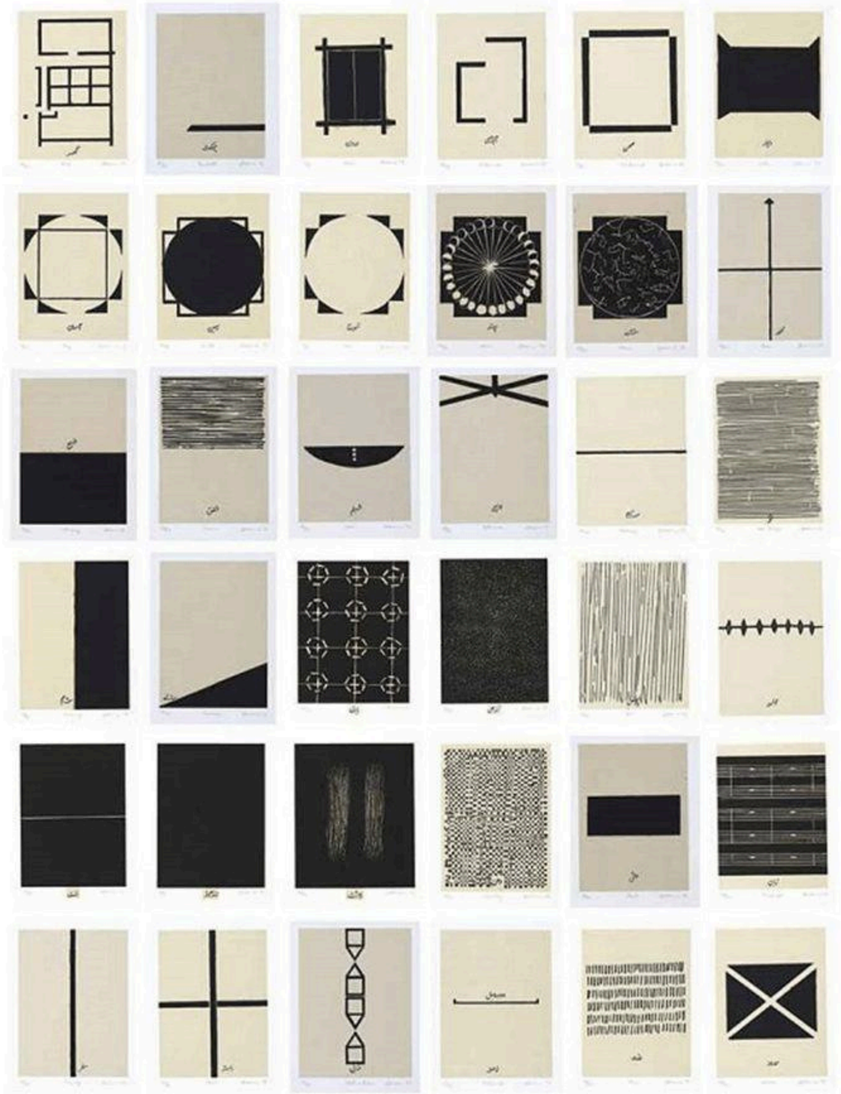
Zarina Hashmi

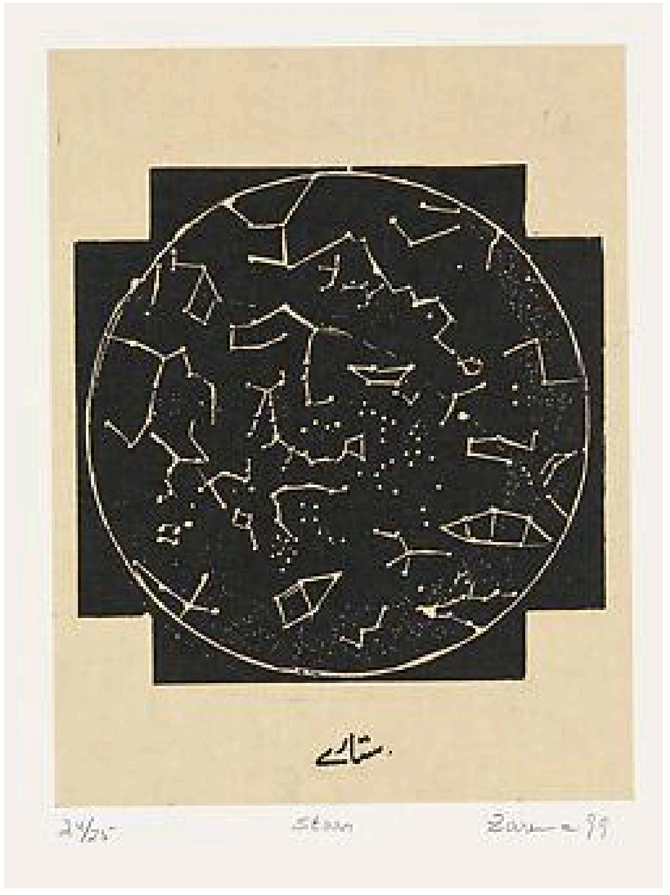
Zarina Hashmi (née **Rashid**; 16 July 1937 – 25 April 2020), known professionally as **Zarina**, was an Indian American artist and printmaker based in New York City. Her work spans drawing, printmaking, and sculpture. Associated with the minimalist movement, her work utilized abstract and geometric forms in order to evoke a spiritual reaction from the viewer.[2]

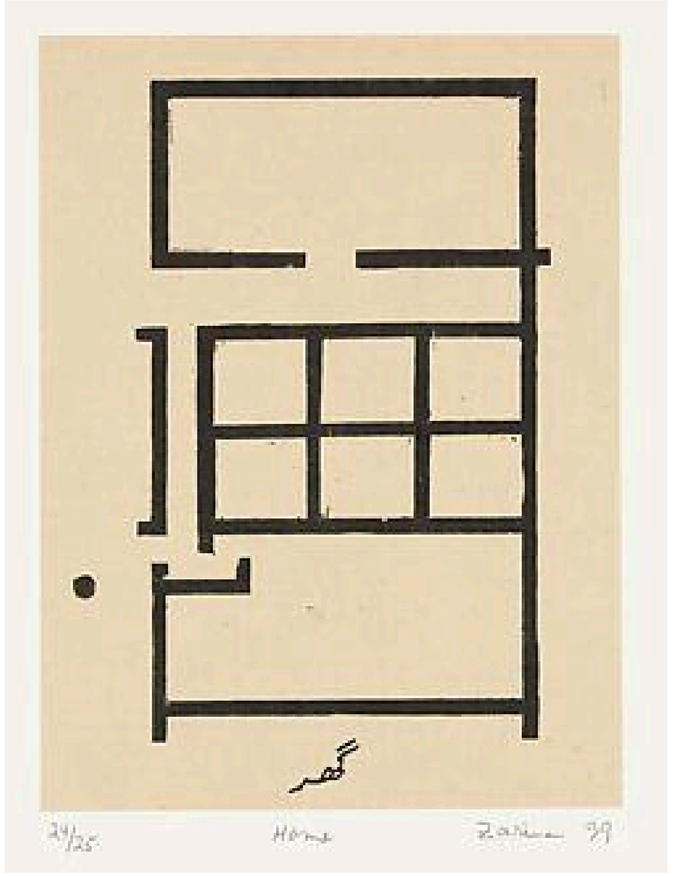
Home is a Foreign Place

Zarina Hashmi

- Each print pairs an abstract form with a single Urdu word, evoking **emotional and spatial memories** like places, weather, and time
- Created after Zarina faced **eviction** from her New York home, the work.
- The opening folio, labeled “Ghar” (House/Home), references her childhood home in Aligarh, merging architectural and emotional belonging.
- Zarina’s words came before images so each term acts as a memory trigger, revisiting home through the lens of language and loss.
- Urdu, her mother tongue, becomes a “homeless language” reflecting the post-Partition diaspora and the search for belonging.



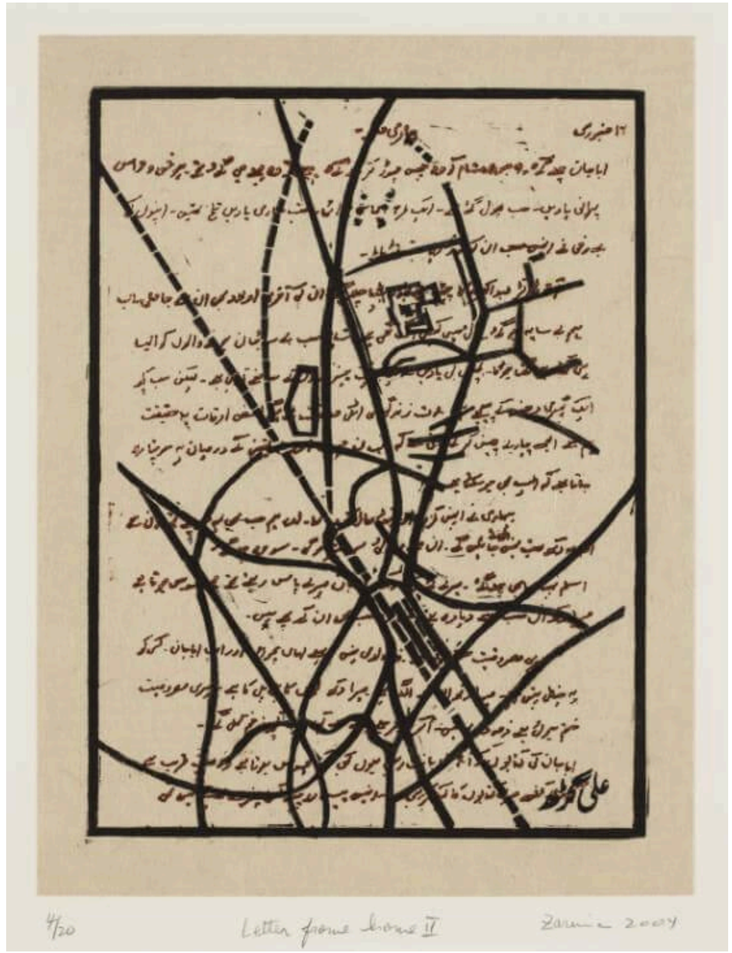

ستارے
24/25
Stars
Zarina 99

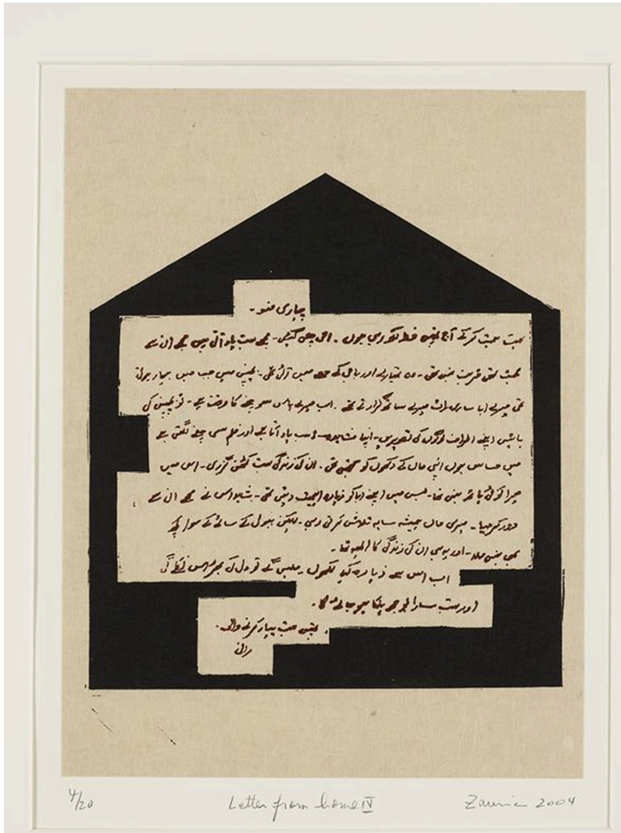

گھر
24/25
Home
Zarina 99

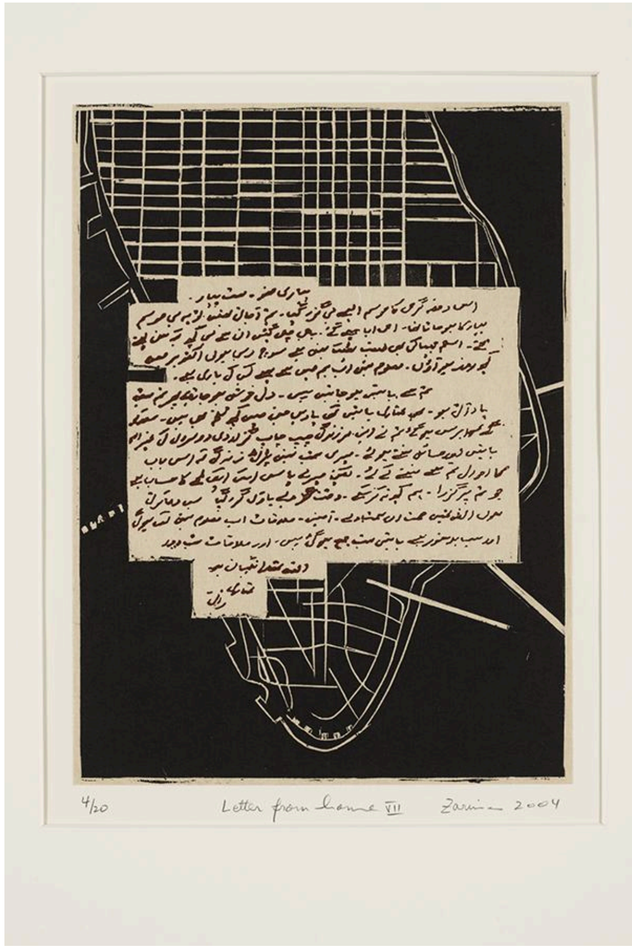
دوپہر
24/25
Afternoon
Zarina 99

Letters from Home

Zarina Hashmi







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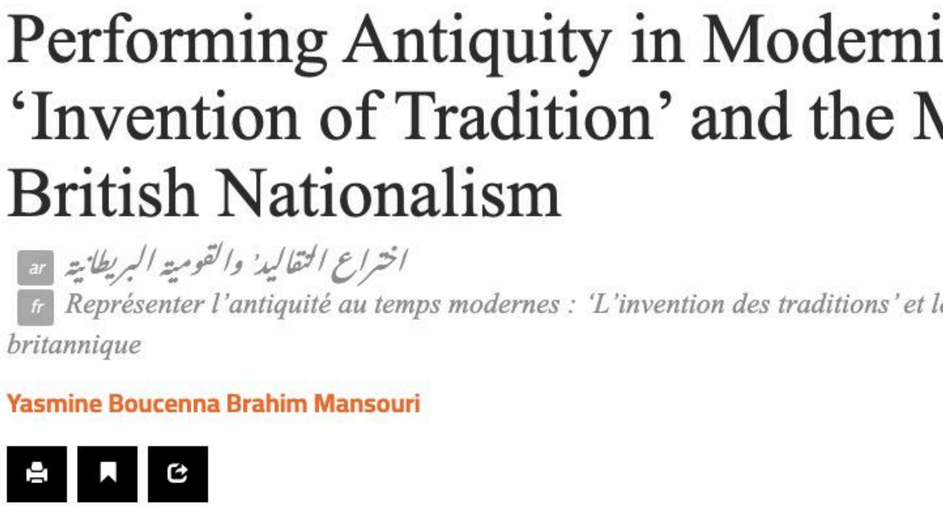
What is this about?

The Invention of Tradition and the Making of British Nationalism



Performing Antiquity in Modernity: The 'Invention of Tradition' and the Making of British Nationalism

ar اختراع التقاليد والقومية البريطانية

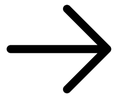
fr *Représenter l'antiquité au temps modernes : 'L'invention des traditions' et le nationalisme britannique*

Yasmine Boucenna Brahim Mansouri

- Analyzes how Britain used Eric Hobsbawm's "invented traditions" to manufacture national unity
- Shows how traditions we think are "ancient" (royal ceremonies, flags, kilts) were actually created in the 19th-20th centuries
- Argues nations are built through selective storytelling about the past

Invented Traditions

Practices that claim continuity with an ancient past but are actually modern constructions created through



- **Repetition (rituals, ceremonies, symbols)**
- **Selective emphasis (choosing unifying stories, ignoring divisive ones)**
- **State endorsement (flags, anthems, national days)**

How is this relevant to me?

The Paradox

Hobsbawm's Mechanism

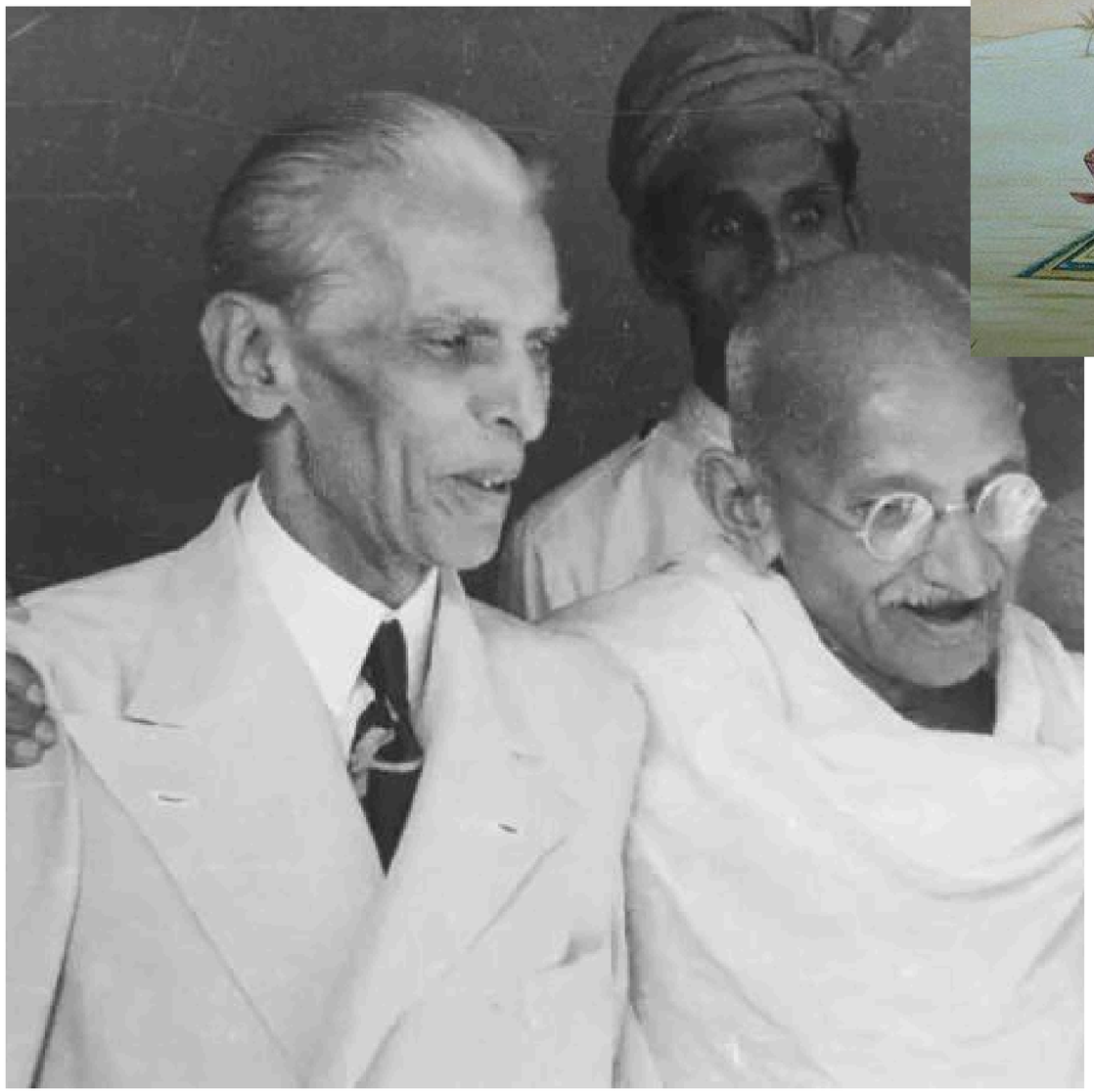
Traditions become "real" through:

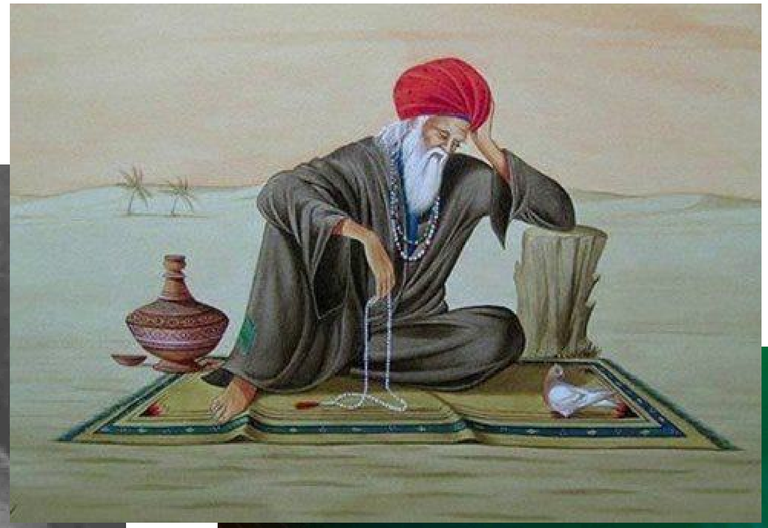
- **Selective emphasis** (choosing certain stories, ignoring others)
- **Repetition** (invoking the same cultural figures again and again)
- **Claiming continuity with an ancient past**

What I am doing

- Repeatedly invoking Bulleh Shah, Punjabi folk music, wedding songs
- Emphasizing unity (pluralist poetry) over conflict (sectarian context)
- Claiming these represent pre-Partition cultural continuity

This mirrors exactly what Hobsbawm describes as "heritage projects": using the past to say "we exist" and "we have deep roots here."





My project uses folklore music and poetry to imagine borders differently, as sites of cultural exchange rather than division.

But Hobsbawm asks:

Are the "traditions" I'm using already products of nationalist construction?

The uncomfortable truth

Even the folk music I reference has been shaped by:

- **State censorship (Zia-ul-Haq's campaign against "Hinduistic" melodies)**
- **Bollywood appropriation**
- **Colonial ethnographic categories that fixed "Hindu" vs "Muslim" music**

What looks like continuity might already be construction.

Hobsbawm - Right or Wrong?

His European Model Doesn't Fit

- Hobsbawm: traditions disrupted by industrialization and urbanization
- South Asia: traditions disrupted by colonial borders and Partition violence

The rupture wasn't gradual.
it was sudden, territorial, administrative.

But His Critique Still Stings

- State institutions in Pakistan do invent traditions (Defence Day, Kashmir Day, Iqbal Day)
- They ignore unifying figures (Bacha Khan) while celebrating sanitized ones
- My project claims to be different from state narratives...but am I using the same tools?

So what matters?

My positioning.

Pakistani, Living in the UK, Designer, Muslim

This isn't innocent. It shapes what I can see and what I might be appropriating.

I am not innocent.

My project participates in cultural construction, just like the states I critique.

But is that a bad thing? I don’t think so

The question isn't: Is this folklore authentic?
The question is: What political work does my reconstruction perform?

Instead of claiming to map authentic cultural continuity, my project might more productively examine how contemporary cultural circulation both reinforces and destabilizes the territorial and administrative boundaries that continue to structure South Asian political life.

This would require acknowledging not only the selective nature of cultural recovery, but also the institutional frameworks that enable certain forms of cultural work while foreclosing others.

The question becomes not
whether folklore can transcend borders?
but

what kinds of borders (institutional, economic, geographical) shape contemporary access to and interpretation of cultural materials?

Looking forward

1. Can I acknowledge my role in cultural construction while still making the work meaningful?
2. How do I address the absences in my project; the stories I'm not telling, the communities I'm not reaching?
3. What would it mean to map folklore critically; not as innocent cultural unity, but as contested, shaped, and politically charged materials?
4. Am I producing work for the communities involved, or extracting cultural capital from them?

Shukria

Thank you.