‘TO TERRIFY AND HARMONIZE’: ON THE NEED OF HISTORICIZING THE EMERGENCE OF THE ‘FATAL DISCIPLINE’ IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract:

The genesis of English as a university discipline has been widely discussed in various international contexts. However, in Pakistan, no comprehensive, critical study has come to the fore until now. The socio-political significance of university disciplines cannot be studied without relevant historicizations. Similarly, this lack of historical narratives of academic disciplines causes a lack of critical engagement with the process of disciplinary formation and evolution and thus, so far, the academic disciplines in Pakistan seem devoid of self-critique—a process which is of vital importance to the well-being of postcolonial societies. The present paper highlights English nationalistic fervour as a factor which played its part in the establishment of the discipline in England and identifies some of the ‘deeper contexts’ (Viswanathan, Uncommon Genealogies, 2000) of the discipline’s institutionalization through available histories of the discipline. The paper argues that the discipline of English literature in Pakistan, which is popularly conceived to be aesthetically autonomous, innocuous, and apolitical, has various historico-political dimensions that must be taken into account if the discipline has to play a humanely progressive and critically conducive role in the local context.

Keywords: English Literature, Pakistan, Historicization, Academic Disciplines, Decoloniality

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Introduction and Literature Review

In 1966, the very first issue of the Journal of Research (Humanities), which was published by the Department of English language and literature, Punjab University,\textsuperscript{1} Professor Sirajuddin wrote:

The more one considers the prodigious variety to be met with, not only in human laws, but in all human institutions, the more one is tempted to believe that what we call necessary institutions are often no more than institutions to which we have grown accustomed (Siraj-ud-Din, 1966, p. 11).

English, as a university discipline in Pakistani universities, has also been considered such a necessary institution that the knowledge about its origins is still shrouded in mystery. By 2015, at the time when I wrote my Ph.D. proposal, nobody knew about the origins of this ‘fatal discipline’\textsuperscript{2} (Maulvi Iman Ali Qtd in Garrett 58-9) even within the departments of English. This fact compelled me to study its genealogy for my doctoral study on the Institutionalization of English Literature in Pakistan. At the beginning of this study, I was unable to find any information in the domain of secondary research about the origin of English departments in the areas that now constitute Pakistan. During my study, I discovered that this historical perspective was a prerequisite to any comprehension of the discipline’s socio-political significance during the period of its existence in Pakistan.

During my research, I discovered that this oblivion regarding the origin of the discipline that I came across in Pakistan was also prevalent in England until quite late in the twentieth century. Chris Baldick wrote as late as 1983 that the university discipline of English was “without an identifiable historical genesis” and that it was “a discipline so unconcerned to examine its own history” (Baldick, 1983, p. 3). While Baldick does not seem satisfied with the number of available historicizations of the discipline, some writers had delved into the matter and had written on the subject.

If we read these earlier historicizations, we cannot ignore the strong national/English imperative which played its part in the rise of the discipline. Palmer (1965), Terry Eagleton (1983), and Brian Doyle (1989) study the inception and evolution of the discipline in the English heartlands and consider nationalism to be an important factor. In his chapter on “The

\textsuperscript{1} The Department was established in 1963.
\textsuperscript{2} It was dubbed the ‘fatal discipline’ by Dr G.W. Leitner, the first principal of Government College Lahore, owing to the high percentage of students who failed in this subject. In my case, the pun is intentional as the subject was used to create a class of persons who were alienated from their own local contexts, favored the exploitative colonizers, and thus became fatal to (and suspended) the cause of self-realization and assertion. For further discussion, see (Khan, Pedagogy of Alienation, 2016) and (Khan & Raza, 2020)
Rise of English,” Terry Eagleton in his seminal work, Literary Theory: An Introduction (1983) cites an early Oxford professor’s words which testify the afore-mentioned claim:

England is sick, and … English literature must save it. The Churches … having failed, and social remedies being slow, English literature has now a triple function: still, I suppose, to delight and instruct us, but also, and above all, to save our souls and heal the state (Eagleton, 1983, p. 20)

This instrumentalist dimension of English literature’s efficacy, namely its ability to develop a national culture, is one prominent strain in historicizations of the discipline. Thus Brian Doyle strengthened the basis of this argument when he made Englishness the focus of this debate, which, until the publication of his work in 1989, was considered “free of any narrow patriotism or overtly nationalist or imperial politics that any debate about the meaning of the term itself was deemed unnecessary” (Doyle, 1989, p. 40). Brian Doyle connected the efficacy of the discipline with the establishment of not only a “high culture” of polite society but also for the development of a “national character,” hence paving the way for “national cultivation” (p. 12). The “channeling and stockpiling of selected fictions” (1989, pp. 1-2) in an institutional setting to him was not “natural” as was considered in “Histories of pre-university English” in England, which to him “offer[ed] little more than functional changes that have happened since the nineteenth century” (6) and justified his study which connects the discipline with the larger project of Englishness.

Explicating upon an instrumental understanding of literature that is channelized through an institution and stockpiled in curricula to “terrify and harmonize” can act as a “therapy or cure” and can help create community and can facilitate reconciliation (Doyle, 1989, p. 9). This effort at forging newer community alliances around newer, secular epistemology through “works of modern English rhetoric and belles-lettres, or ‘literature’, came to be experienced as representing harmony and order of cultured or ‘polite’ society, and in this way helped to legitimize by symbolic and fictional means the whole system of power, status, and exchange (Doyle, 1989, p. 11). Similarly, Terry Eagleton, in his seminal Literary Theory: An Introduction talks of a similar reality unfolding as “religion progressively ceas[ed] to provide the social cement,…’ English’ is constructed as a subject to carry this ideological burden from the Victorian period onwards” (Eagleton, 1983, p. 21).

The period in which the programme was set up in Lahore at the newly established Punjab
University, in 1882, coincides with the period in England in which the efforts for “renewal of cultural leadership at a national level” were underway (Doyle, 1989, p. 17) and during this phase “a number of educationalists, politicians, philosophers, and political theorists searched for new and more efficient ways of building and disseminating a national sense of ancestry, tradition, ….” (Doyle, 1989, p. 18). The historicization of the discipline should thus take this larger, global, or imperial backdrop into account. Such a perspective would enable us to understand the political subtext of educational acts. No academic history should isolate itself from the larger political causes and movements which emerged during the period studied, and has to be linked with the national-political will. Since it was also the period in which newer universities were being set-up in the colonies, therefore this important dynamic between English literature and English nationalism, or Englishness, must be collated to understand the process of institutionalization in British India. Further, or rather, more importantly, it has yet to be seen how this national/colonial imperative continued to influence engagement with English literary texts in Pakistani universities. The evidence of how this Englishness came to be an institutional objective in the early phase of the disciplinary history is beyond the scope of the present paper, however, it has been explored in the second chapter of my doctoral dissertation, which is yet to be published as a separate paper.

To further strengthen the need to study the early phase of the discipline’s institutionalization in Punjab, it would be expedient to point out that important cultural institutions were set up in the last quarter of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century England, a fact which bears testament to the imperial zeitgeist of the times. The National Trust was established in 1895 “to sustain the national heritage in its physical and geographical aspects”; National Portrait Gallery appeared in 1896; National Gallery of Modern Art was established in 1897”; Dictionary of National Bibliography was published between 1885 to 1900; The English Association was established in 1907 to promote “our finest vehicle for a genuine humanistic education”; The New (later Oxford) English Dictionary appeared between 1884 to 1928 The Cambridge History of English Literature was written between 1907 to 1916. Within this context, “the new English,” with its transmogrified materials and methods from classical subjects “serv[ed] the national and imperial culture” (Doyle, 1989, pp. 21, 23). Thus, this interesting phase of development of the discipline at Punjab University, from 1882 to 1918 warrants not just an understanding of the initiation here, but also the need to read
English/national and imperial priorities in disciplinary concerns abroad—Punjab, in our case.

Within the nineteenth century, the ideas regarding the value of English literature were also being formulated. While practically, general knowledge about English language and literature was being evaluated to get jobs in the Civil Service, especially Indian Civil Service, at a more abstract level, its function was being equated with “cultivation of the mind, the training of the imagination, and the quickening of the whole spiritual nature” (Doyle, 1989, pp. 26-7). Similarly, English literature was also turning into something of universal significance as “a means of larger experience…an upper chamber with a view beyond bounds of class, locality, time or country” (Doyle, 1989, p. 27).

Another important interface that has been identified by Doyle has been that of the student who interacts with the literary text. He writes: “…this strategy aimed at bringing the raw subjectivity of the student or pupil into palpable contact with that very stuff of life considered to inhere within the ‘sacred’ text (Doyle, 1989, p. 17). This powerful national dynamic served an imperial purpose. This politics of pedagogy in the colony served as a major imperialist ploy when Indian students of English literature came into palpable contact with the English literary text that was now sanctified and voluntarily allowed the text to overpower their consciousness.

Robert Crawford, with due deference to his national context i.e. Scotland, problematized the emergence of the discipline and declared that “English literature as a university subject [was] a Scottish invention” (Crawford, 1998, p. 1). He argued that English literature as a university subject was first taught in Scottish universities—a fact which is also implied by the first historian of the discipline, Palmer, himself: “…the model of the Scottish universities would naturally have suggested itself since most of the early professors, … , were themselves Scottish graduates” (Crawford, 1998, p. 16). In the introduction to his edited volume, The Scottish Invention of English Literature (1998), Crawford emphasizes, …the university teaching of literary texts written in English has been bound up with issues of colonialism (both internal and external) from its origins in eighteenth-century Scotland, and in its subsequent exporting ground, and it continues to be so, albeit from a much more skeptical perspective in the work of such different critics as Edward Said, Edna Longley, Terry Eagleton, Homi Bhabha (Crawford, 1998, p. 17).

The book also covers the “spread across the globe, and how it conditioned the emergence of the modern English departments in England”
It is thus important to consider the relationship between the instrumental—national and imperial, English departments in England and their subsequent duplication in colonial universities. More than that, Crawford’s work highlights the fact that the discourse is itself a contested domain where no single account of the discipline’s emergence holds sway. The titles of Gupta’s survey of disciplinary histories as “Institutional Histories of Literary Disciplines” (Gupta, The Place of Theory in Literary Disciplines, 2010) and Viswanathan’s “Uncommon Genealogies” acknowledge this variety of historical narratives (Viswanathan, Uncommon Genealogies, 2000).

Balz Engler continues by highlighting the geographical dynamic in narrating disciplinary histories, analyzes the history of the discipline from a European perspective. In the introduction to European English Studies: Contributions towards the History of a Discipline (2000), he writes, “the history of English as a University discipline is not only a British, but a European one” and then goes on to call the work an institutional history of English in Europe. Engler thinks that writing history is not merely a recording of events, rather, it is written with a “specific perspective” and is also “determined … by one’s interests”. He goes on to mention that the interest of those who have contributed to the volume has been “articulation of a European identity” (Engler, 2000, pp. 2, 4).

As far as the question of writing the history of the discipline is concerned, there again we find similar desires operative. According to Engler, “The interest in the history of a discipline, …, usually arises in crises of legitimacy, at moments when accepted verities begin to be questioned,” or “when the discipline has to defend or to re-position itself” (Engler, 2000, p. 4). A very interesting idea Engler presents is “the moment of institutionalization” (p. 5). It is this moment when “certain practices are established that determine the manner in which new issues, arising, later on, can be addressed” (p. 5). He also explains that this “moment of institutionalization” is particularly important because it is here that both scholarly and external factors exert their influence and are “most visible” (p. 5). Engler, however, fails to acknowledge the true impact of one such influence i.e. colonization, as he elides the issue and mentions the need “to train foreign language teachers at an advanced level” (5) for the spread of English across the globe. However, scholars from the postcolonial world did not ignore the issue.

Gauri Viswanathan in her 1989 work, Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India, like Crawford and Baldick, but more
assertively, considers colonialism as the epoch in which “the discipline of English came into its own” (p. 2). Her account signals her dissatisfaction with earlier histories of the discipline as these did not discuss the most significant role that British India played in the institutionalization of the discipline in England itself. Although Baldick does refer to the incorporation of English literature in the Indian Civil Services Exams as a reason for the rise of English in its country of origin, yet to her, this is a mere “token acknowledgment” and does not consider it “enough” (Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest, 1989, p. 2). She thus goes on to investigate the moral, political, and utilitarian motives that governed the study of English literature in India and traces the “changing rationale of English as it entered the Indian University system when it came to be instituted in 1857” (Gupta, The Place of Theory in Literary Disciplines, 2010, p. 97).

One of the significant issues that Masks of Conquest (1989) discusses and which is part of almost all discussions of English in India is the Anglicist-Orientalist dialectic. She explores the Anglicists versus Orientalists controversy in the context of educational institutionalization in colonial India. She charts the dialectical entanglement of the Utilitarian and Evangelical motives that led to the incorporation of English literature in colonial education and goes on to survey the Anglicist and Orientalist academic rationales.

Nowhere in Colonial India, did this politics between Anglicists and Orientalists play out more conspicuously, than it did in Punjab during the run-up to the establishment of the Punjab University in 1882. It was the fourth university to be established in colonial India after the first three which were established in Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. It was also the first university which was set out to impart higher education “through the medium of the vernacular languages of the Punjab” and also sought to improve and extend vernacular literature generally and to promote the “enlightened study of Eastern classical languages and literature and to also “associate the learned and influential classes of the province with the officers of Government” (Singh, 2012, p. 98).

The first objective corroborates, especially, Viswanathan’s stance that both the approaches of the Orientalist and Anglicist, were motivated by the desire to hegemonize. The Anglicists were very overt in their intentions as statements of Sardar Dyal Singh testify. He wrote several articles for this purpose. He established a opposition” to the establishment of Punjab University on Orientalist principles (Bhatti et al.)
newspaper in 1881 called The Tribune to counter Anjuman-e-Punjab, set up in 1865 by Dr. Leitner, to establish a university to impart knowledge in the vernaculars. On February 9, 1881, just a year before the establishment of Punjab University, Dyal Singh mentioned in the first English language newspaper in the region: “It is one of the main principles of the Punjab University College, embryonic form of Punjab University set up in 1870, …, to dispense with English as a compulsory subject of study in all its examinations, and to teach up to the highest standards through the medium of the vernacular languages” (Singh, 2012, p. 2). It was further proposed by those opposed to the idea of “orientaliz[ing] education” not to grant “the degrees of B.A. and M.A. or any other academic titles, which always import a certain quantum of proficiency in Western science and Western erudition in their possessors”, and “…there seems to us no other alternative than to import instruction through the medium of English”. He went on to suggest, “Should English degrees, e.g. B.A., M.A., be conferred on those unacquainted with English? There can be no denying that these degrees are “always meant to imply a certain scholarship in Western sciences and literature” (Singh, 2012, pp. 11-12)

Sardar Dyal Singh waxes lyrical in his praise of the English education and despite hugely different contexts, is reminiscent of the Oxford professor quoted above—only that the connection between English and English nation was straightforward in the case of the Oxford professor, but here, English was a language of the colonizer and not of the society. He wrote: English education is the greatest boon conferred by England on the people of this country. It has stirred up the national soul. It has given birth to a revolution which has spread like a mighty torrent over the whole face of the country, and whose influences will survive every vestige of British power in India. (Dyal Singh August 13, 1881, 90).

Baboo, A. M. Bose, the Honorary Secretary of Indian Association sent a letter to the Secretary of State for India on July 27, 1881, in which his words echo Macaulay’s, “the only way to raise the people was to bestow upon them a sound education in English literature and science” (Bhatti, Abid, & Abid, 2012, p. 112).

The connection between English education and the stability of the English rule is also emphasized. English education, thus meant, subservience to the English rule:

“Those who have some idea of the miserable state of the country before the English came, and observe its present highly prosperous condition, have ample cause to desire the stability of English rule. This statement, the committee submits, is amply borne out by the
facts connected with many local disturbances which have from time to time broken out against the British rule. It would be difficult to find out even the name of a single educated person who ever took part in such a disturbance (Bhatti, Abid, & Abid, 2012, pp. 112-113)

The Orientalists, on the other hand, wanted to use native languages for the dissemination of western ideas. Their concern was pedagogical. The opinion that was settled in Wood’s dispatch of 1854 in which vernacular languages were proposed for earlier phases of education but English for higher education was accepted. Dr. Leitner wanted to change that. He wanted native languages to play a higher role, not because of their content, but because of their ability to impart more effectively the essence of western literature and sciences. For this purpose, Dr. Leitner established an organization called Anjuman-e-Punjab. The university, originally proposed by Dr. Leitner through Anjuman-e-Punjab, did come into being, however, the original idea was restricted to Punjab University College which later became the Oriental College but Leitner’s dream of a university to impart western literature and sciences through the medium of the vernacular was not fulfilled in an overt form, though in some covert forms it did happen. The decision to cherish the English education and hence maintain its exclusivity in curricular settings remained unchallenged for over a hundred years.

As the references above testify, the deeper contexts of an academic discipline have to be engaged with, studied, Because of this lack of engagement with disciplinary history and its controversies, the discipline of English in Pakistan remains immune to self-critique. It has to be pushed to a state of self-audit or a decolonial audit and acknowledge the role it has played in the colonization of the region. There is a larger debate regarding the role the English language has played in promoting colonial discourses which has to be reviewed and in the light of which the character of the discipline has to be evaluated. Alastair Pennycook explores this nexus in his seminal study English and the Discourses of Colonialism (1998). In this study, he analyzes the “micropolitics of colonialism” which produces a “set of practices and discursive frames” which, continue to exist in

4 Charles Wood was President of the Boards of Control of the English East-India Company and he sent a dispatch to Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor General of India, which formulated the Education Policy of India in the coming years.
5 This state of complacency is prevalent in other disciplines as well. My doctoral study, of which this paper is a part, may prove to be the harbinger of this trend of academic audit.  
6 It is absolutely important that social science disciplines too initiate their self-scrutiny or as I call it here, their decolonial audit.

This understanding that the English language played an important part, not just at the visible level, but at a deeper level of discursive formation, and which might have continued to influence subjectivities and cognitions which suited the imperial powers ought to become part of the academic training that the discipline imparts to its students. Pennycook’s work can also be looked at from the point of historicization of literary study as it implicates English for a hand in glove relationship with colonialism. Pennycook exposes the “deep and indissoluble links between the practices, theories and contexts of ELT and the history of colonialism” (Pennycook, English and the Discourses of Colonialism, 1998, p. 19).

One very important dynamic that has been highlighted by Pennycook is the mutually complementary relationship between colonialism and English as “the practice of colonialism produced ways of thinking, saying and doing that permeated back into the cultures and discourses of the colonized nations” (Pennycook, English and the Discourses of Colonialism, 1998, p. 2). He evokes Escher’s picture of two hands drawing each other highlighting the fact that discourses organize and give meaning to texts; they also become institutionalized ways of mapping out knowledge. As this happens, particular words, phrases, texts become common realizations of particular discourses; and their use calls forth those discourses. We also may look at, for instance, what role the English departments played in what Pennycook calls “cultural construction of colonialism”. “…English has been interwoven with British colonialism throughout colonial and postcolonial history” and has been “a crucial part of the colonial enterprise”. One of the ideological rationales that accompanied the teaching of literature had been an appeal to universalism or humanism inherent in literary texts. This was used as a premise to offer English literature as a tool for moral improvement. This sort of ‘humanism’ Pennycook argues has been critiqued by Fanon and Sartre for its “complicity” with colonialism:

The development of such ideas as ‘human nature’, ‘humanity’, and universal qualities of the human mind occurred at the same time as the violent spread of colonial activity. The study of colonialism, then, becomes far more than the study of an historical era; rather, it opens up a wide range of questions concerning the development of current aspects of European and North American thought and culture (Pennycook, English and the Discourses of Colonialism, 1998, pp. 8-9, 18-9).
Despite the obvious imperial role, the discipline of English, through the promotion of colonial discourses, there is a “loud absence” according to Pennycook (1998, p. 22), a term which refers to the dearth of research exploring this nexus between English and Colonialism, and ways in which it continues to negotiate meaning. This loud absence can be understood as a suppression of the native self which is conditioned to be subservient and hence is unable to raise the question of its presence, just like students of English literature, whose selves were also occluded according to Viswanathan in the process of engagement with the texts they studied. (Viswanathan, Uncommon Genealogies, 2000)

A study of English language teaching and colonialism, therefore, can add important dimensions to the understanding of how colonialism operated. Policies about providing or withholding an education in English were not simple questions to do with the ‘medium of instruction’ (to name the reductive framework in which much discussion of such issues occurs today) but rather were concerned with different views of how best to run a colony (Pennycook, English and the Discourses of Colonialism, 1998, p. 20).

In a section ‘Education, control and language’ Pennycook cites the following rationale for introducing education in the first place: “education was a crucial means for more effective governance of the people” (Pennycook, English and the Discourses of Colonialism, 1998, pp. 71-2).

Another question that remains to be answered in the context of Pakistan is, how has the rationale for teaching English literature changed through the post-independence period and how have ideas about its efficaciousness undergone change through these decades. Viswanathan’s history reveals that historically, the ideological positions which underpinned the rationale of English departments in the region highlighted the universalism of the texts taught, their relativistic value, their religious affinity with Christianity, and conversely emphasis upon secular pluralism of the works. She has explained the twin motivations that came from the missionaries on the one hand and from the secular managers of the East India Company on the other which led to a period from the 1820s to 1850s during which the rationale for English literary studies was religious and moral. She has cited numerous missionaries who supported this enterprise as they felt it help to fulfill their “impulse to Christianize” (Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest, 1989, p. 144).

The colonial rationale for the literary study took a functionalistic turn in 1854 with Wood’s dispatch which resulted in the establishment of three universities at Calcutta, Bombay, and...
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Madras. Later there was “less talk of high culture and more of useful education” (Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest, 1989, p. 144). Mill’s thoughts are cited which sought discretion in educating the masses. There was advocacy of discernment in spreading the virtues of education:

An English literary education that ostensibly set out to root Indians in a world of reciprocal obligations came to be attacked for achieving the very opposite, and Howell, along with others, strenuously argued only a practical or non-humanistic education could successfully teach social or civic duty, hitherto associated primarily with a literary curriculum (Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest, 1989, p. 143).

She goes on to emphasize how “The nineteenth-century Anglicist curriculum of British India is not reducible simply to an expression of cultural power; rather, it served to confer power as well as to fortify British rule against real or imagined threats from a potentially rebellious subject population”. Viswanathan’s work, in her own words, is an attempt “to document British educational enterprise in nineteenth-century India as an activity, the stratified conferring of cultural power on a dominated society designed to transmute even the faintest traces of mobilized, unified sentiment against British rule into schisms.” In the context of colonialism, this critique has been accepted. There is a need to study if such objectives continued to impact literary engagement in the period after colonization (Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest, 1989, pp. 167-168). Although she warned against the reading of colonial priorities in the post-independence history of the discipline, yet later scholarship on the institutionalization of India has identified a similar trajectory in the development of the discipline and after exposing the almost seamless continuation of colonial primacies in literary education, advocated an adaptation of the discipline to make it more inclusive of the societal schisms reflected in the microcosmic environment of a literature classroom. What I have discovered during my doctoral study is that in the context of Pakistan, there is an absence of critical awareness of these underlying motives which have governed the study of English literature in the past and the assumptions which continue to govern the study of English literature now.

Since Viswanathan’s study, there have been various historicizations of the discipline in India where it responded to the international crisis perception and attempted to rationalize its existence. In 2015 appeared a very comprehensive account on the subject called Reconsidering English Studies in Indian Higher Education. According to Suman Gupta, one of
the editors, “in the late 1980s and 1990s … the project of historicizing ES [English Studies] in India acquired a sense of urgency” since it had to respond to the “perceived ‘crisis’ in the discipline. This crisis in the discipline manifested “concerns …about the increasingly anachronistic content of institutional ES in India, devoted predominantly to British canonical authors explored in Arnoldian/Leavisite liberal humanist vein, with the occasional forays into American Literature and New Criticism”. He further highlights that the discipline itself “appeared to be entirely unresponsive to social circumstances and developments in India”. This response to the crisis was itself a ripple effect of the “ideological interrogation” to which the discipline was subjected to in “the Anglophone heartland of the USA and UK”. The consciousness of this western import also existed as the historians of the discipline in the Indian context questioned if their embrace of these conceptual frameworks perpetuated their “disciplinary subordination” or whether it facilitated freedom from it and intensified its proximity to its societal context. Their consensus was that the practice would allow them to bring to the fore “the distinctly local” aspects, which too, necessitated crisis debates. The special focus of Indian Crisis Debates (ICD) has been “stratification along the lines of class, caste and gender, with complexities embedded in Indian histories, traditions…and the contested position of the English language in India”. The ES classroom in India, according to Gupta, based on his review of historicizations of the discipline in the country, “seemed designed to elide and silence” social conflicts and provided no room to address or engage with them (Gupta, Historicizing English Studies in India, 2015, pp. 4-5). It is interesting to note that many of these schisms and stratifications were themselves caused by the British colonial administration of education highlighted by Viswanathan in Masks of Conquest (1989).

The crisis that Gupta talks about has a literary as well as a linguistic dimension. Based on Gupta’s observation, it is clear to deduce that the ES departments in India made a choice not to divert their focus from literature and classical texts to the teaching of English language and allowed “mushrooming of bazaar institutes offering crash courses in spoken English and for a variety of other ‘real-life’ communication purposes…” (Rajan, The Lie of the Land: English Literary Studies in India, 1992, p. 19). According to Gupta, “the presumption of an adequate level of proficiency was deeply engrained in institutional arrangements of the discipline”. Ultimately, however, the camp that advocated “that language pedagogy should be given separate and greater emphasis” won
resulting in “policy encouragement” from the government. The crisis debates in India bore fruit and “opened ES in India to analysis … grounded in Indian social circumstances” (Gupta, Reconsidering English Studies in Indian Higher Education, 2015, pp. 6-7). This is something that has not happened in Pakistan. Similarly, Gupta has connected the discipline’s history with international developments as well. As theory brought about a profound impact on the operations of the discipline in the Anglo-American academy which is surveyed by Gupta in his article “The Place of Theory in Literary Disciplines”, he enumerates the impact that Theory has exerted on the discipline in India. According to him, the discourse surrounding the relevance of the discipline in the Indian context, the crisis debates, led to the following:

- adaptive activation of Anglo-American Theory and identity politics;
- accountability of colonial and postcolonial educational policies and institutional mores played in the Indian disciplinary formation;
- featuring of gender, class and caste (evaluation of humanities from the Dalit perspective); pedagogic and sustained scholarly attention to English language teaching and the relationship of English to the vernaculars (Gupta, The Place of Theory in Literary Disciplines, 2010, p. 7)

Two very significant factors that worked as a catalyst for crisis debates in India were the publication of Orientalism (1978) and the working of the Subaltern Studies group under Ranjit Guha and Gayatri Spivak’s collaboration with it. Regarding the influence of Orientalism, the following testimony of Rajeshwari Sundar Rajan sheds light on the exhilaration felt in Indian university over the publication:

Like many people in the Indian academy at the time, I first encountered Said’s work through Orientalism. In those days—I’m talking of twenty years ago—books published in the west took their time coming to India (that is, when they did come, in a haphazard trickle), and so we were considered in the rearguard of intellectual fashions. The buzz about Orientalism had reached us though, and we (I am referring primarily to the circle I belonged to, college lecturers in Delhi University) fell upon the book avidly (Rajan, Politics and Culture, 2004)

Before the 1980s high note of historicizations, Kalyan Chatterjee’s English Education in India (1976) had foreshadowed Viswanathan’s Masks of Conquest (1989). Gupta outlines the following similarities in their works: both works focus on the introduction of literary studies in Indian HE; have understood English Studies as instrumental formation through policies and institutional agendas of colonial
India rather than through scholarship within the discipline; the ideological debates and conflicts that they outlined—between Anglicists and Orientalists, Evangelist and Utilitarians, moralists and functionalists, vernacularists and English-medium educationists – were therefore charted almost exclusively through government policy documents and institutional records (like) curricular content.

Viswanathan chooses not to include in her historicization, the response of the colonized to the way the discipline was institutionalized. This, on her part, is a strategic choice as she considers, what Gupta calls, “colonizer’s rationale” insulated from the desires of the colonized. That is why she excludes “how Indians actually received, reacted to, imbibed, manipulated, reinterpreted, or resisted the ideological content of British literary education” (Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest, 1989, pp. 11-2). She has warned against “reading the history of nineteenth-century English studies as continuous with contemporary educational practice in India” (1989, p. 168). Gupta points out how Viswanathan’s methodological and historiographical decisions leave “ample space for filling in gaps,” particularly “for linking to subsequent phases of the discipline’s institutional practices and educational policy development” (Gupta, Reconsidering English Studies in Indian Higher Education, 2015, p. 14).

According to Gupta, a new phase in the historicization project started by the early 2000s which featured “critical interest in Indian social inequities other than those grounded in colonizer-colonized relations”. In that connection, he cites two books: Santosh Dash’s English Education and the Question of Indian Nationalism (2009) and Alok Mukherjee’s The Gift of English (2009). These works went “beyond postcolonial historicizing and crisis debates” (p. 14). “Position[ing] the discipline amidst the interstices of Indian social dynamic – past and, more importantly, continuing – alongside and beyond the colonial and the postcolonial” (p. 15). From 1999 to 2009, the social pressure of English was driven by international and national workforce imperatives. Other developments, according to Gupta, have played alongside the general thrust of this pressure. These social developments have led to an academic discussion that centers on the questions of identity. Both The Gift of English and English Education and the Question of Indian Nationalism draw “lines of continuity between the colonial history of the discipline and its current condition” remained a constant undercurrent” (Gupta, Reconsidering English Studies in Indian Higher Education, 2015, p. 17). Viswanathan had “put aside the
business of “how Indians actually received, reacted to, imbibed, manipulated, reinterpreted, or resisted the ideological content of British literary education,” Dash and Mukherjee focused precisely on them (Gupta, Reconsidering English Studies in Indian Higher Education, 2015, p. 17).

Conclusion
In the present paper, an attempt has been made to offer a survey of historicizations of the discipline of English to kickstart similar debates in Pakistan so that the process of academic or decolonial audit could begin in the country. In


References