The Other Woman Does Yoga: A Personal Reflection on Growing Up with Yoga in Pakistan

Sabyn Javeri
New York University, Abu Dhabi

The first time I saw yoga on a Pakistani television screen was in a drama serial titled *Humsafar* (Khoosat 2011-2012). A wildly popular melodrama about love, betrayal, and the trials of an ill-fated marriage, it quickly became a cultural phenomenon in Pakistan. Not just for its sweeping romantic plotline, but for the subtle moral binaries it reinforced. It contrasted two women through visual cues: Khirad, the good girl, was frequently shown wrapped in modest attire, hands folded in prayer, kneeling on a prayer mat while Sara, the "other woman," was often shown practicing *asanas* on a yoga mat. This symbolism was not just a physical contrast, but a deeper moral and cultural divide. Khirad was the quintessential docile, devout, and dutiful wife and mother. Sara, in contrast, was bold, career-oriented, Westernized, and single. I still remember the pivotal moment in Episode 6 when the audience began to distrust her – she was doing yoga. Dressed in a figure-hugging t-shirt, she sat cross-legged in *sukhasana* as she refused to give in to an arranged marriage proposal. Sara looked powerful, elegant, in control. Yet the implication was clear: women who did yoga belonged to another moral universe, one that was spiritually off-track, morally suspect, and dubiously feminist. Every time Sara was shown doing one of her yoga poses, it stirred up an uneasiness I had long felt growing up in Pakistan in the 1980s: that yoga, no matter how physically beneficial or mentally grounding, wasn't ours. It belonged to the other side. It was Indian, un-Islamic, hippy. And yet, deep down, I wondered: why did a practice that felt so intimate feel so *othered*? The question led me beyond television screens and into the history of the soil itself.

I was born in Karachi, a few hours from Mohenjo-Daro, where steatite seals depict figures in seated meditation; the Pashupati seal is often read as an early yogic pose (Dani 1986; Marshall 1931). At Buddhist centers like Taxila, monks practiced *dhyana* and breath control from the first century (UNESCO 1980). Yet, growing up in Pakistan, I was never told this was part of my cultural inheritance. This forgetting was not accidental. Determined to distinguish the new nation from "Hindu India," Pakistan's leaders erased shared practices like yoga and classical dance from its story and as Homi Bhabha (1994) reminds us, nations are narrations, stitched by repetition and disavowal. To secure the "two-nation theory,"[1] history was rewritten to distance Pakistan not only from India but also from its pre-Islamic, syncretic past (Ahmed 2016; Jalal 1995; Rahman 1996). In that narrative, yoga, despite its deep pre-colonial presence, became unpatriotic. Its erasure, at the very core of a practice that unites body and mind, left a cultural void. This essay traces how yoga belongs to Pakistan's pre-Partition, precolonial inheritance. I write to situate my story within a longer subcontinental history of yoga, to show how nationalist storytelling obscured that kinship, and to reclaim a practice that helps me recover the self.

Sara's yoga practice in *Humsafar* offers one such lens. In the drama, yoga functions as a visual shorthand for immorality, embodying how nationalist and gendered anxieties turned a

physical discipline into a marker of cultural betrayal. Looking back, I understand now that yoga felt "immoral" not on its own terms but through the language of otherness that shaped my world. Simone de Beauvoir writes in The Second Sex ([1949] 2011) that women are cast as the "Other" against a (male) norm that never needs to name itself.

Figure 1 – *Adho Mukha Svanasana* in Nature (Photo Credit: Selina Maya Jillani).

In Pakistan's post-Partition story, yoga was scripted in a similar "Otherness." It became an uncanny mirror against which a purified Muslim self could appear. My own life carries this script. Like the subject of Lacan's ([1966] 2006) mirror stage I learned to see myself through reflections of what I was not: a Muslim girl in Karachi, praying in Arabic, a language she couldn't comprehend, yet warned away from Om, a sound born of breath. Sanskrit wasn't ours, I was told. But nor was Arabic. I could neither understand the rhythmic, repetitive cadences of Arabic recitation nor the soothing, meditative chants of Sanskrit. I felt suspended in a liminal space: yoga felt transformative in my body, yet it was namaz with its precise cycles of niyat (intention) and sajda (prostration) that I was expected to perform to find peace and acceptability in my culture.

Consequently, this tension between the sacred and the suspect found its reflection onscreen. The Khirad/Sara divide cemented the idea that prayer mats were sacred while yoga mats were questionable, and Sara was quickly reduced to a trope of the immoral modern woman who came up with devious schemes as she practiced her yoga flow. For many of us, her

character, and by extension yoga itself, became synonymous with transgression. She became symbolic of the morally ambiguous 'other woman' who would stop at nothing to wreck Khirad's marriage. In South Asian screen cultures, she is the vamp, the modern girl, the one who works, flirts, desires. She's the woman who won't conform. Cinema studies track this split between the virtuous wife and the transgressive woman across decades in South Asian cinema as a kind of moral code, a warning of how-not-to-be (Majumdar 2009; Virdi 2003). In that visual grammar, Sara's yoga mat was never just a prop; it signalled a habitus that refuses submission. And because yoga was made to stand in for "India," "Hindu," or "West," the sexualized other woman and the cultural "Other" collapsed into one charged image. Yoga was folded into Hindu nationalist symbolism, deepening Pakistan's impulse to define itself by contrast. As Hindutva[2] politics across the border increasingly recoded yoga as a nationalist emblem, our own anxieties hardened in response, making Sara's lotus pose legible as a moral threat rather than embodied care. In this way, *Humsafar* did more than recycle an old trope; it reinscribed the "other woman" as a figure of cultural and moral threat, unsettling the sanctity of marriage and embodying nonconformity. It was a figure, I realized early on, that also haunted my own life.

Incidentally, my mother was a second wife and may well have been considered the "other woman" as she was much younger and markedly different from my father. Hailing from a literary Urdu-speaking background, deeply poetic in her sensibilities, she married my Gujarati father, a businessman whose family had migrated from Bombay but firmly rejected Urdu as their mother tongue in favour of Gujarati and English. Though my mother was a creature of Urdu novels and idealism, she had to adjust to a household where knowledge held less currency than status. Through it all, meditation was the bond that connected them as it was one of the few things my father practiced himself every morning. My father had learned yoga during his years at a boarding school in Panchgani where yogic *asanas* and *pranayama* were part of the daily morning routine for pupils. But he had learned a more disciplined, energetic form of yoga, designed less for spiritual awakening than for instilling order in adolescent boys. My mother's style, on the other hand, was more meditative. While he favored the energizing rhythm of *kapalabhati,* the breath of fire done on an empty stomach, my mother preferred *nadi shodhana,* a gentle internal cleansing practice that better suited her personality. He would quickly move on to breakfast or a brisk walk, while she often remained sitting in a deep meditative state.
In the wake of that *Humsafar* episode, I was reminded of how my mother's reflective yoga practice had often been misunderstood and met with quiet skepticism or bemused indulgence by the household staff. She would sit in stillness after completing her pranayama, her eyes closed, her breath steady, as if she were somewhere far beyond the world of household demands. I still remember my Ayah grumbling to other nannies that, "Sahib has to eat breakfast on his own while Begum Sahiba plays statue-statue." There would be exasperation in her voice, but also a kind of bewilderment, as if she, too, recognized that what my mother was seeking couldn't be interrupted.

When I was a child, my mother began formally learning yoga and later joined Dr. Moiz Hussain's Institute of Mind Sciences and Classical Yoga in Karachi. Framed as a center for self-mastery and spiritual development, it offered tools like Reiki and meditation, but its foundation was Classical Yoga: the breath, the body, and the mind working in unison toward inner stillness. I would often accompany her and watch. I learned that the body wasn't a battlefield to be conquered but a vessel to be heard. She taught me how to sit in *sukhasana* and listen to the silence behind my thoughts, to feel the length of my spine in *tadasana*, and to breathe through discomfort rather than flinch from it. But I also remember I was not allowed to discuss our yogic

practice outside. Under General Zia's Islamization drive during the eighties, practices like dance, music, and meditation were cast as signs of moral laxity. What my mother taught me had to remain private, shielded from the gaze of outsiders who might not see it as heritage but as contamination. Pakistan's national broadcast (PTV), once a hub of cultural programming, banned dance, music, and anything deemed "un-Islamic." Among them was *Payal*, a televised classical dance show featuring Nahid Siddiqui, widely regarded as one of Pakistan's greatest Kathak dancers: cancelled after just six episodes by the Zia regime for being contrary to Islamic morals (Karim 2014). The ban spread like a moral plague through society. Classical Dance became synonymous with sin; yoga, though never officially banned, was lumped into the same category, implicitly vilified as "Indian" or "Hindu." Yet, both classical dance and yoga share centuries-old roots in the subcontinent, practices from a time before partition, a time when we were all part of one shared civilizational continuity.

Figure 2 – *Sukhasana* on a Military Tank in Warsaw (Photo Credit: Selina Maya Jillani).

The old Pakistan, the one of music clubs, cultural evenings, and classical arts, was vanishing. In its place emerged a morally-policed version of society where religion was no longer personal but performative. Arabization seeped into schoolbooks and street corners. These shifts were systematically produced during General Zia's Islamization; education policies explicitly reoriented curricula to foreground Islamic ideology, recasting Pakistan Studies and Social Studies around a purified national self and casting Hindus as the constitutive outsiders (Nayyar and Salim 2003). Textbook analyses document how school histories elevated Muhammed bin Qasim as a civilizational starting point while downplaying the Indus Valley and other pre-Islamic inheritances (Aziz 1993; Nayyar and Salim 2003). Language policy, too, tilted toward an Islamized register which many describe as an "Arabization" of public life as religious vocabulary and frames seeped into textbooks and civic discourse (Rahman 1996).

In school, morning Physical Training (PT) quietly dropped the word *yoga*. The postures remained, but they were repackaged as stretching. I did not yet understand why things that felt joyful like dance and yoga had become taboo. I know now that the reasons lay not only in the

entangled legacies of colonialism and Partition but also in Cold War geopolitics. Under General Zia, Pakistan's Islamization aligned with US strategic priorities against the Soviet Union, channelling aid and ideology into networks of religious schooling funded by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Afzal 2019; U.S. Library of Congress 2003; Waldman 2010). In that climate, yoga, dance, and other subcontinental practices were marked as suspect remnants of an impure past. Meanwhile, across the border, yoga was folded into Hindu nationalist symbolism. The purifications of both states met in the body, where even a breath could seem like treason (Nair and Singh 2020; Sood 2020). If archives can forget, bodies can remember. Jan Assmann calls this cultural memory; Maurice Halbwachs, earlier, named it collective memory; it is the way communities carry pasts through living practice (Assmann 2011; Halbwachs 1992). I think of it as a palimpsest: a page where new ink does not fully erase the old (Huyssen 2003). The state can superimpose a purified national history over the subcontinental one, but beneath the overlay the earlier script persists – in my mother's *nadi shodhana*, my father's *kapalabhati*, the classroom stretches renamed as "PT." Yoga endured as ghost-text. As Diana Taylor (2003) argues, performance and embodied practice constitute a repertoire that transmits memory beyond the archive. In that sense, my mother's breathwork was an archive, an embodied inheritance, even as nationalist narrative sought to erase it. By the late 1980s, the damage was done. With Wahhabism spreading, Islamization and Arabization did not merely take root – they remade the landscape of belief and reconstituted national memory (Asad 1993; Nasr 2000). This was not a purely local shift but a Cold War formation: during the Afghan jihad, the United States and Saudi Arabia funnelled billions into Pakistan to build a religious counterweight to the USSR, reshaping education and culture in ways that outlasted the Soviet collapse (Waldman 2010).

For middle-class households, this geopolitics arrived as an intimate moral economy. Saudi-funded charities circulated translated Wahhabi texts; cassette sermons entered drawing rooms; women's study circles taught a "purified" Islam in which abandoning music, dance, and yoga was recast as virtue. As Afiya Shehrbano Zia (2009) shows, these circles became key sites of female religiosity where domestic piety was framed as national service. What appeared as private devotion in my mother's generation was, in fact, entangled in state and transnational projects of Islamization.

When democracy returned after Zia's death in 1988, cultural expression, long suppressed under military rule, began to resurface cautiously. Yet the deep-rooted biases planted during Islamization had taken hold (Nayyar and Salim 2003). Although my mother had marched against Zia's draconian laws, stood with women protesting in the streets, and joined the cultural resistance of the early 1980s, somewhere between the political and the personal, something shifted. In 1989 she pulled me out of my Kathak classes, perhaps to avoid conflict or perhaps because respectability pressures had grown too heavy. Maybe nationalism overwhelmed sensibility. Or maybe it was simply fear; the city had become a bloodbath. Schools shut down every other day as *hungamas* and riots became commonplace. She, too, stopped going to her yoga classes and, by the early 1990s, joined a women's religious study circle rooted in Salafi interpretations and Wahhabi-inspired teachings; part of a wider turn to piety among women across the Muslim world.[3] A retreat, perhaps, into a more contained world, where certainty replaced chaos and discipline offered a fragile sense of control. But the group was strict, austere, and dismissive of practices like yoga. Needless to say, yoga quietly vanished from our home as if it had never belonged there to begin with.

By the time the next dictator, General Musharraf, took over in 1999, I was about to immigrate to the UK as a young bride. And it was there, to my astonishment, that I saw yoga

flourishing. In studios scented with eucalyptus oil, taught by white women in Lululemon, yoga had become Western wellness. The colonizers had appropriated the colonized's roots and turned them into lifestyle brands. It was jarring to realize that a practice born in colonized lands had been repackaged in Euro-American wellness markets. In these spaces, yoga was stripped of its philosophical and spiritual dimensions, marketed instead through boutique studios, luxury athleisure, and promises of personal productivity. What had once been part of a shared subcontinental inheritance was now available at a price and sold back to us in Western accents and Lycra leggings. Scholars tracked how this commodification is inseparable from cultural appropriation and racialized gatekeeping: South Asian women are often rendered invisible in Western yoga spaces, their authority questioned or sidelined, while white practitioners are celebrated as authentic bearers of the practice (Hassan 2020; Nair 2019). The irony was stark. At home, yoga had been marked as foreign, suspicious, even heretical. Abroad, the same practice was exalted, sanitized of its history, and repackaged as universal wellness.

Even as I absorbed the biases around it, I was drawn to the quiet grace of it, attracted to the breath, the focus, the stillness. It felt like something my body remembered before I was ever taught it was foreign. Though I had let yoga go, yoga never really let go of me. And now, years later, when I returned to yoga in the UK as a form of healing, emotionally, physically, spiritually, I began to unlearn these false memories. I understood that prayer and yoga are not opposites. That submission to God can happen in many forms. That prostrating in *sujood* and folding into a child's pose are not enemies, but echoes.

In the UK, I tried many different kinds of yogic practices, most of which focused on twisting my body into a pretzel, before I found a Kundalini yoga teacher under whom I began my own training. Through breathwork, chants, and movement, I found myself slowly reconnecting, not to the Western version of yoga, but to something older and deeper. Something that felt like home.

Figure 3 – Bridging Yoga and Dance through *Añjali* mudra during Kathak (Photo Credit: Selina Maya Jillani).

I began to understand how our post-colonial anxieties about identity, purity, and authenticity had made us suspicious of practices that predated Islam, predated Hinduism, predated borders altogether. Yoga, after all, is from the soil we all share – from the Indus Valley, before Pakistan, before India, before the idea that a practice had to be religious to be claimed as ours. Borders can claim territory; they can redraw identities, but they cannot cancel the body's memory of breath, the heart's desire for stillness, or the wisdom of practices older than states. Our politics tried to erase something older than modern nationalism, a practice of breath and presence that predates Partition, predates sectarian lines. But as Patañjali reminds us in the *Yoga Sutras*, yoga is not about faith but about stilling the fluctuations of the mind (2009, I.2). And when taken with intention and care, these traditions are no betrayal, they are reclamation.

Learning to practice again felt like refusing an assigned otherness. If the "other woman" trope taught me that female autonomy threatens the social order, then breathing on the mat became a counter-script in which desire, faith, and intellect could coexist. I realised that de Beauvoir's insight on Otherness is not only about gender; it is about power's need for a foil.[4] By reclaiming yoga as part of my Muslim, Pakistani, subcontinental inheritance, I withdraw my body from that foil and return it to a longer story.

Almost a decade after *Humsafar* and its subtle condemnation of yoga as the other woman's practice, by chance, I came across a small yoga community class on a visit to Karachi. A group of women gathered in a quiet space, some in sweatpants, some in hijabs, all seeking something still. It was there, in that modest room with whirring fans and mismatched mats, that I saw a quiet revolution unfolding. Pakistani women were reclaiming yoga, not in defiance of their faith, but as an extension of it. They brought their whole selves: their spirituality, their trauma, their aspirations. They practiced in headscarves and headbands. They understood that movement could be sacred, and stillness could be strength.

In those sessions, I saw how the narrative around yoga had changed. Slowly, quietly, but surely. What had once been marked as foreign, even heretical, was now being reabsorbed, not as a threat to faith but as a form of well-being, a tool of resilience. Since then, many yoga studios have popped up. There are now women-led yoga retreats in Hunza, yoga classes in parks in Islamabad, and even morning show segments on wellness on PTV that cautiously include yoga stretches, though still often labelled as fitness rather than spirituality. Some may argue that unlike India or Sri Lanka, where yoga is practiced freely in public spaces by people of all ages and classes, in Pakistan it still carries an air of exclusivity, something more likely to be found in upscale neighborhoods or posh yoga retreats than in village fields. But this, too, is changing. The younger generation, armed with online access and global exposure, is beginning to peel back the old taboos. They are asking: why should practices rooted in our own soil be alien to us? Because the truth is, yoga was never foreign. It was made foreign, erased, renamed, pushed aside during the cultural cleansing of the Zia era. But yoga, like memory, returns.

I recently completed a yoga teacher training course and for me, yoga has been a homecoming, not to a religion or a ritual, but to a rhythm that lives beneath both. It helped me reclaim what had been denied to my generation through fear, erasure, and politicized religiosity. It reminded me that heritage lives in the gestures we inherit, in the breathwork passed from mother to daughter, even when it is interrupted. In a world increasingly divided by artificial borders and narrow definitions of belonging, yoga offers a space of return. Not to India or to Pakistan, not to Hinduism or Islam but to the self. And perhaps, through that self, to something universal. Because long before nationalism, long before even language, there was the body. And the silence of breath. These days, as I teach my daughter yoga, the way my late mother once

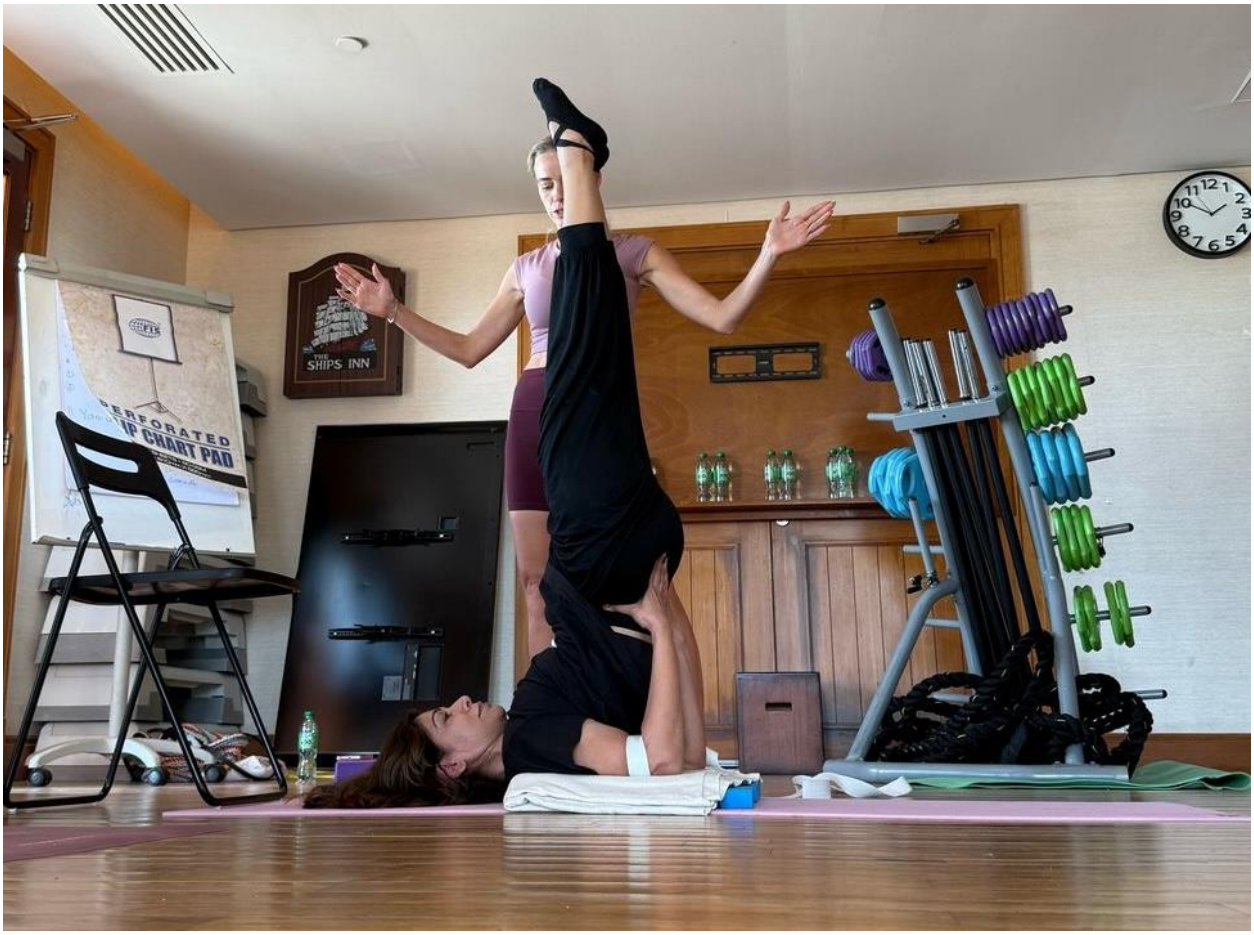

Figure 4 – **Yoga Teacher Training.**

taught me before she gave it up, I often wish I could tell her that yoga never pulled me away from my faith. It deepened it. It taught me breath as a form of *dhikr*. It showed me how the body could be a place of reverence, not shame. It taught me that silence can be sacred, that movement can be a kind of devotion. But most importantly it taught me that I am a woman who prays and I am also a woman who practices yoga. I am both Khirad and Sara. And I carry no shame in that.

Notes

[1] The "two-nation theory" was the ideological basis for the partition of British India in 1947, asserting that Muslims and Hindus constituted two separate nations that could not coexist within one state. In this essay, I invoke the term to contrast modern nationalist identities with the much older, shared civilizational practices, such as yoga, that predate the formation of Pakistan or India.

[2] On Hindutva politics and yoga nationalism, Anusha Kedhar (2020) shows how Modi's International Yoga Day enacts this same logic, recasting yoga as a symbol of Hindu nationalist pride while masking systemic anti-Muslim violence. What *Humsafar* suggested through Sara's body, Kedhar demonstrates on a global stage: yoga as a spectacle of tolerance that in fact sharpens communal divides.

[3] Saba Mahmood (2005) has shown in Egypt, women's piety movements are not only about submission but also about cultivating ethical selves, aligning personal conduct with broader Islamist projects.

[4] A constructed opposite through which the self secures its identity (de Beauvoir ([1949] 2011; Said 1978).

References

Afzal, Mahida. 2019. "Saudi Arabia's Hold on Pakistan." *Brookings Institution*, May 2019. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/FP_20190510_saudi_pakistan_afzal.pdf

Ahmed, Shahab. 2016. *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic.* Princeton University Press.

Asad, Talal. 1993. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam.* Johns Hopkins University Press.

Assmann, Jan. 2011. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination.* Cambridge University Press.

Aziz, Khursheed Kamal. 1993. *The Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks Used in Pakistan.* Vanguard.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture.* 2nd ed. Routledge.

Bryant, Edwin F., trans. 2009. *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*. New York: North Point Press.

Dani, Ahmad Hasan. 1986. *History of Pakistan: Pakistan Through Ages.* National Publishing House.

de Beauvoir, Simone. (1949) 2011. *The Second Sex.* Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. Vintage.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992. *On Collective Memory.* Edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser. University of Chicago Press.

Hassan, Narin. 2020. "Travelers, Translators, and Spiritual Mothers: Yoga, Gender, and Colonial Histories." *Race and Yoga* 5, no. 1: 24–41. https://doi.org/10.5070/R351046982.

Huyssen, Andreas. 2003. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory.* Stanford University Press.

Jalal, Ayesha. 1995. *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan.* Cambridge University Press.

Karim, Meeran. 2014. "Reclaiming Space." *The News on Sunday*, February 16. https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/555768-reclaiming-space.

Kedhar, Anusha. 2020. "Choreographing Tolerance: Narendra Modi, Hindu Nationalism, and International Yoga Day." *Race and Yoga* 5, no. 1: 42–58. https://doi.org/10.5070/R351046987.

Khoosat, Sarmad Sultan, dir. 2011–2012. *Humsafar.* Television series. Karachi: Hum TV.

Lacan, Jacques. (1966) 2006. *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English.* Translated by Bruce Fink. W. W. Norton.

Majumdar, Neepa. 2009. *Wanted Cultured Ladies Only!: Female Stardom and Cinema in India, 1930s–1950s.* University of Illinois Press.

Mahmood, Saba. 2005. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject.* Princeton University Press.

Marshall, John. 1931. *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization.* Arthur Probsthain.

Nair, Lakshmi. 2019. "When Even Spirit Has No Place to Call Home: Cultural Appropriation, Microaggressions, and Structural Racism in the Yoga Workplace." *Race and Yoga* 4, no. 1: 33–38. https://doi.org/10.5070/R341044901.

Nair, Lakshmi, and Arushi Singh. 2020. "Introduction: South Asian Voices on Yoga." *Race and Yoga* 5, no. 1: i–v. https://doi.org/10.5070/R351051481.

Nasr, Vali. 2000. *Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power.* Oxford University Press.
Nayyar, A. H., and Ahmed Salim. 2003. *The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan.* Sustainable Development Policy Institute.
Patañjali. 2009. *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: Translation and Commentary by Sri Swami Satchidananda.* 4th ed. Integral Yoga Publications.
Rahman, Tariq. 1996. *Language and Politics in Pakistan.* Oxford University Press.
Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism.* Pantheon Books.
Sood, Sheena. "Towards a Critical Embodiment of Decolonizing Yoga." *Race and Yoga* 5, no. 1 (2020): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.5070/R351049160
Taylor, Diana. 2003. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas.* Duke University Press.
UNESCO. 1980. "Taxila." *World Heritage List. Accessed November 22, 2025.* https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/139/.
U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. 2003. *Islamic Religious Schools, Madrasas: Background by Febe* Armanios. RS21654.
Waldman, Matt. 2010. *The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship between Pakistan's ISI and Afghan Insurgents*. Discussion Paper No. 18. London: Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics. dp18-The-Sun-in-the-Sky.
Virdi, Jyotika. 2003. *The Cinematic ImagiNation: Indian Popular Films as Social History.* Rutgers University Press.
Zia, Afiya Shehrbano. 2009. *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan.* University of Washington Press.

Sabyn Javeri (she/her) is the author of *Hijabistan* (HarperCollins, 2019) and the novel *Nobody Killed Her* (HarperCollins, 2017). She has also edited two multilingual student anthologies and a pioneering anthology of creative non-fiction by Pakistani women writers titled *Ways of Being* (Women Unlimited, 2023). Her fiction has appeared in *The London Magazine*, *Litro*, *Bookends Review*, *Wasafiri*, *Trespass*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Lakeer*, and *Poetry Daily*. Her scholarly work has been published in the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *South Asian Review*, and *Journal of South Asian Studies*, among others. She is the winner of the Oxonian Review Short Story Prize, runner-up for the Jawad Memorial Translation Prize, and her novel-in-progress was shortlisted for the Tibor Jones Award. She currently teaches writing at NYUAD and tutors in the Master's of Creative Writing at the University of Oxford. She is also a trained therapeutic yoga teacher with a focus on breath and trauma healing.