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**Exploring Sub-Worlds in Farzana Aqib's Poem *I Must Adulate*: A  
Text World Theory Approach**



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**Abstract**

This study explores how different sub-worlds are created in the poem "I Must Adulate" by Farzana Aqib (2023) using Text World Theory. The theory helps to understand how readers build mental images and meanings while reading a text. This research is qualitative in nature and uses textual analysis to find out how emotional, mental, and imaginary worlds are formed in the poem. It focuses only on the sub-worlds such as epistemic, boulomaic, and attitudinal. The data was collected from the poem itself and analyzed by applying Werth's (1999) model of Text World Theory. The study finds that the poem contains various sub-worlds that show the speaker's inner thoughts, wishes, fears, and emotional states. This research helps readers understand how language creates deep meaning beyond surface-level words and offers new ways to analyze poetry through a cognitive linguistic lens.

**Keywords:**Text World Theory, Sub-worlds, Cognitive Poetics, Farzana Aqib, I Must Adulate, Epistemic World, Boulomaic World, Attitudinal World, Poetry Analysis, Stylistics

**Background of the Study**

Poetry often reflects human thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Readers do not just understand the surface meaning of a poem but mentally build its world in their minds while reading. This process is explained by Text World Theory, introduced by Werth (1999) and later developed by Gavins (2007). It helps explain how readers create mental pictures of events, emotions, and settings described in a text. Through this lens, we can see how different sub-worlds (such as hopes, doubts, beliefs, and desires) are formed in the reader's mind.

This study focuses on Farzana Aqib's poem "I Must Adulate" to explore how such mental worlds especially sub-worlds, are created and how they reflect the inner emotional journey of the speaker. Earlier studies like Khan et al. (2025) have shown how discourse, text worlds, and sub-worlds all contribute to deeper poetic understanding, even though their study was on a small scale.

**Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to explore how different sub-worlds are created in the

poem "I Must Adulate" by Farzana Aqib using Text World Theory. It aims to show how the poet expresses emotions, desires, fears, and beliefs through language, and how these are mentally built by the reader while reading the poem. This analysis will help readers understand the deeper meanings hidden in the text by identifying and explaining the sub-worlds formed within it.

### **Literature Review**

Text World Theory (TWT) is a modern approach in cognitive stylistics that focuses on how readers mentally build meaning from texts. It was first introduced by Paul Werth (1999) and later developed by Joanna Gavins (2007). The theory explains how readers create mental representations, called text-worlds and sub-worlds, while reading.

According to Werth (1999), readers do not just process words, they create a complete mental world based on what the text says and their own background knowledge. Gavins (2007) expanded the theory and applied it to literary texts, showing how readers also build sub-worlds whenever characters imagine, believe, remember, hope, or judge something.

Moreover, many researchers have used Text World Theory to study poetry, fiction, and drama. For example, Whiteley (2011) used the theory to show how readers emotionally connect with poems. Gibbons (2012) analyzed how sub-worlds reflect characters' psychological states in narratives. Montoro (2017) highlighted how TWT can help understand a speaker's emotional or moral position in literature.

Furthermore, Shah et al. (2024) explored Farzana Aqib's poem "Little Sparta" through the lens of Text World Theory, a cognitive stylistic approach. Their study examines how readers build mental images and meanings while reading the poem, focusing on how language constructs the main text world and its sub-worlds. By analyzing discourse elements such as imagery, tone, and emotional resonance, the authors demonstrate how the poem evokes thoughts of sacrifice, memory, resistance, and national pride. Importantly, their work uncovers anarchist undertones by highlighting how the poem challenges conventional power structures and presents alternative perspectives through imagined worlds, thus deepening reader engagement. In addition, Khan et al. (2025) examined Farzana Aqib's poem "Chase" using the same Text World Theory to explore how language creates deep emotional and mental experiences in readers. Their study shows how the poem constructs various mental

worlds such as text-worlds, sub-worlds, and discourse-worlds, through imagery, tone, and repetition. These worlds reflect emotional confusion, longing, and imagined presence. The authors highlight how poetry, through language, builds shared mental spaces between reader and text, revealing the emotional depth beyond the literal words.

Khan et al. (2022) applied Text World Theory to *A Passage to India* to show how readers form mental representations by linking language with context. The study highlights how discourse-worlds, text-worlds, and sub-worlds help readers understand characters' inner thoughts and build meaning. It confirms TWT as an effective tool for analyzing how novels shape emotional and cognitive engagement.

In short, many researchers have used Text World Theory to study poetry and novels. Khan et al. (2025) explored all three worlds in poetry, while Khan et al. (2022) applied the theory to a novel. Unlike these studies, this paper focuses only on sub-worlds, making it a small but unique contribution to the field. This study builds on their work by applying TWT to Farzana Aqib's poem "I Must Adulate", focusing specifically on sub-worlds to explore how the speaker's internal world is constructed.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Type**

This research follows a qualitative, interpretive approach rooted in literary stylistics. It is designed to explore how Text World Theory (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007) can be applied to a poetic text to analyze its sub-worlds, particularly how these sub-worlds construct meaning, emotion, and perspective.

Moreover, qualitative research is appropriate for studies that focus on interpretation and meaning-making from texts (Creswell, 2014). Since this study examines a single poem's linguistic and cognitive structure, it does not rely on numerical data but on close reading and conceptual frameworks.

#### **Data Collection Method**

The primary data for this study is the poem "I Must Adulate" by Farzana Aqib, taken from her collection *A Hundreds Bedizen Heavens* (Page 101). The poem was purposively selected for its rich use of modal expressions, belief structures, and evaluative language.

In this connection, purposive sampling allows researchers to select a text that is most

relevant to the theoretical framework being applied (Palinkas et al., 2015). Since the goal is not generalization but in-depth analysis, this method suits the study's purpose.

### **Data Analysis Method**

The study uses Text World Theory (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007) as a framework for textual analysis, focusing specifically on the identification of sub-worlds such as epistemic, deontic, boulomaic, hypothetical, intentional, and attitudinal sub-worlds. Each line of the poem is examined to identify where and how these sub-worlds are constructed.

Furthermore, Text World Theory is particularly suited to the analysis of mental representations in texts and the ways in which readers build layered cognitive models of narrative and poetry (Gavins, 2007). This framework enables detailed analysis of modal constructions and the speaker's inner world.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on Text World Theory (TWT), originally developed by Paul Werth (1999) and further extended by Joanna Gavins (2007). It is a cognitive stylistic theory that explains how readers mentally construct and understand meaning from written or spoken texts. According to Text World Theory, when a reader engages with a text, they create mental worlds based on the information provided. These include:

#### **1. The Discourse-World**

The real-life situation between the writer and reader.

#### **2. The Text-World**

The fictional or narrative world created by the text.

#### **3. Sub-worlds**

Imagined or alternative mental spaces within the text-world, such as thoughts, wishes, beliefs, emotions, and hypothetical scenarios. In this study, the focus is on identifying and analyzing sub-worlds, especially:

*Deontic sub-worlds* (duty or obligation)

*Boulomaic sub-worlds* (desires or wishes)

*Epistemic sub-worlds* (belief or uncertainty)

*Hypothetical sub-worlds* (imagined possibilities)

*Attitudinal sub-worlds* (emotions or judgments)

*Intentional sub-worlds* (plans or purposes).

This theory helps reveal how language constructs deeper meaning by reflecting the speaker's inner world and engaging the reader cognitively and emotionally.

### **Analysis & Discussion**

The following analysis of the poem *I Must Adulate* by Farzana Aqib is conducted using Text World Theory, focusing exclusively on the identification and interpretation of sub-worlds (also referred to as modal-worlds). Sub-worlds are mental constructs embedded within the main text-world that reflect a character's or speaker's desires, beliefs, obligations, attitudes, or hypothetical reasoning.

#### **1. Deontic Sub-World**

*I have to write the praise*

This line expresses an obligation or necessity. The modal verb "have to" signals the speaker's perceived duty to praise, thereby creating a deontic sub-world in which the act of writing praise is a compulsory action.

*I must emblazon the name*

The phrase reinforces the sense of duty with the use of "must", indicating a moral or spiritual compulsion to glorify a sacred name. This also forms part of a deontic sub-world.

#### **2. Attitudinal Sub-World**

*To thou glory*

Here, the speaker constructs a sub-world of emotional reverence, showing an elevated attitude toward the subject. The line contains a tone of spiritual admiration, thus reflecting the speaker's evaluative stance.

*To hail the majesty*

*To the one who is worthy*

These lines reflect emotional devotion and evaluative stance. The speaker holds the subject in high esteem, projecting an attitudinal sub-world that shows reverence and acknowledgment of worthiness and majesty.

#### **3. Boulomaic Sub-World**

*My immortal enthusiast raise*

This line introduces a world governed by desire or longing. The reference to an "immortal enthusiast" being raised signals the speaker's inner wish or hope, forming a boulomaic sub-world.

#### **4. Hypothetical Sub-World**

*Its must if I am made affluent*

*In my creation*

The use of the conditional clause “if I am made affluent” suggests a hypothetical situation in which the speaker imagines being gifted or enriched in creative ability. This introduces a conditional, imagined reality, thus creating a hypothetical sub-world.

#### **5. Epistemic + Hypothetical Sub-World**

*If I am the one chosen*

This line reflects speculation about the speaker’s identity or destiny. The uncertainty expressed through the conditional “if” projects an epistemic sub-world (based on belief or doubt), while simultaneously opening a hypothetical sub-world envisioning the speaker as a chosen one.

#### **6. Intentional Sub-World**

*For a task to adulate*

This line signals purpose and directed intention. The speaker imagines themselves as being assigned a specific task to adulate, thus constructing a sub-world based on intended action.

Lastly, the poem *I Must Adulate* provides a rich example of modal sub-world construction within the framework of Text World Theory. Through modal verbs, conditionals, and evaluative language, the speaker constructs a variety of sub-worlds including deontic, boulomaic, epistemic, hypothetical, intentional, and attitudinal, which deepen the emotional and philosophical dimensions of the text-world. These sub-worlds allow readers to access the speaker's internal motivations, beliefs, and values, offering a layered and meaningful reading experience.

#### **Findings and Conclusion**

This study explored the poem *I Must Adulate* by Farzana Aqib through the lens of Text World Theory, with a focus on identifying and analyzing different sub-worlds. The analysis revealed that the poet constructs several epistemic, boulomaic, and attitudinal sub-worlds to express deep emotions, mental states, and personal desires.

For example, epistemic sub-worlds reflect what the speaker believes or assumes, such as in lines where the speaker reflects on love and admiration. Boulomaic sub-worlds express wishes and desires, like the longing to be close or

emotionally fulfilled. Attitudinal sub-worlds highlight personal emotions, attitudes, and evaluations, such as expressions of admiration, pain, or emotional conflict.

Thus, these sub-worlds help readers better understand the inner world of the speaker and the emotional depth of the poem. The study concludes that Text World Theory is an effective tool for exploring how meaning is shaped in poetry, particularly through the lens of imagined mental spaces that reflect human thought and feeling.

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Cognitive-Stylistic Analysis of: A Passage to India. *Al-Qanṭara*, 8(4), 206-221.

## **Appendix**

### **“I Must Adulate”**

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Its must if I am made affluent

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---Farzana Aqib