

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

<https://llrjournal.com/index.php/11>

**BIOPOWER VIA FEUDAL STRUCTURES: A FOUCAULDIAN
ANALYSIS OF JAMAL ABRO'S *PIRANI & OTHER SHORT
STORIES* (2017)**



Wajid Hussain Khoso^{*1}, Dilnaz Begum²

^{*1}*Head of the Department of English, iRoots College,
Karachi*

²*English Lecturer, APSAC Karachi*

^{*1}officialwajidhussain@gmail.com,

²dilnazkhan365@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the significance and exercise of feudal structures in Pirani & Other Short Stories (2017), a collection of short stories by Jamal Abro and how they signify and exercise biopower. The main aim of this research is to break down the mechanisms of the operation of biopower in the socio-cultural and administrative framework of rural Sindh, and how landed authority, institutional collusion and religious hierarchy intersect each other to manage, regulate and abandon human life. This study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach to research based on the theories of biopower, sovereign power and power/knowledge nexus developed by French theorist Michel Foucault, which goes beyond the traditional thematic approach that sees feudalism as a system of class exploitation. The study uses a systematic four-stage textual analysis which involves close reading, thematic coding, identification of discursive elements and comprehensive synthesis to analyze the representation of the systematic subjugation of marginalized populations in the text. The results reveal that the feudal power in rural Sindh is a localized form of sovereign power which systematically exposes weaker bodies to death and deprivation by inverting the classical right to let live or make die. This research offers a much needed critical perspective on the circulation, normalization and institutionalization of power in the socio-political field of Sindh, and demonstrates that literary representation and political administration of life are always in a close relationship.

Key Words: *Pirani & Other Short Stories, Biopower, Feudal Structures, Jamal Abro, Michel Foucault, Sovereign Power, Sindh Literature.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature and socio-political power structures have always been the main concern of critical investigations, especially in postcolonial and subaltern spaces where literature becomes a mirror and a challenge to the oppressive power structures. The present study aims at examining the interrelation between the structural power and the management of physical life in *Pirani & Other Short Stories (2017)* by Jamal Abro using the theoretical framework of Michel Foucault's concept of biopower through a detailed close reading text analysis. Foucault in his basic theoretical formulations, describes biopower as a type of power that acts on life, on populations and not on individuals (Foucault, 1976, p.139). Biopower does not just exist in the form of the dazzling and rare threat of execution but in the form of a careful management of bodies, life processes, health, mortality and survival. This study explores the processes of control, surveillance and structural power as manifested in the agrarian and semi-feudal spaces of Sindh in the portrayal of Abro, and shows how the biological survival and social identities of the characters are determined, curtailed and sometimes even destroyed by visible and invisible power networks. This study argues that

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Abro's fiction is not only a passive social realism, but an active and critical approach to politics of life that is a critique of the localized biopolitical systems that are so full of violence.

Jamal Abro (1924-2004) is one of the most influential personalities of the modern Sindhi literature. Abro wrote mostly in the mid to late twentieth century, and he added to the literary tradition of Sindh, which had been romanticizing the folklore and shifting the focus to the harsh realities of the rural working class, marginalized women and subaltern subjects in the machinery of feudalism (Ali, 2017; Baig, 2015). His stories are deeply rooted in socio-cultural life of Sindh, which is characterized by structural inequalities, administrative corruption, and cultural practices in rural life (Shaikh, 2018; Memon, 2019). Though Abro's work has always been well received by critics for its realism and sympathy for the downtrodden, it has often been confined to descriptive thematic analysis in academic circles. His stories of power, knowledge and biopower have been overlooked in existing analyses, which tend to view the systems of oppression as outdated and/or moral flaws of individual landowners (Baig, 2015; Ali, 2017). Thus, an analysis of the representation of power as a structuring, generative and regulatory force conditioning the boundaries of human life is still very much needed.

Although much work in postcolonial and subaltern studies has been done on the dynamics of structural oppression and class conflict in South Asian literature (Grewal, 2015; Mohanty, 2003), there is a lack of attention to the literary work of modern Sindhi writers such as Jamal Abro. On the other hand, Abro's work has been isolated by the local literary criticism in Pakistan, which has been preoccupied with regional customs, memory, identity and linguistic nuances (Iqbal, 2017; Khaskheli, 2019) without exploring the connection between the form of the narrative and the overall biopolitical context. The roles of the Wadera (feudal lord), the Sayed (religious elite) and the Mullah (cleric) are often stereotyped as villains in traditional structural readings. They do not examine the functioning of these characters as nodes in an elaborate administrative system that controls the biological functions of the agrarian population. This lack of research has left the extent to which Abro's stories trace the nexus of state power, property and religious learning largely unexplored. This study directly confronts this critical lacuna by examining the feudalism's portrayal in *Pirani & Other Short Stories* which shows the complex interwoven of power and knowledge in the socio-political and biological fabric of rural Sindh.

Objective:

- To analyse the working of feudalism in Sindh's socio-cultural context with a detailed textual analysis of *Pirani & Other Short Stories* (2017) by Jamal Abro to ensure and execute Biopower.

Research Question:

- The research question for this inquiry is: How are feudal structures in Jamal Abro's *Pirani & Other Short Stories* (2017) significant, institutionalized and enforced in Foucault's concept of Biopower?

2. Theoretical Overview & Literature Review

The analysis of the structural dynamics in Jamal Abro's work is based on the political philosophy of Michel Foucault in the late twentieth century, particularly his notions of biopower, sovereign power and the power/knowledge nexus. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault traces a historical evolution in the ways of political power in the West from classical sovereign power to biopower. Sovereign power was the power of the monarch to take life

or let live, a power that was marked by spectacular violence, public executions and the physical elimination of transgressive subjects. Biopower, on the other hand, is an affirmative and regulatory power, focused on the administration of bodies, and the calculation of population level dynamics (Foucault, 1976, p. 139). It is a power that is about "making live or let die", the power that is exercised through public health programmes, birth and death rates, optimisation of labour and preservation or strategic abandonment of life.

An important aspect of this is Foucault's claim that power and knowledge are inseparable, that there is a power/knowledge nexus: "power produces knowledge... power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1975, p. 27). This nexus in a semi-feudal society is manifested in the establishment and propagation of cultural, religious and class truths. The dominant class creates the knowledge of what a loyal peasant, a legitimate religious lineage or a legally valid subject is, and thus normalizes and perpetuates its own hegemony.

Biopower is exercised on collective biological processes at the level of the population, while disciplinary power acts directly on individual bodies, by confining and surveilling them to create docile bodies (Parfenchyk, 2019; Botta et al., 2024). In the postcolonial agrarian landscape of Sindh these two modalities are not one after the other but are one alongside the other. The feudal apparatus still has the spectacular violence of sovereign power and the regulatory, population-level management of biopower is put to work to exploit subaltern labor and bodies.

Jamal Abro was born in 1924 in the village of Dodai in the Larkana District, and had a first-hand lived experience of the intricacies of rural Sindh's social hierarchy. His subsequent professional career in the Pakistani civil service and judiciary gave him a unique perspective to see the inner workings of the state's administrative, social and political institutions. This dual vision as a son of the rural Sindh and an officer of the state apparatus enabled him to record how institutional systems help in perpetuating the feudal hegemony. The definitive collection of his narrative fiction, translated into English by a team of contemporary scholars, *Pirani & Other Short Stories (2017)* is the first book to be released in English. Sixteen different short stories have been included in the collection which are critical case studies of rural life: Black Water, Brigand, Discourteous, Flame, Hair Parting, He was a Hur, Brat of a Shah, Macho Man, Lorry, Pirani, Pishoo Pasha, Gratitude, Blackened Face, The Coat of Khameeso, The Angel and A Mother's Lap. This paper is an attempt to analyse these stories systematically to trace the workings of feudal biopower in fifteen of these stories.

Jamal Abro's fiction has been gaining increasing attention in the academic field in terms of its socio-political significance in the larger context of South Asian literature. Aisha (2022) highlights that Abro's stories are uncompromising and unvarnished depictions of social realities, which have no supernatural or romantic elements and instead focus on social realism to reveal outdated social practices and provide a voice for marginalised subaltern characters. In the same vein, Jamali and Hussain (2022) assess Abro's characterization techniques, where his protagonists and antagonists are highly realistic and depict the real life of the people of Sindh and at the same time symbolically loaded in the context of the short story.

A more specialized critical reading is done by Kulsoom Rind and Mahesar (2022) where they have explored the titular story "Pirani" in the light of Simone de Beauvoir's feminist approach of Gendered Otherness. They point out that their study shows that the economic and marriage choices

are made by the dominant male patriarchal figures without the consent of women, and that they are psychologically marginalized and structurally denied self-recognition. Building on this socioeconomic emphasis, Laghari et al. (2023) discuss “Pirani” and the convergence and divergence of cultural and feudal practices, with an emphasis on class differences, rural poverty, systemic hunger and the biological difference of bodies according to their work and status. Last, Malik (2024) offers a semiotic analysis of “Pirani” with the help of Roland Barthes' narrative codes, which helps to dissect the multi-layered functioning of class struggle and gendered oppression in the intersecting patriarchal, feudal and nascent capitalist structures. But, even with this increasing criticism, there is no analysis in the existing literature on how these different institutional forces i.e., the state, the landlord, the judge and the shrine i.e., coalesce into a single biopolitical apparatus, which is the aim of this study.

3. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative, interpretive and based on textual analysis, enabling the detailed analysis of how language, the form of the narrative and the characterization of the characters create and reinforce the power dynamics in the local context (Creswell, 2013; McKee, 2003). This approach does not use external statistical or quantitative tools, but rather sees literary fiction as a complex discursive archive which mirrors and challenges the political structures of its own time. The main data set is comprised of the English translations of 15 selected stories from *Pirani & Other Short Stories* (2017) by Jamal Abro. Stories were selected through purposive sampling with the criterion that the conflict of characters and the plot of the story is related to the interaction with the institutional authorities, feudal lords, state authorities or religious elites.

The analytical process is based on a qualitative model that consists of four stages (Gibson and Brown, 2009). The first phase consists of several close readings of the main texts, which will be used to discover the structural, physical, systemic and ideological patterns of containment throughout the anthology. The second stage involves a thorough thematic coding and categorization of text segments that are segmented into clusters defining the feudal biopolitical apparatus (the actions of the Police, the Wadera, the Sayed, the Malik and the Mullah). The third stage focuses on the discursive elements, how dialogue and description make pseudo-truths, religious claims or legal manoeuvres normal, and thus make the subaltern subjects compliant. The fourth and final stage brings these together and situates the coded narratives in the specific concepts of biopower, sovereign coercion and population management, thus charting the networks of control that are at work in Abro's work.

4. Discussion & Analysis: Feudal Structures as Biopolitical Apparatuses

In *Pirani & Other Short Stories*, Jamal Abro's text has a very complex and multi-layered critique of the functioning of localized expressions of sovereign power and biopolitical administration in the rural and semi-feudal spaces of Sindh. Abro's stories do not simply depict feudalism as an economic system of agricultural production, but draw an elaborate map of a society in which land ownership, political affiliation, religious power and state institutional apparatus coalesce to create a single apparatus which has absolute control over the biological survival and social identities of the subaltern population. The network of power is integrated and not only polices individual violations, but also regulates, sorts and sometimes discards human bodies according to their status in the socio-economic and spiritual hierarchy.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

One of the main symptoms of this biopolitical management is the need to expose subaltern bodies to death and deprivation in times of environmental and economic crisis, in order to maintain the life of the elite. This is clearly portrayed in *Black Water*, in the structural reactions to an environmental catastrophe. The feudal lords in the area exploit their structural power to compel "villagers to work without pay to construct mud barriers" (p. 4) that are only for the protection of private agricultural property and elite households. At the same time, the elites "along with their families, to safer towns" (p. 4) to leave the working-class population directly in the path of the incoming floodwaters.

Biological survival of the common people is neglected in favour of protecting the landed assets, which is the case even after the disaster has passed. The bureaucratic and feudal networks combine to siphon off the financial compensation when state-allocated relief funds are used, as is the case in the towns, where the "landlords living in the towns" (p. 4) take the funds. The systematic reallocation of resources makes the agrarian poor totally vulnerable, with their lives deprived of legal and economic security, and demonstrates the feudal apparatus' sovereign right to abandon life.

The right to manage and exploit bodies is further institutionalized by extraction of subaltern labour and by creating absolute physical dependence. Flame explains how the subaltern body is incorporated into the agrarian economy, by means of uncompensated labor. The protagonist is first depicted working "without any wages, just to get two meals a day, cajoling his driving teacher" (p. 18), but this level of exploitation is increased by a huge margin once he becomes a sharecropper. The narrative critique makes it clear that the agricultural production was not evenly distributed, and notes that: "apart from the earth, the sun and the husband of Saaran, there was one other person who took away these heaps of grain, leaving just two bags for the peasant's family. (p. 20)

The landlord takes all the biological product of the peasant's work, and the working family only has a quantity of grain which is not enough to ensure the basic nutrition of the family. Even with this extraction, the peasant does not rebel, because he has an ingrained fear of state coercion and the prospect of his children going hungry. The subaltern body is, therefore, a disciplined body of production, which regulates itself to ensure its survival in a system of production that is basically exploitative.

This physical vulnerability and exposure of the labouring body is reflected in *The Coat of Khameeso*, where an eleven-year-old child herder is asked to protect a commercial pea crop from frost, on behalf of a landowner. The child's marginalization is literally inscribed on his body: he is a child who works "barefooted" and "no shirt... a tattered winter coat" (p. 83). This is a clear inversion of the biopolitical values, in which the life of the subaltern worker is not taken into account, and his/her body is used as an expendable resource for the production of a commercial crop, in the name of profit.

This feudal system is kept in place by the absolute power of the feudal order, not only by the economic exploitation, but also by the use of state coercive mechanisms which are direct extensions of the will of the landlord. *Brigand* is about the micro-level of domestic authority, and the macro-level of state apparatuses, and how they are used to control society. In the private sphere, arbitrary patriarchal violence is accepted as normal: when neighbours complain about the protagonist's son's aggressive behaviour, the father protects his family from the community's condemnation by saying: "They must have a solid reason to complain" (p. 8).

If a subaltern character trespasses on property, the local village chief, with his connection to the state authorities, can call the police and "immense pressure" (p. 10) is put on the character to recover his stolen property. This enforcement is the most extreme form of it, and is the most

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

humiliating – physically, in public. The police force takes the brigand's sister's clothes off, and makes him "pluck her pubic hair" (p. 10). This is an act of spectacular violence, which degrades the female body in public, crushes the resistance of the subaltern and shows the absolute power of the dominant alliance.

This "weaponization" of state institutions is further discussed in Pishoo Pasha, where the black iron hooks and "proud and haughty walls" (p. 56) of the Apex Court visually remind of the state's power. In this area, the law is not an impartial instrument of justice but a malleable tool used by police and the ruling classes. The story of the police officials routinely making up evidence and testimonies under the cover of the court in order to maintain the subaltern subjection, and how legal knowledge is used systematically to maintain the hegemony of the elites and to punish the marginalised populations.

The institutionalisation of life and death is also through the state's professional and medical institutions, which classify and treat people according to their socioeconomic status. Discourteous has a highly differentiated system of life-saving health care. The narrator, a magistrate, is a "well-to-do person with a lot of well-wishers" (p. 13) and is immediately and respectfully treated by the medical staff. But when a poor bullock-cart driver brings in a seriously ill family member, he gets a "stern and grim" (p. 13) reception.

The next time the state physician visits the family, he prescribes a healthy diet to them: "milk, orange juice, and grapes" (p. 13), a diet that they cannot afford, given that they cannot even afford a basic four-rupee injection. Medical expertise is not to cure, but to exclude the poor and make their lives secondary in the state's health care system.

The same kind of professional authority to control social fears is extended in *The Angel*, when a state physician from the administrative hub of Islamabad speaks to patients, assuring them that "Everything is going to be alright... This is a very peaceful place" (p. 87). This pacifying discourse renders the structural inequalities as individual medical problems, thereby defusing any potential opposition and transforming political complaints into controlled health issues, and making subjects passive.

Communities deprived of basic institutional and economic protections, have no choice but to view the human body as a commercial commodity in the survival equation of the people. Hair Parting is the process whereby the female body is directly part of the transactional process along with land and livestock. My wife is worth a lot of money, "boasts a husband. "She was worth five thousand rupees" (p. 23) and the narrator notes that in this culture "daughters... are auctioned for peanuts" (p. 26) and "treated like a pair of oxen, a few acres of land" (p. 23). This is a logic that is confirmed when the woman tries to leave her husband, and her husband does not want to give her a divorce, saying, "Has anyone ever given up their land or wife? (p. 26). Her body and her reproductive life is contained in systems of ownership and the female body is permanent private property.

The commercialization of the bodies under extreme economic pressure is at the heart of *Pirani*, and the migratory Brohi tribe is marked by the signs of deprivation on their physical bodies, travelling "barefooted" with "shredded and fading" (p. 52) clothes. In times of serious famine, the authority of the father becomes an economic transaction, in order to save the collective life. The father asks his young daughter to buyers, "Brothers, does anybody need a girl in marriage? (p. 53) a socially sanctioned mechanism (marriage contract) to make a financial sale. The child's body is turned into a means of survival, a basic currency, for the biological survival of the other family units, an example of severe poverty.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

These hierarchies are often legitimised by the combination of religious descent and feudal power, and thus form strong systems of truths that require total submission. In *Brat of a Shah*, the story illustrates the use of the claims of divinity as an effective power/knowledge. The agrarian community has no real respect for the secular landowner (wadera) but uncritical submission to "Saen Peeral Shah" is due to his being a Sayed. His appearance (with an "unshapely beard... eyes blackened with antimony and... oily hair" (p. 35)) is a visual symbol of his authority. Both ordinary people and local religious leaders (mullahs) bow down physically before this act of holiness, by bowing and touching his feet. Through the religious genealogy, a hierarchy is thus legitimated in which the elite have absolute power over the social and spiritual lives of the subaltern.

This is another example of the manipulation of spiritual power, as the local shrine economy is also in place to control resources in *Blackened Face*, along with the feudal system. The story is about the difference in the reproductive success of a rich landlord (Pir Dino) whose newborn child is welcomed with gold and silk clothes at the shrine, and a subaltern child Allah Dino who is sick. The poor family can't afford the four-rupee injection that is routinely needed, and the child dies. The shrine economy confirms and celebrates the elite lineage and the biological life of the poor is left unprotected, which is a proof of the merging of religious and feudal institutions for the marginalisation of the subaltern.

The implementation and internalisation of these class divisions are also manifested in the organisation of everyday transit and domestic spaces, and thus in the habits and expectations of the population. The public transport vehicle is a localised metaphor for spatial segregation of the state in *Lorry*. The front compartment is for landed elites and top bureaucrats who are able to travel without paying fares because of their "connections with government officials" (p. 47), and the overcrowded back compartment is for the working-class passengers. This physical separation is a technology of power which normalizes class differences, and makes subaltern passengers internalize their condition and treat the elite passengers with respect: "We have to travel anyway, but you are really a big gun!" (p. 46).

In *A Mother's Lap*, spatial regulation is at the domestic level, as well. The upper-class Begum Sahiba cleanses her house from the contamination of lower-class people. When she comes across a migrant worker who has dark skin children she says to her, "surely she is a sweeper!" (p. 91). This caste-coded labor labeling of subaltern bodies is a way of showing how class-based biases are used to spatially separate and thus maintain social distance in order to keep the home clean.

This ubiquitous control of human life is based on the historical shift and internalisation of political power. *He was a Hur* is a text which deals with the transition from colonial containment to postcolonial governance. The story is about how the colonial state used space to control populations by the encampment system, which involved "set[ting] on fire" rebellious villages and putting "captive women, children and military men" (p. 30) under strict military surveillance. This outside pressure becomes an inside pressure: "Their own government made a home in their hearts and minds" (p. 31). The main character, Khairo, goes from being a rebel to being a collaborator, justifying his collaboration by saying "God could forgive a man but the government could not" (p. 32). The state's power of punishment and control of life becomes an internal reality, and it shows how external surveillance becomes self-monitoring behavior, and makes the subject compliant.

Lastly, *Gratitude* challenges the upper class's ideology which is used to explain these structural inequalities. The elite characters talk of their relationship with the feudal lords, ministers, CSP officers, secretaries and ambassadors and define themselves through these. In their worldview,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

subaltern bodies are completely superfluous and they claim that they can "put in jail and kill with bullets" (p. 74) any subjects who oppose the order. This potential for violence goes hand in hand with an assumption of ideological conformity: The working class should be grateful to the elites for the jobs and industrial facilities they offer. This expectation produces a paternalistic discourse that presents systemic exploitation as economic goodwill, and makes the exploited subject of the discourse feel that he or she must be exploited in order to survive.

5. Conclusion

This study proves that the socio-political scene of the rural Sindh that Jamal Abro's *Pirani & Other Short Stories* (2017) depicts is governed by the entangled networks of biopower, sovereign coercion and institutional surveillance. The full analysis of these narratives shows that feudalism does not simply exist as an outdated land tenure system, but as a whole biopolitical system. This network comprises landlords, state police, judicial courts, medical establishment and shrine economy, which are responsible for managing, disciplining and exploiting subaltern population. The results show that in this semi-feudal setting, lives of humans are valued in an asymmetrical manner in terms of class, gender and lineage. Sovereign power is manifested in the ability to extract labor and leave behind marginalized bodies in times of environmental and/or economic crisis, as in *Black Water*, *Flame* and *The Coat of Khameeso*. At the same time, institutional systems are used to create compliant subjects, who internalize their subordination, as is shown in *Lorry*, *Pishoo Pasha* and *He was a Hur*.

Finally, Jamal Abro's short stories can be seen as a kind of literary archive which brings to light the structural operations of normalizing socio-economic inequalities in the Sindhi society. The text reveals the mechanisms by which subordination is maintained, by mapping the ways in which power is exercised through the use of everyday language, institutional practices and local systems of truth. This Foucauldian analysis is a valuable addition to South Asian literary studies, as it moves away from descriptive thematic readings of subaltern suffering to an analysis of biopolitical processes of human survival, identity and resistance. As Abro's work shows, literature is still a powerful means of dissecting the politics of life and exposing them within the postcolonial agrarian world.

References

- Abro, J. (2017). *Pirani & Other Short Stories*. (Original work published 1986 as *Pishu Pasha*). Oxford University Press.
- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press.
- Ali, M. (2017). Socio-political consciousness in modern Sindhi fiction. *Journal of South Asian Literary Studies*, 24(2), 112–128.
- Baig, S. (2015). Feudalism, landscape, and the subaltern voice: Re-reading Jamal Abro. *Sindh University Research Journal*, 47(3), 445–460.
- Botta, A., et al. (2024). Population management and the evolution of biopolitics. *Review of Politics and Life Sciences*, 12(1), 89–104.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

- Foucault, M. (1976). *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*. Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (2003). "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*. Picador.
- Gibson, W., & Brown, A. (2009). *Working with Qualitative Data*. SAGE Publications.
- Grewal, I. (2015). Postcolonial literary studies and the critique of power. *Contemporary South Asia*, 33(4), 310–326.
- Iqbal, Z. (2017). Mapping regional identities in Pakistani short fiction. *Pakistan Perspectives*, 22(1), 65–82.
- Jamali, K., & Hussain, M. (2022). Characterization and realism in Jamal Abro's short narratives. *Larkana Literary Review*, 8(2), 45–58.
- Khaskheli, M. (2019). Folk traditions and memory in Sindhi literature. *Mehran Quarterly*, 68(2), 12–29.
- Kulsoom Rind, S., & Mahesar, S. (2022). The construction of the gendered other in Jamal Abro's 'Pirani'. *Grassroots*, 56(1), 189–202.
- Laghari, A., et al. (2023). Class, hunger, and gender differentiation in the agrarian economy of rural Sindh: A study of Abro's fiction. *Journal of Socio-Cultural Studies*, 15(3), 201–217.
- Malik, N. (2024). Deconstructing patriarchal and capitalist structures: A Barthesian reading of 'Pirani'. *Pakistan Journal of Literature and Culture*, 11(1), 74–91.
- McKee, A. (2003). *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*. SAGE Publications.
- McLaren, M. A. (2002). *Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity*. State University of New York Press.
- Memon, R. (2019). Feudal hegemony and subaltern spaces in rural Sindh. *Sindh Academic Journal*, 14(2), 88–105.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Duke University Press.
- Parfenchyk, O. (2019). Defining biopolitics: Population management and the state. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 22(3), 341–357.
- Shaikh, A. (2018). The administrative state and landed power: Historical intersections in Pakistan. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 39(1), 120–137.