

Sana Iltaf¹ Fasih ur Rehman² Maham Nawaz³

Abstract: *This study examines the narratives of the Afghan Taliban through their poetry, contrasting the dominant Western portrayal of the group as violent extremists with their own self-representation (Johnson, 2013). Using postcolonial theory, the research explores themes of Watanwali (nationalism) as reflected in Taliban poetry, emphasizing its role in expressing Afghan culture, social norms, and identity. The analysis highlights the Taliban's use of poetry to convey grief, pride, and a profound connection to Afghan traditions and land. Incorporating elements of Afghan language, religion, and tribal codes, the poetry employs metaphors and symbols to articulate nationalism and serve as a form of resistance against foreign occupation. By inspiring Afghan youth to confront invaders, poetry functions as both a cultural artifact and a rhetorical tool. Textual analysis of pre- and post-9/11 poetry translations underscores its emotional depth and cultural significance (Mackee, 2003). The study concludes that Taliban poetry is not mere propaganda but a vital expression of Afghan identity and resistance, deserving critical scholarly attention.*

Key Words: Nationalism, Taliban, Afghanistan, Poetry, Resistance, Postcolonialism

Introduction

In the mid-1990s, the Taliban appears during the war against Russian troops. They are students from Islamic science schools (Madrassas) in southern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. After the Soviet withdrawal, when the Civil War gave rise to conflicts among the Afghan population, it also provided an opportunity for the Taliban to establish their government in the name of religion and to bring peace to Afghanistan. In 1996, the Taliban came into power and almost controlled two-thirds of Afghanistan (Smiles, 2004). They experienced challenges because of their strict Shariah laws and fundamentalist Pashtun code of conduct (Pashtunwali). Mullah Muhammad Omar was their first leader. Their policies include the total departure of women from public life (education and employment), a ban on music, and violent criminal punishment (Amiri, 2021). Anti-Taliban groups were Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazara in the northwest of Afghanistan. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States were the Islamic countries that accepted their government. By 2001, the West threatened the Taliban for helping Osama Bin Laden (a Muslim fighter) and the al-Qaeda network, which engaged in attacks on the United States. When the United States found that Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network were behind the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the Taliban refused to hand over Osama to them. In October 2001, with the support of Anti-Taliban groups, the U.S. commenced attacking Afghanistan. In early December, they achieved their goal of toppling the Taliban government. From 2001-2014, even though they were not in power, their members continued to exist at enormous numbers during the Afghanistan war.

In 2015, they returned with greater resilience and coordination among their Mujahidin. Their groups adopt new ways of fighting the insurgency, such as suicide bombing and consuming technology. In 2013, Mullah Omar died, and Akhtar Mansoor took leadership until he was killed in 2016. Then Hibatullah Akhundzada took leadership after him. Meanwhile, the Taliban insurgency forced the Karzai regime to

¹ M.Phil. Scholar, Department of English, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

² Lecturer in English, Department of English, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: fasihrrkk@gmail.com

³ M.Phil. English Literature, Department of English, Riphah International University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: mahamnawaz228@gmail.com

harmonize with the Taliban and Afghan government under President Ashraf Ghani. In 2018, the Taliban and the U.S. called meetings with the agenda of the departure of the U.S. army from Afghanistan. In 2019, the U.S. held a meeting based on the future agreement, but the Taliban still focused on a deal with the West. In February 2020, the United States signed an agreement with the departure of the U.S. Army within 14 months from Afghanistan. In exchange, the Taliban signed an agreement to end their bombing their bombing on US troops and to stop Al-Qaeda's ISIL (The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) operation in Afghanistan. Because of the Afghan government's delay, the deal lasted into 2021. In September, the U.S. withdrew its forces, and the Taliban came into power and took control of many districts. Their groups lack manpower against the Afghan regime. Subsequently, united by mid-August, they took control of almost all of Afghanistan, including Kabul (Johnson, 2007).

Marwaise Rahmany and Abdul Hamid Stanikzai are the translators of the poetry of the Taliban. Marwaise Rahmany was born in Nangarhar in 1983. At an early age, his father taught him English. In the late 1980s, because of Russia, he left his country and departed for Pakistan. In 2001, he began his medical studies at Herat University. He worked as an English teacher and continues to work as a translator. Abdul Hamid was born in Kapisa province in Afghanistan. In 2001, he worked as a computer operator in the Cartography head office. He has written and translated many texts and documents into English, Pashto, and Dari language.

The Poetry of Taliban is a translated work by Marwaise Rahmanay and Abdul Hamid Stanikzai, which reveals the insights and world view of Taliban to the universe. This collection contains more than 200 poems from members of the Taliban movement. These poems are written between 1990 and 2009. The opening section, Before September 11, refers to the soviet occupation and the destruction caused by Russian troops and the civil war in Afghanistan. The rest of the book focuses on the influence of colonization, the corrupt Karzai regime, and the United States' aggression in Afghanistan. This collection contains only one poem written by a woman, Asefi Nusrat. This dominance from the West and its allies portray the Taliban as emotionless, lacking humanity, and fundamentalist, but this collection proves their aesthetics, concerns, interests, and attachment to the tradition of Pashto poetry. This collection covers a wide range of themes. These are the cultural, political, and religious themes. This study also portrays their love themes (mystical and temporal love) and interest in relationships (Kłagisz, 2015). They picked such topics that are dearer to every Afghani's heart. They portray their honor victory against the invaders, the heroism of the Taliban, and foreign occupation as a threat to their religion, Islam, and remind Muslims of their moral duty to protect Islam and do Jihad against its enemies. Their poetry also throws light on how the Karzai puppet regime and corrupt politicians are attempting to manipulate our honor history, tradition, and religion. Their poetry portrays the continuity of Form and Thought in an ever-changing environment in Afghanistan (Weinreich, 2012). Through their poetry, they present the power of martyrdom and also suggest every brave Muslim should sacrifice them to save his country and religion. They warn puppet regimes, invaders, and the Afghan population if they befriend the enemy of their faith and homeland because, in their policy, supporting the enemy is prohibited. Their poetry portrays the exile in Afghan societies because of modernity, such as the massive consumption of alcohol, prostitution, and sexual abuse of children that were there in Kabul and other districts in Afghanistan. On the other hand, their aesthetics portray the beauty of their homeland in the form of visual images of mountains, lands, and infrastructures in Afghanistan.

Research Objective

The study has the following research objective:

- To analyze the portrayal of nationalism in the poetry of the Taliban
- To examine Taliban resistance towards the West portrayed by the Taliban in the poetry of the Taliban

Research Question

What are the elements of nationalism reflected in the poetry of the Taliban?

Literature Review

Post-colonial critic Abdul R. Jan Mohamed addresses the effectiveness of literature as a medium for



domination and as an instrument for an individual/colonized to determine in which category he/she can fix himself. Jan Mohamed reveals that these works have characteristics that can be used against imperial practices. His analysis suggests that an active reading of the literary text can assist post-colonial critics in re-writing a text and cause the downfall of colonial writing. This process of re-writing is more effective because it does not the dependency, but it breaks the effect of colonization and its concepts and beliefs. Gayatri Spivak also questions whether the Subaltern Speaks. Whether there is any possibility that the Subaltern can represent itself (p: 8). She demonstrates her interest in the difficulties and conflicts that occur in developing a Speaking Position for the colonized or subaltern. She concludes that there is no effective and unproblematic subject through which a subaltern can understand and express itself. Another post-colonial theorist, Homi K. Bhabha, argues that through literary texts, The West exercises authoritative control over colonized or others by controlling their concepts and aspirations. Bhabha's analysis also reveals that Western domination presents ambivalent attitudes of colonizers (Ashcraft, 1995, p. 9). Bhabha claims that annihilation and Subversion of colonial domination are possible because such authority is ambivalent, and it is never total, absolute, and perfect because of hybridity and mimicry. Bhabha describes resistance as the failure of colonial domination.

Resistance is the space between imperial domination and the colonized response to it. Bhabha locates the post-colonial conception as a medium of opposition, struggle, and refusal to the colonial authoritative narratives. It not only represents the opposition but also reveals colonized societies' achievements and transformations in politically effective ways. It means that the colonized societies used colonial theory as a means to deconstruct colonial knowledge and develop a different reading of the colonized self (Semple, 2011).

Ashcraft, Griffiths, and Tiffin report that in 1882, French Orientalist Ernest Renan defined a nation as "Something which newly emerges in history ."This concept of nations is not something ancient like Egypt, China, and ancient Chaldea (Ashcraft, 1971). Nations are not natural concepts, but they are socially constructed. Through the definition of a nation, Renan attempts to define nationalism as a political belief that perceives a nation as the basis of political organization. The term nations is unstable or changeable, and it contains sub-divisions of tribes, languages, cultures, and religious beliefs (Ashcraft, 1971). It is an in which specific peoples are hired to establish unification and some concepts and beliefs about elements of nationalism, such as national traditions and cultural values. It is an active corporate determination that inspires and motivates the majority of natives, and it demands inspiration from all of its signifiers and supreme loyalty toward it. It can also be defined as a moral duty or loyalty that connects or brings together specific identifiers through common organization, religion, culture, tradition, race, and language and, as a result, creates homogeneity and unity among them. Renan further adds that such specific identifiers of national elements and communities are always unable to represent it in its true spirit, receive and accept the influence, and strengthen the moments of any powerful group within any national formation. The formation of a nation is usually based on having great authority, control, and powerful domination within society.

Similarly, national community and tradition construction does not only refer to the legitimization of a group of people, but it also refers to the constitution and development of modern concepts of nationhood. This modern concept of nation-state needs to consider and legitimize all state organizations as representatives of national history, tradition, and culture. These apparatuses of a nation-state are religious sects, military forces, judicial branches of government, education systems, political parties, and organizations. These instrumentalities of a state power provide a homogeneous conception of national history and culture, which makes nationalism one of the most powerful forces in the formation and construction of a nation or country. In contrast, Ashcraft, Griffiths, and Tiffin also maintain that the concept of independence and self-determination, unification of social groups, and identification reveals conflicting notions of domination, enforcement, violence, and separation, which construct nationalism as an offensive force. Despite its offensiveness, nationalism is a most influential and potent site in twentieth-century study of government of states and politics. The 20th century has become the first period in which the world has recognized and accepted political conduct as that of nationalism. This concept of nationalism differs in every country according to that country's history, culture, and social structures. This concept demands the legitimization of community and a new ordering of social structure. Nationalism is a

European concept (Kettunen, [2018](#)). It began in the 17th and 18th centuries in the imperial European states concerned with affection and attachment to homeland, language, traditions, race, longing for political freedom, desire to establish peace, pride in honored history and culture, religion, and a belief in individual freedom. Furthermore, it includes a belief in the dominance of one's own nation, religion, race, and caste and a desire to suppress other nations (Lauri, [2019](#)).

In the early 19th and late 20th centuries, the Anti-colonial movement and national liberation movements that came into being in third-world countries represented the concepts of the nation in terms of resistant nationalism against imperial powers (Ashcraft, [2007](#)). These movements represent the concepts of a pre-colonial period to demonstrate opposition and resistance against colonization. Anti-colonial movements argue that such nations hold a sense of difference in terms of history, language, culture and tradition, race, and religion. These nations demand a separate country based on the formation of national bodies and instrumentalities. This analysis proves that nationalism masked by ideology is a powerful force for revolutionary change in colonized or neo-colonized countries. In the light of this European modal of nationalism, this study investigates the development of Afghan Nationalism in the poetry of the Taliban and defines the concept of Afghan Nationalism as follows: Afghan is a nation in which Mujahedeen serves as a dominant force in bringing together people of different races, religious and language (Strick, [2012](#)).

Theoretical Framework

The present study analyzes the Poetry of the Taliban, translated by Mirwais Rahmony and Hamid Stanikzai, from a Postcolonial perspective. This study uses Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, the Postcolonial Studies reader (1995) and Postcolonial Studies (Ashcraft, [2007](#)) to have a better understanding of Postcolonial theory. Ashcraft, Griffiths, and Tiffin maintain that from the late 1970s, post-colonial studies have referred to the historical aspect of colonialism and its influence and impacts on colonized societies. (Ashcraft, [1995](#)). Such effects are resistance, enslavement, suppression, repression, gendered and racial discrimination, inferiority, immigration, alienation, mimicry, ambivalence, hegemony, hybridity, and problems of representation. Such effects also involve an acknowledgment of the colonizer or imperial history, language, and influential literature. Indeed, post-colonial literature came into being as a result of interaction amongst the West practices and underdeveloped or Other Cultural Systems. In post-colonial societies, The West and its allies present discourses that portray them as most civilized, superior, rational, and well-mannered, while the colonized are uncivilized, savages, irrational, barbaric, brutal, fundamentalist, and lustful. They portray that it is white men's burden to civilize others because they have every reason to rule over them. Ashcraft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that post-colonial theory has emerged to perceive the conception, beliefs, and reactions to colonization all over the world. So, the word post-colonial represents the continuous practice of colonial society's suppression and material practices throughout underdeveloped countries. Because the colonizers practiced and performed through and upon individuals and societies.

Analysis

According to Ashcraft ([2007](#), p. 138), nationalism is the European concept that commenced in the 17th and 18th centuries in the imperial European states concerned with affection and attachment to the homeland, language, traditions, race, a celebration of political freedom, desire to establish peace, pride in honor history and culture, religion, and a belief in individual freedom. It is an active and cooperative organization that will inspire and motivate the majority of its natives and demands to inspire all its members and loyalty towards it. Poetry of the Taliban through the portrayal of elements of nationalism such as religion, race, culture and tradition, celebration of political freedom, attachment with place (Afghanistan), and pride in victorious history represents their supreme loyalty and affection for their homeland. Their portrayal of nationalism challenges the negative image portrayed by the dominant discourses of the West.

Religious nationalism is an aspect of nationalism that represents the notion of religion, and strong religious belief is a powerful aspect that constitutes the concept of nationalism. Religion is the dominant source of identity that can unify a group and create loyalty towards national movements. The poetry of the Taliban represents how their strong faith and religious belief, faithfulness, and the power of sacrifice in the name of religion and to protect their homeland from the enemies of their religion and country



motivates and empowers. Their movement and group towards the concept of nationalism. The religious poems of the Taliban include praise of God with the glorification of national lands and presentation of Taliban as national heroes who are not the cause behind the tragedy, but they are the victims of war while serving their homeland.

We are the Soldiers of Islam

*We are the soldiers of Islam, and we are happy to be martyred;
We are the men of the battlefield, and we fight on the front lines.*

*We defend our religion, and if we are struck for that we smile;
We appeal for liberty in our lives, we never give up
We are the soldiers of Islam, and we are happy to be martyred;
We are the men of the battlefield and we fight on the front lines.*

*We will eradicate all the Christians; this is our undertaking;
We depend on God, not on tools and equipment.
We are the soldiers of Islam and we are happy to be martyred;
We are the men of the battlefield and we fight on the front lines
We are the heroes of the era and we are the conquerors of every field;
Our enemies are shivering, we mount their forts.
We are the soldiers of Islam and we are happy to be martyred;
We are the men of the battlefield and we fight on the front lines.*

*Once again, the Khan of this era Ayyub Khan was the conqueror
We will remind them of Maiwand and we will reach Washington
We are the soldiers of Islam and we are happy to be martyred;
We are the men of the battlefield and we fight on the front lines.*

*Those who are imprisoned in corridors and under the Israeli hawks
Are looking at the prelude of a rising flood; we will not be deceived by their patrols and watchmen.
We are the soldiers of Islam and we are happy to be martyred;
We are the men of the battlefield and we fight on the front lines.*

*Oh Muslims! Rise! And March towards the qibla of Sutton
I am Ramani, advising you to get ready; we will reach our goal.*

Ramani 1 January 2007 (Strick and Kuehn. 2012, p.92)

This is a poem written by a Taliban member named Ramani. The target audience of his poem is the local Afghan population and the West. It centers on the variety of issues caused by foreign occupation and devotion and faithfulness towards their religion Islam. These issues are that foreign involvement is a threat to Islam, foreigners desire to manipulate their religion, and desires to bring Christianity into their country. The poet expresses that their religion Islam cannot be defeated because Islam has a true follower who dares to sacrifice everything for the name of their religion and homeland. The poet expresses his wish to willingly sacrifice his life and to lead their army against the enemies of their religion and country. It shows that personal freedom and national independence are the core values that are important to them. The poet is saying that they are protecting their religion and country. They have the power and spirit to tear their enemies into pieces. They are not materialistic. The poet is talking about the heroism of their ancestors and how they forced foreigners to depart from their country. They are the conquerors of their time, and the enemies are fearful of them. They are strong sufficient to defeat their enemies and to make them fearful. Some of their natives are following their cunning enemies because of fear but still, they are looking for a great change. The soldiers and followers of Islam have strong faith and unshakable beliefs that cannot be defeated and deceived either because of fear or of the power of foreigners. The reference to Ayyub Khan in the poem shows their strong intention to punish their enemies of religion and homeland. Like Ayyub Khan who played an important role in the war of Maiwand during the second Afghan war against occupiers, he got victory. They are also going to win the battle like him. The poet explicitly invites Muslims to join their movement and war against the invaders by encouraging nationalism and playing on nationalistic

sentiments and beliefs that are dear to every Muslim heart. This call for fighting against a “threat to Islam” and to remind their natives about their ancestors taking revenge and victory against invaders has been a powerful force to influence and motivate the Afghan population in this poem.

A Mujahed's Wish from His Mother

*Mother! Pray for me, I am going into battle tomorrow.
I am going to Allah's satisfaction without delay.
The battle has many rewards.
Allah will grant me paradise:
If I am martyred, I'll go to my leader with a white face.
If I head to my trench
To fight against the invaders,
I like pride and will head into the afterlife with pride.
If I don't make it back home,
This is my last will to my father and mother:
Don't be impatient; I head towards doomsday with a red shroud
Until the homeland becomes free
When all the betrayers are suppressed.
I go to the punishing plains of war with great courage.
You became Allah's blessing for us: Now, we all accept you, Abu Fazl.
I'll ascend to the sky in great honor.*

Abu Fazl (Strick & Kuehn, 2012, p. 198)

In this poem, the poet is expressing his desire to his parents to forbid mourning over his sacrifice because he is doing all this for Allah's will and to free his nation from foreigners. The poet strengthens and supports his argument by referring to the benefits of war against the enemies of their nation and religion. Here, he plays on national sentiments that it is a matter of pride and honor for Afghans to fight against the invaders and free their homeland from their evils. Here the poet's desire to be a martyr, wish for his parents, and intentions to take part in battle with bravery symbolize every honorable Afghan concern for their honor, pride, and respect for relationships. In Afghanistan, to their people, their pride, religion, honor, and respect are worth more than life, and they are capable of sacrificing everything for that. Another award of the battle of a Muslim is to receive a high place in heaven because he sacrificed his life for the name of religion and the independence of his nation. For every Muslim, life after death is real life, and if he receives, then it's worth more than his self-sacrifice. The poet appeals to his parents not to lament and complain. To God, if he does not return alive to them because he is doing this to suffer and punish the unfaithful enemies of his homeland to receive sovereignty and for the sake of his faith this religious homolytic and Wataniya (homeland) poem dwells on traditional political words and phrases and concepts that are deeply related with struggle for national independence and sovereignty pride and honor, affection for homeland bravery and courage given by strong religious belief and faith.

Homeland Song

*I want to honor my homeland, no matter if I am hanged, I shall sacrifice to you, my homeland.
If someone beheads me for you,
I will be proud as if I were your servant. If I am cut into pieces,
I will never obey anyone else as long as I live.
I will never bow down to anyone.
I don't accept to obey foreigners.
I took the zeal from my mother's milk; I took some lessons from my father.
I shall not step aside,
I don't desire power or a crown.
I desire nothing but you.
I don't care about being burned Death to he who is treacherous to you!
I never wanted happiness for them: I want them to be upset*



*I shall be out of reach of those people,
I don't call him a Pashtun when he becomes a slave
I don't bear the problems of those who salute to the foreigners,
I don't allow them.
Rich Watanwal would rather be poor.
Better to pain my heart for you. I've never claimed to be a master.*

Watanwal 16 December 2007 (Strick & Kuehn, [2012](#), p. 97)

This Watanwali chant represents the poet's attachment to his country, struggle for independence, and religious nationalism. The target audience of this song is the United States, anti-Taliban groups all over the world, and the local Afghan population. Through the use of powerful imagery, the poet presents his excessive favor and willingness to free his homeland from Americans and the betrayers befriending their country's enemies. War for independence, killing, self-sacrifice, and taking revenge from enemies is an honor and pride moment for a lover of his homeland who considers his life as a reward gifted by God to protect his homeland from the influence of others. The poet says that they are serving their country and will not surrender in front of their enemies because their lives are not worth more than their country's religion and their natives. This willingness to sacrifice life, desire to serve country and the power and bravery to punish invaders is because of the attachment and love in every Afghan heart for their motherland. The poet reveals that they are not fighting for power or to have a kingdom of their own but the love for the religion and motherland motivates them towards their purpose of independence from the foreigners and to have a sovereign state for their people. They are desiring a country where there will be peace, love, and beauty and where Muslims will be free to worship their God. Through the use of powerful words, the poet warns foreigners and the betrayers of their own country to stop their conspiracies about their homeland. Otherwise, they will have to face the wrath of the soldiers of Islam and lovers of their beloved homeland. Every Pashtun considers his homeland his pride and honor. If Watanwali does not mean pride and honor to someone, then he is not Pashtun at all, and the poet dares to end that betrayer's life without mercy. Even if it causes pain to him. This pain at the murder of his native is nothing in front of his nationalism (Hatimuria, [2020](#)).

Crusader Army

*It's the Crusader army, it can't tell mihrab from minbar.
They have come out of the dark, they don't know light.
It is an open-mouthed dragon hungry for human flesh.
It is a flood of red blood, and we can't tell the mountain from level ground.
They are wild animals that came out of the forest
They don't know any other art aside from war and fighting.
There are gunpowder flames and smoke from the bombs.
Bullets are falling everywhere, and you can't tell east from west.
Flame falls on them, falls on them, O the thunder of the sky!
The devoted Mujahid doesn't know death.
The lamp lights the blood on the path to independence.
A believer doesn't know any other cup except that of martyrdom.
We will go to the beach on the boat of jihad.
You are Muslim and don't know any other army except the Ghazis;
May you, Barialai, always be the hero of high steeds.
A mujahed never knows another leader.*

Barialai Mujahed (17 July 2008) (Strick & Kuehn, [2012](#), p. 105)

The title of this poem "Crusader Army" refers to the unfaithfulness, violence and cruelty of American troops in Afghanistan. In this poem the poet focuses on the violence, inhuman activities, the destruction caused by foreign forces in Afghanistan, Taliban nationalism, their religious faithfulness, and the power of martyrdom. The poet uses an iconic metaphor "open mouthed dragon" for the United States to expose their savagery and inhumanity, bloodthirsty and furious nature in the East. These Christians / are faithless and

ignorant. They cannot differentiate between right and wrong good and bad. The United States is hungry and only knows the language of war and probability the poet expresses that only religion teaches humans humanity and shows light to walk on the correct path, but these foreign forces do not have any faith and lack sympathy for humans. There are attacks, bombings and destruction everywhere in their beloved homeland Afghanistan. *"They are wild animals that came out of the forest"* In this line the word *"wild animal"* again is a metaphor for US troops to show their irrationality, barbarism, and united states undomesticated approach in Afghanistan. The word *"forest"* is used for the United States, *"Flame falls on them falls on them both under of the sky"* In this line the poet requests and appeals to supernatural power to inflict evil and destruction upon the enemies of Islam and their motherland. To a faithful follower of his religion and zealous lover of a country, death has no importance. The only thing that matters to a zealous mujahid is the way that leads towards his homeland and independence and security. The poet reveals that the attachment to their nation and natives, their faithfulness, and the power of martyrdom have been a powerful aspect throughout their struggle for independence that inspired them towards their goal to achieve.

Praise

*O God! I am astonished by Your work.
I am astonished by Your powers.
You created the garden.
And I am astonished by the flowers.
You created the sky and the earth.
I am astonished by all these things.
O God! Grant us happiness.
I am astonished by tragedy happening elsewhere.
I hope for security.
I am astonished by this time of trials.*

23 December 2007 (Strick & Kuehn, [2012](#), p. 113)

The religious poem of the Taliban not only includes their willingness to sacrifice their lives and to punish their country's enemies to show their nationalism, but it also presents glorification and prayers of Allah almighty and their appeal forum God to protect their people and homeland from the unfaithful and cruel foreigners. Similarly, in this poem, the poet directly refers to the greatness of Allah. God has created this beautiful world and only He has the power to create such great things. Humans cannot reach his power God has the power to grant human happiness and to eat their suffering and miseries. The poet expresses his astonishment over the greatness of God and shock and sadness over the awful and inhuman activities that are happening in Afghanistan. There is tragedy and bloodshed everywhere humans are causing pain to each other. As God has the power to provide happiness and prosperous life with this hope the poet appeals to God to end tragedy, to provide peace and independence to their natives from foreigners. In the line, *"You created the garden"* the poet uses the word *"Garden"* as a metaphor for Afghanistan and it symbolizes the beauty of Afghanistan. The poet uses Visual imagery in the lines *"And I can, and I am astonished by the flowers"* *"You created the sky and the earth"* *"O God grant us happiness"* and *"I am astonished by this time of trials"*. In the first line, the poet request praises God and hopes for an improved and independent life from God and then expresses his pain over the tragedy and his country to express his religious nationalism.

Pamir

*I know the black, black mountains;
I know the desert and its problems.
My home is the mountain, my village is the mountain and I live in the mountains;
I know the black ditches.
I always carry a rocket-launcher on my shoulder;
I know the hot trenches.
I always ambush the enemy;*



I know war, conflict and disputes.
 I will tell the truth even if I am hung on the gallows;
 I know the gallows and hanging.
 I don't care about being hot or cold;
 know all kinds of trouble.
 I am the eagle of Spin Ghar's high peaks;
 I know Pamir's canyons.
 I walk through it day and night;
 I know the bends of Tor Ghar.
 Bangles are joyful on the girls' hands;
 I know swords.
 Those who make sacrifices for religion;
 Faizani, I am familiar with such young men.

Faizani May 21, 2008 (Strick & Kuehn. [2012](#), p.23)

The title "Pamir" refers to the eastern Iranian ethnic group native to the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan. The poet expresses that he is familiar with the black Mountain and the arid lands in his country. He is aware of the problem and beauty of his native lands; the black mountains are his homeland and shelter, and it is more dear and precious to him than his life and the lives of his homeland's enemies. Furthermore, he expresses that he is familiar with the narrow excavation in the earth and the dangerous and unpleasant situation in those ditches but still, they are fighting against the enemies of their country, and from those hot ditches they are ready to take offense against their enemies by using weapons. They are not fearful of the calamity, suffering, and miseries that occur on the way to cause the downfall and eradication of foreigners. Taliban has the courage to attack enemies by surprise. The poet that is aware of the troubles that occur during the battle, and conflicts with powerful forces, however, such trouble cannot shake his beliefs and cannot change his attachment to his homeland even if it takes his life. He is aware of the Pamir Valley beauty, TorGhar mountains, Afghan culture, and zealous and faithful soldiers and Ghazis who have sacrificed lives for the country and religion. "I will tell the truth even if I am hung on the gallows, I don't care about being hot or cold" In these two lines the poet that life holds no importance in front of his faith and country. The hardships of the faith in independence cannot change his intention to punish and teach a lesson to his Homeland betrayers. "I always ambush the enemy" In this line the poet reveals ambitions and objectives to kill their nation's enemy and force them to depart from Afghanistan. Similarly in the line "I am Eagle of pen war high peaks" the poet uses the metaphor of eagle him to show similarity with Eagle. This metaphor is a sign of power and having qualities that are required to receive your purpose. While the phrase "Spin Ghar's high peaks" represents the whole of Afghanistan. "Bangles are joyful on the girl's hand" In this line the bangles on the girl's hand signify Afghanistan culture and are considered pleasurable and delightful. "I know Pamir's canyons" and "I know the bends of Tor Ghar", through the reference to the Pamir's valley and bend of Tor Ghar the poet tries to create a beautiful, enjoyable, and a pleasurable image of his homeland in the minds of the readers.

Place

Attachment with place and love for homeland is the aspect that constitutes the concept of nationalism. (Ashcroft, [2006](#)). In the *Poetry of the Taliban*, the poet expresses strong bonds and feelings of affection towards their country's homeland and soil. The place is Afghanistan. They show their affection towards their homeland in the form of glorification of national land, mountains, historical places, beautiful canyons, cities, and villages. Their poetry highlights the key aspects of the natural beauty of their homeland and makes them proud of the beauty of their country and landscapes. They use the imagery in their aesthetic which features national scenery and beautiful sights making the Taliban extremely proud and attached to Afghanistan. Besides the glorification of national scenery, they express their feelings of grief over the destruction of the homeland and elements that generate feelings of nostalgia when they talk about their Homeland's Natural beauty.

My Cottage

O homeland of beauty, be well!
May your flag be raised all over the world.
You have mountains, You have full seas.
You have beautiful deserts,
You are a piece of paradise; be this paradise!
O homeland of beauty, be well You are the trench of the brave.
You are the rug of the Pashtuns, the liver of every Afghan.
You are my cottage; be honorable;
O homeland of beauty, be well!
You are the turban of honour,
You are our respite amidst a long walk.
May your enemy be blamed everywhere, O homeland of beauty, be well!

August 18, 2008 (Strick & Kuehn, [2012](#), p.72)

The title of this poem, "My Cottage," has been used by the poet as a symbol for his homeland to express his strong attachment and adoration to Afghanistan. 'Cottage' refers to a home where an individual feels happiness and peace. In this poem, the poet considers his homeland as his home. Where he feels content pleasure and peace. The poet is praying for his homeland's success and prosperity. He glorifies the natural and stunning beauty of Afghanistan because it has beautiful hills and peaks, oceans, valleys, and seas. Afghanistan has a wonderful desert, and it is a place of complete blessing, delight, happiness, and peace, like heaven. It is the homeland of carriages and brave Pashtuns who forced foreigner to depart from their motherland and taught them lesson with great courage and pride. It is the honor of the Taliban, and belonging and attachment to this beautiful homeland makes them feel proud. Every Afghan desires to oppress the Invaders in their country. Likewise, in the line "O Homeland of beauty be well," the poet used the phrase 'homeland of beauty' for his homeland (Afghanistan) to portray his homeland as an ideal place full of natural beauty to present strong devotion towards it. "You are the rug of the Pashtuns," "You are the liver of every Afghan," "You are my cottage. Be honourable". In these lines, the poet portrays his homeland as pride and fortitude. He endurance and honor the Afghan population and call his homeland his home, where he feels pleasure and peace, and that shelters him from the miseries of the world. "You are my piece of Paradise; be this paradise." In this line, the poet uses the metaphor of paradise for his homeland. Paradise is considered a place full of pleasure, peace, and the end of worldly pain. For the poet, his homeland is like heaven for him where he feels peace and delight. "You are the rug of Pashtuns," "You are the liver of every Afghan." In these lines, the poet uses the symbol of 'rug' for Afghanistan to show their bravery and power, while the other word, 'liver', signifies endurance, desire, and love for Afghanistan. "You are our respite amidst a long walk." In this line, the poet portrays his homeland love as a sign of relief in their conflicts and their way of struggle for independence. "You have mountains," "You have full seas," and "You have beautiful deserts." The poet has used visual imagery that features national scenery and more stunning pictures and sights of Afghanistan in the minds of readers.

My Homeland

The land of the brave and of heroes,
The land of Malalai and Nazo.
The depths of the high Pamir became full again
With your love stories, my homeland!
Once again, it's an eaglet flying.
On the peaks of the high mountains.
We'll sacrifice ourselves to you,
My homeland of the partridge-eyed and those with the green mark.
May you be honored amongst your competitors,
Land of turbans.
Once again, make the leaves garden green,
The land of pines and cypresses.

Noor Muhammad Saeed 15th September 2008 (Strick & Kuehn. [2012](#), p.73)



In this poem, the poet praises and owes the homeland to its daring and spirited soldier. It is a nation of heroes and spirited and fearless women like Malalai and Nazo. These two daring women are the folk heroes of Afghanistan. Malalai fought with Ayyub Khan in the war of Maiwand and is still considered the reason behind the victory in Afghanistan. Nazo is a famous Afghan poet and courageous fighter in the history of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the home of these two courageous grandmothers of their nation. The poet expresses that the attraction towards the homeland and its love stories among people is at its peak, and it provides his natives with the confidence to continue their struggle for national independence. Again, their soldiers fly towards their enemies, and it is like an eagle flying on high hills. The poet expresses that national love and responsibilities tend to hold greater importance than personality in the lives of Taliban Mujahidin. They are ready to be martyred for their homeland. The poet calls his homeland a country of wise and courageous people and women who put green marks on their heads to represent their culture; to show his attachment to his nation, the poet reveals his desire for his homeland of beauty and the honorable nation of Pashtun to be victorious and beautiful *"The land of the brave and of heroes"* *"The land of Malalai and Nazo"* in these lines the poet expresses his attachment with the landscapes of his homeland by referring to it as the soil of the devoted, daring and honor. He praises his homeland with these words. *"You be honored among your competitors, land of turbans."* In this line, the poet shows the best in his heart for his homeland to be powerful and champion between its rivals. *"Once again it's an eaglet flying."* In this line, the poet compares the soldier's struggle for independence with the eagle flying, which signifies that victory is coming in their way and the faith of being victorious over the evil means the foreigners.

Conclusion

My analysis of Taliban poetry suggests that the Taliban carefully picked the concept of nationalism to be portrayed in their poetry. This analysis reveals that their poems are developed positively to reflect their attachment to their beloved homeland and values that are dear to every Afghan and Taliban in particular. This analysis of Taliban poetry challenges the portrayal of the Taliban as violent and uncivilized and the propaganda that they have no concern for their homeland. In the state, their poetry explicitly exposes the Afghan Taliban's devotion and affection for Afghanistan and their resistance towards the West and anti-Taliban groups (Johnson, 2011). This analysis focused on a variety of key elements of nationalism, including religion, race, place and tradition, and victorious shared Afghan history. The concepts portrayed by Taliban poetry are clear and to the point. The element of nationalism is portrayed by iconic portraits of the West and honored Pashtuns, symbolism, and imagery. Such symbols and imagery signify their bravery, love, homeland beauty, pride, hopes, emotions of grief and anger towards the foreigners, their counting betrayers, and the human loss and destruction of Afghanistan. Each of the elements is presented in a poetic form that portrays the attachment to their country. The poetic form is shown as familiar among the Afghan population. To their religious element, the Taliban, through their faithfulness and devotion towards Islam, represented their nationalism. Their religious homiletic poems suggest that their religion, Islam, and their courageous soldiers of Afghanistan cannot be defeated. The poetry also reflects their nationalistic sentiments and beliefs, which hold great importance in Afghan lives. This analysis suggests that the Taliban are national heroes, willing to accept martyrdom for Allah's rule and Afghanistan. West involvement and their Afghan puppets are a threat to religion and country, and these must be dug out from their roots. The Taliban have their Islamic rhetoric and nationalistic sentiments effectively. In their poems, they fuel the public anger towards the foreigners and the betrayers of their nation. Their religious poetry also suggests that worldly pain and self-sacrifice are gifts and blessings of God upon them, and these are not worth their religion and homeland. This analysis highlights major evils present in their country, including United States involvement in their country and their struggle to manipulate Islam by distracting people from their religion and tradition and by making local people deceive their land.

The present research also analyzed poems related with place and the soul of Afghanistan. These poems portray their strong attachment to place in the form of glorification of mountains, Pamir, peaks, canyons, valleys, and every place dear to them. Their poetry suggests the natural scenery of Afghanistan is a more interesting and memorable part of their lives using imagery, they portrayed that the national scenery makes the Taliban prouder and feel more attached to Afghanistan to express their devotion. In several poems, the poets called Afghanistan their cottage and home. This suggests that Afghanistan is a place where they feel content and peace.

References

- Akbar, M. (2015). A Critical Analysis of Taliban's Emergence in Afghanistan. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 35(1), 213–224. <https://pjss.bzu.edu.pk/index.php/pjss/article/view/302>
- Amiri, R., & Jackson, A. (2021). Taliban attitudes and policies towards education. *ODI Centre for the Study of Armed Groups*, 13. https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/taliban_attitudes_towards_education.pdf
- Ashcraft, R. (1971). Hobbes's Natural Man: A Study in Ideology Formation. *The Journal of Politics*, 33(4), 1076–1117.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). (2006). *The post-colonial studies reader*. Taylor & Francis.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2007). *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203933473>
- Hatimuria, P. (2020). Exploring the American Invasion of Afghanistan Through Fiction: A Comparative Analysis between a Thousand Splendid Suns and Poetry of the Taliban. *Journal of Xian University of Architecture and Technology*, 12(12), 173–179.
- Johnson, T. H. (2007). The Taliban Insurgency and an Analysis of Shabnamah (Night Letters). *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 18(3), 317–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592310701674176>
- Johnson, T. H., & Steele, K. L. (2013). The Taliban narrative: Understanding the group's messages, actions and clues to their endgame. *Naval Postgraduate School*. www.nps.edu
- Johnson, T. H., & Waheed, A. (2011). Analyzing Talibantaranas(chants): an effective Afghan propaganda artifact. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 22(1), 3–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2011.546572>
- Kettunen, P. (2018). The concept of nationalism in discussions on a European society. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 23(3), 342–369. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2018.1502943>
- Kłagisz, M. (2015). Temporal, mystic and religious love: the poetry of the Taliban. *Estetyka i Krytyka*, 37(2), 9–27.
- Lauri, A. D. (2019). The Taliban and the humanitarian soldier: Configurations of freedom and humanity in Afghanistan. *Anuac*, 8(1), 31–57. <https://doi.org/10.7340/anuac2239-625X-3623>
- Mackee, A. (2003). *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*. London. Sage Publications
- Semple, M. (2011). Rhetoric of resistance in the Taliban's rebel ballads. *Harvard Kennedy School, CARR CENTER for Human Rights Policy*.
- Smiles, J. (2004). The Taliban regime in Afghanistan. *Journal for Contemporary History*, 29(2), 221–240. <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/EJC28312>
- Strick van Linschoten, A., & Kuehn, F. (Eds.). (2012). *Poetry of the Taliban* (M. Rahmany & H. Stanikzai, Trans.; Preface by F. Devji). Hurst & Co.
- Weinreich, M., & Pelevin, M. (2012). The Songs of the Taliban: Continuity of Form and Thought in an Ever-Changing Environment. *Iran and the Caucasus*, 16(1), 45–70. <https://doi.org/10.1163/160984912x13309560274055>