



The Militarised University and the Everywhere War*

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The post-9/11 global political climate has seen an unprecedented growth in the spheres of cultural and knowledge production in Pakistan. This growth has taken place alongside a simultaneous multi-scalar expansion of the Pakistani state-military apparatus into all spheres of life as well as an influx of global capital with similar wartime agendas into the cultural and academic spheres. We are interested in understanding the effects on academia and culture of Pakistan's participation in the war on terror as it transformed and proliferated into what Derek Gregory calls an everywhere war, where war becomes 'the pervasive matrix within which social life is constituted' (Gregory, 2011: 239). Contextualizing this stage against a history of repression and censorship by the Pakistani state, we trace the trajectories of the academic-military-industrial complex in an attempt to uncover the mechanisms and consequences of the neo-colonial university in Pakistan as it increasingly becomes an instrument for state surveillance and propaganda.

The policing of academic production has rapidly accelerated in recent years under the narrative of countering violent extremism. In 2017 with the emergence of Radd-ul-Fasad – a new nation-wide military operation – the military has become increasingly flagrant about their involvement in higher education institutions, simultaneously denigrating these spaces as 'breeding grounds' for antinational politics and instrumentalising them towards their vision of the national project.

In a neo-colonial state fighting a neo-colonial war we cannot extricate these developments and this discourse from a global countering violent extremism campaign. We explore the way in which culture and the art school have been weaponised and the cultural landscape irrevocably transformed as the everywhere war has entered the field in the form of international aid and donors – marking a new stage in the historically colonial nature of the art school. This cultural resurgence that has sprung up via unprecedented global capital, surfacing in the form of public art and countless literature festivals, has taken place alongside a simultaneous military-sponsored occupation of higher education and a series of debilitating attacks on alternative

cultural/pedagogical spaces. We attempt to make sense of the dual forces of the military-state apparatus and global cultural capital, which are both linked through a narrative of countering violent extremism in Pakistan.

Histories of Academic Policing

To better understand our own precarious positionalities within the academic-military-industrial complex, we must trace out longer genealogies through which the age-old alliance between the academy and state power can become clear. Tracing earlier instances of state regulation in the academy makes visible the historical continuities between crisis and the boundaries of containment, revealing the many thresholds of academic repression. From its early years, the state was invested in the production and policing of foundational truths about the nation-state and its apparatus of imperial violence. It had inherited from the British regime, and carried forward, a system of higher education that was embedded in colonial structures of repression and militarism. One of the earliest instances in Pakistan of violent policing on campus was during the language movement protest at Dhaka University on 21 February 1952. Students were gathered to protest against the state and demand for Bangla to be made the national language. Police opened fire at this peaceful protest, killing several students. The number of deaths was never confirmed. Less than a year later, on 8-9 January 1953, students protesting for state funding at DJ Science College in Karachi suffered a similar fate.

To legitimise these acts of police brutality, student activism was invariably cast as 'anti-Pakistani' by the state. It viewed the university with suspicion, as a dangerous breeding ground for anti-national dissent, in need of strict control and surveillance in order to contain threats from 'destabilising forces'. The Central Safety Public Ordinance, passed after the events of 1952 in Dhaka University, allowed for preventive detention of students and the arbitrary imposition of Section 144 that banned public assembly. This colonial law was resurrected in the name of 'safeguarding and protecting the freedom of Pakistan' (Toor, 2009: 204). Using the fiction of freedom, the colonial machinery of repression and control was imposed upon students and citizens to regulate the production of proper subjects in the new imperial nation. From the inception of Pakistan, the university was tightly placed within the network of state apparatuses of discipline, surveillance, carcerality and violence.

With the onslaught of Pakistan's first military regime under Ayub Khan in 1958, leftist student groups were banned on campuses and democratic expression was criminalised. In 1959, when students planned to organise a peaceful protest against the visit of President Eisenhower, the military pre-emptively arrested student leaders of the left, who were incarcerated for over a year. In 1961, following a mass student demonstration, hundreds were arrested and twelve students were put under trial in military courts for the first time (Gayer, 2014: 55). These same military courts have recently been re-established in Pakistan in 2015 and are increasingly being utilised to convict and execute alleged anti-state elements including many students. These trials are carried out in complete obscurity under the guise of an urgent

need to swiftly and uncompromisingly counter the pervasive threat of extremism.

In 1977, when the next military dictator, Zia-ul-Haq, came to power, he had witnessed the 1968-9 student uprising that had overthrown Ayub. He realised that banning student organisations and incarceration were not enough to mitigate the dangerous threat posed by students to his regime. He attempted to contain the influence of left-wing forces on campuses by patronising the opponent faction of Islamist student activists and providing them with firearms (Gayer, 2014: 64). The Zia regime facilitated the militarisation of student politics as a strategy to silence left-wing students. However, with the US-sponsored Afghan jihad ongoing, other students were also able to acquire arms in response. The arrival of weapons on campuses at Pakistani universities resulted in persistent student warfare in the 1980s, which conveniently distracted students from earlier intellectual traditions of political critique and protest against the military-state and forced them to battle against each other.

Shoot outs and killings became a regular routine at Karachi University as weaponisation escalated on campus and throughout the city. It was against this culture of violence in public universities, that the first private universities started opening after Zia's regime granted the charter to private universities in 1983. As public universities were increasingly cast as unsafe and volatile spaces in the media, these new private universities were marketed as privatised, securitised spaces free from both student militias and state intervention. Students who had grown disillusioned as a result of the militarisation of student politics started seeking out these safe, private environments. However, in the corporate and industrialised restructuring of higher education, politics was left outside the gates of such institutions. These knowledge factories fostered the anti-intellectualism that divorced knowledge from broader socio-political contexts and historical debates, alongside 'a natural affinity for cultural conservative agendas' (Saltman, 2014: 253). As Saltman explains, neoliberal privatisation of education sees 'education not as a public good ideally serving a democratic society but a private good primarily used for prepping workers and consumers for the economy'. In this equation schools are seen as businesses, neighbourhoods as markets, students as consumers and knowledge as a product.

In the 2000s, the next military dictator Pervez Musharraf continued to support neoliberal policies of privatisation in the university sector. In 2002, he founded the Higher Education Commission (HEC), meant to oversee, regulate and accredit all public and private sector universities. Private education became a flourishing business, as 42 new private universities opened up in this decade (Halai, 2013: 777). Under the pretense of academic freedom and safety, these private institutions continued to closely monitor and regulate their students. As higher education became transformed into a corporate business, profit became the driving factor for curtailing student freedoms. Under no circumstances did these institutions want students and teachers unionising and protesting against tuition fee hikes or demanding higher faculty salaries. Formation of student and teacher unions was strictly prohibited, with the universities often using tactics of intimidation and silencing; and in the cases where such unions did exist, they functioned merely as perfunctory bodies. Politics continued to be anathema to the administration.

State surveillance and policing within private institutions continued, as the growing sector of private education remained central to providing the identities, subject positions, knowledge, labour, and legitimating ideologies that placed students securely within the grip of the military-state. In the months of April-May 2015, Pakistan witnessed a series of repressive attempts by the military-state to police knowledge production in the university. One of the first widely known cases of censorship occurred at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) – a private university. The student council had organised an event on campus titled Unsilencing Balochistan. The panel discussion was to feature – on the home turf of Pakistan’s military elite – activists from the province of Balochistan where the Pakistani army has been brutally fighting a series of separatist insurgencies since 1948. The day before the event, members of the state intelligence had walked into LUMS and demanded that the administration cancel the panel. Despite widespread student protests, the administration complied with state orders. Almost two weeks later, in response to this state enforced censorship in the university, the same event was held in the non-institutional community space of The Second Floor (T2F) in Karachi. That night, on her way home from the event, Sabeen Mahmud – the founder/director of T2F – was shot dead.

This precarious moment served as a reminder for those of us in the academic community about the workings and consequences of the academic-military-industrial complex. The relentless silencing of academic discussions on Balochistan within university and cultural spaces was clear proof of how the state continues to regulate the boundaries of what is permissible and desirable to express and discuss in these intellectual spaces. Within this renewed atmosphere of fear and surveillance, the Punjab Government issued a letter to all public and private universities that clearly demarcated boundaries of discourse that were acceptable to the state. It censured all critical and political discussions as ‘anti-Pakistan’ and ‘anti-cultural’, and demanded that academic institutions comply with a patriotic responsibility to nurture ‘nationalism’. Use of such rhetoric shows how the university is a key arena for the production and reinforcement of patriotic citizenship and nationalist discourse.

The Unsilencing Balochistan seminars had become the focal point of censorship and academic containment precisely because they threatened to rupture national narratives. As charged sites of dissident knowledge production, they challenged the silence around illegal military operations and states of exception that routinely reduce Baloch citizens to ‘bare life’, to be monitored, contained, curtailed and, when need be, killed with impunity. This discussion exposed the military-state’s nation-building project to be founded on, and sustained through, imperialism, war and violence. It became a matter of ‘national security’ to shut it down.

The Art school and the Weaponisation of Culture

The 1990s saw a surge in the opening of new art schools in Karachi. The Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture was founded in 1989 by a group of established architects, designers and artists including prominent figures such as Noorjehan Bilgrami, Aqeel Bilgrami,

Shahid Abdullah and Shehnaz Ismail. IVS was the fourth private university in Pakistan to be granted a charter by the state. The Visual Studies Department in Karachi University was founded by renowned artist Durriya Kazi in 1998. Prior to this, art schools could only award diplomas, but these schools created the first generation of artists with degree qualifications. In subsequent years, neoliberal privatisation brought significant new capital to the art economy, with a mushrooming of art galleries ushering in the onset of art investment and creating a new class of art collectors. The expanding local art market firmly bound together the worlds of art and finance in new ways. In this growing neoliberal economy, production of art, and thereby art education, could not be disassociated from capital. The art school became a key site for channelling the labour of students into the exploitative circuit of capital within the art commodity system and these art schools quickly became central figures in the cultural landscape of Pakistan.

However, the education-industrial complex that dominates art schools today is not simply the result of neoliberal privatisation, but dates back to the pedagogical practices enforced in colonial art schools in the second half of nineteenth-century India. These schools of 'industrial art' were opened with purely economic motivations to preserve and improve traditional art industries, through the imposition of British aesthetics and methods of instruction (Kantawala, 2012). These schools were meant to impart the skills necessary to improving the quality of Indian manufactured goods for the British market. Today, while the word 'industry' has been removed from the titles of post-colonial art schools, the foundational relationship between art and industry remains. As Mahrukh Tarapor notes, the early schools 'operated largely as vehicles for a kind of cultural imperialism in which curiously misplaced models of western academic art were imposed on Indian students to the detriment of any training whatsoever in native techniques' (Tarapor, 1980: 62).

The art school played a key role within the colonisation of concepts of time, development and growth within the cultural sphere, as local crafts and traditions with their own pedagogical methodologies and practices were absorbed into a European pedagogical system. Art forms that required lifetimes to evolve across generations of learning, development and apprenticeship – like calligraphy or miniature painting – were now reconstituted into new formulations of knowledge, pedagogy and temporality. These absorptions and appropriations not only functioned as a form of cultural imperialism and anthropophagy but also worked to create bodies of labour trained to manufacture in the service of colonial needs. The major mechanism instituted to perform this disciplining was thus the art institution.

Contemporary art schools continue to perform a similar function. The Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi was founded in 1989 during a growing culture of neoliberal privatisation. Its founders explain that the idea for this school emerged in part as a response to the growing urban violence where they felt 'an urgent need to introduce positive energy to the strife-torn city' (Bilgrami, 2003: n. pag.) IVS was envisioned as a private institution that could provide 'an environment to nurture the young, become an oasis in the parched city and help reduce the fragmentation of society' (Bilgrami, 2003: n. pag.) This oasis is today an elite,

neoliberal campus-enclave; safe, secure and separate from the violence and volatilities of the city. In this privatised space, art education is framed as a consumable commodity and culture is imagined as an antidote to the violence and politics of the city.

Alongside this neoliberal turn, local art institutions have also been organised by the neo-colonial configurations of the global art economy and its cultural sphere (Toukan, 2010). In the years following 9/11 and the war on terror, the neoliberal turn of the local art market has intersected with, and taken place alongside, an unprecedented growth in global demand for, and fascination with, cultural and knowledge production from Pakistan. Art schools like IVS have played an integral role in preparing students for this wartime boom in demand for cultural production from Pakistan. In its most recent phase this neo-colonial relationship has taken the form of a huge influx of US and European aid to the cultural sector. This aid comes with its own wartime agendas and aesthetic presuppositions, and in recent years has flooded and saturated the cultural field in Pakistan. Art schools have enthusiastically tapped into this new aid infrastructure, collaborating widely across art and design departments with these aid organisations.

One recent collaboration that has been widely covered in the media took place between the fine art department at IVS and the Karachi Youth Initiative (KYI) – a local ‘funnel’ organisation for USAID to sidestep the growing scepticism and fears amongst local organisations about accepting USAID money. ‘Reimagining the Walls of Karachi’ was a much-lauded project for which both KYI and IVS received rave reviews in the local and international press, and which covered an overwhelming number of walls in the city. Part of USAID’s CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) stream, the project set out to cover supposedly rampant ‘hate graffiti’ in Karachi by replacing it with aesthetically pleasing imagery. In this discourse, graffiti was framed in entirely negative terms as religiously motivated and hate mongering – while Karachi, as was often the case with KYI projects, was framed as a terror-ridden city in which the potentiality of violence lurked at every corner and was inscribed onto every surface. The goal was to fight extremism by painting over the ‘hate graffiti’, which was often little more than advertisements for small businesses, such as barbers or homeopaths (graffiti being the cheapest and most accessible form of advertising in the city), or simply expressed the slogans of political parties. The guidelines for artists responding to USAID’s CVE call for submissions asserted that there be no text and no ‘religious or political imagery’ while encouraging ‘landscapes/cityscapes/patterns/designs’. The result was a depoliticised aesthetic – colourful, celebratory and often orientalist in nature.

One of the longest stretches of wall covered by the project unfolded on MT Khan road: down the street from, and dwarfed by, a long, white, stretch of the untouched twenty-foot high blast-resistant walls lining the new US consulate. Despite these walls being used as a site for this project of aesthetic regeneration, the violence inscribed upon the walls, with snipers stationed every few feet down the road, remained unaddressed by artists. Through this collaborative project, KYI, IVS and the artists involved instrumentalise art and culture against the ever-present threat of fundamentalism. In these collaborations, the art school itself becomes

the primary local institution through which global corporate and imperial powers calibrate art's function in line with the demands and political vision of the emerging everywhere war.

The art school becomes a knowledge/cultural production factory producing creative and cultural labour dictated by the demands and agendas of the emergent imperial aid infrastructure which is marketed as countering violent extremism. Countering Violent Extremism, a program initiated by the Obama Administration in 2011 refers to "noncoercive longer range tools deployed in an effort to counter violent ideologies and narratives" in US and abroad "combining bolstered investments in soft power with sustained military and law enforcement efforts." The key currency of soft power is culture. In addition to public art, film and literature festivals have been another major addition to the cultural landscape of Pakistan bolstered by USAID support alongside other diplomatic missions under similar self-aggrandising claims of countering extremist ideologies. USAID's humanitarian aid in culture is not just a noble cause to inculcate "hope, pride and ownership in the citizens of Karachi", but entrenched in imperial and military goals to protect US security interests in the post 9/11 world order.

The art school is also coopted by the military-state for hypermilitarised knowledge production. The army's agenda for disseminating soft power through art schools is evident at the National College of Arts (NCA), where the Film and Television Department has been working for the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistani military, on marketing campaigns. This collaboration with the military and intelligence agencies is visible on the surfaces of the department's walls - which have been plastered with NCA-made posters voicing support for military operations, as well as nationalist installations of images commemorating army 'martyrs' through the many years of war. In this way, art education and art production is co-opted for visualising dominant state narratives that sustain the militarised apparatus of the Pakistani state. These imperial visualities sustain a highly militarised and jingoistic culture, and enable the normalization of violent processes in everyday life to a point where subjects become unquestioning supporters of violent structures and practices, in the name of patriotism. Art schools, previously sites of resistance and protest against the military state during the Zia regime in the 1980s, are increasingly being activated for the production of visual narratives and soundtracks for the war on terror. In this sense the art school, in collaboration with international capital and the military-state, wields an extraordinary amount of power in shaping the politics and aesthetics of the Pakistani cultural sphere. Today, the art school constitutes the main mechanism for the reproduction of a creative labour that is trained in discourses and skills which service the neo-colonial project and take on a neo-colonial war.

Radd-ul-Fasaad and the Militarisation of Universities

On 24 February 2017, a day after a bomb blast tore through a shopping plaza in Lahore, the law enforcement agencies evacuated the hostels of the National College of Arts following an undisclosed security threat. The college stayed shut for one week until given security clearance.

In the same week, the Pakistan army launched its new countrywide military operation Radd-ul-Fasad. While military operations so far have been limited to specific regions, Radd-ul-Fasad is the first of its kind – a nationwide operation that re-envisioned counter-terrorism as ‘the everywhere war’. Derek Gregory defines the everywhere war as the replacement of the concept of the battlefield in the military doctrine by the multi-scalar, multi-dimensional ‘battlespace’ with ‘no front or back’ and where ‘everything becomes a site of permanent war’ (Gregory, 2011: 239). The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa, in a speech given at a seminar titled ‘Role of the Youth in Rejecting Extremism’, in May 2017, heralded this operation as the most critical phase of our war against terror, transitioning “from major operations against terrorism to more intricate, targeted operations against residual threats.”

In this seminar, organized by the ISPR as part of new counter-terrorism measures, the COAS also made clear that the first line of defence for Radd-ul-Fasad are educational institutions and media houses. He clarified that this includes not only madrassahs but also institutes of higher learning. He further elaborated, “having defeated terrorism physically, now [terrorists’] deceitful message and narrative must also be defeated,” i.e.: the enemy must be decisively defeated not only in battle but also in ideology. Here the university and media – both key sites of knowledge and cultural production – are cast as the new battlegrounds of counterterrorism. Nicholas Mirzoeff explains that post 9/11 global counterinsurgency takes culture to be the means, location and object of warfare: war is culture. Counter insurgency has become “a digitally mediated version of imperialist techniques to produce legitimacy” (Mirzoeff, 2009: 1737). We see the Pakistani army’s renewed interest in these sites of knowledge production as a way of acculturating citizens to its proliferating violence and control. The result is an increasingly militarised university, geared towards the production of values supporting the pervasive surveillance and securitisation under the guise of an unlimited war against terrorism.

Already in 2016, all universities in Punjab were instructed to revamp security arrangements: to install more CCTV cameras, to build an eight-foot-high wall with barbed wire, to hire more security guards, reduce entry and exit points, and conduct ID and body searches of all students entering. While this already reflects the insidious diffusion of military debates around security into the space of the university, what is new about Radd-ul-Fasad is that it treats the university not simply as a potential target of attack, but also as a threat where students are seen as dangerous bodies to be observed, tracked and targeted. This is reflective of an evolving military urbanism, which Stephen Graham defines as “encompassing a complex set of rapidly evolving ideas, doctrines, practices, norms, techniques and popular cultural arenas through which the everyday spaces, sites and infrastructures of cities – along with their civilian populations – are now rendered as the main targets and threats within a limitless ‘battlespace’” (Graham, 2009:388).

In April 2017, the Sindh Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted a survey in the province’s jails to evaluate the threat posed by the ‘educated hardcore militants’, claiming that out of 500 surveyed militants, at least 64 had a masters degree or higher and 70 had a

bachelors degree (Dawn, 17 Apr 2017). This survey, along with media coverage of a recent spate of terrorist activities linked to students from public and private universities, served to augment existing fears that universities have become 'breeding grounds' for terrorism and extremism. The media introduced countless pieces that framed the university as a threat to national security. Headlines asked: 'Are universities in Pakistan becoming a breeding ground for terrorism?' and 'Universities – incubators of fanatical minds?' These scripted vocabularies evoke the university as a failed and feral space – dangerous, unchecked and insecurely governed. These strategic representations of insecurity work to advance and legitimise further militarization of campuses, enabling the tightening of the military's grip on campuses and justifying the need for a more vigilant regulation and policing of students.

The current militarisation of the university places a new demand on university administration and faculty for greater cooperation with law enforcement agencies. Since the launch of Radd-ul-Fasad, the military and the CTD have organized numerous talks, seminars and conferences to call upon university leaders, administrators and academics to join the fight against terrorism. In one such seminar which was attended by the Vice Chancellors of forty universities from Sindh, the CTD outlined the need for new research centres, collaborative vigilance teams on campus, better CCTV surveillance and mandatory peer, faculty and parent reporting to more effectively monitor students and detect 'suspicious activities' (The News, 11 Jul 2017). Citing the case of Noreen Leghari who was radicalised through social media, he also called for greater online surveillance of students, widening the net of surveillance from physical spaces of campuses to cyber space. The emphasis on national security, as Nicole Nguyen argues, folds education into the assemblage of disciplinary technologies used to advance military intervention (Nguyen, 2014: 111). By transforming the university from a public good to a security risk, this new surveillance regime dangerously co-opts teachers, administrators and students as agents of the state. As the ISPR public service messages repeatedly exclaim, "every Pakistani is a soldier of Radd-ul-Fasad." These priorities shift the purpose of education away from fostering critical thinking to training the youth for the war on terror.

Alongside the physical securitisation of campuses, universities are also engaged in the militarisation of knowledge, what Armitage defines as "the militarisation of facts, information, and abilities obtained through the experience of education" (Armitage, 2005: 221). They operate as "a training ground for the state, its military machine, and the corporations, thus obscuring the fundamental functions of critical knowledge production." Ranging from patriotic army banners hanging on university walls, to the active role of the army and paramilitary in organizing talks, events and extra-curricular activities on campus, these practices normalise the boundless process of militarisation, of both the urban landscape and realms of culture, collapsing the distinction between military and civilian binaries. They teach students to valorise the army and become willing participants – as workforce and patriotic citizens – in violent structures and processes in the name of national security and patriotism.

Hypermilitarised knowledge production is also closely linked to the neoliberal economic

practices through what Giroux (2007) calls the trilogy of forces that shape contemporary education, namely, “patriotic correctness, consumerism, and militarization.” As part of the academic-military-industrial complex, universities are embedded in a predatory neoliberal economic order. The Higher Education Commission Vision 2025 introduces the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its large-scale investment in infrastructural development as a game changer in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. It states, “Higher Education has to play a critical role in preparing and providing competent, skilled human resources to fully participate in all phases of this transformative mega project,” building an “intellectual corridor”, alongside the much lauded “economic corridor”, to open new information and skills super highway” (HEC, 2017). The military has been heavily involved in securing the entry of CPEC into the Pakistani landscape through heavy-handed and violent methods. The sites for CPEC roads, trains, mines and power plants have been heavily militarized over the previous years, through raids, disappearances and the destruction of homes and villages. The language of CVE has also been instrumentalised to build support for this project and its concomitant militarisation. The narratives fluctuate between: CPEC, a vehicle for progress and development, is symbolic of the nation’s victory against terrorism, and: we must fight terrorism with a renewed determination in order to make space for CPEC. Both narratives overlap and reinforce one another in a feedback loop uniting anti-terrorism and development efforts. With the inauguration of the ‘intellectual corridor’, the university becomes a new site for militarization and securitization in the name of CPEC as paramilitary presence at universities is increasingly justified in the name of securitising space for this project.

A worrying consequence of the militarisation of universities is the new control it gives the military over knowledge production, by which they are able to eliminate spaces of critique and dissent. It is important to note the ways in which the unchecked presence of law enforcement agencies on campus actually heightens insecurity and violence for students. The language of terrorism has been useful in legitimizing the military’s own violence under the heading of counterterrorism and security operations delegitimizing acts of resistance. Through hyper-militarised knowledge production the military-state exercises the power to name what is to be considered extreme and who is to be regarded radical, and in this way counter terrorism laws are used inordinately to silence and criminalize all forms of and potential for dissent.

Conclusion

Art schools and other universities continue to be mobilised for the production of discourses and subjectivities that maintain first colonial, and subsequently neo-colonial, configurations of global power. However, in the same way that sites of knowledge production, especially when institutionalised, can become sites for the perpetuation of systems and structures of governance, surveillance, colonialism, class rule, and alienation, they can also be turned into sites of refusal, sites for the reappropriation of the tools of ideology, and sites for the production of counter discourses, subversion of knowledges and the production of new

radical subjectivities. These sites of knowledge (counter-)production are spaces of struggle, forged in conflict and demanding high stakes for all who participate within them (Caffentzis & Federici, 2009: n. pag).

Alternative pedagogical spaces in the city play a crucial role not as a withdrawal from the university project, but as spaces that directly intervene and disrupt the institutionalised colonial modes of knowledge and cultural production, dissemination and circulation. They provide us with alternate pedagogical and cultural environments and critical methodologies that often situate these spaces in direct opposition to the state. In recent years, alongside the expansion of state intervention in higher education and global capital in the cultural sphere, there has been an alarming and systematic silencing of such alternative spaces.

OPP-RTI, The Syed Hashmi Reference Library and The Second Floor are three cultural/pedagogical spaces in Karachi that stand witness to the early entrance of the brutal violence of the everyday war into the sphere of cultural/knowledge production. As internationally-funded Literature festivals and public art projects proliferated in Karachi, and in advance of the strengthening of the crackdown on academic institutions, these spaces were debilitatingly attacked, irrevocably altering the cultural/pedagogical landscape of the city.

In May 2007, Sabeen Mahmud founded The Second Floor (T2F), a community space and café in Karachi. With a diverse program including lectures, talks, panels, film screenings, poetry readings, music, dance, theatre, yoga, T2F offered a café in which designers could work, leftists collaborate and organize, medical students met for study dates, queer kids could build community. T2F's impact was wide and continues to this day in the form of artists and activists it nurtured, projects and organisations it patronized and created space for. T2F emerged in the post-9/11 period during the 'war on terror', at a time when a voracious desire for knowledge and cultural production from Pakistan was surging in Western art and academic spheres. Yet the context for which Sabeen built T2F was unequivocally local, as was the work of T2F and its audience, the local community that it served.

With Sabeen's murder, T2F transformed overnight from a liberal-elite cultural space to the growing category of alternative pedagogical/community spaces in the city that have 'mysteriously' lost their founders/leaders. In March 2013, Parveen Rehman, the founder-director of the Orangi Pilot Project Research & Training Institute (OPP-RTI), was killed in similar circumstances by 'unknown assailants' after receiving consistent threats from political figures and the city's infamous land mafia. Similarly, poet-scholar Saba Dashtiyari, founder of the Syed Hashmi Reference Library in Malir, Karachi - a library, archive, community space and publishing house for Balochi language and literature - was shot on his way home from Balochistan University in Quetta in 2011. Today, T2F, OPP-RTI and the Syed Hashmi Reference Library are still alive but struggle to maintain a vision and find grounding in an atmosphere of increasing surveillance and censorship. OPP-RTI, for example, saw the murder of another leading activist, Abdul Waheed, mere weeks after Parveen Rahman was killed.

Against the celebratory and self-congratulatory liberal landscape of CVE-funded literature festivals and public art projects, as these spaces struggle to survive immeasurable loss and

trauma, they provide us some insight into the culture war that we have lost. These are the spaces, discourses and narratives, the cultural and intellectual communities, that had to be eradicated for culture and pedagogy to be fully and securely weaponised by the military state. As the state tightened its grip on institutions and the culture sphere was increasingly compromised by its patronage and entanglements, it was also necessary to diminish the possibility of any independent/alternative/community-based cultural/knowledge production to ensure that every aspect of social life in Pakistan is mobilised towards and in support of the everywhere war.

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