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Angarey and its Aftermath

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Abstract. This paper is a comparative study of the two publications of the (Urdu) *Angarey*. A historical analysis of the contexts of the two publications (in 1932 and 1995) can shed light on how the public reception of scandalous literature and reactions to its censorship have either changed or remained unchanged through the course of the intervening sixty years. The paper focuses on the historical context and the book history of *Angarey*. The republication of *Angarey* in 1995, edited by Khalid Alvi through a microfilm preserved in the British Museum in London, is also symptomatic of how knowledge is produced, reproduced and archived in the imperial centres, even when it defies this same imperial centre. The editing choices made by Alvi are symptomatic of the print capitalist context of late 20th-century India, besieged as it was with censorship debates because of the critical, public and censorial response to works like Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. The paper uses the traditional theories of censorship using Bourdieu's theories of fields of power, and through a socio-historical analysis of the public sphere at the time of the production of the two editions.

Keywords. *Angarey*, Sajjad Zaheer, Postcolonial Book History, Indian Public Sphere, Censorship, Progressive Writer's Association.

In 1932, Sajjad Zaheer, as the editor, published the collection of stories *Angarey*, which included two stories by Ahmad Ali, one story and a drama written by Rashid Jahan, a translated version of a short story by Mehmood-uz Zafar and five stories written by Zaheer himself. *Angarey* was the first multi-author anthology in Urdu. The anthology was banned within months of being published and has since influenced Urdu literature in absentia because the British government burned all but two copies. The anthology has retained its stature as a beacon of rebellion against state and colonial tyranny in literary form, and even though no one read the book for the next sixty-odd years, its presence was felt in most of the subsequent discussions about Urdu literary radicalism of the twentieth century.

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Angarey, in Urdu, was first published by the Nizami Press, Lucknow, in 1932, before being banned in a couple of months, and was republished in 1995 by Educational Publishing House, Delhi. There have been two English translations of *Angarey* published within the last decade. One was published by Rupa and Co. and translated by Dr. Vibha Chauhan, a scholar of English Literature, and Dr. Khalid Alvi (*Angarey*), a scholar of Urdu literature and responsible for republishing the book in Urdu in 1995. The other was translated by Snehal Shinghavi (*Angaray*) for Penguin. Both translations were published in 2014.

This article aims to study the publication history of *Angarey* (in Urdu) to reveal how the socio-historical forces of the two publication events (1932 and 1995) gave rise to specific ways of understanding the event of publication and the response to the book's rebellious content. It will detail how the proscribed and lost book was republished in 1995, and what editorial censorship was practised by Khalid Alvi, the editor for this imprint. The comparative study can shed light on how the theorisation and understanding of state censorship and self-censorship (on the part of the editors) have evolved through the years. This can be carried out most obviously through the lens of the discursive shift between colonial and post-colonial contexts.

Censorship has been understood primarily as a repressive process and seems out of place in the context of 1995, when the Indian democracy had been in operation for half a century. As critics of censorship (Sethi 2019; Muller 2004; Jansen 1988 among others) have noted, the easy assumption and association of censorship is with repressive states, not with liberal democracies. It is seen as a useful and commonplace tool of dictatorships and authoritarian states. Critics, however, have shown that it can manifest in democratic and liberal states through many mechanisms and in many guises (Patterson 1984; Darnton 2014 among others). Self-censorship due to the fear of social or professional ostracization or targeting is quite common even in democratic states. When market-based organisations and publishing houses control the production and dissemination of knowledge systems, censorship is frequently observed. These invisible forms of censorship have a grave effect on the form as well as the content of literary texts produced (Jensen 1988, Gilbert 2013, among others).

Beate Müller categorises the traditional censorship studies into two kinds – self-censorship and that imposed externally by a political authority which directly regulates information and knowledge through control of their mechanisms, production and dissemination. The second kind of censorship is further divided into two parts – pre-production censorship through control of the licenses and post-production censorship through

banning (2004, 4). In the case of the publication of *Angarey*, the overt censorship at the time of its first production is openly a post-production ban, but in the second instance of its production, the elements of self-censorship are more evident. Bourdieu's theorisation of the field of cultural production provides one way of critiquing the positioning of the various agents which make up the social field, rather than the reduction of the praxis of critique to an analysis merely of the agents. This is why Bourdieu defines the field as a dynamic structure. It is in this context that Bourdieu defines the field, which produces self-censorship, as being far more potent and effective than the bans through any external institution or power (346). The present paper looks at the social field which produces different variations of censorship at the two instances of the publication of the anthology.

A brief look at the historical moments which gave rise to the two Urdu versions of the book can provide important and interesting insights about how literature and popular consciousness intersect – often with dangerous consequences for the authors/editors, who take on the responsibility of creating blueprints for symbolic as well as semantic rebellions for their readers. This was the ambition of the *Angarey* writers and the cause of the legal and social backlash they faced.

Sajjad Zaheer had written the stories he published in *Angarey* when he was admitted to a sanatorium in Switzerland. This was during his stay in London as a student. While in London, Zaheer participated in the activities of the London branch of the Indian National Congress. He united Indian students against the British government and protested several times. He started and edited a magazine called 'Bharat' on behalf of the Indian students in London, but Oxford University shut the magazine down. While in London, Zaheer came in contact with and made friends with a lot of influential intellectuals like V.K. Krishna Menon and Mulk Raj Anand, among others. He also met and was influenced by Shapurji Saklatvala, who was a British Communist of Indian origin. This was when he joined the Oxford Majlis and attended the Second Congress of the League Against Imperialism, which was held in Frankfurt (Jalil 2).

The rebellion of *Angarey* can be understood in the historical background of the national movement and these international conversations that Zaheer became a part of. The call for Purna Swaraj had been made in January 1930 and formed a forceful impetus for all literary and political action. The printed word played a very decisive role in the formation of the anti-colonial public opinion at this specific moment in history. Gyanendra Pandey states that the emergence of the national consciousness in the second and third decades of the twentieth century was

influenced largely by propaganda and the printed word. This, even though the majority of the Indian population at this time was illiterate (61). The economic conditions of the 1920s and 1930s as well as the propaganda of the militant revolutionary, who popularized the idea of the bomb as a form of justified colonial resistance, exercised a lot of influence on popular imagination. Pandey quotes M Barnes to state that the press played an unprecedented role in furthering of the nationalist propaganda in the 1930s. The reading of the nationalist newspapers by the literate congress workers or even civilians for illiterate people, often in groups, meant that the impact of the nationalist propaganda in newspapers increased manyfold and often in geometric progression among the common people. The printed word was hence at the heart of the nationalist rebellion in the early 1930s when Sajjad Zaheer decided to publish the anthology. The impact of revolutionary literature was such that it was easily associated with anti-colonial action. Many revolutionaries, including the charismatic Bhagat Singh, propagated the reading of revolutionary literature, much of which was left-leaning and communist in orientation. Smuggling communist books equally into the jails and the universities was a common act of rebellion against the colonial establishment (Sethi 35-36). During the 1920s, Zaheer himself was among those who smuggled communist literature, banned in India at the time, into the country from London (Sethi 31).

Similarly, the communist influence that was sweeping the world in the early decades of the twentieth century formed an important impetus which led to the frenzied literary activity, which in turn, led to the birth of *Angarey*. The fire of revolution was not specific and intrinsic either to Zaheer or to the Indian Freedom Movement. Devika Sethi states that censorship and propaganda both contributed to discourse formation, known by the generic phrase, 'public opinion.' The banning of *Angarey* formed one of the most pressing and immediate reasons for the call for the formation of the Progressive Writers' Association, which in turn influenced the course of socialist and realist orientation in contemporary literature being written in Indian languages.

Aijaz Ahmad locates the publication of *Angarey* and the subsequent creation of the Progressive Writers' Association in the "international context of a new policy of a broad anti-fascist united front enunciated by the Comintern" (28). He states that the PWA was the first *modern* movement to bring together these diverse groups of thinks and writers and bind them with a feeling of common cause. Ahmad looks at the internationalist context for the anthology and the PWA, which connect the book with other revolutionary works being written across borders at the time.

Ahmad credits the PWA with bringing together writers and artists

across languages and forms and representing the confluence of the various movements – political, theistic, social, and cultural – which were as diverse as anti-colonialism, Bhakti and Sufi. Importantly according to Ahmad, the PWA served as the link between the Indian writers/artists and the rest of the world. Politically, he links the PWA with three international movements, "the Bolshevik lineage of socialism, the transcontinental anti-fascist front, and the anti-colonial/anti-imperialist struggles across the tri-continent of Asia, Africa and Latin America" (29). The PWA also created a stir in the literary community when Premchand agreed to give the inaugural speech at the first meeting.

As the editor, the textual, ideological and discursive decisions made by Zaheer were critical in the formation of the text as it was published. Zaheer's education in the revolutionary ideals of Communism during his stay in London was a formative influence which marked his life and all subsequent work as well. A case in point is his involvement in the infamous Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case in Pakistan in 1951. Zaheer's orientation and deep respect for the connection between literature and revolution can be seen reflected in the conceptualisation of the *Angarey* anthology also. As an upper-middle-class and foreign-educated revolutionary, it is not hard to imagine that Zaheer envisioned the anthology as a way to register and bolster his anti-colonial political ideology.

The resistance to *Angarey* however, was as much due to its supposed affront to Islam as to its political overtones encouraging revolution. As Rakhshanda Jalil notes, out of the four contributors to *Angarey*, two were from upper-middle-class families and the rest two were from highly privileged backgrounds (109). Zaheer, for instance, had been to New College, Oxford, for his M.A. Eventually, like his elder brother and father (who was the Chief Justice of Oudh and hence a man of great influence and wealth) he would also become a Barrister-at-Law. Since all four contributors had received "Western-style education" (Jalil 110), they were easily accused of being corrupted by Western Ideas. Sajjad Zaheer was the biggest contributor to *Angarey* with five stories and uses Western modernist techniques like montage and stream-of-consciousness in his short stories, which defy the traditional expectations of the genre in Urdu in multiple ways. Jalil references Qamar Rais' *Tanqīdī Tanāẓur* to state that Zaheer acknowledged the influence of the modernist movement (Dadaism) on the *Angarey* stories written by him (115). A lot of the experimentation draws attention towards the hypocrisy of how Islam was being practised by Muslims at the time. The interior monologue often exposes the confused and blinded religious ideals followed superficially, even by the people who were part of the religious order. It also highlights the disenchantment with

the religious ideals as a source of comfort in the time of heightened political and colonial tension of the 1920s and 30s. The aim of the anthology was avowedly religious, political, as well as literary.

The declared intention of the *Angarey* writers was to rebel against the forced and artificial alienation that had become characteristic of the modernist project in Europe as well as in India. This artistic and political project in Europe was also influenced by communist ideals to a large extent. Artists and philosophers emphasised the deep-seated need for literature and all other arts to take on the mantle of political action. In India, the Progressive movement amplified the rallying cry for the political responsibility of literature to educate the common masses and explicitly detail the social politics of exploitation. The aim of the PWA is defined in these words by Sarah Fatima Waheed:

> The utopian project of the anti-colonial progressive intelligentsia was framed by the task they set before the writer: social realism– an explicitly mirrored reflection of society and its injustices… It included struggles against a wide range of social and political forces: religious extremism, fascism, and the conservative sexual politics of one's own society. Thus, as Urduphone progressives articulated anti-colonial nationalism with left internationalism, they assertively confronted Islamic conservatism in their own communities… (4).

In the political atmosphere of the early decades of the twentieth century, it was not uncommon for books considered to be socialist to be banned in many countries, including India. It is ironic to note that the revolutionary fervour of the left-inspired PWA was eventually accused also of sectarianism. Ahmad Ali, one of the contributors, later distanced himself from the movement, citing sectarianism as a reason. This, however, was to come much later. In the 1930s, the PWA was secure in its political, social and literary ideology.

Angarey's first publication also coincided with the issuance of the General Communist Notification in September of 1932 while the book was published in December 1932. The Notification banned several communist books in India. The writers of *Angarey* were decidedly influenced by Communist ideology but also attacked religious orthodoxy. As a result, in February 1933, the Central Standing Committee of the All-India Shia Conference demanded that the book be banned immediately by the British. The book was banned under section 295A of the Indian Penal Code on 15th March 1933 by the government of the United Provinces for "a deliberate and malicious intent of outraging the religious feeling of any class of His Majesty's subjects." (Shinghavi Introduction). According to Devika Sethi,

section 295A was added to the IPC in 1927, after the controversy over a pamphlet titled 'Rangīlā Rasul.' This was because the courts of the time believed that the existing section 154A was not sufficiently clear about what constituted 'insults' to religious leaders. Section 295A, hence, was a specific response and provision which was added to fill this lacuna (24). Interestingly, the book was censored under this provision of the law. Sethi states:

> In colonial India, the state monitored and banned or prosecuted publications falling in three main categories: those that transgressed norms of loyalty laid down by the state ('seditious' publications); those that transgressed moral norms as interpreted by the state and pressure groups within society ('obscene' publications); and, finally, those that incited communal or social disharmony ('hate' literature) or violence by members of one group against another (12).

According to Sethi, even though terms like 'seditious' and 'obscene' were used fairly frequently by the British while censoring texts and ideas, the limits of their meanings were not fixed but changed as and when the political circumstances demanded. *Angarey* also fell prey to the dynamic and fluid definitions of what came to be termed 'obscene' and 'offensive.' As a practical result, all but five copies of the book were destroyed by the government (Shinghavi Introduction). Out of the five, two of the extant copies were sent to London, where they were held in the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections. Shabana Mahmud, in her article 'Angarey and the Founding of the Progressive Writers' Association', states that the British Museum obtained a copy on 21 June 1933.

After this, the book was lost to the reading public but even in its absence, the book cast an undying and influential shadow over Urdu literature, especially the tradition of the short story written after *Angarey*. In its brief public life of about four months, the book was read by few but judged, berated and celebrated by too many. This was also influenced by the limited number of readers who could access the book. It is interesting to note that the first publication of *Angarey* came on the heels of the Indian Press Act of 1931, which was to remain active as a framework for action against the press for the next two decades. This act strengthened the hold of the colonial government over the Indian press in the volatile environment of the increasingly intense national struggle. The civil disobedience movement was at its height with the Dandi march (1930) still fresh in the national memory. Consequently, the 1930s were dynamic and uncertain for the Indian press. At the beginning of that decade, *The Hindu* had already been around for 50 years and the *Times of India* for almost a

century. At the same time, according to the 1931 census, fewer than 10 out of every 100 Indians could read. Colonial authorities termed this low level of literacy a very serious obstacle to attaining full self-sufficing nationhood on modern democratic lines. However, they also recognised that it was precisely this low level of literacy that accorded educated Indians disproportionate influence and gave rumours, a peculiar force (Sethi 21-22). The colonial discourse underlining the British lament about the low literacy levels was the justification used for delaying India's bid for self-governance and the possibility of democracy in the future. This is directly reminiscent of what Said would later call the circular justification of colonial hegemony arising out of the colonial discourse. On the other hand, the undue influence of the literate elite on the masses was what made the *Angarey* writers and their bold experiment so scary for the religious orthodoxy as well as the colonial government. As has already been detailed, there was certainly a lot of anxiety about the influence of literature and newspapers in the 1930s.

In an interview conducted for this paper, Dr. Khalid Alvi recalls the journey of trying to publish the book in 1995. The republication in Urdu was made possible through procuring a microfilm preserved in the India Office in London. This event of archiving and inventorying of the knowledge systems of the colony to be produced, reproduced and archived exclusively in the imperial centres, even when they defy this same imperial centre is in itself epistemological evidence of how even the post-colonial knowledge of the once-colonized 'self' and the 'imperial centres' is still constituted but also actively limited by the imperial centres. Indian sources and documents stored in imperial centres, away from the academic reach of most Indian scholars, is another way in which the post-colony is reproduced within neo-colonial epistemological boundaries.

Procuring the film from London was done with some help from Alvi's personal friends like a Swedish acquaintance and Dr. Qamar Rais. Due to the furore it had caused at the time of its first publication, the book was not accepted by any publishers when republication was attempted even in the 1980s. Dr. Alvi began looking for a publisher in 1985 but only found one willing to publish the book a decade later, by 1995. During this time, only one publication was made possible when Shabana Mahmud published an edition through Bokforlag Kitabiat publication, Sweden, titled *Angarey: Ek Jāiza* (Live Coals: An Overview) in 1988.

Even when the book was published, it was possible to do so only after deleting some of the more scandalous and objectionable words from the book, which had ostensibly caused offence in 1933. The publisher's scepticism about publishing the book with the so-called scandalous

passages points to the power of censorship to create monolithic reading practices which sustain (even without the evidence and availability of the actual book) for decades. Dr. Alvi states that while some of the edits, which the publisher insisted upon, were fairly innocuous, some others, like the insinuation that the prophet's wife was nagging, and drove him to move out of the home to make his iconic journey, should have merited a thorough and literary deliberation. The publisher was quite insistent on publishing the book without the provocative sections to ensure that the book would not be banned again. It seems the last decade of the twentieth century was much more adept at self-censorship than the third decade.

This raises uncomfortable and ironic questions about the (un)changed nature of censorship and expectations from the reader, despite the passage of 60 years between the two publications. A brief look at the literary and political history of the last two decades of the twentieth century might perhaps shed some light on this fear and scepticism. The dissolution of the Soviet Bloc in the early 1990s was the most pertinent communist event of the decade, but communism had long lost its political and revolutionary edge in the popular imagination. The fear of literary freedom becoming submerged in religious and orthodox scandal, which the *Angarey* writers were mounting a resistance against in the 1930s, had manifest itself again in the late 1980s, with the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. The literary fates of the two books, *The Satanic Verses* and *Angarey* were intertwined at this historical moment as the publishers were scared of hurting the religious sentiments of Muslim orthodoxy through the republication of the scandalous *Angarey*, on the heels of the controversy stirred up by *Satanic Verses* in 1988. The forced secularisation of the Muslim prophet in Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* was seen as a direct challenge and offense to Muslim propriety and religious sentiments. The confusion about whether the alluded verses are of satanic implication or are divine is implicit in Rushdie's reference to 'Satanic Verses.' The power of the printed word and the multiplicity of meaning embedded in any verse/text is an important referent and is ironically highlighted in this debate about censoring texts as having only one, fixed and offensive meaning. This irony is central to the multiple foci that Rushdie creates in his magic realist work. Magic realism, furthermore, is a form born out of the twentieth-century writer's need to highlight the revolutionary and post-colonial potential of literature as a political device. The attempts to incorporate surrealistic and modernist techniques in his stories by Sajjad Zaheer were undertaken in much the same spirit. The immediate and pressing need for revolutionary impulse in literature, due to which *Angarey* became the beacon of celebrated literary radicalism in India had perhaps changed too much by the time Rushdie's

work was published.

In fact, India gained the dubious distinction of being the first country in the world to ban the import of *The Satanic Verses*. The book was published by the Viking/Penguin group in London. The Indian counterpart was the Penguin group, which decided not to bring out an Indian edition, and the Consulting Editor of the Penguin group in India at the time, was Khushwant Singh, who advised against the publication of *The Satanic Verses* in India as he believed that it could offend the sensibilities of Indian Muslims. It seemingly was dangerous to the moral and religious sensibilities of the Indian Muslim community and hence fell into the categories of seditious and hate literature. The many awards that the book was nominated for (Booker and Whitbread among others) and the international recognition it garnered as opposed to its approbation in India, can reveal a lot about the continued battles between stereotypes about Western modernity and the Oriental 'other'. Many critics like Bruce King, Talat Asad and M. M. Slaughter have undertaken this study.

The only way left for the Indian reading public to gain access to *The Satanic Verses* was through importing the UK edition, and since the Rajiv Gandhi's government prohibited the import of the book under the Customs Act on September 26th 1988, a mere nine days after its publication in Britain, this was also not possible.

In an interview for this paper, Alvi states:

> In an interesting parallel, when I approached Khushwant Singh to write a preface for the republication of *Angarey*, Khushwant Singh agreed but eventually ended up writing the preface for another of my book, a collection of essays, while refusing to be associated with *Angarey* on similar grounds – that it was too blasphemous and would invite backlash from the Indian Muslim community.

This brings to the fore the debate about the role of censorship in promoting ethics of anxiety, which dissolves the distance between the semantic and symbolic function of literature, which fundamentally lends strength to literature's political radicalism. This radicalism was a stated intention of *Angarey* as well as *The Satanic Verses*. Both are literary reactions to the semantic and imaginative limitations of different forms of fundamentalism. Censorship requires arresting the 'sign' and denying even the possibility of the plurality of the interpretative process – the banned texts can entertain no multiplicity of interpretation but must retain one, fundamentally arrested semantic identity. Terry Eagleton, in a recent article in the New Left Review, states, that "fundamentalism…is essentially a

mistaken theory of language." Jonathan Bates in his *The Wire* article about the violent reactions that Rushdie's book inspired, adds, "It assumes that every word of a text, whether sacred or secular, must be read as a statement of a literal truth or a proclamation of the unshakable beliefs of the author. It is deaf to irony, metaphor, satire, allegory, provocation, ambiguity, contrariness." An alternate view can be drawn from Annabel Patterson's work, which relates the condition of internalising censorship by writers as leading to allusive, metaphorical and ironical writing. When writers are conscious of institutional censorship, they create more symbolic forms of literary expression. This also leads to an "open-ended experience of the readers' construction of meaning (1984: 18).

The association of this anxiety of singular interpretation, that became attached to *Angarey*'s first publication carried on its burden till the 1990s so that after the minor edits, even though the actual content of the text was no more scandalous, it still generated cultural and literary anxiety about texts transgressing the boundaries of social orthodoxies. Both of these instances of publication, of *Angarey* in 1932 against the backdrop of the nationalist movement and in 1995, against the backdrop of the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, regurgitate the easy and reductive binary of the East and the West. Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* was seen not as a metaphoric representation of the migrant experience of a South Asian in the West but as the misguided representation of the wayward South Asian attacking his traditional roots because of the corrupting influence of the West. Rushdie, of course, was no stranger to the discourse of censorship and the uneasy relationship that subjective memory and seemingly objective history share. His most famous novel till *The Satanic Verses*, *Midnight's Children* is a novel as much about the Emergency as it's a work of fiction. It peels off some of the scabs from the wounds inflicted on the Indian self-consciousness about secularism and freedom of expression during the politically unstable 70s. In his article about *The Satanic Verses*, Bruce King states:

> Important works of literature and major writers often signal their presence by being the occasion of controversy, lawsuits, claims of obscenity or blasphemy. *Madame Bovary*, *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *Ulysses*, *Lolita*, and *Doctor Zhivago* are interesting as literature using new concepts of form, style, narrative, or characterisation while challenging the political, moral, or sexual standards of their time (433).

Through their own admission, many progressive writers were influenced by western avant-garde movements, and the controversies they generated could be understood as much about the literary experimentation as about their political and rebellious potential.

The blasphemous nature of both *The Satanic Verses* and *Angarey* was attributed to exposure to Western education and ideas. In *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence,* Priyamvada Gopal states that since the *Angarey* writers had received a Western education, they lent themselves to accusations of being "intoxicated by English education, brainwashed into attacking Islam and its tenets" (16). In his book *The Light* (*Roshnai*) Zaheer talks about the lack of depth of the stories in *Angarey* but also about the influence of writers like D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce on the way in which sexuality is treated in the anthology. This, he stated, was taken as an excuse to attack *Angarey* as being influenced by the West (160). People issued death threats. This brings to the fore another unfortunate parallel between *The Satanic Verses* and *Angarey,* which can be used as a gateway to initiate discussions about the physiological and material repercussions of censorship and the important debate about the freedom of press and literature. The attempt on Rushdie's life in August 2022, in New York, is just another instance of the blurring of the lines between literary expression and ideological execution. Many newspapers including *The Times of India*, *The Hindustan Times* and *The New York Times,* carried articles about how even on the heels of the publication of the book, 12 people had lost their lives and almost 40 were injured in what were dubbed as the 'anti-Rushdie' riots in Bombay in February 1989.

The republication of *Angarey* also presents an interesting case of how meanings of censorship have been rearticulated. There are many forms of censorship attached to the book. The banning of the book upon publication is of course, the most obvious form of censorship, due to which the book was not available to the reading public for a long time. But if one examines the definition of the term censorship more closely, another kind of censorship becomes obvious. Beate Müller states that "censorship occurs when there is 'authoritarian intervention by a third party in the act of sending message between author and reader', after which the message cannot reach the public" (11). The deletions made by the editor to make the book more accessible are a form of sanitization, reflecting self-censorship.

This comparative study helps us get away from the dialogic bifurcation of the imperial villainy and hegemony as opposed to a nationalist and progressivist resistance, which was forwarded as a justification for condemning the banning of the book in 1933. How would the censorship of books like *The Satanic Verses* or the self-censorship of the republished version of *Angarey* be read in the absence of the villainous colonial laws? The impulses of censorship and its focus might change, but the fact of censorship defines both the instances of the publication of *Angarey*. The

book's publication in Urdu in 1995 has been a commercial success with the book running into multiple editions; Dr. Alvi believes it must be at least ten editions since the first publication in 1995. The English translations, one by Rupa Publication and another by Penguin, both in 2014 have not received as much reader response as the books have barely run into second editions – though exact publication numbers are almost impossible to get.

At the time of the first publication of *Angarey*, the freedom of speech almost literally translated into the freedom of dissent. Around the second birth of *Angarey*, the freedom to dissent is already curtailed, as is evident in the case of *The Satanic Verses* and the reaction of the Indian government to it. The freedom of speech, hence, becomes a conditional aspect of the political and social reality in the last decade of the 20th century. Beate Müller refers to the two kinds of censorship that distinguish between censorship studies and 'new censorship studies', which take into account the differences between regulative censorship and constitutive censorship. The traditional understanding of censorship as a regulative activity takes into account its functioning and imposition through an institution and is carried out through (often forceful) interventions. Regulative censorship is manifest through the regulation of information and the limitation of its accessibility to certain (often large populations) of people on the behest of a regulatory body like the government. The banning of books is a direct instance of regulative censorship. Constitutive censorship, according to Müller, on the other hand, is more wide-ranging. Influenced by the work of philosophers like Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, constitutive censorship is formulated as a structural phenomenon. It is the regulation of what can be said, to whom, when and how. Sethi also quotes critics like Judith Butler and Sue Curry Jansen as subscribing to the presence of structural and constitutive censorship. Sethi states that Butler believes this is "the kind of censorship that operates prior to speech, and which distinguishes, even before utterance, the speakable from the unspeakable." She further adds that "Beate Müller provides a convincing critique of this new model when she suggests that widening the ambit of what constitutes censorship to such an extent means equating censorship with any and all kinds of social control" (4).

Müller in her essay suggests that the 'new censorship' debates were also a result of the dissolution of the Soviet bloc (ending in 1991) and the subsequent release of a flood of official documents to the public domain as a result. In this context, one might do well to consider also the change in the academic and discursive contours of the discussions around what constitutes 'censorship' and what it entails and contains within its domain, as it changes between the 1930s and the 1990s. The conceptualisation of

the freedom of expression in the 1930s was understood primarily as a freedom of dissent. This meant that the *Angarey* writers were staging a protest through public literary forms and content considered transgressive. The censorship was a validation of their freedom to write and a challenge to the colonial authority to curtail and define the limits of the Indian public sphere. In the 1990s on the other hand the editor's self-censorship is an important marker of the difference.

The change in the vocabulary, between the two periods, 'proscription' in the 1930s and 'forfeiture' in the 1980s, can symbolize the change in the subjective positions of the state, but the censorship remains. Censorship is often projected as the state's ideological and ethical responsibility towards its citizens. Ironically, this curtailing of literary freedom also takes away the freedom of literary interpretation and intellectual engagement from the reader and culminates most commonly in the curtailing of the freedom of life for writers like in Rushdie's case since the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. It expects the reader to intentionally extend the literary function of a text to its political function, which the *Angarey* writers actually aimed to do.

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