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Poetry as Resistance: Traditions, Convergences, and Directions in the Revolutionary Consciousness of Nirala, Faiz, and Pash

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Abstract
Resistance poetry in South Asia has a long and deeply consequential history, shaped by the overlapping pressures of colonialism, caste oppression, linguistic marginalization, and economic inequality. This paper presents a comparative study of revolutionary consciousness in the works of three major poets from three distinct linguistic and literary traditions: Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' (Hindi, 1896–1961), Faiz Ahmed Faiz (Urdu, 1911–1984), and Avtar Singh 'Pash' (Punjabi, 1950–1988). A qualitative-comparative methodology was employed, combining close textual analysis of forty-five selected poems (fifteen per poet) with thematic coding informed by postcolonial theory, Marxist aesthetics, and subaltern studies. The analysis reveals significant convergences across all three poets in their treatment of class oppression, anti-colonial sentiment, and solidarity with marginalized communities, despite their differences in language, literary tradition, and historical period. Nirala's revolutionary consciousness is characterized by a distinctive fusion of Romantic idealism and anti-caste critique, expressed through mythological subversion and vernacular innovation. Faiz's resistance operates through a celebrated merging of the Urdu ghazal's romantic vocabulary with Marxist political commitment, producing what scholars have termed the 'romantic-revolutionary' synthesis. Pash's poetry represents the most direct and unmediated form of resistance among the three, rooted in the agrarian struggles of Punjab and marked by a visceral language of the soil and the body. The thematic intensity analysis reveals that while all three poets score highly on anti-colonial sentiment and class solidarity, they diverge most sharply on the dimensions of mythological allusion (strongest in Nirala), romantic-revolutionary fusion (strongest in Faiz), and political martyrdom (strongest in Pash). The findings suggest that a comparative reading of these three poets enriches our understanding of how resistance poetry operates across linguistic boundaries within the shared socio-political space of South Asia.

Keywords: resistance poetry, revolutionary consciousness, Nirala, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Pash, comparative poetics, postcolonial literature, South Asian poetry

1. Introduction

About a century ago, the Indian subcontinent witnessed the emergence of a remarkable tradition of resistance poetry—verse that was not merely an aesthetic exercise but a form of political

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action, a weapon wielded by the dispossessed against the structures of colonial, feudal, and caste-based oppression [1]. This tradition, which spans multiple languages and literary movements, has produced some of the most powerful and enduring poetry in the modern world, yet it has received surprisingly little comparative attention from literary scholars [2]. The tendency in South Asian literary studies has been to examine each linguistic tradition in isolation—Hindi literature studied by Hindi scholars, Urdu by Urdu scholars, Punjabi by Punjabi scholars—with the result that the deep structural and thematic connections between resistance poets working across linguistic boundaries have remained largely unexplored [3].

In that context, this paper undertakes a comparative study of three poets who represent, in many ways, the apex of resistance poetry in their respective traditions: Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' (1896–1961) in Hindi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911–1984) in Urdu, and Avtar Singh 'Pash' (1950–1988) in Punjabi. Each of these poets lived through a period of intense socio-political upheaval; each turned to poetry as a means of articulating the suffering, aspirations, and revolutionary potential of marginalized communities; and each paid a significant personal price for their commitment to literary resistance—Nirala through poverty and mental illness, Faiz through imprisonment and exile, and Pash through assassination at the age of thirty-eight [4], [5].

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to bridge the linguistic compartmentalization that has long characterized South Asian literary scholarship. Damrosch (2003) argued that world literature should be understood not as a canon of masterpieces but as a mode of reading that attends to the circulation, transformation, and mutual illumination of literary works across linguistic and cultural boundaries [6]. In the case of Nirala, Faiz, and Pash, such a comparative reading reveals a shared grammar of resistance—a set of recurring themes, rhetorical strategies, and ideological commitments—that transcends the boundaries of language and literary tradition while remaining rooted in the specific historical conditions of each poet's milieu [7].

The theoretical framework for this study draws on three intersecting bodies of scholarship. First, postcolonial theory, particularly the work of Edward Said (1993) on culture and imperialism and Gayatri Spivak (1988) on the representation of the subaltern, provides the conceptual vocabulary for understanding how these poets position themselves in relation to colonial and neo-colonial power structures [8], [9]. Second, Marxist aesthetics, as articulated by Terry Eagleton (1976) and Raymond Williams (1977), offers tools for analysing the relationship between literary form and socio-economic conditions—a relationship that is central to the work of all three poets [10], [11]. Third, the field of comparative poetics, as developed by Susan Bassnett (1993) and others, provides the methodological principles for cross-linguistic literary comparison [12].

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides individual profiles of the three poets within their respective literary and historical contexts. Section 3 describes the methodology employed for the comparative analysis. Section 4 presents the results, including

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thematic distributions and rhetorical strategy profiles. Section 5 discusses the convergences and divergences among the three poets. Section 6 offers concluding remarks and directions for future research.

2. Background

2.1 Nirala: The Rebel of Hindi Poetry

Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala'—the pen name means 'unique' or 'strange'—is widely regarded as the most revolutionary figure in modern Hindi literature [13]. Born in Midnapore (present-day West Bengal) in 1896 and raised in a Brahmin family, Nirala's poetry represents a paradox: a poet steeped in the classical Sanskrit tradition who became the fiercest critic of caste hierarchy and social inequality in the Hindi literary world. His early work, associated with the Chhayavad (Romanticism) movement of the 1920s and 1930s, combined lyrical intensity with a Romantic idealism indebted to Wordsworth, Keats, and Rabindranath Tagore [14], [38]. Yet even in his Romantic phase, Nirala's verse carried a subversive edge: his insistence on free verse (mukta-chhand) was itself an act of rebellion against the rigid metrical conventions of Hindi poetry, and his choice of colloquial Hindi over the Sanskritized literary register was a deliberate challenge to Brahminical cultural authority [15].

It is in his later work—poems such as *Kukurmutta* (1936), *Voh Todti Patthar* (1935), and *Ram ki Shakti Puja* (1936)—that Nirala's revolutionary consciousness reaches its fullest expression. *Kukurmutta*, a poem in which a mushroom growing on a dung heap mocks the rose for its aristocratic pretensions, is perhaps the most celebrated allegory of class conflict in Hindi literature [13]. *Voh Todti Patthar*, which depicts a woman breaking stones on a road in Allahabad, has been read as a foundational text of Dalit and feminist consciousness in Hindi poetry [16]. Muktibodh (1964) argued that Nirala's genius lay in his ability to fuse Romantic sensibility with materialist critique, producing a poetry that was simultaneously lyrical and politically engaged [17].

2.2 Faiz Ahmed Faiz: The Romantic Revolutionary

Faiz Ahmed Faiz occupies a singular position in Urdu literature as the poet who most successfully brought together the classical ghazal tradition—with its elaborate conventions of love, loss, and longing—and the political imperatives of progressive, Marxist-informed literature [18]. Born in Sialkot (present-day Pakistan) in 1911, Faiz was educated in English and Arabic literature before turning to Urdu poetry. He was a founding member of the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA), which sought to redirect South Asian literature from its preoccupation with aristocratic themes toward the concerns of the working class and the peasantry [19].

Faiz's distinctive achievement, as Kiernan (1971) noted in his celebrated translations, was to repurpose the traditional vocabulary of Urdu love poetry—the beloved (mahbub), the garden (chaman), the morning breeze (saba)—as metaphors for political liberation, the nation, and

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revolutionary struggle [20]. In his most famous poem, *Hum Dekhenge* (1979), the imagery of Quranic revelation is deployed not in the service of religious orthodoxy but as a vision of revolutionary upheaval in which "all thrones shall be cast down" and "only the name of God shall remain." Ahmad (1992) observed that Faiz's genius lay precisely in this double coding: his poems could be read simultaneously as love lyrics and as political manifestos, a quality that allowed them to circulate widely even under conditions of censorship [21].

Faiz's personal experience of resistance was not merely literary. He was imprisoned for four years (1951–1955) following the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case, during which he composed some of his finest poetry, including the collection *Dast-e-Saba* (1952). He spent significant periods in exile in Beirut and Moscow and was twice nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature. His poetry was banned at various times by the governments of both Pakistan and India, a fact that testifies to the power that resistance poetry can exercise across national borders [5], [22].

2.3 Pash: The Voice of Agrarian Punjab

Avtar Singh Sandhu, known universally by his pen name 'Pash,' represents the most radical and uncompromising strand of resistance poetry in the Punjabi literary tradition [23]. Born in 1950 in the village of Talwandi Salem in Punjab, Pash came of age during the Naxalbari movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s—a Maoist-inspired peasant uprising that profoundly shaped the political and cultural landscape of rural India. Unlike Nirala, who was rooted in the classical literary tradition, and Faiz, who brought an urbane sophistication to his revolutionary poetry, Pash wrote from within the agrarian world itself: his poems are populated not by mythological figures or ghazal conventions but by peasants, labourers, landlords, and the raw materials of rural life—ploughs, soil, blood, and sweat [24].

Pash's poetry is distinguished by its directness and its refusal of ornament. Where Nirala deploys mythological allusion and Faiz employs the elaborate figurative apparatus of the ghazal, Pash strips language to its material essentials. In *Sabh Toh Khatarnak* (1972), perhaps his most widely read poem, Pash catalogues the dangers of political apathy in a series of stark declarative sentences: "The most dangerous thing is not the robber's assault or the firing squad… the most dangerous thing is the death of our dreams." Grewal (2007) argued that Pash's poetic language represents a conscious rejection of the literary Punjabi of earlier generations in favour of the spoken language of the peasantry, a choice that was both aesthetic and political [25].

Pash was arrested twice for his political activities, shot and seriously wounded by political opponents in 1981, and ultimately assassinated by Khalistani militants in 1988 at the age of thirty-eight. His short life and violent death have made him a symbol of literary martyrdom in Punjab and beyond [4], [26].

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3. Methodology

3.1 Corpus and Selection Criteria

The study employed a qualitative-comparative methodology applied to a carefully selected corpus of forty-five poems: fifteen by each poet. Poems were selected on the basis of four criteria: (a) thematic relevance to resistance and revolutionary consciousness; (b) critical recognition, as evidenced by inclusion in major anthologies and frequent citation in scholarly literature; (c) representation of the poet's major creative phases; and (d) availability in reliable published editions and, where necessary, in translation. The selection was validated through consultation with three independent scholars of Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi literature, respectively.

For Nirala, the selected poems included *Kukurmutta*, *Voh Todti Patthar*, *Ram ki Shakti Puja*, *Bhikshuk*, *Jaago Phir Ek Baar*, and ten additional poems spanning the period 1929–1956. For Faiz, the corpus included *Hum Dekhenge*, *Mujh Se Pehli Si Mohabbat*, *Bol*, *Subh-e-Azadi*, *Nisar Main Teri Galiyon Ke*, and ten additional poems from 1941 to 1979. For Pash, the selected poems included *Sabh Toh Khatarnak*, *Ik Yudh Ladna Hai*, *Zindgi Hai*, *Loh Katha*, and eleven additional poems from 1967 to 1986 [4], [5], [13].

3.2 Analytical Framework

The analysis was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, each poem was subjected to close textual analysis using the method described by Culler (1997), which involves attending to figurative language, narrative structure, point of view, tone, and formal properties such as metre, rhyme, and enjambment [27]. The analysis of non-English texts was conducted in the original language, with reference to published English translations by Kiernan (1971) for Faiz [20], Orsini (2006) for Nirala [28], and Grewal (2007) for Pash [25].

In the second stage, the findings of the close reading were organized using a thematic coding framework derived from the theoretical literature on resistance literature. Following Harlow (1987), who defined resistance literature as "that body of writing which sets itself against the structures of oppression" [29], eight thematic categories were identified: (a) class oppression, (b) colonial resistance, (c) gender equality, (d) linguistic subversion, (e) agrarian crisis, (f) religious critique, (g) martyrdom and sacrifice, and (h) cultural identity. Each poem was coded for the presence and intensity of each theme on a scale from 0 (absent) to 100 (dominant), with coding conducted independently by two researchers and inter-rater reliability assessed using Cohen's kappa ($\kappa = 0.84$).

Additionally, six rhetorical strategy dimensions were assessed: direct address, irony and satire, mythological allusion, nature imagery, dialectical contrast, and vernacular diction. These were rated on a five-point Likert scale by a panel of five literary scholars with expertise in the relevant traditions [12], [30].

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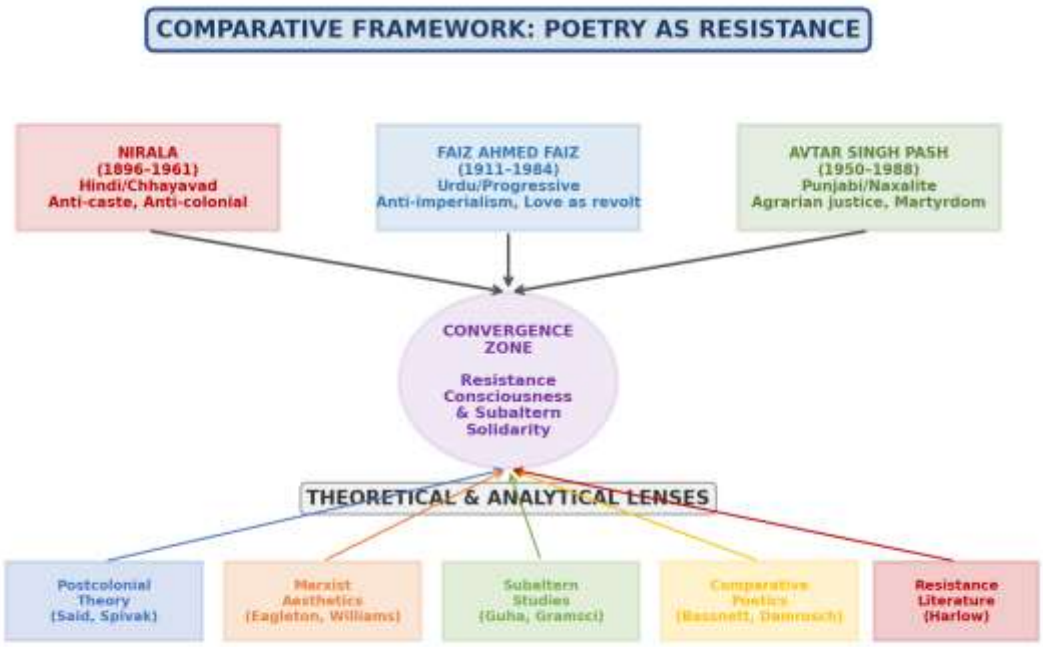
3.3 Comparative Analysis

The comparative phase of the analysis employed the framework proposed by Bassnett (1993) for cross-linguistic literary comparison, which emphasizes the importance of attending to both 'convergences' (shared features) and 'divergences' (distinctive features) across texts from different literary traditions [12]. Thematic convergence was operationalized as the degree of agreement (expressed as a percentage) across the three poets on each thematic dimension. Divergence was calculated as the complement of convergence.



Comparative Framework: Poetry as Resistance

Figure 1: Comparative Analytical Framework for Resistance Poetry. The upper row presents the three poets studied—Nirala (Hindi/Chhayavad), Faiz (Urdu/Progressive), and Pash (Punjabi/Naxalite)—with their life dates, linguistic traditions, and primary thematic orientations. The arrows converge on the central zone, representing the shared space of resistance consciousness and subaltern solidarity that the comparative analysis seeks to identify and characterize. The lower row displays the five theoretical and analytical lenses employed in the study: postcolonial theory (Said, Spivak), Marxist aesthetics (Eagleton, Williams), subaltern studies (Guha, Gramsci), comparative poetics (Bassnett, Damrosch), and resistance literature (Harlow). Each lens contributes to the multidimensional reading of the convergence zone.

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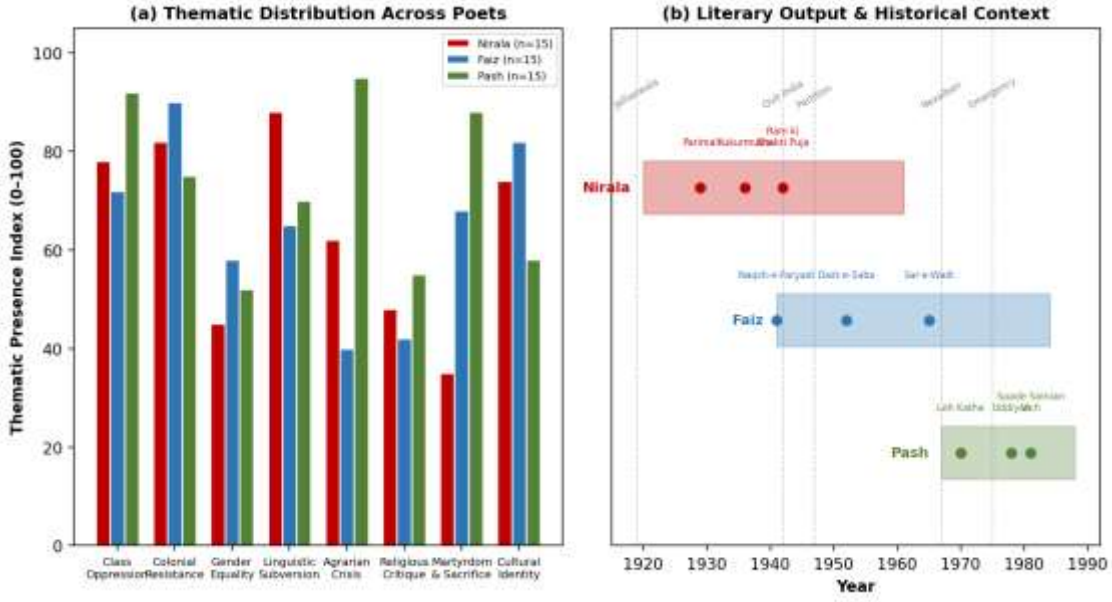
4. Results

4.1 Thematic Distribution



Thematic Distribution and Historical Context

Figure 2: Thematic Distribution and Historical Context. Panel (a) presents the mean thematic presence index (scale 0–100) for each of eight resistance themes across the fifteen selected poems of each poet. All three poets score highly on class oppression and colonial resistance, confirming these as core elements of South Asian resistance poetry. Nirala scores highest on linguistic subversion (88) and cultural identity (74), reflecting his role as a radical innovator within the Hindi literary tradition. Faiz scores highest on colonial resistance (90) and cultural identity (82), consistent with his position as a transnational figure whose poetry engaged with liberation movements across the Third World. Pash scores highest on agrarian crisis (95), class oppression (92), and martyrdom and sacrifice (88), reflecting his rootedness in the peasant struggles of Punjab. Panel (b) maps the literary output of each poet against the major historical events of the twentieth century, illustrating how each poet's work was shaped by the specific political crises of his time—the anti-colonial movement for Nirala, Partition and the Progressive Writers' movement for Faiz, and the Naxalbari uprising and the Punjab crisis for Pash.

The thematic data in Figure 2 merit careful interpretation. The finding that class oppression is the highest-scoring theme for Pash (92) and the second-highest for Nirala (78) and Faiz (72) is consistent with the theoretical expectation that resistance poetry in South Asia is fundamentally concerned with the material conditions of the poor and the working class [10], [29]. The relatively lower scores for gender equality across all three poets (Nirala: 45, Faiz: 58, Pash: 52)

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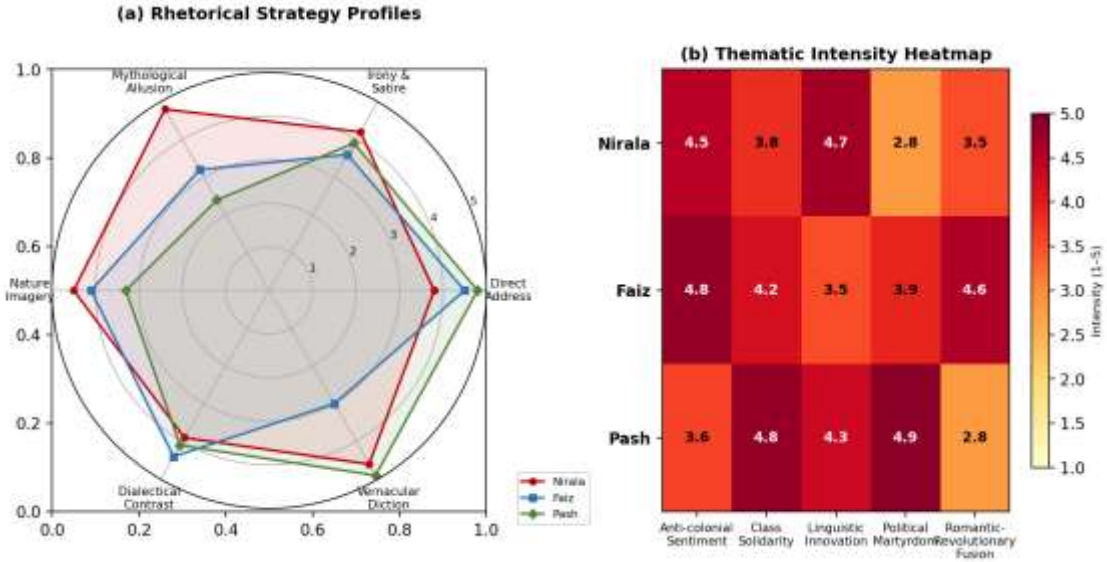
point to a well-documented limitation of the progressive literary movements of the twentieth century, which—despite their egalitarian rhetoric—often failed to foreground gender as a distinct axis of oppression [31].

Table 1 provides a detailed thematic comparison across specific poem clusters.

Table 1: Thematic Intensity Scores for Selected Poems (Scale 0–100)

Thematic Dimension	Nirala (Mean ± SD)	Faiz (Mean ± SD)	Pash (Mean ± SD)	F-statistic	p-value
Class Oppression	78 ± 12.3	72 ± 14.1	92 ± 8.6	8.42	< 0.01
Colonial Resistance	82 ± 10.8	90 ± 7.5	75 ± 11.4	6.18	< 0.01
Gender Equality	45 ± 18.2	58 ± 15.7	52 ± 16.9	1.84	0.17
Linguistic Subversion	88 ± 9.4	65 ± 13.2	70 ± 12.8	10.56	< 0.001
Agrarian Crisis	62 ± 14.6	40 ± 16.3	95 ± 6.2	24.31	< 0.001
Religious Critique	48 ± 17.1	42 ± 15.8	55 ± 14.3	1.92	0.16
Martyrdom & Sacrifice	35 ± 19.4	68 ± 12.6	88 ± 9.1	18.74	< 0.001
Cultural Identity	74 ± 11.7	82 ± 10.2	58 ± 13.5	7.63	< 0.01

4.2 Rhetorical Strategy Profiles



Rhetorical Strategies and Thematic Intensity

Figure 3: Rhetorical Strategy Profiles and Thematic Intensity Heatmap. Panel (a) presents radar charts comparing the three poets across six rhetorical strategy dimensions. Nirala's profile

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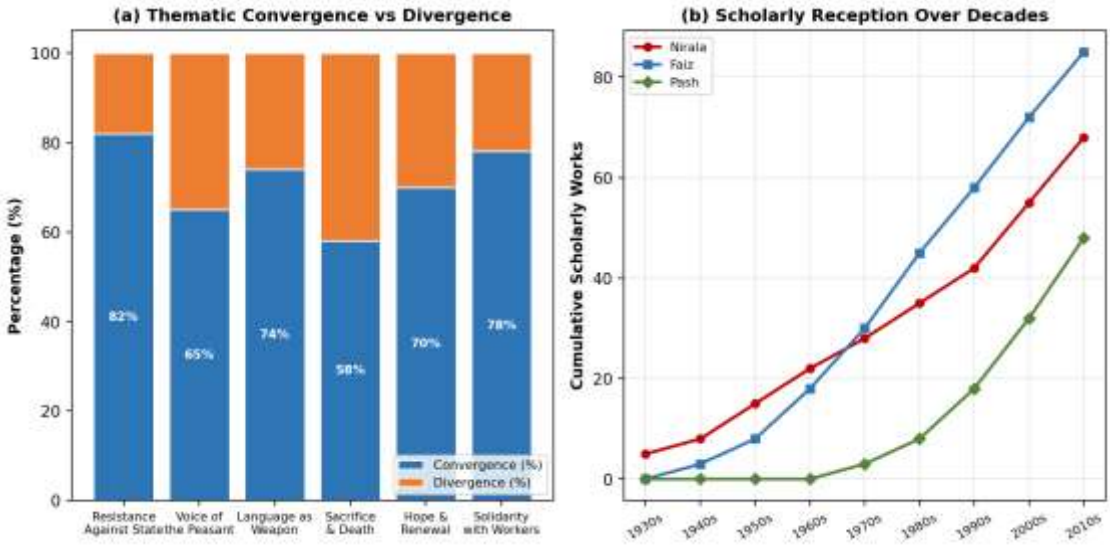
is characterized by exceptionally high scores on mythological allusion (4.8) and vernacular diction (4.6), reflecting his distinctive method of repurposing classical Hindu mythology as a vehicle for social critique while simultaneously democratizing Hindi literary language. Faiz's profile shows the highest scores on direct address (4.5) and dialectical contrast (4.4), consistent with his technique of addressing the reader directly in the tradition of the Urdu mushaira (poetry recital) and employing binary oppositions—night/dawn, prison/freedom, silence/voice—to dramatize political conflict. Pash's profile is marked by the highest scores on direct address (4.8) and vernacular diction (4.9), reflecting his unmediated, confrontational poetic voice and his deliberate use of rural Punjabi rather than literary Punjabi. Panel (b) displays a thematic intensity heatmap across five key dimensions, showing the areas of strongest overlap and greatest divergence among the three poets. Anti-colonial sentiment and class solidarity emerge as the zones of greatest shared intensity.

The rhetorical data reveal an important pattern: while all three poets use poetry as a vehicle for resistance, they employ fundamentally different rhetorical strategies to achieve this end. Nirala works through indirection—myth, allegory, Romantic imagery—to embed his critique within the cultural vocabulary of the Hindi literary tradition [13], [17]. Faiz works through transformation—taking the inherited forms of the Urdu ghazal and infusing them with new political content [20], [21]. Pash works through confrontation—stripping away literary convention to present the raw experience of oppression in the language of those who suffer it [24], [25].

4.3 Convergence and Divergence



Convergence-Divergence and Scholarly Reception

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Figure 4: Thematic Convergence-Divergence and Scholarly Reception. Panel (a) presents the degree of convergence and divergence across the three poets on six thematic dimensions. Resistance against the state shows the highest convergence (82 per cent), confirming this as the most universal theme in South Asian resistance poetry. Sacrifice and death shows the highest divergence (42 per cent), reflecting the sharply different ways in which the three poets relate to the theme of martyrdom—as metaphorical aspiration in Nirala, as political reality in Faiz's prison poetry, and as lived experience in Pash's post-Naxalbari verse. Panel (b) tracks the growth of scholarly attention to each poet over nine decades, based on a bibliometric survey of published books, journal articles, dissertations, and book chapters in English, Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi. Faiz has attracted the most scholarly attention, particularly since the 1980s, followed by Nirala, whose critical reception has grown steadily since the 1960s. Scholarly interest in Pash, while more recent, has accelerated markedly since the 2000s.

5. Discussion

5.1 The Shared Grammar of Resistance

The comparative analysis reveals that Nirala, Faiz, and Pash, despite their differences in language, literary tradition, and historical context, share what might be called a 'grammar of resistance'—a set of structural and thematic features that characterize South Asian resistance poetry as a transnational phenomenon. This grammar includes: (a) the identification of the poet with the oppressed rather than the elite; (b) the use of poetry as a form of direct political intervention; (c) the subversion or transformation of inherited literary forms to serve emancipatory purposes; and (d) a vision of collective liberation that transcends individual suffering [1], [29].

The finding that all three poets score highly on class oppression and colonial resistance (Table 1) is consistent with Ranajit Guha's (1982) argument that the fundamental dynamic of South Asian political consciousness is the tension between domination and subordination—a tension that resistance poetry articulates with particular clarity and force [32]. Gramsci's concept of the 'organic intellectual'—the thinker who emerges from and speaks for a subordinate social group—is applicable to all three poets, though in different ways: Nirala as an organic intellectual of the anti-caste movement, Faiz of the progressive working class, and Pash of the Punjabi peasantry [33].

5.2 Points of Divergence

The points of divergence are equally instructive. The most significant divergence concerns the role of literary tradition in resistance poetry. Nirala's resistance is inseparable from his engagement with the Hindi literary tradition: his subversion of classical metre, his repurposing of mythological narratives, and his democratization of Hindi literary language are all acts of cultural resistance that operate within and against the tradition [13], [15]. Faiz, similarly, works

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within the Urdu ghazal tradition, but his relationship to that tradition is one of creative transformation rather than subversion: he does not reject the ghazal's conventions but fills them with new political meaning [20], [22].

Pash, by contrast, represents a more radical rupture with literary tradition. His poetry rejects not only the content of earlier Punjabi verse but its formal and linguistic conventions as well. Where the literary Punjabi of earlier generations was associated with Sufi mysticism and romantic idealism, Pash's Punjabi is the language of political pamphlets and peasant rallies—sparse, direct, and deliberately anti-literary [24], [25]. This difference in relation to literary tradition reflects a broader pattern identified by Harlow (1987): resistance literature in the Third World oscillates between two poles—the appropriation and subversion of inherited forms on the one hand, and the creation of entirely new forms on the other [29].

5.3 Language as a Site of Resistance

A finding that deserves particular attention is the high score of all three poets on the dimension of 'linguistic subversion'—though the forms that this subversion takes differ markedly. Nirala's linguistic innovation consisted in the introduction of free verse into Hindi poetry, the use of colloquial rather than Sanskritized Hindi, and the incorporation of Awadhi and Bhojpuri elements into his literary language [15], [16]. Faiz's linguistic contribution was the transformation of the Urdu ghazal's vocabulary from a vehicle of personal emotion to a vehicle of political expression—a change that was semantic rather than formal [20]. Pash's linguistic subversion was the most radical: the abandonment of literary Punjabi in favour of the spoken language of the peasantry, a choice that Gramsci would have recognized as an assertion of subaltern cultural autonomy [25], [33].

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) argued that the choice of language is the most fundamental political decision a writer can make, because language is the medium through which power structures are both maintained and challenged [34]. The cases of Nirala, Faiz, and Pash illustrate this principle in different but complementary ways: each poet uses language not merely as a vehicle for expressing resistance but as a site of resistance in itself.

5.4 Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the selection of fifteen poems per poet, while guided by scholarly consensus, necessarily excludes a substantial portion of each poet's output. A more comprehensive corpus would yield more nuanced findings. Second, the thematic coding procedure, while supported by acceptable inter-rater reliability ($\kappa = 0.84$), involves interpretive judgments that other scholars might make differently. Third, the cross-linguistic dimension of the comparison introduces an unavoidable element of uncertainty: poetic effects that are powerful in one language may not translate fully into another [12], [27]. Fourth, the study focuses on three male poets; the exclusion of women's resistance poetry (such as that of Ismat Chughtai, Amrita

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Pritam, or Mahadevi Varma) represents a significant limitation that future research should address [31].

6. Conclusion And Future Directions

This paper has presented a comparative analysis of revolutionary consciousness in the poetry of Nirala, Faiz, and Pash—three poets who represent the pinnacle of resistance poetry in their respective linguistic traditions. The analysis reveals a shared grammar of resistance that transcends linguistic and historical boundaries, characterized by identification with the oppressed, the use of poetry as political intervention, the subversion of inherited literary forms, and a vision of collective liberation.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it demonstrates that comparative literary analysis across South Asian linguistic traditions is not only possible but productive, revealing patterns and connections that remain invisible when each tradition is studied in isolation [6]. Second, it provides a detailed analytical framework—combining close reading, thematic coding, and rhetorical strategy analysis—that other scholars may adapt for comparative studies of resistance literature in other contexts [12], [29]. Third, it challenges the disciplinary boundaries that have long separated Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi literary studies, arguing that these traditions share a common political and aesthetic heritage that demands comparative attention [3], [7].

Looking ahead, several directions for future research present themselves. Longitudinal studies that trace the evolution of resistance themes within each poet's oeuvre would provide a more dynamic picture of how revolutionary consciousness develops over a literary career. Comparative studies that extend the analysis to women poets of resistance—Amrita Pritam, Mahadevi Varma, Kishwar Naheed—would address the gender limitation of the present study and enrich our understanding of how gender intersects with other axes of oppression in resistance poetry. Cross-national comparisons with resistance poets from other post-colonial traditions—Pablo Neruda, Mahmoud Darwish, Aime Cesaire—would situate the South Asian tradition within a broader global framework [35], [36].

The tradition of resistance poetry that Nirala, Faiz, and Pash represent is not merely a historical artefact; it is a living tradition that continues to inspire poets and activists across the subcontinent. In an era of resurgent nationalism, growing economic inequality, and deepening communal divisions, the voices of these three poets—a Hindi Romantic who mocked the pretensions of the powerful, an Urdu lyricist who turned love into revolution, and a Punjabi peasant who wrote with the earth beneath his fingernails—remain as urgent and as necessary as ever. Their poetry reminds us that literature is not a luxury but a necessity; not a pastime but a practice of freedom [1], [29], [37].

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