

Exploring Love, Yearning, and Memories in Majeed Amjad's Poem "Munich"

Mecid Emced'in "Münih" Şiirinde Aşk, Özlem ve Anıların Canlandırılması

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the process and reasons behind the transfer of memories in the poem "Munich" (1958) by Majeed Amjad. Memories are a way of expressing the personal experiences that are shaped by our thoughts and emotions. These experiences are a crucial part of memories and become more firmly entrenched when shared through storytelling. Remembering is a process, and memories are a reflection of that process. When memories are transformed into stories, they become more deeply ingrained in our minds and become open to reinterpretation. The poem "Munich" is named after the city of Munich in Germany, a place of love for Majeed Amjad and a reminder of his love for someone. This choice of location was influenced by the poet's historical and cultural context, as well as the autobiographical details of the woman who'd inspired him. By choosing Munich as the setting, Amjad drew upon both the reality of his society and language and the symbolic significance of the place in his memories. The poet Majeed Amjad, who had never left Pakistan, created a vivid image of Munich in his poem named after the city based on the information and memories Charlotte, a German woman he'd met briefly in 1958, had shared with him. Despite not experiencing the city firsthand, he constructed an image of it in his mind through Charlotte's descriptions and a few photographs, and this allowed him to create a poetic representation of Munich. Using the memory theories of Maurice Halbwachs and Jan and Aleida Assmann, this study also explores how the transfer of intercultural information and memories has been depicted in the poem through Charlotte's contributions to the poet's understanding of the city.

Keywords: Collective Memory, Individual Memory, Memoir, Majeed Amjad, Munich

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı şair Mecid Emced'in "Münih" (1958) adlı şiirinde geçen hatıraların nasıl ve neden aktarıldığını incelemektir. Hatıralar ortak duygu ve düşüncelerden hareketle bireysel yaşanmışlıkların dile getirilmesidir. Bireysel hafızanın en önemli parçası olan bireysel deneyimler, hatıraların anlatımı veya aktarımı sırasında öyküleştirilerek hafızada yerini sağlamlaştırır. Hatırlama bir süreçtir ve hatıralar da bu sürecin yansımalarıdır. Dolayısıyla hatıralar bir öyküye

dönüştüğünde hafızada yerini sağlamlaştırır ve yeniden yorumlanmak için hazır bekler. Şiire adını veren Almanya'nın "Münih" şehri, Mecid Emced'in bireysel hafızasında belirli bir yere işaret eden aşkın mekânıdır ve bu mekânı konu edinerek aşkını hatırlatmak ister. Bu bir yandan şairin yaşadığı zamana, onun ana diline ve ait olduğu toplumun geleneğiyle bağlantılı olan gerçekliğe diğer taraftan da ona ilham veren kadının otobiyografisine ait semgesel ve tarihi gerçekliğe dayanmaktadır. Gerçekte Pakistan dışında hiç bulunmayan şairin hafızasında yer etmiş olan Münih şehri, Charlotte'un sadece ona anlattıklarından ibarettir. Charlotte'un bireysel hafızasından aktardığı semantik bilgiler ve epizodik olaylar şair Mecid Emced'e ilham kaynağı olur. Bu bağlamda şair, Charlotte'un şehri olan Münih'e dair bu verilerden yararlanarak, onunla ortak bir hayatı paylaşmamış olmasına rağmen sevdiği kadının ona anlattıklarıyla ve az sayıda fotoğrafın yardımıyla zihninde bir Münih yaratır. Charlotte'un Münih'i artık Mecid Emced'in bireysel hafızasında yerini alır ve böylece şiirinde kendisinin hiç bulunmadığı Münih'e sanki gitmiş gibi şehri anlatır. Bu çalışmada ayrıca şiirde Charlotte'un aktardığı bilgiler veya anılar ışığında kültürlerarası aktarımın nasıl kurgulandığı Maurice Halbwachs, Jan ve Aleida Assmann'ın bellek kuramları aracılığıyla irdelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kolektif Hafıza, Bireysel Hafıza, Hatıra, Mecid Emced, Münih

Introduction

As the first owner and witnesses of one's memories,¹ humans develop their reminiscence through active participation in the communication process. Membership in one's family, religion, nation, and social groups can contribute to developing one's memory through symbolic interaction. Continuous communication sustains memory, and forgetting can occur when communication ceases. Thus, people tend to remember best when they are actively engaged in interplay and can share their experiences with others within the framework of collective memory.² Collective experiences shape human memories, and others often remind people of these memories, even if only through the recollection of events one had witnessed or in which one had participated.³ Both tangible and intangible elements and contents affect the remembering/reminding process. Examples such as the aroma of coffee, the color of a hat, rainy weather, or even a smile can evoke memories and transport one back to specific moments. According to J. Assmann⁴, remembering figures serves as a vital tool for preserving individual and collective memory by connecting past experiences to the present. In a sense, recalling brings the past to life and makes it relevant in the present. Halbwachs' following example of the city of London is a valuable illustration of how objects of remembrance, such as signs and symbols, can evoke memories of the past and contribute to human collective memory:

Let's say I'm coming to London for the first time, and I'm walking around the city a couple of times with someone. An architect will draw my attention to buildings, their proportions, and their arrangement. A historian will tell me why a particular street, house, or place is of historical interest. A painter will direct my attention to the colors in the parks, the lines of palaces and churches... A merchant and business person will drag me into the city's crowded streets with shops, bookstores, and department stores. Even if no one accompanies me, it is enough for me to have read the descriptions of the city written according to all these different points of view..., enough to read the city's plan.⁵

The above example of the city of London, which Halbwachs used to illustrate how memory works, is valuable because it shows how objects that can evoke memories from the past, known as objects of remembrance, play a role in the process. According to Halbwachs, even when exploring London alone, one may physically be unaccompanied; however, encountering specific

1 According to Halbwachs, memories are mostly drawn from the present and serve as information about the past. Using this information, memories undergo a reconstruction process of what had been carried out in earlier periods and results in a distorted version of the past. Maurice Halbwachs, *Kolektif Bellek*, Çev. Zuhâl Karagöz, (İstanbul: Pinhan Yayıncılık, 2018), 85-86.

2 According to Halbwachs, when people recall a situation or event, they always do so within a social framework. This is because individuals are influenced by the perspective of the group or groups with which they are associated, and as such, individual memories are intertwined with the memories of the group. Therefore, individual and social memory are in constant interaction and both rely heavily on a social framework. Memories can therefore be seen as a means by which individuals express their experiences based on shared feelings and thoughts. Maurice Halbwachs, *Das Gedächtnis und seine sozialen Bedingungen*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985), 23.

3 Halbwachs, *Kolektif Bellek*, 29.

4 J. Assmann, *Kültürel Bellek/ Eski Yüksek Kültürlerde Yazı, Hatırlama ve Politik Kimlik*, Çev. Ayşe Tekin, (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2015), 48.

5 Halbwachs, *Kolektif Bellek*, 30.

landmarks or artwork can evoke memories of the Dickens novels one has read in childhood, highlighting how the physical environment can trigger one's memories. Therefore, places, objects, people, aromas, and flavors are essential to individual memory and support and shape the remembrance. Each individual's memory represents a unique perspective on the broader collective memory,⁶ and the transfer of memories can differ depending on the relationships between the involved individuals and groups. Noteworthy, mentally sound individuals can recall their various experiences throughout their life. The individual experiences that make up one's memories become more firmly rooted when narrating or sharing them with others, thus highlighting their significance within one's memory.⁷ According to Erll (2005), remembering is a dynamic process, and memories are the narrated manifestation of this process.⁸ This suggests that memories become more firmly established through communication and are open to reinterpretation.

1. About Majeed Amjad

Majeed Amjad (1914-1974) was born on June 29, 1914 in Jhang, Punjab, now part of present-day Pakistan. The poet's childhood memories mainly comprise the moments he spent at his maternal grandfather's house with his relatives, as his parents had separated when he was just two years old. Amjad's uncle and grandfather allowed him to receive an education with both traditional and Western elements. He received his primary education on the Qur'an, Hadiths, Arabic, and Persian from his grandfather. After completing high school, Majeed Amjad went to Lahore for his higher education and received his doctorate. He left his academic life in Lahore due to the economic crisis that had also affected India at the end of the 1930s and returned to Jhang, where he had been born and raised. He then started working as an editor in the government-sponsored weekly newspaper *Urooj*. His poems, which were written under the classical Urdu poetry tradition and primarily focused on contemporary issues, were published in the literature section of this newspaper.

The poem "*Qaisariyat*" [Repressive Management], written by Majeed Amjad and published on the first page of *Urooj*, caused him trouble. At the time, politics in India was a sensitive topic, and the city's administrators deemed the poem politically objectionable. As a result, a lawsuit was filed against Majeed Amjad on charges of inciting people to revolt against the government.⁹ After losing his job and career in India in 1940, Majeed Amjad spent the following years working in temporary jobs during World War II (1939-1945), which coincided with the period when the freedom struggle in India gained momentum. Between 1940-1944, he worked in various temporary positions. During this period, Majeed Amjad married his cousin, but their

6 Halbwachs, *Kolektif Bellek*, 60.

7 Aleida Assmann, *Zur (Un-) Vereinbarkeit von Leid und Schuld in der deutschen Erinnerung*. *Zeitgeschichte* 2/33 (2006).

8 Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen*, (Stuttgart/Weimar: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 7.

9 Mehr Afshan Fârooqi, "The Legacy of the "*Misfit*" Poet: Repositioning Majîd Amjad in the Modern Urdu Canon", *BUNYÂD*, 6 (2015), 47.

marriage was unhappy and ended in divorce, causing a rift between the poet and his relatives.¹⁰ Despite his unsuccessful efforts at finding a stable job in bigger cities, he eventually settled in Sahiwal and started working as a food inspector in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture under the Social Development Institution in 1944. He continued working in the same position throughout his life in Sahiwal.¹¹ Sahiwal was a small settlement on the Karachi-Lahore railway line in the center of Punjab province and was also known as Montgomery between 1865-1967 after the former Punjab deputy governor, Sir Robert Montgomery.¹² Although Sahiwal did not have as great a diversity of literature and culture as Lahore, Majeed Amjad found enough productive and competent literary friends there.

Majeed Amjad is said to have been a sensitive person who reflected his emotions and experiences in his poetry. He was known to commute to his workplace in Sahiwal by bicycle and in the evenings would discuss poetry and literature with his friends at the Stadium Hotel. He was unable to maintain a happy marriage and ended up leading a modest, lonely life. Amjad was also known for his love of nature and trees. Some people say that his poems also reflected the pain he had felt when, in order to expand the city, the authorities cut down trees around the water channel along the path he commuted, as well as the sadness he felt about the destruction of forests.¹³ After Majeed Amjad's death on January 11, 1974, a park was built in his memory in Sahiwal, where he had spent most of his life. The park is known as Majeed Amjad Park and features several trees and a fountain as a tribute to the poet's love of nature. The park is famous for the locals and visitors who enjoy the serene atmosphere and pay their respects to the legendary poet.¹⁴

Amjad was a modest and reserved person in poetry gatherings, and his reluctance to take the spotlight may have distanced him from the passionate literary circles and famous poets of his time. However, his poems were evidently well-received by the public.¹⁵ His poor situation did not escape the attention of Intizar Hussain (1925-2016), one of the master writers of Urdu literature. Intizar Hussain visited Amjad a few weeks before his death and witnessed the great poet's loneliness due to his poor living conditions. After receiving the news of the death of the great poet, Intizar Hussain wrote an article titled "*Takhliqi Safar Main Aik Tanha Musavvir; Majeed Amjad Aik Munfered Awaz*" [A Lonely Muse on a Technical Journey, Majeed Amjad's

10 As previously mentioned, the poet Majeed Amjad grew up in his maternal grandfather's house and later married his aunt's daughter in 1939. However, he did not find happiness in this arranged marriage and remained childless. After the divorce, he chose to live alone, as he received little support from his family and struggled financially. Even after his death, no relatives came forward to claim his body, which was a surprising and sad situation in a culture that values familial ties. This lack of support and neglect from his relatives, coupled with the poet's financial difficulties and declining health, was a source of sadness for his friends. The poet suffered from poor eyesight and had not been paid his retirement salary for two years, which exacerbated his struggles. Fârooqi, "The Legacy of the "Misfit" Poet: Repositioning Majîd Amjad in the Modern Urdu Canon", 50.

11 H. Muhammad Zakariya, *Kulliyat-ı Mecid Emced*, (Lahore: AlHamd Publications, 2006), 33.

12 Vazir Agha, *Majeed Amjad ki Dastan-e Mohabbat*, (Lahor: Moeen Academy, 1991), 89.

13 Fârooqi, "The Legacy of the "Misfit" Poet: Repositioning Majîd Amjad in the Modern Urdu Canon", 47-48; Majeed Amjad, *Shab-i Rajta ke Ba'd*, (Lahore: Majeed Amjad Ishaati Committee, 1976), 81.

14 Syed Qasim Mehmood, *Encyclopedia Pakistanika*, (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2014), 868.

15 Fârooqi, "The Legacy of the "Misfit" Poet: Repositioning Majîd Amjad in the Modern Urdu Canon", 51.

Benevolent Voice].¹⁶ Intizar Hussein and other empathetic writers' sad response to Majeed Amjad's passing led to a movement in the Urdu literature community, resulting in many of his unpublished poems being discovered. Thus, after the poet's poetry collection *Shab-e Rafta*¹⁷ published in 1958 while he was alive, he had another work published in 1976 titled *Shabe e Rafta Ke Ba'd*.¹⁸ The common point in these two poetry collections is remembering the past. Amjad's poems often reflect a sense of nostalgia and loss as he mourns the passing of traditional values and the destruction of nature. He was interested in exploring the complexities of human emotions, such as loneliness and sorrow, and often used nature as a metaphor for the human condition. His work is known for its delicate and reflective tone and ability to evoke a sense of deep melancholy in the reader.

2. The Transfer of Memories in Majeed Amjad's Poem "Munich"

The poem "Munich" by Majeed Amjad centers around a character named Charlotte, who is from Munich and had traveled to Pakistan to explore its ancient regions. During her visit to Harappa, she met Majeed Amjad, and they become friends. The poem captures their friendship and the unique perspective that Charlotte brought to her exploration of Pakistan. This short-lived friendship continued until Charlotte left Pakistan to continue her journey. Amjad accompanied her to the last point in Pakistan, Quetta, on the Iranian border. He said his goodbyes to Charlotte here and then wrote the poem "*Quetta Tak*"¹⁹ on the train while journeying back to his life in Sahiwal. Since saying his goodbye, his poems about sadness and longing reached large masses. Wazir Agha (1991) mentioned in his article "*Majeed Amjad ki Dastan-e Mohabbat*" [Tales of Majeed Amjad-i Mohabbat] about Majeed Amjad's poetry and how no surname was ever mentioned in any of the articles or poems written for Charlotte. An envelope is said to have been found containing photographs and letters of Charlotte among the poet's belongings after his death.²⁰ After Majeed Amjad's death, his belongings, including the letters, appear to have not been passed on to any specific heir. As a result, the letters have remained unfound. Shahzad Ahmed, one of Majeed Amjad's friends, mentioned a photograph of Charlotte sitting in a boat with her feet dangling over the edge. This photograph was attached to a letter Charlotte had sent to Majeed Amjad and formed the subject of the poem titled "*Aik Photo*" [A Photo].²¹

16 Fârooqi, "The Legacy of the "Misfit" Poet: Repositioning Majîd Amjad in the Modern Urdu Canon", 74.

17 "Past Nights."

18 "After Past Nights."

19 "Until Quetta."

20 On this subject, Majeed Amjad is also stated to have met Charlotte at the beginning of September 1958 and their goodbyes to have taken place at the end of November of the same year (Agha, *Majeed Amjad ki Dastan-e Mohabbat*, 1991). Farooqi also mentioned an approximately 3-month acquaintance (Fârooqi, "The Legacy of the "Misfit" Poet: Repositioning Majîd Amjad in the Modern Urdu Canon", 61). The notes, photographs, and letters Amjad had about Charlotte, as well as the whereabouts of the other memory objects, unless they have been deliberately removed, remain unclear (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1124666>).

21 Amjad, *Shab-i Rafta ke Ba'd*, 79.

Majeed Amjad's poem "Munich" portrays the emotional reunion between Charlotte and her mother, which occurred in 1958 after Charlotte's decadelong journey. The poet fictionalized the time and manner in which Charlotte returned home, and the poem captures the emotions of this reunion, which took place during Christmas of that year.

میونخ

آج کرسمس ہے
شہر میونخ میں آج کرسمس ہے

رودبار عسار کے پُل پر
جس جگہ برف کی سلوں کی سڑک
فان کاچے کی سمت مڑتی ہے
قافلے قبوقبوں کے اترے ہیں

آج۔ اس قرئیہ شراب کے لوگ
جن کے رُخ پر ہزیمتوں کا عرق
جن کے دل میں جراختوں کی خراش
ایک عزم نشاط جو کے ساتھ
اُمڈ اُٹے ہیں مست راہوں پر
بانہیں بانہوں میں بوٹوں پر!
برف گرتی ہے ساز بجتے ہیں
کوٹے میریں کے اک گھروندے میں
ایک بوٹھی، اداس، ماں کے لئے
پھول اک طاقچے پہ ہنستے ہیں
گرم انگیٹھی کے عکس لرزاں سے
آگ اک آنے میں جلتی ہے!
ایک دستک ہے! کون آیا ہے!
زرد کمرے کے گوشے گوشے میں
جو ماضی کا سائہ مصلوب
آخری سانس لینے لگتا ہے!

ماں کے چہرے کی ہر عمیق شکن
ایک حیران مسکراہٹ کے
دلنشین زاویوں میں ڈھلتی ہے
”میری شالاط، اے مری شالاط
اے میں قربان، تم آ گئیں، بیٹی!“
اور وہ دُختِ ارض الماں جب
سر سے گٹھڑی اُتار کر جھک کر
اپنی امی کے پاؤں پڑتی ہے

اس کی پلکوں پہ ملک ملک کی گرد
ایک آنسو میں ٹوب جاتی ہے

ایک مفتوح قوم کی بیٹی
پارہ ناں کے واسطے، تنہا
رُوئے عالم کی خاک۔ چہان آئی

دس برس کے طویل عرصے کے بعد
آج وہ اپنے ساتھ کیا لائی؟
روح میں، دیس دیس کے موسم!

بزمِ دوراں سے کیا ملا اس کو
سیپ کی چوڑیاں ملایا سے
کینچلی چین کے اک اژدر کی
ٹھیکری اک مہنجدارو کی
ایک نازک بیاض پر، مرا نام
کون سمجھے گا، اس پہیلی کو؟

فاصلوں کی کمند سے آزاد،
میرادل ہے کہہ شہرِ میونخ ہے
چار سو، جس طرف کوئی دیکھے
برف گرتی ہے، ساز جتے ہیں
(۱۹۵۸)۔

Munich

It's Christmas today.

It's Christmas in Munich today.

On the bridge of Isar

Road covered with snow and ice

Where it turns to the Frauenkirche side

Happiness and laughter have descended

Today, the people of this city of wine²²

With the sweat of defeat on their foreheads

With scars of wounds in their hearts²³

Intoxicated, have come to the roads

With revived passion and spirit

Hugging and kissing!

22 *Weihen Stephan Bier* is a beer brand unique to the city of Munich.

23 This refers to the material and spiritual difficulties experienced during and after World War II.

*It is snowing and music is playing
 In a house in Marien²⁴
 At a sad old mother
 The flowers on the shelf smile
 Flames dance on the warm hearth
 fire is reflected in a mirror
 From the door comes a knock! Who is there?
 In every corner of the flame-colored room
 The persecuted shadow of the past on the cross²⁵
 takes its last breath*

*Every single deep mark on Mother's face
 Turns into a marvelous surprised smile
 My Charlotte! Oh my, Charlotte!²⁶
 May I be your ransom; you've come, my daughter!
 And that German girl
 When lowering her bundle and bends
 Falls to her mother's feet
 The dust of different kingdoms on her eyelashes
 Drowns in a single tear*

*Daughter of a defeated nation
 For a piece of bread, alone
 Has traveled all over the world*

*After ten long years
 What did she bring with her today?
 In her spirit, the seasons of various nations!*

*What did she take from the ages?
 An oyster shell bracelet from Malaysia
 Dragon skin from China
 A stone from Mohenjodaro
 My name in a delicate notepad
 Who can understand this enigma?*

*A lasso free from distances
 My heart beats in the city of Munich
 Everywhere I look
 It snows and music is played. (1958).*

24 *Marienplatz* is a central square in Munich.

25 Reference is made to the defeat of Germany in World Wars I and II and the traces this had left on German society.

26 "My Charlotte Oh my Charlotte!" In the original text of the poem, she is referred to as *Shalat*.

The poem "Munich" refers to a particular place that Majeed Amjad created as a space of remembrance in his memory. Majeed Amjad established the construction of his memory space in "Munich" in two aspects. Firstly, on the reality of the period, language, and social traditions to which the poet had been connected, and secondly based on the symbolic and historical facts the poet wanted to express through his work. One of the essential aspects of recalling are the emotional aspects through imagery. In this context, the poet reexperiences his unrequited love in his poetry by referring to his memories and conveying the details to the reader. The city of Munich holds a significant emotional value in the poet's memory, even though he was never physically there. It is a result of his past conversations with Charlotte where she shared her experiences and memories of the city with him. The memory of Munich has become a vital memory object for the poet, connecting him to a reality tied to his cultural and societal traditions. In literature, a place can have a symbolic meaning beyond its physical characteristics and can be used to represent a specific historical event, cultural identity, or emotional experience. A place can also serve as a metaphor or an allegory for a broader theme or idea in a literary work. Nora suggested the need for space to be often linked to a fear of individuals or society being forgotten. Places are important because they preserve and reflect the spirit of a specific period in the past, and as such play a crucial role in history. Memories are transferred to future generations through autobiographical memory, and as "the voice of the past is the transmitter of the future," these memories help to shape the future.²⁷

*Autobiographical memory is composed of episodic memory, which is memory for specific events, and autobiographical knowledge, which is an individual's conceptual, generic, and schematic understanding of their personal history. When recalling a memory, both types of memory are typically used. These memories make up an individual's self by locating them in a specific socio-historical time, society, and social group. Autobiographical memories play a crucial role in the development of the self, while also limiting what an individual can become.*²⁸

Clues, also known as memory triggers, are important for retrieving autobiographical memories. These triggers can be sensory, such as a smell or sound, or contextual, such as a location or event. They evoke a specific memory and provide a path to accessing the information. The emotional significance of these triggers can make them particularly effective in facilitating memory recall. The formation and retrieval of autobiographical memories are also influenced by an individual's cultural and social background, personal experiences, and beliefs. Majeed Amjad's "Munich" exemplifies how an individual can use poetry to preserve their memories. By using the objects of memory Charlotte had told him, the poet evokes associations in his mind that bring back visual images of his past experiences. This is a common experience when remembering autobiographical memories, as they often involve a feeling of traveling back in time. By writing down his feelings in poetry, Majeed Amjad can keep his memories alive and share them with others.

27 Pierre Nora, *Hafıza Mekânları*, Çev. M.Emin Özcan, (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi, 2006), 30.

28 Helen L. Williams and Martin A. Conway, "Networks of Autobiographical Memories", In *Memory in Mind and Culture*, Eds. Pascal Boyer, James V. Wertsch, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 33.

In the poem “Munich,” Majeed Amjad reflects on and transfers memories that belong to Charlotte’s autobiographical memories, which are the memories of events and experiences that a person has had in their own life. These memories are unique to the individual and an important part of their identity. Amjad can capture the emotional and personal significance of these memories through poetic language and convey them to the reader.²⁹ Autobiographical memory has two important features. The first is recollective experience, which refers to reliving the memory when it is recalled. This includes sensory and emotional details and a sense of mental time travel to the original event. The second feature is self-referentiality, which refers to the degree to which a memory has been integrated into the individual’s identity and sense of self. This includes the belief that the memory actually happened to the individual and the personal significance and meaning that the memory holds for the individual.³⁰ Autobiographical memories can be multisensory and often involve visual and auditory sensations, smells, tastes, and tactile experiences. In addition, the narrative or life story surrounding the memory and the communication and social context in which it was formed can be important elements of autobiographical memory. Finally, the personal experience associated with the memory can shape how it is remembered and the emotions it evokes.³¹ In the poem “Munich,” Majeed Amjad uses Charlotte’s memories to create sensory experiences that become part of his autobiographical memory. The falling snow, laughing people, flowers on the shelf, songs playing, and brewers at home all contribute to his experience and memory of Munich, even though he has never been there. These sensory details also help bring the poem to life for the reader, allowing them to imagine and feel like they are there themselves.

Considering the possible communications between Amjad and Charlotte regarding the Munich poem is interesting. If there had been correspondence between them, Charlotte might have read the poem and provided feedback or shared her memories and feelings about the described events. Additionally, if Amjad translating the poem for Charlotte could have provided a way for them to connect and understand each other’s perspectives more deeply. However, the poem might also never have been directly shared with Charlotte and may have simply remained a personal reflection of Amjad. Regardless, the notebook³² of Amjad’s poetry suggests that the words were important to Charlotte and held sentimental value for her, whether or not she had the opportunity to read the Munich poem specifically. The assumptions on this subject show how despite the friendship between Amjad and Charlotte being short-lived, it had left a long impact in the field of literature through his poem “Munich.” Charlotte might

29 C. David Rubin, “A Basic Systems Approach to Autobiographical Memory”, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14/2 (2005), 79.

30 Tuğba Uzer, “Nasıl Hatırlarız, Nasıl Unuturuz: Kuramsal Yaklaşımlar”, *Hayatı Hatırlamak, Otobiyografik Belleğe Bilimsel Yaklaşımlar*, Edt. Sami Gülgöz, Berivan Ece, Sezin Öner, (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2018), 53.

31 Williams & Conway, “Networks of Autobiographical Memories”.

32 Also see: Farooqi, “The Legacy of the “*Misfit*” Poet: Repositioning Majid Amjad in the Modern Urdu Canon” and Agha, *Majeed Amjad ki Dastan-e Mohabbat* and <https://www.dawn.com/news/1124666> .

not have known the Urdu language, and Amjad might have been aware of this when he written his poem in Urdu. Translating poetry is a challenging task, as it involves the literal meaning of words and the nuances, metaphors, and cultural references unique to a language. Thus, the translated version of the poem might not fully convey the same emotional impact and depth of meaning as the original. However, even if Charlotte had read a translation of the poem, the fact that it was written in Urdu and then translated to another language would have added an extra layer of cultural complexity to their communication, making the poem a representation of intercultural exchange through poetry.

The poem narrates the reunion of a mother with her daughter who has just returned from a long journey to the East. The poet describes the moment the daughter lays down the bundle she has carried on her head and falls at her mother's feet, the dust from her travels in the East mingling with her tears. The poem also mentions the souvenirs the daughter brought back, including those the poet gave her. A soft-bound notebook is an important symbol of the intercultural expression the poet has constructed.³³ The poem's descriptions reveal information about Charlotte and shed light on the poet Amjad's perspective. These show that Charlotte, who is identified as a woman belonging to Western culture, is also connected to Eastern culture. Through the synthesis of Charlotte's memories as influenced by her German identity with the poet's Pakistani perspective, the poem depicts the interaction between the two cultures.

The poet and his inspiration, Charlotte, had most likely communicated in English because they did not know each other's native tongue. Among the place names mentioned in the poem, *Fan Kuche (Frau der Kirche)* being a street name in Munich, *Marien (Marienplatz)* being the name of a square, and *Isar* being the name of a bridge remained in Amjad's memory. The poem "Munich" conveys foreign words in Urdu that Amjad had heard from Charlotte and brings to life a German woman named *Shalat* in the minds of its readers. The name *Shalat* in the poem "Munich" is likely a transliteration of the name Charlotte into Urdu. Because the poet had never been to Germany, his knowledge of German culture was likely be limited to what Charlotte had shared with him during their friendship. Therefore, *Shalat* can reasonably be assumed to refer to Charlotte, and the poem is about her return to her homeland after her travels in the East.

However, the poet used the name *Shalât* "شالاط" in the poem originally written in Urdu, transferring it to the cultural memory³⁴ and immortalizing the name of the woman in his memories. The poet had likely heard about the famous Munich drink Weihenstephaner Beer

33 Amjad, *Shab-i Rafta ke Ba'd*, 57–59.

34 The poet Amjad reflects the information he learned about Munich, which was only transferred to him, from his individual memory to his poetry. The poet transfers both what he learned and his feelings to the cultural memory. As a matter of fact, according to A. Assmann *Zur (Un-) Vereinbarkeit von Leid und Schuld in der deutschen Erinnerung*, 45; a writer who ignores the boundaries of time and space is an accountant of memory and a professional immortalizer. In this context, the poet also immortalizes his feelings about the city of Munich and Charlotte, which is described to him as a place, and immortalizes his experiences/feelings in the form of poetry as a means of reminiscence.

from Charlotte, and this being foreign to his collective memory, he recorded the name as *Weihen Stephan Bier*, as he'd heard it.

Whether factual or fictional, symbols in a literary text always identify a real object or event to which the text refers. In the simplest definition, symbols are the images in an idea (Frenzel, 1963). The signs symbolized in a novel or poem can also form the subject of a work and even reflect the feeling of the period or individual being mentioned. In the poem "Munich," the most effective symbol describing Charlotte's emotional intensity can be said to be snow. According to Butzer and Jacob (2008, p. 331), snow in the literary genre represents the individual's isolation from society and introversion, death and the grave, a general drowsiness or confusion, and old age; however, it has also been defined as a symbol of innocence, purity, and beauty, as a world of knowledge, and as the bearer or erasure of a clue. In the poem "Munich," snow is used as a symbol to describe Charlotte's emotional intensity. The line "snowfalls" represents the loneliness in the poet's life. The snow symbolizes the purity and clarity of the poet's feelings for Charlotte. Moreover, the poet's choice of winter as the season to describe Munich, a city he has never been to, can be seen as a symbol of his confusion. This is due to his lack of knowledge about both Charlotte and Germany, which is reflected in his limited individual memory.

Conclusion

Majeed Amjad was a renowned Urdu poet who began his career during the Progressive literary movement. His poems focus on the adverse effects social and economic issues have on individuals and society. Despite being a contemporary of the proponents of the Progressive literary movement in Urdu literature, he has not been associated with any particular literary movement. Amjad's career as a poet flourished in the late 1950s, and he continued to produce poetry until his death. He lived through the struggles of colonization, division, and urbanization between World Wars I and II, which had influenced his poems' diverse range of subjects, motifs, and symbols. Amjad's poetry is characterized by its variety and broadness of themes compared to his contemporaries.

Amjad's poetry took on more romantic elements in 1958, and can be traced back to his encounter with a German woman named Charlotte. They had met in early September that year and parted ways at the end of November. Amjad collected notes, photographs, letters, and other items related to Charlotte, but the current whereabouts of some of these objects are unknown. The city of Munich, the subject of his poem, represents a specific place in Amjad's memory based on what he had learned from Charlotte. Amjad's memory of Munich was limited by what Charlotte had conveyed, but the semantic information and episodic events she had shared with him inspired his poetry. With a few photographs and Charlotte's stories, Amjad created his own version of Munich in his mind, despite never having actually visited the city. Thus, Charlotte's Munich became part of Amjad's memory and found its way into his poetry, allowing him to describe the city as if he had been there.

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