

Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb. *I Am Malala; the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* (Little, Brown 2013), pp. 327 Price: \$26

The Greeks pen tragedies with ritzy edifice that marks the history of the transfiguration of human form and archaic matrix which often ranges from naïveté to reflection, from naturalness to artifice and from abstraction to mechanization of human soul with that of emblem of time and space. These tragedies are demarcated well in align with their structure which complements the construction of the tragic action interface with climax or vice versa. While reading book of a young girl hailing from Pakistan's small valley Swat titled "*I Am Malala*", writing protégé of renewed British journalist Christina Lamb; one can suavely identify that these memoir are written on classical thematic tragic structure which includes *prologue*, and *parodos* followed by five episodes interspersed by *stasima* and it ends with an *epilogue* FYI the story concludes. Every part takes a disposition with a Pashtu couplet that might intend or refer as to serve the purpose of a *chorus* which en suites in tragedy as a knotted weft though it is succinctly placed unlike Greek playwrights.

The book contains 327 pages and has divided into five extensive parts. The *epilogue* inaugurates and uncoils the story from the day whence she was shot by Taliban; hence it changes her entire world anew. These four parts are further divided into 24 chapters. The book is dedicated to all the girls who have faced injustice and have been silenced around the world which calls on a clef for universal feminist approximation. She summons all the girls as together their voice will be heard vis-a-vis this book. She falls through in her understanding this simple fact that terrorism has affected the entire world regardless of its gender and identity.

First part titled "*Before the Taliban*" reveals the historical importance, natural landscape and pluralistic socio-religious ethnicity of the valley. Malala's triumph lies at turning the riveting narrative of her life into something unforgettable as compelling as this book. She goes on describing her journey from the small valley termed as paradise which transforms into a terrorist epic centre out of the sudden militarily rule of weaponizing the society during Zia era in order to fight against Russian expansion. Although this description is explained in a naïve fashion but reveal beyond its instances. It reflects the political sagacity of this little girl at this tender age but at the same time it is difficult to discern the Malala's voice from that of Lamb. It may oft mislead the readers.

The second part "*the Valley of Death*" describes the turning of this happy valley into the hub of terror activities which thwarts the peace of

the land and closing down of all the schools. One of noteworthy episodes is that of “*The dairy of Gul Makai*” in which she acts as an eyewitness of nefarious activities and pronounces the incidents of Taliban as a pseudonym of *Gul Makai* with one of the correspondent of BBC blog, so nobody can track down her identity.

One can be certainly amazed that the little girl is brought up in a fashion in which she is introduced by the examples of world leaders like Jinnah, Lincoln, Gandhi, and Napoleon and playing Romeo and Juliet, reading Tolstoy, Jane Austen, Stephen Hawking and Twilight books. And she wields metaphor of vampires with that of Taliban’s physiognomy, mien and silhouette. She writes;

Moniba and I had been reading the Twilight books and longed to be vampires. It seemed to us that the Taliban arrived in the night just like vampires. They appeared in groups, armed with knives and Kalashnikovs, and first emerged in Upper Swat, in the hilly areas of Matta.

The third Part termed “*Three Bullets, Three Girls*” records the incidental details when Malala was gunned down by the terrorists with triad thunder of “*crack, crack, crack*” while returning from school on her way. She also supplies a circumstantial evidence of war torn Valley of Swat after military operation in 2009 which has annihilated the beauty and peace of the land. She remembered the bitter experience of being an IDP (Internally Displaced People) and other of the same kind whose homes were destroyed during the operation but she was the luckiest one because her home had survived during this holocaust.

The fourth Part “*Between Life and Death*” explains her struggle between life and death and “*Journey into the Unknown*” explains what the world is already aware of. She creates a history.

The last part titled “*A Second Life*” describes her account details about the aftermath of recovery and finally gets settled down in the city. Thus a common girl is metamorphosed into a world renowned celebrity. Is it just a coincidence that everyone from Madonna to Angelina Jolie, Beckham and Brown, Obama and the Queen of England, the EU and the UN, the powerful players of the imperial tragedy are showing all over the globe that they have discovered Malala as if on cue?

Additionally, the book contains capturing illustrations, maps, acknowledgements, historical events of Swat and Pakistan, note on Malala Fund, vote of thanks as well as an interesting section of personal photographs of Malala and her family. Though memoirs are significantly different than those of novels and stories, they are not necessarily more square and upright. What is paramount for the reader is that the expression and the experiment have succeeded. Although

there is a continuous echoing and omniscient presence of her father; Ziauddin Berani's description in the memoir which too often let the reader takes away from Malala's own story and thinks about her father instead of her. Malala is never bored with expressing her gratitude for her father's share into her growth but this might have done in a more subtle way without making repetitions and digressions from the biographical viewpoint.

One thing which needs to be revisited and recounted for every South Asian child particularly that of Pakistanis who have witnessed such sudden outburst of terrorism and becoming it a state to street phenomenon which punctures the day to day life of every denizen. It causes serious repercussions on individual liberty and aggrandizes the state surveillance strategies. As she writes in apropos to 9/11 incident:

We did not realize then that 9/11 would change our world too, and would bring war into our valley.

It is dispiriting to know that our young generation like Malala is grown up with specific war-mongering worldview and nomenclature. An average Pakistani child who lives here, his/her worldview is constructed through a theoretical, cultural and ideological perspective about their intimidated environment in which words like curfew, military operations, suicide bombing, revolution, marshal law, emergency, boom of cannons and machine guns, war on terror, NATO forces, gunships, fight, target, seize, assassination, threat, bullet-proof, killing, ambulances, Kalashnikovs, check posts, drones, ISI etc are too frequently referred and used. It has manufactured their worldview full of violence, voyeurs and vacillation.

Malala raises her voice across all length and breadth and her struggle proves a milestone for education attainment which is pathway to global citizen, tolerance and development for any individual. She is an epitome of change, conscious, and character building. Thereby she realizes the importance of education which requires a visionary and committed leadership to put our house in order but her reminiscences regarding the unconcerned attitude of political leaders of Pakistan is worth mentioning once she was awarded with Peace Award, she states:

After the PM presented me with the award and cheque, I presented him with a long list of demands. I told him that we wanted our schools rebuilt and a girls' university in Swat. I knew he would not take my demands seriously so I didn't push very hard. I thought, One day I will be a politician and do these things myself.

Malala's transcendent image is denoted with that of enlightenment, emancipation and empowerment for women all across the world.

Though Malala revolution is silently and subtly penetrating deep into the minds and hearts of many Pakistani which remains unheard for the past many years. Malala's conjuring is heard loudly in UN general assembly speech which would resonate unequivocally amongst many generations yet to come:

Let us pick up our books and our pens. They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.

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