

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-55803

Title: The Communicative Power Of Narrative: Empathy and the pursuit of Social Justice

Recommendation:

Accept as it is
 Accept after minor revision.....
 Accept after major revision
 Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	...			
Techn. Quality	...			
Clarity		...		
Significance	...			

Reviewer Name: Dr. Ishrat Fatima

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The paper presents an ambitious, interdisciplinary exploration of communication, narrative, and social justice by situating Shahnaz Bashir's *The Half Mother* within a broad historical, theoretical, and digital communication framework. It argues convincingly that narrative functions not merely as literary expression but as a powerful communicative tool capable of preserving memory, fostering empathy, resisting oppression, and challenging hegemonic silences especially in conflict zones like Kashmir. The study's scope is wide-ranging, drawing on communication history, literary criticism, political theory, media studies, and digital ethics, which gives the work intellectual richness but also creates certain coherence and focus challenges. The abstract clearly outlines the paper's central concern: the enduring relevance of storytelling as a communicative practice that bridges historical forms of expression with contemporary narratives of conflict and resistance. The use of *The Half Mother* as a case study is well-justified, as the novel offers a poignant depiction of enforced silence, grief, and marginalization in Kashmir. The abstract effectively highlights the paper's key contributions empathy-building, memory preservation, and social justice advocacy while also acknowledging its limitations, particularly the reliance on a single literary text and a specific geographical context. This reflexive acknowledgment strengthens the academic credibility of the study. The introduction is one of the paper's strongest sections. It situates *The Half Mother* within broader histories of communication control, censorship, and resistance, drawing parallels between historical repression and contemporary digital surveillance. The discussion of silence as both enforced and strategic is insightful, especially in relation to Haleema's character. By framing silence as an alternative communicative mode rather than mere absence of speech the paper lays a strong conceptual foundation. The hypothetical repositioning of the novel in a 2025 digital environment is innovative and demonstrates the author's attempt to connect literary analysis with present-day communication realities. The sections on the history of communication from cave paintings and smoke signals to rhetoric, Marxist theory, and media history demonstrate impressive breadth and scholarly engagement. References to thinkers such as Innis, McLuhan, Aristotle, Cicero, and Marx effectively establish communication as a historically embedded social practice. However, while the historical overview is informative, it occasionally reads as encyclopedic rather than directly analytical. At times, the connection between these historical frameworks and *The Half Mother* could be made more explicit to maintain analytical coherence and narrative flow.

The discussion of silence, drawing on linguistic competence theories (Hymes, Canale & Swain) and Orwell's concept of Newspeak, is particularly compelling. The paper succeeds in demonstrating how silence operates as both oppression and resistance across contexts totalitarian regimes, war zones, and personal grief. The comparison between Orwell's 1984 and Bashir's *The Half Mother* is well-argued, highlighting how control over language shapes reality, memory, and identity. Haleema's silence emerges as a deeply symbolic communicative act that aligns well with the paper's core thesis. The analysis of communication technologies in warfare from World War I to net-centric warfare and drone combat is theoretically sound and historically informed. The paper effectively contrasts the

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rhetoric of “clean” and efficient warfare with the lived realities of emotional devastation and enforced disappearance depicted in *The Half Mother*. This juxtaposition strengthens the moral and ethical argument of the study, reinforcing the idea that technological advancement does not mitigate human suffering. However, this section is dense and could benefit from tighter integration with the literary analysis to prevent thematic diffusion.

The sections on digital communication, AI, surveillance capitalism, and algorithmic bias are timely and relevant. The paper successfully extends its core argument into contemporary debates on digital silence, deplatforming, and ethical communication. By linking modern digital repression (internet shutdowns, surveillance, misinformation) with historical forms of silencing, the study demonstrates continuity in power dynamics across time. Nonetheless, this section occasionally shifts toward a general discussion of digital ethics, and a more sustained return to *The Half Mother* would strengthen thematic unity. Methodologically, the paper relies on qualitative literary analysis supported by historical and theoretical scholarship. The reference list is extensive and interdisciplinary, reflecting strong academic engagement. However, the methodology is implicit rather than explicitly stated. A dedicated methodology section clarifying analytical approach (e.g., critical discourse analysis, narrative theory, postcolonial criticism) would enhance rigor and clarity. Additionally, while the breadth of sources is impressive, selective tightening could improve focus and argumentative sharpness.

The conclusion effectively synthesizes the paper's major themes silence, narrative, memory, and resistance while reaffirming the relevance of *The Half Mother* in both historical and digital contexts. The discussion of “digital silence” as a modern form of erasure is particularly insightful and opens valuable avenues for future research. The paper makes a meaningful contribution to studies of communication, literature, and social justice by demonstrating how narratives from conflict zones function as acts of ethical witnessing and communicative resistance.

Overall, the paper is intellectually rich, theoretically grounded, and socially relevant. With tighter structural coherence, clearer methodological framing, and more sustained literary focus, it has strong potential for publication in interdisciplinary journals dealing with communication studies, cultural studies, or postcolonial literature. It successfully demonstrates that narrative is not merely storytelling but a vital communicative force capable of preserving truth, challenging silence, and advancing social justice.