



Affect, Subjectivity and Everyday Resistance in Hasan Azizul Haque's *The Bird of Fire*

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Abstract

This paper intends to explore Affect as a potential source of both personal and political subjectivity, with special reference to Bangladeshi author Hasan Azizul Haque's historical novel *Agun Pakhi (The Bird of Fire)*. Published in 2008, *The Bird of Fire* chronicles a highly eventful time in the history of the Indian subcontinent. The novel begins around twenty years before the partition of Bengal and goes on to document a number of socio-political upheavals of the time, including, for example, the Second World War, the Bengal famine of 1943, the partition of Bengal, and the ensuing unrest between the Hindus and Muslims. In *The Bird of Fire*, however, these events are documented not as external, 'outside' activities, and is instead mediated by and presented through the everyday domestic experiences of the novel's unnamed female protagonist. As a consequence, the 'mundane' in Haque's novel acquires political salience. In Haque's novel, qualities like tenderness and affection, which are usually taken to be signs of 'passive' femininity, come to play a crucial role in the protagonist's attempts to subjectivize her. This 'feminine' expression, in turn, is largely driven by Affective dimensions. By the virtue of her emotional response-ability, the protagonist succeeds in forging a new mode of resistance that challenges both political violence and patriarchy. By studying the form and content of Haque's novel, this paper explores how the notion of resistance in *The Bird of Fire* recalibrates itself in terms of the 'ordinariness' of the protagonist.

Keywords: Affect, Everyday, Subjectivity, Political Violence, Resistance.