

Index and Transcript of  
Albuquerque, New Mexico narrator

**Yasir Hussain**

26 May 2015

Interviewer David Lee del Norte

recorded in the narrator's home nearby  
University of New Mexico

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## **Project History**

After an internship with Bessemer Historical Society and CF&I Archives in Pueblo, Colorado, with intention to continue public history and narrator driven oral history collection, researcher David Lee del Norte requested recommendations for potential narrators from Albuquerque friends, neighbors, and colleagues. Each of the narrators have local community connections to the city of Albuquerque regardless citizenship status within the United States.

From October 2014 to January 2017, this independent research project recorded educators, students, and artists about their personal perspectives and professional work in New Mexico. This digital collection seeks repository sponsorship for long-term preservation. Access to transcription, recording, or interview files remain under strict copyright of narrator and interviewer with availability limited to repositories for consideration of complete project accession.

For more information please send a letter of interest to [recordspapers@icloud.com](mailto:recordspapers@icloud.com)

## **Narrators**

Of twelve narrators, two chose to restrict access to their contribution to the project and therefore are here unlisted.

Cheryl Wright – John Saucedo II – Yasir Hussain – Ernesto Garrido

Marcia Bockemeier – Oscar Lopez – David Hernandez – Margaret Pool

Enrique Harrison – Harry Morris



## **Narrator Summary**

Dr. Yasir Hussain was born in the tribal lands of the Kurram Agency in the town of Alizai, grew up in Peshawar, and later relocated to Islamabad, Pakistan. With a love for literature, Hussain became a Fulbright scholar at the University of Pennsylvania before completing the Phd in Language, Literacy, and Socio-Cultural Studies at the University of New Mexico. In the dissertation called *English Language Teachers' Preparedness: An Investigation of Ideological Meaning-Making in Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan*, Hussain explores the historical, ideological, and political factors which influence the English language teaching methods of his home country. Today, Dr. Hussain teaches as a member of the Department of English with the National University of Modern Language in Islamabad.



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## **Albuquerque, New Mexico Transcript**

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Yassir Hussain

### **Yasir Hussain:**

I think what I like about the education system of this country, or maybe any other country in the West, is that they give you the work. You do it, and you talk about it, and you have your opinion about it. So you feel more empowered in class. You feel more like sharing stuff.

And we would just make the teacher responsible for everything, and the teacher had a really tough time because he had to talk about the whole stuff for hours and hours, and the students just had to cram the stuff in and produce that in examinations.

So I think I'm just going to, from whatever level I have, I'll just go to my classroom, if I am teaching in a classroom. I'm going to be using my own practices the way I have learned. I'll try to change the culture of education. And if I'm in policy making, I would definitely try to do my best for changing some of the basic practices of teaching. And then, teacher training is very important. Teachers, I think, are not trained enough for that. So if I could help teachers with that, like teach them "How to teach," that's very important.

del Norte: What is your opinion of teaching for the test in the United States? It's a controversial topic that we have that's separated by politics. Specifically, what would your opinion be on rote memorization practices in the United States, and what would your advice be coming from a country where that's all there is – You said ninety percent of your time is lecturing, and keeping the student engaged – What do you think of that practice in the United States?

**Yasir Hussain:**

Yeah. First of all, I have seen that it's not like the way we do it. It's much better here. I know it's maybe— If American standard is going up and up in education, definitely they're going to criticize the already existing situation. And they're going to look at it from their own standards, not from our standards. Because I'm going to be like—

del Norte: That's a good point.

Hussain: I'm going to be like, "Wow. This is super." Even the worst of practices here, I'm going to be: "Wow! This is great," because I come from a really messed up situation. So I had a lot of discussion within my classroom because that's what we are all talking about— Common Core in Education, and No Child Left Behind, and the public school system, and all that — They say it is not good to be having a uniform system, I said I would love to have at least one system of education for my country because at least that's going to produce some kind of uniformity.

Because we have multi-layered education. People impoverished, they get the worst education. People who are rich, they get the best education. They get the English medium in the ruling class. They get the peasants, and the lowest cadre of society. So if we could have one system, I would love to have that because at least that would produce harmony and uniformity.

In American standard I would say that they're trying to do it because of that reason— They want every person to be having the same kinds of skills, or at least the capacities, but then learning about literacies. There could be different kinds of literacies, like somebody could be good at Math, others could not be, so how could you judge them on the same kind of test? I think it's opening up our debate towards different kinds of literacies that we bring from our own background, and how they get appreciated and acknowledged in the school system. I think you guys in the U.S. are going a step further in that.

**Yasir Hussain:**

We are coming towards uniformity from scratch where there's nothing. Where the disequilibrium is kind of producing disharmony and mistrust among different classes. But you guys have come to that. Now you guys are going to some other level where you could appreciate the second step. So I think it's good to have a debate. It's good to have, like—

del Norte: I agree.

Hussain: It's open. It's open. Everybody is criticizing education. I think it's a thing worth to be investing in. Yeah.

del Norte: Absolutely. You have the term: "Education equity—"

Hussain: Yes.

del Norte: And that is specific to your thesis or your dissertation. You're addressing equitable education opportunity?

Hussain: My interest for the time being would be a critical education. Critical education in a way that it's promoting critical thinking. It's away from the banking model, and just not a Freudian model of how you are given something, and you receive it as your ready meal. I want my students— at least in whatever capacity that I'll be teaching in — I want them to be at least having a critical mind where they could think about anything. And if I give them that critical ability, I think then a question about all the stuff, like the ones that I'm talking about — Religion, Politics, and everything— they would be able to think—

del Norte: Racial, class differences—

**Yasir Hussain:**

Yes. It's very important to instigate them to think about it. If they could think about it then they would be able to question and try to reform. So for the time being— I mean, some people don't even know how to think. They seriously have no idea if they could question the argument which is in the book. I mean, they would not question it. They would consider that to be like "Super-correct."

del Norte: Ah. Yes. Without even addressing an opinion of their own. Or being able to contrast—

Hussain: And that's what I call a colonized mind.

del Norte: Say again.

Hussain: That's a colonized mind. If you're being colonized, controlled for ages, you're going to continue thinking like that. If you want to get decolonized you start deconstructing the ideas. You see that, "Oh, wow. I never thought about it." What I want is that I want them to be thinking in a different level. At least start thinking. I mean, that's very important for the time being. We, I think as a society, lack that. So I would encourage that in my practices.



