



Sara Suleri Goodyear

June 12, 1953 - March 20, 2022

Sara Suleri Goodyear, the preeminent Pakistani-American cultural and literary critic and memoirist, author of *Meatless Days*, died in Bellingham, WA on March 20, 2022, at the age of sixty-eight.

An emeritus professor of English at Yale University (1984-2008) and an internationally renowned scholar, Sara's work has crucially helped to shape the burgeoning field of postcolonial literary and cultural thought. Her memoir *Meatless Days* (1989, University of Chicago), which evokes her upbringing in Lahore in relation to Pakistan's evolution in the wake of its struggles for independence, has been described by the critic Henry Louis Gates Jr. as "dazzling...Suleri is a postcolonial Proust to Rushdie's phantasmagoric Pynchon." Kamila Shamsie, the prolific Pakistani-American novelist whose work has been short-listed for several prestigious awards, praises the book's "singular brilliance." *Meatless Days* weaves the fraught personal, intellectual, political, and gender consequences of imperialism's legacies. Translated into multiple languages, *Meatless Days* continues to be a crucial international text for postcolonial feminist critical writing and for courses on post-colonial literature.

Sara's seminal book of literary and cultural criticism, *The Rhetoric of English India* (1993, University of Chicago Press), continues to serve as a foundational text of postcolonial studies. Tracing representations of pre- and

post-colonial India from the 18th c. British politicians Edmund Burke and Warren Hastings, 19th c. diarists Fanny Parks and Harriet Tyler and novelists Rudyard Kipling and E. M. Forster, through the works of 20th c. novelists V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, *The Rhetoric of English India* examines the ways in which these writers register the effects and after-effects of colonialism, and considers how their rhetorical strategies have influenced the development of postcolonial cultural studies. The critic Jane Marcus, professor at the CUNY Graduate Center And The City University Of New York, describes the book as “The most brilliant contribution to postcolonial criticism since Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, and a masterpiece of calm, well-thought-out, cogent and inspiring analysis.”

Along with numerous scholarly articles and reviews, Sara wrote a second influential memoir, *Boys Will Be Boys: A Daughter’s Elegy* (2003, University of Chicago). A daughter of the eminent and controversial journalist Z. A. Suleri, who was closely involved in Pakistan’s independence movement, Sara incisively appraises the import of her father’s illustrious and turbulent journalistic career in its political and personal resonances. Pakistani novelist Bapsi Sidhwa wrote of the book’s publication, “Sara Suleri Goodyear doesn’t have fans, she has devotees, and few books have been more eagerly awaited than *Boys Will Be Boys*.”

With Azra Raza, the renowned Pakistani-American oncologist, Sara co-wrote *A Tribute to Ghalib: Twenty-One Ghazals Reinterpreted* (2017, Penguin). Of this ‘reinterpration’ of the great 19th c. Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib’s verses, the critic Harold Bloom wrote, “In this inspired commentary upon the great poet’s way of knowing, there is a continuous sense of deep love for the text and a kind of ecstasy of apprehension. A reader, who like myself lacks Urdu, cannot do better than to possess the work of Azra Raza and Sara Suleri Goodyear.”

During her academic career, Sara was a founding editor of *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, and served on the editorial boards of *The Yale Review* and *Transition*. The first scholar to hold a tenured appointment in postcolonial literature at Yale, Sara also taught courses in Romantic and Victorian poetry. Throughout her career, she lectured widely and internationally.

Sara's renown amongst contemporary writers remains considerable. In response to news of her death, Pakistani novelist H.M. Naqvi, author of *Home Boy* (winner of the inaugural DSC Prize for South Asian Literature) tweeted that Sara was “perhaps the greatest Pakistani writer of a generation.”

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Sara was the daughter of Z.A. Suleri, a prominent journalist, and Mair (née Jones) Suleri, who taught English at Punjab University in Lahore. She was predeceased by her husband of fifteen years, Austin Goodyear, and by her older siblings, Nuzhat Akhund, Ifat Mawaz, and Shahid Suleri, and is survived by her younger siblings, Tillat Khalid of Vancouver, BC, and Irfan Suleri of Birmingham, UK, and by many nieces, nephews, and their children. Sara graduated from Kinnaird College, Lahore, received a Master's Degree in English Literature from Punjab University, and earned her Ph.D. in English from Indiana University. She taught at Williams College prior to her career at Yale University.