

Digital Pen and Global Voice of Youth: I am Malala as Cross-Cultural Communication Discourse

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Abstract

The transformation of education in the age of artificial intelligence is not merely a technical upgrade; it is a moral imperative to promote peace, diversity and fundamental human rights. “Education is neither Eastern nor Western it is human” and global peaceful weapon in the fight against terrorism within Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda promised by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as a security imperative of peacebuilding. The denial to the fundamental right of education for girls is gender-based intellectual violence related to other forms of physical, psychological and verbal violence for erasure of feminine identity, intellectual pursuit, and professional aspiration. There is no peace without inclusion of women in the architecture of future because the hands that rock the cradle is also the hands that codes the representation of voice in the age of artificial intelligence resonates through every server and every soul. Malala Yousufzai is the Pakistani Youngest Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in the history at the age of seventeen. She belongs to era of Web 2.0 in which she used the digital pen of social media platform to fight for education as a fundamental right declared by UDHR, UNICEF AND UNISECO in the world. The gendered autobiography I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood for Education and was Shot by the Taliban is a tribute to the world, humanity and English Literature as a cross-cultural communication of the language, history, culture, and struggle of Pakistani origin Pashtun descent author Malala Yousufzai. The research is qualitative in approach employing the theoretical framework of Johan Galtung’s theory of Violence and Peace to identify the factors responsible for gender apartheid and how Malala used the voice of defiance to dismantle the narrative of oppression.

Keywords: *Education, Gender Apartheid, Oppression, Peace, Violence, Voice Representation*

Introduction

History has witnessed that heavy prices have been paid by the martyrs of peace to execute the truth: intellectual, philosophical and religious information to reach the masses. Truth is not the commodity to be licensed or silenced or muted by the tyrants of time but a biological and spiritual necessity; a testament to the fact that human conscience is an unlicensed force. The individuals who challenged the ideological dogmas were seen as a threatening force to the power structures: Empires, Church, and States. Authorities like religious, political and monarchical used extreme measures to curb or to suppress intellectuals who challenged the status quo. Throughout history during periods of intense

religious and political conflicts individuals who denied the key dogmas or established order and authority through their observation fell victims to execution, burning at stake (immolation), exile, imprisonment, systematic banning and burning of books to control information with charges of heresy/political defiance and traitors. The key figures of history who rebelled are Socrates (399 BC), Thomas Beckett (1170), St. Joan of Arc (1415), William Tyndale (1536), Nicholas Copernicus (1543), Michael Servetus (1553), Thomas More (1535), Giordano Bruno (1600), Galileo Galilei (1633), Antoine Lavoisier (1794), Rosa Luxemburg (1919), and Nikolai Vavilov (1940) etc.

The motives behind banning or licensing of books is a form of censorship to suppress the freedom of opinion, expression and speech in annals of history due to the power that literature holds in shaping societal values and beliefs. The literature and books have been always identification for a nation. Historically books have been burnt in times of conflict such as the burning of books and live burial of 460 Confucian scholars in 213 BCE were ordered by Chinese emperor Qin Shi Huang to eliminate criticism and consolidate power. The destruction of one of the most significant libraries of ancient world is library of Alexandria in 48 BCE by Julius Caesar is a significant loss to ancient knowledge. In the Nazi campaign during 1930s over 25000 books were burned across Germany deemed to destroy un-German literature. The destruction of the Vatican Library and Archives in between 1797-1813 under Napoleon Bonapart was s systematic seizure and removal of historical records. The US Library of Congress was burned during war in 1814 by British troops that destroyed 3000 volumes.

When intellects are executed and books are burned the goal is to destroy both the nation's identity and intellectual freedom. History always lived in national imagination which indicates how deeply the memory of war and peace penetrate into national consciousness because the effects of war and peace translated into words which bear witness to pain and pleasure. The literature becomes evidence of resistance and resilience related to conflicts as per environment to bring about societal cohesion to give voice to impulses of peacebuilding. John Milton's book *Areopagitica* is one of the most famous defenses of free speech against Licensing Order of 1643. He stated, "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life... who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God" (2016). It is a universal fact that mortals die but executing a thinker is a crime against humanity but above all killing a book means destroying knowledge, truth and reason produced by author. The reasons and beauty stored in a book are the vessels that have the potential to make knowledge, and truth immortal through perfection of art across ages as treasures of humanity.

John Keats expressed the reality in *Ode to Grecian Urn* (1819),

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on" (2024).

The physical heard voices can be silenced through extreme antagonism, but oppression cannot seize the unheard human spirit longing for fundamental human rights of peace and justice. Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Masque of Anarchy* (1819) is the first manifesto of non-violence resistance in pages of English Literature. The powerful cry of poem remained censored for 13 years by the state under the Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act until publication in 1832. The Peterloo Massacre stands as one the most brutal example of direct violence in the history of British democracy used to curb a peaceful global voice of 60,000 citizens for demand of vote. Following the public outcry over deaths at Peterloo the British government led by Lord Liverpool and Lord Castlereagh

passed The Six Acts (1819) including the Training Prevention Act (targeted organization of youth), the Seizure of Arms Act (invasion of privacy), the Misdemeanor Act (imprisonment of truth-teller), the Seditious Meeting Act (required license on global voice of gathering), the Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act (penalties of writing who critiqued the state or church), the Newspaper Stamp Duties Act (economic censorship). The Six Acts were part of literal and legal curb of Structural Violence to dismantle power of social networking: pen and voice to ensure that people should not assemble to speak again. P. B. Shelley writes that,

Rise like Lions after Slumber
In unvanquishable number
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you
Ye are many-they are few (2015).

In the age of Web 2.0 revolt the 'Digital Pen' is held by humanist universal figures like Malala Yousufzai who represents the 'Modern Lion' of the global youth waking up to the chains of oppression. She is global education activist, U.N. Youngest Messenger of Peace (2014) and the Youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient in history of world at age of 17. As a most powerful global symbol of courage and hope she is fighting for a world where every girl can learn and choose her future.

The gap between the Age of the Stake (Bruno and Galileo) to the Age of Press (Milton and Shelley) is filled up by the Age of Internet of Things (Malala). In the web 2.0 era the 13 years gap of censored poem has shrunk to 13 milliseconds. Yet the direct violence (bullet) and structural violence (pamphlets, and algorithms) remain identical to the tools used against icons of history. The age of Internet of Things (IoT) has triggered the rapid advancement of communication technologies through cyber-physical systems that have advanced and enhanced aspects of living facilitating communication across the world. In this context, the transmission of information to every nook and cranny becomes very easy and practically accessible. The environments where physical constraints prevent direct communication the digital tools become essential and reliable way of communication as a voice transmitter. The 'Digital Pen' is a direct descendent of the physical pens of martyrs and the current struggle of information control in 2026 is a continuation of the age-old battle between human rights to peace and the tyrant's need for censorship to hold power. The medium has mutated from inks to bits the essence of the voice and intent of pen remained constant. Whether passing through a telescope to a pamphlet to blog the 'Realms of Gold' used the same psychological frequency to broadcast truth against abuse of power. The imperialism of information tried to categorize the individuals by technology but the voice that demands peace, and freedom remains universal human constants. Pope Leo Francis XIV promoted interfaith peace and asserted in Cameroon that, "The world is being ravaged by a handful of tyrants, yet it is held together by the multitude of supportive brothers and sisters...onto a sustainable path rich in human fraternity. There is no catholic peace. There is no Islamic peace. Peace is human. Blessed are the peacemakers! But woe to those who manipulate religion and the very name of God for their own military, economic, and political gain, dragging that which is sacred into darkness and filth" (Purdy 2026).

Pope Leo's XIV discourse served as theological seal to the legacy of Malala Yousufzai who acclaimed factual endorsement of humanization of peace and fundamental rights for all without discrimination as the youngest Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2017) in the world. She stripped the sectarian and gendered-based boundaries for peace asserted

education as cross-cultural discourse having no geographic license, “Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is Human” (2013). The cross-cultural discourse is the study of exchange of ideas, values, beliefs, and narratives between cultural groups of different nations. In this context the marginalized or local voices transcends geographical and ideological boundaries to create shared universal human experience of truth. The cross-cultural discourse of Malala Yousufzai; *I Am Malala* (2013) is the triumphant survival of legacy of global voices of resistance for peace and freedom entitled as, “*I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban*”. The interconnectivity proves cross-cultural defiance towards cross-cultural humanism to resist Eastern extremism of the Taliban regime: Shot but not silenced. Therefore, *I Am Malala* can truly be called as the ‘Modern Areopagitica’ ink-stained with the blood of those who refused to be silenced. Her discourse creates the universal shared conscience where the youth of the west emphasized upon the ‘Right to Know’: EDUCATION is a human moral necessity and fundamental right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) defined at international platforms of UNO, UNESCO and UNICEF. The Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states, “The right to life and dignity of an individual cannot be assured unless it is accompanied by the right to education” (2015). Malala Yousufzai was born and brought up in the Mingora city of Swat valley of Pakistan called as the Switzerland of Pakistan. Her autobiography *I Am Malala* narrates how a local school going Pashtun girl becomes globally recognized and identified and how a personal story becomes international public myth. *I Am Malala* is not merely a ‘Pakistani’ narrative (Pashtun origin) of non-violent resistance to seek education, but the text bridges the gap of English Literature to Global South. By writing in English, she performs an act of reclaiming, reestablishing and retelling the truth to both Eastern and Western stereotypes. Her memoir *I Am Malala* serves as a fascinating real world case study in transcultural communication. By writing in English: global lingua franca about Pashtun taboos, social structures and culture she created a bridge between the local realities of the Swat valley of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan and global audience of international community. She weaves in English the ‘Pashtunwali’ concepts and flavours of her heritage rich with poetry and hospitality ‘Melmastia’ to be known throughout world. Her evolution from a local schoolgirl to global activism of peace and education illustrates transcultural journey. By adopting the language and frameworks of global community Malala did not just report the local problem of denial of education to girls but she elevated her non-violent resistance to a ‘Universal Holy Grail’ something worth her sacrifice as she survived the assassination attempt at age of 15: sacred, ultimate quest of dignity for womanhood.

Review of Related Literature

Her autobiography *I Am Malala* as a cross-cultural communication ensures that the Pashtun struggle for education is not viewed as a foreign problem but as a shared human endeavor with a long lineage of international legal battles and civil uprising. She proclaimed in Speech at United Nations, “This is the legacy of change I inherited from Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Muhammad Ali Jinnah” (2013). Therefore, this is the same struggle as the Civil Rights Movement (1940-1960) in America claimed for equality in the days of Jim Crow Laws which maintained to keep the segregation between whites and Blacks in housing, transportation, education, public places and on jobs. The Brown vs. Board of Education became first global commandment of education, ‘Separate is inherently Unequal’ (1954). The chief justice Earl Warren delivered a unanimous decision that admissions must be universal without considering race under 14th

Amendment's Equal Protection Clause of America. The fight against inequality and injustice focused on racial segregation in America is the same fight of 'Gender-Apartheid' in Swat valley of Pakistan: deliberate systematic attempt to erasure of women from public and private life by denial of their basic human rights primarily right to education as a crime against humanity. She expressed in her global address with her speech at the United Nations Assembly (2015), "We must ensure that no girl should left behind". In her memoir *Finding My Way* (2025) she addressed the global crisis of gender apartheid adopted the language of global policy and Agenda for Sustainable Development of 2030 as, "Every girl deserves the chance to be in school. No girl should be left behind". In 2021 US Congress passed the Malala Yousufzai Scholarship Act legally enshrining her name to the US education framework as an ultimate act of cross-cultural communication becoming the part of American Public Law.

The connection between the Soweto Uprising in South Africa and Malala's struggle is the ultimate testament of Nelson Mandela's 'Young Lions' stepping into vacuum of leadership to defend their right to think. Nelson Mandela in 1990 stated, "I pay tribute to the endless heroism of youth, you, the Young Lions. You, the young lions have energized our entire struggle" (2011). In 1976 thousands of Black South African students marched against Bantu Education Act (1953) which forced them to learn in Afrikaans (language of oppressor). The architect of the Act Hendrik Verwoerd created a hedge for Blacks so that they could never compete to modern world, "What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?... There is no place for him in European community above the level of certain forms of labour" (1953). The peaceful protestors met state sponsored violence and the dying image of youth; Hector Pieterse became Malala Moment of 21st century. Malala in her memoir *I Am Malala* writes about how her father Ziauddin filled their home with stories of global heroes and she mentions Mandela is one of them. She notes that Mandela spent 27 years in prison to claim equality as she was fighting for Swat valley. She writes in *I Am Malala*, "I wanted to be as tall as him (Mandela) when I stood up for my girls" (2013). By invoking Mandela as a transcultural link in memoir, she was signalling to the world that Taliban's ban on girl's education was just another form of apartheid that required 'Soweto Style' youth uprising to break the chains. Therefore, Malala embodies the Lion archetype in the cross-cultural context refusing to let her mind be caged. Malala took up this call proving in *I Am Malala*, "One pen, one book and one child can change the world" (2013).

The abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Government Girls Secondary School Boko Haram in 2014 and the Chibok 2.0 incident of kidnapping 110 schoolgirls from the Government Girls Science and Technical College in Dapchi in 2018 run parallel to the survival of Malala in same brand of extremism. In her memoir *I Am Malala*, the destruction of girl's schools is the central theme of part 'Valley of Death' in which she describes the systematic campaign of fear and terror through verbal, psychological and physical tactics of Taliban led by Maulana Fazlullah (the Radio Mullah) who kept environment of surveillance through FM broadcast. She writes, "I was just ten when more than 400 schools were destroyed. Women were flogged. People were killed. And our beautiful dreams were turned into nightmares. Education went from being a right to being a crime". Just as the abduction of girls in Nigeria was a strategic weapon to destroy education in Nigeria, Taliban destroyed the infrastructure of schools in Swat valley that is how she linked trauma of Pashtun girls with Nigerian girls showing that extremism follows the same pattern everywhere. She visited Nigeria in 2014, 2017 and 2023 which serves as a bridge to borderless quest for education as a symbol to global anti-apartheid movement.

Her organization The Malala Fund Legacy invested \$6.1 million since 2014 to promote education to girls in Nigeria. She stated, “I can see those girls as my sisters”. She writes in her autobiography *I Am Malala*, “They thought that bullets would silence us, but they failed. And out of silence came thousands of voices. In the face of violence truth cannot be destroyed” (2013).

As a cross-cultural message to the world through UN speech she stated, “You cannot have peace talks in Afghanistan or Nigeria if half the population of girls is illiterate” (2015). In *I Am Malala* she describes the importance of ‘Admission Doctrine’ and school ‘Register’ as a legal document of identification as a social contract. The school register is the place where a girl’s name is recorded outside home in private sphere and Taliban blew up the school records to erase girl’s existence practicing a form of social assassination. She stated, “Taliban blowing up our books and our school registers...they wanted to wipe out our history and future in one go” (2013). When the girl’s names are removed from history they were pushed back to ‘Separate Sphere Theory’ where girl has no public names and rights imparting them second class citizenship. The aim is to justify the male dominance over womanhood attributing them gender communal traits like dependent, passives, non-decision makers, emotional, muted or silenced ones. A society that excludes and oppresses women justifying its aims through ‘Patriarchal Culture’ further entrenched by Taliban regime cannot achieve true peace through gender gap. Gender inequality denied girls their identification based on intellectual pursuit, political participation and professional aspiration. *I Am Malala* depicted literal and metaphorical curfews on minds and bodies of women in Swat valley. She explained how patriarchal culture intensified by Taliban oppression when severe restrictions and curfews are enforced on female movements and they were not allowed to travel without male escort. “Taliban imposed a permanent curfew. We were told to stay inside. To be invisible. Our presence on street was treated as crime” (2013). The law of oppression imprisoned women and their abilities to work, shop and seek education and medical care. She stated, “Our world was getting smaller. It was a house then a room. We were like birds in a cage” (2013). The problem became more severe when militant extremist violence banned girls right to go to schools and prevented 50,000 girls from schools. The parents who violated Taliban laws defying their orders and sending their daughters to schools’ severe punishment publicly inflicted to them like whipping.

After the incident of September 9/11, the war on terror transformed women’s rights to global security pillar through Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda as a strategic necessity for world peace into a single cross-cultural narrative. Laura Bush stated that, “Fight against terrorism is also a fight for rights and dignity of women” (Jessica 2019). The agenda is codified in UN Resolution 2242/2015 and 1325/2000 which established the essential rights of Protection, Participation, Prevention and Relief and Recovery for women around globe. Malala acted as the WPS personified functional agency and acted as bridge between the pillars of essential rights from Right of Protection to Relief and Recovery for women across the world. She influenced the international global catalyst for the Safe Schools Agreement (2015) in conflict zones to prevent schools from violent extremism. In 2026 She has redefined gender apartheid system not merely as human rights violation but a primary security threat to international peace and security. Recently in March 2026 Malala outspoken for Minab school bombing following Tomahawk missiles strike on Shajareh Tayyebbeh Girls’ Primary school in Iran in which 170 innocent girls aged from 5 to 14 were martyred. The strike physically vaporized the records of Minab girls under the rubble of history and views schools as collateral rather than

sovereign territory just like Malala describes the Swat valley destruction in, *I Am Malala*, “They are blasting the schools every day because they were and they are afraid of change and equality that we will bring to our society” (2013). On Women’s International Day she addressed, “I am devastated for families in Iran whose daughters left for school and did not return home... True justice does not defend the humanity of children in one place and ignore it another... why justice is not wide enough to reach girls in Minab, Jabalia, or Kandahar?... true justice does not claim our rights are dependent on where we are born or what is politically safe?” (2026). Malala is using Minab incident to push for the codification of global demand if a girl at desk is not safe from missile in her classroom no one is truly sovereign in the world: no difference who hate education (Taliban) and those who claim Pax Americana (Global Super Power). Through WPS Agenda she is demanding a world where a girl at Global South is secured and protected as equally treated as under international law of CAH Treaty (Crimes Against Humanity Treaty) just like a girl at Global North. Malala has shifted the narratives of WPS agenda globally to the framework of ‘Negative Peace and Positive Peace’: Justice is the prerequisite for peace. She stated at the United Nations Speech in 2013, “I speak not for myself but for all girls and boys. I raise up my voice... so that those without voices can be heard” (2013).

Following are research objectives

To document the cross-cultural appeal of Malala’s narrative, *I Am Malala* as a practical bridge of historical struggles for the right of education for girls.

To explore the power of digital pen and global voice of youth challenging the structural violence of gender apartheid to restore positive peace in *I Am Malala*.

Research Questions

Following are research questions

In what ways does the cross-cultural appeal of Malala’s narrative, *I Am Malala* serve as a practical bridge of historical struggles for the right of education of girls?

How does the synergy between the digital pen and global voice of youth challenge the structural violence of gender apartheid to restore positive peace in *I Am Malala*?

Methodology

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

The research is qualitative in approach and document analysis of *I Am Malala*. Through Malala’s framework, education is a grand unified theory of human progress. She synthesized different ages into transcultural matrix as follows:

1. Education is ultimate act of national sovereignty and intellectual self-determination she learnt from Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Nelson Mandela. She argues that, “pen is mightier than sword” (2013).
2. Education is the legal battle for unrestricted access to equality she learnt from the participation of Martin Luther King in the Civil Rights Movement. She demands “12 years of free, safe and quality education” in justice cannot be selective demands (2026).
3. Education is inherent necessity therefore the gates of education ‘Admission Doctrine’ must be open to all in humanitarian protected zone that prevents the radicalization that fuels global terror. She learns from Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda that safety is prerequisite for peace and stability for women.

Education is a social contract to sovereignty (Right to Learn), equality (Right to Access) and stability (Right to Safety).

Findings and Discussion

Digital Pen of Youth

Voice is an internal realization and outward expression of individual's reality in the world. Voice without action is just verbalism but voice with action becomes activism and a person becomes agent of change to protest for fundamental rights. In the annals of history there is an interconnectivity between voice, education and liberation of nations. Historically education is a weapon to liberation: liberation of mind and body. It is an instrument by which younger generation integrate into logic of social, political, and economic contradictions to deal critically and creatively as per environment to participate in transformation of their world so that they will be no longer spectator of history but author of history themselves. The world history records that the voice of intellectuals is stolen continuously by the umbrella terms tyrant agencies such as Racism, Colonialism, Nazism, Patriarchy and Talibanization. The central paradox of their oppression collectively is to occupy the minds of the people: to accept and to internalize the image of oppressor. Oppression turns people from subjects to objects: things to be used, directed and dictated by external force. Human beings that are defined, named and interpreted by others. Therefore, Oppressed population are stripped of their fundamental rights and forced to live in 'Culture of Silence' because they have no conscious mind: they see the world through eyes of oppressor. Paulo Freire in his monumental work *Pedagogy of Oppressed* (1968) expressed, "For the oppressors, 'human beings' refers only to themselves; other people are 'things'". The relationship between oppressor and oppressed is defined by the struggle of (de)humanization between them. *I Am Malala* is gendered autobiography of Malala Yousufzai in which she narrates her real-life journey of 'becoming' through truth claim representation of reality: journey from local actor to global activist to international author. Her autobiography functions as public utterance of personal trauma to live under constant fear and terror proving truth cannot be silenced under extreme antagonism of assassination attack. Her narratives transformed the ultimate act of oppression of patriarchy and Taliban violence into local and then global voice of youth to seek fundamental rights. In Malala's world Taliban acted as ultimate oppressors by monopolizing truth and forbidden dialogue controlling the lives of people as objects. "We realize the importance of our voice when we are silenced. In the same way we realized the importance of pens and books when we saw the guns" (2013).

Education reveals a person that world is not a given reality but a historical one and internalized chains can be dismantled. Paulo Freire in literary work *Pedagogy of Oppressed* (1968) stated, "Education is the practice of freedom; as opposed to education as a practice of domination: man is abstract, isolated, passive, and unattached to the world. To exist, humanly is to name the world, to change it". The Taliban's ban on female's education is a classic example of Freirean tactic to prevent the oppressed from 'naming the world': most powerful act of being about power, ownership, and transformation. If an individual cannot name the reality (injustice, inequality, violation of fundamental rights like theft of education) in which she/he lives they will always live like spectators in a world created by others. In Malala's context snatching away the right of education is an act of female erasure of identification in both public and private lives. She recognizes the problem and named it as, "Taliban could take our pens and our books, but they couldn't stop our minds from thinking" (2013). She names their rule as, 'Jahalin' (ignorance), "Taliban are not a faith; they are group of men who want to keep us in dark" (2013). For

Malala internet (web 2.0) was her dictionary and vocabulary. The Taliban called the Burqa (physical concealment) as modesty and mandatory for females to wear outside home but Malala renames it as physical and mental cage. "It is like a walk-in-jail... I chose to keep my face uncovered. I wanted to be Malala, not a girl hidden in shuttlecock burqa" (2013).

No one can give voice to oppressed they must seize it through shared struggle for social change. It is an ultimate act of courage and resilience against systemic antagonism of oppressor forces. The process of unchaining or mind-liberation or breaking the deafness of silence starts when the oppressed says 'NO' to the force to stop behaving them as master to slaves. The oppressed person becomes an agent of change through moral awakening realizing themselves as historical beings who have power of voice to influence and change history. The act of coming to voice is a revolutionary shift to exist in the world an act of healing. It is a bridge between a being as a 'thing of unheard' to a person who acts accordingly and reaches 'self-actualization' phase. Bell Hooks in her monumental work *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989) pointed out, "Moving from silence to speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited...a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible...when we dare to speak in a liberatory voice...we participate in a global struggle to end domination" (1999). At the age of 11 she wrote a BLOG to BBC Urdu named, "Diary of a Pakistani Schoolgirl" in 2009 under the name Gul Makai. She dictated BBC reporter over the phone call and her voice transformed into digital text that shifted her from object to subject of history. She used the blog to document the crimes on global stage as Global Crisis of Human Rights. It was the birth of her voice (critical consciousness), "I began to see that pen and words that come from it much more powerful than machine guns" (2013). Her voice got attention of international audience and picked by The New York Times documentary film by Adam Ellick *Class Dismissed* (2009) which gave her visual and vocal force unchaining her thoughts from local silence to global stage. When Taliban issued the ban on girl's education completely by January 2009 her decision to be filmed was her 'NO' to 'Culture of Silence' bypassing Taliban's blockade of information by a series of deliberate media appearances. Another film by the New York Times was *A Schoolgirl's Odyssey* (2009) detailing how Taliban turned the lives of citizens of Swat into Internally Displaced Person (IDP). She appeared in monthly interviews on national channels like PTV, Geo TV, AVT from 2009-2011 as a youth of Pakistan who wanted justice and peace. She was attacked in 2012 by Taliban calling her Pro-Western due to continuous social activism. *I Am Malala* is written in 2013 one year after attack and she transformed from local voice of Gul Makai to global authority of Malala using digital infrastructure to ensure the problem is not local Pakistani issue but a human rights crisis in world, "I was not just a girl anymore; I was a voice of all those who could not speak" (2013).

Digital Clicktivism

Malala Yousufzai use of 'Digital Clicktivism' is the emphatic use of online noise converted into collective voice of youth having political weight: a form of modern consciousness. The digital platform mobilizes the youth of web 2.0 to name their own world. Her digital words start with a click and ends with movements of global dialogue for conflict resolution. The Key movements are #BooksNotBullets launched in 2015 and resulted in 3 million petitioners signed for human security than military security. The global movement of Incheon Declaration passed. #TheLast was launched in 2015: aimed at Sustainable Development Goals. In 2018 Assembly digital platform magazine for oppressed to write stories and break the silence.

Global Voice of Youth

Malala Yousufzai's activism is a strategic attempt at Conflict Transformation. Through the world of *I Am Malala* she deconstructs structural, cultural and direct roots of violence hindering in noble of education. She is a global advocator for transition from Negative Peace to Positive Peace in the world. This section explores the theoretical bridge applying Johan Galtung's theory of Triangle of Violence.

The Anatomy of Violence

In Galtung's framework violence is like an iceberg: Direct is visible tip but it is supported by the massive, submerged weights of Structural and Cultural violence.

Structural Violence

Johan Galtung in *Violence, Peace and Peace Research* defines Structural Violence as, "It is present when resources are unevenly distributed (education and income) and above all power" (1969). The structural violence is the systemic deprivation that occurs due to social machinery of laws, and customs embedded in social institutions (Patriarchy and Taliban) automatically blocks the goals of one gender (women) to justify dominance of another gender (men). It creates social injustice that prevents individuals from achieving full potential. It is a gap that manifest lack of legal and social identity which creates alienation and erasure of womanhood. In *I Am Malala* the structural violence refers to gender gap between male and female since birth. The structure of Pashtun patriarchal culture rendered the women as non-entities as they do not exist in the eyes of records. Malala describes the 'Woma Celebrations' which sets the standards of social acceptance and recognition of a boy and girl at birth. "On the seventh day the Woma, there is usually a great feast for a boy, but for girl nothing... When a boy is born in our tradition, it is a cause of great celebration. Guns are fired into the air, and gifts are placed in baby's cot. A boy is a cause of celebration. But when a girl is born no one visits the mother receives sympathy" (2013). The nothingness for a girl is structural norm and standard procedure of Pashtun society to ignore girls. The feast is physical resource symbolic to community support which establishes a hierarchy of potential right of celebrated future for a boy since birth. The Structural violence works by penetrating in taboos pushing one gender to marginalization or exclusion. "There seemed no point in going to school just to end up cooking, cleaning, and bringing up children" (2013).

The structural violence deprives people from meeting basic needs by law and coercion. Johan Galtung defines the Basic Human Needs as, "The term violence is used about avoidable insults to basic human needs...survival needs (negation to death), well-being needs (negation to misery), identity needs (negation to alienation) and freedom needs (negation to repression)" (Cultural Violence 1990). By categorizing Malala's experience through Galtung's four types of needs her struggle is a defense of universal human needs. The violence against 'Survival Needs' in *I Am Malala* results in death and most obvious layer used by Taliban as verbal threats, public executions, hanging bodies publicly, flogging, whipping, bombing and shooting of Malala is a direct insult to the need of survival. "I started thinking about death. At night I would wait until everyone was asleep...then I'd check every single door and window" (2013). Galtung views education as meta-need because it provides tools to fulfill all other needs. The education gap in *I Am Malala* is not merely a social disparity but direct insult to 'Well-Being Needs'. By closing schools, the structure ensures that girl's intellectual and mental health is the form of gendered essentialism. "The extremists are afraid of books and pens...the power of

voice frightens them” (2013). The ‘Identity Need’s provide sense of belonging to land, culture and culture. The violence against identity needs results in alienation as Malala gave the detailed description of how Radio Mullah broadcast to distort the identity of Pashtun women telling them their only identity is domestic and to remain silent, “I am a daughter of Islam...Taliban were not killing people but they are killing our culture” (2013). The ‘Freedom Needs’ imparts an individual the choice of one’s path: freedom of movement, speech and thought. The violence against freedom results in repression, segregation and fragmentation of power gap like women were not allowed to participate in Jirga (councils), “I was a girl in a land where...daughters are hidden away behind a curtain” (2013).

Cultural Violence

Johan Galtung describes the aspect of culture (religion, ideology and language) used to justify the structural and direct violence. He defines as, “Cultural violence makes direct and structural violence look right...it changes the moral color of an act from red/wrong to green/right” (1990). In I Am Malala Taliban bombed 400 schools (direct violence) banned girl’s education (structural violence) to convince the community as a religious and moral necessity by using authority of Islam. “He said that if people didn’t follow his version of Islam they would go to hell. Girls should stay at home and schools were a western plot” (2013). The cultural violence use language to dehumanize as Malala was seen as a ‘traitor’ and her father’s school was called as ‘center of obscenity’. Malala’s ‘Digital Pen’ served as a tool to deconstruct the cultural violence which made oppression feel like piety and misinterpreted Islam. “I am daughter of Islam and I know Islam is religion of peace and humanity” (2013).

Direct Violence

Johan Galtung defines it as, “verbal or physical act that causes harm to body or mind” (1990). In Malala’s discourse Direct Violence is the most visceral entry point of a deeper hidden conflict that became global voice. The shooting of Malala is not an isolated incident but a climax of campaign of terror designed to silence the digital pen. She stated as, “The man was wearing a peaked cap and had handkerchief over his nose and mouth... Then he took out Colt 45 and fired three shots. One after another” (2013).

Typology of Peace

Johan Galtung defines two types of peace: Negative and Positive. He defines Negative Peace as “absence of war, direct or physical violence” (2011). It is a state where underlying reasons of conflicts remain rooted. In the text Malala stated, “peace deal was signed...but it was not peace we hoped for...they were still stopping girls to go schools” (2013). Therefore, Malala used ‘Digital Pen’ of Gul Makai Blog to document ‘Negative Peace’ to the world that just because the bombed stopped didn’t mean the violence ended. She demanded ‘Positive Peace’ through ‘Digital Pen’ as a global driver to ‘Feminine Empowerment’. Galtung describes Positive peace as, “absence of structural and cultural violence” (2011). The positive peace is not the static state of no war zones but an active process of social justice, equality and restoration of human rights without discrimination for all so that everyone can fulfill basic human needs to full potential. Malala’s vision is a vision of positive peace where every girl should go to school.

Malala as Peacebuilder

Muhammad Ali Jinnah; the Founder of Pakistan stated in 1944, “There are two powers in the world; sword and pen...there is third power stronger than both that of women”. Malala Yousufzai became the living symbol of Jinnah’s philosophy on global cross-cultural stage. In 21st century youth is universal language of cross-cultural communication. Whether in Birmingham, New York, UN stage or Swat valley she proves to be ‘Jinnah’s third power’ shifted the global policy towards UN passed resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security in 2015 which recognized the youths not as victims of war but agents of peace treaties and national security. Malala emerged as global icon of youth as youngest UN Messenger of Peace using ‘pen vs. sword’ philosophy in global governance transforming the dream into reality of Charlevoix Declaration of G7 Summit in 2018. The G7 leaders after declaration funded 12 years of free, safe, quality education as a hard security asset. On national ground after Malala’s shooting a global petition #IAmMalala of over 3 million signatures were acted as immense force to track and ratify the Article 25-A Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill. Malala acted as practical policy laboratory to educate girl’s secondary education through Malala Fund for Right to Education in Pakistan. Malala Fund has invested \$15 million in direct grants and programs since its inception in 2013 in Pakistan till 2026.

As a cross-cultural communication Malala Fund has invested over \$60 million to international programs since 2013. In Afghanistan since 2021 Taliban takeover, Malala Fund treated Afghanistan as ‘Gender Apartheid Front’ and invested \$8- \$10 million to defend girl’s rights. The Malala Fund has heavily expanded in Africa: Nigeria (\$7M-\$9M), Ethiopia (\$4-\$5M), Tanzania (\$4-\$5M) granting between \$75000 to \$100,000 USD supporting specific actions of AI programs, Safe Schools Declaration to protect education in conflict zones, legal reforms of gender-based violence, and Women’s Response Rooms for survivors of sexual violence. In Brazil Malala Fund has invested \$5M-\$7M focusing on gender equity programs. The Fund invested \$7M-\$9M in India with focus on marginalization of women and ‘Debt Justice’. In 2024-2025 Malala Fund released a policy ‘Towards Debt Justice for Girls’ that became central point of G20 framework of gender equality. In 2026 Summits of G20 Malala organized a coalition of 70 feminist and economic organizations (Plan International, UN Women, Nala Feminist Collective) calling for complete reform of global debt system. The slogan is: Debt is stealing girl’s futures. She played the role of Global Policy Architect as a ‘Third Power’ watchdog ensures Youth 20 (Y20) and Women 20 (W20) groups are aligned on Debt Justice to release or unlock \$506 Billion for education through debt forgiveness and restructuring.

She proved that her pen is more powerful than sword of extremists and she became the strongest force of diplomacy doesn’t just speak for Pakistan but for ‘all girls’ and boys’ creating a transnational identity of resistance. She communicates that desire of education is not only western value but a fundamental human and Islamic urge and code of conduct. According to Galtung peace education (conscientization) is different than Indoctrination (prevents peace). The conscientization is the product of conscious resistance of social, political and economic barriers of peace therefore, for Malala pen is an ultimate peacebuilding tool of divergent thinking of global policy maker. Educating girls means to dismantle structural violence of psychological warfare which keeps them discouraged and impoverished, “Girls who go to school are like buffaloes and they will go to hell” (2013). Malala getting her moral and political awakening empowers youth voice to challenge cultural violence, “Extremist have shown what frightens them most: a girl with

a book” (2013). Malala’s fund is cross-cultural organization and practical implementation of global policy to make positive peace possible through education across world.

Implications

The findings and implications of research reveal that the document *I Am Malala* is far more than a memoir acts as transcultural bridge among nations that connects the global history, and practicality to universal appeal of youth activism around world to the struggle to seek education as a fundamental right

Conclusion

Malala’s discourse is cross-cultural communication because she uses digital pen to bridge the gap between Global South and Global North creating a language of shared non-violent resistance what Galtung calls it, “peace by peaceful means”. Her ‘Digital Pen’ served as a tool of cultural counter-violence to global voice for positive peace shifting the international policies of military intervention to structural empowerment of education. She reminds the youth of 2026 that peace is an active process of building justice and equality towards restoration of human rights for all without discrimination.

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