



Urdu Studies

An international, peer-reviewed,
bilingual research journal
ISSN: 2583-8784 (Online)
Vol. 4 | Issue 1 | Year 2024
Pages: 1-5

EDITORIAL

Prof. Fatima Rizvi

(Guest Editor, English Section)

Dear reader, we are delighted to bring you Volume 4 of *Urdu Studies*, online Issue 1. The English section of this volume comprises a total of 14 critical essays on a wide range of subjects, including the nineteenth century Urdu novel, postcolonial Urdu journalism in West Bengal and the evolution of educational institutions established in Colonial India to the present times. A number of contributions center progressive writings ranging from the fiction of Sajjad Zaheer and Rashid Jahan, to those of Krishan Chander, Sa'adat Hasan Manto and Ismat Chughtai. Two papers read a variety of perspectives in the poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz. This volume also includes translations of Urdu prose, poetry and fiction which emphasize the dynamism of the language and its literature.

Among the critical essays, **Mohammed Afzal's** "The Novelist as Critic: The Disparaging Versions of Urdu Poets in Early Urdu Novels" reads the nineteenth century Urdu novelist as a critic who warns against the shortcomings of Urdu poetry in regard to developing a strong character, especially in regard to young women and girls. By analysing Naẓīr Aḥmad's novels *Taubat-al Naṣūh*, *Fasāna-e Mubtalā*, and Mirzā Hādi Rusvā's *Sharīf Zāda*, Afzal's paper seeks to demonstrate that depictions of poets as profligate, degenerate, narcissistic, effeminate and idle reveal a strategy adopted by these novelists to undermine the cultural appeal of poetry.

Marcia Hermansen's "Sufism East and West in Qudratullāh Shahāb's Shahābnāma" is a study of Sufi elements in the autobiography of Qudratullāh Shahāb. Her paper reflects on the themes of cross-cultural exchange and contact, as well as diverse literary, philosophical, and religious or spiritual strands that extend and inspire its readership.

"Constraints and Priorities of Urdu Journalism in Post-Colonial Bengal: A Study of the Urdu Daily, *Āzād Hind*" by **Ishtiaq Hussain** highlights the role of the leading Urdu daily *Āzād Hind* which played a pivotal role in

Included in UGC-CARE List since October 2021

Published on August 11, 2024

<http://www.urdustudies.in>

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/?ref=chooser-v1>

augmenting democratic ideals, instilling them in its readers and strengthening secular values among Muslims in the postcolonial era. It reads how, in the midst the changing socio-political scenario, how *Āzād Hind* became the mouthpiece of Muslims and provided remedies within democratic and secular frameworks.

Arifur Rahaman Mollah's "From Calcutta Madrasah to 'Āliyah University: A Journey," traces the history of Calcutta Madrasah popularly known as Madrasah-e-'Āliyah. This was the first educational institution in India, established by the British Government for the promotion of education in Theological Science, Oriental Studies, Medical Education, Geological Studies and Islamic Laws among Muslims in Bengal, and prepare them for administrative and judicial careers. The paper underscores that the institution played a remarkable role in the dissemination of knowledge.

"Histories and Historiography: Problem of National History in *Āg kā Daryā*" by **Mohammad Irfan** reads how Qurratulain Hyder's *Āg kā Daryā* challenges the historical narrative constructed by colonial powers. This Article broadly addresses the question of historiography, modernity, Urdu language, culture and civilization.

"*Main bhī munh mein zubaan' rakhti 'hur:*" Feminist Identity, Confession, Consciousness-Raising, and Urdu Autobiography: A Study of Saeeda Bano's *Ḍagar Se HaḌ Kar* by **Shuby Abidi** reads Saeeda Bano's *Ḍagar Se HaḌ Kar* as a candid feminist text and examines how while documenting the socio-political milieu and disenfranchised history, the author indulges in consciousness-raising and emphasizes the relevance of women's education, economic independence, and a self-reliant female identity. The paper directs our attention to its confessional nature, and the fact that it foregrounds the most intimate details of the authors life and initiates the process of critical self-understanding and self-validation. It analyzes the autobiography as a text that resists normative gender roles and urges women to create their own identity and space.

More than ninety years on since the publication of *Angārey* (1932) papers in this volume affirm that this slim, politically charged text, co-authored by four amateur writers, that was proscribed soon after it was published, continues to elicit academic responses. The All-India Progressive Writers' Movement (1936) that took literature across the subcontinent by storm, and is understood to have its beginnings in *Angārey*, also continues to draw the attention of academia. The papers included here, read and re-read the dynamics of progressive literature and subject several progressive writers and their writings to alternate and/or contemporary readings. "The Poetics and Politics of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's Poetry" by **Sohini Saha** is an attempt to interrogate the supposed "political turn" that Faiz Ahmad Faiz's poetry is assumed to have taken in *Naqsh-e faryādī* (Remonstrance) through his popular nazm "Mujh se pahli sī mohabbat mere mahbūb na māñg." Saha's paper engages with the poetics and politics of Faiz's poetry, in order to argue

that his writings enmesh the themes of love and politics in a way that makes a separation between the two impossible. She concludes that Faiz never really “departed” from Classical Urdu poetry and neither did he make a fresh entry into the “political,” since the essence of love and affection remains, blends and informs his poetries on resistance and revolution.

Sumbul Nasim’s “Rashid Jahan: An Iconoclast” attempts to study different aspects of Jahan’s writings through studying various texts, which prove her as an iconoclast, as a strongly dynamic figure who touched upon various themes in her oeuvre which are relevant even today. Sumbul’s paper reads “Behind the Veil” and “A Tour of Delhi” as feminist texts foregrounding feminist issues plaguing Muslim women. “Ifṭārī” and “Şifar” bring out her Marxist ideology wherein she raises her voice against class divisions existing in capitalist society. Her patriotism, and her messages of peace and brotherhood can be seen in “Paṛosī” and “Hindustanī.”

“The Flawless Commitment of a “Flawed Progressive:” Krishan Chandar and his Art of Storytelling” by **Dhurjjati Sarma** attempts to undertake a critical-textual study of select short stories and novels of Krishan Chandar who emerged as a major prose writer in Urdu literature during the early to middle decades of the twentieth century. The study also deals with the major features of Chandar’s writings, particularly his dual engagement with romanticism and progressivism, and how they were synthesised within/through his masterful art of storytelling, thereby enabling him to explore the varied dynamics of human character and action in the course of his extended literary career.

Huma Yaqub’s “Ismat Chughtai, Women and Partition: Challenging Fanaticism” examines two short stories, “Roots” and “Fragile Threads,” the play “Green Bangles” and the essay “Communal Violence and Literature” all of which both, reflect the carnage that unleashed during the Partition and offer a ray of hope through exemplary women characters who become symbols of unity and brotherhood. The essay examines Ismat Chughtai as a woman writer who challenges intolerance while negotiating ideas of home and nation.

“Precarious Homes in Saadat Hassan Manto’s “Toba Tek Singh:” Insanity, Illness and Displacement” by **Takbeer Salati and Huzaifa Pandit** examines the short story “Toba Tek Singh” to understand the interrogation of “home” in the post-colonial future which is perpetuated through the fiction re-interpreted across time, space, and different frameworks. The study underscores that by focusing acutely on traumatized and split subjectivities, Manto demonstrates the performative potential of cultural memory to serve as a testimony of the enduring power of memory.

“Dehumanization and Trauma : A Study of Sajjad Zaheer’s “Dulari” and Sa’adat Hasan Manto’s “Naked Voices”” by **Adarsh Narayan Parbat** analyses the two short stories, to highlight the suffering of characters who are subjugated and not understood by people close to them and as a result are left

with no one to empathise with. The paper argues that these characters cannot reflect on their own inner processes that lead to such violations and are incapable of establishing intersubjective relationships because they are unable to affirm the subjectivity of another human being.

“Gendered-Trajectories, Dissident-Dreams: Re-reading “Lihāf” and *Kāghazī hai Pairahan* in the Postcolonial Context” by **M. Aleem Qureshi** demonstrates the grit of an unconventional Muslim female voice of Indian subcontinent- Ismat Chughtai, as recorded in her autobiography, *Kāghazī hai Pairahan* (1988) and her short story “Lihāf” (1942). Along with drawing parallels on Spivak’s and Connell’s ideas of “subaltern” and “hegemonic masculinity” respectively, this paper attempts to analyze and contextualize feminist issues in the Third World vis-à-vis Indian sub-continent.

“Exploring the Depths of the Psyche: A Psychoanalytic Study of Faiz Ahmad Faiz’s Poem *Dasht-e tanhā.ī*” by **Shabeer Ahmad Shah** and **Chetana Pokhriyal** aims to understand the hidden motives, emotional conflicts, and societal factors that shape Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s artistic creations. The analysis seeks to contribute to a deeper comprehension of the intricate interplay between poetry and the human psyche, highlighting the enduring relevance of Faiz’s poem “*Dasht-e tanhā.ī*” in the realm of psychoanalytic literary studies.

Urdu Studies, Volume 4 includes four translations covering various genres of Urdu writing by poets and writers. They emphasize the cultural and regional diversity and dynamism that enriches Urdu language and literature within the Indian subcontinent. **Maria Casadei’s** “The Poet and the Rain” a translation of the evocative “Shā’ir aur Barsāt” by the Deccan poet, Nazīr Aḥmad Dahqānī. The poem is an ode to the intrinsic essence of poetry and its profound resonance within the human experience. The poet’s existence unfolds against the backdrop of a rainy day, characterized by solitude and introspective contemplation.

Mubashir Karim’s “Film and Culture,” a translation of perhaps Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s only essay on film criticism, “Film aur Saqāfat.” It deals with ideas of film production in South Asia and an emerging culture. Reading through it, one becomes aware of Faiz’s aesthetic, as he inclines himself, like other conte Progressive writers, with the new cultural aesthetic. He believes films could be seminal in broadening the scope and disseminating the ideals of the Progressive Movement.

Mohammad Saquib’s “Six Ghazals from *wo jo sha’irī kã sabab huã* (The Indifferent Muse) by Kaleem “Aajiz” is an attempt to understand and situate Aajiz’s poetry in the corpuses of Indian Urdu Literature, Urdu Literature from Bihar and Partition Literature. The translations foreground the poet’s disconsolate grief during Partition.

Zainab Fatma’s translation of an abridged version of Ghazanfar’s “Sarasvatī Isnānān” as “The Saravasti Bath” is a story wherein the writer employs the meeting of the protagonist, Raghav and the boatman, to delve

into the intricacies of human existence. The encounter becomes a window to reflect on broader human experiences that reveal profound truths of human existence.

My gratitude to Professor Arshad Masood Hashmi for bringing out *Urdu Studies* with immense dedication. I would like to express a warm thank you to all the contributors of this issue for their contributions; their ready responses to all my comments and queries and their patience through the entire editorial process. Truly, this edition owes itself to their enthusiasm to study Urdu literature. I hope you will enjoy reading the essays included here.

With best wishes,

Fatima Rizvi

Professor,

Department of English and Modern European Languages,

University of Lucknow, Lucknow (India)