



Urdu Studies

An international, peer-reviewed,

bilingual research journal

ISSN: 2583-8784 (Online)

Vol. 5 | Issue 1 | Year 2025

Pages: 1-5

Editorial

Fatima Rizvi

Urdu Studies Volume 5 Issue 1, is dedicated to the memory of Professor C. M. Naim who passed away on 9th July, 2025. He was 89. An Urdu scholar *par excellence*, beginning in 1962, he taught Urdu to generations of students at the University of Chicago, United States of America. He will be remembered for his contribution to Urdu Studies which is both, enormous and invaluable. This volume opens with a commemorative essay on Professor Naim.

This 2025 edition of *Urdu Studies* is a Special Issue on the contribution of Western women scholars to Urdu and Islamic Studies. It includes seventeen submissions in all – three of which are on the theme of the issue. A clutch of critical studies on the politics of the Progressive Writers Movement critiques and problematizes Sa'adat Hasan Manto's, Sajjad Zaheer's, Rashid Jahan's and Rajinder Singh Bedi's writing and cinema. The politics of censorship and silencing within Urdu print culture and colonial legal systems, with special reference to Manto's stories and lawsuits, has been dwelt upon in a study including a translation of his "Aşlı Jinn." Women's *tazkirās*, the *mushā'irah* culture of Amroha, Islamic feminism, Qurratulain Hyder's family saga *Kār-e Jahān Daraīz Hai*, and Urdu press constitute studies on various genres of Urdu writing, politics and oral tradition. Also included in this volume and two translated stories – "Faisla" by Musharraf Alam Zauqi and "Sāye" by Khalid Jawed.

"Transnational Mediations: Western Women Scholars and the Reimagining of Urdu Literature, Sufism, and Cultural Histories" by Samiul Azim and Md. Akidul Hoque critically examines the transformative yet contested contributions of several Western women scholars including Annemarie Schimmel, Frances Pritchett, and Carla Petievich. It explores their role in redefining Urdu literature, Sufism, and cultural historiography. The study employs textual analysis, archival research, and comparative frameworks to argue that these scholars bridged Euro-American and South Asian intellectual traditions, globalizing Urdu's

Included in UGC-CARE List since October 2021

Published on August 11, 2025

<http://www.urdustudies.in>

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

cultural legacy while navigating postcolonial critiques of epistemic appropriation. **“Bridging Cultures through Text and Tradition: Anna Suvorova’s Contributions to Urdu Literary Studies and Indo-Islamic Scholarship”** by Arifur Rahaman Mollah examines Russian Orientalist Anna Suvorova’s interdisciplinary analyses of South Asian literature, Sufism, and performative traditions. It examines her nuanced interpretations of Urdu prose and poetry genres while situating them within Islamic cultural frameworks. This study argues that her methodology, integrating literary criticism, cultural history, Islamic studies, and art history, enriched global understanding of Urdu literature’s transcultural significance, though her textual focus and outsider perspective limited engagement with contemporary Muslim practices and marginalized voices, particularly women’s voices. **“Textual Insights and Islamic Reform: Barbara Metcalf’s Contributions to Urdu Studies and Twentieth Century South Asian Muslim Scholarship”** by Imdad Husain evaluates American historian Barbara Daly Metcalf’s (b. 1941), pioneering work on South Asian Muslims from the late 20th century to date. It examines how Metcalf, renowned for her interdisciplinary analyses of Islamic reform movements and her translation of Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānawi’s *Bihishtī Zewar* (*Heavenly Ornaments*), illuminates the intricate interplay of language, religion, and colonial history. This article argues that her meticulous engagement with Urdu sources, has deepened understanding of Islamic practice and Urdu’s theological and cultural significance.

Marcia Hermansen’s essay **“The Evolution of South Asian Muslim *Tazkiras* as Memorials of Places and Persons”** examines the process of “making Muslim space” in South Asia through the composition of biographical compendia celebrating the lives of local poets, saints, and other notables. It illustrates how shifts have occurred over time in the conception of these places, both in themselves and in relationship to others, particularly in the sense of permanence, security, and more recently, nationalist agenda of a space, as well as in its religious and cultural meanings. In **“Gender Dynamics in the *Mushā’irah* Culture of Amroha”** Anam Siddiqui explores the participation of women poets in *mushā’irah* of Amroha. She analyses gendered spaces within this traditionally male dominated poetic performance space and focuses on how deeply embedded patriarchal norms shape participation and recognition of women. Using qualitative methodology, Siddiqui draws on personal narratives collected from both male and female poets of the city along with the observation of the settings of *mushā’irah*. **“Islamic Feminism: An Overview”** by Arshad Masood Hashmi and Noor Fatma studies the causes and effects, of the factors of Islamic feminism as it has evolved over the years as a powerful voice against the patriarchal nature of Muslim society. Islam and Feminism,

these two words and the concepts they imply, are contradictory to each other, so their very combination is surprising to many intellectuals. Traditions of creating literature in the light of opposition to patriarchy in Muslim society and religious matters exist in every language.

“Angarey and its Aftermath” by Khalid Alvi and Tarika is a comparative study of the two Urdu publications of *Angarey* – the original published in 1932 and the 1995 edition edited by Khalid Alvi. A historical analysis of the contexts of these publications shed light on the public reception of scandalous literature and reactions to its censorship. The paper focuses on the historical context and the book history of *Angarey*. Alvi’s editing choices are symptomatic of the print capitalist context of late 20th-century India, besieged with censorship debates because of the critical, public and censorial response to Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*. The paper uses Bourdieu’s theories of fields of power. In his essay **“Beyond His Last Trial: Reflections and Speculations on Sa’adat Hasan Manto’s ‘Aşlı Jinn,’”** Haris Qadeer notes that this homoerotic short story has largely been overlooked. He uses this provocative story, which holds potential for censorship in conservative societies, to reflect on the author’s complex legacy following his last trial. His essay engages with several hypothetical and notional questions in this regard. The essay concludes with an English translation of “Aşlı Jinn” as “The Real Jinn.” Girija Suri’s **“Prophet or Renegade: An Assessment of Sa’adat Hasan Manto as a ‘Progressive’ Writer”** examines Manto’s writings and comments on the role and nature of art in society, to arrive at an understanding of what it means to be a “progressive.” It views the fraught and tenuous relationship between Manto and the Progressives to offer an insight into Manto’s undermining the narrow, political definition of the ‘progressive’ in favor of an all-encompassing, complex and literary response. **“Embodying Gender, Class, and Religion in 20th Century India: An Analysis of Rashid Jahan’s “Mera ek Safar” or “One of my Journeys””** by Rahma Ali is an attempt at both a literary analysis and a retrospective commentary on communal strife in 20th century India. It analyses Jahan’s approach towards representation of womanhood, caste, and religious identity. It brings the story’s emphasis on these common subjects in conversation with the post-colonial approach forged by Subaltern Studies. Since satire is the author’s genre of choice, it equips the texts with the agency to offer political commentary on these crucial questions. **“Un-Constitutionalism of the British Raj”** by Ahmad Aqeel Sarwar examines the concept of constitutionalism during British colonial rule in India by focusing on Sa’adat Hasan Manto’s short story, “Naya Qanoon” (The New Constitution) set against the Government of India Act, 1935. Employing a New Historicist approach, this study examines “Naya Qanoon” alongside the Act of 1935 and relevant historical documents and

contextualizes it within the broader socio-political climate of the time. The study scrutinizes the intentions behind the British Empire's laws and sheds light on the unconstitutional nature of the colonial regime. **“Angarey and ‘The Purpose of Literature’: Setting the Stage for Progressive Writing”** by **Tabinda Sadiq** analyzes Premchand's address at the first meeting of the AIPWA and the manifesto that Sajjad Zaheer formulated in London to showcase how *Angarey* exemplified the kind of literature these documents called for, several years earlier. The paper establishes that *Angarey* was not only a cornerstone of Progressive Movement but also a fine example of what a Progressive writing should be. **“Gender, Class and Religion: A Study of Sajjad Zaheer’s “Dulari” and “Heaven Assured!””** by **Almee Raza** studies “Dulari” and “Heaven Assured!” to discuss themes of vulnerability, domestic servitude and exploitation of women, religious duplicity and hypocrisy in a patriarchal and feudal society. The paper underscores *Angarey* as a path-breaking text and the rise of the Progressive Writers' Movement aimed at demolishing conservatism and orthodoxy deeply embedded in the socio-cultural milieu. **“Negotiation, Intervention, and Representation: Understanding Rajinder Singh Bedi’s Cinetopia”** by Fatima Siddiqui aims to understand and highlight the picture of life and man as it emerges in the films of Rajinder Singh Bedi. Bedi captures the complex correlation between the Indian man and his socio-cultural, religious and political beliefs with dexterity. The paper analyses the representation of realism in Bedi's cinema and the range of emotions and sensibility that characterize them. In **“Embers of Social Revolution in Rajinder Singh Bedi’s Short Stories”** Ayesha Irfan studies “The Woolen Coat”, “Lajwanti,” “Kalyani”, “Maithun”, “Where is the Funeral Procession”, “Give me your Sorrows”, “Too Tall for Marriage”, “Quarentine,” and “Vitamin B,” among others, which candidly display human emotions and predicaments of the middle and lower middle-classes. With sharp precision she reads how Bedi navigates the everyday lives of common people; while placing them in their cultural milieu.

“Mapping Identity: Qurratulain Hyder’s Return to Roots in *Kār-e Jahān Darāz Hai* (Vols. I and II)” by **Naila Anjum** conducts a close reading of Hyder's *Kār-e Jahān Darāz Hai* (vols I and II) to explore its thematic preoccupations with identity, ancestry, belonging and historical continuity. She notes that this family saga has enormous scope and depth, particularly because of its epic treatment of familial and historical rupture. **“Contemporary Landscape of Urdu Journalism in India: Challenges, Influence, and Future Prospects”** by **Shah Alam and Saiba Khatoon** investigates the contemporary status, and socio-political influence of Urdu journalism in India. The paper underscores that despite facing challenges such as financial constraints, political pressures, and the decline of print media, Urdu journalism is currently undergoing a substantial digital

transformation. It explores Urdu media's adaptation to digitization, current readership demographics, and the evolving role of Urdu newspapers in shaping both national and international narratives.

This year's issue carries two translated stories. “**Faisla**” from the collection *Ek Anjāne Khauf kī Rehearsal* (rehearsal of an unknown fear, 1995) by Musharraf Alam Zauqi has been translated by Banibrata Mahanta as “The Compromise” and introduced by Vatsal Rohilla. It is a meta-fiction which depicts the powerful socio-political forces active in post-Independence India which force the uncompromising Manto to make a decision that involves an ethical compromise. Aspects of the story and the allusions it makes collectively suggest the deeper socio-political reasons for the anjāna khauf rehearsed in the narrator's dream.

“**Sāye**” from the collection *Tasrih kī ek Dopahar* (a leisurely afternoon, 2008) by Khalid Jawed is introduced and translated as “Shadows” by Fathima M. As the narrative of “Shadows,” vacillates between analepsis and prolepsis of the protagonist's mind-space, it incorporates elements of modernism, postmodernism, the supernatural, and the gothic. Yet, the narrative does not evidently delve into the existential, neither does it include forced complexities. Despite a straightforward narrative style, the story rivets the reader and leaves him or her wondering about its theme, plot, or even questioning the existence of a storyline.

I must acknowledge Professor A.M. Hashmi's dedicated engagement with bringing out this special issue of *Urdu Studies* and thank all the contributors for their contributions, their responses to the reviewers' and to my comments and queries, and their patience through the entire editorial process. I hope you will find the research papers and the translated stories published here both, engaging and effective.

Fatima Rizvi

Professor, Department of English and Modern European Languages,
University of Lucknow,
Lucknow,
Uttar Pradesh, India

14th August, 2025.