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Here, it would be interesting to trace the origin of the word “Urdu” and briefly give its history. Urdu is a word of Turkish origin, found in the earlier literature in various forms, such as Oordā, Oordā, Aurdā, and Urdā, and means “camp,” “aligning place,” “army post,” “an army,” or a “part thereof.” It also means tent, camp bazaar, fort, or a royal place (cf. Nūr al-Abāfir, MS. in the library of Dr. Muhammad Shafi’, Lahore). After undergoing several changes the word filtered into Persian books after the Mongol invasion of Iran. After the invasion of Eastern Europe by Bābur it also entered into the languages of Europe.

It was, perhaps, Bābur who introduced the word “Urdu” into India, and during the reign of Akbar it was used as a term for the royal camp or the royal mint. During the subsequent periods, we find the usage of Urdu-i Mu‘alla for the residential quarters belonging to Government officers (civil area) and Urdu Bīzār (the market attached to this area).

It is generally admitted that the word “Urdu” as the name of a particular language is usually associated with one of these two later expressions. That is to say, Urdu meant the language of the royal camp. But it would be wrong to assume on the basis of this fact that the Urdu language took its origin during the period of Ṣhāh Jahan. The term “Urdu” in this special sense appears to have been in vogue since the time of Akbar. Actually it came into being soon after the invasion of India by Muslims from the North. Ṣhāh Murdā of Lahore was perhaps the first writer who used the word “Urdu” for the language itself in one of his letters written in 1190/1772. The other early writers who used this word for the language were Mūsbāñī (1211/1796) and Gilchrist (1194/1780).

In a way, Urdu is not exclusively the creation of the Muslims. Its birth is the direct result of their contact with the Hindus, who jointly with the former have developed it down to recent times. The contribution of the Muslims to its development is, however, more substantial, rather monumental, as compared with that of the Hindus or the Europeans who also played a creditable role in its advancement. Considered from the point of view of quantity as well as quality, spirit as well as atmosphere, Urdu is predominantly a language of the Muslims, although the services of the other co-workers in the field can in no case be under-rated.

Urdu was popularized by Muslim mystics and saints and patronized by Muslim kings and rulers. Some of the Muslim emperors, kings and princes themselves composed Urdu verses and compiled diwans of Urdu poems. Its literature was enriched from Islamic sources. The Muslims, therefore, were mainly, though not exclusively, the architects of this language.

Let us now assess and determine the nature and extent of Muslim contribution to the creation and development of Urdu. Urdu took its shape first in A

1 Aḥmad Bābā Saksānas, History of Urdu Literature, 1927, p. 4.
2 For instance Muhammad Quli Qutbī Shāh, Shāh Jāmī Shāh, Bahādur Shāh Zafar, Wajīd ‘All Shāh Akhtar, etc.

Chapter LXXI
THE SILVER LINING
DEVELOPMENT OF THE URDU LANGUAGE, GRAMMAR, AND LITERATURE

A

Rahshā, Hindī, Hindū, Zabān-i Dīhī, Gujārī, Zabān-i Urdu-i Mu‘alla— all those names were given to Urdu at the various stages of its progress by the Muslim rulers of and other settlers in India. It was also called the “language of the Moors.” The name Hindustānī popularized by the Europeans was also used by some writers in the early period.


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the Punjab and Delhi during the Ghaznavid and the early Sultanate period when the first powerful conning of Hindu-Muslim cultures occurred, causing a productive intermixture of Muslim (i.e., Persian, Turkish, and Arabo) languages with Prakrit (the Apabhramsa of the Punjab and the Khari Boli of Delhi, Moorad, and the adjoining areas) of Northern India. This situation had its effect in two directions. First, it created a hybrid form of speech used by Hindus and Muslims in the bazaars with a sprinkling of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words; subsequently, it developed into a crude vehicle of lyrical utterance (cf. Amir Khusro's Ruhm Abad). Secondly, it caused an infiltration of Hindi words into Arabic and Persian books on the one side and of Persian and Turkish words into Hindi books on the other. The Khilaf al-Saladin of al-Biruni and the early lexicographical works in Persian written in India contain a large number of Hindi words and idioms, and Chand's Pravati Bai Bisa and, later, Ad Gramh of Naranak embody large materials drawn from Muslim sources.

But, apart from this linguistic fusion, a distinct language came into being with the passage of time as an admixture of Persian and Arabic words and expressions in use more in Muslim circles, with a clear bias towards Muslim cultural modes and attitudes. Persian enjoyed the status of the Court language, but side by side with it this new language too kept on progressing from one stage to another.

From Delhi, this new language reached Gujarat and the Deccan where its growth and initial popularity awakened the first serious literary activities under the 'Adilshahis and Qutbshahis rulers, some of whom were themselves good poets of Urdu. Earlier, the Sufis employed this polyglot for their missionary work and wrote religious and mystic treatises in it. Gradually, it attained a literary status in the South which was later employed by writers in the North, where in due course it became popular during the post-Aurangzeb

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period, during which Iltim, Mir, Sauda, Dard, and others wrote excellent poetry in it. Then the centre shifted to Lucknow and other places, till in 1212/1850, the Fort William College was established by the British at Calcutta where deliberate efforts were made to simplify Urdu style under the name of Hindustani, which encouraged a revival of interest in secular, non-communal, and local aspects of its literature.

These efforts, however, did not succeed fully because Urdu had already assumed a specific shape and complexion more akin to Persian and other Muslim literatures, and it was not then possible to divert it of its predominantly Muslim stamp. They, in a way, encouraged parting of the ways, and led to the creation of the modern Hindi with a distinct Hindu spirit drifting largely away from Urdu and the "lingua franca" Hindustani. So, by 1369/1855, Urdu, which was hitherto a common language of the Hindu-Muslim intelligentsia, came to be claimed as a language, more or less, of the Muslims. About the same time, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan advocated this claim simultaneously with the declaration of the Muslims to exist as a separate politico-cultural group in India and the issue was thus decided once for all. Later, the protection and preservation of Urdu became one of the basic grounds for demanding a separate homeland for the Muslims.

B

This brief history would prove the fact of active association of the Muslims with Urdu since its origin, though not to the exclusion of other communities (Hindus and Europeans) whose contribution to its progress is certainly creditable. For a considerable time the Hindus took keen interest in the advancement of Urdu as if it were their own language. It attracted their enthusiasm due to the spirit of orthodoxy existing in its mystic poetry, taste for which had already been cultivated by them through Persian which had become a part of their education ever since the reign of Akbar. With the intensification of the communal consciousness, however, certain sections of the Hindus created a gulf between Hindi and Urdu which went on increasing till the country was partitioned and the shape of things changed altogether.

The Europeans played their role a bit differently. They used Urdu for official purposes, simplified it for common use, compiled dictionaries and grammars—and patronized it so long as it served their ends.

1 S. M. Abdullah, Farsi men Hindon'nu in Hichip, pp. 4 sq.
2 The first grammar of Urdu was written perhaps by J. J. Kostler ("Abel al-Haq, Quaddudi's Urdu," 1811; Preface, pp. 11 sq.) and Intik was the first "local" writer who dealt with problems of Urdu grammar in Durag IV Lughit. It may, however, be noted that some preliminary discussions are also found in the Misir (1st University of the Punjab) of Khan A'ren (a writer of Muhammad Iqbal period). Among several European writers and poets, D. J. Poll, John Shade, Mottram, H. and H. Akin were the notable scholars who produced books in Urdu; G. de Toey may also be considered to be among those who wrote about Urdu.
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Principally, therefore, Urdu has been a concern and creation of the Muslims; but from another point of view it is positively a joint production of the Hindus and the Muslims (although its distinct bias towards Islamic culture can never be denied).

C

New about Urdu composition and grammar. It is agreed that whatever form Urdu took ultimately, it is essentially an Indian language which developed on the grammatical patterns of Sanskrit Pārthirī. Therefore, it follows the same rules of grammar as any other branch of this group, and its basic alphabet is also the same. But the complete Urdu alphabet is richer and is a combination of Hindi and Arabic-Persian sounds. In certain cases the Hindi sounds have been softened and in certain others amplified according to the phonetic rules of Persian and Urdu.14

Urdu is, therefore, a more advanced language than the Pārthirī so far as sounds and vocabulary are concerned. It has borrowed a large number of nouns and adjectives from the original Arabic-Persian loans, in addition to the recent borrowings from European languages. Most of the verbs, pronouns, and prepositions belong to Hindi but the structure of the sentence has been very much determined by Persian.

The main Muslim contributions to Urdu grammar are: adoption of Arabic terminology, application of the rules of word formation (in plurals and adjectival compounds), and introduction of the Persian karanah-i idštānt (vowel mark ‘I’ to denote possession) instead of its Hindi form ekā, ekē.

During certain periods of strong Persian influences, even the sentence scheme was made to follow the Persian sentence arrangement. Conversely, however, certain Arabic and Persian plurals (like many other words) also underwent change according to the Hindi usage,15 particularly in the early Urdu literature.

These modifications in the grammatical structure of Urdu have been of benefit to it in several ways. The karanah-i idštānt has the advantage of economy over Hindi ekā, ekē. The Persian compounds (marakhdāhī) also have the same value, with additional rich rhythmic properties, so useful in paragraphs and stanzas. Conciseness in literal utterances too has always been a favourite mode of expression with the Muslims—accomplished mostly by the use of karanah-i idštānt and “concise compounds,” although these features have sometimes been misused in the form of “dead” adjectival compounds or unnecessary “Arabized” plurals. And it is a relief to find that the Persianized sentence structure of Urdu composition has particularly vanished with the advent of the Western literary influences.

15 Ghairī’s article: “Sub-Bau,” Oriental College Magazine, November 1934, and “Introduction to Dhawândhâh Hâtim” (MS. University of the Punjāb).

17 Wâli al-Dīn Salim, Wâli’s Lädhâlāt-i Imârât, 1811, pp. 7 sqq.
18 For the influence of Islam on Urdu poetry, see ‘Alī Usman, Maulâdān-i Shârî, 1955, pp. 66 sqq. Also see Zaid, op. cit., pp. 16 sqq.
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process of assimilation continued. The literary ideals of Persian became the main goals to be reached by Urdu writers, and they remained so till the literary taste changed in modern times.

The distinctive characteristics of the Persianized form of literary expression were: a tendency towards elaboration, affection and forlornness; sumptuousness of detail in the narrative; love of grandeur and grotesqueness; imaginativeness even when realistic delineation was required; preponderance of wit; and fondness for metaphor, allegory, and symbolism in poetry. Coarseness in lyrical poetry is another distinctive feature borrowed from the Persian ghazal. Simplicity and directness in style were later introduced by writers at the Fort William College and also by the poet Ghilab and the reformer Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

Sometimes, there is a touch of insincerity in the literary style of the Persian models, but these models when reformed have helped Urdu literary expression, to gain in force, vigour, and dignity of tone, rarely found in the sister languages of India.

D

In classical poetry, the chief forms—ghazal, qasidah, rubai, matn, etc.—were borrowed from Persian. Ghazal, a short poem of a few verses (commonly between seven and twelve), mainly devoted to love themes, interspersed with other subjects of philosophical and mystical nature, is essentially a lyrical form, insisting on conciseness, economy, and beauty of diction. In this form, each couplet is complete in itself but is interwoven into the whole, by means of a common rhyme and a common metre, and sometimes by an undercurrent of a common mood apparent in the tone though not necessarily in the subject. In Urdu as in Persian, ghazal is associated with its fold several great poets such as Wali, Mir, Dard, Sauda, Mushafi, Atigh, Mumin, Ghilab, and later Hali, Iqbal, Jibrat, and some of the prominent modern poets like Raffiq, Firdoos, and Faid (Fais) who have adapted it to the changed mental atmosphere of the modern age.

Qasidah (panegyric or praise-poem), a form more lengthy in size and more complex in structure and content, requires an unusual command over language and also great constructive ability. It may be noted that qasidah is not confined to praise and that it has also been employed successfully for subjects of descriptive, narrative, dramatic, and subjective nature. The chief qasidah-writers in Urdu are Nazmat, Sauda, Inshah, and Dhaqan, whose art in this particular branch can compete with that of the best qasidah-writers in Persian, at least, in their care for the externalities of technique, if not for internal beauties. To this list, one may add Ghilab, who introduced some changes in the structure of qasidah.

Another form is matn, which is originally meant for narration of a longer chain of events of historical or fictional nature, and is cistinshined

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from other forms in that each couplet in it has a separate rhyme in consonance with a uniformity in the metre scheme. The most outstanding matnakshah in Urdu are those written by Mir Taqi Mir (Dard-i-Taqi), Mir Haasan (Sehr al-Basir), Darya Ghazkar Nastin (Ghalat-i Nastin), and Ghulam Lakhwani (Sehr-i Khwa).

Out of the remaining poetical forms, special reference seems necessary to shahād-dab—a form used by Persian and Turkish writers, more or less for humorous themes but employed by the Urdu poets such as Mir and Sauda, for serious subjects of social and political import. Another very important branch of Urdu poetry is mithqal, which derived its name from Arabic rubi (elegy) and took a peculiar narrative shape in Urdu. It has some resemblance to epic forms and deals with the tragic events of Kharbala (a place in Iraq where Imam Husain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, and a small party of his kinsmen and followers, courageous fought against a much larger army defeated by Yazid, an Umayyad ruler, and lost their lives). The prominent mithqal writers were Amid and Dahir whose mithqals are the best representatives of this art. Mirza Rafi' Sauda and Damir had also contributed to its progress earlier.

Rubai (poems, as though written by women, with peculiar female attitudes towards love and with characteristicality female ways of speech) means, literally, "the feminine form of rubai" (one of the names for Urdu, and later for Urdu poetry as a whole, or for Urdu ghazal alone). It is more or less in the nature of a "feminine" burlesque or parody of love-poems written by men. In most of such poems, the tone is non-serious, rather comic, sometimes bordering on licence and obscenity. The chief representative poets of this literary form are Rangin and Jin Ghilab, although its earliest specimens are also found in the Deccani period of Urdu poetry.

We may mention in passing the rubai (quatrains), the muzzaddas (Hali's Muzzaddas being the most prominent), wosidad (ironic love-poems), gurug (the fragmentary and episodic poems written more or less on the model of shorter qasidahs or quatrains), and a few other forms such as musahmas (quintets), wastazad, etc. These forms were adopted from Persian and were employed by almost all the famous poets. Recently, the Hindi pā and doha forms have been revived in Urdu by poets such as Haul, Muazzam Ahmedpur, Mughal Shaheed, Janati 'Ali, and others, while some of the European forms have been given currency by 'Armat Allah Khan, Faiz, Rashid among many others whose poems deserve a high place in Urdu poetry for perfection of technique and construction.

In its emotional moods Urdu poetry differs from Hindi poetry despite the fact that some of its attitudes (e.g., towards the sex of the lover) and imagery in it were borrowed by Urdu poets in the Deccani period, and also to some extent in recent times, but the general atmosphere of Urdu poetry has been throughout Persian, except in the part produced under Western influences.

The most important poets of Urdu (Wali, Mir, Sauda, Dard, Mushafi,
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Ājīh, Mir Ḥasan, Naqīr, Ghālib, Ismā'īl, Ḥādī, Iqbal, and others are Muslims, but the contribution by Dāya Shāhshār Nāsim, Shaffīq Auranjābādī, Chakbā, Sūrū, Māhrūm, Firdās, Anand Narsain Mulla, and others who are Hindus is equally creditable and cannot be ignored in any history of Urdu poetry.

The spirit of Urdu poetry like that of Persian poetry, when serious, is passionately lyrical; when mystical, deeply reflective; when humorous, intensely witty and at times ironical. Muslim narrative poetry in the classical period has rarely been realistic and its descriptions are more imaginative than real and objective. The poetry of the Hindu poets of Urdu could be somewhat different but they too followed in most cases the general spirit of Urdu poetry. In recent times, Firdās has tried to infuse a Hindu devotional spirit in it but his is a solitary instance. The modern Urdu poets have copied some Western models as well, but most of the original Persian forms still persist. Iqbal, a unique literary figure in the Muslim world, has given a new meaning to the old forms and symbols, but the aura of his poetry is also patent to Persians. Iqbal is also responsible for giving Urdu poetry a deeply Islamic and philosophical colour.

Some Europeans too have written good Urdu poetry but none of them can be considered a first-rate poet, and none of them has introduced the European spirit into it. Nevertheless, Urdu poetry has recently received much inspiration from European (particularly English) models, and has accepted changes in content and tone, and, to a limited extent, in form. For instance, some attempts have been made, especially in most recent times, to employ free verse and blank verse for long and short-long poems, and to write sonnets and cantos.

It is, however, in content that European influences are markedly noticeable. One might refer here to the national as well as the "nature" themes in modern Urdu poetry which clearly bear the European stamp both in attitude and in diction. The chief representatives of the national or political poetry are Ḥādī, Šhilī, Ḥakīr, Šajwar 'Ali Khān, Chakbā, Iqbal, J. Gh. Pāi, and certain other modern poets, while Ismā'īl Mīrāthī, Mohgālar, B. Na'dīr, and some others who wrote for children, may be called the nature poets of Urdu. The classical Urdu poetry has in its own way dealt with nature also Naqīr Akbarābādī may be cited as the most profound poet of this line.

The case of Urdu prose is the same as that of Urdu poetry so far as forms employed in the classical period are concerned. But the share of non-Muslims in prose is more noteworthy especially in literary history, bāmānī writing (biographical dictionaries of poets), and fiction. Sakkart's History of Urdu Literature has so far been the best, and Sir Rām's Khān khānā-s— a dictionary of poets—is a monumental work of considerable worth. In fiction, Sārgār, Fāzmān Chand, and Khushn Chand (among the moderns) and Nihāl Chand (among the old) occupy a conspicuous place. The vast "fiction literature" (捻 ants and ḫirāy) has borrowed largely from Sanskrit sources, as also from European channels so far as the novel and the short story are concerned.

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E

Comparatively speaking, Urdu prose is of recent growth and most of the prose literature of old Persian atmosphere is rather undeveloped and is in a crude literary shape. From Noh-bās (All-Juice), a mystical alchemy translated from Persian by Wājī (c. 1645/1655), up to Sīnāqī Bahār (The Flower Garden and the Flower Season), a tale of the four dervishes by Mir Anāman (c. 1217/1802), there is a big gap, except for Nau Fara-i Mumayya, which is an outstanding work of the Persian model and Dastān-i Rāhī Kānī by Ighārī representing a new model. Then came Ghālib and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Ḥādī, Šhilī, and the modern prose-writers who enriched Urdu prose drawing much from European sources and wrote biographies, histories, essays, novels, stories, theological and philosophical works, and books of literary criticism and science. In Osmania University, quite a large number of European books have been translated into Urdu.

Here, it would be proper to bring out prominently the role of Ghālib and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan in the development of Urdu prose style. It may be noted that the credit of simplifying the literary Urdu language for the first time, after it had become laborious, affected, and merely decorative under the influence of high-flew Persian style current in India during the earlier periods, goes to the prose-writers of the Fort William College, Calcutta (founded by the British East India Company in 1215/1800), such as Mir Anāman, Shīr 'Ali Āfīs, Ikhālar Babālī Ḥādīrī, and others. Yet the personal emotive prose of Ghālib with touches of wit and delightful irony (as reflected in his Urdu letters) and the natural style of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, reflected in all of his works particularly in his Essays, broadened the possibilities of Urdu prose enabling it to become an effective vehicle, not only for literary expression but also for the expression of emotional, philosophical, or scientific content.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad insisted, not only on simplicity, naturalness, and ease, but also on the purpose, truth, sincerity, and earnestness of the author. Again, while Ghālib is inimitable, Sir Sayyid tremendously influenced his age, especially the group of his associates in the Aligarh movement, such as Ḥādī, Šhilī, Nāhār Ahmad Dakhālī Allah and others who enriched Urdu literature abundantly by producing works of unusual merit on various subjects.

Side by side with these prose-writers, we find Muhammad Hussain Azālī, once Professor at the Government College and the Oriental College, Lahore. He was with Ḥādī a co-founder of the Natural School of Urdu poetry and was perhaps the most popular stylist of Urdu, even though he did not belong to the immediate circle of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. He chose to write in a manner which, though not simple and direct, was yet expressive, rich, and graceful. The three main qualities of his prose are its beauty, artistry, and grandeur, and so far none has surpassed him in excellence. Some of his notable works are Ab-i Ḥarpī (a history of Urdu poetry), 500hānān-i Fāris
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(a history of Persian literature), Nairang-i Khojil (a collection of essays), and Durbar-i Ahmar (a history of the Emperor Akbar).

Drama is the weakest spot in Urdu literature and whatever exists in this branch has been borrowed from and inspired by the European models. Abasih Lakshmiwai, Agha Naeem, and Sayyid Imtiaz Ali Taj are the most outstanding figures in this field.

Most of the writers of Urdu prose are Muslims. Hence, the general stylistic atmosphere is also the same as is associated with the Muslim genius.

The works on biography and Islamic history produced at Dar al-Muqarrif, Azamgarh (now in India), reflect an intensely Islamic spirit. Similarly, most of the works on socio-political subjects embody Muslim inclinations.

In the field of fiction, i.e., romances (dastans), novels and short stories, we witness a variety of tastes, because in those branches Muslims and non-Muslims have taken almost equal part, introducing new elements drawn from different sources, beautifully fused together.

The romances (or dastan-e adaat) should naturally come first. This kind of literature is based on or adopted and borrowed from Arabic and Persian as well as from Hindi sources, and manifests a mixture of various racial and cultural elements. For instance, there is emphasis on nature and phantasy in stories of Sanskrit origin, on action and sensuality in stories of Arabic origin, on adventure and extravagance in stories associated with Turkish and Khurasani, on occultism and on fabulous and imaginative pleasure in those associated with Iran. The Hindu element in the dastan is also conspicuous, although the number of Hindu writers of dastan is not so very large.

The atmosphere in earlier novels of Urdu, as represented by Nohir Ahmad, Shajar, Tahib, and Raghil al-Khwarizhi is predominantly Islamic, while local life has been depicted in the more modern novels (for instance, in the novels of Feroz Chand) and in Urdu short stories, as represented by Manto, Krishan Chand, Rajinder Bedi, Ismail Ghandhi, and others. The influence of the Progressive Writers’ movement has manifested the spirit of realism as fostered in European, particularly Russian, literature, and adapted it to the circumstances of indigenous life.

To summarize, Urdu is a joint achievement of several communities, but Muslim contribution to its creation and development is outstanding. The language is basically Indian but it developed largely in accordance with the Muslim (particularly Persian) taste and style. The attitude in the classical Urdu literature are mostly in tune with those existing in all Muslim literatures. Urdu is a wonderland manifestation of the synthetic capacity of the Muslims which succeeded in evolving out of heterogenous elements a language which can now be regarded as one of the most powerful languages of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and one of the two official languages of Pakistan.

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criticism to classical Urdu and Persian literature, in a somewhat imperfect manner, for they could not get rid of their old inclinations and in practice had to rely on old standards. The Magaddhanak (Introduction) to poetry by Bibi, the Shair al-Ajam, a history of Persian poetry by Shibli, and Usul-at-Usul (a history of Urdu poetry) by Muhammad Husain Aziz, and Raghil al-Haqiq (The Revealer of Critical Principles) by Imad-i Imam Agha are some of the noteworthy books on criticism belonging to the earlier period of modern influences. Later on, however, Urdu criticism made tremendous progress and fell in line with the more modern criteria of literary judgment. The notable figures in this field are Qudsi, Zor, Agha, Niaz, Majnun, Firdoos, A. I. Ahmad Suri, Mirza Husain, Kaltim al-Din Ahmad, and a few others.

G

F

The recent trends in Urdu literary criticism are also directly inspired by the European critical theory and practice. The modern Urdu criticism manifests a clear departure from the old practical criticism, largely based on old rhetorics and stylistics, specimens of which are to be found mostly in indikarah (biographical dictionaries of poets) and other stray writings. Shibli, Haji, Agha, and Imad-i Imam Agha were the first to reorientate Urdu criticism along new lines. They tried to apply the principles of European