

## ABSTRACTS

THE FOLLOWING abstracts are from “Narrative in South Asian Literatures: Text and Interpretation,” Panel 2a of the 14th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies (Copenhagen, 21–24 August 1996), and were sent to the *AUS* by Christina Oesterheld. Her own paper at the panel was entitled “ ‘Deconstructing’ a ‘Deconstructionist’ Urdu Story: ‘Ēk Kahānī, Gaṅgā-Jamnī’ by Kaiser Tamkeen,” a “slightly more elaborate version” of which appears elsewhere in this issue. —*Editors*



“Recapturing the Collective Trauma Through Literature: [Sa‘adat Hasan] Manto, Bhisham [Sahni], and [Kashmirilal] Zakir.”

by Kamlesh Mohan

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My paper seeks to focus upon a significant but neglected aspect of the Partition of India—pain, anguish, and sufferings of ordinary men, women, and children who were caught in the cross-fire of sectarian violence in a difficult moment of change in state power, establishment of new nation states, and ruling classes. Recaptured in the creative writing of three Punjabi writers—Sa‘adat Hasan Manto, Bhisham Sahni, and Kashmirilal Zakir—the refugees’ traumatic experience of being uprooted, mauled and raped (both physically and emotionally), and coming to terms with the meaning (and even the location) of Hindustan formed a significant strand in their collective memory.

In order to find an answer to the question “What does it mean to be the victim of violence?” I have tried to locate the points of agreement or tension between the perceptions of the creative writers and the raw emotions of inarticulate and faceless people whose minds and bodies continue to bear the scars of bloody political wrangles.

How far do the memories of Partition influence the larger events and construction of identities of Hindu and Sikh refugees today? I have tried to understand these questions in context with the language of historical

discourse and its ability to represent violence, pain, and the daily struggles of the uprooted.



[No title given]

by Giriraj Kishore

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This paper compares the story “Shaṭranj kē Kḥilārī” by the noted Hindi novelist Premchand with its film version by the great Indian film director Satyajit Ray. Our conclusion is that while the film is undoubtedly a great achievement of the genre, it does not capture the spirit of the story but rather creates a different spirit of its own. While Premchand’s story presents a portrayal of the decadent society which made the march of the British possible, and captures the licentious and lax spirit of the Lucknow of the times, Ray’s film shifts the focus to the life of the royalty and their selfish concerns. Ray makes the story a metaphor for the contemporary Indian situation, a perspective which is totally absent in Premchand’s story. In short, while Premchand’s story is a story for the masses, Ray’s [film] is a film made for the classes.



**“A Modern Pakistani Film and Ruswa’s Urdu novel *Umrā’ō Jān Adā*: Relationship between Two Urdu Narrative Texts”**

by Alain Désoulières

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In this study we intend to analyze the relationship between an Urdu novel, viz., *Umrā’ō Jān Adā* by Mirza Muhammad Hadi Ruswa (1858–1931), and a Pakistani color feature film, *Umrā’ō Jān Adā*, directed by Hassan Tariq, inspired by the novel.

Ruswa’s *Umrā’ō Jān Adā*, published in 1905, is generally considered one of the greatest Urdu novels; it is the story of a village girl abducted at an early age and sold to a procuress in Lucknow who trains her to become a refined prostitute and dancing girl. The story is told in the first person as an autobiography with many dialogues, the author relating in a realistic way the private thoughts of the heroine, or so it seems. The famous courtesan tells the story of her life in a very vivid way, with many thrilling

incidents. This novel, one of the first in Urdu, and famous both for its plot and its panoramic view of early nineteenth-century life in Lucknow, inspired at least two feature films, one in India and another in Pakistan.

Hassan Tariq's *Umrā'ō Jān Adā*, produced by Rashid Hussain (c. 1978), with Rani and Shahid as the principal actors, does start with the abduction of the village girl and her education as a refined dancing girl and prostitute (though this aspect is rather subdued), but has a plot of its own. The characters are mostly borrowed from the novel, and the atmosphere of nineteenth-century Lucknow is also recreated, but the lyrics and dances are proper to the film industry and the plot is devised to please both cultivated and popular Pakistani audiences. The moral aspect of the film story is also peculiar, religion playing a part that is somehow different but perhaps not inconsistent with the novel's morale.

The study of the narrative process both in the novel and in the film reveals the moral intentions of the Pakistani director, but also his strong fascination with the novelistic world. The director has to respect the conventions and recipes of a successful feature film, although the literary and historical background may contradict them. This contradiction between two traditions, both strongly influenced by Western styles, has to be studied.