Mirat ul-Arus: Examining the Afterlife of a Literary Text

Mobeena Shafqat

The mid-nineteenth century seems to have been an awkward time for the Muslims of Delhi: The rise of the British Raj loomed large and the city residents tumbled forth into a new reality, still blinking away memories of the Mughal past. But the nineteenth century would also prove to be a time of great excitement and commotion as India broke into a new age of intellectual and literary ferment. In fact, it was early as 1813 that the British East India Company had given voice to its ambition for a grander agenda – "A sum of not less than one lac of rupees [Rs. 100,000] in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India."[1] At the time, this had been a mere ploy to legitimate direct involvement in India through the East India Company. It had been suggested that "nothing could guarantee their [the natives'] welfare, in this life and the next, better than British culture."[2] The 1857 'War of Independence' (as the event was dubbed by the Indians themselves) caused a great shift. Flushed with victory and now the official rulers of India, the British hastened to churn such reform into reality. Nearly a decade later in 1868, cash prizes of up to rs. 1000 were offered with the aim of promoting "useful compositions in Hindi or Urdu"[3] pertaining to either a branch of the sciences or of literature. It was only in the following year, that the first Urdu best-seller, *Mirat ul-Arus,* made its entry into the world.

The text is a narrative constructed through the lives of two young women. Though Akbari and Asghari are sisters they couldn't be more dissimilar, and their vastly differing characters serve as foils to one other. To elaborate, Akbari is the elder of the two and utterly spoiled, incapable of performing even the simplest of domestic tasks correctly. On the other hand, her younger sister Asghari, is a gem in the ordinary household: Plunging headfirst into domestic chaos, she never fails to straighten even the most impossible of situations into a perfect order. As her own brother-in-law, Muhammad Aqil, lauds her, "Asghari is girl out of a thousand."[4] With his detailed descriptions of the household and a constant, yet energetic unfolding of events, Nazir Ahmad charms his reader, but his every anecdote lies he firm belief: "Education has more importance for women than for men."[5] In the tumultuous times following 1857, it had become critical to re-evaluate traditional

roles and for the *ashraf* (elite) Muslims grappling with the changes of a new era, Ahmad's voice had rapidly become one of the clearest. As for its contributions to literature, the novel's significance is perhaps well encapsulated in Gail Minault's words when she states that the "*Mirat ul-Arus* had an enormous success when it was published in 1869, and it remains one of the classics of Urdu Literature."[6] However, the characters are quite like those found in a fairy-tale, and often strike the reader as one dimensional – If Asghari, as an admirable protagonist can do nothing wrong, then Akbari, as a true foil to her character, can do nothing right.[7] At the heart of the tale lies an instructive manual, for Asghari is both the model bride, and the ideal woman. *Mirat ul-Arus* literally translated as 'The Bride's Mirror,' serves as a metaphor for the practical function of the novel: Frequently gifted to young girls at the time of the marriage, it served as a guide to help them perfect and adjust their own character – The more they resembled Asghari, the more likely they were to tread the correct path. Consequently the language of the novel, as Frances Pritchett notes, falls prey to being that of a "well-written didactic tale."[8] But the detailed depiction of the life of an urban Muslims' family living in Delhi is of more value than it appears to be at first glance. Filled "with crowded markets and narrow lanes, festivals and weddings, money-lenders and cheats, spiteful servants and machinating mothers,"[9] the text is not only relevant to the student of Urdu literature, but also to the student of history. In its time, *Mirat ul-Arus* may have been phenomenal as a rallying cause for social change, but as this paper suggests, it continues to live its afterlife as a historical artifact, having carefully preserved the "social life (of a Muslim family) in old Delhi."[10]

In the afterword to G.E Ward's translation of Nazir Ahmad's novel, Pritchett informs her readersthat at the height of its popularity, the book was not usually referred to by its title, but instead simply known "as the tale of Akbari and Asghari."[11] In his own research on Hindi fiction, A.S. Kalsi observes the influence of Ahmad's literary techniques on Hindi literature.[12] For example in Gauridatt's novel, *Devrani Jethani Ki Kahani,* Kalsi traces out what he deems the most imitable pattern – that of two antithetical women placed in a "comparative situation" only to demonstrate how the more 'educated' of the two finally triumphs by prospering in life.[13] Ultimately, Gauridatt's novel was not as successful as Ahmad's, though it did win a prize of rs. 100.[14] The emphasis on the antithetical protagonists should be noted, but not misinterpreted in its significance. While Asghari is a remarkably competent woman, and Akbari's many flaws never fail to entertain the reader, there is little doubt that their social backdrop remains a highly communal one. Their individuality then, is a factor that is constantly negotiated with the wider society. Hence, though Akbari is fond of "*Chuniya* – the daughter

of Bhondu the sutler, and *Zuflan* – the daughter of Bakhshu the tinker, and *Rahmat* – the daughter of Kimmu the water-carrier, and *Sulmati* – the daughter of Maulan the greengrocer,"[15] these are not sustainable friendships. She is chastised by her elders, and they are dismissive of Akbari's company as such people are "not admitted to our society or friendship."[16] It is helpful to compare this with the history that Margrit Pernau provides. She believes that for the Muslim residents of Delhi, "membership in a family and an extended network of relatives was one of the key factors in determining an individual's social and economic status." Consequently, when Asghari moves into her husband's home after her marriage she cultivates a careful distance between herself and girls of the "lower classes."[17] Thus, while Pernau's comment pertained to the Muslims of the early nineteenth century, it seems to hold true for the Muslim families of the late nineteenth century as well, considering that *Mirat ul-Aroos* was published in 1869.

These notions of upright company can be further expanded into a discussion between the *ashraf* and the *ajlaf* members of the Muslim society. The *ashraf* constituted of the "respectable people," and as Pernau explains, they proudly (albeit often incorrectly) traced their lineage to those who belonged to the "Islamic heartland."[18] The *ashraf* represented the Indian Muslim elite, and Delhi was regarded as the center of their culture.[19] When *Mirat ul-Arus* was published, Sahib Bahadur stated very firmly that Akbari and Asghari's family belonged to the "well-bred [*sharif*] family of the Muslim community."[20] The *ajlaf* in contrast, comprised of either the common-folk or converted Muslims,[21] and their portrayal is far from idyllic. Through the fictional *Mirat ul-Arus*, Ahmad allows his historical reader to catch a glimpse of how these social biases may have realistically played out in the stratified Muslim society living in a nineteenth century Delhi. When Asghari starts her school and begins to educate young girls, she is selective in her admission process – as Nazir Ahmad narrates,

> But Asghari picked out only those girls who were born of good parents, and found some pretext for putting off the others.[22]

Ahmed's narrative continues by providing possible reasons as to how they could be avoided:

> She [Asghari] said she might any day be going to stay with her mother, and that schooling was no good unless it was continuous.[23]

Asghari's character, despite this blatant lie, is beyond reproach and it is understood that the two strata of society are not meant to mix. Where the *ajlaf* members of

society do make an appearance they were either viewed with disdain, as in the case of Akbari's 'friends,' or rendered immediate objects of pity: it is only with Asghari's efficient management of her in-laws home, that the home becomes capable of giving "two chupatties away to the poor."[24] However, these "poor" remain nameless, faceless individuals and the sole function of their presence in the novel is to enhance Asghari's noble persona.

Is it possible to map out the space of the city through Nazir Ahmad's novel? Pernau observes that the Muslims of Delhi lived primarily in the area to the south of Jama Masjid, and she notes that the region was often regarded as their "intellectual and spiritual center[25]." Though the setting of Nazir Ahmad's novel is indisputably that of a domestic household, through the conversations of various characters, the careful reader is able to detect a glimpse of Delhi as it lies just beyond the periphery of Asghari's new home. Though there is no reference to the Jama Masjid, there is a consistent mention to the city of Lahore, which is insightful. There are always letters coming and going from Lahore: They either contain pleas for aid, such as the one Asghari sends to her brother when she needs help ridding the household of Mama Azmat, or sending money for the family, such as the one Asghari's mother-in-law eagerly awaits so that she can repay the money lender. The standing reputation of the city is nicely captured in Akbari's remark as purchases an item from the hustler, Hajjan. Akbari describes,

> Now the trouser-cord was of real Lahore make, and extremely fine; broad, and thick woven; and with knotted tassels of silk and gold thread.[26]

In addition to being a city of splendor and wealth as Akbari's comment insinuates, Pernau adds that Lahore was also an important Mughal capital. As such, it features quite naturally into the conversation of *ashraf* Muslims. As to the issue of how it may have been mentioned so frequently in the family's conversation, Pernau's research contains a potential resolution: "the Delhi gate of the city walls in the south," contained a Lahore gate, placed not too far from the Chandni Chauk. This famous Chandni chauk, does not escape mention in the *Mirat ul-Arus.* Most memorably, when questioned about the price of paan leaves, an insolent Mama Azmat fires back,

> Lady, you just leave the reckonings of your *mohulla* alone. Where is the Chandni Chauk, I should like to know? And where is the Turkoman gate?[27]

With reference to the city gates and the Chauk, it seems quite plausible to suggest that Asghari and her family did indeed live in the vicinity close to the Jama Masjid,

where the concentration of Muslims was reportedly as high as 67%.[28] Mama Azmat's reference to the *mohulla* too is significant. Translated as 'neighborhoods,' Pernau explains that they were an integral feature of the society, and generally inhabited by a "community of common descent, of a particular trade or professional guild."[29] Although m*ohullas* did not occupy the main city, they were located close by: the large city roads slowly dissolved into smaller streets which then led into the different homes of people.[30] Generally, these clusters of homes constituted different *mohullas*, and it is likely that it was in such a *mohulla* that Asghari resided.

Ideas regarding distance too were changing. Perceptions about the expanse of the city were undergoing transformation, and this too, is embedded within the language of the dominant characters. Endowed with all the advantages of a modern education, to her reader, Asghari comes across as a sharp woman. Her calculating intelligence is displayed through the classes that she teaches the young (and reputable) girls of the *mohulla.* As readers, we are enlightened that a *kos* is "one thousand seven hundred and sixty yards."[31] It seems that the locals largely perceived distance to places in *kos.* For example, regarding the cityscape of Delhi, Husnara states that it is "three *kos* to the tomb of Nizamuddin."[32] For the traveler, the distance of one *kos* was marked by the placement of a large stone. But clearly, modifications were underway, and during the British rule the city had slowly begun to evolve. Mahmuda's confusion regarding the odd placement of stones near the Qutb Minar is revealing. She struggles to understand why the stones have been put so close together. Thankfully, Asghari clarifies their odd arrangement,

> Those were not *kos* stones, they are mile-stones. A mile is half of a *kos,* and there is a stone fixed at each mile, and there is written on it that from here to Delhi is so many miles, and to the Qutb, so many.[33]

Through *Mirat ul-Arus*, the reader discovers that with the arrival of the British a new kind of measurement was being implemented. Pernau suggests that Delhi had increasingly become a city of interest for the British since the 1820's, and the British were meticulous in their research.[34] Thomas Metcalf, who eventually rose to the rank chief justice and revenue administrator in 1835, commissioned a series of miniature paintings on the cityscape of Delhi. His acquired painter, Mazhar Ali Khan, was set to the task during the 1840's and 1850's. Pernau lauds Khan as an "acclaimed son of one of the most famous families of company painters."[35] Perhaps one of his paintings of the Qutb Minar (fig. 1) allows its viewer to catch a glimpse of how women such as Asghari and Mahmuda, occasionally traversing through the city, might have seen the "Qutb sahib's ruins"[36] from their doolie. It is

important to note that towards the bottom center of the painting lie a pile of stones. However, it is unlikely that these are the new milestones that Asghari refers to: they do not seem to be placed in a specific order, nor is there anything "written" on them, and it seems more probable that they are merely part of the remains of the ancient site. Thus, if the mile-stones were replacing the *kos* stones, then it seems logical to conclude that it was not during the mid nineteenth century, but towards its end that the change was happening. Certainly, this implementation was not ongoing during the time that the Qutb Minar was being painted – under the bottom left corner, it is easy to make out the signature, Mazhar Ali Khan.

It is also important to recognize that this debate over *kos* stones and mile-stones, though initially novel in Asghari's class, is a symptom of a much larger socio-political change underfoot. England, which had once been fathomed as far away and alien, was no longer conceived as a different world, but only a different country. It was not entirely dissimilar to India – just as Begams of Bhopal ruled in India, so too did Queen Victoria reign supreme in England. The distance between the two countries was now no longer an impossibility, but a calculation. Britain was an exact five thousand *kos* away, and people travelled frequently by ships. Consequently by the late nineteenth century, one may imagine that English goods though still prized, were no longer rare: Even the self-serving scoundrel, Mama

Azmat, is easily able to go to the market and procure some "pieces of English stuff" for herself.[37] The sparkle around British novelties had begun to diminish and this had resounding impacts in India. For example, in explaining Nazir Ahmad's success, C.M Naim draws a comparison between *Mirat ul-Arus* and Maulawi Sayyid Nizam ad-Din's book entitled *Aql-o-Shu'ur: For Indian Girls, Boys, Ladies, and Gentlemen.* Naim believes that Nizam ad-Din enchants his reader by detailing the scientific and technical achievements of the British Empire.[38] Unfortunately for Nizam ad-Din these wonders quickly became "common place" – quite like the pieces of English cloth that the Mama acquires – and though initially enchanting to behold, they soon became inculcated in ordinary life. More troublingly so, as the British Raj became more official in India, the "wonders" too grew more routine, and the issue became not an explanation of their features, but rather how to adapt to a new way of life.[39] With its strong emphasis on education, it was Nazir Ahmad's *Mirat ul-Arus* that contained the answer.[40] As Asghari explains to her rather sulky husband, Muhammad Kamil,

> My eldest brother has read a lot of Arabic and Persian, but he cannot get an appointment. My father tells him that until he learns how to keep accounts and do office work he need not expect to be employed.[41]

Asghari's words reveal a change in the socio-political order and embody the triumph of rationale over tradition. The globe had shrunk, the British were in India, and if progress was to be made, then education and awareness had to be the way forward for the elite Muslims of Delhi.

As the deputy inspector of schools in the Department of Public education, Nazir Ahmad would have been no stranger to the issues surrounding the quality and provision of education in India. At times, it seems that the situation was dire for both boys and girls: "At a very early age," observes Ahmad, "boys have no inclination to go to school."[42] Similarly, girls "were frightened out of their wits at merely going near their governess."[43] A strong exception to Nazir Ahmad's comment would be Ashrafunnisa Begum whose desire to not only read, but also write Urdu became a life-long passion. Though she did succeed eventually and later taught at the Victoria Girls School, she too was a witness to the abysmal attitudes towards education. In her own autobiographical note she recalls how her relatives, astounded by her abnormal obsession to read and write would derisively taunt her by saying, "Most children have to be scolded and spanked to make them read."[44] The "schooling" for girls and boys presented a stark contrast. In the novel, Asghari initiates her own school within the premise of her home, and twenty girls are able to attend her classes. Asghari not only teaches her girls to read, write, and

calculate, but she also includes sewing and cooking in their classes. Though Ashrafunnisa Begum did not learn to write with her governess, she too was taught to cook, and remembers fondly how she and the other girls would practice making *roti, qorma, kebab, pulao* and *zarda.*[45] Boys on the other hand, were sent to school. Asghari's husband, Muhammad Kamil, goes for his classes every "morning and evening."[46] Likewise, in her note, Ashrafunnisa Begum encounters the rather subdued "son of her grandmother's sister," and clutching his bag and books in hand, it is evident that he too attends a school.[47] The novel *Mirat ul-Arus* then represents a binary that once split the social order: The outside world was the man's domain, whilst the realm within the household was the woman's domain.

"The kind of education for women Nazir Ahmad recommended in his story was a traditional one," highlights Kalsi, and its main purpose was to "increase the efficiency and contribution of women to their domestic life."[48] While Ahmad is obviously more concerned with education and its benefits to the domestic (and feminine) sphere, it is possible to reconstruct the lifestyle of a *sharif* man through the *Mirat ul-Arus*. Asghari's own father-in-law is often referred to as "Maulavi Sahib" and he is an esteemed member of the society. Moreover, he is the proud owner of the "butter market,"[49] which reveals that his profession was not only respectable but also profitable. Gail Minault highlights that a teacher was usually referred to as a "Maulavi," and we may presume that the title also marks him as a learned man.[50] Furthermore, by relying on Minault's research it is possible to recreate what the childhood of such a man may have been like. Similar to that of Ashrafunnisa Begum's male relative, the *maulavi sahib* may have attained his early education at a mosque school, or *maktab.*[51] Alternately, he may also have gone to the home of his teacher. It is likely that he learned Arabic or Persian, or pursued a combination of the two languages. Upon fulfilling his basic educational requirements, he must have later been enrolled in a *madrasa* where he would have been able to attain a higher knowledge of Arabic and Islamic learning.[52] Later, after being married to Asghari's nameless mother-in-law, the reader is informed that he holds a job in Lahore. When he does return to his home in Delhi, he is immediately preoccupied with meeting his friends, once more emphasizing that it was the men who had the freedom to roam beyond the walls of their home. Asghari, a true *sharif* Muslim woman is never seen leaving her house to visit her friends – and it's quite probable that she doesn't have any, thereby insinuating that family comes foremost. Consequently, on the rare occasions that Asghari does leave her home, she goes to either visit her own biological parents, or to save her weak-willed husband from succumbing to his vices in Siyalkot. Nazir Ahmad, with a touch of sympathy remarks that women through no fault of their own remain

constrained within the *purdah* for most of their lives and are unable to set foot beyond their own home. The men in contrast are free to move about and socialize, and Muhammad Kamil demonstrates this fact to us: He habitually comes home late as a result of playing cards or chess with "boys his own age."[53]

Mirat ul-Arus is almost entirely devoid of sensuality. In his introduction, Ahmad states that a "woman's thoughts are usually of a delicate and private nature," and they often need to be communicated "to a mother or a sister."[54] But as to what these thoughts might be, to the reader, he appears silent. It is only in the last chapter that we find out about the names and number of Asghari's children. Their mention in the novel is jarring, almost as if they had been added to the novel as an after-thought. *Mirat ul-Arus* contains no real biological sense of time and in Chapter Seven, as Asghari's character makes an entrance, Ahmad quickly mentions, "God made Asghari a mother in the second year of her married life, while she was still of a tender age."[55] Considering Asghari is married at thirteen, the reader can only presume that she is a mother by fifteen – a "tender age" indeed. Yet, this depiction is not far from to reality – Ashrafunnisa Begum's marriage to her cousin nine year old Alamdar Hussain was arranged soon after she was born.[56] As the novel progresses, a palpable sense of time eludes the reader completely, and it is only Asghari's achievements that are paramount, leading Frances Pritchett to remark,

It is hard to imagine her as a mother. Her legacy is not maternal but material and abstract: she becomes famous for her buildings and charitable trusts.[57]

Asghari's principled character is certainly the talk of the whole *mohulla* – a factor that she always keeps in mind. When the affluent Shah Zamani offers payment to Asghari to come to her house and educate her spoiled daughter Husnara, Asghari promptly refuses. Minault comments that Ahmad's protagonist is "entirely too *sharif*,"[58] and fully aware that it would be improper for a woman of her stature to step outside her home, she declines Shah Zamani's offer. But the *Mirat ul-Arus* does provide a slight hint towards the sensual and the bodily manifesting in the feminine form, when Asghari's husband Muhammad Kamil, finds himself "quite adrift at Siyalkot," and consequently falling into the "worst kind of society" by attending "nautches" and "dissolute plays."[59] The affect of Muhammad Kamil reveling in such seduction is not discussed, and it hardly creates a dent in their marriage – Asghari is not prone to jealousy or rage, instead, she is concerned about his reputation, and quickly brings him back in line. Fits of passion, may lead to scandal, and those as Ahmad explains, are best avoided.[60] Dancing girls are of

course not the only kind of women who exist beyond the threshold of the home. The conniving *hajjan,* Mama Azmat, and Akbari's improper assortment of friends are all undesirable characters who roam the streets, generally plaguing some hapless individual or the other. But such behavior for them seems permissible, for they belong to the *ajlaf* sect, and present a lower class morality. Among them all it is only the new Mama, Diyanat Nisa, who manages to remain in the good graces of society. She is a commendable and loyal aid in the household, and she is much valued for her services. Just as Asghari can be said to stand as a model for *sharif* women, Diyanat Nisa's unwavering loyalty and obedience to an elite Muslim woman becomes exemplary for *ajlaf* women.

It is intriguing to note that while the sensuality is not linked outright with the *ashraf* woman's body, adornment certainly is. Ahmad, through his novel, introduces us to wide variety of jewelry – rings, earrings, bangles, armlets and bracelets are all part of female adornment. It is likely that women would have been introduced to jewelry at an early age, for as Ahmad warns in his very introduction,

> It often happens that heedless girls let some of their ornaments fall while they are playing about.[61]

His statement also serves to reveals a certain consciousness embedded within the women pertaining to their jewelry. In order to emphasize its importance Ahmad dictates,

> The ornaments which you [young girls and women] wear cost a great deal.[62]

His statement is weighty, and through the course of the novel, it becomes apparent that it is not only a financial cost that he refers to. The notion of ornament is laden with symbolism. Jewelry here in *Mirat ul-Arus* is linked specifically with the female body, and as ornamentation, it seems only fair to argue that its primary purpose served to accentuate the beauty of the body. Mahmuda may have had the face of the moon, and the modesty of a queen, but even she is not sent to her betrothed's home without

> rings and pins for the nose, ornaments of several kinds for the forehead, earrings, plain and jeweled, of all sorts and sizes, necklaces and chains and pendants for the throat, armlets and bracelets of every device, rings for the fingers, anklets and rings for the feet and toes.[63]

Ahmad's description bedecks Mahmuda in jewels from head to toe, vaguely evoking the old, sensual Urdu literary tradition of *sarapa* – describing the body of a woman from head (*sar)* to foot (*pa*). Pernau remarks that "young girls were not

permitted to wear gold or silver jewelry," thereby suggesting that the acquisition of valuable jewelry marked the transition of the female body from a girl's to a woman's. It also binds the woman to the fortune of her jewelry. This is wonderfully depicted in the novel, when Mama Azmat pawns her own daughter's bangles in a desperate attempt to pay off her heavy debts. Hocking off jewelry as payment does not seem to be a strange practice, as Minault draws upon the example of Abadi Banu Begam who sold some of her gold jewelry in order to pay for her son's education.[64] While jewelry seems to have been part of every woman's life, the worth of their jewelry would have varied according to their status in society. Just as Asghari embodies an upper class and virtuous woman (like Abadi Begum) her bangles are worth rs. 1000 in the market. In contrast, Mama Azmat's daughter's bangles are at best worth rs. 16, These prices also help the reader of *Mirat ul-Arus* to understand the worth of money as it was distributed in the late nineteenth century. Nazir Ahmed's book won a prize of rs. 1000, a truly impressive amount at par with Asghari's bangles. Likewise, the prize of rs. 100 won by Gauridatt's novel may seem meager in comparison to Ahmad's novel, but only in comparison. One must remember that the salary of Asghari's own brother-in-law is a mere rs. 10, and though he leads perhaps a slightly impoverished life, he is still able to afford the basic necessities, and live in his own home with his wife, Akbari, which would have been rare for his time.

Nazir Ahmed's novel *Mirat ul-Arus* is thus packed with all the action and the dialogue that would have preoccupied a *sharif* Muslim family living in Delhi. The characters however, come across as largely faceless and one-dimensional entities. As consumed as Ahmad was to promote education especially among the women, it comes at the expense of his character. Asghari is difficult to imagine, not only because we are given no detail regarding her physical features, but also because she lacks the roundedness and depth of a 'real' character – She is superhuman, and it is strength that damns her. She is only the husk of Ahmad's beloved ideal and far too superior to be real. The language however is rich, and while the novel would be a pleasure for a critic of Urdu literature, for the historian too, it carries great worth. Pulsating with agitation, the novel lays bare the essence of its era: the British takeover is complete, and the Muslim sphere trembles on the brink of change, as a new governance and lifestyle is ushered in. Frozen forever in the realm of the novel, Mama Azmat may walk through the same *galis* and *kuchas* till they break, eternally haranguing Hazuri Maal, and hollering her demands, but unwittingly as Ahmad's reader walks alongside her, we catch the most fleeting glimpse of life as it once was – elite women travel exclusively in their *doolies*, *baniyas* hustle in the streets, and with every meal comes the delight of a *paan*. Letters too, play a vital role, representing not only the best of education but also serving to connect vibrant cities of India – Agra, Lahore, Siyalkot and of course, at the center of it all, lies Delhi.

Notes and References

[1] East India Company Act clause as quoted in C.M Naim, "Prize-Winning *Adab*: A Study of Five Urdu Books Written in Response to the Allahabad Government Gazette Notification," p. 290.
[2] Margrit Pernau, *Ashraf Into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth Century India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013): 90.
[3] A.S. Kalsi, "The Influence of Nazir Ahmad's Mirat Al-Arus (1869) on the Development of Hindi Fiction," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 7, p. 33.
[4] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror: A Tale of Life in Delhi a Hundred Years Ago*, trans. G.E. Ward (New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2001): 55.
[5] As quoted in C.M Naim, p. 306.
[6] Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998): 32.
[7] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,* 204.
[8] Ibid, 219.
[9] Ibid, book jacket.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid, 207.
[12] A. S. Kalsi, 31-43.
[13] Ibid, 36.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,* 18.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid, 67.
[18] Margrit Pernau, 57.
[19] Class notes.
[20] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,* 201.
[21] Margrit Pernau, 57.
[22] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,*125.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid, 112.
[25] Margrit Pernau, 11.
[26] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,* 48.
[27] Ibid, 69.
[28] Margrit Pernau, 11.
[29] Ibid, 9.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,*140.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Margrit Pernau, 165.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,*140.
[37] Ibid, 100.

---

[38] C.M Naim, 299.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,* 115.
[42] Ibid, 16.
[43] Ibid, 126.
[44] Ashrafunnisa Begum, "How Bibi Ashraf Learned to Read and Write," *Urdu Texts and Contexts,* C.M. Naim (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004): 211.
[45] Ibid, 207.
[46] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,* 114
[47] Ashrafunnisa Begum, 213.
[48] A.S. Kalsi, 35.
[49] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror,* 183.
[50] Gail Minault, 21.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Nazir Ahmad, 115.
[54] Ibid, 13.
[55] Ibid, 58.
[56] Ashrafunnisa Begum, 203.
[57] Ibid, 215.
[58] Gail Minault, 35.
[59] Nazir Ahmad, *The Bride's Mirror*, 157.
[60] Ibid, 39-40.
[61] Ibid, 12.
[62] Ibid, 12.
[63] Ibid, p.185.
[64] Gail Minault, 26.