

## Contemporary Urdu Mushā'ira: A Cultural Trope for Revitalizing Art, Aesthetics and Language

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### Abstract

This research paper intends to chronologically map the transformation of Mushā'irahs, or the poetic symposia in the Urdu language, from Mughal Era to the Digital Age and analyse the most crucial elements which culturally and stylistically dictate and dominate the form of Mushā'irahs namely; Art, Aesthetics and Language. Being a dynamic performative art, Mushā'irahs changed through the time in matters of poetic composition, subject, language and style to name the few. There was a manifested congruency in the shifts within the society, so were the changes in the art of Mushā'irahs. Mushā'irahs continue to preserve within them the history and culture and at the same time have stood across them. Keeping this aspect in mind, this study brings forth intimate relationship between Art and Culture through the study of changes in Mushā'irahs over the period of time through the approach of New Historicism. As Raymond Williams advocates in *The Long Revolution* that "We cannot say that we know a particular form or period of society, and that we will see how its art and theory relate to it, for until we know these, we cannot really claim to know the society", thus Mushā'irahs stand visibly as a distinct cultural artefact in the Indian cultural scenario and studying changes in them brings out the complex equation between art forms, cultures, history and present.

**Keywords:** Mushā'irah, New Historicism, trope, archival continuum, ghazal