

## ABSTRACT

Shams Ur Rehman Faruqi's memory-making historical novel, *The Mirror of Beauty*, is an exercise in mediation of the family history of Wazir Khanam - the mother of the classical Urdu poet Dagh Dehlvi. Drawing from memoirs, letters, diary entries, court records, and classical Urdu canon, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, in the imaginative 'dastanaesque' form of novelistic fiction, forges a specific historical period inhabited by historical characters, situations, and stories. The novel is divided into seven books occupying different tempo-spatial spheres inhabited by a culturally rich and racially diverse group of heterogeneous people, including painters, carpet-weavers, singers, jewellery makers, augurs, and poets from all around the Indian sub-continent as well as English Company Bahadur officers and administrators. Using a dynamic approach to memory studies, this thesis delves into the complexities that colonialism and patriarchal systems imprint on the formation and transmission of cultural memories. Instead of treating memory as a stable and reified object to be studied frozen in time, this thesis explores the capricious nature of memory in its transmedial travels. While the premediated traditions, cultural schemata, and preexisting media allow new routes for the old mnemonic forms and practices to travel across time, space, and media, they also inform and translate into new and original mediations making every act of mediation also an act of remediation of the premediations. Faruqi's characters, as carriers and mediums of memory, are constantly navigating their ancestral memories against a broader socio-political narrative using the latest media technologies available to them. Thus, all intermedial movements of memory oscillate between old and the new or premeditated and the remediated forms of remembrance.

Keywords: Memory Studies, Travelling Memory, Historical Fiction, Urdu Poets, Colonialism