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Metatexuality, Matriarchy and Middle Class: An Ethnographic Reading of Nazir Ahmad's *Mirat-ul-Urus*

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Abstract

The following paper revisits *Mirat-ul-Urus*, translated as *The Bride's Mirror* to uncover the ethnographic basis of the work. It argues, borrowing concepts from New Historicism, the text's susceptibility to absorb ethnographic details of an Indian Muslim, middle class household living in colonial Delhi. By focusing on the constituent parts of the text, namely the translator's note, the preface and the introduction, the paper establishes how native fiction from 19th century colonial India fraternizes with colonial ethnographic accounts, and records events, cultures, and minor histories of Muslim women. The text's metatextuality, namely the text's self-referential quality whereby the text comments on itself and offers a critical analysis, lends it a status of a historical/cultural document that sheds light on the emergence of middle class in the Muslim community.

Keywords:
Mirat-ul-Urus, Ethnography, Metatextuality, New Historicism, Muslim women, Muslim community

Introduction/Background of Study

This paper revisits Deputy Nazir Ahmad's *Mirat-ul-Urus* to uncover and explore the possible ethnographic premise of the text. *The Bride's Mirror*, originally Mirat-ul-Urus, translated by G.E Ward, an officer of the British Empire, does not pretend to be a disinterested, purely literary and artistic accomplishment. In fact the text's overlapping narrative, stock characterization, and sudden plot shifts hardly qualify it as an aesthetic object. The work, nevertheless, marks the beginning of a literary genre, the novel, which was directly a colonial legacy. Regardless of its flaws of form, structure and craft, *Mirat-ul-Uroos* enjoyed great popularity. In its heyday it was translated in all major Indian languages and copies of the book were distributed amongst schoolgirls and housewives. In its afterlife too, critics, both feminist and postcolonial, have perused it for its close paternalistic ties, its colonial instructional spirit, its classism and its unabashed assertion of feminine epistemology. The construction of the Indian 'angel', which makes for the larger appeal of the text, as a counterpart to the Victorian English woman, has unfortunately led the text into an abysmal of reductive and superficial analysis. Such an analysis fails to register and accord suitable attention to the elements of self-reflexivity embedded within the novel itself, and completely undermine the beginning of a middle class matriarchal system and social structure.

The novel's primary function was to educate the metropolis of ways and habits of the natives of the colony. It was therefore necessary to identify stories that were cultural documents of the society, and eventually translate them to a language accessible to the white/European audience. When imperial scholars and administrators commissioned ethnographies of the colonies they did so as a means of dominating the native through ways that were less direct but more pervasive and transformational. 'Knowing the orient' was thus the only way that dominance sans force and coercion could be possible. The fiction of British India, produced under the tutelage and influence of the colonial masters, imitated the literary culture of the metropolis not only in form but also in conception and style. The literary imagination of the East steeped in poetry and music was now confronted with a new genre that of prose and novelistic discourse. The production and subsequent dissemination of Urdu prose as textbooks, patronized by the Fort William College, alongside the translation of these Urdu texts proved to be more than just works of fiction to the western Indologists and Orientalists. To the colonizer, the translated texts provided a window into the lives, cultures and ethos of the colonized. Much of what was written in prose and prose fiction was in one way or the other an account of the colonize d's ways and habits. From recreating and re-visioning the grandeur of the Mughal era, most of which was overshadowed by the fascination for

the harem and slander for polygamy, to writing instructional treatise for the emerging middle class, the colonial prose, both by the indigenous and foreign writers, provided the colonized with a self-image, his own culture explained to him and his ways reinterpreted and newly named. This reinvention of indigenous cultures, an anthropological rebirth of the Indian native, was a preferred subject of the native writers writing in local languages and vernaculars. In the translator's note of the English translation of *Mirat-ul-Urus*, G. E. Ward proclaims how the novel, devoid of literary merit, is profuse with details about the day-to-day life of fellow Indian subjects.

Knowledge of and about the colonized, post Mutiny, came to be produced from within the native community. James Clifford calls this phenomenon the birth of the "indigenous ethnographer"(1), one that studies his own culture and presents an insider's and often intimate perspective of the native and his interior world. This indigenous ethnographer was someone that produced cultural documents under the tutelage and patronization of the imperial/ English master. More often than not these indigenously produced ethnographies presented stories of how the English wanted to re-form and re-construct the Indian society rather than give an insight of the native and local ways of culture and habitation. These works, both prose and novelistic, like the *Mirat* itself depicted a reformed way of life, one that was a direct contrast to the affluence and luxury depicted in the cultural accounts of Muslim aristocracy. The paper therefore undergirds the novel's ascendancy to an ethnographic account on three major grounds. To begin with the text constitutes metatextual elements revealing how and why it's publication and promotion was commissioned. Secondly, the text's focus on domestic drama, food, feasts and festivals allows a microscopic view into the interior world of the colonized Indian Muslim community. Lastly, the treatise departs from its original colonial ethnography by recording life of Muslim bourgeoisie rather than the grandeur of their aristocratic and noble ancestry.

Theoretical Framework: New-Historicism, Ethnography and Metatexuality

Drawing on the New Historicist idea of the interplay of discourses this research proposes to explore the presence of ethnographic tropes in literary writings, and the presence of literariness in ethnography and anthropology. The new historicist allowance to view all writing as texts and treat literature as just one, but not the only form of cultural representation expands the notion of literature overrunning its immediate boundaries. All texts such as, fiction, law, philosophy, history, are products of their particular social conditions and so contain signs of their birth, and circumstances of their production. New Historicism with its power to revolutionize

orthodox academic classifications "brackets together literature, ethnography, anthropology, art history, and other disciplines and sciences, hard and soft"(2) facilitating the dethroning of literary narratives by treating them as an extension of any other cultural document. Another idea that New Historicism concerns itself with, and which is of particular interest to this paper, is the notion of extracting "counter histories"(3) from within the grand and patriarchal histories. These histories are contained either in the text or accompany the main text in the form of "anecdotes"(4). These anecdotes, argue new historicist critics, serve as crucial starting nodes in analyzing literature. My argument here is to show how metatextual elements that accompany *The Bride's Mirror* such as the translator's note, the author's preface, are anecdotes that help decipher the text's objectives, its power relations and representational practices. Once the text is revisited for its anecdotal and counter histories, the everyday world and the "figure hitherto kept outside the proper circle of interests"(5) captures center stage.

Metatexuality

The preamble to Nazir Ahmed's *Mirat-ul-Urus*, or *The Bride's Mirror* is straightforward and does not pretend to mask its propagandist inception. Supplemented by a preface in the original text and a translator's note in the translated version, two teleological apparatuses, the novel professes to influence and affect social reform. Its involvement with characters who are caught up in a family drama is purely coincidental since the foremost function of the novel is to address the indolence of the middle class Muslim community. The text's metatextual features, the preface and the note, anticipate this reformatory zeal at the very onset. They not only comment on the narrative and thematic concerns of the text they also predict the degree of influence the novel is thought to make. Metatextuality, a feature of most modern/post-modern works, is the "relationship between a text and the critical -commentaries, biographical commentaries and other references on the main text"(6) and it appears sometimes in the text and at other times extraneous to the primary text. When they appear in and with the text, they appear in the form of "epigraphs, prefaces, forewords, epilogues, addresses to the reader, acknowledgements, footnotes, drafts, illustrations that are somehow connected to the main narrative"(7) which Gerard Genette, a structuralist narratologist calls paratexts. In both cases, however, the text's relationship to other texts or to parts of the same text performs a significant role in deciphering the text's context and reception. *Mirat-ul-Urus'* translation, which can be seen as the novel's 'metatexts', not only foregrounds the text's colonial connection but also bears an important commentary on the text's style and content. The translation declares that the text is to be treated

as an ethnography as it portrays to the English audience an "authentic picture of the domestic and social life of the Indian fellow subjects"(8) becoming thereby a handmaid to the imperial project. *Mirat's* existence in the language of the masters is an evidence of the text's dependency or interconnectedness with texts other than itself. While the translation may claim to be an exact metamorphosis of the original work, its existence in the English Language itself provides a critical lens with which to regard the purport and authenticity of the original. Like a metatetxt then, the translation becomes a critique of the motive and intent behind the creation of the Urdu version itself.

The agenda that translation fulfills and propagates for the metropolitan audience namely "imaging colonized people"(9) as they wished to see them, the original text in vernacular Urdu does for the native, Indian and Muslim audience. The inclusion of a preface and an introduction metatextualizes the work by proclaiming its allegiance to instructive literature and dissociating itself from literature that corrupts the mind and infuses emotional instability in women. The sole objective of *Mirat* then, is the transformation of the Muslim community especially the womenfolk into respectable and ideal citizens of the colonial government. Ahmad's commitment to the colonial cause and his participation in the colonial reconstruction of the Indian society is a divulgence in a work that indubitably and seemingly professes to be a treatise for Muslim middle class women. To be regarded as an aide to the colonial project, the paratexts, the introduction and the preface, associate Muslim women of the subcontinent such as "Nur Jehan Begum and Zebunnisa Begum"(10) with the English Princess, Queen Victoria. This not only declares a subject's fidelity towards the imperial master but also promises an advantageous position in the colonial office.

The Middleclass Matriarch

The Bride's Mirror's largely urban preoccupation invites a reading of the text that will look beyond its masculine/feminine division. Written at the turn of the century and in a city implicated with colonial system and structure, it is impossible to disregard the division of professions, labour and classes depicted in the text. Nazir Ahmed's proclamations in the novel are for women, but not all women. The novel's exclusionary discourse and often derogatory portrayal of women other than the women of a "few good families"(11) is instrumental in setting a class consciousness in a mohalla that is largely middle class and whose inhabitants live under the perpetual fear of slipping to the lower class and thus losing their dignity. It is dangerously reductive then to see the women, particularly Asghari and Akbari, as mistresses of their household alone. In them and through them the novel endlessly constructs a binary of 'us' and 'them' not on the basis of gender but class. In an

essay *Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel*, Elizabeth Langland describes how, through an agency of the perfect housewife, the seemingly innocent and a-political middle-class family of the Victorian tradition negotiated a position of authority. A middle class household, Langland argues included working with one servant which resulted in an "active deployment of class power" producing a "middle class conflict between the domestic angel in the house and her other (the worker or servant)"(12). Interpreted this way, it becomes evident how the 'angel' embodied in the face of the perfect woman/ daughter/ housewife is causative to the discourse of class division. More than her prowess with housework, the perfect woman is lauded for her ability to distinguish dregs from diamonds.

Both the protagonists of the novel, Asghari and her imperfect sister Akbari, engender gendered and classed spaces all at the same time. Their burghered ancestry, "Durandesh Khan held a Government appointment in the Hills"(13), Muhammad Aqil had an appointment of ten rupees a month, immediately sets them apart from the women whose services they require to maintain the very class structure these outliers threaten to destroy or at least make porous. An important element fortifying the binary of Asghari and Akbari is the former's complete abstinence from intermingling of classes and the latter's persistence on having a more inclusive group of friends. In a fit of anger, Kamil is seen reprimanding Akbari for her undignified bearing:

> Whatever people there are of the commonest sort living in the mohulla, you treat their daughters as if they were your sisters. Chuniya the daughter of Bhondu the sutler, and Zulfan the daughter of Bakhshu the tinker, and Rahmat the daughter of Kimmu the water-carrier, and Sulmati the daughter of Maulan the greengrocer, are received by you with open arms at all hours of the day, and you take no account of the fact that these people are not of our family, or connection, nor admitted to our society or friendship.(14)

So while Akbari fails to keep up with the bourgeois protocols of classism, Asghari's watertight control over the household bars all intruders, suspects all stalkers and criminalizes all crooks from breaching the peace of the private sphere. In fact she is crowned as the paradigmatic mistress only because under her administration of the house the conglomeration of girls hailing from the working class of the neighbourhood gradually diminished. Not only does she manage to filter the 'good' woman from the 'bad' company she also succeeds in decreasing the amount of wastage spent during such wild revelry. Her strength as an influential mistress of the house is most visible when she prevents her husband from dawdling around with his disadvantaged company.

It is apparent then, that class consciousness which would have

been and is difficult to maintain, uphold and establish in the public sphere has to be articulated within the private sphere. It is only in relation to the ladies of the houses that we notice the relative prosperity of some families. Middle class Delhi, as depicted in the novel, is a world ridden with ambivalent social statuses. This ambivalence is apparent in the limited professional options the characters have. Muhammad Aqil, as opposed to Asghari who is in control of her sphere, is someone with "less knowledge and less natural ability". Contrary is to this, the division of labour and class within the domestic space is perfect and precise. It would not be wrong to say that while the men oscillate between jobs and lack of control over their working spheres (Durandesh Khan fails to convince his masters for a leave, Aqil is easily swayed by his mother-in-law and Kamil fails to exercise temperance) the women control, organize, establish their sway over their territory of the household assertively and with relative ease. Elizabeth Langland deconstructs this image of the guiltless Victorian angel (trope for the native Indian middle class Muslim women) and unmasks its covert class and political ideologies:

> It shows that the wife, the presiding hearth angel of Victorian social myth, actually performed a more significant and extensive economic and political function than is usually perceived. The prevailing ideology regarded the house as a haven, a private domain opposed to the public sphere of commerce, but the house and its mistress in fact served as a significant adjunct to a man's business endeavors. Whereas husbands earned the money, wives had the important task of administering the funds to acquire or maintain social and political status. (15)

The 'angel in the house' then is not a neutral, submissive and destitute figure. In her is played the politics of class consciousness which, because of her apolitical compass, becomes permanent, pervasive and palpable. While the crossings between classes become almost impossible, the ladies frequently transgress the private and enter the public sphere.

Matriarch's Material Wisdom

The Bride's Mirror begins with expressing dissatisfaction over children absorbing knowledge and literature that has the "effect of depressing their spirits, of checking their natural instincts and of blunting their intelligence"(16). Ahmed extends the colonial project of enlightenment through his preference for moral instruction, improvement of ideas and correction of habits. In his disregard for all "romantic notions"(17), he proposes the idea of a rational man, or more particularly woman, who is least afflicted with wasteful emotions and thereby more productive and industrious. Throughout the novel, there is little to no sentimentalism; both parental and marital relationships are appropriated on principles of rationality, reason and restraint. The novel departs from its reductive binary of

the good versus bad woman by juxtaposing the idea of the resourceful urban citizen as opposed to a self-indulgent, idle civilian. Colonial pragmatism and economic independence of the middle class Indian subject was one the many concerns of the Empire. The Empire's growing agitation with the pensioned remnants of nobility sought to raise a class of colonial subordinates who could be recruited without burdening the imperial pocket, and whose industrial dexterity could be employed for the service of the white household. The threat from the dying nobility could only be diverted through the redemptive labour of the middle class.

Margrit Pernau in her book *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth-century Delhi* notes how accounting for the leftover Mughals posed a threat both to the imperial economy and the urban fabric they so desired to construct. The English administration as a consequence sought to reform the emerging middle class through the methods of identifying and classifying individuals according to their kinship to the dying aristocracy. This was all the more important to prevent the impoverished Mughal women from falling into illegal and immoral activities. Pernau observes that the self-reliant, moderately religious and skilful middle class mistress of the house was a remedy to any or all conditions of profligacy. Their moderately orthodox beliefs safeguarded them from the affluent and extravagant behaviour of their ancestors. Ahmed's family in The Bride's Mirror, men in the public sphere of the colonial office and the enterprising women in the private sphere, is hence the colonizer's preferred community. They serve, reinforce and receive authority of the Empire all the same time. Their education thus too has to be aligned with trends of industrial modernity. Indolence is a luxury the empire is least willing to offer.

Nazir Ahmed's prescription for this luxury and feminine promiscuity are models like Nur Jehan Begum, Zebunnisa Begum and "English Princess, Queen Victoria". In these women, who Ahmed concludes "have understood the value of time, and have spent it in useful pursuits"(18), lies the salvation of the Indian subject who otherwise can easily give into listlessness and senselessness. When Asghari, drawn into an argument, because of her husband's wantonness, reaffirms the notion of useful knowledge, she inadvertently argues for reforms in the education of the middle class Muslim community. Unsettling as it may seem, (to the Islamist sensibility of the nineteenth century Indian Muslim) Ahmed's sly intervention through Asghari, who valiantly declares the futility of Arabic and Persian education alone, without knowing "how to keep accounts and to do office work"(19), is also a case for an education that will not only procure material wealth, but also the keep the middle class floating above the low-breds with prospects of

employability. Many who like to see *The Bride's Mirror* as simply a document for domesticity fail to acknowledge how Asghari's urban wisdom is not one of the hearth and home only. Her sagacity is that of the enlightenment. In declaring that the "object of learning is that one's business with the outer world should never come to a standstill"(20), Asghari takes the colonial civilizing mission to its material end. The romantic ideals of education for culture, refinement and aesthetics, the Hellenic pursuit of letters, languages and literature, and the pleasures of poetic verse and prose are only to be had as a supplement with the profane yet inevitable knowledge of arithmetic, accounting and good sense.

To the newly born middle class, however, merely secular education was insufficient; it failed to instill the morals and manners required for the sustenance of class boundaries. "Good sense, self-restraint, modesty and consideration for others"(21) could only be acquired through a complementary training in spirituality and religion. *The Bride's Mirror's* dogmatic value is in fact the novel's over insistence on practicing and pronouncing religion. The 'ashraf', Pernau's lexical appropriation for a community born out of the Mughal elite and just above the working class, depicted in *The Bride's Mirror*, functions within the gambit of religion and establish their righteousness and virtue. Respectability and distance from the class, immediately below them, required performance and participation in religious learning and festivity. Pernau contends that association with the Deoband school of Islam offered individuals "identity and a community"(22). Besides this a distinctive sect also provided the middle class with a manner of living and a vantage ground for power and privilege. Being in majority, the Deoband Muslims prided themselves over the rationality of their belief systems that was in sharp contrast to the aristocratic resplendence of the Mughal Islamic traditions. So while urban knowledge provided the middle class Indian employment, respectability and colonial proximity, religion allowed them indigeneity, communal harmony and most importantly piety.

Matriarch's Mission

The pervasive influence of domesticity on matters concerning economy, social reform and even political campaigning are the very substance *The Bride's Mirror* is made of. Apart from being a simple domestic tale about middle class Indians, Ahmed's story is embedded in deep ideological discourse. Produced under colonial patronage, the novel cautiously fosters colonial civilizing mission, configures a human face of the empire and pays homage to the English masters. From epitomizing Queen Victoria as the ideal woman to indoctrinating adolescent girls with the notion of Englishness, to portraying the empire as providers of employment, *The Bride's*

Mirror does little to gloss over its colonial allegiance. In its devotion to the English masters, the characters in the novel endlessly seek validation either through service as imperial employees, or through service to the imperial reformist mission. While the men serve the empire directly, the women serve it through their reformist zeal. The reconstitution of the Indian society required complete metamorphoses of thought, action and habits. Once divided into princely states, the English now sought to re-form the Indian society and subject who had for years idealized the affluence and opulence of the Indian royalty. The new class created post 1857, required newer forms of discipline, order and structural revaluation. Blotting the splendor of yesteryears thus required an induction of work ethics amongst the middle class Indians. Only the industrious and educated in the ideals of Enlightenment will have colonial approval became the rule of the day. The 'ashraf' became the epitome of efficiency. They not only replaced the idle and now powerless Indian royalty; they also claimed and contested for respect and acknowledgement much like their royal ancestors. The Indian society, nevertheless, was without a center. The empire, however fond of prevailing in all matters, could not enter the private sphere of its Indian subject. Cultural domination meant recruiting people from amongst the natives and in this the middle class Indian woman became its newest talebearer. The new mistress of the household "controlled significant discursive practices [and] the dissemination of certain kinds of knowledge and thus helped to ensure middle-class hegemony" which eventually erased the memory of past glory. They were as much "produced by these discourses even as they reproduced them to consolidate middle-class control".(23)

Asghari, the Delhi middle class matriarch, preaches to her emerging middle class family principles of both bourgeois economy and bourgeois values. Her mission in her household is that of the colonizer in the subcontinent. She interpellates colonial subservience, transforms a dispersed domestic economy to one that is centralized and reduces the inclusive space of her husband's home to one that is enclosed and esoteric. Contrary to popular reception, that obstinately denied the women's role beyond the bounds of her home, a bourgeois reading of the text allows one to uncover the ideological hinges of the novel. Asghari's role as a missionary is therefore twofold; on one hand she is responsible for converging domestic and middle class economy, one the other hand she is assigned task of extending the colonial civilizing mission through miniscule suburban welfare units. As mistress of her house, Asghari controls the expenditures, filters extravagances and manages to uproot all or any unnecessary expenses. Through her good sense and pragmatic outlook she is able to monitor supplies "of everything that was requisite… and

notwithstanding this abundance the expenditure in each month did not exceed fifteen rupees…Thrift and good order were introduced by her into everything."(24). Having mastered the art of controlling finances, Asghari is able to introduce moderation not only in her home but also in her immediate vicinity. In her one sees the beginning of the family enterprise which is inaugurated first and foremost through the systematic economic structure of the household. What later is seen as the commercial and corporate hence owes its establishment to the supervision of a disciplined wife/ daughter/ woman. "Family, hearth and home were both rationale and setting for the business enterprise while domestic ideals increasingly set the terms for economic activity."(25). Frequent references to Asghari adroitness at cooking and sewing are not mere instances of insignificant domestic chores. Humble errands like these are entrepreneurial beginnings for a class looking to establish its economic dominance. The novel too records how Asghari is able to transcend her private sphere and contribute to the public realm through her seemingly inconsequential skills.

The community of protégés Asghari acquires is another example of the enterprising middle class Indian woman. From making the girls read and write to giving them the profiting skill of sewing and needlework, her school is an early model of a modern day vocational training center. It is through her role as mentor, governous and mistress, that Asghari is able to civilize the neighbourhood. On one incident, Asghari is seen educating the native Indians about the virtues of the English woman. She endorses English enlightenment values when she tells women of her mohalla that the English women's love for their children "is tempered with reason"(26). This reformation of habits, thoughts and actions alongside Asghari's charitable mission are too monumental to be ignored. In the scheme of middle class emergence her role as an entrepreneur, her interactions with the community's elders and her philanthropic pursuits, makes Asaghari an instrumental figure. In a chapter titled "'The Hidden Investment': Women and the Enterprise", Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall record the unflinching role of the middle class women in the sustenance of class boundaries. Denied access to the private sphere, they remind the bourgeois patriarch of the female support they so conveniently dismissed. Their veiled projects in the shape of small businesses often from the safe refuge of the home and household, provided support for male members of the family. "The skills and contacts women brought could enrich male careers... It has been recognized that personal contacts played a central role in the functioning of both household and enterprise… women held a special place in building and maintaining relationships". (27)

What Davidoff and Hall establish here is the primacy of

women in the project of bourgeois business and politics. The Indian woman, much like her Victorian English counterpart, was an active agent both in and outside the house. The political dimension of Asghari's domestic life, its influence on society and posterity is recognizable in the way she is commemorated, celebrated and remembered. *The Bride's Mirror's* construction of women taking charge of their material surroundings calls into question the conservative portrayal of Indian Muslim middle class women. Although separate and private, Asghari's work is integral and integrated. She is an embodiment of middle class prosperity—a mistress who leaves a legacy far too great to be subsumed under a reductive "good woman' banner.

Conclusion

Contrary to erstwhile readings of the text, *The Bride's Mirror* marks the inception of the 'New Woman'. This late 19th century phenomenon, where women mostly from the middle and upper-middle class struggled for economic security, occupational choice, and vocational and university education, was significantly different from earlier understandings of an ideal womanhood that emphasized the veil, the wall and domestic duties for a woman of good birth. It was in fact the metamorphosis of closed and cozy neighbourhoods into trade and business towns that led a major transformation in middle class households. The urban setting, the *mohalla*, the town and the *gali*, Asghari is part of, is a burgher town, and the Delhi she comes to dominate is no longer Mughal in its character and atmosphere. Consequently this woman, domesticized, docile and disciplined, yet in control of her household served an important metaphor for the emerging middleclass. Traditional in her upbringing but radical in her resourcefulness, she was a sharp contrast to the aristocratic lady of the house. She was not only skilled and trained, but also a torchbearer for middleclass values, an entrepreneur is her own right and most importantly a figure through which bourgeoisie or more particularly bourgeoisie politics were exercised, implemented and fulfilled. Asghari, the quintessential Indian woman is also Muslim and middle class. She transforms the perception of the middle class Muslim woman by becoming an important instrument in generating middle class economy and hegemony. The passive figure of Asghari is in truth pervasive and politically conscious. In contrast to earlier readings of *Mirat-ul-Urus* that viewed Asghari as an agent of patriarchy, the paper has explored and discussed her role as an agent and negotiator of middle class values. It has reevaluated her middle class needs that require a rational, pragmatic education and foregrounded her role in leaving behind a middle class legacy in the shape of a finishing school for women and girls.

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