



ics
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Institute for Culture and Society
University of Navarra (Pamplona)

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13:00- 13:30 Saqlain Hassan (University of Navarra)

Landay: transition times for rebellious poetry of Pashtun women

In this paper I will discuss one of the oldest forms of Pashto poetry called landay and the transition of themes typical of this genre. Pashto literature is well known for its rich oral tradition that exists both in the form of oral tales and poetry. The female poetry called landay, is considered to be one of the earliest and prolific genres that survived through many centuries. This form of the poetry was developed by Pashtun women in order to express their feelings, emotions, love, anger, and thoughts and mainly represents discussions of their marital and sexual lives or praises of their husbands, lovers, and brave warriors. In this paper I will introduce to the audience this genre used by women to express their feelings in the form of singing in a men dominated conservative society, where the women enjoy very little or no freedom at all to express their thoughts openly.

Named after a snake called landay (a poisonous snake) this 22 syllabic genre of Pashto poetry can be seen as rebellion against the unjust society. Moreover, the tradition of singing aloud the landays was a slap on the face of men supremacy. In today's Pashto society women can be heard singing or whispering Landays, although the themes of landays are currently undergoing the phase of transition. The effects of modernity can be seen in the thoughts presented in landays in different time periods. The presenter will also amuse the listeners with some of the best known re-mixed examples of landays with their older versions.

Keywords: Landay, Tapa, Pashto Poetry, Malalai of Maiwand, Rahila Muska