

An Analysis of the Origin & Evolution of ‘Mahiya’ in Pashto Literature

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Abstract:

The dynamic interplay of cultures in close geographical and social contact often leads to the emergence of shared poetics, symbols, and aesthetic values. “Mahia,” a popular Punjabi folkloric genre, gradually permeated through sustained interaction with Saraiki and Hindko-speaking communities. Over time, it was embraced and practiced by Urdu poets, eventually migrating into Pashto literary tradition. This paper explores the origin, evolution, and thematic-technical transformation of the Mahia genre as it shifted from Punjabi to Pashto poetry. While retaining its distinctive folk character, the genre in Pashto has been adapted by a limited number of poets who have successfully integrated it with the collective meters, rhythms, and poetic conventions of Pashto literary tradition, resulting in the creation of “Pashto Mahias”.

Key words: Mahia, Folklore, Pashto Poetry, Cultural Assimilation, Creative Expression.