

Shaista Nuzhat

Sayyad Waris Shah Da Smaj Shastri Falsafa (Sociological Philosophy of Sayyad Waris Shah), a publication in Gurmukhi, is Shaista Nuzhat's doctoral thesis accepted by Punjab University, Lahore. Nuzhat is working in Pakistan as Director of Institute of Punjabi Language, Literature and Culture.

The publication acquires significance in the wake of tercentenary celebrations of birthday of Waris who is one of the most outstanding Punjabi poets of all times and who wrote the most celebrated love-story of our language: *Heer-Ranjha*. The narrative has been written by more than 100 poets in different languages and scripts; they also include an original rendering in English by Afghan Prince Sardar Abdul Qadar Khan Afandi. But *Heer Ranjha* by Waris is an ultimate narrative, apart from two translations in English by Charles Frederick Osborne, Deputy Commissioner, Lahore and Sant Singh Sekhon.

A number of leading Punjabi scholars including Prof. Kishan Singh, Sant Singh Sekhon and Najam Hussain Sayyad of Pakistan have deliberated on this work in a learned manner. Nuzhat's work doesn't refer to them significantly nor is a reflective affair, yet is significant for the details that she constructs. Nuzhat starts with featuring different concepts of Sociology followed by next chapter that reveals political, social and cultural scene of Punjab as seen by Waris. She capably depicts attacks of Nadar Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali but fails to appreciably relate the contemporary situation either with philosophy of poet or design of narrative.

Primarily a student of philosophy, Nuzhat analyses sociology of the region from philosophical point of view and concludes that presence of scholars and people of different backgrounds enriched Punjabi language; Waris's narrative epitomizes the same. Fourth chapter, wrongly titled as dealing with historical perspective of the story, actually gives some information about all the *kissas* written on this legend. Fifth chapter narrates life history of Waris and eulogizes his poesy. Before summing up her thesis to prove that *Heer Ranjha* is a literary reflection of the existing reality, she devotes another section on

various characters of narrative and creates a niche for some of the major characters who never got their due in the existing critical appreciation. Ranjha is a specific case, who, under the pressure of critics who see this poetry as a stand for Heer, is seldom discussed properly.

But unfortunately Nuzhat doesn't relate to the sociology of Waris's times with that of his writing; and fails to give us anything insightful. We don't come to know why Heer gets precedence over Ranjha, as concluded by her, when the period itself is reeling under the forces of feudalism. If Waris is depicting his times, how Heer becomes such a strong character? And if Heer represents the suppressed sentiments of the woman of poet's times, as sometimes Nuzhat support the customary argument, then how to relate with her 2nd Chapter, which underlines that Punjab was being (mis)led by a woman named Mughlani Begum. There are too many gaps between what she says and tries to prove. Another problem is that Nuzhat has not been able to distribute her material properly, into her sections; there is lot of repetition and overlapping.

Despite all these limitations we welcome Nuzhat's book that is transliterated by Dr. Iqbaldeep; it is path-breaking in the sense that it's based on Punjabi research done on the other side of the fence. Her language, laden with Persian technical literary terminology, comes as a relief and we can expect that her vocabulary shall enrich our available lexicon.