

Worldly Magazines: Form, Circulation, and Cultural Change

1-2 December 2022
Université de Lausanne
Amphimax 414

Conference Program

Organizers:

Melina Gravier
Sumaira Nawaz
Zain R. Mian

A joint venture of scholars at the **Université de Lausanne, University of Pennsylvania, and McGill University.**

About Worldly Magazines

Conceived as a collaborative effort between scholars situated across Switzerland, the United States, and Canada, this conference looks to explore how the magazine form mediated diverse reading publics by circulating news, knowledge, and literature in creative ways. We hope to understand how magazines help think ‘the world’ as a material entity and abstract concept. ‘World,’ understood capaciously, gestures beyond a single geography to signal a plurality of historical, literary, and religious networks (e.g. the Indian Ocean and Islamic worlds). We examine how magazines emerged from and constituted such multiple worlds while cultivating consequential dispositions in their readers vis-à-vis other peoples, spaces, and cultures.

The organizing committee is delighted to welcome scholars from across Europe, North America, and South Asia to Worldly Magazines. We look forward to two days of meaningful exchange and thought-provoking debates. Welcome!

Melina Gravier, Université de Lausanne
Sumaira Nawaz, McGill University
Zain R. Mian, University of Pennsylvania

Schedule

Day 1: December 1, 2022

**09:00 - 09:15: Introduction by Prof. Blain Auer, Department Chair
Welcome by Melina Gravier, Conference Organizer**

09:15 - 10:45: Panel 1: Modern Islam and Intellectual Renewal

Chair: Prof. Wissam Halawi

“*Jeune Afrique* in Paris as the Unsuspecting Site of the Second Arab Renaissance”
Prof. Idriss Jebari, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

“Reading the World, Seeing the Self: *Alamgir* (1924-1953)”
Arshdeep Singh Brar (PhD candidate), University of Pennsylvania, USA

“Vernacular *Science*: Mapping the journey of an Urdu risala (1928-1959)”
Dr. Soheb Niazi, Max Weber Stiftung, Delhi, India

10:45 - 11:15: Coffee break

11:15 - 12:45: Panel 2: Women’s Voices, Travelling Magazines

Chair: Dr. Nadia Cattoni

“Reading Muslim Women’s Travel Writing in Urdu Periodicals in Colonial India”
Prof. Daniel Majchrowicz, Northwestern University, USA

“Refashioning Women of the East: The Material Economy of *Khatūn-e-Mashriq*”
Melina Gravier (PhD candidate), UNIL, Switzerland

“Remembering the “Ephemeral:” Historicizing a Women’s Magazine in Karachi”
Prof. Megan Eaton Robb, University of Pennsylvania, USA

12:45 - 14:45: Lunch break

15:00 - 16:30: Keynote: “A Window, an Assemblage? Magazines and World Literature”

Prof. Francesca Orsini, SOAS, University of London, UK

20:00: Dinner at Amici

Rue Dr César-Roux 5, 1005 Lausanne

Day 2: December 2, 2022

09:00 - 09:15: Opening word by Sumaira Nawaz, Conference Organizer

09:15 - 10:45: Panel 3: The World as Translocal Imaginary

Chair: Dr. Rosina Pastore

Thinking and representing “the World” in the 20th Century Hindi Print sphere
Prof. Shobna Nijhawan, York University, Canada

“Reporting the World in Hindi magazines in the early twentieth century”
Prof. Prabhat Kumar, CSDS Delhi, India

“Connecting Communities with the World: Aspirations for freedom in Two South-Indian Christian Periodicals, 1920-1930”
Dr. Philippe Bornet, UNIL, Switzerland

10:45 - 11:15: Coffee break

11:15 - 12:45: Panel 4: Transnational Ecology and Global Circulation

Chair: Prof. Blain Auer

“Istanbul’s *Akhtar*”
Dr. Tanya Elal Lawrence, SOAS, University of London, UK

“The Torchbearer of Change: Afghanistan’s *Sirāj-ul Akhbār*”
Sumaira Nawaz (PhD candidate), McGill University, Canada

“From Liverpool, to Cairo, to Tokyo: Self-Proclaimed Voices of Islam and their intervention in the Global public Sphere”
Dr. Ulrich Brandenburg, University of Zurich, Switzerland

12:45 - 14:45: Lunch Break

14:45 - 16:15: Panel 5: Transnational Making of Literary Genres

Chair: Dr. Rosine Vuille

“Literary Assamese and Formal Ambiguities: Untangling Literature and Language in Roma Das”
Sneha Khaund (PhD candidate), Rutgers University, USA

“Through the Lens of Urdu: Reading World Literature in *Adabī Dunyā*”
Zain Mian (PhD candidate), University of Pennsylvania, USA

“True Stories from around the World: *Satya Kathā* in Hindi Magazines”
Dr. Aakriti Mandhwani, Shiv Nadar University Delhi, India

16:15 - 17:00: Concluding Discussion and remarks by Zain R. Mian, Conference Organizer

From 18:00: Apéro at the Christmas Market (Montreux) and Dinner at Le Palais Oriental Quai Ernest-Ansermet 6, 1820 Montreux

A Window, an Assemblage? Magazines and World Literature



Keynote Lecture by Prof. Francesca Orsini

December 1st 2022

15:00 CET / 09:00 ET

In many parts of the world, readers learnt about the world and world literatures largely through the pages of magazines. Magazines provided “thick” and “thin” knowledge about foreign literatures in the form of translations, reviews, snippets of information, survey articles, and so on. While often envisaged as “windows” onto an already existing world and world literature, magazines in fact assembled from the resources they had at their disposal always specific views of world literature, assuming and creating familiarity in readers with particular writers, languages, genres, trends, and in world literature, while leaving or making others invisible.

In this talk I will compare three magazines that “did” world literature from different geographical and political locations—the GDR magazine *Der Bücherkarren* (The Book Cart, 1957, ed. Heinz Dieter Tschörtner), linked to the East Berlin publisher Volk und Welt; the Hindi story magazine *Sārikā* (Starling, ed. Kamleshwar, 1960s–1970s); and the Italian quarterly *Linea d’ombra* (The Shadow Line, 1983, ed. Goffredo Fofi). In each case, I will ask: what is the correlation between political and literary internationalism? Does literary visibility follow political alliances, and do literary choices map onto political ones? More generally, how do magazines produce world literature, and what experience of world literature do they produce? For example, how do we understand the choice of publishing “the latest” or “the classics”, in other words, the temporal as well as spatial production of world literature? How does the discursive production of world literature in a magazine compare with the range of literary texts it makes available?

Prof. Francesca Orsini is Professor Emerita of Hindi and South Asian Literature at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Prof. Orsini’s research interests traverse the fields of Hindi-Urdu literary culture, Indian book history, and world literature. She is the co-editor of the Cambridge Studies in World Literature series and is currently finishing a book project on the multilingual history of Awadh from the 15th to 20th century. She has most recently co-edited *Hinglish Live: Language Mixing Across Media* (Orient Blackswan 2022).

Panel Abstracts

Panel 1: Modern Islam and Intellectual Renewal

Discussant: Prof. Wissam Halawi

1. *Jeune Afrique* in Paris as the Unsuspecting Site of the Second Arab Renaissance

Prof. Idriss Jebari, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Abstract: During the global sixties and seventies, the Paris-based Third-Worldist magazine *Jeune Afrique* developed into a privileged site for Africans, Maghribis and Arabs to decipher the important directions of world affairs, between the Cold War and Decolonization. Spearheaded by the Tunisian Bechir Ben Yahmed, *Jeune Afrique* gave a platform to a range of exilic journalists from the Global South and was read quasi-religiously on the other side of the Mediterranean. Their articles broke the monopoly of official news and faced regular bans, seizures and attacks from the very political leaders who would then sit down for lengthy interviews when suitable. Nestled in the latter pages, and less considered about this magazine was the regular space it gave to intellectual, academic and cultural matters. *Jeune Afrique* remained committed to the Afro-Asian imagination of a new humanism. Book reviews, interviews with important academics, round-tables and opinion-pieces constituted the currency of *Jeune Afrique*'s contribution to this ideal.

In this paper, I center focus on the critical renewal of ideas originating from the Arab region following the 1967 defeat against Israel. This period was labelled a “second Arab renaissance” in the wake of the 19th century movement of intellectual and cultural renewal. In contrast, “post-1967” Arab thought saw the emergence of a cast of younger critical intellectuals from North Africa rethinking the terms of progress and tradition and the Arab historical experience. With the emergence of Islam as modern global discourse in the seventies, the Moroccan historian Abdallah Laroui and the Tunisian historian Hichem Djait in particular became regular fixtures in *Jeune Afrique*. Their increased visibility in this magazine was part of a larger trend for Arabs and North Africans to cohabitate before edging out French orientalist from this public arena, with figures such as Maxime Rodinson or Jacques Berque's views on modern Islamism appearing out of touch compared to analyses from their counterparts from the regions of concern. Laroui and Djait wrote on the war in Lebanon, the Iranian Revolution, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as players in the pan-Islamic world, and offered thoughts after their respective stays in America and France's attitude toward the region. As such, they deprovincialized their horizons by daring to look beyond North Africa, a traditional periphery, all thanks to the platform of *Jeune Afrique* located at the nodal point of multiple Mediterranean networks. In sum, this paper offers a reading of the magazine as a site of intervention and debate within the public sphere, one that we can only properly appraise if we take it as a transnational and Mediterranean space that integrates Paris, North Africa, and Beirut.

2. Reading the World, Seeing the Self: *Ālamgīr* (1924-1953)

Arshdeep Singh Brar (PhD candidate), University of Pennsylvania, USA

Abstract: Writing about the troubles of launching a new journal, Hafiz Muhammad Alam informed his readers about a conversation with a fellow editor who wanted to bet that Alam's journal would not even sell two hundred copies. Alam said that he was sure of his new journal 'Ālamgīr's success

and advised the editor to instead donate two-hundred rupees to Anjuman-e-Islam, an organization dedicated to Islamic intellectual and educational reform in colonial Lahore.

My paper explores how contributors to the Urdu periodical ‘Ālamgīr, launched in 1924, utilized print and the emerging technology of visual culture in expressing Muslimhood by inviting readers to situate themselves in a larger, global Islamic world, while also encouraging them to be open to international influences in matters of literary taste. It reminded the readers that despite being “minority” colonized subjects, they were part of a prestigious Islamic community in a wider world, where they were represented by the Shah of Iran, the Ottoman sultan, and the mujāhidīn of Syria. The periodical became a mode of rehabilitating old models and figures now disparaged, as well as keeping a tab on the internationalism of the Muslim world of the 1920s. I see ‘Ālamgīr as an instrument in the project of Muslim participation in global history through the project of pan-Islamic ideas, engagement with world literature, and visual Islamic culture. Whether it was the discussion of affairs in Turkey or Morocco, the matter of artistic debt to European litterateurs or illustrations of mosques from Beijing to Paris, the periodical helped build a new community of readers who were re-assessing their affiliation in a time of cultural and moral reform.

3. Vernacular *Science*: Mapping the journey of an Urdu risala (1928-1959)

Dr. Soheb Niazi, Max Weber Stiftung, Delhi, India

Abstract: This paper aims to examine the popular monthly magazine in Urdu, *Science* published by the Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu Board. The Anjuman, originally founded in 1903 in Aligarh, later shifted to Aurangabad in 1913 under the patronage of the princely state of Hyderabad, was one of the leading Urdu publishers of the twentieth century. Abdul Haq, the founder of the organization and editor of their magazine, *Science*, was at the helm of the movement to “make Urdu the medium of scientific knowledge,” a pedagogical concern that tied Urdu with the progress of the nation.

The first issue of *Science* was published from Hyderabad in 1928. It continued to be published from Hyderabad till 1947 and was later published from Pakistan till 1959. As part of ‘new’ discourse on science and scientific temper, I argue that the magazine had a global outlook, as it sought to inform its readers about the latest scientific discoveries and innovations that were shaping their contemporary world. This paper will trace the journey of the magazine which developed an integrative approach of reunifying various disciplines with articles ranging from agriculture, medicine, biology, and astronomy to Urdu literature, history of Mughal rulers and atomic energy. Through a close reading of the contents of the magazine, the paper unpacks the attempts by the editor and writers in translating science in the vernacular. These also point towards innovative strategies that aimed to bridge the gap between the advancements in Western science and parallel forms of knowledge systems that existed in the Perso-Arabic and Hindustani world. The paper will trace the writers, intellectuals and contributors associated with the magazine and the Anjuman and in the process, reflect on the diverse networks of its production, circulation and readership.

Panel 2: Women’s Voices, Travelling Magazines

Discussant: Dr. Nadia Cattoni

1. Reading Muslim Women’s Travel Writing in Urdu Periodicals in Colonial India

Prof. Daniel Majchrowicz, Northwestern University, USA

Abstract: Urdu literature had a vibrant and lively tradition of travel writing in colonial India. Thousands of accounts were produced, with their subject matter spanning the globe. Yet, to look at the publication of Urdu travelogues in book form, it would appear that this was an exclusively male tradition: there are no more than a handful of travel books published by women in the colonial period. But this does not mean that they did not produce travel writing. To the contrary, in this paper I argue that women were in fact major contributors to that travel writing tradition, but that their contributions largely appeared in magazines marketed to women. From around the year 1900, the dialogic space of Urdu women’s magazines emerged as the primary space for women writers to negotiate representations of the world and India’s place within it. The content of these magazines mainly came from articles and letters sent in by readers, often addressed not to the editors but to “my fellow sisters.” Women travelers would send in accounts of their experiences traveling in India or abroad. In turn, readers would submit responses, queries, objections, and alternative perspectives, in effect turning women’s magazines into a textual *zenana* where perceptions of the world could be circulated and debated. In this paper, I examine a series of print runs from three prominent magazines: *Ismat*, *Tabzīb un-Niswan*, and *Harem*. Based on these sources, I trace out the gradual development of women’s travel writing in Urdu from the early 1900s to 1950, noting both where writers came from, and where they traveled. Based on this primary source data, I argue that the dialogic space of colonial-era women’s magazines allowed Indian Muslim women to produce a global imagination, and to negotiate and give meaning to the world on their own terms.

2. Refashioning Women of the East: The Material Economy of *Khātūn-e-Mashriq*

Melina Gravier (PhD candidate), UNIL, Switzerland

Abstract: This paper proposes to investigate how the material economy of the Urdu women’s magazine *Khātūn-e-Mashriq* participated in the refashioning of the “women of the East”. First edited by Abdullah Farooqi, Fahmida Khatoon “Farhat” and Nur Al-Nissa Begum, *Khātūn-e-Mashriq* was published in Delhi from 1938, and by 1949, was circulating widely in Pakistan, Aden, Malaysia, South Africa and Burma. Promoting “the voices of Muslim women”, the material economy of “the cheapest women’s magazine of India” and the vernacular politics of its reception contributed to the creation of new transnational reading publics. *Khātūn-e-Mashriq* took clear stances against the West and challenged the *ethos* of the East, imagined as the space of the Other by colonial Orientalism. Therefore, looking into the material economy of the magazine opens new perspectives for understanding how *Khātūn-e-Mashriq* reinvested “a pluralistic and protean space” (Green, 2018) of the East, a heterotopia (Foucault, 1967), for imagining Eastern women anew. The magazine established a dialectical relationship between various vernacular economic, religious and political spheres and instituted multiple imaginaries for the *mashriqī bahinen* to refashion themselves: What “*mashriqī*” heterotopic experiences did *Khātūn-e-Mashriq* provide? What role did the material economy of the magazine play in these imaginings? How did heterotopic experiences produce “significant geographies” (Laachir and al., 2018) and what do they tell us about the multiple ways *Khātūn-e-Mashriq* refashioned the women of the East?

3. Remembering the “Ephemeral:” Historicizing a Women’s Magazine in Karachi

Prof. Megan Eaton Robb, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Abstract: While there exists a body of work on the reformist writings and women’s periodicals of the late colonial period, this article extends analysis of print periodicals into the postcolonial period through a discursive and material analysis of 45 issues of *Akbbār-e Khavatin* (Women’s Newspaper), a

Karachi magazine edited by a journalist named Mussarat Jabīn, MA from 1966. This project on *Akbbār-e Khavātim* builds on previous research to place it in context with other women's magazines published in Karachi in the same period. In doing so, it engages in oral histories of the Karachi, the magazine's followers, and members of the editorial staff in Pakistan to understand how compositors, technicians, readers, and collectors in Pakistan interacted with the magazines and preserved them. While explicitly female literary spaces like women's magazines have been considered valuable as access points to the de-historicised category of social reform, they are more importantly workshops for postcolonial nationhood. The magazine's publication required negotiation because of its innovative status as a women's magazine that experimented with form and content. The magazine to some extent normalized women's journalism, even as its work room structures re-affirmed gendered hierarchies of power in the print industry. Its board of editors grappled with tensions between education and domestic responsibilities; this balancing act shows symmetry with its editors' concern to cultivate international awareness while retaining Pakistan's distinct national character. This archiving of the so-called ephemeral conversations between middle and upper-class, literate women offers scholars a view of the perspectives of not only the women editors, but also to the technicians of the publishing industry who collaborated with the editors to create print periodicals. Paying attention to how 'ephemeral' material was produced, collected, and archived makes previously invisible choices of print technicians and editors visible.

Panel 3: The World as Translocal Imaginary

Chair: Dr. Rosina Pastore

1. Thinking and representing "the World" in the Hindi Print sphere of the early 20th century

Prof. Shobna Nijhawan, York University, Canada

Abstract: This presentation explores the role of Hindi-language publishers and magazines in representing and 'think[ing]' "the world" for their diverse readerships. More specifically, it engages with the Lucknow-based publishing house Ganga Pustak Mala (est. c1918) and its socio-literary periodical *Sudha* (1927-1941) as they shaped the Hindi public sphere in the first half of the twentieth century. By establishing distribution networks across North India and in major cities and towns of British India, Ganga Pustak Mala liaised an extensive network of small and large publishers all working towards a joint project: the creation and dissemination of (fictional and non-fictional) literature that serviced the citizens of the nation-to-be. Sudha offers a micro-perspective on to bringing "the world" to the reader. The open form of the magazine allowed for multiple perspectives onto the world that were disseminated in genres and columns such as the travelogue, world news, book reviews, poetry and fiction.

Ganga Pustak Mala's achievements were formative for Hindi publishing in Lucknow. The publishing house's literary output included popular, canonical and translated literature including an array of Hindi translations of works of fiction, scientific and religious literature from English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Urdu, Bengali, French and Latin. This versatility may be credited to the vision of the print capitalist Dularelal Bhargava, editor and proprietor of the publishing house. Bhargava was instrumental in appreciating the book as a resource as well as a commodity. He constantly conquered new markets (including the textbook market) and circulated information about the vibrant emerging national, vernacular and to a lesser extent international book-publishing scene in

his periodicals. Included in his and other publishers' interest to increase readerships were women, children and adolescent readers as well as peasants.

2. Reporting the World in Hindi magazines in the early twentieth century

Prof. Prabhat Kumar, CSDS Delhi, India

Abstract: From around the middle of the 1910s Hindi magazines began publishing accounts of the places, institutions, and people beyond India and England or the predictable circuits of the Empire. Some writers-reporters happened to visit a foreign destination for personal, educational or business purposes. Many others identified themselves primarily as travelers without immediate utilitarian motives and often gestured and invoked pre-modern traditions of wandering in search of knowledge. They appeared as travel diaries, reports, (ethno)graphic essays on the landscape, people, city life, educational and cultural institution, political structures, etc. in the contemporary magazines and often compiled and republished later on as books with additional preface, introduction, foreword, etc. by the writer and/or other eminent personality. This paper shall focus on some such lesser known accounts by people like Shiv Prasad Gupta (a Banaras merchant-philanthropist and patron of nationalist institutions), K P Jayaswal (a revolutionary turned nationalist historian at Patna), etc. which appeared in the magazines like *Saraswati*, *Maryada*, etc. We shall probe why and in what ways the information and knowledge beyond India and Empire become visibly prominent from the second decade of the twentieth century. For example, in the newly instituted imagination countries like Germany, Japan, China, Turkey, Egypt, America become constitutive of significant geography of the world. How the encounter with the world beyond England enables newer standpoints to critique and assess Empire and imperialist ideologies as well as nationalist politics and Indian society. How do these heterogeneous and pluralized accounts of the West, wherein a German or American University or for that matter any other institution could be perceived as radically different or superior to that of Britain, reconfigure or play upon the nationalist cultural imagination of the world or geo-politics? How and in what ways such narratives in the magazines and its subsequent reproductions as book often accompanying additional images and paratexts differ with each other in terms of their actual and affective contents.

3. Connecting Communities with the World: Aspirations for freedom in Two South - Indian Christian Periodicals, 1920-1930

Dr. Philippe Bornet, UNIL, Switzerland

Abstract: It has often been assumed that Christianity and Christian missions went hand in hand with the imperial establishment, so that Indian Christians have sometimes been considered as "denationalized". The present contribution explores discussions about politics and religion in two Kannada / English Christian periodicals of the 1920s published out of Mangalore: a periodical published with the support of the mission (Christa Hitavadi), and an "independent" Christian periodical published without such support (Satyavrata). The complexity of material appearing in these media mirrors the multifaceted interests of the target communities: Christian moral stories, news and historical accounts about the region (not to mention advertisements) are juxtaposed with militant texts that are not only critical of the British colonial administration, but also - for some of them - of the foreign missionary institution itself. We focus specifically on the case of a call for freedom in both periodicals, paying a particular attention to the arguments used to defend the opposed positions: Biblical quotations, but also historical references from European history, and allusions to movements of contestation happening elsewhere. In conclusion, we return to the initial

question and ask to what extent the context of a Christian mission - along with its "international" network, its schools and especially its expertise in the use of print media - might have represented (or not) a favourable setting for the development of nationalist ideologies among communities outside of India's main centers.

Panel 4: Transnational Ecology and Global Circulation

Chair: Prof. Blain Auer

1. Istanbul's *Akhtar*

Dr. Tanya Elal Lawrence, SOAS, University of London

Abstract: The Istanbul-based Persian language newspaper *Akhtar* was the first periodical in Persian to be published outside the auspices of the Qajar state (1789-1926), and first appeared in January 1876 in the presses owned by the Iranian émigré Muhammad Tahir Tabrizi in the Valide Han. Over the course of the next twenty years that the periodical *Akhtar* remained in circulation, it was considered one of the most significant publications in Persian of the time and had a readership in the Ottoman Empire, Iran, the Caucasus, Egypt and India.

Although the purported significance of *Akhtar* as a pioneering publication in the history of Persian journalism is often underlined, *Akhtar* is rarely considered as a depository of information on how Persian-speaking communities of the Ottoman Empire and beyond viewed the late-nineteenth-century world. This paper will discuss how *Akhtar* as is a valuable source for scholars of Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire, as well as world historians interested in studying the perspectives of transnational Persian-speaking communities as they relate to the important political, social and cultural events of the late nineteenth century.

To this end, this paper will address the nature of the inter-imperial dynamics which defined the publication, reception and circulation of this 'Persian' newspaper, highlighting that the history of *Akhtar* is intimately intertwined with broader questions relating to the multiplicity of audiences it enjoyed and the role of its trans-imperial editors, contributors and financiers.

2. The Torchbearer of Change: Afghanistan's *Sirāj-ul Akhbār*

Sumaira Nawaz (PhD candidate), McGill University, Canada

Abstract: One of the earliest Persian newspapers to be published in Afghanistan, the bi-weekly *Sirāj-ul Akhbār* (1911-1918) was instrumental in introducing the Afghan reading public to new political, literary, and religious debates that were raging among Muslim reformers across the Ottoman Empire and British India. Published under the aegis of Mahmud Tarzi, an emigre intellectual inspired by the writings of Jamaluddin al-Afghani and the Young Turks, the paper had a modern, anti-colonial, pan-Islamic outlook that advocated reformist models of Islamic nationalism. Tarzi and his associates, the Young Afghans, actively collaborated with Ottoman and Indian intellectuals in initiating state-building activities, in the hopes of turning Afghanistan into an ideal archetype of the grand Muslim *tajaddud* or "renewal" (Green 2011, O'Sullivan 2016).

Sirāj-ul Akhbār was at the centre of the project of transnational modernity that straddled a varied range of groups and advisers to build its own vision of an Afghan identity. At the same time, the

paper marked itself as a “Muslim newspaper” that would cater to a readership beyond Afghanistan’s borders, paving the region as a “significant geography” within the Muslim world (Orsini 2016). My presentation will discuss the role of print culture and commercial press to investigate the competing and parallel narratives of what it meant to be a modern Muslim subject in the Middle East and South Asia, areas whose collaborations and engagements are usually branded as “peripheral” to the history of the public sphere. I hope to particularly locate *Siraj-ul Akhbar* as a literary space, animated with new genres and modes of political discourse, to capture how changing forms of Persian literature shaped and reflected Afghan aspirations and agency.

3. From Liverpool, to Cairo, to Tokyo: Self-Proclaimed Voices of Islam and their intervention in the Global public Sphere

Dr. Ulrich Brandenburg, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract: Who speaks for Islam and how can Muslim opinion be assessed? These questions loomed large on the minds of orientalists, diplomats, and policy makers in the age of imperialism. One solution was found in the intensive observation of the “Islamic press,” of which we can find ample evidence in diplomatic archives and orientalist journals, among others. At the same time, the press constituted a preferred means through which Muslim activists tried to communicate their aims and explain their perspectives to a variety of readers. This paper examines three journals from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the *Crescent* (Liverpool, 1893-1907), *Arafate* (Cairo, 1904-06), and the *Islamic Fraternity* (1910-12) –, which all claimed to speak in the name of Islam and the Muslim community. While published in different places and at different times, they had in common that they chose to address their readers in the languages of global communication: English and French. These consciously transnational journals are difficult to integrate into national press histories and have received relatively little attention so far, but they are noteworthy as early attempts to give a voice to Islam in the global public sphere. Combining Dietrich Jung’s conception of the global public sphere with ideas from the Mediated Social Communication approach, this paper understands global communication as an interactive but asymmetric process. The discussion will shed light in particular on the three journals’ self-conception as representatives of a globally connected Muslim community and their ambition to become mediators of Islam for Muslim and non-Muslim readers alike.

Panel 5: Transnational Making of Literary Genres

Chair: Dr. Rosine Vuille

1. Literary Assamese and Formal Ambiguities: Untangling Literature and Language in Roma Das

Sneha Khaund (PhD candidate), Rutgers University. USA

Abstract: The Assamese writer Roma Das does not occupy a rarified position in the Assamese literary canon today, he is either forgotten or dismissed as a writer of cliched romance stories. This has however not always been the case as pioneering Assamese literary critics of the twentieth century like Birinchi Baruah and Maheswar Neog have acknowledged the importance of Roma Das in signifying a new, mature, and confident phase of Assamese writing. In this paper, I parse out Das’ engagement with Romantic poetry and the interrogation of romance tropes in his short story

“Barshā Jetiyā Nāme”, published in the literary magazine *Awabon* in 1939, to discuss how he used formal literary features to amplify ambiguities inherent in an Assamese linguistic identity.

Critical work on the history of the evolution of the Assamese language has pointed out the corollary role of literature as a tool for the assertion of a distinct linguistic identity in the nineteenth century (e.g. Sharma 2011, Majeed 2019). In this paper, I argue that journals such as *Awabon* offered space for an interrogation of the conflation of language and literature through the negotiation of a received Romantic legacy and proto-modernist experimentation. In this regard, I depart from theorizations of English as a dominating mediator of the world literary field and explore the ways in which vernacular literary cultures critically reflect on the role of English literature in fashioning local linguistic identities as well as how the space of the short story in Assamese magazines offers genre deviations that constitute a “meaningful symbolic act” (Jameson 1981) and thereby function as postmonolingual (Yildiz 2012) strategies.

2. Through the Lens of Urdu: Reading World Literature in *Adabī Dunyā*

Zain R. Mian (PhD candidate), University of Pennsylvania, USA

Abstract: I examine *Adabī dunyā*, or *Literary World*, to argue for a dialectical relationship between world literature and the Urdu magazine. *Adabī dunyā* carved a niche for itself in a competitive Indian magazine ecology by positioning itself as a worldly and world-class magazine in terms of its content and material form. How this publication circulated world literature was inspired by the educational impetus of the *ilmī o adabī* magazine genre (roughly translatable as “educational and literary”). *Adabī dunyā* mediated readers’ appreciation of world authors by relying on a range of forms such as the survey essay, image, and original Urdu texts inspired by those authors. By focusing on its representation of Dante Alighieri, I show how the magazine sought to nurture a multidimensional relationship between Indian readers and foreign writers. In so doing, *Adabī dunyā* produced a local iteration of world literature centered on Urdu culture.

3. True Stories from around the World: *Satya Kathā* in Hindi Magazines

Prof. Aakriti Mandhwani, Shiv Nadar University Delhi, India

Abstract: The paper proposes to think about the “*satya kathā*” or “true story”. Often deemed thrilling, sensational, lurid and flimsy, this genre has been put to many purposes by a range of lowbrow and middlebrow magazines in Hindi. Challenging the line between fiction and non-fiction, plausible and the implausible, what does this genre achieve that fiction cannot? What readerly pleasures are offered by the consumption (and significantly, production) of the true story? The paper shall focus on a vast array of magazines, such as *Satya Kathā*, *Sacchi Kathāyein*, *Sacchi Ghaṭnāyein*, *Pushpī and Dharmyug*, specifically in the 1960s and 70s and consider how this genre, imagined (and re-interrogated) across such a wide range, interacted with and thought about “the world”. It shall specifically examine the genre’s response to international conflict, such as in the case of the Sino-Indian war, 1962 and the Indo-Pakistan war, 1971.
