

The time period from 17th century to 19th century, in Urdu prose, is called the era of 'Dastan'. Though some attempts or endeavor can also be seen in Dastan writing after this time period. Because of a leading kind of its time period, Dastan is of prime importance. In this thesis, under consideration research carried out about a very important part of Dastan. The investigatory and the critical analysis of the main characters of the Dastan not only drag this kind of speech from darkness of past but also helps to highlight the standard of characterization of that era. All those Dastans are included in this thesis which are published, having unity of plot and revolve around central character. Collection of proverbs is included in this selection. All those Dastans are avoided to include in which most of the material was borrowed from other Dastans or which revolves around the same topic. In this thesis, standard of characterization in Dastans, capabilities of characterization and how was it differ from the characterization of modern was discussed. Character of Dastan is also examined according to social and moral standardization of modern era.

The thesis has been divided in to four parts. Part one deals with the central theme of 'Dastan'. Part two deals with the main characters of the prominent Dastan published pre Fort William College period. Part three consists of critical analysis of important characters of the stories published under the patronage of Fort William College, while part four comprises critical analysis and evaluation of the central characters of important Dastans published during the same period but not under the patronage of the college. The objective of the thesis is to highlight the fundamental characters of the Dastan, portray their importance and judge the standard of characterization. It is also our objective to enable the modern reader establish, by himself, a link between the ancient and modern literature. Epilogue is captioned "collective evaluation". In epilogue the central characters of the Dastans, included in the thesis, have been discussed briefly.