

This Issue of *The Annual*

NO MORE EXCUSES, no more delays. The transition is finally complete, and so we are able at long last to present the first issue of *The Annual of Urdu Studies* edited and published from the University of Wisconsin. We think our readership will be pleased with the contents of this issue; we have striven to maintain *The Annual's* reputation—a truly large concern, considering the amount of work Prof. C.M. Naim put into establishing it throughout the past decade. We thank him for providing us with the opportunity to follow up on his vision, and for the encouragement to try.

We mark *The Annual's* inaugural publication from Madison with some mixed emotions, commemorating the passing of two of Urdu literature's most prominent authors—Zamiruddin Ahmad, who passed away in London in December of 1990, and Ismat Chughtai, who passed away in Bombay in October of 1991. In their respective writings, each put an indelible stamp of artistic individuality and sophistication on the Urdu language, and all of Urdu humanities will suffer for their absence. Tahira Naqvi has contributed two translations of Ismat Chughtai's work, along with an introductory essay that outlines both her biography and the themes of her literary output. For Zamiruddin Ahmad, we present three translations of stories produced in the years before his death, when he resumed writing after a two-decade hiatus. Both authors certainly deserve the critical acclaim they have received over the years; our attempt here is to show the English-speaking world what they have to offer, and in so doing perhaps in some way to acknowledge the immensity of our loss.

Scholars of Urdu humanities may constitute a small segment of the general academic population, but they continue to produce wonderfully provocative and insightful work. David Lelyveld, D.J. Matthews, Geeta Patel, and Carla Petievich all have provided critical articles, and although we had not intended any set theme for this issue, it turns out that their articles mesh very nicely with each other: Lelyveld's and Matthew's deal

explicitly with the early linguistic, literary, and historical relationships between Dakani and Urdu; Petievich's is concerned with the poetic, cultural, and gender-based issues found in the form of early Dakani poetry known as *rēxtī*; and Patel's with the gender-based problematics of interpreting Miraji's name and biography.

Next comes a section devoted exclusively to translations of Urdu poetry. We are privileged to preview a selection of translations of several "postmodern" Urdu poets by Asif Farrukhi and Frances W. Pritchett, to appear (soon, we hope) under the title *An Evening of Caged Beasts*. Represented here are only six of the poets Farrukhi and Pritchett are currently working on; this taste makes us hope that their anthology will be *much* larger. As something of a contextualizing appendix to Geeta Pate's article, we include her translation of Miraji's long poem "An Evening on the Far Side of the Wine Glass." And to wrap up the poetry section, we have a brief poem of Zishan Sahil's, translated by Alamgir Hashmi. The poetry section is my favorite, and so I will offer a tip to anyone who might be inclined to listen: turn first to the poems of Zishan Sahil—you won't be disappointed.

Moving on to the review articles, Carlo Coppola takes us through Baidar Bakht and his associates' translations of five prominent Urdu poets, nicely providing some insights into both the poets' techniques and concerns, as well as the skill of the translators. Vinay Dharwadker writes an extended review of Muhammad Umar Memon's *The Tale of the Old Fisherman*, replete with structural, thematic, and historical insights into all of the short stories presented in this volume. Some of his observations (for example, his comparison of Abdullah Hussein's *The Tale of the Old Fisherman* with the fiction of Salman Rushdie) are extremely intriguing, and will no doubt surprise many of our readers. We get something of a double treat with C.M. Naim's review of Parveen Shakir's poetry, for not only does it include an analysis, but also some wonderful translations of her poetry. And finally we get two delightfully irreverent reviews by Muhammad Salim-ur-Rahman, the first on the fiction of Abdul Halim Sharar, the second on what is reputed to be the first indigenous novel of South Asia, *Niṣṭar*.

After a brief letter to the editor by Alamgir Hashmi on an article by Ralph Russell in *AUS* #6, we come to the book reviews—ten in all—touching on everything from how to learn Urdu in two weeks (!), to the poetry of Faiz, to the first issue of the journal *Pakistani Literature*. There should be something here for everybody concerned with issues surrounding the Urdu language.

Next we present an extended bibliography of recent publications related to Urdu humanities in the widest possible sense. It seeks to be as complete as possible, but in a very few instances some piece of information or other (e.g. number of pages, date of publication, price, etc.) was simply unavailable at the time we went to press.

We include a brief section on news and events germane to Urdu scholarship, and to cap off this issue of the *Annual*, we present for your enjoyment a deceptively simple, hauntingly beautiful poem by Zishan Sahil in Urdu—to remind ourselves that this is, after all, a journal devoted to Urdu.

Of course, a publication like this would simply be impossible without a sustaining readership. We enthusiastically request submissions of articles, translations, commentaries, and the like, as well as any reports of news and/or events pertaining generally to Urdu humanistic studies. Obviously, not everything is suitable for publication in the form in which we receive it, but we do examine all submissions in detail and strive to balance our critical impulses with a sense of fairness. We enjoy working *with* our readership, and encourage all to contribute. Submissions should be typed or stored on 3½-inch computer diskette (both Macintosh and IBM/compatible formats are fine).

The formalities now out of the way, we proudly present the inaugural issue of *The Annual of Urdu Studies* edited, assembled, and published in Madison. We truly hope you enjoy it.

G.A.C.