BOOK REVIEWS

Ismat Chughtai. *Lifting the Veil: Selected Writings of Ismat Chughtai.* Selected and trans. by M. Asaduddin. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2001. xxv, 261 pp. Rs.250.

Ismat chughtai is one Urdu writer whose works have been translated into English extensively in the last couple of years, earning for her not only a pan-Indian but also an international audience. This has led to her inclusion on the reading lists of departments of English, Gender Studies and Culture Studies in India and abroad. The volume under review contains eighteen stories, two personal sketches and a fragment from her unfinished autobiography, *Kāghazī Hai Pairahan*. Thus it attempts to give us a holistic view of the writer, rather than limiting it only to feminist concerns as was the case with an earlier collection of stories published by Kali for Women. In his fairly extensive critical introduction, M. Asaduddin situates the writer in her socio-cultural and literary contexts, which helps the reader make a nuanced and informed reading of the translated texts.

The volume makes it clear that a significant segment of Chughtai's fiction deals with concerns that are largely, though not exclusively, those of women who were compelled to lead a faceless existence in early twentieth-century India. She gives voice to their inner urges and aspirations, showing them strategies to resist patriarchal structures. She takes up subjects most uncomfortable to her times and with her wit and raw irony, demolishes set ideas. There is no trace of sentimentality or mawkishness in her writing. "Childhood," "Touch Me Not," "Vocation," and "All Alone" deal with different facets of a woman's life. Chughtai's virtuosity lies in depicting all these facets engagingly and sensitively, without losing for a moment her rapier-sharp wit and her joie de vivre. "The Wedding Suit," long canonized in Urdu literature for its theme and treatment, is decidedly a classic that bears favorable comparison with Chekhov's story, "Grief." The legitimate aspiration of a woman to get married and the anguish and suffering a woman and her family have to undergo in the process made Chughtai write this highly-acclaimed story which rings as true in today's India as it did fifty years ago.

To my knowledge, no writer has depicted the childhood stirrings of sexual urges as delicately as Chughtai has done in stories such as "Gainda" and "The Net." The child narrator in "Gainda" and Attan and Sufia in the latter story are so convincing that they seem almost like textbook illustrations of Simone de

Beauvoir's exposition of childhood fantasy and playacting in her *The Second Sex* (1949), a foundational text of Western feminism. These stories, as well as "The Quilt," "Vocation" and others, explore in vivid and pitiless detail the forbidden terrains of female sexuality in the women of respectable middle-class families. "The Quilt" and the controversy surrounding it which landed the writer in court have become a part of Urdu's literary heritage. However, what is forbidden and suppressed in the above stories has been given free play in "The Homemaker" and "The Mole," two delightful stories which show Chughtai's humor and linguistic resources touching an all-time high. Each of them has a woman protagonist from the lowest strata of society—full-blooded, sexy and with a liveliness and vitality all her own. The sustained and controlled eroticism depicted in the characters Lajo and Rani is without parallel in Indian literature. In fact, "The Homemaker" can serve as a test case highlighting Chughtai's artistic excellence. The central character here is Lajo (the literal meaning of her name is "the coy one," but she is the antithesis of her name if ever there was one), a woman of uncertain parenthood who is delightfully amoral in her dispensation of love. She is unabashed about her sexual charm and flaunts it to good effect. The latest of her victims is Mirza. She installs herself in his house and takes full control of it despite Mirza's reservations. To legitimize his liaison, Mirza marries her. For Lajo the marriage is redundant as she has already become attached to the household and its owner. However, after marriage Mirza tries to make her a "respectable" woman and that is where the trouble starts:

> Mirza put a ban on the lehnga and instructed her to wear tight-fitting churidar pyjamas. Lajo was used to open space between her legs. Two separate legs joined by a strip of cloth were truly bothersome. She kept pulling at the strip and then, at the first opportunity, took off the pyjamas and was going to slip into the lehnga when Mirza appeared on the scene. She got so nervous that she forgot to hold the lehnga around her waist and let it fall.
>
> 'La hawla wala quwwat…', Mirza cried out in agony, pulled up a sheet and threw it over her. …
>
> What was her fault? Previously, the same act would have made Mirza swoon over her. Now he got so incensed that he picked up the lehnga and flung it into the fire. (pp. 88–9)

Chughtai maintains this delightfully comic tone throughout the story, and also in the story, "The Mole." The depiction of boundless sexual energy in lowly women contrasts sharply with its attenuation in their middle-class counterparts giving credence to Asaduddin's comment that

> the construction of female sexuality in these stories follows a uniform pattern and underscores Chughtai's own perception of the issue: sexual attraction and raw sensuality is vested in women of lower strata of society,

> while shame, silence and erasure of sexuality is the lot of middle class ‘respectable’ women. This pattern is so frequent in her stories that it acquires the force of a binary system. (p. xxii)

Another great strength of Chughtai’s art is her characterization. Long after the reader has read the stories the characters continue to haunt him, making him smile, laugh, wonder, and sometimes, cry. They become an inalienable part of the portrait gallery that every sensitive reader carries in his mind. Who can ever forget the unnamed granny in “Tiny’s Granny” or the unnamed mother-in-law in the story of that name? Here are two heartwarming portraits of crotchety, resilient, querulous but nevertheless very affectionate and adorable old women who are slowly becoming relics of an old culture and a bygone era.

Apart from such women-oriented narratives, we also have a good selection of stories in the volume which deal with issues of a general nature relating to society and politics. For example, “Quit India,” “The Survivor,” “The Sacred Duty” and “Roots.” “Quit India” is about Eric Jackson, a British officer of Irish descent who chooses to stay in India even after Indian independence, and “The Survivor” depicts the heady mix of politics and religion. “The Sacred Duty” and “Roots” portray the absurdity of the communal hatred between Hindus and Muslims which has become an unfortunate feature of Indian society.

The two pen sketches, of Manto and of her own brother Azim Baig Chughtai, are interesting in themselves apart from providing a more meaningful context in which to understand her other works. Both the style and the treatment of the subject in “Hellbound” make it demonstrably clear why it is regarded as one of the most memorable biographical sketches of a brother by his sister in world literature. The autobiographical fragment deals with the furor caused after the publication of “The Quilt” and the way Chughtai had to take on a militant section of the Urdu literary establishment. It also delineates her rather stormy relationship with other members of the Progressive Writers’ Movement.

The English translations of the stories are lucid and immensely readable while remaining close to the original. In his Introduction Asaduddin deals with issues of translation, noting that it was indeed a challenging task to render such a culturally-rooted writer as Chughtai in English. Despite this challenge, the fact that the stories, in many cases, read like original works in English says much regarding the efforts that must have gone into the making of this volume. The lack of a glossary may prove to be a minor inconvenience to some readers. The current thinking on the subject, I understand, is against glossing. Whatever the case, Penguin deserves all accolades for bringing out such an elegant volume for such a reasonable price. ❐

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SHAMSUR RAHMAN FARUQI. *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001. 211 pp. Rs. 395. ISBN 0-19-565201-0

SHAMSUR RAHMAN FARUQI's latest contribution to Urdū scholarship, *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History*, is a seminal achievement in many ways. At first glance, one immediately notices the enormous breadth of texts referenced in this work, spanning Urdū's earliest authors in the late eleventh century through fourteenth-century Gujarati poets, seventeenth-century Deccan and Northern Sufis, Mīr and Ghālib, and finally, the great nineteenth-century reformers Āzād and Ḥālī. But in addition to his usual scholarship, which here even includes previously unresearched archives and poets, Faruqi also deeply interrogates Urdū as a linguistic entity and a literary construction, and this is what sets *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History* apart from other literary histories.

Arguing against the common history given to Urdū—that it was born in the royal camps of Delhi (then called Shāhjahānābād), embellished in the hands of Mīr and Ghālib, and patronized primarily in the North—Faruqi employs a much more skeptical approach, questioning at every step why some works are considered "Urdū" and others Hindī, Hindvī, and Rēkhta, while considering the politics and history behind all of these names. This kind of serious examination presents a difficult task not taken on often enough, and Faruqi is to be saluted for the tremendous effort and honest grappling he applies to such important questions. However, sometimes the analysis succumbs to its own intellectual boldness, and the very assumptions Faruqi aims to interrogate serve as methodological mishaps that muddy the narrative. Nevertheless, *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History* marks a great contribution to Urdū scholarship for its scope as well as for the courage it displays when tackling difficult questions, and thus should be heartily welcomed and seriously examined.

Faruqi begins with a refutation of nomenclature, and appropriately so, for the question of nomenclature underlies much of his argument (Chapters 1 and 2). Any historian of Urdū confronts an overwhelming repertoire of names, including Hindvī, Hindī, Dihlavī, Guhrī, Dakanī and Rēkhta on the Indian side, and Moors, Indostans, and Hindustani on the British side. Despite this confusion, however, many scholars have concurred that the name "Urdū" refers to the royal camp around Delhi in the middle of the sixteenth century, and denotes a mixed language derived from Persian, Arabic and more indigenous languages like Hindī/Hindvī. Faruqi, on the other hand, complicates this theory by arguing that "Urdū" first referred to the "royal city" of Delhi, and was not aligned with any language until 1780 (p. 28); meanwhile the language of the Delhi area was being called Hindvī or Hindī and later, Rēkhta. British intervention into this controversy only further obscured the issue by introducing the names Moors and Hindustani into the mix, and, moreover, began to identify Hindustani as a Muslim language and Hindvī as a Hindu language. These alliances were only deepened by the post-1857 Hindī/Urdū controversy headed by Bharatendu Harishchandra, and the development of Hindī and Urdū canons at Fort William College and in Āzād and Ḥālī's works.

So far the analysis is relatively familiar, and Faruqi quotes the usual sources as well as some new additions by prominent scholars like Shiblī Nuʿmānī and Tara Chand. But the real work begins when Faruqi investigates Urdū's "real" origins, locating them not in the North but rather in Gujarat and in the Deccan (Chapters 3 and 5). Faruqi certainly does not stand alone in his emphasis on the South, but his exposition of the conflict between what he identifies as southern "Hindī/Hindvī" or sometimes "Dakanī/Hindvī," and northern "Rēkhta" becomes controversial. According to this exposition, Sufi religious devotion found its outlet in the developing Hindī/Hindvī medium, while Sufis in the North patronized the then dominant Persian because of its eminent respectability and high-class basis. However, at the same time, Hindī/Hindvī vocabulary was making inroads into Persian dictionaries, and the Rēkhta style, distinguished by its mixture of Persian and Hindī/Hindvī, gained popularity. This growing rapprochement between North and South found its patron saint in Valī, born in Gujarat but popular in the North, who incorporated Persian themes into Hindī/Hindvī poetry and began to compose acclaimed Rēkhta/ Hindī poetry. It was only after Valī's death that Delhi and its environs produced the rich literary atmosphere that nurtured Mīr, Ghālib and the like.

This narrative of North/South conflict and rapprochement certainly remains convincing and presents a considerable number of new names, like Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān Lāhaurī (1046–1121), reported to have written a Hindvī *dīvān*, Shaikh Bahā'u 'd-Dīn Bājan (1388–1506), the first author whose Hindvī work has survived in sufficient quantities, and Fakhr-e Dīn Niẓāmī, a fifteenth-century writer in the popular Deccan tradition (Chapter 5); however, here Faruqi perhaps blurs the distinctions between Hindī/Hindvī and Rēkhta on which his analysis hinges. This raises several questions. For example, if North and South undoubtedly influenced each other, what makes Hindī/Hindvī and Rēkhta different? Where does so-called Hindī/Hindvī begin and Rēkhta end? When does Rēkhta become Rēkhta/Hindī as Faruqi calls it in Valī's case, and when is it simply Rēkhta as distinguishable from Urdū? Furthermore, what makes these languages different enough to be considered separate languages, yet not distinct enough to be collapsed into the larger history of Urdū? Faruqi's liberal usage of the word "Urdū," while preventing a limited understanding of Urdū as a hermetic entity, goes too far by claiming all the manifestations of Urdū's constituent parts, whether they be Rēkhta's earliest forms, Hindī's Dakanī dialects, or the mixture of the two propagated centuries later. Thus Faruqi's important attempts to widen the literary sphere beyond Delhi and recognize the role of the Deccan region become contingent upon a problematic expansion of the term Urdū to include its other manifestations.

Chapters 4 and 7 focus on literary theory, and here Faruqi engages his usual diligence in elucidating literary principles. In Chapter 4 he explicates Khusrau's contributions to literary theory, drawing together a wide range of texts by exposing their shared practices of *ravānī* or flowingness, *īhām* or punning, and *balāghat* or appropriate usage of words and the themes they imply. Faruqi then traces how these values expanded and changed in the eighteenth century (Chapter 7) as a preoccupation with "correctness" and language reform developed, the latter being often a euphemism for the purging of non-Perso-Arabic elements. The principle of *īhām*, and its implications that language could be purposely deceptive to reach an artistic goal, further came under attack in the nineteenth century by reformers like Ḥālī and Āzād, who viewed Urdū poetry as often artificial and decadent. All of the techniques discussed by Faruqi, *ravānī*, *īhām*, and *balāghat*, promote an attention to wordplay that is reminiscent of the *ghazal* principles elucidated in Frances Pritchett's *Nets of Awareness*; this resemblance would seem to suggest a continuous literary theory in Urdū, focused on wordplay from the earliest writings through nineteenth-century *ghazal*. However, one wonders whether such a continuous literary theory also serves to artificially consolidate a phenomenon called "Urdū," since it is quite likely that not all Urdū texts conform to the same literary standards.

Despite such doubts about consolidation, however, *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History*'s overall picture is one of great diversity and contestation. Faruqi's excursus demands that we restore to Urdū its complicated past and recognize Urdū's dynamic position as an entity that can never quite be pinned down. At the same time, we can embrace the vision of Urdū as a syncretistic, hybrid, multi-regional phenomenon that remains *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History*'s greatest contribution to the field. ❐

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ALI AKBAR HUSAIN. *Scent in the Islamic Garden: A Study of the Deccani Urdu Literary Sources.* Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000. 284 pp. Rs. 495.

THE concept of "garden" constitutes a significant aspect of not only the architectural landscape of Islamicate cultures but also of the abstract literary and mystical discourses within these cultures. Ali Akbar Husain's recent book reflects well the pivotal existence of the garden trope at a concrete as well as at an abstract level, and specifically focuses upon a region of South India known as the Deccan.

Scent in the Islamic Garden is divided into six chapters. The first two foreground the historical and geographical landscapes of the Deccan. The third one introduces readers to the gardens of the Deccan. The fourth chapter sheds light on "agricultural texts" within the Islamicate milieu. Chapter 5 imparts to readers the importance of perfumes and fragrances in various texts, Deccani as well as non-Deccani ones. Chapter 6 highlights the invocation of the garden and olfactory imagery in Deccani literature. The thorough appendices toward the end are worthy references, for they provide a unique catalogue of plants, flowers, perfumes and lovely verses from Deccani poetic works.

The sweep of Husain's research is considerably versatile: he competently explores the terrains of history, geography, architecture, literature and astrology, while bringing hitherto unknown/unread texts to our attention. By concentrating on the largely ignored field of Deccani literature and culture, the author attempts to offset deficiencies that have marred the field of South Asian cultural studies for many decades.

As a compendium of gardens, flowers, herbs and trees, as well as of the literature and architecture that conjure up these gifts of nature, this book is a great boon; it is deficient however in several other ways. One aspect of the book that I found especially disturbing was the author's acquiescence to essentialist categories and stereotypes that have been repeatedly questioned in recent years. For example, when discussing the *ʿāshūr-khānas* (places of mourning) of the Deccan, the reader gets the idea that these are exclusive Shīʿa places of commemoration. The author makes no attempt to deal with these trans-communal, trans-sectarian sites as hybrids that provide space for shared spirituality and practical cultural accommodations. The book could have also broadened the terms of discourse by challenging certain categories like "Hindu culture" and "*Hindustānī mizāj*" instead of accepting them at face value. One instance of such an unnecessary generalization occurs on p. 40: "The resurgence of Hindu culture, which both paralleled and followed *bhakti*'s social message, was stimulated by the patronage of wealthy Hindu rulers, too, and it was perhaps also a reaction to the spread of Muslim culture." What constitutes a "Hindu culture" as opposed to the Muslim one, we are never told in any convincing manner. What is also amiss from this book is a discussion of how the visual emphasis of natural artifacts in architecture, literature and miniature paintings figured a respect for the environment. The author would have made a greater contribution to our understanding of Islamicate environmental ethics if he had posed questions about how the environment and nature were generally viewed and approached in the Deccani architectural as well as in literary aesthetic sensibilities. In this regard, Husain might have benefited from works such as Annemarie Schimmel's *Deciphering the Signs of God.* Regrettably, the book also suffers from editorial oversights. The author and the editors seem to have made very little effort in tightening up the book with sustained, flowing arguments. The abrupt transitions between and within paragraphs might deflect attention from the substance of the book.

If one can lay these factors aside, there are many stimulating tidbits about gardens, plants, perfumes and Deccani literature in this work. Many a scholar who has worked on the history of Urdu literature as well as South Asian Islam has been impervious to Deccani sources. Husain fills in this gap in our scholarship with considerable competence. The book deserves to be read by anybody interested in Urdu-Deccani literature, the history of South India, Islam in South Asia or environmental ethics in Islamicate cultures. ❐

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Syed Ahmed Khan. *The Causes of the Indian Revolt.* With an introduction by Francis Robinson. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000. 92 pp. $26.95. ISBN 0-19-577984-3.

The latest relic unearthed from the India Office Library in London and republished under the auspices of the Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints series is Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's *Asbāb-e Baghāvat-e Hind* (*The Causes of the Indian Revolt*), with a new introduction by Francis Robinson. This new edition is a welcome addition to the Sir Syed canon, for besides the occasional reprint of Sir Syed's essay in English, the only other edition of the *Asbāb* to my knowledge is a 1997 reprint published in Lahore, entitled *Causes of the Indian Revolt: Three Essays* (Sang-e-Meel Publications). The 1997 edition's greatest gift is its beautiful rendition of the *Asbāb* in the original Urdu; in addition, it contains an earlier draft of the *Asbāb* in letter form, sent to Queen Victoria on 1 November 1858, as well as a letter about the Revolt addressed to Sir John Kaye, dated 14 December 1869. Both are presented in print and handwritten format. These documents are compiled, edited, and introduced by Salīmu 'd-Dīn Quraishī. The Quraishī edition is astonishingly well printed, a feature that any reader of Urdu will appreciate, but probably cannot be easily obtained outside of Pakistan. The new Oxford University Press reprint, then, serves the noble purpose of introducing *Asbāb-e Baghāvat-e Hind* to a wider public, as is indeed evidenced by the excellent introductory essay by Francis Robinson.

Robinson's introduction, unlike Quraishī's, assumes no prior knowledge of Sir Syed's life or influence, and thus begins with a brief outline of Sir Syed's life, numerous activities in the political and intellectual spheres, and deep engagement with what he saw as the plight of Indian Muslims following the 1857 Revolt. Robinson then highlights the main points of the *Asbāb*, interprets Sir Syed's position as a member of the "old Mughal ruling elite" and a man with "a powerful sense of Muslim identity" (pp. xi–xii), and places the *Asbāb* within the context of current scholarship on the Revolt. The introduction as a whole is short and to the point, and certainly presents a more critical and extensive perspective than Quraishī's introduction.

But the real gift of the Oxford reprint is *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* itself, for it contains an astounding critique of the British government based on a political philosophy of mutual recognition and shared social practice. While many aspects of this philosophy can be found in Sir Syed's later writings—for example, that Indian Muslims comprised a separate constituency with its own needs and problems; that only a new kind of education would provide the privileged with power and prestige; and that British rule benefited India and should be understood rather than feared—the *Asbāb* provides a degree of comprehensiveness not achieved in Sir Syed's mostly shorter essays, while commenting along the way on intimacy and trust, the needs of the Muslim community, and the Mutiny itself.

Originally published in 1858 in the immediate aftermath of the Mutiny, the main purpose of the *Asbāb* was to soothe British/Muslim tensions in order to improve English sovereignty. Despite this blatantly pro-British position, however, Sir Syed spends most of *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* critiquing the British government, not in any anti-colonial programmatic way (as could never be expected from one who had personally defended British families from mutineers in Bijnor), but rather as part of a philosophical project centered on a theory of good government. The British government's fundamental mistake in India, Sir Syed claims, is that it failed to gain the trust and loyalty of its subjects. Not only did the British prohibit Indian representation in the Legislative Council, but also they introduced land reforms and other laws, buttressed by daily acts of disrespect and racist prejudice, that were hostile to Indian ways of life. Such hostility was based not on any fundamental British/Indian antagonism, however, but rather on mutual misrecognition—the Indians failed to understand and appreciate the good will of their British masters, and the British lacked a commitment to comprehending Indian daily life.

In this philosophy of government based on intimacy and trust, the combined weight of numerous acts and encounters ill-suited to India's population created a combustible mass awaiting only a spark to set it aflame. Indeed, such a spark came when the revolting masses arrived at Delhi, only to come face-to-face with the visage of a once great King, now maintained on the throne as an illusion of Indian sovereignty (p. 11). But neither this, nor the circulation of chapatis, nor the "tainted" cartridges, nor the revolt in Bengal can be blamed for the eruption of the Mutiny; rather, the blame lies with the "actions of an alienating and insensitive government" (p. xiii). Sir Syed was not alone in this view, but on the contrary, as Robinson relates in his introduction, the metaphor of a spark igniting a fire was the basis of several British histories of the Mutiny, including J.W. Kaye's *A History of the Sepoy War* (1867). But how was such a combustible mass created?

Sir Syed locates his discussion of this topic in a fluid conception of the political, the economic, and the social. On one hand, the main cause for grievance before the Mutiny was the introduction of too many land reforms that had the result of casting India's landholding classes into poverty. Sir Syed cites Regulation 6 of 1819, which allowed for government seizure of revenue free lands, as the "most obnoxious" infringement on native rights (p. 26), but this Regulation was surrounded by others that claimed property or demanded more production than could be permanently sustained. On the other hand, these acts were destructive not because they took away means of subsistence, but because they fundamentally altered a way of life. This way of life, oriented around landed estates as "little kingdom[s]," where local chiefs settled disputes and certain rites and customs marked land transactions and transfers of authority (p. 27), reaches a bit into fantasies of idyllic feudal economy, but the invocation of native structures of power and authority remains convincing. These structures, including durbars, robe-giving ceremonies, and small courts, were sometimes unsuccessfully imitated by the British, but more often were displaced by new rituals like stamped paper, land titles, and government councils. But alongside these ritual displacements came new institutions of education, most notably the missionary school. These schools, quickly perceived as the means to government posts and thus to power and prestige, more often than not came with their own Christian instructors, whose curriculum favored English and Urdu over Arabic and Persian, and science and mathematics over Qur'ān and *ḥadīs̤*. These changes, along with other laws contrary to Islamic law and Hindu practice, began to feed a growing suspicion that British institutions for "uplift" were actually disguised attempts at proselytization. (Parenthetically, it is easy to see here how Sir Syed's later creation of the Aligarh Muslim University attempted to assuage these fears while providing the same access to power.) Sir Syed considers this religious anxiety to be at the core of Indian mistrust of British government, and he here takes the controversial step of proclaiming that since Indian Muslims were more committed to doctrine than Hindus, they were hit harder by this perceived threat (p. 23).

Alongside this step toward arguing for Muslim distinctiveness—a move recognized by Robinson in the introduction, and which Sir Syed attributes to Muslims' greater roles in government, land ownership, and sense of pride—Sir Syed simultaneously insists that Muslims, who "are not the aborigines of this country … [but] came in the train of former conquerors" have adjusted to living in India, and have become part of the Indian populace (p. 35). Unlike the British, he claims, who "almost all look forward to retirement in their native land and seldom settle for good amongst the natives of India" (p. 33), Muslims have overcome different blood, faith, manners and customs to produce a "feeling of cordiality" and brotherhood (p. 40). This uneasy sidestepping between invoking Indian pluralism and calling for separate constituencies is a technique Sir Syed refined further in his later arguments for separate electorates.

But despite all of these attacks on the British government, Sir Syed maintains that the mutineers were misinformed and misguided. Not only have the views of Government been "misconstrued by the people" (p. 16), but the tenets of Islam and understandings of jihad were misunderstood as well. Those mutineers crying jihad were "vagabonds and ill-conditioned men … wine drinkers and men who spent their time in debauchery and dissipation" (p. 8). Furthermore, the supposed fatwa printed at Delhi that called for holy war was a forgery in Sir Syed's eyes. If one thinks here of the growing debate at the time as to whether India was a *dār al-Islām* or *dār al-ḥarb*, one can easily recognize how controversial a stand Sir Syed was taking on this point.

But perhaps Sir Syed's most controversial contribution to the scholarship on the Mutiny is his implied point that the Mutiny was not as disruptive or definitive as many historians of India have suggested. While Robinson is right to point out that "the 1857 Revolt was one of the defining moments of Syed Ahmed's life" (p. vii), and certainly the same could be said for many other Muslim intellectuals of the time, for most people, according to Sir Syed, the Mutiny represented nothing more than the culmination of rapidly escalating mistrust and anxiety. In this view, the Mutiny, while certainly momentous, forms one part of a more organic process in which Indian subjects became more and more discontented as they realized British rule was there to stay, and the British responded more and more forcefully to what they saw as a growing threat to their recently acquired sovereignty. One should read *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, then, not just to "discern something of the quality of a great man" as Robinson suggests (p. xiv), but also to explore a critique of British government, and of Indian historiography, with many lessons to offer for the present day. ❐

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Kishwar Naheed. *The Distance of a Shout: Urdu Poems with English Translations.* Edited by Asif Farrukhi. Translated by Asif Farrukhi and others. Salman Tarik Kureshi, editorial consultant. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001. 109 pp. Rs. 295. ISBN 0-19-5793307.

Was there ever a more fitting time for English readers to listen to the voice of a contemporary Urdu woman poet? As American newspapers map the intimate geographies of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Qur'an becomes the number one bestseller on Amazon.com, and images of veiled women limn discussions on local television news, Kishwar Naheed's poetry captures the experience of being female in an Islamic society.

There is now a non-Urdu speaking audience avid to understand manifestations of the female voice from Karachi to Kabul. What is it like to live in a country that is highly repressive to women? What exactly constitutes the "place" of women in South and West Asia's societies? Suddenly, those who have never listened before want to hear voices of people from the Islamic world, and more specifically, the voices of Muslim women.

Indeed, it is tantalizing to think how Kishwar Naheed's poems in *The Distance of a Shout* could easily find a broad international audience at this crucial time—an audience more diverse than the usual Urdu aficionados coupled with intellectual circles in India and Pakistan. It is also interesting to speculate about how her words could enrich many of the discussions taking place today in English. This scenario is not beyond the realm of possibility—the book has been ordered by almost forty libraries in the United States, and Oxford University Press, Pakistan, does distribute about 20% of its titles in London.

Kishwar Naheed is now sixty-one years old. She has been making a public noise, and throwing her voice into the public arena since she first entered the scene with her highly acclaimed Urdu ghazals thirty years ago. Over time, her work in the technically demanding form of the ghazal has yielded to single-subject poems (*naẓms*) and poems in blank verse, speaking of personal, sometimes very personal matters, and carrying overtly politicized, feminist agendas.

She has authored eight collections of poetry since 1969. Just last year she won the Government of Pakistan's Sitara-e-Imtiaz prize. As a public intellectual in South Asia, she has held prestigious positions, and she speaks in her poems not just of her own personal relationships, but also of the relationships that women have with the institutions of power in her society. She writes of how the private and personal intersects with the public and political.

Both Naheed's poetic abilities and significance are evident in this collection. In particular, she has the power to connect the highly proscribed, limited experience of Pakistani women, hereditary victims of a culture which Naheed would herself be the first to acknowledge is increasingly closed to women, with the larger historical events of the world. This September, the Western world witnessed a series of violent events. The attention of English-only readers focused on the Islamic world. There was a tiny ironic echo of the violence and destruction in New York and Afghanistan in the vandalizing of a monument in Lahore's Fatima Jinnah Park. Erected after the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 to commemorate fifty years of Pakistani women's political struggles, it too was attacked this autumn. The desecrators paid particular attention to the words on the monument, painting over them. The words were:

> *Maiṅ tō vohī hūṅ rasm-o-rivāj kē bōjʰ talē jisē tum nē cʰupāyā*
> *Yeh nahīṅ jānā roshnī gʰōr aṅdʰērōṅ sē kabʰī ḍar nahīṅ saktī*
> I am the one whom you made hide under the weight
>   of customs and traditions
> Not knowing that the light can never fear pitch darkness[1]

These are lines from the Kishwar Naheed poem, "*Maiṅ Kaun Hūṅ?"* (Who Am I?). This poem, included in the present anthology, begins with these evocative lines, answering its title question:

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[1] Reviewer's translation.

I am not that woman
Selling you socks and shoes!
Remember me, I am the one you hid
in your walls of stone, while you roamed
free as the breeze, not knowing
that my voice cannot be smothered by stones (p. 34)

The act of destroying the monument—of making invisible what the words have made visible—is part of the brutal fight against those who want to be heard, to be remembered, to be seen, which is captured in this poem, and is one of the central tensions of Naheed's poetry. Her poems, like this one, often talk of the treatment of women by men in her society. They record women's real, as well as metaphorical, walling up, their chaining and their drowning. In the belief that women can be silenced, smothered and drowned, the acts are perpetrated, but they meet resistance in the form of a voice. In this poem, women triumph against these crimes through their strength, in their voices, in their fragrance, in their traces. Naheed is saying "you cannot silence me, and I am not the commodity you treat me as."

The larger symbolism of this act of vandalism in a Pakistani park is remarkable. It connects the dots in a growing cycle of violence, presaging what was to come in New York. It also provides a new ontology of the violence and the terror: this is the very terrorism Pakistani women have experienced for decades, the act against Naheed's poem seems to say, and now it has come to visit you, the West.

The immediate symbolism of destroying words on a memorial—and the metaphor for the event—could easily be turned into another, as yet unwritten, poem by Kishwar Naheed. All the elements are there—the crying out, the violence, the silencing. The very stones themselves carry the words. When speculating about the identity of the defacers and erasers of her words, Naheed said (in an interview with the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn* on 10 September 2001):

> It might be the handiwork of agents of darkness or fundamentalists who do not want to see a meaningful change in the lives of the hapless women of this country. A few verses cannot change the women's plight but the agents of status quo are threatened by the written words which have the power to transcend mental and physical boundaries which threaten them. That's why "they" seem to have erased the poetry from the monument.

And Naheed speaks of this erasure and the danger of speech in her own poems:

The destination of speech is the gallows
Everyone is aware
that the wounds from the unspoken letter are mine

Whom my loneliness
Besides myself, knows. ("A Distance of Two Miles," p. 8)

Or,

I, well, I speak the unspeakable
Because I haven't learnt to say
What must be said. ("Recompense," p. 10)

Translation brings voices that are often heard only by a relative few to a larger audience. In this case, not only is a woman's voice heard in the public arena, Urdu words are now being made heard in English. And not only is it an Urdu voice speaking in English, it is the voice of this highly-acclaimed woman poet who addresses specifically those tensions of the personal and the political, the psyche and society that have so drawn the interest of English speakers now.

The Distance of a Shout is a compilation of forty-one of Naheed's poems published in the 80s and 90s and translated by various individuals (including some by Naheed herself in collaboration with Naomi Shihab Nye). Most of the translations here have been published before in other venues. Two other collections of her work translated into English—viz., *The Price of Looking Back* (in a dual text format) published in 1987 in Lahore, translated by Baider Bakht and Derek M. Cohen, and *The Scream of an Illegitimate Voice* (English text only), translated by the same two translators along with Leslie Lavigne and published in Lahore in 1991—have been mined for *The Distance of a Shout*.

In addition, some poems in this collection have been published in anthologies with other poets' work: *We Sinful Women* (the title of this anthology comes from a Naheed poem), edited and translated by Rukhsana Ahmad; *Fire and the Rose*, edited and translated by Anisur Rahman; *Modern Urdu Poetry*, selected and translated by Mahmood Jamal; and in the *Annual of Urdu Studies*, where C. M. Naim's translations appeared. Farrukhi also acknowledges that some of the translations are from an essay "The Intertextuality of Women in Urdu Literature," but it is unclear who wrote this essay. Some of C. M. Naim's translations are appended with the note "adapted by Salman Tarik Kureshi" and it would have been helpful to know exactly what that means. Incidentally, Naheed has the enviable position of being the only Urdu woman poet to have translations of her poems collected and published in books by themselves, and not just grouped with other poets.

In choosing to present twelve different translators, Asif Farrukhi has forsaken a presentation with a single voice. What he loses in a coherent philosophy and in a single voice for a single author, he makes up for in the richness of myriad presentations of a single poetic persona. Asif Farrukhi has done fourteen of the translations himself, and here the English-only reader might look to him for a discussion of how he approached a poem, since none of the other translators are available, so to speak, for comment. Were there particular technical difficulties?

Did he retain a rhyme or a refrain? But his interests lie elsewhere; he is more concerned with Kishwar Naheed's development as a poet than with the technicalities of translation. He writes in his introduction that

> Kishwar Naheed, one of the leading poets of Pakistan, is a topographer of discomforting experiences, fragile and splintered relationships, and of private sorrows overshadowed or underpinned by public events. A dab of pastel in a heavy, black frame. Down-trodden and yet defiant grass. Havoc wrought by the human heart … this introduction seeks to fix the lines of reference between the poet's writings and her world, with the hope that it would facilitate the reader's appreciation of her poetry. (p. vii)

Here, Farrukhi makes specific and creative references to titles of her works, *Siyāh Ḥāshiyē mēṅ Gulābī Raṅg* (The Dab of Pastel) and *Fitna-Sāmānī-e Dil* (Havoc Wrought by the Heart), but the English reader would not be aware of this. Not only are these references to titles in the introduction accessible only to the bilingual, the absence of discussion regarding how individuals approached their translations may indicate that the editor anticipates an audience who can read both the Urdu and the English and simply see for themselves what choices have been made. Thus, the Urdu title for one poem, translated by Naheed and Nye, is the English word "Censorship." When translated into English, the poem becomes "A Poem Out of Focus." Why? You only know about the substitution if you can read both texts. Here the editor could have been of assistance, if only to clue in the English reader as to what is going on.

Farrukhi does say this about the translations:

> Her bold theme and the no-holds-barred expression often barely conceal the rough edges of her poems. The texture is tense and brittle. This sense of ill-ease could also be the result of these poems venturing deeper into unfamiliar zones of experience. Such poems tend to be more successful in their translated versions rather than in the original. (p. xiii)

This is a fairly surprising statement to read from an editor. Many English-only readers would naturally doubt that even some poems are better in translation. In fact, it seems improbable that having lost their original sound in the Urdu they are somehow improved. Are these poems so arresting that they are more comfortable to the Urdu listener if they are screened through English? Are they simply too abrupt in the familiar language? Do poems with a feminist agenda—the agenda that critics have accused of ignoring class differences in favor of Western categories borrowed by Pakistan's middle and upper-middle class feminists—seem better in a "borrowed" language? Would the reader who is able to read both the original and the translated version side by side agree with this idea?

Since Farrukhi makes choices that seem to presume the bilinguality of the audience, he and his publishers should be commended for presenting the work in a dual text format. For readers who know both Urdu and English (which is to say many of the South Asian readers) this is the only proper solution. The Urdu-knowing audience, because of a historic bilingualness, is more than able to move between the two languages, and wants to do so. The dual text approach has become a norm for translations from Urdu, but it is expensive and complicated to produce. In the past, and in more mainstream publications, it has sometimes been abandoned. Some older works, like *The Golden Tradition* by Ahmed Ali, are frustrating for the bilingual reader who is never provided with the Urdu originals. So three cheers for the dual text approach, but let us also acknowledge what it might mean about readership and audience.

The Urdu-knowing reader will also forgive the very cursory look at the historical background to the kinds of poems Naheed is writing. When Farrukhi says

> Modern Urdu poetry had developed as two distinct streams: the socially committed and left-of-the-centre Progressive writers, which included Faiz, and the 'modernist' who were more interested in experimentations with the form and content as well as explorations of the psychological (pp. viii–ix)

this sort of sketchy summation reminds the Urdu-knowing audience very briefly of recent Urdu literary history, but it is of limited use to those without a working knowledge of Urdu. As Farrukhi notes, Naheed combines social commitment with a very personal voice. He mentions that Naheed had absorbed classical influences, but he again relies on a knowledgeable audience to fill in the blanks of what this might signify.

I am a bit confused by why Farrukhi has chosen "The Distance of a Shout" as the title for the collection. This is the name of a poem by Michael Ondaatje. Farrukhi does not quote its text, nor does he tell us why this makes a good title. In the past, another collection of Naheed's translated poems borrowed its title from the Adrienne Rich poem, "The Scream of an Illegitimate Voice," so possibly he sees his choice as part of a pattern of choosing a title from outside the Urdu context that is linked to Naheed's subjects. Likewise, Farrukhi also uses a reference to Penelope Lively's City of the Mind as a point of departure to discuss Naheed.

Perhaps I am missing something, but after reading the Ondaatje poem I don't quite see what it contains that makes it the best choice for a title for this collection, except that borrowing the title from Ondaatje is a strategy (a post-colonial one) for locating some sort of "other" authority for the text. So many of Naheed's own titles are so riveting—for example, "We Sinful Women," it seems a waste not to have named the anthology after one of her own poems, or one of her own images. If I have missed something, I apologize, but if I cannot follow the reasoning, then surely other readers may be confused as well.

The complete text of the Ondaatje poem follows, and I include it so readers can draw their own conclusions about its appropriateness as a title for Naheed's collection:

> We lived on the medieval coast
> south of warrior kingdoms
> during the ancient age of the winds
> as they drove all things before them.
>
> Monks from the north came
> down our streams floating that was
> the year no one ate river fish.
>
> There was no book of the forest,
> no book of the sea, but these
> are the places people died.
>
> Handwriting occurred on waves,
> on leaves, the scripts of smoke,
> a sign on a bridge along the Mahaweli River.
>
> A gradual acceptance of this new language.[2]

When I try to reread Ondaatje's poem relating it to the Urdu context, I have difficulties. Are we to read the monks as religious fundamentalists? Is the idea that new ways to communicate are being devised? That writing is ephemeral? That some experiences are not recorded? Again, this seems to be a bit of a reach when juxtaposed with Naheed's poems, and I wonder why it is necessary to, in effect, cite this outside authority.

Meanwhile, for both the bilingual and the monolingual reader, the voice of Kishwar Naheed slowly grows louder as the reader peruses each poem. It becomes louder, more insistent and somehow more intimate.

Here she is in her poem, "Soliloquy":

> Condemn me!
> For writing the book without lunacy,
> for writing the interpretation of
> dreams with my blood. (p. 40)

The bilingual reader will know that the poem's refrain is not "Condemn Me!" but rather "Punish Me!" a much more physical act, with the concept sliding from the legally guilty to the "bad child." Nevertheless, the poem takes on a real power with the repeated refrain, however much one may quibble with the translator's choice.

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[2] Michael Ondaatje, *Handwriting* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), p. 6.

Not just for her poetry, but for Kishwar Naheed herself, the central question is: "Will the message get out, be remembered?" This is a voice addressing crises both personal and political, which asks questions and makes statements like these about the words being spoken to her:

> With words of chastity he adorned my hands,
> chained my feet like prisoners,
> and called it modesty. ("How Crazy Are Those Who Love You
> So Much," p. 26)

And again:

> Dust
> on the dining table …
> my finger writes
> What I dare not
> tell you. ("A Story Among Many," p. 54)

Here is the preoccupation with daring to speak, with writing, and with the message getting out. Here the bilingual reader will have the tools to question the translator's (i.e., Daud Kamal's) choices. The literal translation of this poem is:

> Dust had fallen on the dining table
> I did not eat it
> In fact, with my finger
> I wrote with this dust
> What I did not find the courage to say to you.

In the Daud Kamal translation, the image of the "not eating of dust," or of its implied opposite, of the mouth filled with dust, has disappeared. So we have lost a chain of associations that are there in the Naheed poem in Urdu. For example, why would the writer consider eating dust or not eating dust? Is the writer hungry for the truth or love, and is dust all that is offered? Is there dust in the mouth because of ill-treatment or fear? And if dust-eaters are defeated beings, in this case Naheed has made the choice to write, rather than to eat—as she says in her poem. The bilingual reader can see and hear it all, but the Daud Kamal translation has lost this important chain of images as well as the contrast between eating and writing. The Urdu poem ends up having a much tougher feel and richer images than his delicate translation conveys.

The poems have an insistence of theme that does mount to crescendo. In her tour-de-force, "We Sinful Women" (which has been anthologized in a textbook published by Harcourt Brace) we confront Naheed at her strongest. It translates well, with the repetition of "It is we sinful women" or "These are we sinful women" (in the Urdu) repeated at every verse. The poet describes a battle between the brave women "who don't sell our lives," while those who sell them "become exalted." And those women too

> Who find stories of persecution piled on each threshold
> who find the tongues which could speak have been severed. (p. 74)

Of particular interest and poignancy are the poems here that discuss her mother. As Farrukhi notes in his introduction, drawing on the autobiography she has published in Urdu, *Burī ʿAurat kī Kat*^{h}*ā* (A Bad Woman's Tale), Naheed confronted paternal opposition to her work as a poet. "No one in her family wrote poetry, least of all women!" She attended college in a *burqa*. These restrictions on her freedom as a woman may have inspired her close look at her own mother's life. And her own relationship with her late husband appears in poems exploring the relationship her father had with her mother. After all, a girl's mother is the first to pass on the inheritance of expectations. Naheed asks poetically in "A Palace of Wax":

> Before I ever married
> my mother
> used to have
> nightmares.
> Her fearful screams shook me
> I would wake her, ask her
> "What happened?"
> Blank-eyed she would stare at me.
> She couldn't remember her dreams. (p. 64)

And then looking, wonderingly, at what her mother and father may have expected of each other:

> After a certain age
> Our mothers and fathers
> Would transfer to separate courtyards, separate rooms
> Without any storms or rage. ("Turning the Page," p. 106)

There are many more riches in this anthology: poems in which she talks to Jane Austen, poems in which she addresses the master of countries with a cold climate, and in "History Does not Repeat Itself" (transcreated—liberally—by Daud Kamal). She asks the questions and tells the tales that we all, bilingual and monolingual alike, want to hear.

As the newspapers, talk shows and magazines layer the images of Muslim women into their texts and into our thoughts, it is up to us to search for an authentic voice. This book is in some libraries, as mentioned. The conversation about these kinds of women, these "sinful women" is now taking place in the most unexpected of forums. *The Distance of a Shout* provides us the opportunity to listen to that unfiltered voice, not brought to us by commercial sponsors, but through the efforts of a group of translators mining what was spoken first in another language, calling from (shouting from?) another tradition, carrying with it another culture and another history. And even with all these differences:

> A letter of the alphabet
> Imprisoned in the chains of speech
> Became a noun
> Became a covenant
> Became a poem ("A Distance of Two Miles," p. 8)

Thanks to the efforts of many that went into this volume, we can read the poem that began with a letter of the alphabet, that was destroyed in a park, and that lives on in this book. ❐

—LAUREL STEELE
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NATALIA PRIGARINA. *Mirza Ghalib, a Creative Biography*. Translated from the Russian by M. OSAMA FARUQI. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000. xiii, 361 pp. $29.95

ONE wonders what the somewhat pretentious word "creative" is supposed to indicate—a point to which I shall return later. But first let us look at the book in its context. In 1969 *Ghalib, Life and Letters*, by myself and Khurshidul Islam, was published simultaneously in the USA and the UK. (An OUP edition is still in print.) It remains, as far as I know, the fullest treatment of Ghālib's life and is, I would claim, no less "creative" than the work under review. But a friendly critic pointed out to me that although Ghālib is known mainly as a great poet, our book did not adequately reflect this. In 1989 (three years after the original publication in Russian of Prigarina's book) Pavan K. Varma's *Ghalib, the Man, the Times* devoted greater attention to Ghālib's poetry, and now Prigarina's book more than remedies this deficiency. For this she deserves high praise; and if I now go on to point out important defects I would not wish this to obscure the book's virtues.

It has to be said that the welcome weight given to Ghālib's poetry owes more to quantity than quality. There is a lot of mere padding in the narrative. One can only smile when the author thinks it necessary to impress upon us (in 11 lines on p. 24) that "actual life" does not always follow the pattern of detective stories. We do not need any account of "Basti Nizam ud din," much less of the Ghalib Academy and the Ghalib Institute (pp. 158–9). In Chapter 3 (pp. 21–48) the "Vignettes of Agra" (drawn mainly from Nażīr Akbarābādī's verse) are largely irrelevant.

Even those parts of the book (pp. 1–8 and Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 49–92) dealing with the background to Ghālib's verse, discussing Persian legend and Ghālib's references to it, the traditional themes of Persian poetry and the "Indian style" are much longer than they needed to be; and moreover these precede the rather timid and unnecessarily apologetic account of the themes of "allegorical love"—i.e., love between two human beings—whereas they should have followed it.

Having given us more than was necessary on these themes, she devotes very little attention to what makes Ghālib's verse specifically his, and, most importantly, what makes Ghālib's ghazals specifically Ghālib's ghazals. I have done this at some length, originally in the article on Ghālib's Urdu verse in the collection, *Ghalib, the Poet and His Age*, a work which she lists in her bibliography but which she seems to have hardly used, and more recently in *The Famous Ghalib* (New Delhi: Roli, 2000). I think it appropriate to summarize at some length what I said there, omitting the many verses quoted in illustration

Ghālib's verse often comments on the society in which he lived. He feels himself to be at odds with it, mainly because he alone practices the values which all profess.

He is acutely aware of unceasing change, and welcomes it, even when it brings him misfortune. At every moment something new is coming into being, and one must see it all. Reality is infinitely rich, and one who is alive to this can already see things that have not yet come into existence.

Life is an unending search; it ends neither in Mecca nor in Paradise. In it you may accept the help of anyone competent to give it, but you must never surrender yourself to anyone else's judgment.

In what other Urdu poet will you find this range of deep thought and keen feeling? I read verses on these themes and think, "What a wonderful, wonderful man." Prigarina evidently does not feel that.

There is something to be said about his choice of the ghazal as the medium of most of his verse. The fundamental reason for his choice is that, for him, the ghazal is not just an exercise in conventional themes but also the expression of thoughts and feelings which really do accord with his own. But there is more than this to be said. All the ghazal's traditional themes occur in his verse, including that of the passionate, all-consuming love of a man for his mistress. We know that Ghālib himself did not experience—more accurately, perhaps, did not allow himself to experience—such love, taking care to be "the wise fly that settles not on the honey but on the sugar." But that is not to say that he never wished he could have experienced it. In a letter written perhaps only a year or two before his death, he looks back on his life and quotes a verse of the Persian poet Anvarī as describing his own position:

Alas! There is no patron who deserves my
praise
Alas! There is no mistress who inspires my
verse

In some of his verses he is creating in fantasy the beloved which real life denied him and expressing for her all the feeling which he would have wished to experience but which no real woman in his life ever inspired in him.

But his choice of this form has a deeper relevance to his needs. If we look at the essential character of the ghazal's lover-hero, we can soon see why it appeals to Ghālib so powerfully. The lover is someone whom the experience of an all-consuming love has completely transformed. Few people in the society in which he lives have ever undergone such an experience, and to one who has not undergone it, it is something that thought and emotion alike can hardly ever begin to comprehend. Yet it is this experience which alone gives meaning to the lover's life. All other values, all other standards of conduct, are either discarded or are absorbed into and given new meaning by the way of life which is learned from love, and which love alone can teach. The lover thus lives out among others a life dedicated to, and directed by, ideals which even the most sensitive and sympathetic among them cannot comprehend. That great majority which is neither particularly sensitive nor particularly sympathetic, because it cannot comprehend his values, shuns him, fears him and resents him. If you condense this description and express it in more general terms, you can say that in the ghazal, the lover-hero, and the ghazal poet taking on that role, is someone to whom all the things that are most precious in life are the product of a unique, nearly incommunicable experience which is all-important. This experience isolates him from his fellows and condemns him to live his life among people who cannot understand him, let alone appreciate him, and who cannot really accept him as one of their own community.

The book does not deal at all adequately with Ghālib's religious views. Perhaps an author who finds it necessary to follow every mention of Muḥammad's name with "(PBUH)" found this too unsettling a theme. Otherwise there was no difficulty in it. Ḥālī, in a statement Prigarina does not quote says: "From all the duties of worship and the enjoined practices of Islam he took only two—a belief that God is one and is imminent in all things, and a love for the Prophet and his family. And this alone he considered sufficient for salvation." And we have his own passionate declaration of his faith in response to Ḥālī's ill-judged preaching (*Life and Letters*, pp. 362–3). Both of which belie Prigarina's remarkable claim (on p. 121) that "For him [Ghālib] there was no particular value and advantage in any of the religions…." Ḥālī is equally clear on the question of whether or not Ghālib was a Shī'a (*Life and Letters*, pp. 98–100). Prigarina's only reference to the question is on p. 254–5 where she makes the absurd suggestion that “perhaps in order to avoid idle talk and accusations [made by whom?—RR] he declared himself to be a Shia.”

There are other even more remarkable omissions. Most surprising is the absence of a proper evaluation of Ghālib’s letters, second only to his Urdu verse as the basis of his fame—and there is no mention of Ghālib’s own estimate of them and of how he at first absolutely prohibited their publication and then changed his mind and himself made every effort to collect them.

Like everybody else, she quotes Ghālib’s exaggerated exaltation of his Persian verse over his Urdu, and fails to note his equally exaggerated assertion of the exact opposite.

> If people cry “Can Urdu then put Persian verse
> to shame?”
> Recite a line of Ghālib’s verse and tell them,
> “Yes, like this!”

And she seems totally unaware of the existence of the very important collection of Ghālib’s letters *Nādirāt-e Ghālib*, published as long ago as 1949 but not even listed in her bibliography. This is full of his delightfully uninhibited praise of his own Urdu verse and includes the humorous claim that it is greatly superior to that of his great predecessors Mīr and Saudā.

This leads me to note that this “creative” author often fails to use some of Ghālib’s own much more creative writing about his experiences. Thus she gives little attention to his devotion to his “grandchildren.” Yet there is a wonderfully vivid expression of his love for these two mischievous, unruly boys in his letter to Tufta dated 18 June 1852. Nor does she deal adequately with Ghālib’s relationship with his wife. She highlights, as everyone else has done, his dissatisfactions, but omits to speak of his constant concern for her welfare, strikingly evident in his letters from Rampur to his young admirer Ḥakīm Ghulām Najaf Khān.

A more serious fault is the author’s not infrequent failure to give due weight to Ghālib’s perfectly clear and unequivocal attitudes, preferring her own “creative” interpretation to his. This is especially evident in her treatment of his attitude to the 1857 revolt. There is absolutely no reason to doubt that the utter loathing and contempt which he expresses for the mutinous sepoys and their supporters is exactly what he felt. One may wish that this had not been his attitude, but the suggestion that these views were expressed as a ploy to curry favor with the British is entirely unwarranted. That Ghālib’s contempt was genuine is clear from his letters to his friends, but his creative biographer does not scruple to suppress this. In a letter which she mistakenly says was written to Ḥakīm Ghulām Najaf Khān—in fact it was one to Tufta—there is a sentence in which he laments the loss of his friends, both English and Indian. He writes, “the English *whom these infamous black scoundrels slaughtered*,” but Prigarina in quoting this letter omits the words I have italicized.

Equally unwarranted is the suggestion, made by K.M. Ashraf (in what is, incidentally, a disgracefully dishonest article) and by Dyakov, who provide no evidence for their view, that Ghālib "edited" his journal, "selecting only what could be given to the English for their perusal." She says "it is difficult not to agree with this." On the contrary, it is quite impossible to agree with it. In the version he sent to the British (and there is no evidence that there was any other version) he speaks with bitter irony of their hanging Indian nobles on the gallows tree "that none might say that their blood had been shed"—a remark hardly flattering to the British.

Similarly Prigarina does not speak of Ghālib's bitter and wholly justified indignation at the Nawab of Rampur's callous indifference to his acute distress in the closing years of his life.

Ghālib of course knew how to express complaint less openly but in a disguise which anyone who knew him well could penetrate without much difficulty. Thus his famous "apology" to Bahādur Shāh implies in almost every line a complaint against him. All this is described in detail in *Life and Letters*, pp. 78–82, but Prigarina either misses this or chooses not to speak of it.

The *maṭla'* is a perfect summing up:

> God is my witness, Ghālib is no liar,
> I set great store by my integrity

The perceptive reader would have been sure to see the implication that all that he had said in the *qaṭa'* for which this is ostensibly an apology was also true.

A number of other instances of Prigarina's impermissible toning down of Ghālib's views could be given.

Let us turn now to the best aspect of the author's "creativeness." This expresses itself mainly in the interweaving of the poetry with the incidents of Ghālib's life. This is an entirely appropriate method and in general she employs it well and effectively. Indeed this is the really valuable feature of her book. But she does not always use this method in justifiable ways. The great danger here arises from the fact that as she correctly states "it is practically impossible to find out when one or another verse was written, whereas in order to visualize the story of a poet's life as the biography of his heart, one should at least know when he wrote a particular verse" (p. 126). This does not mean that one cannot illustrate the significance of a particular incident by quoting a verse which was not in fact composed for that purpose. The author does this, e.g., on p. 310, where she aptly says that "the poetic motif of one of his earlier *ghazals* becomes unexpectedly relevant" at this point. But she quite often quotes verses at different points in the narrative in a way which leaves the reader to assume (what cannot be assumed) that these were composed at the time of the event being narrated. The most glaring example is on pp. 109–10 where a complete ghazal lamenting the death of his beloved is stated to be "dedicated to the death of a *domnī*"; and this is said to be "a fact confirmed by all the biographers." The first statement is probably false and the second entirely so. Some, in my opinion correctly, think that it refers to a respectable purdah-observing lady. And in any case one cannot prove that wherever he speaks of a beloved of his youth he is always referring to the same person. In all probability there was more than one such beloved.

A word about the production of the book. Readers accustomed to OUP's traditional high standards will be disappointed in the marked lapse from them in evidence here. Open the book at any point, and the pages will not lie flat. More important, OUP's editors have not done their job properly. For example, Ghālib's famous prophecy about the fate of his verse is mistranslated on p. x; and yet a correct (if not very elegant) translation of the same verse is given on p. 244. (Incidentally, the translations throughout the book are disappointing.) For the verse the author relies heavily on the generally unpoetic and occasionally inaccurate translations of Yusuf Husain Khan. One wonders why she does not make similar use of our translations from the prose. Hers are markedly inferior—not surprisingly, since they are presumably re-translations into English from translations into Russian.) There are no notes, and for many important quotations given in the main text no sources are given. Neither is this deficiency made good in the totally inadequate bibliography. For example, there is more than one citation from "the collection *Anecdotes from Ghalib's Life*." But nowhere are we given any information about this work. Abundant (and mostly unnecessary) references are made to a whole galaxy of other writers' opinions about various incidents in Ghālib's life, but hardly ever are we told in what books or articles these opinions are to be found. (Many of them should in any case find no place in a biography, "creative" or otherwise—e.g., the speculations on pp. 98 ff. about whether one of the beloveds of Ghālib's youth was a *ḍōmnī* or a *t̤avā'if*.) We are told what "all the biographers" (p. 27) and "all the commentators" (p. 117) on Ghālib's letters have to say, but no details are given of where they say it. (And I have never heard of any commentator who has felt it necessary to explain things that need no explanation, e.g., that in a famous letter "*bēṛī*" (fetter) refers to "*bīvī*," Ghālib's wife.)

Having said all that, let me reiterate that the book is a valuable and generally well-written one. For example, the complex developments in Ghālib's efforts to get from the British what he felt to be his due in the form of a "pension" are well and lucidly presented. So buy or borrow it and read it. You will enjoy it. ❒

—RALPH RUSSELL
SOAS (London)

Ralph Russell. *How Not To Write The History Of Urdu Literature & Other Essays On Urdu And Islam.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 235 pp. Rs. 450.

Another welcome book from a much admired friend of so many of us. A miscellany, it contains in the main previously published essays but also a few new pieces. None of us could possibly have read them all when they first appeared. Each has now been revised to some extent.

The book is in three parts. Part I consists of an essay on Ralph—I think he would prefer that to being referred to as Russell—by Marion Molteno. A useful survey of Ralph's many writings, it elucidates for us the diverse contexts of his life's work. Part II contains seven essays, including the eponymous, that deal with Urdu language and literature in some strong way. Part III contains ten essays that can be said to be about Islam in South Asia. Together these seventeen essays display Ralph's keen engagement with Urdu language and literature, the people who claim it as theirs, and their recent history in South Asia and the United Kingdom. As expected, they are quintessentially Ralphian. You hear a voice that does not pretend to be anything other than the man's own: conversational and commonsensical; plainly indignant when so feeling, and yet readily forgiving too; self-critical, but unhesitatingly assertive of what he believes in.

A most pleasant surprise for me were the essays of Part III. It was thrilling to see someone identified in the academia with Urdu taking forceful stands on such matters as Abul A'la Maududi's obscurantism, the uproar over Rushdie's novel, and interfaith dialogues. While resolutely avowing that he is a communist and an atheist, Ralph looks for common ground with his largely Muslim audience in these essays—he finds one such accommodating site in the sufistic humanism that permeates not just much of Urdu poetry but also the lives of most Muslim men and women in South Asia. At the same time, he can be depended upon to point out any humbug in sight. Three quotations may make this clear:

> Many of [the exponents of interfaith dialogue] who understand the feelings of the anti-Rushdie campaigners seem to me to have been saying to them, in effect, 'We recognize that devotion to Islam demands that you act as you do, and we respect your stand.' What they ought to have said was, 'We challenge the view that Islam sanctions your behaviour and your demands', and pointed to those doctrines of both mainstream Islam and of the Sufi trend in Islam which dictated a very different response. ("Inter-Faith Dialogue—and Other Matters," p. 229)

> Saudi Arabia is not exactly an exemplar of all the high principles of Islamic democracy, Islamic freedom, and Islamic human rights, but no one reading Maududi would ever know this. One is tempted to the cynical conclusion that this is because it is Saudi resources that finance the worldwide propaganda of Maududi's ideas, and you don't bite the hand that

> feeds you. And what goes for Saudi Arabia goes for all the other Muslim countries too. Where, for example, in all these Islamic countries with a continuous Islamic history is there a single one which can be called a democracy? And why is Saudi Arabia so wholly subservient to that perniciously secular, perniciously democratic and perniciously nationalist imperialist power, the USA? ("Maududi and Islamic Obscurantism," pp. 217–8)

> When S. Abid Husain, in his *The Destiny of Indian Muslims*, remarks with satisfaction on the absence among the Muslims of any feelings of what he calls 'linguistic communalism' or 'linguistic separatism' he is claiming for them more credit than they deserve, for this 'all-India' feeling derives mainly from the all-India imperial tradition, which takes it for granted that Delhi and UP provide the leadership for the country as a whole and ignores to a quite indefensible degree the legitimate aspirations of India's fairly numerous nationalities. ("Strands of Muslim Identity in South Asia," p. 179)

While Ralph can be fairly stern with those who enjoy any sort of social or political authority over others, he is always genial—without compromising his own values—with those whom he perceives not to be powerful, as in the case of the villagers he describes in "Islam in a Pakistan Village: Some Impressions." Written in 1978, it is still a wise and inspiring essay.

Of the seven essays in Part II, three originally appeared in the *Annual of Urdu Studies*: "How Not to Write the History of Urdu Literature," "The Urdu Ghazal: A Rejoinder to Frances W. Pritchett and William L. Hanaway," and "Some Notes on Hindi and Urdu." The subjects of other essays are: Aijaz Ahmad's "versions" of Ghalib, leadership in the Progressive Writers' Movement, Urdu in post-1947 India, and the late scholar/novelist Aziz Ahmad.

The eponymous essay is of course a classic by now. My first reading of it in 1987 alerted me not only to the arrogantly judgmental, and ultimately useless, stances of Muhammad Sadiq and Ram Babu Saksena but also to many quirks of my own thinking. Also on target is Ralph's admonitory review of Aijaz Ahmad's book, particularly concerning its interpretive accuracy, though I would still praise the project for bringing some fine American poets into a creative engagement with Ghalib.[3] Like Ralph, I too preferred the "versions" by Adrienne Rich and

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[3] The project on Ghalib was commissioned by the Asia Society's Asian Literatures Program on the model of the anthology of Modern Hindi Poetry that Vidya Niwas Misra had put together in collaboration with Josephine Miles, Leonard Nathan and some other poets at Berkeley (*Modern Hindi Poetry: An Anthology*, Vidya Niwas Misra (ed.), (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965). The two books, however, differ in a major way. The Hindi anthology was

W. S. Merwin, for they seemed closer to Ghalib than others, but I also found a different pleasure in David Ray's wild riffs on some of Ghalib's couplets.[4]

In the essay on the PWA leadership, Ralph posits three tasks that those who start a movement must undertake: (i) at the ground level, win the allegiance of people not yet committed to any cause; (ii) gain the support of those whose allegiance may be elsewhere but whose support would not be inconsistent with the aims of the new movement; and (iii) "at a more exalted level," seek the support of those who are established leaders with an important following and "who may be expected to carry that following with them when they accept the claims, or some of the claims, of the new movement." The Urdu Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) leadership, according to Ralph, did well in all three tasks, but it went somewhat overboard in accommodating itself and the movement to diverse social and political groups that already wielded influence.

> A consequence of this was the blurring of the lines which, had they acted with greater consistency and in accordance with more sharply defined principles, would have demarcated them more clearly from other social, political and literary groups whose claim to be regarded as "progressive" was at least somewhat dubious. (p. 84)

Similar demands for a kind of ideological purity were frequently made from within the ranks of the Progressive writers in the forties and fifties too, often around the inclusion or expulsion of such writers as Manto, Krishan Chander, and Qurratulain Hyder. Sardar Jafri even accused Faiz of ideological ambiguity in the latter's view of freedom's dawn. These demands dismayed many supporters of the movement, and did not enhance its general acceptance. One may well ask: how does one judge the success of a literary movement? By the class origins of its supporters or by the size of the audiences at its *mushā'iras*? By the excluding energy of its ideology or by its willingness to accommodate diversity and then grow into something more cohesively integrated? Be that as it may, the task that most "leaders" tend to adopt as their most important is that of holding on to their positions and denigrating the role of others, and a study of the PWA (Urdu) from that perhaps jaundiced perspective is yet to be written.[5]

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put together by selecting, through mutual agreement among the collaborators, one version of each poem out of the many done by different poets, while the Ghalib book includes all the available versions for any given ghazal.

[4] Adrienne Rich eventually wrote an entire set of poems that she titled, "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib," included in *Leaflets: Poems 1965—1968* (New York: Norton, 1969).

[5] Ralph's essay was written before the appearance of the most "self-critical" study of the Progressive Movement in Urdu: *Urdū Mēṅ Taraqqī-Pasand Adabī Teḥrīk* by Khalīlu 'r-Raḥmān 'Aẓmī (Aligarh: Anjuman-e Taraqqī-e Urdū, 1972),

I must also disagree with Ralph when he criticizes Krishan Chander for including N.M. Rāshid's poem "Intiqām" in an anthology, for that poem is neither autobiographical nor does it ask us in any way to celebrate its protagonist, who is conceived, I would venture, in much the same way as Eliot's Prufrock and Hollow Men. We should also remember that Rashid's second book, *Īrān Mēṅ Ajnabī*, contains some of the strongest anti-imperialism poems written in Urdu.

I must now make some comments on the essay, "The Urdu Ghazal: A Rejoinder to Frances W. Pritchett and William L. Hanaway," which also contains a reference to me. I'm currently teaching, for the last time, my two-quarter course on the Urdu ghazal. As usual I asked the students to read first the original essay by Ralph, "The Pursuit of the Urdu Ghazal," and then Pritchett's, "Convention in the Classical Urdu Ghazal: The Case of Mir." To my bicameral mind, the two essays are essential to each other, though not exactly as correctives, for each brings to the fore some issues that are essential to our full appreciation of the Urdu ghazal and its many contexts. I don't quite support the idea of "illicit love" because I have trouble imagining anything that was actually considered "licit" love in the 18th century. Love was not a required element in what were licit relationships in that society—husbands and wives, for example, did not take vows to love and cherish each other. Nor do I believe that the Indo-Muslim society was as strictly segregated along sexual lines as Andalib Shadani and Annemarie Schimmel suggest. Even if we limit ourselves to the *shurafā'* or the upper classes, at least the men had more than ample access to persons of the opposite sex for erotic gratification. How then could that society "inevitably" produce homosexuals and pederasts? Ghazal, if it is anything, is the poetry of relationships par excellence, and it is never quite remote from real life. I don't believe that its so-called conventions did not have some basis in real life, but I also believe that most people tend to fall back on conventions when they make an effort to represent their lives, particularly in some literary form. This is all I wish to say with reference to the debate which originally appeared in this journal, and can only hope that my remarks displease all parties equally. I'm a happy hypocrite when it comes to holding on to good friends.

I must not conclude without making an urgent appeal to Ralph: please publish right away the interviews you conducted with Mufti Raza Ansari of Firangi Mahal, Lucknow. At this time in our lives, the Muslims of South Asia sorely need to read the words of that uniquely erudite and tolerant person. ❐

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who broke away from the movement in the 1950s and completed his book in 1957.

Selections from the Persian Ghazals of Ghalib with Translations. Translated by RALPH RUSSELL (English) and IFTIKHAR AHMAD ADANI (Urdu). Karachi: Pakistan Writers' Co-operative Society, 1997. 166 pp. Rs. 350.

RALPH RUSSELL is a well-known scholar of Urdu and its literature and is the author of several books including two prominent volumes on Ghālib: *Ghalib—1797–1869*: *Life and Letters* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969; republished in 1994 by Oxford University Press, New Delhi), and *Ghalib: The Poet and His Age* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972).

Iftikhar Ahmad Adani began his translation of Ghālib's Persian ghazals in 1978. He proposes to publish up to a thousand Persian couplets of Ghālib with his Urdu translation, which he has tentatively titled *Naqsh-hā-e Raṅg Raṅg*. He has authored a book *Ghālib Shināsi kē Karishmē* (1995) which is a collection of essays, reflecting on different aspects of life, each one being inspired by some particular *she'r* of Ghālib. Adani had a chance meeting with Russell at a conference in 1994 in Pakistan. The two scholars shared their collection of favorite couplets (*bayāẓ*). Then, in 1995, Russell sent the manuscript of his *bayāẓ* to Adani. The latter selected 250 couplets common to their collections and proposed to Russell that they be jointly published. The proposed volume would have the Persian original, Adani's Urdu version and Russell's English translation with notes. The volume under review is a result of their independent translations, published jointly. Reading Adani's Urdu version of Ghālib's Persian verse is a strange experience, since Ghālib's Urdu *dīvān* is so much more interesting, complex and daring than his Persian verse. And the Persian rendered into Urdu sounds unlike Ghālib. The English translation does not suffer from this problem, as its idiom is so far removed from the Persian or Urdu.

Russell is well-known for his first book *Three Mughal Poets*, in collaboration with Khurshidul Islam (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968), and more recently, *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Press, 1992). *Three Mughal Poets* won the authors respect in the Urdu world for its erudition and flair, and its sparkling English prose made the book extremely readable. Russell's translations came across as attractive, accurate and emotionally in sync with the poems. He matched the two-line original verses with two lines of translation, thus embodying the "feeling" of the original. This was an innovation in translating the Urdu ghazal. In *Ghalib—1797–1869*: *Life and Letters*, Russell's grasp of the English idiom makes the polished, urbane prose of Ghālib come alive.

However, in the present translation the desire to stick to a two-line verse form is often carried to an illogical degree. For example, when it becomes a case of sacrificing accuracy simply to fit into the two-line format, then the result is a wooden deadness. Admittedly, it is a challenging task to adhere to the two-line format because the idiom and culture of English is so different. Therefore, it is hard to convey the subtlety of thought from Persian to English. Russell faced a more challenging task than Adani, who benefited from being able to transfer Persian vocabulary directly into his translations.

For example, on pages 72–3 one finds the following couplet:

> *Dabīram shā‘iram rindam nadīmam shēva-hā dāram*
> *Giraftam reḥm bar-faryād-o-afghānam na-mī āyad*

The Urdu translation reads:

> *Shā‘ir dabīr-o-rind maiṅ ik yār-e khush-tadbīr maiṅ*
> *Dēkʰō tō mujʰ sā kaun hai čʰōṛō mirī āh-o-fughāṅ*

The English translation reads:

> *I am a writer, poet, drinker, friend—and much besides*
> *So be it if my sad lament can never touch your heart*

My translation would be:

> *If my sighs and laments don't move you, I accept that.*
> *But, what of my other qualities?*
> *I am a writer, a poet, a liberal, and a* nadīm *as well.*

Though the Urdu translation is inaccurate, it does benefit from borrowing the words *rind* and *dabīr* from the original. However, the second hemistich is a loose, vague translation. The English translation is incorrect. *Rind* does not mean a "drinker." A *rind* can be defined as "a person having a liberal outlook; unconventional, heterodox." *Nadīm* is a technical word which means "a companion," and the implication is "an official companion" like the *nadīms* at princely or royal courts.

The very first couplet on pages 72–3:

> *Ālūda-e reyā natavāṅ būd Ghālibā*
> *Pāk-ast khirqa-e ke ba mai shust-o-shū kunand*

The Urdu translation:

> *Ghālib usē na jāniyō ālūda-e reyā*
> *Khirqa vo pāk hai jisē dʰō'ēṅ sharāb sē*

The English translation reads:

> *Ghalib, you must not wear a cloak soiled with hypocrisy*
> *That cloak alone is clean that has been washed in the purest wine*

My translation would be:

> *Ghalib, it is not possible for a drinker to be a hypocrite*
> *The* khirqa *that is washed with wine is pure.*

Russell sounds didactic. The translation does not "feel" right. Adani, on the other hand, by using the demonstrative pronoun *usē,* points to the coat instead of the poet himself. The sweetness of the usage of *alif-e-shafqat*, in "Ghālibā" is also lost, in both the Urdu and English versions.

Pages 106–7:

Persian:

> *Darān če man na-tavānam ze eḥtiyāt̤ če sūd*
> *Badānče dōst na-khvāhad ze eḥtiyāt̤ če ḥaẓẓ*

The Urdu translation:

> *Jō apnē bas mēṅ na hō kēsī eḥtiyāt̤ us sē*
> *Hō jis pe dōst na mā’ïl us ikhtiyār sē kyā*

The English translation:

> *Why go with care about a task I cannot perform*
> *I can; she doesn't want me to. So where's the joy?*

I would translate the above like this:

> *Why practice caution in what I cannot do?*
> *A choice by not having a choice is no choice.*

The implication of "go with care" is not the same as what is meant by *"eḥtiyāt̤."* The phrase "about a task" is superfluous.

Perhaps Russell's translation can be defended at some level. No two translations can ever agree. Several English translations of Ghālib's Persian ghazals have been published: Syed Arif Shah Gilani, *Ghalib, His Life and His Persian Poetry* (Karachi, 1956) contains a selection of a thousand couplets; Yusuf Husain, *Persian Ghazals of Ghalib* (New Delhi: Ghalib Institute, 1980); and many others. In the volume under consideration no sources for the ghazals are cited, nor are the ghazals numbered. The selection is random and not at all representative of Ghālib's genius. In all fairness, the work is simply a personal selection of favorite couplets. It leaves the impression that it is not a serious work, and should not be judged as such.

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Nations and Narration

NIAZ ZAMAN. *A Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.* Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001. 358 pp. Rs. 595.

THE Bangladeshi scholar Niaz Zaman's comprehensive study of novelistic representations of Partition comes at a time when postcolonial writings from the Subcontinent have claimed an important role in contemporary cultural discourse. In recent years, dozens of regional language novels and short story collections about Partition have appeared in English language translations, some in conjunction with new films and television series, no doubt signifying a renewed willingness in the region to contemplate the bitter legacies of Partition. In her book, Niaz Zaman observes that half a century after this odd historical event, finally, the writers of the Subcontinent have begun to face up to the divided legacy of Partition, although this painful event still tends to evoke irreconcilable responses constrained by respective national ideologies. Indian novelists tend to view Partition as tragic dismemberment, but Pakistani writers view it as unfinished business. Although Niaz Zaman does not offer us a theory or a critical method for problematizing the legacies of Partition, she does offer a competent and quite useful description of a wide range of novels written in English, Urdu, and Bengali, with additional references to fiction that has appeared in Punjabi and Hindi.

Indeed, the subject matter demands an overview of the history and politics of the two-nation idea, which she provides in her introduction and in varying degrees throughout the book. She has also made an effort to discuss the contemporary realities in the three nations that have come into being through Partition. For instance, early on, she comments on the enthusiasm with which the fiftieth anniversary of independence was celebrated in India, whereas in Pakistan, she notes, "there didn't seem much to celebrate," on account of its lingering feudalism, its inability to come to terms with the loss of Bangladesh; in Bangladesh itself, where the clarion call for the two-nation idea came, she writes, "there was no celebration." Although, as an Indian, this reviewer finds much to quibble about in the author's comfortable summary of events leading to Partition—who can ever claim to offer a balanced overview of this event!—Zaman might very well be accurate in her assessment that "despite individual differences, the ideology of the nation affects the writer's response" (p. 17).

As a critical work that seeks to isolate ideological content by sifting through a vast multilingual genre, this book could have benefited from an overview of half a century of Partition novels, in the absence of which, at least a thorough bibliography of primary works could have served the purpose. Also missing is a clear articulation of the critical criteria used for choosing the so-called "selected novels" mentioned in the title. Why select Shashi Tharoor? Why ignore Mukul Kesavan?

Looking Through Glass deserves more than a paragraph in this study. And why waste so much time on Mahmud Sipra?

The author's basic strategy in *Divided Legacy* seems to be to march through selected novels by distinguished writers like Qurratulain Hyder (*Āg kā Daryā*, 1957; *Ākher-e Shab kē Hamsafar*, 1979), Mulk Raj Anand (*Private Life of an Indian Prince*, 1953), Attia Hosain (*Sunlight on a Broken Column*, 1961), Manohar Malgonkar (*A Bend in the Ganges*, 1964), Salman Rushdie (*Midnight's Children,* 1980), Anita Desai (*Clear Light of Day*, 1980), Abdullah Hussein (*Udās Naslēṅ*, 1962), Amitav Ghosh (*The Shadow Lines*, 1988), Bhisham Sahni (*Tamas*, 1971), and Tasleema Nasrin (*Fera*, 1993; *Lajja,* 1994). However, one of the pleasures of this study is the discussion of lesser-known novelists like Balachandra Rajan (*Dark Dancer*, 1958), Chaman Nahal (*Āzādī,* 1975), Intizar Husain (*Bastī,* 1995), and Sunil Gangopadhyay, (*Purba-Paschim*, 1995). Zaman also offers excellent close readings of works by much less accomplished writers like M. Aslam (*Raqṣ-e Iblīs,* 1950), Naseem Hejazy (*Khāk aur Khūn,* 1949), Bapsi Sidhwa (*Ice-Candy Man*, 1988, published in the US as *Cracking India*), Mahmud Sipra (*Pawn to King Three*, 1985), Rahi Masoom Reza (*The Feuding Families of Village Gangauli,* 1995), Sharf Mukaddam (*When Freedom Came*, 1982) Mumtaz Shah Nawaz (*The Heart Divided,* 1957), Mehr Nigar Masroor (*Shadows of Time*, 1987) Abul Fazl (*Ranga Prabhat*, 1957), Abu Rushd (*Nongor*, 1967), Shaheedullah Kaiser (*Sangshaptak,* 1965), Sardar Jainuddin (*Anek Suryer Asha*, 1966), and Alauddin Al Azad (*Kshuda O Asha*, 1964), several of them Urdu and Bengali writers rarely studied in conjunction with the English language writers of the Subcontinent. At times, several of these novels come off as substandard and incorrigibly partisan, undercutting the overall effect of this study, which doesn't seem to distinguish between literary work and hack work. Similarly, the author expends considerable energy discussing writers like Salman Rushdie, whose work has been studied with great theoretical sophistication by other critics. Perhaps the author could have adopted a textual-discourse approach in her critique, consciously focusing her energies on lowbrow novels solely with a view of revealing the fault lines in the ideologies of Partition and nationhood. What has happened because of the lack of focus is that Salman Rushdie and Qurratulain Hyder are judged by the same criteria used for the likes of M. Aslam, Tasleema Nasrin, and Mahmud Sipra. In fact, a thorough study of inferior Partition novels might have offered us greater clarity about the various ideologies at work over the past fifty years than the present thematic commentary with the brilliant, the average, and the substandard all thrown in together.

Also on the question of adopting a clear critical focus, Niaz Zaman limits herself to the old-fashioned criticism of description and commentary, without attempting a thorough exploration of even one of the main points she raises. Besides this, in the past decade or so, literary criticism has benefited from considerable theoretical analysis developed by postcolonialism, feminism, narratology, cultural studies, and subaltern studies, not to mention works by Edward Said, Aijaz Ahmad, Homi Bhabha, Frederich Jameson, and M.M. Bakhtin, whose analytical tools could have enhanced the power of *Divided Legacy.* For instance, many of the excellent observations Zaman makes throughout the book (the prevalence of nostalgia, the deliberate attempts to emphasize differences between Hindus and Muslims, excessive use of violence as a metaphor, the motif of inter-religious romance, authors' inabilities to rise above respective national allegiances, and the evolution of authorial attitudes toward historical figures like Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Gandhi) remain incomplete, never being developed fully within the context of the drama of a given novel and its ideology.

The author also tends to compromise her critical authority by repeatedly speculating on writerly motives, adding sprinklings of biographical trivia, and even offering irrelevant personal anecdotes. On the question of Qurratulain Hyder's national ideology, she repeatedly discusses how Hyder migrated to Pakistan and then returned to India, suggesting her loyalty to India perhaps prevented her from writing about Partition in both books. Also, the author makes much of Hyder's two-word treatment of the year of the Partition in *Āg kā Daryā*—"Hindustan—1947"—and asks:

> Did nothing happen that year? Or was it too horrible to be noted? To those who do not know, the chapter says nothing. And for those who do, perhaps it is not necessary to repeat the descriptions of that traumatic event. Though in the narrative the year—and the chapter—do not appear to have any significance—how would a person who did not know anything about the Partition realize the massacres and migrations that took place this year and for several years following? (p. 73)

Novelists opting to remain silent about Partition is indeed an important topic—perhaps worth a book—but neither the two Qurratulain Hyder novels nor Abdullah Hussein's *Udās Naslēṅ* are really silent about Partition, not by any measure. Both of them speak loudly about it, in their own ways, of course. Such is the genius of the novel form. And these two novelists have dramatized the horror and tragedy of Partition as well as Khushwant Singh and Manohar Malgonkar, the two novelists who did it so openly. True, Abdullah Hussein allows the hero to grow old in the middle of the action, to become a toothless tiger, but who is to say that his brother Ali's experience of Partition is not Partition?

Ultimately, Zaman's book remains unsatisfactory, partly because of the magnitude of the undertaking. However, I am grateful to Niaz Zaman for her brilliant reading of Mulk Raj Anand's comic novel, *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, for her delineation of the *hindutwa* subtext in Balanchandra Rajan's *Dark Dancer*, and for introducing Bengali-language writers like Sunil Gangopadhyay and Tasleema Nasrin. The bibliographic materials in the book are also inadequate; for instance, the reader is not provided the publication date for Intizar Husain's *Bastī.* Bhisham Sahni, author of *Tamas,* becomes Balraj Sahni in the bibliography, a minor error, unless it is another evidence of the “divided legacy” caused by the presence of Balraj Khanna, author of *Nation of Fools*. ❐

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