

LETTERS

Dear Editors:

I HAD INTENDED to comment on Alamgir Hashmi's letter published in *AUS* #8 in time for my letter to appear in your next number. Unfortunately other more urgent preoccupations prevented me.

Much of what he writes seems to me to be interesting, but beside the point. The "cultural cringe" is indeed one that Muhammad Sadiq and others shared with Americans and Australians, and in every case one can understand why. But to understand why they felt like this does not mean that there is anything to be said in its favor. Nor does it invalidate my argument. A historian of Urdu literature writing in English should know who he is writing for. It is surely obvious that readers who take up a book on Urdu literature written in English will for the most part be people who read English more fluently than they read Urdu, and these will certainly include many who are interested in Urdu but not well acquainted with it. Such a history would inevitably not be a comprehensive one. (For example, it would not discuss, as Sadiq does, what Āzād's *Āb-e Hayāt* owes to the *taẓkira* literature.) But neither would it be one which leaves readers with the message, as Sadiq does, that Urdu literature is not worth much, and is certainly greatly inferior to English. It should show them that Urdu literature is a great literature—which it is. I would never claim that I have anything like the range of knowledge (either of Urdu or of English literature) that Sadiq had, but my "half of candle" enables readers to see what they are looking for and what they need to be shown while Sadiq's "sun" just isn't shining in that quarter at all.

On quite a different matter: on p. 69 of *AUS* #9 Ahmed Ali quotes E.M. Forster from memory. His exact words were: "I hate the idea of causes, and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country" (*What I Believe* [Hogarth Sixpenny Pamphlets Number One, 1939], p. 8).

—RALPH RUSSELL

