BOOK REVIEWS

Blood into Ink: South Asian and Middle Eastern Women Write War. Edited by Miriam Cook and Roshni Rustomji-Kerns. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. 239 pp. $47.95 (hc), $15.95 (pb).

In their preface to *Blood into Ink*, an anthology of women writing about war, the editors cite two quotations which reflect on the title of the book. The first one is a *ḥadīṯ* attributed to the Prophet Muhammad: "The ink of the pen of scholars is more precious than the blood of martyrs." The second quotation comes from a poem by the Palestinian writer Laila al Saih: "You do not know how hard it is transfiguring blood into ink." This slim but powerful volume brings together poetry, fiction, and autobiography by women from war-torn times and places in Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, India, Pakistan, Israel, Syria, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iran, and Kuwait. Assembling these pieces into a collection divided into two sections, "Remembering" and "Making Peace," the editors force the reader to question the boundaries of such nationally marked identities and the gendered nature of the conflicts that bring such boundaries into place.

By taking on the difficult labor of "writing war," of transforming and translating the experience of war into the memory guaranteed by ink, these writers challenge the meta-narratives of masculist militarism and the nationalist histories which draw clear lines between the theater of destruction "on the war front" and the feminized space of the "home-front" (in the name of which such wars are often fought). In these writings, women testify to the way violence permeates cultures, the forms in which gender gets negotiated in times of crisis, and the ways in which survival becomes, in itself, a powerful critique of the mystique of war.

In their introduction, Cooke and Rustomji-Kerns explain their decision to bring together South Asian and Middle Eastern women's writings on war: apart from recognizing the complexity of intertwined histories made separate by colonial pens, the anthology wishes to participate in the creation of "a new mythology of the war-peace paradox that can effectively challenge the more traditional, male-dominated mythology of wars …" (p. 3). The anthology is meant to function on several levels: as testament, as counter-narrative, and as a way of mobilizing others to end the violence that continues to terrorize these areas. Each entry is preceded by a useful biographical sketch of the author and a rather reductive (and to my ears, rather "matronizing") summation of the writing piece.

The editors thus cross Western "area-studies" borders to put together this

anthology. They "risk dialogue" (p. xxi)—among the writers collected here, among the traditional scholarly divisions between areas of study, between literature and politics, between the conflictual space of the home and the public space of "real" conflict, and between "native" and "outsider" representations of conflict and culture.

How then is one to review such a book for a journal as specific to a language and its literature as the *Annual of Urdu Studies?* I ask this question as a reviewer "outside" the field of Urdu studies, conscious these days of the debates about language, culture, power, and identity fought out in Pakistan among "indigenous" and "immigrant" populations, and the cost of such conflicts which have devastated Karachi, a city I love. Who pays the price of such conflict? In India, similar struggles over power and identity have erupted since the destruction of the Babri Masjid. In Kashmir too, the violence continues, as it does to the south in Sri Lanka. And here, I offer only a contemporary and selective map of violence in South Asia. But perhaps "home"—in this case, the "home" of Urdu—is a place we can start to read violence and it gendering, using some of the stories collected in this anthology to enable an interrogation of borders and of histories.

It is impossible, I would imagine, for anyone of South Asian or Middle Eastern origin to read this anthology without having one's own memories of wars triggered. As someone who clearly remembers the 1971 war from a child's vantage point in Karachi, it has been salutary to read Chitra Divakaruni's English poem "Blackout: Calcutta 1971," where the poet recounts her childhood memories: "All that year our windows / were crusted with thick inky paper", and on the streets "…the walking skeletons / wailed each day outside."

An excerpt from Bangladeshi writer Jahanara Imam's wartime journal *Of Blood and Fire* narrates the same war from the point of view of a woman whose city (Dhaka) is being occupied by Urdu-speaking soldiers from West Pakistan. As soldiers sweep through the streets and her nationalist son begs her to let him abandon his plans to study in the U.S. and join the resistance, the narrator suddenly notices an incriminating sticker on the family car: "Each letter of the Bengali alphabet represents one of us." Afraid, she asks her son to peel it off. Language, cultural nationalism, and the stark horror of the occupier's violence resonate through the journal entries. But threaded through these are a mother's anxiety over her son's imprisonment, her struggle to maintain the dailiness of her routine, and her shared grief with other women involved in the struggle. What is simply the "1971 War" for India and Pakistan gets recast here as a "War of Independence."

The question of naming occurs in a slightly different, but equally charged way in Farkhanda Lodhi's powerful and complex story "Parbati." Lodhi revisits the primal scene of the India-Pakistan partition by locating her heroine on the borderlands between the two countries. While the war isn't mentioned specifically, the editors misidentify it as the 1971 war; the war in question is the 1965 war

(the story was initially published in the Urdu journal *Aurg* in 1966). Lodhi's heroine Parbati is granted a curious agency by the eruption of war. She becomes a spy, and changes her name, history, religion, and identity by crossing the border. Parbati / Parveen's transgressions, her struggle to ensure her survival, and her desire for pleasure and pride, are impossible to place into any simplistic narrative of women and war. Lodhi's story questions all attempts to privilege nationalism as Parbati / Parveen finds her attempts at agency recuperated in a peacetime which deeply re-entrenches old gendered / national / religious roles. Still, she resists: "She had forgotten that on this earth were countries and countries had borders and standing on borders were guards. She kept walking."

Another story, Suraiya Qasim's "Where did She Belong?" also portrays the instability of national identity when the body in question is a poor prostitute's body. Munni Bai, the protagonist of the story, does not even know who her parents are. Found "equidistant between a mosque and a temple," given a name which "passes" either way, the girl's experience of partition radically questions the traditional founding narratives of both India and Pakistan and cynically points out the corruption of their postcolonial conditions. Looking at her rich clients—a Nawab and a Raja—Munni Bai muses on war and nations and the events which have displaced her from Pakistan to India, and pointedly asks: "Then who lost and who died in the partition?"

The way in which borders testify to the desires of masculist nationalism also recurs in Krishna Sobti's Hindi story "Where is my Mother?" where a Muslim soldier projects his love for his sister onto a Hindu girl orphaned by the communal violence unleashed by Partition. However, the child's memory of her massacred family thwarts the soldier's desire to claim her into his narrative, into his patriarchally motivated "protection." She resists by refusing to forget, by refusing to trust the man who "saved" her.

Nevertheless, the danger remains that such childhood memories of violence can also lead to more severely marked notions of identity born out of fear and self-protectiveness. Memory, if not interrogated, can congeal into dogma and engender more violence. How connected are these stories of a history of Subcontinental warfare to the recent riots in Karachi and Bombay and to the tragedy of Kashmir? What happens to women in such struggles? How do anxieties over masculinity inform such violence? What of the women like *sādʰvīs* Uma Bharati and Ritambara Devi of the fundamentalist Hindu right, who urge men to violence in the name of a lost Hindu manhood? What of the violences enacted against women in the name of Muslim religious identities? Where, in fact, is the real location of the theater of war?

The stories in this anthology unsettle any easy geographies. Violence radically alters the fabric of societies and in these ruptures new forms of genderings may become available, or new forms of repression may emerge. In any case, the lives of women and men are shaken up and reconstituted, and the after-effects of violence linger long after the actual "historical" event. Often those most hurt

remain unable to record, to explain, to have the space of writing open to them. It is, after all, the survivors and the privileged who alone are able to write such narratives, who take it upon themselves to testify, to meditate upon, and ultimately to transform our knowledge and understanding of war and its complex genderings.

In her brilliant foreword to the volume, the Indian-American poet Meena Alexander forges powerful connections between her memories of violence in India, in Beirut, the Gulf War, and even in the everyday of her life in the U.S. as she recounts a BJP meeting in New Jersey which takes place, ironically, in an Indian restaurant called "Akbar." Among the protesters outside, there is a woman who asks the poet: "How will you write this?" The urgency of the question haunts me as I write this review. By focusing on only a few of the South Asian writings from an anthology which tries to make stronger connections between Middle Eastern and South Asian histories, I have been trying to highlight some specific histories.

Questioning these histories, understanding the uneasy relationships between places and bodies, seeing how things like language, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality are negotiated in these stories, we may learn to read with critical commitment the daily texts of violence which surround us.

Blood into Ink, offering personal and poetic narratives by women, brings to our attention even the violence of other forms of narration which pay no attention to stories such as the ones collected here. Perhaps in reading texts like these, in questioning our own memories through such contestations, one can begin to re-imagine and remap the geographies of these areas, conscious of the words and bodies of the men, women, and children which lie across these pages.

—Nuzhat Abbas
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Estelle Dryland. *Faiz Ahmed Faiz 1911–1984: Poet of Social Realism*. Lahore: Vanguard, 1993. xvii, 306 pp. Rs. 295.

In the preface to the book under review, Professor Leith Morton comments that "[Faiz] is largely unknown outside Asia (apart from a certain fame in the former Soviet Union). Undoubtedly one important reason for this is the paucity of translations of modern Urdu poetry." No doubt there is a paucity of translations—certainly good translations—of modern Urdu poetry in the West, but that does not affect Faiz, nor was Faiz as little-known outside Asia as Professor Morton makes him out to be. Faiz was a well-traveled man, known to and friendly with a number of Russian, Chinese, Middle-Eastern and European poets and writers. Naomi Lazard has commented that because of "his continuous acts

of courage and conviction," Faiz deserves to belong in the list of writers like Pablo Neruda, Cesar Vallejo, Ernesto Cardinal, Nazim Hikmat, Yannis Ritsos, and I would add Mahmood Darwish—"great poets whose stance and influence have altered the consciousness of the world."[1] Edward W. Said has talked about spending some time with him and Palestinian poets in Beirut.[2] Faiz himself has mentioned his various meetings with the Turkish poet Nazim Hikmat and the Chilean Pablo Neruda.[3] Also, Faiz has been translated into English—there are at least four well-known translations of his work,[4] three of which are mentioned in the bibliography of the book under review—Russian, Chinese, and perhaps even some of the continental European languages. Victor Kiernan has pointed out that a number of Faiz's poems "have circulated in East Africa in Swahili versions."[5] Actually, it is a widely recognized fact that after Ghalib and Iqbal, Faiz is the only Urdu poet whose genius was accorded recognition in his lifetime and whose work has been (and is still being) translated into many different languages. A statement such as Professor Morton's is merely an attempt to justify yet another translation of the poet's work, a justification altogether unnecessary.

Estelle Dryland's book on Faiz Ahmad Faiz is a re-working of a thesis written for the Master's degree at the University of Sydney, Australia. As such, it has both the strengths and the weaknesses of the genre.

Like most scholarly theses, this one too is concerned with demonstrating that the primary and secondary sources have been duly researched, understood and digested. A plethora of citations from the sources furnishes ample proof of that. But sometimes in pursuing this scholarly activity, what seems to be overlooked is the necessity or usefulness of the research undertaken. Faiz, as he himself confessed, was never directly involved in socialist politics, whether at the national or the international level—the words Marx, Lenin, socialism, communism, trade unions do not appear in his poetry even once—yet in the present book we get to read about the differences between the policies and performances of the Communist Party of India and its Soviet counterpart. Faiz was, Ms.

---

[1]Naomi Lazard, *The True Subject: Selected Poems of Faiz Ahmad Faiz* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. xi.

[2]Edward W. Said, "The Mind of Winter: Reflections on Life in Exile," *Harper's Magazine* (September 1985), p. 50.

[3]Dr. Aiyūb Mirzā, *Ham ke Ṭʰehrē Ajnabī* [We who have Remained Strangers], (Rawalpindi: n.p., 1979), *passim.*

[4]Besides Naomi Lazard's translation, referred to above, the following are also well-known: Daud Kamal's, in Khalid Hasan, ed., *The Unicorn and the Dancing Girl* (Lahore: Student Services, 1984); Mahmood Jamal's in *The Penguin Book of Modern Urdu Poetry* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1986), and Victor Kiernan's *Poems by Faiz* (Lahore, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[5]Kiernan, p. 285.

Dryland informs us, the Secretary of the Postal Workers' Union and leader of Pakistan's Trade Union Federation, but these facts contribute little towards making the poet's work more accessible to the reader.

In terms of the critical methodology employed in the book, Ms. Dryland seems to have a preference for the structuralist school of exegesis and uses, with a fair amount of ease and unself-consciousness, its formulae to deal with the encoding and decoding of Faiz's poetry. She is the only critic I know of who has attempted a textual analysis of Faiz's work from the structuralist perspective. However, whether Roland Barthes's and Michel Foucault's textual strategies are essential to identifying the specific sources of power and energy in the poet remains questionable. But more of that later.

Estelle Dryland's particular strength lies in delineating the sociology of literature—that is, dealing with the factors, the background and history, that inform the poet's output. She gives considerable attention to Faiz's biography, his personal background, his association with his contemporaries and his debt to his predecessors, namely Ghalib, Iqbal, and a number of Persian poets. She devotes a whole chapter to Faiz's involvement with the Progressive Writers' Movement and the All India Progressive Writers' Association, an involvement which spanned over a decade, and the differences and schisms which emerged over the years between him and the other proponents of the movement. Similar treatment is accorded Faiz's contacts with the Indian Communist Party—even though Faiz was never a card-carrying member, nor did his association with the political structure and organization of any Communist Party, whether in India or the former Soviet Union, have any bearing on his creative or critical effort. There are detailed discussions of Faiz's Muslim literary influences, his linguistic heritage, the history of the language he chose to express himself in, the literary forms and conventions available to him from the Persian courtly tradition, and his occasional handling of literary forms other than his favorite, the *ghazal,* as, for instance, the folk song, the elegy, the martial chant, the lullaby and the *qavvālī.* Faiz elected to write a great majority of his poems in the form of the *ghazal,* restrictive though it is, and chose to make use of the traditional imagery of the *ghazal* because he was faced with a dilemma, which is neither new nor limited to Faiz's specific situation. It is the one faced by many creative artists living and operating under dictatorial or ideologically repressive regimes. As Faiz explained in an interview,[6] he came to realize that the conventional imagery of the *ghazal*[7]

---

[6]Suhēl Aḥmad Khān, "Faiẓ Ṣāḥib sē Bāt-Čīt" [A Conversation with Faiz], in Ẕiyā Sājid, ed., *Faiẓ Aḥmad Faiẓ* (Lahore: 'Alīm Publishers, n.d.), p. 196.

[7]For a comprehensive list of such imagery, see Gōpī Čand Nāraṅg, "*Faiz kā Jamāliyātī Eḥsās aur Ma'niyātī Niẓām*" [Faiz's Aesthetic Sense and the Organization of Meaning], in Shāhid Aḥmad Maḥlī, ed., *Faiẓ Aḥmad Faiẓ: 'Aks aur Jihatēṅ* [Faiz Ahmad Faiz: Image and Aspects] (Lahore: Māvarā' Publishers, 1988), pp. 160–91.

offered enormous possibilities to a poet who wished to speak of oppression and social injustice, of the destruction of national dreams—of matters unsavory to those at the helm of affairs who would have liked the poet's cooperation or acceptance, and if nothing else, at least his silence—and not be persecuted for his views. All one needed to do, Faiz said, was to use one's curiosity, put in a little effort, and transform the clichéd images and expressions into something original.

Ms. Dryland devotes an entire chapter to discussing Faiz's involvement in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case. No other biographer or historian has explored this aspect of Faiz's life in as great a detail as Ms. Dryland has done. There is an overview of the situation in the Subcontinent that launched Faiz into his army career, a thorough and patient assessment of Faiz's work as a journalist, and a precise outlining of the extraordinary historical circumstances that culminated in Faiz's being implicated, with twelve others, in the conspiracy to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan. The conspirators, comprising a number of military officers and a few civilians, were arrested under the Pakistan Security Act, the charges brought against them being so serious that if convicted most, if not all, stood to lose their lives. Luckily, Faiz emerged from this ordeal with no more than a four-year prison term. What is instructive in all this for Faiz's readers is the impact this and various other incarcerations had on his creativity. Ms. Dryland profitably compares two of Faiz's poems written during his prison terms with an early poem to point to the growth of a new discipline and maturity in Faiz's poetry, "nurtured by suffering, hardship and disillusionment." "Romantic themes," she rightly concludes, "are still in evidence" in the later poems, simply because Faiz never disburdened himself of the gear and baggage of romanticism, "but [those themes are] now skillfully manipulated to accommodate topics on social realism"(p. 71). Later in the same chapter, she makes another observation that can serve to sum up Faiz's entire career as a poet, even though it relates only to the poetry of the middle period of Faiz's life—the product of his arrest and imprisonment. She states: "Despite his use of classical imagery such as love, beauty, wine and youth, he nevertheless placed emphasis on the meaning of life. The content of his work became a blend of romanticism, scrutiny of life, class-consciousness and collective struggle. …[H]e could [now] adapt himself to the broader field of social reality and protest" (p. 75).

The choice Faiz made of sticking with the traditional forms of poetic expression and imagery was a deliberate one. There were advantages for him in spurning innovation in poetic form and technique. His poetry, as Ms. Dryland observes, "drew considerable and popular attention"(p. 75). The alienation between the poet and the public virtually disappeared. His choice enabled him to suffer no loss of public as some of his contemporaries had done. Because he chose the traditional forms of expression (the *ghazal,* or even the *naẓm,* the regular stanzaic form with predictable end-rhyming) his poetry remained less inhibitive than that of his contemporaries. Faiz's innovation lay in investing the traditional Persian, courtly images, such as those of wine, the cup-bearer, the tavern, the

garden, etc., with newer, contemporary associations, or as Kiernan has remarked, with "a fresh meaning, as symbols of a revolutionary challenge to social order."[8] Faiz changed the context and content, rather than the form, of Urdu poetry. Unlike N.M. Rashed and Mira Ji, his contemporaries, he ultimately came to be known as the poet of the people. At the same time, however, it was also recognized that he would never be a seminal literary personage, a poet's poet, which N.M. Rashed, for instance, has become.

About half of the book under review consists of Ms. Dryland's translations of Faiz's poetry. Some of these translations are also used in the first half of the book for the purpose of textual explication. Let us look at Ms. Dryland's translations now. It is here that one notices her lack of complete familiarity with Urdu usage and syntax and, consequently, lapses in the critical interpretation of some poems, either through reading more than the context allows or, sometimes, because of misreading the context altogether. The very first translation used by her for explication is that of an early Faiz poem, "*Sarōd-e-Shabānā*" (Song of Night). The poem itself is a product of an almost Keatsian, languorous, indolent, romantic—an aesthete's—sensibility. A brooding, listless persona observes the exhaustion or somnolence of the natural phenomena and notices a certain correspondence between nature and his own dreamy longings. The poem belongs to a time in Faiz's life when he was, by his own admission, young and directionless, and in love,[9] perhaps with the idea of love itself. The mood of the poem is determined and the burden of its meaning borne by a few words or phrases like *"khud-farāmōshī," "vīrāṅ," "bē-khudī," "surāb," "khāmōsh tārōṅ," "ārzū,"* and *"khvāb,"* some of which Ms. Dryland has mistranslated. *"Vīrāṅ,"* which simply means empty of life or vegetation, is given another dimension by her, uncalled-for in the poem, by translating it as "lying in ruins," thus hinting at active devastation caused by some marauders or by outside forces, etc. *Surāb,* meaning mirage, is rendered by her as "shadow-play," thus inviting an unnecessary Platonic nuance. *Khāmōsh tārōṅ,* which refer to the silent or tuneless strings (of a musical instrument) are misunderstood by her to mean the stars in heaven, even though the use of the word *sāz* (instrument) earlier on in the same line would preclude such interpretation. Even the words *khud-farāmōshī* and *bē-khudī* she chooses to render by the single word "oblivion," which, although it can be used for *khud-farāmōshī,* simply cannot convey the right sense of *bē-khudī* ("self-forgetfulness")—a senselessness occasioned by rapture or ecstasy or intoxication. Thus, though she correctly identifies the tone of the poem as generally melancholy and soporific, much in her final comment on the poem seems to be based on a misreading or on certain critical assumptions she is working from. For instance, she states: "The hitherto grieving 'galaxy of stars' [*fasurda … bazm-e*

[8]Kiernan, p. 36.

[9]Suhēl Aḥmad Khān, *op. cit.,* p. 194.

anjum] becomes seduced by love's melody. And, in the intoxication of semi-arousal, starts to narrate classical legends of the exultation derived from surrender, echoing the longing for and dreams of the beauty of the Beloved's face"(p. 22). Also, having imputed meanings and nuances to the original text, she encourages herself to look for a "subtle political innuendo" (p. 22) in the poem, even though Faiz himself would have discounted any such possibility in his early poetry. It was not until the mid-thirties, when he became part of the Mahmuduzzafar and Dr. Rashid Jahan group and was inducted into the Marxist ethic and induced to open his eyes to the stark reality of the world around, the world shaped by capitalist and colonial forces, that he arrived at and articulated his poetic credo (as embodied in his poem "Don't ask of me, Beloved, the love I once had for you") and political innuendoes began to figure in his poetry.

Nor is the translation of "Song of Night" the only one where such lapses may be detected. In "Don't ask of me, Beloved …" for example, the music, the honesty of expression, the poignancy and explicitness of the lines *"Aur bʰī dukʰ haiṅ zamānē mēṅ muḥabbat kē sivā / Rāḥatēṅ aur bʰī haiṅ vaṣl kī rāḥat kē sivā"* are severely compromised by her translation as "There are obligations to / others beside you, my love; / there is a peace other than that / which coalescence / may bring." "Obligations" is a far cry from the agony and suffering the poet seems to refer to; "coalescence" does not necessarily embody love, and "peace" and pleasure are not always synonymous. I believe, both Daud Kamal and Victor Kiernan have captured and communicated the intent of these two lines rather well in their respective translations. Kamal's version reads: "Now I know / There are afflictions / Which have nothing to do with desire, / Raptures / Which have nothing to do with love,"[10] and Kiernan's goes thus: "Our world knows other torments than of love, / And other happiness than a fond embrace"[11].

Ms. Dryland translates a couplet from one of Faiz's *ghazals*—*"Raushan kahīṅ bahār kē sāmāṅ hū'ē tō haiṅ / Gulshan mēṅ čāk čand garībāṅ hū'ē to haiṅ"* (roughly paraphrased as: "At last the prospect of the advent of spring seems bright; in the garden some people [madmen] have rent their garments")—thus: "The light suggests a possibility of the advent of spring / yet in the garden people rent their garments." The couplet, in its original form, speaks of hope, the possibility of change and offers the tearing of garments by some madmen, hitherto tired and frustrated by the delay and their own long wait, as proof of the coming of spring, for the tearing of clothes—a demonstration of madness, an act engaged in at the height of madness—is their only way of welcoming or celebrating the spring. In Ms. Dryland's translation, however, one notices two problems: to begin with, there is the confusion in the use of the word *"raushan."* Instead of treating it, as it ought to be treated, as part of the verb *"imkān raushan hōnā,"* meaning, "the

[10]Daud Kamal, *op. cit.,* p. 185

[11]Kiernan, *op. cit.,* p. 65.

prospect [of something happening] becoming bright," she regards it as some source of light which promises the advent of spring. Secondly, one is completely puzzled by the entirely inappropriate use of the conjunction "yet," a use that distorts the meaning of the couplet. Her explanation accompanying the couplet further puzzles the reader, for it does not seem to follow from her translation of the couplet. She says: "Upon initial reading, the she'r would appear to portray the frustration of the traditional lover. This is, however, not the traditional lover, but the desperate cry of lovers of revolution"(p. 164).

This, however, is not to suggest that all of Ms. Dryland's translations—which she prefers to call transcreations (p. xii)—suffer from errors and awkwardness; in fact, some, like "To a Political Leader," "A Lullaby for a Palestinian Child," and "Prayer," are powerful renderings. All the same, what might prove irksome to a reader fully familiar with Urdu usage is what sometimes transpires in an otherwise smoothly flowing and effective translation, when a word or phrase appears which tends to detract from the force or intent of the original, and becomes more like a coup de grâce than a stroke of genius.

My intention is not to discourage or to sound patronizing, but I would like to point out that the book under review, which clearly has much to offer, could have easily become, with a little more effort, a very useful book in English to introduce Faiz to the Western reader. Ms. Dryland obviously has the expertise, the scholarship and, more importantly, the ease of expression of a native speaker of English to put her ideas across.

The conclusions Ms. Dryland arrives at concerning Faiz's art, ethics and aesthetics cannot be faulted. Faiz, as she states clearly, "had the ability to transform the traditional disappointment of a romantic lover into the cry of suffering humanity at large"(p. 166); he never sacrificed "his poetic integrity to the dictates of Leftist ideology or text-book idealism"(p. 171); "he dispelled the image of Urdu poetry as a stagnant, purely hedonistic indulgence attached to past traditions. He imbued it with vitality, urgency," and placed the "vagueness of romantic euphoria within a new and precise framework of social realism"(p. 172); he regarded "class struggle [as] a universal sociological fact," and his role as a poet was that of "the conscience of society," this being, in Ms. Dryland's view, "his most valued contribution to literary posterity"(p. 172). These are all responsible judgments. However, none of these is startlingly new or original. Many other critics have variously reached many of the same conclusions about Faiz's craft and life. That is why I find myself still puzzled by Ms. Dryland's critical methodology. I cannot find a rationale for the choice of the structuralist methodology to arrive at the above conclusions, nor do I see any justification for devoting considerable space in the penultimate chapter of the book (pp. 160–65, *passim.*) to discussing the differences between structuralist and post-structuralist approaches to literary criticism.

The bibliography, impressive as it looks, does not include three significant works on Faiz. Their omission is inexplicable; one of those books is Victor

Kiernan's *Poems by Faiz* (Lahore, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1973), a book that not only has translations of some of the same poems that Ms. Dryland has also translated, but also includes perhaps the most perceptive introduction to Faiz's background, milieu and art and a very instructive comparison between Faiz and Iqbal's ethics, aesthetics and poetic diction. One may, at places, punch holes in some of Kiernan's translations, but one cannot argue with his understanding of the literary tradition and ethos of the Indian subcontinent. The other two books are, respectively, by Fateh Muhammad Malik, *Faiẓ: Shā'irī aur Siyāsat* [Poetry and Politics] (Lahore: Saṅg-e Mīl, 1988), a sustained look at the political dimension of Faiz's poetry, and Shāhid Aḥmad Maḥlī, ed., *Faiẓ Aḥmad Faiẓ: 'Aks aur Jihatēṅ* [Faiz Ahmad Faiz: Image and Aspects] (Lahore: Māvarā' Publishers, 1988), a collection of critical essays, some of which are truly instructive on Faiz's art and craft.

A brief note about some rather jarring orthographic idiosyncrasies, historical inaccuracies and mistranslations in the book: for some reason the names of the writers Saiyid Sajjād Ẓahīr and Ashfāq Aḥmad have been consistently transcribed as Sajjid Zahir and Ishaq Ahmad; and the first part of the title of Faiz's book *Sar-e Vādī-e Sīnā* has been written as "Sare" and translated as "All the Valleys of San'a," which is inaccurate because *sar* is a Persian prefix meaning "in" or "at" which is attached to *Vādī* by means of an *iẓāfat*. Ms. Dryland is also wrong in accusing Saqi Farooqi of having "delivered a scathing personal attack on [Faiz]" in his essay "Ḥasan Kuza-gar" (pp. 165–66). Saqi Farooqi did no such thing. He only reported what he heard from one of Faiz's contemporaries, the poet N.M. Rashed. Ms. Dryland makes a historical mistake when she mentions that both grandsons of Prophet Muhammad, Hasan and Husain, were killed in battle at Karbala (pp. 123–24). Also, the meanings of a number of Urdu words and phrases in the glossary (pp. xvi–xvii) need to be revised, and some explanation, somewhere, about the rather eccentric use of the apostrophe in the transcription of Urdu words in English needs to be provided.

—Faruq Hassan
Dawson College, Montreal

Ghazals of Ghalib: Versions from the Urdu by Aijaz Ahmad, W.S. Merwin, Adrienne Rich, William Stafford, David Ray, Thomas Fitzsimmons, Mark Strand, *and* William Hunt. Edited by Aijaz Ahmad. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994. 174 pp. Rs. 125.

In 1969, many of us were excited and pleased to receive a thin but elegant booklet called *Ghalib*. Edited by Aijaz Ahmad, it was a unique experiment in transcreation, for it contained freewheeling renderings of some Urdu *ghazals* of Ghalib

by some leading contemporary American poets. If nothing else, they sounded like extremely unusual modern metaphysical poems. In 1971 came the book *Ghazals of Ghalib*, also edited by Aijaz Ahmad, and expanding the same transcreational theme. The original of 1971 and its reissue of 1994 are before me now.

To elaborate a little: Aijaz Ahmad chose some Urdu *ghazals* of Ghalib as well as a short extract from one of his *qaṣīdas,* rendered them into plain, literal English, added explanatory comments, and gave them to a number of leading modern American poets who then composed translations/imitations based on the material supplied by Ahmad. Thus there are, sometimes, plural versions of the same *ghazal*. Also, the poets didn't attempt to do all the *she'rs:* one poet chose some *she'rs* from a *ghazal* from which another poet chose some others. This presents before us not only a mapping of the intricacies of the translative-creative spirit, but also a delightful interplay between different—indeed, foreign—sensibilities with the sensibility of a great medieval-modern Urdu poet.

For example, there are four versions of Ghazal 33. Three of them—by Thomas Fitzsimmons, W.S. Merwin, and Mark Strand—are more or less "faithful." But the one by David Ray is a much freer play of imagination, sometimes vaguely recalling Ghalib. Ray places his version of the first *she'r* at the end, puts Ghalib's fifth as his fourth verse, the fourth one as his third, and introduces entirely new material to stand for *she'rs* two and three. Thus we have a fine English poem which is tantalizingly Ghalib-like.

Since Ahmad himself chose both the *ghazals* and the *she'rs* from each *ghazal*—five were chosen from each selected *ghazal* as a rule, with one or two exceptions—and since it was he alone who provided the translation aids, it is clear that he took upon himself a vast responsibility. In his brief note on the 1994 edition, Ahmad calls Ghalib "doubtless the most cunning" among all Urdu poets. In my view, Ghalib is very nearly that, and much more besides. Ahmad undertook a job which thrills for sheer audacity, imaginative application, and resource management. His knowledge of Ghalib and classical Urdu-Persian poetry was, at the time he compiled this book, less then one would desire. As Aijaz Ahmad himself observed in his original Introduction, it is difficult for a foreigner at all times to come to terms with the Urdu *ghazal*. Although he did his best, Ahmad couldn't, of course, overcome all his deficiencies in Urdu and Persian to prove a fully competent mediator between Ghalib and modern American poets. But he, and they, had a perfect idea of the resources of English, and had a fine feel for poetry in any language. The result is a book of poems of great beauty, poems which establish many connections and set up reverberations of Ghalib with a lot of staying power.

Most of the poems follow the two-line scheme of a *ghazal she'r*. Many achieve the chiseled brevity and memorability so characteristic of a good *she'r*. *Ghazal* poetry in not epigrammatic or aphoristic. It is just that a good practitioner can incorporate much in the two-line world of the *she'r* without seeming to strain himself or the structure of the poem. Much of the polyvalence and sym-

bolism is lost in translation, but genuine and mature poets like the ones who contribute to this volume can still bring back much from their voyage of discovery.

Let me now give you a few of my favorite transcreated *she'rs.* They have, more or less, the flavor of Ghalib in the original, in his different moods and modes:

> Killing me off she sobs: "I never meant to hurt you!"
> Tears of repentance, wept three seconds too late.
> —Adrienne Rich (Ghazal 2, p. 11)

> Waterbed ecstasy: dying in a stream;
> Too strong a pain brings its own balm.
> —Thomas Fitzsimmons (Ghazal 5, p. 25)

> Exiled, how can I rejoice, forced here from home,
> and even my letters torn open?
> —William Stafford (Ghazal 8, p. 41)

> The dove is a clutch of ashes, nightingale a clench of color:
> A cry in a scarred, burnt heart, to that, is nothing.
> —William Stafford (Ghazal 21, p. 104)

> Love holds him
> prisoner he says
> and something has him
> sealed
>
> like a great rock on his hand
> —W.S. Merwin (Ghazal 21, p. 102)

> Stubbornness is something else. She is not bad-natured.
> She will try to break promises, forget, end up keeping them.
> —Mark Strand (Ghazal 33, p. 152)

> Ghalib! I can't contend with love. It's a fire
> so dead I can't light it, so hot I can't put it out.
> —William Stafford (Ghazal 34, p. 156)

> Again I watch for her at her window
> waiting for wind in her black hair.
> —Adrienne Rich (Ghazal 26, p. 125)

I am nothing but dust being blown around in her street;
O wind, let me down, I have no wish to be a bird again.
—Mark Strand (Ghazal 29, p. 135)

I have had enough of flying.
It is the dust in the streets now
I'd like to descend to.
—David Ray (Ghazal 24, p. 117)

(Incidentally, this *"she'r"* of Ray's should have been placed under Ghazal 29. That it is under Ghazal 24 seems to be a mistake of editing.)

Fire licks out from the rims of my eye, Asad;
when I look at a dry leaf it starts to smoulder.
—Adrienne Rich (Ghazal 19, p. 92)

Well, it is a wonderful book. For all its deficiencies, it gives a better idea of the plenitude of Ghalib than most dissertations. I only wish that the editing had been a little more careful. The apparent error in placing David Ray's verse at Ghazal 24 instead of Ghazal 29 has already been noted. Among others may be mentioned the inclusion/non-inclusion of a *she'r* by Bahadur Shah Zafar in Ghazal 29. Inclusion, because it is dealt with in the explanatory apparatus, complete with a weak explanation why a Zafar *she'r* should be included here at all; non-inclusion, because it does *not* appear in the Urdu text. The Urdu text of the *ghazals* has been photographically reproduced from the then definitive Arshi edition of 1958. Arshi however used a number of symbols and marks in the text to denote different things. They mean nothing, and in fact cause confusion, to the reader who does not know the Arshi edition. They should have been blanked out.

Certain grievous errors of translation should have been rectified, at least in the present edition. *"Gul-e naghma"* (Ghazal 12) does not mean "flower/blossoming of song" (whatever *that* may mean). In the same Ghazal *"parda-e sāz"* does not mean "curtain/tapestry/web/shelter/note of music." In Ghazal 25, *she'r* 5, the Urdu text and the editor's translation/commentary are totally different: the text is that of the last *she'r* of the *ghazal* in Arshi's edition (p. 225), whereas the translation and commentary relate to the last *she'r* but two from the same *ghazal*, same page. The unsuspecting American poets, not knowing Urdu, were misled into translating a *she'r* whose original does not appear in the printed text, and having their translation appear alongside a totally irrelevant Urdu original. In Ghazal 19, *she'r* 4, *"bu 'l-havas"* does not mean "father of lust." It just means "one who has lust." Words like *shauq*, *jauhar*, and *bihisht* have been transliterated incorrectly, and so on.

The present edition is a slightly reduced facsimile of the 1971 edition, and on

somewhat lighter paper. Considering its size and quality, the book is very moderately priced. One only wishes that Aijaz Ahmad had done a little cosmetic cleaning up of the text before sending it out for reissue.

—Shamsur Rahman Faruqi
Editor, Shab-Khūn

Qurratulain Hyder. *Fireflies in the Mist.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1994. 347 pp. Rs. 300.

Qurratulain hyder, winner of India's highest literary honor, the Jnanpith Award, for her contributions to Urdu literature, has published an English version of her 1979 Urdu novel *Ākhir-e Shab kē Ham-Safar,* which has also appeared in Hindi and Russian translations. Her translation of India's first novel, written in Persian in 1790, appeared as *Hasan Shah's The Nautch Girl: A Novel* (New Delhi: Sterling Paperbacks, 1992).[1] It has been recently reissued by New Directions, New York, under the title *The Dancing Girl.* Reasonably good translations of her short stories are also widely available in the various anthologies of literature from India. A writer of prodigious energy, Qurratulain Hyder is known for her evocations of the interfaces between the domestic and the historic; increasingly, she seems to be obsessed with the possibilities of linking the subcontinental experience to that of the international, postcolonial experience, although the attempt is not all that successful in *Fireflies in the Mist*, primarily on account of thematic and formal inadequacies.

The theme is familiar—all too familiar. Once upon a time, there was a great Indian continent characterized by an uninterrupted life of high culture, known for the harmony among its peoples and religions. Even the British merged with the enormous multicultural fabric. There were no anxieties. No illusions. The early chapters of the novel provide a series of glimpses at a so-called benign age of aristocracy, British and Indian. Before the narrative begins to focus on the central characters and their political aspirations for a free India, the initial impression generated by the novel is that of a cultural bias in favor of the colonists and the feudal aristocrats of East Bengal. The elegant descriptions of Caledonia, MacDonnel Saheb's mansion in Dacca (now Dhaka), and the fastidious documentary presentation of Nawab Syed Ahmad Ali's golden album of photographs offer us a glimpse of the post-1857 socio-economic status quo. Romesh Baboo, who acquires Caledonia, anglicizes himself and his surroundings so thoroughly that he begins composing heroic couplets in English. But, in the third chapter we

[1] For a review of this work, see *AUS #8* (1993), pp. 226–29. [—*Eds.*]

come to know that the aristocratic charade does not last long: "Dire misfortune befell Romesh Baboo's survivors. His sons were horrified to discover that he had left behind a mountain of debts. Most of the land had been mortgaged, and for the last many years they had been living on borrowed money" (p. 17).

As the novel develops, we are merely told that the *bhadralog's* younger son Dinesh was hanged by the British for terrorism and that his elder son Dr. Benoy Sarkar lost his practice because of his Gandhian activism; it is the latter's daughter Deepali who takes center stage in the novel as its idealist heroine who follows the leftist path and comes to ruin, destined to live an unfulfilled post-independent life, riddled with guilt, displacement, and the punishment of loss.

When the novel abruptly moves away from the peripheries of history to the year 1939, we encounter "Typhoon Uma," an affluent leftist intellectual who begins to practice a kind of extremist politics along with the London-returned Rehan Ahmad. The two lure the young Deepali into their extremist political circle, and she helps them out by stealing Balucher saris from her own ruined household! The context of the nascent communist politics is gradually established even though the mainstream Indian nationalist movements are mostly absent from the story. As a character who would control and eventually unsettle the emotional lives of Uma and Deepali, Rehan Ahmad is inadequately developed; in some sense Rehan also symbolizes the eventual ruin and decay of the leftist ideology, but from the very beginning we see him straining to carry the burden of so much personal and political alienation.

With the Quit India Movement, the narrative begins to disintegrate, particularly at a historical juncture where the reader expects a clear delineation of the complex issues of class, religion, caste, language, and other factors which constitute the dissonant upheavals of the era. Instead, the novelist seems to rely on the old certainties of the immortal India, the mystical center fantasized by the colonizer and the colonized. In place of a sustained exploration of the personal and public histories of the age, what we get by way of the narrative is a confounding series of anecdotes; the reader attains no coherent experience or insight into the dizzying centrifugal force that would end in the division of India and the displacement of its peoples. Even the domestic details and the historical backdrop often appear flawed because of the flighty nature of the events selected to create this "saga," a word used in the jacket copy to acknowledge the breakdown of thematic and formal continuity.

The novelist is also attempting to explore the impact of British rule over the Hindu, Muslim, and Christian cultures, and how it has continued to unsettle the lives of so many people even after Partition. A representative household from each of these religious groups is well constructed early on, but the ironies of the various political postures are only vaguely suggested. A better focus on the formal elements of the modern novel could have highlighted these ironies more fully. For instance, Uma Roy and Rehan Ahmad, following the party line, do not cooperate with the Quit India Movement; Deepali's friends Jyoti and Mahmood

die for the cause; Rosie, daughter of a Bengali Christian parson, is wounded during an attack on a police station. The true underpinnings of these enigmatic events are not clarified through either plot or characterization.

When the Hindu-Muslim divisiveness becomes contagious in the final days of the freedom struggle, the revolutionaries find themselves helpless; these events force many of them to lead a life of guilt while others compromise and gradually allow themselves to be seduced by the corruptions of their respective post-independence nationalisms. The best example of this compromise is Rehan Ahmad, the erstwhile revolutionary who ends up as the richest jute tycoon in Dacca; he took on the fortune he had once turned down during his idealist days, along with a woman he loved, Jehan Ara. Had the novelist focused more fastidiously on characters like Rehan instead of doling out a chapter each for everyone, this work could have become more convincing and allowed the readers into the minds of the key characters. Only Deepali and Rosie emerge as well-rounded individuals with whom the reader can sympathize, but for some reason, even in the latter part of the novel, where she is a mature old woman, it is the voice and image of the younger, naïve Deepali that persists.

Fireflies in the Mist is divided into three parts. In the third part, the novelist shifts from omniscient narrative to epistolary form, enabling Deepali and her close friends to face up to the next generation which ends up scattered all over the world. We see them struggle and die in their splintered nations, their loyalties divided, memories truncated and bitter; the brooding melancholy of the final chapters becomes quite touching as we see some of their children struggle in the diaspora; many become consumed by the corruptions and seductions of the West. This is a sorry ending, given the fact that their parents had sought to free India from the British. The most telling picture of post-independence displacement and unending terror is that of Jehan Ara and her family in the new Bangladesh, all of whom are wiped out in a carnage reminiscent of the tragedy of Mujibur Rahman and his family.

After 347 pages of chaos resulting from a wobbly plot, spatial and temporal breakdowns, kaleidoscopic characterization, tired language, all saved only by the enormous ambition of the historical and personal themes and the occasional charm of the cultural details about the old country, we find our heroine, Deepali, the staunch idealist and underground activist, in an utterly disillusioned state. Old and unimportant as a postcolonial individual living in the diaspora, the novelist shows her jetting through the air, back to Trinidad; then, she suddenly comes to an awareness of the insignificance of it all as she looks out the window at a sunrise over the China Sea: "For millions of years the sun has been rising and going down and rising again and going down again and rising." Another vanity-of-vanities speech negating much of the experience of her youth, but does she grasp the true meaning of her history if she can do nothing more than compare her story to that of the colossal incomprehensibility of the universe? As a reader from the generation that got lost in the diaspora, I feel the novel as a whole reads

like an equally flawed comparison of the personal to the unknown.

—Thomas Palakeel
Bradley University

Christopher R. King. *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth-Century North India*. Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1994. xii, 232 pp. Rs. 375.

The difference between Hindi and Urdu as standard languages remains one of the great, unsettling issues of modern South Asian history and contemporary society. Questions of language and language community intersect with the politics of religious identity, Hindu and Muslim, the Partition of India, and current issues of cultural pluralism and minority rights. If the contribution of history is therapeutic, to place present passions into the context of longer views, Christopher King's lucid, fair minded and richly researched presentation of important aspects of the Hindi movement deserves wide attention.

King, who has devoted a good part of the past twenty-five years to studying the development of modern Hindi, knows better than to fall into the unfortunate oversimplification of his title, *One Language, Two Scripts*, a lapse that is probably explained by the fact that an earlier version of portions of his work bore one of the more arcane dissertation titles, "The Nagari Pracharini Sabha (Society for the Promotion of the Nagari Script and Language) of Benares 1893–1914: A Study in the Social and Political History of the Hindi Language" (University of Wisconsin, 1974). From the outset and throughout his work, he has been fully aware of the complexity of linguistic variation in speech and in literary traditions that have been subsumed under the labels Hindi and Urdu. His title, however, does indicate a nagging presupposition to his research: that the radical differentiation of Hindi and Urdu marked a regrettable, even tragic failure to create a wider field of cultural unity, of social harmony rather than violent ethnic conflict. He attributes this failure to the self-interest or misunderstanding of Indian "élites" and colonial officials.

King has grounded his research in a general theoretical model of social mobilization developed in the 1950s by Karl Deutsch as modified in the early 1970s by Paul Brass in *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge University Press, 1974). Whether to illustrate Deutsch and Brass's theories or to legitimate the accuracy of his findings, King's reliance on this framework fails to do justice to his own research. According to Brass's 1974 formulation, which King takes on whole cloth, the would-be leaders of a political community achieve their goals "manipulating" symbols to create "multi-symbol congruences" out of diverse cultural differences, most particularly of religion and language. Generally

religious loyalties are more powerful than linguistic ones, in Brass's study, but language has served to underline and unify religious identities.

What was missing in these earlier formulations of social mobilization theory was a due regard to the specific cultural content of the linguistic and religious practices that converge into a sense of community. One would account for the rise of self-conscious ethnicity and, ultimately, nationalism, by establishing the extent to which people are brought into networks of communication through urbanization, printing, and mass communications. The motivations that underlie these processes were matters of personal gain, which was presumed to be the same the whole world over. The particular meanings over time, place or temperament of religious identity or linguistic expression did not determine what loyalties or boundaries would prevail.

King moves from his theoretical introduction to a survey of the rise of modern standard Hindi. In the course of the nineteenth century, according to this account, the so-called Khari Boli dialect associated with Urdu was relexified with an infusion of Sanskrit-derived terms. It was this "Hindi," what King calls "the 'Sanskritization' of Urdu" (p. 59), not Braj or Avadhi, that continued to expand as the language of instruction, publication and official business. Thus literary Urdu was the foundation as well as the negative identity of Hindi: Hindi was what Urdu was not, and "a major impetus for the Hindi movement was the existence of Urdu" (p. 179).

The diffusion of what was to be standard Hindi relied on the printing press and the primary school, but both, according to King, responded largely to British policies with respect to recruitment to government employment in the different administrative domains of northern India, that is, the Central Provinces, Bihar and, finally, what became the United Provinces. (King only makes passing references to the Punjab.) For this reason, it is the thorough mining of British administrative records that constitutes King's most substantial contribution. As with so much else in modern South Asian studies, one is struck by how much important research, even with respect to the history of Indian languages, must inevitably turn to English sources. Although King notes Amrit Ray's claims that the differentiation of Hindi and Urdu was established quite apart from British administrative intervention, the weight of his evidence demonstrates that the institutionalization of standard languages in schools and government offices were matters addressed and heavily influenced by official policy.

British language policy, from the decision in the 1830s to replace Persian with the "vernacular" to the recognition of documents in *nagari* script by government offices and courts in U.P. in 1900, is a long history of debate and contestation initiated largely by British officials, but spurred on from time to time by the work of Indian pressure groups as represented by associations and the press. King points out that much of the debate had to do with the scripts in which education might be conducted or government business transacted, rather than lexicon or grammar, to say nothing of pronunciation or literary style. In a society in

which literacy was the privilege of only a small proportion of the population, the issue of script was a matter of access to the role of mediator. Alongside *nagari* or *nastaliq*, there was also *kaithi*, which received official recognition in Bihar. Although there could be compromises on issues of lexicon and grammar, as speakers modulated their linguistic repertoires to appropriate contexts, the issue of script required more than good will. Choices had to be made, and these choices symbolized, in the minds of many, the status of Hindi as Hindu and Urdu as Muslim.

British calculations about the nature of Indian social boundaries were at the heart of their decisions with respect to such issues. Although King does not go deeply into the intellectual history of linguistic thought among British officials, he shows that there were substantial disagreements among them, which were often bound up with their attitudes to Indian mediators and their claims to represent the general population.

The educational and employment statistics that King produces in his argument reflect rather uncritically the state of nineteenth-century colonial knowledge which emphasized broad divisions by religion and broad caste categories rather than more specific social and economic networks. Thus Muslims and Kayasths are taken as meaningful aggregates from which Indian officials had been recruited and for whom the continuity from Persian to Urdu represented a solid economic interest. The relevant pro-Hindi categories are Brahmin, Khatri, Rajput and Baniya. King realizes that only a very small proportion of the populations so categorized participated in the educational and governmental realms that he is discussing, but he is unable to put forth a more specific analysis of who these people were in nineteenth century northern India and what motivated their participation, if any, in institutions and social movements relevant to official language policy. He is content to refer to them as "élites," a word that begs many questions about what might make someone dominant, over what and over whom. Part of the answer is no more than an artifact of the sources, that is, British official analysis and recognition. But King does not claim that British imperial rule was the driving force behind social mobilization. His portrayal of British policy is one of "sheer muddleheadedness" (p. 185). In particular, he cites British encouragement through much of the nineteenth century of *devanagari* primary education while denying it recognition in government proceedings.

If British policy set up some of the areas for linguistic conflict, King is finally concerned with the Hindi movement of his subtitle, that is, the efforts of writers, publishers and organizations, notably the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, founded in 1893, and the Hindi Sahitiya Sammelan, started in 1910, to promote the use and development of modern standard Hindi. King's own research shows that the work of Hindi writers as they moved from Braj, Avadhi and other literary models, was influenced not only, whether negatively or positively, by Urdu models, but also by Bengali ones, to say nothing of English. Some Hindi writers were by no means hostile to Urdu and did not see their work as an either/or

choice, but one of extending linguistic possibilities and reaching new audiences, often in ways that were receptive to Urdu influence. Much of the new Hindi literature, on the other hand, was devotional and gravitated to the Braj, Avadhi and Sanskrit prototypes. It would therefore be a mistake to limit the making of modern Hindi to the school examinations and court documents that were the stuff of political contestation.

Over the last two decades theories of ethnicity, nationalism and social mobilization have been stirred by numerous writers including Benedict Anderson and, most recently, Martha Chatterjee, to a more profound engagement with ideology and meaning as opposed to indices of behavior. Although King does not take up these more recent challenges, his work has moved increasingly into the reading of actual Hindi texts as opposed to official statistics, reports, and administrative decisions. The result of this shift has been to open up a larger field of inquiry about linguistic practices and the relation of culture and authority.

—David Lelyveld
Social Science Research Council (New York)

Shabana Mahmud. *Urdu Language and Literature: A Bibliography of Sources in European Languages.* London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1992. xx, 332 pp. $100.

Shabana mahmud should be congratulated for compiling this volume because there have been few, if any, similar inventories of European materials pertaining to Urdu language and literature in English since Frances W. Pritchett's *Urdu Language and Literature: A Bibliography of English Language Sources* (Delhi: Manohar, 1979). It both updates Pritchett's work and expands the coverage to include materials from a variety of Western languages in addition to English. It also makes liberal use of monographs, Festschriften, symposium presentations, and conference proceedings, thus making the work a reasonably comprehensive "guide to those seeking information on any aspect of the Urdu language and its literature" (Introduction, p. xi). And it is especially rich—as indeed it should be, since Ms. Mahmud works in the Reference Division of The British Library—in its coverage of pre-twentieth-century materials.

In her Introduction (pp. xi–xiv), Ms. Mahmud outlines—rather too briefly for this reviewer's taste—the history of the development of Urdu language and literature, the strengths of her work, and the organization of the material. This is followed by a roster of authors whose works are listed in the bibliography, a feature which I find extremely useful. A total of 3545 items are logged under 7 main divisions. Thus the division entitled "Works of Reference" lists such basic resource materials as "Bibliographies" and "Catalogues." The division "Language"

includes: (1) "Dictionaries," listed according to the period of their compilation (e.g., nineteenth century and earlier, twentieth century) or subject matter (e.g., literary and technical terms); (2) "Grammar"; (3) "History of Urdu Language and Literature"; and (4) "Study and Teaching," subdivided into nineteenth century and earlier, and twentieth century. Next comes the division "General Literature," dealing with "History and Criticism," but more specifically with the following three topics: literature on women, the Progressive Writers' Movement, and *qavvālī*. By far the largest division is reserved, understandably, for "Poetry," subdivided into "Individual Authors," "Anthologies," and "History and Criticism;" the last itemizes materials by poetic genres or subject matter (*ghazal*, *marṣiya*, *maṣnavī*, *mushā'ira*, patriotic and war poetry, Progressive Writers' Movement, *qaṣīda*, religious poetry, *rubā'iyāt*, *shahr-āshōb*, Ṣūfī poetry, and women's poetry). "Prose" follows essentially the same sub-groupings as "Poetry" (viz., "Individual Authors," "Anthologies," and "History and Criticism" of the two main fictional forms—the novel and the short story). "Drama" and "Dāstān" are each accorded a separate main division, each recording works by individual authors as well as writing focusing on the history and criticism of the two forms. An "Index of Authors" is provided at the end of the bibliography.

It is obvious that this arrangement, otherwise quite satisfactory from a practical and pragmatic point of view, is nevertheless going to raise a few eyebrows. For instance, one could be squeamish and ask: Why is *qavvālī* listed under "General Literature" and not under "Poetry," along with the *ghazal*, *marṣiya*, *maṣnavī?* or even: Why has a whole category been especially assigned to *qavvālī* when only a single 2-page article is logged under it (item 1253)? Why does the Progressive Writers' Movement appear under "General Literature," and again under "Poetry," but, curiously, not under "Prose," when the main vehicle of this movement was prose? Even more pointedly, why was it not given a separate heading of its own, instead of the current piecemeal treatment, especially since the defining element of this movement is its distinctive world view, not its employment of a particular prose or poetic form? One could also question why "Drama" and "Dāstān" have been given separate divisions of their own, when, at least, drama happens to be quite a minor and the least employed form in Urdu and pales in significance, both in quantity and quality, before the short story and novel? And why have the novel, short story, drama, and *dāstān* not been treated together under a more logically tenable classification such as "prose fiction," or just "fiction?" Or, finally, why have certain prose works been catalogued under "Poetry"?

But such questions, although important from a purely theoretical point of view, do not—indeed cannot—offset the value of the compilation as an important and much needed source of information for continuing and prospective scholars of Urdu, principally in the West.

This leaves the inventory itself. How comprehensive and complete is it? Such a question inevitably begs a point of reference, a prior knowledge of existing

material to see whether it has been covered, and if so, how—its physical attributes, in other words. I started with my own work and the work of scholars with which I am familiar, to see how it has been presented. In a perusal of roughly four hours, planned in most cases, but also random in others, I noted certain deficiencies, anomalies, and shortcomings—none serious enough to cripple a prospective researcher's efforts, but which might nonetheless make a search more protracted and cumbersome than it might have been. I list them here in the hope that a future revised edition will find them useful.

1. Item 2932 has been incorrectly credited to the present reviewer. In fact it is a review of Intizar Husain's novel *Bastī* by Muhammad Salim-ur-Rahman. This mistake is all the more surprising because in the same publication Mr. Rahman has contributed another review and it has been correctly ascribed to him (entry 2941).

2. While Aziz Ahmad's two French articles which appeared in *Orient* (1043, 1044) have been entered, his "Iqbal et la théorie du Pakistan," which appeared in the same journal (17:1 [1961]) has not, though his three other English articles on Iqbal have been given (1849–1851). Likewise, *Orient* (11:3 [1959]), in which one of the two Aziz Ahmad pieces was published, also carried a translation of Ahmed Ali's well-known short story "Hamārī Galī" as "Notre rue." But this translation has not been recorded under the author's works.

3. Entries 3060 and 3061 are extremely confusing. Both refer to "Cold, Like Ice," a translation, by C.M. Naim and Ruth L. Schmidt, of Manṭō's short story "Ṭʰanḍā Gōsht," but under different journal names, dates, and page numbers. The translation appeared in the first issue of *Mahfil* (Chicago), not in the first issue of *Journal of South Asian Literature*, the name that *Mahfil* subsequently adopted, but not until a decade or so later (with 9:1 [Spring 1973] issue, to be precise).

4. *Night and Other Stories* and *Downfall by Degrees and Other Stories*, both by Abdullah Hussein, have been listed. But while the contents of the former have been itemized in full, those of the latter are not, though it is a more extensive—and, in a way, more important—collection of the author's short fiction work.

5. Entries 2284–2286, translations of poems by Gilani Kamran, are not listed under his name in the Index.

6. Item 1162, the work *Modern Urdu Literature*, by Gopi Chand Narang and Leslie A. Flemming, is shown to have been published already from Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, in 1983, as vol. 8, fasc. 4, pt. 1 of Jan Gonda's edited work *A History of Indian Literature*, but in fact it still hasn't appeared. This and similar items should have been profitably moved from the main part of the bibliography and grouped elsewhere in the volume under "Forthcoming or Expected Works."

7. Item 3168 appears as: "*Bazgoi.* Trans. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. Delhi: Educational Publishing House, 1988. 203p." From this one would be justified in thinking of the work as a translation by Mr. Faruqi. In fact, it is an original Urdu

work, a collection of short stories by the Indian writer Surendar Prakash. Mr. Faruqi's only contribution to it is a foreword in Urdu (pp. 9–14).

8. *Selected Stories from Pakistan*, edited by Ahmed Ali, appears once under his name (3381) and next in its own right (3408), each time with slightly different information, in the section "Prose: Anthologies." There is nothing wrong with this method of citation, except it has not been consistently applied for the rest of the entries in this section. The two entries could have been consolidated in one place and their respective publication details integrated into a single comprehensive item. The method of recording, moreover, leaves the reader with the impression that this is an anthology of Ahmed Ali's own writings. The same goes for a number of other anthologies and collections in this section. While it is true that the explanatory note accompanying some collections does clarify their collective status, it is equally true that in the case of others the impression of a single author persists. This could have been easily avoided with the addition of "ed." after the compiler's name immediately following the entry number (i.e. "3381 Ali, Ahmed, ed.")

9. Item 2692 has been incorrectly credited to Ahmed Ali in the Index. But *Prison House* (Karachi: Akrash Publishing, 1985), a translation of his Urdu short stories, has been left out from the bibliography. (In fairness to Ms. Mahmud, it should be pointed out that the book does not use the word "translation" or "translated by.") Perhaps this is the right place to raise another issue. One working on an Urdu writer cannot dispense with the need to refer to his or her works originally written in other languages (e.g., Persian, English), all the more so in the case of Ahmed Ali. Yet not only have his three English novels (*Twilight in Delhi*, *Ocean of Night*, and *Rats and Diplomats*) been left out, but also the Urdu, French, and Spanish translations of *Twilight in Delhi* (*Dillī kī Shām*, 1963; *Crépuscule à Delhi*, 1989; and *Crepúsculo en Delhi*, 1991, respectively), as well as many other of his writings (for a fairly complete list of which, see *AUS* #9 [1994], pp. 10–14). On the other hand, "And Now the Pen Brings forth Some Jokes" (2332), an assortment of jokes culled by translator C.M. Naim from Mīr's Persian autobiography, has been duly recorded, though, curiously, in the division "Poetry." Perhaps future revisions of the present bibliography will add another heading to list an Urdu writer's work in other languages as well as secondary materials pertaining to that work.

10. Conscious division of the entries into discrete sections of Poetry and Prose raises, naturally, the expectation that the items listed under the two would preserve the intended distinction. And to a large extent they in fact do. Yet there are exceptions, with little in the way of an explanation for the unexpected departure from the norm. For instance, if a researcher wants to look up Ghālib's prose works, (say, his letters,) the most likely place would be under Ghalib in the section "Prose: Individual Authors." But Ghālib is not listed here. Instead, he appears in the section "Poetry: Individual Authors," and *Urdu Letters of Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib*, in Daud Rahbar's translation, is listed here (1566). A

related anomaly (in addition to the one referred to in item 9 above, regarding Mīr) is Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam's *Ghalib, 1797–1869. Volume I: Life and Letters* (1699), which comes further down in the sub-section "Studies." An additional, more or less similar, anomaly is C.M. Naim's *Readings in Urdu: Prose and Poetry* (3424), which has been listed under "Prose: History and Criticism." This work is simply a collection of Urdu prose works and poetry to be used for teaching advanced students. It should have been placed with his similar other works (971, 972) in the section "Language: Study and Teaching," where indeed a precursor of the work (972) is appropriately included.

11. In some cases only a single entry has been offered from a collective work. E.g., item 2982 lists Leslie A. Flemming's article on Qurratulain Hyder's novel *Āg kā Daryā*, which appeared in *Studies in the Urdu Ghazal and Prose Fiction*. I edited this volume. It includes a total of twelve articles: nine on the *ghazal* (some of them major ones, such as S.R. Faruqi's important "Expression of the Indo-Muslim Mind in the Urdu Ghazal" and C.M. Naim's comprehensive treatment of "The theme of Homosexual (Pederastic) Love in Pre-Modern Urdu Poetry") and three on fiction. Yet only Flemming's from this collective work has been cited. One wonders why. The volume appears neither under the name of its editor, nor under those of the remaining eleven contributors.

12. In the Index the works of critic Muhammad Salim-ur-Rahman are cited both under "Salim-ur Rahman, Muhammad" and "Rahman, Salimur." It is conceivable that this is precisely how the name appeared on a given work. But both of these—as well as a third variant of the name ("Saleem-ur Rahman, Muhammad") found in the bibliography (p. 284) but not in the Index—refer to a single writer, and this should have been indicated by cross-referencing all three name entries, both in the bibliography and Index. Further, the two German translations of Rahman's works (3329 and 3330), registered here from a single anthology, have identical page numbers (94–100). Apparently, this is an oversight.

13. "Bürgel, J.C. 1930–1931" and "Bürgel, Christoph. 1303–2188" stand side by side in the Index. Probably they refer to the same individual. Moreover, entries 1303 and 2188 have nothing to do with "Bürgel, Christoph." The former refers to poet Majeed Amjad, the latter to an article on "Iqbal and Free Will" by M. Saeed Shaikh.

14. Author Balraj Manra has had several translations of his fiction, of which only two are cited, 3397 and 3409. Six others—one of which is a whole volume of translations of his short stories—logged in Pritchett's *Bibliography*, have been left out here.

15. Likewise, Regula Qureshi has published two more works on music, in addition to the two cited in entries 2601 and 2650. They are: *Qawwali, Music of Islamic Mysticism in Pakistan* (New York: Asia Society, Performing Arts Program, 1977) and *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context, and Meaning in Qawwali* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

16. Khalida Husain started writing under her maiden name Khalida Asghar.

Subsequently she changed it to Khalida Iqbal and still later to the present Khalida Husain. Her famous short story "Savārī" appeared while she still wrote under the name of "Asghar." My translation of this story ("The Wagon"), which appeared in *Indian Literature* (19:6 [November–December 1976]), therefore carries that name. Later *Pakistani Literature* reproduced it (1:1 [1992]) and changed the author's name to Khalida Husain. Ms. Mahmud has listed both (2770, 2944), but separately. This will likely create some confusion, which could have been easily avoided by cross-referencing the author's different last names. Moreover, Qurratulain Hyder had also translated this short story in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. But this translation has been omitted.

17. I could not find any listing for two publications, which leads me to believe that there may be other items as well that have somehow escaped the compiler's notice. One is *Bibliographie des Deutschen Pakistan-Schrifttums bis 1974* (Hamburg: Deutsch-Pakistanisches Forum e. V, 1975) by Uta Ahmed, which includes some Urdu materials. The other is *Lesebuch Südasien* (South Asia Reader; 1974; a publication of the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University), edited by Lothar Lutze. It comprises German translations from various South Asian languages, including two from Urdu (a poem by Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Manṭō's short story "Ṭōba Tēk Singʰ").

18. It is not clear what the cut-off date was for including bibliographical information in the present volume. Ms. Mahmud's Introduction is dated "August 1992." The book also came out the same year. Certain items are also recorded from publications that appeared the same year (see, e.g., entry 1453). But some other publications of the previous year have been left out, among them two of my own anthologies, *The Tale of the Old Fisherman: Contemporary Urdu Short Stories* and *The Colour of Nothingness: Modern Urdu Short Stories*, both of which were out in 1991.

And, finally, the typographical errors. This work is not free of them. Let me mention just a few: read "moored" for "mooted" in entry 2974 ("Moored on Other Banks"), "Leslie" for "Lesley" in entry 1085, "Machhlishahri" for "Machlidshahri" in entry 2548, and "Lala" (Shahnaz Lala Rukh) for "Lal" in Index, p. 328.

Most of these shortcomings could have been easily avoided with a little bit of additional information and some slight reorganization of the material, along with a bit more attention to the logic behind setting up categories of classification. But "[t]he classification has evolved through the attempt to find the most practically convenient divisions into which the subject matter falls," writes Ms. Mahmud in her Introduction, "rather than being built up from preconceived ideas of what was proper and logical. It was, however, quite impossible to read every one of the more than three thousand items listed in this book, and one cannot be completely certain that every item has been assigned to its correct subject designation. No claim can therefore be made for complete accuracy or consistency of treatment in this respect" (p. xiii). For now, let's be grateful for her

labors and hope that Ms. Mahmud will continue to update the work, giving us a supplement every five years.

—Muhammad Umar Memon
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Firoze Mookerjee. *Lucknow and the World of Sarshar*. Karachi: Saad Publications, 1992. xv, 242 pp. Rs. 150.

This book is a revised version of the author's Ph.D. dissertation for the University of London. It is also the first research book in English on the complete writings of Pandit Ratan Nath Sarshar.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a very important period in the history of Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali prose. The father of modern Hindi, Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850–1885), the great Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838–1894), and Ratan Nath Sarshar (roughly 1838–1902) all lived and worked during this period. Although quite distinct in their own ways, what the three had in common was their pioneering work in their own literature, their familiarity with English literature, which influenced their writing to a certain extent, and the didactic character of their literary work.

Ratan Nath Dar ("Sarshār" was his pen-name) was born into a family of Kashmiri Pandits domiciled in Lucknow, where his father, Baij Nath Dar, enjoyed both respect and influence. He died when Ratan Nath was barely four years old. The Dars had their home in a neighborhood inhabited by cultured Muslim families. Here, the fatherless child learned his Urdu, mostly from the ladies, who were known for their expressive and gracious speech.

The Brahmins who had emigrated from the Kashmir Valley in the eighteenth century "to seek fame and fortune in the rich plains below," in the words of the late Jawaharlal Nehru, had relocated mainly in Delhi and the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) and adopted Urdu as their language, producing a number of distinguished Urdu scholars, prose writers, and poets, of whom Sarshar was undoubtedly the greatest. Unfortunately, not much is known about his personal life and even the year of his birth and date of his death are matters of conjecture and dispute. (Contrast this with his contemporary Bharatendu. An obituary published following his death mourns that "his age was only 34 years, 3 months, 27 days, 17 hours, 7 minutes, and 48 seconds"!)

After finishing school Sarshar enrolled at Canning College (established by the British in 1864) but left it without completing a degree. But he did carry with him a fair knowledge of English literature which served him well throughout his career as a writer. He started his professional life as a school teacher in Kheri, a district near Lucknow. During this period, Sarshar started writing articles for var-

ious Urdu newspapers and magazines, among them the *Avadh Punch*, the most notable. Some of his articles focused on social themes. A number of these, which appeared in the periodical *Akhbār-e Sarishta-e Ta'līm*, published by the Department of Public Instruction, drew the attention of the Director of the Department, who noted "in one of his annual reports that Sarshar's translations [from English] were the best of any he had seen in the whole province" (p. 3).

In 1878 Munshi Naval Kishore, the biggest publisher in those days, invited Sarshar to edit *Avadh Akhbār*, which became a rival of *Avadh Punch*. Sarshar edited this paper from 1878 to 1893 and he edited it with distinction. Many of his own writings first appeared in this paper, including the voluminous novel *Fasāna-e Āzād,* which was serialized. Later, Naval Kishore published it separately in four volumes, the first of which appeared in 1880. As a serial *Fasāna-e Āzād* was read and enjoyed by all sections of society and brought great fame to its author. It is a gargantuan novel spread over a total of three thousand pages. It recounts the adventures of its hero, Āzād, and his inseparable companion or sidekick, Khūjī (a humorous diminutive for Khwāja) who provides endless mirth and comic relief by his antics. Sarshar was undoubtedly influenced by *Don Quixote* in writing the *Fasāna.* Above all, it was Sarshar's mastery of "the vivid, racy, and colloquial" language of Lucknow that made his work so popular. "This command of language," writes Dr. Mookerjee,

> is nowhere more evident than in the passages of dialogue which form so large a part of the whole work. Sarshar knew how well he could write dialogue, and he uses this talent to the full.... He knew exactly the forms of speech, the special vocabulary and the characteristic style and tone appropriate to each of the wide range of characters of different classes and different areas whom he introduces in his pages. The number of characters who appear in *Fasana-i-Azad* is enormous, yet all seem quite distinctive. (p. 154)

Some idea of the scope and volume of Sarshar's literary output can be gained from the following lines of Firoze Mookerjee:

> During the editorship of *Avadh Akhbar* Sarshar wrote many articles on political, social and literary subjects. In 1887 he published a translation of Donald Mackenzie Wallace's *History of Russia,* a re-written version of an earlier novel, now entitled *Jam-i-Sarshar*. Two years later he translated Lord Dufferin's "Letters from High Latitudes." In 1890 his novel, *Sair-i-Kuhsar*, appeared, followed some time before 1893 by *Kamini*. About 1893 he started a series of short novels under the general title of *Khum-Kada-i-Sarshar*. Included in this series were *Kurum Dhum*, *Bichri Dulhan*, *Tufan-i-Betamizi*, *Pi Kahan*, *Hushsho* and *Rangile Siyar* [*Range Sayar*]. Some time during this period he translated a political pamphlet written by Dr. Hunter, a history of Egypt entitled *Shakh-i-Nabat* and a slightly abridged version of

> the *Arabian Nights*. In 1894 came *Khudai Faujdar*, an adaptation and free translation of *Don Quixote*. (p. 4)

However, in all his work, Sarshar aimed at reforming Indian society, cleansing it of obscurantist ideas. The didactic approach was usual in the literature of those times, indeed, it characterizes all classical literature to some extent. As he said, introducing *Fasana-e Āzād* in *Avadh Akhbār*,

> Our real aim in this series is to enable the readers of *Avadh Akhbar* in the guise of humor to become fully conversant with education and culture and good taste, with correct conversational usage and the idioms appropriate to various occasions, with the atmosphere of every kind of gathering and with the manners of society as a whole … so that [knowledge of] the various states of human communities and the effect of the company one keeps and the climate of the age may bring benefit to our country, so that men's minds may be illumined by the radiance of good thoughts and excellent morals, and their mentality cleansed of the darkness of corrupting ideas and the unworthy traits of the ill-bred, and upright minds may receive the full benefits that accrue from a sane training.… Our aim is that from reading these articles they may at one and the same time derive pleasure and enjoyment and amusement on the one hand and linguistic accomplishment and lofty ideas on the other. (pp. 79–80)

Towards the end of his life, Sarshar went to live in Hyderabad, a center of Urdu language and literature in those days. According to his own account published in *Kashmir Prakash* of March 1899:

> About four years ago I went to Madras as a member of [the Indian National] Congress and from there my good fortune brought me to Hyderabad, Deccan. Prominent Hindus and Muslims welcomed me enthusiastically as did the public at large. Maharaja Kishan Parshad, the Nizam's Minister of Army, and a former … Prime Minister appointed me at a salary of Rs. 200/– a month to correct his poems and prose. (p. 5)

Sarshar spent the last few years of his life in Hyderabad as the literary mentor of Maharaja Kishan Parshad. At this time he also brought out a literary magazine called *Dabdaba-e Āṣifīya* in which he began to serialize his novel *Čančal Nar.* This novel, however, was never finished. Sarshar also received the patronage of the Nizam.

Sarshar was not only a major prose writer of his day, he was also a distinguished poet. Although his preferred theme in poetry was love, other subjects also received his attention. *Tuḥfa-e Sarshār,* a *maṣnavī,* is reckoned as his best known poetic composition. He wrote it to quell the outcry of orthodox Kashmiri

Brahmins who took strong exception to the visit of Sarshar's barrister friend Bishan Narayan Dar to England. In this long poem Sarshar makes fun of the Pandits who sought to ostracize Bishan Narayan Dar for his audacity in crossing the seven seas.

Sarshar died at the age of fifty-five—his end being hastened by his addiction to alcohol. He had himself confessed as much:

> *pīnē par jab ātē haiṅ pʰir bas nahīṅ kartē*
> *maikhānē mēṅ suntē nahīṅ sarshār kisī kī*
> Once he starts drinking, he won't stop.
> In the drinking-house Sarshar doesn't listen to anyone.

Firoze Mookerjee appropriately devotes considerable space in her book to the Lucknow of Sarshar's days, which had inspired most of his work. There is an informative chapter on the prose narrative tradition which Sarshar inherited and developed further, giving it a recognizably modern feeling. Mookerjee also discusses both Sarshar's major and minor works as well as his role as a translator. In conclusion she says:

> When we review the course of Sarshar's development as a writer, we see at once that the key period extends from 1878 to 1890. In the course of these twelve years he progresses from the stage of *Fasana-i-Azad,* a stage in which, though closely tied to the old tradition, he is grafting on to it the new modes of writing which characterize the modern novel, to the stage where in *Jam-i-Sarshar* and *Sair-i-Kohsar*, he has all but severed his ties with the old and practically completed a transition to the new. After that the trend is reversed, and already in *Kamini*, he is in many respects back behind the starting point which *Fasana-i-Azad* had represented. Yet, taken as a whole, his writing represents a great step forward in the development of Urdu prose fiction. (p. 235)

A valuable aspect of Firoze Mookerjee's work is her attention to Sarshar's role as a sensitive partisan of women's issues. She writes:

> But above all, he is a champion of women's rights. More than any other Urdu writer of his time he pleaded passionately for justice to women. To illustrate the gross injustice done to them both by Hindus and Muslims, he created numerous women characters from every section of society, women who are beautiful, intelligent and possess a strength of character which his men characters lack. Yet they are treated badly and are exploited by society. (*Ibid.*)

Firoze Mookerjee rightly calls Premchand the true heir to Sarshar. In fact, it

was Premchand who introduced Sarshar to Hindi readers by producing an abridged version of *Fasāna-e Āzād* which in Hindi he called *Āzād kī Kathā*. This Hindi version has since run into several editions. It should be pointed out that Premchand started as an Urdu writer but later turned to Hindi as it ensured greater circulation to his writings and wider readership. Premchand acknowledges his debt to Sarshar in a letter to Banarsi Das Chaturvedi: "On my writing," he writes, "there is more influence of Sarshar and Sarat Chandra and less of Tagore" (*ibid.,* p. 236).

The book's value is greatly enhanced by a detailed and very useful bibliography. It is interesting that such a detailed treatment of an Indian writer who died a century ago should have been facilitated by the excellent literary records—books, newspapers, and periodicals—in the India House Library and the British Museum Library in London. One wonders if the author could have found all this priceless material in India itself. The paucity of available biographical material on Sarshar himself is shown by the fact that only six such titles are listed—two books each by Prem Pal Ashk and Tabassum Kashmiri, and one each by Sayyad Latif Adil and Qamar Rais. Three of these six titles were published in Pakistan. It is a sad commentary on the state of Urdu in India today that though, like Sarshar, Firoze Mookerjee had her cultural roots in Lucknow, her fine book on the distinguished Kashmiri Pandit writer could only find a publisher in Pakistan.

—Ravi M. Bakaya
Jawaharlal Nehru University

[Reproduced, with thanks, from *Mainstream* (Delhi), 19 June 1993, pp. 33–35; edited for the *AUS*.]

Frances W. Pritchett. *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and Its Critics*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1994. xvii, 234 pp.

This book is yet another addition to the stock of Pritchett's writings on Urdu literature, and one which maintains the high standards we have come to expect of her. It centers on two works which she rightly assesses as the pioneering, and still influential works of modern criticism of Urdu poetry, Āzād's *Āb-e Ḥayāt* (1880) and Ḥālī's *Muqaddima-e She'r-o-Shā'irī* (1893), and criticizes their assessment of the Urdu *ghazal*. Her subtitle is somewhat misleading. A more accurate one would have been *The Urdu Ghazal and Its Critics*, since it is only the *ghazal* which she is concerned with. The point is worth making, because Ḥālī's book deals extensively with all the other genres of Urdu verse too and Pritchett has nothing to say about them. However, that is a criticism of the title, not a criti-

cism of the book. She divides her study into three main parts. The first, of four chapters, gives the historical background, covering the last days of the Mughal Court, the rebellion of 1857, the complete defeat of the revolt and the vigorous measures taken by the British victors to remold the culture of the Urdu-speaking élite. Pritchett rightly considers this essentially extra-literary background as the major influence upon the works she is examining.

The second part, also of four chapters, is in my view the most valuable part of the book. It expounds the principles of traditional poetic criticism and does so much more adequately than any other work I am aware of either in Urdu or in English. Especially useful are her detailed analyses of particular verses—her admirable exposition of Żauq's famous *lā'ī ḥayāt ā'ē …* (pp. 84–6), of verses by Mīr, Ghālib and others (pp. 106–22), and, in an appendix, of a complete *ghazal* of Ghālib (though not, alas, one of his best). These demonstrate very effectively the many-sidedness of the *ghazal* couplet.

Ironically, this part of the book is not only the best, but also the least satisfactory. Pritchett everywhere plays down the importance of the content of the poet's work, explicitly denies that its historical and social setting has any great relevance to it, and insists on it being judged almost exclusively by the standards of the traditional poetic criticism which concerned itself mainly with form and technique. Her reasons for taking this stand are more explicitly set out in a 1979 article of hers, *Convention in the Classical Urdu Ghazal: The Case of Mir,*[1] to which she refers us for further elaboration of her views. Strange that one who, correctly, insists on extra-literary factors as the setting for Āzād and Ḥālī insists equally strongly that such factors have virtually no relevance to the literature of earlier ages. "Any attempt to move from poetic imagery to social reality," she writes, "is destined to break down" (p. 176). I have written at length elsewhere in this issue about this—in my view completely wrong—interpretation of the *ghazal* (which she adduces no argument to support) and will simply say here that, on the contrary, it is "social reality" which provides the essential key to understanding what the *ghazal* is all about.

Pritchett quotes approvingly from the work of C.S. Lewis. She might reflect that his study of courtly love—a love in many respects closely parallel to the love depicted in the *ghazal*—is set firmly in the social and historical conditions of the age which produced it, and that Urdu love poetry too could most profitably be studied in the same way. And she might further reflect upon his comments on medieval literary criticism, which, like pre-1857 Urdu criticism, was concerned only with structure and style and had nothing to say about the content of the poetry it studied. For example, "All Chaucer's medieval successors speak of him in this way. You could not discover from their eulogies that he had ever presented a

[1] See Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 3:11 (Fall 1979): 60–77.

lifelike character or told a merry tale."[2] It does not at all follow that to the contemporaries of these critics, or even to the critics themselves when they were not writing criticism, the qualities which we admire in Chaucer today were unimportant. The same applies to Urdu poetry. *Āb-e Ḥayāt,* one of the two texts on which Pritchett's study focuses, has plenty of material which she does not quote but which shows how much the content of poetry was valued. A few examples will suffice. Mīr and Saudā are contrasted in the judgment that Mīr's verse is predominantly *āh* (sighs) while Saudā's is *vāh*—which in this context may be translated as "gusto." Mīr rejected a would-be *shāgird* because he estimated that he lacked the basic qualification of a poet: "Poetry is a task for those whose hearts have been seared by the fire of love and pierced by the wounds of grief." Mīr's reputedly very poor opinion of Jur'at ("You can't write poetry; keep to your kissing and slavering") has nothing to do with Jur'at's technical competence. Similarly Ghālib's definition of poetry as *ma'nī-āfrīnī* (the creation of meaning) refers to the content of poetry, and his phrase bears a much more extensive range of meaning than Pritchett would have us believe—as Ghālib's own poetry abundantly shows.

All this Pritchett, in effect, invites us to ignore and to adopt as our own standards those of the pre-1857 literary critics. (Her evident enthusiasm for the extraordinary "Oulipo" movement [pp. 187–88] is of a piece with this.)

It must be said also that her critique of the two books which form the basis of her study is far from adequate. Her adverse criticism of Āzād and Ḥālī is sound as far as it goes, but is nothing like so cogent as it should be. In particular, Ḥālī's long and comprehensive survey of the *ghazal* requires much more attention than she gives it. Let us first summarize it and then see what Pritchett makes of it.

The great virtue of Ḥālī's section on the *ghazal* in his *Muqaddima*[3] is its blunt avowal of things about which many of his successors have chosen to maintain a discreet silence. One such thing, not relevant to my argument here, is his statement that the great *ghazal* poets thought that you would not get more than an occasional really good (*a'lā darjē kā*) couplet in a *ghazal*, and the rest would be padding (*bʰartī*). More significant here is that he recognizes unequivocally that the main theme of the *ghazal* is sexual love, and that where the beloved is a woman she can only be somebody else's wife or fiancée (*mankūḥa yā makhtūba*) or a courtesan (*bēsvā*). And the whole thrust of his proposals for the reform of the *ghazal* is to make it respectable, so that it will no longer be vulnerable to the attacks of either the pillars of conventional Muslim society or the Victorian British.

---

[2] C.S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964; paperback ed., 1967), p. 190. The whole paragraph in which this sentence occurs is relevant.

[3] Much of what follows is an elaboration of pp. 125–28 in the chapter of my *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature: A Select History* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1992) headed "Changing Attitudes to Poetry: Azad and Hali."

A glance at his main argument is enough to show this. He launches into his discussion of the themes of the Urdu *ghazal* by saying that they are predominantly those of love, and then, if you please, goes straight on to say, "In this respect the *ghazal* of our times is exceedingly debased (*nihāyat abtar*) and seems to be nothing more than an unprofitable (*bē-sūd*) and practically useless (*dūr-az-kār*) genre." In other words, what is wrong with the *ghazal* is, according to Maulānā Ḥālī, above all its content—that it celebrates love, and that this makes it "exceedingly debased," etc. Throughout his treatment of the *ghazal* the puritanism of the *maulvī* blends happily with the puritanism of the Victorian British. A postgraduate Pakistani student of mine once aptly remarked of Ḥālī that he regards every sexually mature woman either as his sister or his mother. Characteristically, he represents the *ghazals* of the great Persian masters, Saʿdī, Ḥāfiẓ and others as not really being about a male beloved. He rightly says that love is something more than that, but neither does it exclude it, however much Ḥālī might have wished it did. For all his insistence that poetry must be "founded on reality," this is a major feature of reality he wants to exclude from it. He wants to, so to speak, castrate the *ghazal*—and not, be it noted, because he thinks that the picture it presents is false, but because to speak of such things "does not become (is not *zēbā* in) a society which observes purdah." In such a society *all* love in which sexual desire is prominent should be "love that dare not speak its name." So, he says, let us henceforth exclude from the *ghazal* all verses which would clearly refer to sexual love. Provided that no words in a verse can *prove* that it expresses sexual desire for a woman or a man, it will be acceptable. He gives a long list of all the other kinds of love that one may feel, and produces this list as a justification for his demand that *every* verse about love should be written in terms which make it applicable to every one of these kinds—and adds, quite properly, that the Urdu *ghazal* already does include innumerable verses of this kind. This is because—though Ḥālī does not say this—its theme is the celebration of every kind of love, in accordance with the view that Ḥasrat Mōhānī expressed that "all love is unconditionally good." Ḥālī rightly stresses the unrivaled popularity of the *ghazal,* a popularity which continues to this day. He comes near to admitting that its popularity is due to the prominence in it of the theme of sexual love. And he recognizes that it would be difficult—he should have said impossible—to maintain its appeal if reformed on the lines he suggests, as difficult as it would be "to maintain the intoxicating power of wine once it has turned to vinegar."

His reaction to the *ghazal's* savage attacks on what are today called the fundamentalists is similar. He speaks of the classical Persian *ghazal's* railings against the *shaikh* as justified in the conditions which prevailed *in their time.* He goes out of his way to say that poets must no longer criticize the *shaikh* just because he *is* a *shaikh,* choosing to ignore what he knows perfectly well, that the *shaikh* (like the other stock characters of the *ghazal*) is presented as a *type,* not as a realistic portrait. And once again his proposals for reform are motivated by a desire to, so to

speak, draw the teeth of the *ghazal* and make it respectable—something which neither he nor anyone else has been able to do. It is important to observe here that as a firm supporter of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan no one knew better than Ḥālī that his contemporary *shaikhs* were just as virulent in their assaults on anyone who ventured to dispute their views as the contemporaries of the old Persian *ghazal* poets had ever been. It is refreshing to turn from the mealy-mouthed Ḥālī to his fellow-puritan Nażīr Aḥmad Nażīr Aḥmad is as anti-love as Ḥālī is but makes no bones about condemning the themes of love in Sa'dī and Ḥāfiẓ too. He says contemptuously of those who advance Ḥālī's interpretation of their verse that they are trying to touch their buttocks with their ears.[4] He is also outspokenly contemptuous of the *shaikhs* of his day, from whom, he says, the Muslims can learn only two things—hypocrisy and idleness.

So Ḥālī's aim is to make the *ghazal* respectable. (One occasionally feels that Pritchett and he are on the same wavelength here. Thus she writes: "And certainly classical poetry did not legitimize the physical expression of pederastic desires, any more than it legitimized actual adulterous affairs with respectable ladies …" [p. 175]. One can argue about whether it legitimized these things. What is for sure is that it did not condemn them.)

Ḥālī's respectability should have been the main target in Pritchett's criticism of him; but she couldn't make it her target because, unlike Ḥālī, she denies that the *ghazal* is about what it *is* about. And her tribute to Ḥālī (on p. xvii) is misconceived. (She brackets Ḥālī and Āzād, but Āzād's case is in fact markedly different from Ḥālī's and I am not concerned with it here; so in the extract that follows read *he* for *they* and *his* for *their*.) She says, "Even when they attacked their own poetry most bitterly, their love for it was never in doubt." On the contrary, where the *ghazal* was concerned—and Pritchett's book focuses entirely on this—Ḥālī felt no love whatever for what had always been its major themes. In his *Musaddas* he says:

> That foul collection of verses and odes, which stinks worse than a cesspool, which has an impact in the world no less than an earthquake, and which makes the angels in heaven feel shame at it, has been the ruin of learning and religion. Such is the role among our arts and sciences of the art of literature.
>
> If there is any punishment for the composing of depraved verse, if the telling of vain lies is impermissible, then that court in which God is judge, and in which retribution of good and bad deeds is decreed, will release all

[4] See letter no. 99 in his *Mau'iẓa-e Ḥasana*, ed. Iftikhār Aḥmad Ṣiddīqī (Lahore: Majlis-e Taraqqī-e Adab, 1963), pp. 199–200.

other sinners and fill hell with our poets.[5]

And if one aims off for poetic exaggeration this *is* essentially his view. His argument, roughly, is: The *ghazal's* main themes are debased, unprofitable, and practically useless, but it is immensely popular. So let's see what we can do to cash in on its popularity while changing its content.

Pritchett thinks that Āzād and Ḥālī's larger purpose was achieved. "The Indo-Muslim community … learned to play the new game by the new rules" (p. xvii). Again on the contrary. The community's reaction to Ḥālī's proposals is what he himself had thought it very probably would be, and he says as much quite bluntly in his *Muqaddima.* It either rejected them or ignored them, and if, as Pritchett rightly says, the *ghazal* lives, it lives not because of Ḥālī's efforts but because it took no notice of them. What Ḥālī *did* achieve—and all honor to him for it—was the enlargement of the range of Urdu poetry, not through the reform of the *ghazal* but by the use of other forms—his *Musaddas,* nowadays a much underrated poem, is the outstanding example—for the powerful expression of themes prompted, to use Pritchett's phrase, by the "social reality" of his time. And here I am sure that Pritchett and I would agree. It seems that it is only in relation to earlier periods that, for some unexplained reason, she asserts the irrelevance of "social reality."

—Ralph Russell
University of London

Iqbal Siddiqi. *Jarman Urdū Lughat (Deutch Urdu Wörterbuch).* Islāmabād: Muqtadira Qaumī Zabān, 1993. 373 pp. Rs. 135.

For many decades the need of a German-Urdu, as well as an Urdu-German, dictionary has been felt both in Germany and South Asia. German students of Urdu and Urdu-speaking students of German have been using English dictionaries, a practice which has led to the commission of many mistakes especially when choosing appropriate equivalents among several given options. Scholars in Pakistan and Germany from time to time talked about forming a team to produce a dictionary but somehow the idea never materialized. Therefore, the publication of Dr. Iqbāl Ṣiddīqī's dictionary is very welcome news for all students of Urdu in Germany.

---

[5]The *Musaddas* has been published in numerous editions. That which I use is the undated one published from Lucknow by the Tēj Kumār Press ("Vāriṣ-e Naval Kishōr Prēs"). Users of other editions may wish to know that the stanzas I quote here are the 251st and 252nd.

In his Preface Dr. Ṣiddīqī mentions that he started to compile the dictionary after Christmas 1989. From this statement one may conclude that it took him roughly three years to complete the work. Given this short period of time and considering the fact that it is the work of a single author, the limited scope of the lexicon is understandable. (The number of entries is not given. According to my estimate, it is somewhere around 18,000.) Dr. Ṣiddīqī claims to have given as many equivalents as possible. Unfortunately, there is no indication of the different fields of meaning, as all equivalents have been separated by commas only. This is a serious drawback for the user who is not well versed in Urdu and/or German, for such a user is likely to be confused by the presence of a number of equivalents that lack order and specificity. To give just one example: on p. 1, under the headword **abführen,** we find, among several other meanings, *giriftār karnā, dast ānā.* Apart from the fact that the latter meaning is not correct (it should be *jullāb dēnā),* a demarcation ought to have been drawn between these very different meanings, which is usually done by listing them numerically and indicating, where possible, the fields of meaning or collocations. In the given example, the last meaning could be marked by *med.* for "medical."

To enable the user to pronounce the German entries correctly, the author transcribes them using the phonetic symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet. This is a wise decision because South Asian students of German usually know English and therefore tend to pronounce German according to English rules. In his Preface, Dr. Ṣiddīqī refers to Table A, explaining the phonetic symbols used in the dictionary with the help of Urdu examples. Unfortunately, Table A, as given in the book, omits phonetic symbols altogether, confronting German words with Urdu examples only. The very first German example, *man,* is given with the wrong pronunciation—the "a" here is short instead of long, as the Urdu example *kām* would indicate. The same mistake is repeated in Table B. Additionally, Table A is full of misprints, especially in the transliteration of the names of German letters, while Table B contains one more mistake: while explaining the pronunciation of German vowels, the author seems to propose four pronunciations for each vowel: a "normal" *('ām),* a "long" *(lambī),* a "double" *(dōgunā)* and a "short" *(mukhtaṣar)* one. The examples given, however, provide for two pronunciations only: *Staat* and *Stahl* have a long vowel and *man* and *Mann* the same short "a." These two pronunciations are already reflected in the phonetic transcription given in the dictionary—why then such misleading explanations in Table B?

The explanations regarding German Umlaut following Table B end with the words *ṣaḥīḥ ṭarīqa* (correct way or manner), leaving the sentence incomplete. Most probably the compiler intended to refer to Table Ḥ on the following page. But Table Ḥ itself contains a number of mistakes in spelling as well as in the way the pronunciation of German sounds is explained. Instead of *mäßig* we read *mapig,* which does not make any sense. The transcription for "-ig" is "-ish," using an Urdu sound that does not correspond with the German sound. Here, a correct

transliteration in phonetic symbols only could have been given, since Urdu does not have any sound that corresponds to the German "ch," which is the pronunciation of "g" in "-ig."

The logic of giving "oe" for "ö" but stressing that "ü" is different from "ue" escapes this reviewer. In standard German, "oe" and "ue" are used as alternate forms of "ö" and "ü" in writing only and do not indicate any difference in pronunciation. To explain these sounds in terms of Urdu sounds is rather impossible. It would, therefore, have been much safer and less misleading to use phonetic symbols. "Ä" (misprinted as "a") is described as "almost e" *(taqrīban "e"),* though in Urdu there is quite a difference between "e" and the vowel "ai," as in the example presented here, *mail,* which is much closer to the German "ä." The Urdu transcription of *Haus* should be *hā'ūs,* instead of *hāūz.* It is also doubtful whether the user will be able to pronounce "eu" correctly after reading the very complicated Urdu transcription.

The example given by the author for the pronunciation of distinct syllables of German words is divided at the wrong place by him: for instance, *ent-leih-en,* which should be *ent-lei-hen.* Moreover, the correct syllabification of German words, indicated by dashes or dots in the headwords, would be a very valuable addition to the information provided by the dictionary.

The next point referred to in the Preface has to do with word compounding. German abounds in compound words but not every formation is sanctioned by usage so that compounding is not as arbitrary as the author claims it to be.

Let us now turn to the main corpus of the dictionary. Apart from the misprints and translation mistakes, the fundamental deficiency of the present work lies in the total absence of grammatical agreement, phrases and idioms. The dictionary has obviously been produced with only the Urdu-speaking user in mind. For such a user, idiomatic usages would provide a very useful addition because idioms often do not convey the correct meaning when translated word for word. In many cases, the grammatical information about the German headwords has been omitted. Stylistic information is not provided at all. Furthermore, the compiler should have added complete German plural forms where they imply a change from simple vowel to Umlaut, as, e.g., in *Zug—Züge.*

Some rather difficult and highbrow equivalents are given for certain German words, disregarding the most common Urdu expressions. Take the example of **dunkel**, for which the compiler fails to give the more appropriate Urdu *andʰerā;* instead, he offers rather such far-fetched translations as *siyāh* (p. 59). For German **Schmutz,** *mail* should have been given, in addition to *gandagī* (p. 231).

Some more examples of wrong or incomplete translation, chosen at random, are as follows:

Dein: *Tumʰārā* is not given, but it should be added here because *tērā* alone restricts the meaning to a very narrow context of usage. The same applies to all derivatives of **dein** (p. 53). **Dir:** Instead of *tērā* (p. 55), the listing should have consisted of *tujʰ kō, tujʰē; tum kō, tumʰēṅ.* **Einnehmen:** *(davā) pīnā, kʰānā* (p. 66)

should be added here. **Erbe:** The compiler has here mixed up the following two words: **Erbe** masc: *vāriṣ,* and **Erbe** neut: *virṣa, tarka, mīrāṣ,* and *virāṣat* (p. 75). **Kreuzigen:** The correct translation for this would be *ṣalīb par laṭkānā/čaṛʰānā* (p. 179). **Liebe:** Why do we not find *'ishq* here? (p. 172) **Ofenpest:** This word is a translation by Dr. Ṣiddīqī of the geographical name "Budapest" (*būḍāpeṣṭ;* p. 198). As it is, this translation does not make any sense in German. "Budapest" is always used in this very form in German. (Hungarian *Buda* does mean *Ofen* in German, but what about *pest?* Anyway, the local use of *Ofen* for the part of Budapest named Buda is not known to common speakers of German.)

German users who are not well versed in Urdu will find themselves completely at a loss when using this dictionary. For them indication of gender, grammatical valency, and fields of meaning of Urdu equivalents are essential. It is therefore suggested that the additional information be made available to them, especially those among them who are learning Urdu, in all subsequent editions of the *Jarman Urdū Lughat.*

As far as printing errors and factual mistakes are concerned, a thorough revision of the material in close cooperation with a native speaker of German would probably ensure a more satisfying result. Judging by the multitude of errors contained in the dictionary it seems to have been produced in haste. Lexicographical work, however, requires patience, meticulousness, and lots of time. It is hoped that after this first, somewhat stumbling step, German-Urdu lexicography will proceed along surer and professionally more satisfying lines, and will eventually produce the dictionaries so long awaited and so badly needed by students of Urdu and German. To Dr. Iqbāl Ṣiddīqī, however, goes the credit of the first attempt, which always is the most difficult.

—Christina Oesterheld
Universität Heidelberg, Germany

Stories about the Partition of India. Edited by Alok Bhalla. 3 Volumes. Delhi: Indus, HarperCollins, 1994. Volume 1: xxxiii, 236 pp. Volume 2: 249 pp. Volume 3: 261 pp. Rs. 195 each.

There can hardly be two opinions about it. The carnage associated with the partition of the Indian subcontinent represents in our recent history the apogee of dehumanization. The fact that it was allowed to go on largely unchecked by amateurish and irresponsible governments is a matter of shame.

To say that the riots were unexpected is to fly in the face of facts. There had been bloody rehearsals in Calcutta, Bihar, and Noakhali in 1946. The writing was on the wall. Only no one cared to read it. Unfortunately we were, and still are, mesmerized by notions of freedom. We overvalue them. But as someone has

aptly put it: To be free is nothing. To become free is everything. It is the primary function of a civil government to guarantee the security of every citizen. In this undertaking we failed almost at once.

Literature, insofar as it must examine and reinterpret its social context, could hardly have remained indifferent to these tragic happenings. Given the circumstances, its best examples are attempts to retain whatever objectivity it possibly can, although it often became difficult for writers to distinguish between passion and compassion. Punjab and Bengal, the two provinces which were split up, suffered the most. Punjab in particular was a shambles for quite some time. By sifting through the material available to him, Alok Bhalla, who teaches at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad (India), has edited a big anthology in three volumes, consisting of short stories thematically linked to the partition. Nothing comparable is available in English, at least not in so much detail. But I note the recent appearance of another anthology, covering the same ground, which has been edited by Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal. I haven't seen it but apparently it is not as extensive as Bhalla's. The simultaneous publication of two anthologies that deal with the same subject denotes a rekindling of interest in Partition and its traumas.

Some thirty years ago, Mumtaz Shirin, a distinguished Urdu critic and writer of fiction, planned a similar anthology in Urdu but couldn't finalize her project. She believed that there was enough material at hand in Urdu to suffice for an anthology. The desire to confine her book to one language only may smack of exclusivity, but as it is, some of the most interesting and readable fiction on Partition and its aftermath is in Urdu. One has only to look at Bhalla's book to confirm this. Out of the 63 stories in the anthology, 29 are from Urdu. Next comes Hindi, which contributes 15 stories. There are 8 stories from Bengali, 3 from Punjabi, 2 each from Sindhi, English, and Malayalam, and 1 each from Dogri and Marathi. The only cause for astonishment is the poor representation of Punjabi. There must be many more reasonably good stories in Punjabi which depict the events of 1947. There have to be.

To pick holes in a selection is the easiest thing to do. The task confronting an anthologist is always unenviable. He can never hope to win the approval of every reader. Everyone has his own preferences, his own indices of excellence. On the whole, however, Bhalla's selection is commendable. I can't speak for other languages, but as far as Urdu is concerned, most of what deserved to be picked has been included. So if the selection of fiction from Urdu is taken as a yardstick, I suppose his anthology is fairly representative.

Whether the contents in general are good enough is another matter. However, it would be less than fair to upbraid the editor for this. He had to make do with what was available. There should be no hesitation in admitting that, barring a few exceptions, the fiction that deals with Partition is of indifferent quality. But even where it fails as literature it has considerable relevance as an index of social configurations. Embedded in it we can find, if we look carefully,

our fears, ambitions, failings and fantasies, our twisted moralities, and an anxiety to conform to falsified versions of history. As such, the anthology can repay study.

Although entitled *Stories about the Partition of India*, the anthology carries some stories which have very little to do with the partition. The two excerpts from Ibne Insha's writing can be labeled as stories only by stretching the definition of fiction to the limits of absurdity. Their inclusion, however, is understandable because a condemnation of Pakistan is grist to Bhalla's mill. Besides, he fails to appreciate Ibne Insha's subtle humor. Insha was making fun of his countrymen and he had every right to do so. Again, the central issue in Asif Farrukhi's "The Land of Memories" is about the generation gap and not about Partition as such.

The fact is that Alok Bhalla is a poor reader of literature and a sloppy critic, as his Introduction to *Leaves*, a selection of Intizar Husain's short stories, amply demonstrated. Once again, his Introduction is the most easily read thing in the anthology. He is yet another Indian unable to reconcile himself to the creation of Pakistan. His quarrel with history is pointless and his assertion that the emergence of Pakistan was not inevitable and that Partition was a terrible error reveals his mindset.

Let us assume for argument's sake that the partition may have been an error. What can we do about it now? History is what happened and not what may or could or should have happened.

Some of the translations, mostly by Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil in tandem, are at best pedestrian. This may well be a virtue because translators who try to achieve too much often overshoot the mark. Had the editor enlisted the services of several translators it might have added to the diversity of the prose, now somewhat monotonous. Also, I cannot vouch for the accuracy of some of the translations. When I find Bhalla translate the name Chiraghdin [Čirāghdīn] as the "light of the day," spell *SEATO* as *CEATO,* and describe Jamila Hashmi as the author of a novel on Mansoor Mallaji [Manṣūr Ḥallāj], I have every reason to feel alarmed.

—Muhammad Salim-ur-Rahman
Editor, Savēra *(Lahore)*

Leo Tolstoy. *Jang aur Amn.* Translated by Shahid Hameed. Lahore: Polymer Publications, 1993–1994. 1786 pp. Rs. 600.

It is a milestone in Urdu literature that the world's greatest novel has been rendered into Urdu. The same feeling of satisfaction had occurred decades earlier following Muhammad Hasan Askari's translation of Stendhal's *The Red and the*

Black. Given the length of *War and Peace* and the peculiarities of Tolstoy's technique, it was a difficult task that Shahid Hameed undertook some years ago. The date on his Preface (1992) would indicate that it took two years to print the translation. If that is so, it was time well spent because this remarkable production appears to be, surprisingly, free of any major textual misprints.

Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy (1828–1919) started developing his ideas about the determinism of history and free will when he was with the Russian army in the Caucasus. It is interesting to know that he was fighting the Chechen in 1852 in the war that Imam Shamyl was then waging against Czarist imperialism. The next battle against the Turks at Sevastopol completed the process that had started in his boundlessly egotistical personality, as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad notes in a bit of facsimile manuscript that Shahid Hameed has included on the title page. One can compare it to similar Russian experiences in Afghanistan, the only difference being that Tolstoy was able to conceive of a European canvas and to set up a personal vision in marked opposition to the historical and philosophical trends of his time. He became a loner after his stint in the Caucasus, accepting Turgenev's hospitality in St. Petersburg but secretly despising him and the aristocracy. His retreat into Yasnaya Polyana, his inherited estate near Moscow, and his descent into peasant life completed the isolation that his genius required to challenge the society he despised.

His personal philosophy of "natural" living, his psychological conflict between love of humanity and carnal desire, all went into the novel that he wrote in installments for a magazine. The monumental novel whose first volume came out in 1869 could have died under the weight of his theories about history and the endless pacifist, non-violent soliloquies that issue from the characters he loved, had he not had the ability to depict his large gallery of characters realistically and with great internal detail. There is nothing like this in Urdu, except perhaps the sweeping canvas of *Āg kā Daryā* by Qurratulain Hyder who was able to conceive an entire historical ethos and populate it with characters, with the only difference being that her characters were restricted to a romantically evoked upper-class ambiance.

Shahid Hameed has written conscientiously about his methodology in the face of the difficulties his English texts represented. He prefers the Maude version over the Garnett one, he has honestly explored the possibility of giving us the real sound of Russian names, and he has put his finger on the one major issue arising out of the lack of a punctuation system in Urdu. He knows that Russians pronounce "Boris" as "Barees" but has accepted "Boris" for reasons of familiarity. The West has evolved its own way of ignoring the unstressed "o" in Russian, which has become familiar in English; and departing from this system would have damaged Shahid Hameed's translation. Urdu reveals its limitation in transliteration the moment you sit down to translate; for instance how do you write "Pierre" in ligature form if you don't want to break it up as "pi-er," which looks odd. The problem of correct pronunciation is embedded in the unreformed

Urdu alphabet.

The other problem relating to punctuation is enormously more serious. Urdu didn't have any punctuation marks apart from the short dash to indicate end of sentence. There were no question or exclamation marks, direct speech was not given in quotes, and the sub-clause was not set apart with commas. Lately, all that has been easily absorbed from English, and today Urdu texts are easier to read because of this borrowing.

We even use colons, although the semicolon is still not favored. Shahid Hameed notes the complex imaginistic style of Tolstoy and fixes on the sub-clause as a crucial tool with which to bring the translation close to the original. In Urdu, the sub-clause is still not a very comfortable grammatical device. Our best writers use it sparingly and readers find it difficult to pick up the sentence after it has been interrupted.

There is no doubt that the use of the inverted single comma has made it possible for us to use the qualifying sub-clause in Urdu. Shahid Hameed uses it copiously to keep close to the way Tolstoy writes. I suppose it is important to convey the stylistic complexity the author developed due to the amount of philosophy and historical analysis he was coping with, but there are points in this translation when Urdu simply refuses to carry the load. For instance, "*fauj kī pēshqadmi, in dō laṛā'iyōṅ, jin mēṅ us nē ḥiṣṣa liyā tʰā, aur apnī taraqqī, ki rūdād bayān karnē …*" taxes the Urdu-habituated mind beyond comprehension. And "*uskī āvāz us baччē kī, jō ma'lūm hōtā hai keh abʰī abʰī rō dēgā, āvāz kī ṭaraḥ laraznē lagī*" bisects the possessive case which is not usually done in Urdu. Then where *tēz* would have quickened the pace of prose describing non-essential action, there is a tendency to use "*ba-'ujlat*" and "*ba-ṣūrat*." Urdu is undergoing rapid syntactical change in today's journalism-dominated world, where translation is routine. One hopes that the matter of the sub-clause will be settled by practice itself.

Shahid Hameed has opened a new and vast reading experience to Urdu readers. *War and Peace* is a difficult book to read in any language, but its newness in Urdu will help us overcome the tediousness of original Tolstoy. The romance and the heartbreak, the marvelous creation of a microcosm of relationships, the realism that tempers romance, all these aspects of this great work are expressed competently by the translator. He writes in a clear and contemporary Urdu and surprises us with the ease with which he uses exact Urdu terms for the philosophical vocabulary employed by the author. The translation reads very well and has a style that keeps you involved with its aesthetic pleasure. One hopes that this large book will bring us back to good reading and reintroduce us to the visions we have lost in contemporary fiction.

—Khaled Ahmed
Columnist, The Friday Times *(Lahore)*

[Gratefully reproduced from *The Friday Times* (000.000), p. 0; edited for the *AUS*.]

• •

To translate war and peace from cover to cover, with nothing left out, not even Tolstoy's philosophic ramblings about history, is quite a feat. Even reading it is like climbing Mt. Everest. Anyone who attempts to translate it must feel, right through his bones, what it means to raise, stone by stone, a structure as formidable as Mt. Everest. It is tiring work, but weariness of this sort has its own rewards.

So what prompted Shahid Hameed to have a go at it? Great passions have no rational basis and frequently don't even seem sensible. He thought that translating it would be a civilized expression of his love. Or, perhaps, he found its greatness challenging. Anyway, he has produced a very readable translation of the Russian masterpiece and, with it, earned a place for himself in the history of translations into Urdu.

One can write reams about the novel itself—it attracts superlatives like a magnet; however, our admiration blinds us to the fact that it is not a good or safe model. Tolstoy was far too individualistic to stick to specifications, and there are things in the work which make so little sense that they can be eliminated without making the least bit difference—for instance, his interpretation of history, with which the novel ends and which, one can safely assume, few readers care to plod through.

Tolstoy is not a copy-book writer. But, then, none of the greats ever is. Their vision is too expansive to be confined within the parameters fixed by creative writing manuals or cautious critics. Only minor authors write according to rules.

What exactly is it that elevates Tolstoy above other novelists? Perhaps his ability to intensify the reality of life or of the ambiance which forms the context of human existence. It is all very well to talk about realism or graphicness or authenticity, but fiction is essentially fiction and there are very few writers whose created worlds, locked in their own time and space, can engage the reader's attention so powerfully that he or she feels literally *there,* on the spot. To make reality convincing is difficult, but Tolstoy succeeds in it more often than most. The sense of immediacy which overpowers us not only in *War and Peace* but also in Tolstoy's best fiction is unique. Perhaps this sense is so strongly present in *War and Peace* because of its vast scope. We do not know if the Russia Tolstoy wrote about was essentially as he describes it. No fiction can guarantee that. But at least Tolstoy can create the illusion, make it breathe, and conjure a strong whiff of corporeality out of it.

George Steiner, in his *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky,* makes a very pertinent observation. After noting the fact that nineteenth-century Russian and American fiction moved far beyond the limits of traditional realism, he speculates how the vastness of space may have acted as a spur. Apart from the vastness, from the ferocity and grandeur of physical settings which at times mocked and undermined man's at-

tempts at encroachment, the presence of another element also mattered. The element of unsettledness. Its workings sufficed to mutate realism. Representing the outer limits of European civilization, both Russia and America felt not only free but also isolated, as if unable to see for themselves a beginning or an end. The vast curiosity, stirred by endless possibilities, was constantly at loggerheads with a vast indecision. The discontent occasionally generated fiction of immense power and distinction.

Would it have helped had Tolstoy been translated into Urdu in the nineteenth century? It is a purely speculative question and may even be seen as meaningless. However, there can hardly be any doubt that, regrettably, some of our outstanding writers of fiction, like Nażīr Aḥmad, Ratan Nāṯʰ Sarshār, and Muḥammad Hādī Rusvā had no consummate models before them. Sarshār did read *Don Quixote,* but learned little from it. Perhaps his alcoholism ruled out any meaningful interplay.

In a sense, Shahid Hameed's translation is a bit late. Someone should have attempted an Urdu rendering of *War and Peace* sixty or seventy years ago. But as they say, better late than never. It is a bonus for the general reader. Shahid Hameed has netted a whale for them. There isn't a better read around.

The detailed Introduction and the copious annotations bear witness to the seriousness with which the translator undertook his task; and the fact that he made use of the best English translations and left nothing out shows his conscientiousness.

—Muhammad Salim-ur-Rahman
Editor, Savēra *(Lahore)*