

ganized. It will prove to be a useful source of information for both professional anthropologists and their students for years to come.

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URSULA ROTHEN-DUBS, *Allahs indischer Garten. Ein Lesebuch der Urdu-Literatur*. (Neue Indische Bibliothek, 18). Frauenfeld: Im Waldgut, 1989. 605 pages, DM 48.-

This reader is most welcome. As a professor of Urdu language - a language spoken by more than 130 million people - at the Islamic Studies Department, University of Bern, Ursula Rothen-Dubs follows the tradition of her family with her interest in South Asian culture and especially Urdu. She is the first German-speaking scholar to introduce a large variety of translated Urdu texts to the German public. Quite consciously the author opposes the common academic style of several works already available on this literature. Hence this book can be regarded as a rich complement to the English contributions by e.g. Annemarie Schimmel, Muhammad Sadiq and Ram Babu Saksena etc. *Allahs Indischer Garten* does not necessarily have to be read from A to Z. Rather, its short poems and short stories etc. can be enjoyed according to the personal interest of the reader who may randomly pick out certain authors or certain periods, browsing over them one by one, or in any other selection. The translated passages offer a splendid insight into the world of Urdu poetry and prose and of Muslim cultures in South Asia.

Chronologically arranged, the *Garten* (Persian: *Bustan*; often used for anthologies in literary circles) starts with poets of the early 17th century and ends with contemporaries. It comprises classical poetry, the phase of the early prose and poetic art of the 19th century as well as of the time of "recontemplation and reorientation" in the wake of colonial rule. Each phase is represented in the words of the then well-known artists. Contemporary poetry, short stories and extracts of novels make up the chapter on the 20th century. The two important schools of this comparatively young literature - Delhi and Lucknow - are documented.

The different topics and authors are supplemented and introduced by the so called *Zwischenblätter* (interim pages), mostly comments of leading Urdu literary critics, abounding with information. In this way the author succeeds in providing a cross-section of Urdu literature - the development of literary genres and themes - as reflected by its own writers. Nevertheless, not each critic's statement has to be regarded as definitive, especially since some of

those quoted here - like e.g. Muhammad Husain Azad and Abd al Majid Daryabadi - had been written at the time of "recontemplation and reorientation" and were considerably influenced by the period of the so-called "new light". Hence, they not rarely rejected their own tradition, ridiculed it or even misunderstood it, thereby often paving the way for what has been labeled "Orientalism" by Edward Said.

Poetry seems to be the prime concern of the author, and indeed, poetry is the main form of literary expression in most of the Muslim circles. Urdu prose started only in the mid 19th century, primarily under the impact of colonial media. In this context the contribution of Islamic scholars and mystics could have been mentioned who, for the first time, used the new printed word as a means of propagating their own ideas. Likewise, Urdu political poetry, especially during the Khilafat movement, might be worth mentioning. The crucial Progressive Writers Movement in the thirties and forties has also been given little attention (p. 208, 335). *Angare - burning coals* (p. 559) -, the first collection of Urdu short stories published by the progressives had an epoch-making impact on contemporary cultural production. A more detailed evaluation of this movement could have prevented statements like "besides Manto ... Ismat Chughta'i is the only Urdu author who has dared to make social grievances the topic of her stories" (p. 561).

A short but brilliant epilogue puts different trends into a historical framework. Ursula Rothen-Dubs gives a bird's-eye view of the development of Islam in South Asia, of the importance of courtly poetry, of the mystics' influence as well as of the era of reorientation. Thus, the author has skillfully provided maximum information with minimum data and has thereby succeeded in not overloading the reader with too many facts and names.

Biographical notes on the authors presented, a glossary and a comprehensive bibliography and, finally, an elaborate table of contents greatly facilitate orientation. This pioneering *Bustan* will be most stimulating for those interested in South Asia and in Islam.

*Jamal Malik*