

Book Reviews

***Paradise of the Assassins* by Abdul Halim Sharar [a translation of *Firdaus-e-bareen*] translated by Tariq Mahmud, introduction by Asif Farrukhi, edited with chronology and notes by Amina Azfar, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp.108, price Rs.150.**

This book is a new translation of *Firdaus-e-bareen* [‘paradise on earth’] by the famous multi-faceted intellectual, Abdul Halim Sharar [1860-1920] – well-known for his historical novels in addition to other literary activities. An earlier translation by Masud-ul-Hasan [n.d.] has preceded it with the result that the same novel now has two English translations – the one under review has the advantage of an *apparatus criticus* of sorts.

The fact that a new translation was commissioned or desired or published by the Oxford University Press at the present time invites some questions. It seems to reinforce the fallacy that terrorism is endemic to the psyche of Muslims and that the disease must break out at different intervals as it can never be eradicated but can only be temporarily suppressed. If for any reason this is the preconceived idea behind the whole work, then the whole exercise can be seen as just another manifestation of the new crusades against Islam in the guise of a ‘war on terror’. This impression is strengthened by references to Osama b. Laden and reinforces the notion that the Muslim world is teeming with killers-for-hire, mercenary murderers, would-be assassins, brainwashed enthusiasts and fanatical suicide bombers. The assassin’s knife has been replaced by the remote-controlled bomb – as the last line of the introduction states.

It is again significant that this novel [dealing with an extinct sect of religious murderers] has been chosen for translation rather than any of those novels by Abdul Halim Sharar which expose the machinations of westerners against Muslims – such as *Malik al-Aziz* or *Hasan Angelina*. It is to be hoped that, in order to redress the balance, competent translations of such novels by Sharar will also be published.

The back cover states unequivocally:

Abdul Halim Sharar could hardly have guessed how interesting and *relevant* his novel would sound in the twenty-first century, more than a hundred years after he wrote it [emphasis added].

Of course, Sharar could also hardly have guessed that his novel about a historical topic of several centuries back might also provide contemporary raw material for the demonization and stereotyping of Muslims who are now classed as ‘the other’.

No mention has been made as to which text [that of 1899 – the first edition – or later] was used for the translation nor is there any reference to the textual history of the novel or whether the translation is complete, edited or abridged. It is not clear whether this novel preceded the biography of Hasan b. Sabah written by Sharar [Bombay: Sultan Husain c. 1945] whereas the novelist clearly states that this novel is a by-product of the earlier biography. An earlier preface – that of Prof. Habibullah Khan Ghazanfar [Karachi: 7 March 1955] has been referred to but this merely elucidates the historical background of the novel in which Prof. Ghazanfar was more interested. The erudite and detailed preface of Prof. Syed Waqar Azim [Lahore: Majlis Taraqqi-i-Adab, February 1967, 2nd edition] has not been utilized to advantage. The notes are sparse of detail and elementary. The great fort of Hasan b. Sabah is properly called ‘alamut’ – not ‘alamoot’ as in the text as it is derived from ‘aluh amut’ [= ‘eagle’s nest’]. The present Aga Khan’s residence in Paris is named ‘Aiglemon’ [= ‘mountain of the eagles’]. *Paradise of the Assassins* is part of a series titled *Classics from South Asia and the Near East*. More books – of a suitable kind – need to be included in this series.

Syed Munir Wasti

***Pakistan, Social and Cultural Transformation in a Muslim Nation* by Mohammad Abdul Qadeer, London/New York, Routledge, 2006, pp.322, price not printed.**

Very few authors have written on the rapid socio-cultural change in Pakistan which can be taken as serious academic investigation. As a Third World country Pakistan shares many characteristics with the countries in the region, especially with the Muslim societies, but it is unique on many accounts as well. Mohammad Abdul Qadeer’s book under review is a venture in social history, a very much neglected field of study in Pakistan. The historical approach makes the analysis embedded in temporal and spatial realities. Looking from the contexts of geography, colonial history, and history of freedom movement, the author identifies the roots of the phenomena of social change which has

been going on at an enormous pace since 1947. In this connection the author remarks that, 'Hindus and Sikhs, who migrated to India on partition, would find little familiar if they were to return [today]'.

Major themes discussed in the book, and taken as significantly contributing to social change, include modernization, Islamisation, population growth, urbanization and economic development. These are presented in ten chapters. The first chapter is an introductory one. The second chapter deals with patterns of social change. The third chapter focuses upon the physical features and the processes that have been changing them. The dimension of ethnicity is explained in the fourth, urban transformation in the fifth, development in the countryside in the sixth, and Islam and social life in the seventh chapter. Family, kinship, community, and civil society have been discussed in the eighth chapter. Everyday life is the theme of ninth chapter, and the last chapter gives an overall picture and scope and direction of change.

The author's motive in writing this book is to present Pakistan as a pivotal Muslim society. Muslim societies are generally taken as being 'stagnant and resistant to change'. The author proves through his academic analysis that this conception is totally wrong. The cultural history of Pakistan, presented by him, is in fact a vividly moving picture, full of life, vibrating in the public as well as private arenas.

Describing 'historical' as something contributing to change the course of event that follows, the author observes several historical landmarks in the history of Pakistan. He has periodised Pakistan's social and political history at 1947, 1971, 77, to date. He has found these periods corresponding to, nation-building and modernization, populist egalitarianism, re-invented traditions, Islamisation and globalization. He could have divided the last period into two, putting the dividing mark at 1991 as after this year the country got on a track where it has been facing the on slaught of globalization without finding any countervailing force against it. Qadeer argues that the era after 1977 to date has certain degree of unity to make it a historical phase. It is the era of institutionalization of military's direct domination of government and economy; it has revivalist thrust in national ideology and culture, and has accelerated modernization of the material base. In fact, these thrusts have been there in the previous eras as well, but the distinct process of globalisation gained momentum after 1991, hence it could be taken as a critical landmark. A single strand that can be identified in all the three phases is modernization. In this regard 1977-88 was the only set-back period but it generated the energy, capacity and demand for adopting modernization all the more due to economic and regional situations.

Describing the super-structural changes in politics, economics and on aspects related to religion, Qadeer also explores the private arena consisting of family, kinship, customs, traditions, gender dynamics and people's aspirations. He explains that despite profound changes in culture and social organization, what has been preserved very keenly is the family and to a lesser extent blood bonds. The ethnic diversity and high degree of segmentation which has allowed maximum maneuvering for individuals and groups, has been explained alongwith their problematic aspects. National culture has gradually started shaping itself after the emergence of national level organizations and institutions. These were aided by national symbols, icons of national pride, media, and voluntary organizations. Besides these, the undercurrents of regional dissatisfaction has also been pointed out by the author, since these are rooted in history and political process.

Islamisation has also remained a constant theme throughout the history of Pakistan, though it was enforced pompously as a political rhetoric only in the Zia period. Another prominent trend has been development of individual or small entities at the cost of larger entities. Occasional manifestation of national spirit has been there but politicians have failed to turn it into national vigour and pride. Qadeer has presented his analysis at various planes and, as such, he has left no significant factor untouched and uncontextualized.

The author has identified anomalies emerging in the process of change, the processes generating them and their deep-entrenched reasons. He finds disparity between material and non-material, imagined and lived culture, and private and public space as the lines of fault. He argues that introduction of modern technology, consumer goods, and medical treatment took no time to get popularized but small family norms, women's equality, punctuality and efficiency, rule of law and related aspects of life which require maturity, discipline, diligence and honesty, are not adopted, hence the distortions. Personal goods have superceded collective good; filthy neighbourhoods line posh localities as urbanism never got into the behavior of people who still adhere to the rural feudal mindset. Such aspects show the cultural lag. Qadeer has very keenly observed and analysed transformation in the institutions of family, tribal system, and rural caste system which is withering. He notices urban stratification as a composite outcome of income, profession, and caste, but it is more open.

The author finds out that the Pakistani society has divergent visions and commitments about national identity and goals due to multiple ethnic identities living in Pakistan. He asserts that Pakistan means different thing to different ethnicities. New technology, new

consumption patterns and production practices, on the one hand, and military rule, failure of electoral democracy, ethnic and regional centrifugal tendencies, social inequalities, incompetent institutions, on the other hand, have forced Pakistani society to reconcile divergent interests and values. Thus the progress to modernity is hampered. Material life is advancing but political and social life still has to struggle for it. Regional subcultures shape the daily life of people and ethnic consciousness of people heightens when a person competes with persons of different ethnic background, for economic, political, and cultural power and autonomy.

Extending the same argument he explains urbanization, and points out transportation, infrastructure, and housing as relevant factors for explaining landscape changes. Describing overall experience of urbanisation in Pakistan he states, 'Pakistan has been urbanized, physically and demographically, but its social institutions remain steeped in a rural ethos.'

He finds Pakistani society visibly Islamised, i.e. in the public space, and modernized in the private space and economy. This Islamisation has brought about social change of its own brand. One can see the emergence of *jehadis*, sectarian violence, terrorist attacks, rising sense of insecurity, anxiety and religious extremism in the provinces where the Islamists have formed governments after the 2002 elections. The poors are given least attention so their sense of deprivation is increasing. Rural-urban migration is in turn crowding the urban space, and infrastructure. To fill the gap created by rapid social change, and resultant unavailability of norms, new norms have been invented. Qadeer see the rising Islamic revivalism as being parallel to the contemporary evangelicalism in the USA and Europe.

What have been adding more complexity to the landscape of change are processes of internationalization and globalisation. The factors of trade, aid, international law, regulatory regimes, migration, Pakistani diaspora, all bring their influence from the economic sectors to the social structures and then cultural practices. Both Islamisation and globalisation have been identified by Qadeer as forces of homogenization. He argues that the regional cultures are both eroded and reinforced by these two forces. While this assertion can be contended on the ground that regional tendencies might have got support from media and information revolution, but rapid movement of people at the local, provincial and international levels have affected more rapidly. Remittances, consumerism, and integration with modern sectors of economics, modern education and politics, have been reinforcing integration more than indigenization. The economic factors behind

cultural enterprises can explain why the folk and 'raw rural' is fading out. Only a few TV channels, feature films, regional language academies, and the Institute of Folk Heritage cannot save the 'true folk' from petrifying. The downslide is obvious. The folk is unable to meet the combined challenge of ruthless globalisation and commercialization together. Qadeer has explained it as convergence of ethnicities, through trade, travel, and media.

The chapter on 'Everyday Life' is unique in the sense that it tries to bring into focus changes in those aspects of life which are generally ignored, such as leisure, recreation, romance, arranged marriages, tea house meetings, cinema, theatre. Also he discusses the Pakistani elite, class-specific lifestyle, mind-set, worldview, popular culture, minorities, and work. This shows his approach to give comprehensive coverage to important aspects of life. In the end, he has expressed the hope that Pakistan can integrate Islam and modernity,

The narratives and analysis is studded with very critical remarks, forceful assertions, and conclusions. The plan and organization of the book is apparently very logical, but while going through it, due to overlapping of many processes and currents, the analysis at times becomes burdened with series of quick flashes, glimpses and comments. On the whole the book is written in a style which varies from light narratives to serious pieces of analyses, yet it is a piece of writing which is not verbose, nor seems too academic, despite the fact that it is a scholarly work in all respects.

On the whole the book is a comprehensive effort to grasp the major and minor forces, perceptible and imperceptible indicators, and significant facets of the society, christened as 'Pakistan' in 1947. Though the author has not mentioned, but the book is testimony to the claim that Pakistan has now developed a national identity of its own. It is a tribute by the author to his homeland where he could not live for a larger part of his life but which he tried to explain and present to the world as a land of hope, vibrancy, and a life of its own, still craving for a fair treatment both by its people and the leaders.

Anwar Shaheen

***Rethinking Education in Pakistan: Perception, Practices and Possibilities* by Dr. Shahid Siddique, Paramount Publishing Enterprise, 2007, pp. 196, hard bound, price Rs. 345.**

Rethinking Education in Pakistan is written by Dr. Shahid Siddique, a well-known educationist of Pakistan. The cover page of the book shows that, as a tree education in Pakistan has all the capabilities to grow and

develop but every part of this tree is besetted with various problems. There is no possibility of progress and development in education in Pakistan without identifying, understanding and rectifying these issues. Therefore the title of the book is *Rethinking Education in Pakistan*.

The contents of the book show that the author has covered a wide spectrum of issues. The whole book is divided into seven sections. Each section inspires the readers to think and invites the larger audience i.e. students, teachers, policy makers and curriculum writers to enhance their understanding on the subject and as change agents play an active role in this respect.

Section one policy issues

The first section of the book has six articles which offer critique to the educational policy of Pakistan. The article 'Commodification of Education' indicates that the entire education system in the country has been turned in to a supermarket. The human touch in education is completely missing, rather than nourishing souls and minds educational processes is going on in the form of a business. In this market fake degrees are in vogue. The author has emphasized that to improve the quality of higher education in Pakistan we need to produce more quality PhD degree holders as faculty in our universities. But the Higher Education Commission (HEC), with the collaboration of universities, should take all precautions to safeguard the quality of PhD programs.

Coming to school education the author also proposes that community involvement should be enhanced in order to improve the quality of education. He presents a case study:

...during my involvement in a community school project in rural Sindh, I came to realize... how community can participate in the uplift of education, this help could be in various forms, i.e. piece of land, wood, skilled labour etc and not necessary in the form of hard cash.(p.44)

At the end of the section the author states

What is needed thus, is a genuine shift in our thinking paradigm; only then can an initiative work. (p.46)

Section two: teacher and teacher education

In the second section of the book the author has discussed the issues regarding teacher and teacher education. The crux of the message is our teacher education programs prepare our teachers very superficially. They pay more attention to the knowledge and skill of student teachers but do not consider transforming their attitude; they hardly give them an opportunity to rethink on their own teaching. Through their training

programs they get the impression that as teachers they need to transmit curriculum to students. The situation of teacher education programs become bleaker because there is no follow up and support system of these teacher education programs. The author has raised a relevant question in this section i.e. Why after teacher training there is no change in classroom teaching? The author has given his own reflection on this issue. He states after learning skills a teacher becomes a technician and no room is left for creativity. He gives a wise advice that professional development of a teacher should involve their heads, their hands and their heart and should go beyond skills (p.68). Teachers should be given opportunities to rethink their own teaching and should get opportunities to practice practical teaching in real classrooms.

The author in the article 'The touch and go teaching' high lights that as a teacher teaches in various universities, teaching process has become mechanical. Students and teacher hardly get an opportunity to dialogue and discuss. In this situation how education will take place? Education means to extract the inner capabilities of pupil and in this hurried situation teachers do not get any such opportunity. More over, teachers attend one day workshops where mostly theoretical knowledge is given to them. To solve this problem the author has proposed that these short term teacher education programs should be planned properly. To attend these workshops, need analysis and mental set up of the participants is essential; the most important dimension should be the follow up of these workshops. In our teacher education program we ignore to develop thinking skills of our teachers. The author has proposed to nurture the thinking skills, the teachers should write about their teaching practice in reflective journals. In the situation, where quality education is not given, informal tuitions centers are in vogue. To rectify this situation the author recommends to develop more professional attitude in our regular institutions. Tuition centers and other educational institutions should play a complimentary role to the formal education program.

Section three: curriculum and material

Through out the section the author has highlighted important facets of the problems related to curriculum and material. In a most interesting style author has revealed that the whole processes of engineering curriculum is obscured. For example few selected people get together and one fine day they announce that curriculum is ready. In this process the experts ignore the involvement of other stakeholders and overlook the whole process of implementation of curriculum (p.97). Further teachers are also confused with the notion of curriculum as, according to

them, understanding the text books are curriculum. In this situation teachers and can not think innovatively. The best part of this section is where the author has explained lucidly common participants of curriculum i.e 1. teachers; 2. teaching material; 3. students; and 4. school. In this sense curriculum is not a static phenomena but living and vibrant reality and invites the teachers to play an active role in the implementation process of teaching. The author advises that during teacher education programs the participants should reconceptualize the notion of curriculum. Curriculum plays an important role in preparing the students to face the challenges of future. Our curriculum should contain appropriate subjects so that our youth will be equipped to take advantage of the changing economic environment. Unfortunately our curriculum remain unchanged for a long time.

Another dark facet of our curriculum is that our students use helps books i.e. guess papers. In this changed world, knowledge has a premium and our students should not leave a page unturned. In reality most of the students leave the text books behind and just go through these help books. Rather than constructing knowledge they just reproduce knowledge. In this manner their thinking skills do not develop. The author has discussed this issue and recommended the curriculum writers that they should revisit the curriculum that they have prepared. The examiners are advised to develop examination papers wisely to check the thinking and creative skills of the students.

In this section the author exposes another wrong practice i.e. during vacations students are given a lot of homework. The author has advised to give lighter and interesting homework and often teachers can give mental homework to their students. Teachers should bear in mind that in the technological revolution era education does not stop at school it continues through newspapers, radio, films and TV and teachers should utilize all these resources.

Section five: re-conceptualizing good school

In Pakistan efforts have been made to improve schools but basic problem in this regard is that different people have different notions of a good school. The author himself offers a holistic definition of a good school:

A more comprehensive view of a good school is a place that provides opportunities for holistic development of children. ...One of the aims of a good school should be to prepare its students as independent learners and to develop their concepts, skills and attitude to enable them to face various situations of life with confidence. (p.116)

Today we require financial and human resources to create enabling, none threatening and friendly environment for developing a complete personality of a child. While discussing quality education in school the author has highlighted an important issue in our teaching practice i.e. punishment. Some teachers go to the extremes: ‘...in some cases the fingers get imprinted on the delicate cheeks of young learners’ (p.125). The author asks an important question: What teachers can do to deal with students misbehavior? He offers some brilliant suggestions like individual counseling sessions with such students outside classroom or during teacher education programs teachers belief about punishment should be explored. They should be helped to reconceptualize it and provided with skills along with changed attitude to deal with disciplinary problems in the classroom.

Section five: home

Under this heading the role of home in child’s holistic development has been explored. i.e. there is a growing realization on the part of educationists that educational change needs a holistic approach where key players i.e. teacher, head teachers, students and parents need to work together. There should be a close link between home and school. Parents should continue to take an interest in their children’s education. Teachers are anxious to help parents provided parents also cooperate. The author has suggested that parents can play an important role in two areas:

- Daily school work of a child can be enhanced through parental support.
- Parents can inculcate the principles of ethics into the minds and hearts of young children. These principles will stay with them through out their lives.

Unfortunately in most cases parents are so busy that they hardly find time to visit the schools of their children and interact with teachers. The author beautifully describes this scenario: ‘...this broken bridge between home and school is a sad commentary on the prevailing situation in Pakistan’. The author here recommends that parents should play a crucial role in the holistic development of their children. First of all from early childhood parents should develop positive image of their children as well as help their children to discipline themselves. He has rightly pointed out that: ‘..children who are not exposed to discipline life at home miss out many opportunities in school and their performance is usually below the expectation of their parents.’(p.136)

Section six: language issues

In the sixth section of the book the author has discussed the issues related to the medium of instructions. He has recommended that in our education system we should promote Urdu language since it is a national language. He thinks that unless we attach some benefits to Urdu, language power will remain with English language. On the other hand today we live in an international era and English is the language of science and management. To meet the requirement of the time we need to improve the standard of teaching English. First through teachers education and secondly students should be encouraged to interact in the second language. That is with the help of the 'collaborative approach' teachers and students should interact and dialogue in English language. The author has proposed that English language communication skills should be introduced in all higher education institution of Pakistan so their students do not feel left out when they enter the highly competitive professional world. Our students should have strong command of the English language. They should read in English, learn in English and think in English. We should look at English as an important subject for the future.

Section seven: research and assessment

The author in this section has analyzed the quality aspects of current research practices carried out in various universities of Pakistan. The author from his wide experience of higher education institutions mentions that

Most of the research in established universities in Pakistan is mere repetition of earlier ones.... In some cases even the subsidiary questions of an earlier research are replicated. The ultimate aim of such researches and research theses is to get their authors degrees. After that most of the researches gathered dust, sitting in the shelves. (p.185)

At the end of the article the author suggests that there is a genuine need to offer research courses to the junior faculty and graduate students. Supporting research facilities should be available in the universities. Seminars and conferences should be organized at frequent intervals which will help equip them with necessary skills of research. Moreover to enhance the research culture in our educational institutions we also require research platforms, groups, and associations where researchers can come and share their research with others colleagues. A dialogue among scholars and students can truly create a research culture in our society. Pakistan Association for Research in Education at AKU-IED is one of the examples. We also require computer based data i.e.

how much research has been done in a particular area in Pakistan? What are the areas in which we need to do more research? This kind of information can lead us to develop academic associations where researchers belonging to one field could come together, share their research and have a dialogue across the country. Moreover dialogue between researchers and policy makers should be developed to create a link between research and educational policies of Pakistan.

In this section another important article is on our ‘ailing assessment system’. The author has highlighted that in our education system we have ‘memory driven assessment system’. This traditional examination system is encouraging rote memorization. Students are so busy in rote memorization there is no time left for thinking which is the crux of education. The author has proposed that we should have an effective national testing service. There is a need of collaboration between institutions and examination boards through workshops, conferences where target audiences and decision makers come together and alternative modes of assessment should be shared and developed.

Over all, the book *Rethinking Education in Pakistan* presents novel perspectives on traditional ideas and notions about issues in the education system of Pakistan.

Shahida Mohiuddin

An Indian Passage to Europe: The Travels of Fath Nawaz Jang,
Edited and introduced by Omar Khalidi Oxford University Press,
Karachi, 2006.

This travelogue – an early example of travel writing in English by an educated Indian Muslim [one of the first to receive an ‘English’ education] – is a unique treasure-trove of inaccessible information not found in contemporary chronicled history. Fath Nawaz Jang’s real name was Mahdi Hasan Khan and he was born near Lucknow in 1852. He received his title from the Nizam of Hyderabad [Deccan] as he worked in Hyderabad for many years, rising to the post of Chief Justice. His diary covers not only the homeland of the writer but also spans the continents to include places on the journey like Egypt, parts of Europe and finally Britain. Travel has always been educative even if not undertaken for that specific purpose. A Turkish proverb even suggests that ‘he who travels knows more than he who reads’. The number of educated Muslims of Indian origin who visited Britain in the 19th century is few and far between, though they cover a spectrum ranging from Mirza Abu Talib Khan [tr. 1799-1803] to Aga Khan III [tr. 1897]. Even fewer have left behind worthwhile records of their impressions. Thus the unearthing of

this travelogue by Omar Khalidi from its first printed edition deserves much praise. He has also provided the book with a title, notes and an erudite introduction.

Omar Khalidi hails originally from Hyderabad and has written copiously on all aspects of Hyderabadi life. Today the dominions of the Nizam of the state of Hyderabad have been carved up among several Indian provinces. However, the polished culture and rich civilization they once possessed still survives in ghostly form despite attempts to trample it into oblivion. The layer of Hyderabad has not been erased from the palimpsest of Omar Khalidi's consciousness, and his attachment to his roots is both amazing and instructive. Based in Boston, itself a playground of history, Omar Khalidi's mind ranges across time and space to resurrect the Hyderabad Deccan of a century ago, and to give it utterance through the diaries of Fath Nawaz Jung.

The original title of the book was 'Extracts from the Diary of the Nawab Mahdi Hasan Khan Fathah Nawaz Jang' – which indicates that the volume might be part of a diary presumably lost and from which the author [Nawaz Jang] made his extracts. It is not immediately clear how much textual editing was done by Omar Khalidi – whether he abridged the text or just annotated it and modernized the spellings.

The diary begins on 2 February 1888 and concludes on 24 October 1888. In the appendix are several letters written by the author to British newspapers on Indian affairs especially those of his state of Hyderabad which was in an uneasy relationship with the 'Paramount Power' in the 'days of the Beloved' [Mir Mahboob Ali Khan Nizam VI].

The diary is a panoramic presentation of the socio-cultural milieu of contemporary Britain and a grand sweep of the state of Europe in all its fin-de-siècle splendour. It catalogues a large variety of people and events – including such items as the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. Fath Nawaz Jang gains entry into the social life of London and meets the people who matter. He is impressed by the theatres, clubs and restaurants of London. Reading it today, it is disquieting to observe just how much the defeat of the Muslims and their subsequent disenfranchisement after the first war of independence in 1857 must have deprived them of self-confidence and left them in awe even of relatively minor British achievements. In Fath Nawaz Jang's account, the picture of Britain that emerges is of a glorious and gentle combination of culture and technology, a land of milk and honey – except, of course, for the cold and gloomy weather. It is difficult to accept his assertion that he, at the house of a British friend, 'had a splendid dinner, particularly in the matter of curry, which was the most delicious I ever tasted' except as an instance of polite Lucknow exaggeration. Such a statement may well be

true today, but is highly unlikely more than a century ago. Fath Nawaz Jang did not look for – and did not observe – the class struggles, the squalor, the denial of women's rights and the rampant child labour that had engaged the attention of serious observers from Dickens to Marx and Engels, not to mention the vast majority of the British population. He is an unabashed Anglophile – not at all impressed even by the 'mission civilisatrice' of French imperialism. Arriving at Folkestone from the Continent, he is naively delighted to find that everyone speaks English and that the advertisements are in English. Fath Nawaz Jang even labels the views of Dadabhai Naoroji as radical. He comes across as a meek, mild, observant but finicky individual.

It is creditable that Omar Khalidi is devoting himself to the discovery and dissemination of unknown or forgotten works written by educated Muslims in India. These can be cited as sources in research works and also read for sheer interest. The book has a few minor misprints – e.g. the name Donnelly is spelt in three different ways – and it is hoped that these will be corrected when the book is reprinted. However, this cross-cultural study is a useful and readable endeavour which attempts to restore the balance in an area where the bulk of travelogues is by visitors to India and not from India.

S. Tanvir Wasti