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India in the Persian World of Letters

*Khān-i Ārzū among the
Eighteenth-Century Philologists*

Arthur Dudney

OXFORD ORIENTAL MONOGRAPHS



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ARTHUR DUDNEY

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*For those who have realized that “there is no document of civilization
which is not at the same time a document of barbarism”
and are working to do something about it.*

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This study is a revision of a PhD thesis submitted in 2013. One of the delights of revising it over such a long period was stripping out the claims—some merited and some the inevitable result of a student’s naivete—that various aspects of my argument were completely new. Several excellent scholars have converged on questions that I also address in this study and there have been rapid advances in “Ārzū Studies” and adjacent disciplines in that time. I have done my best to integrate relevant new scholarship, but I am acutely aware of the gaps that remain. In any case, “Above everyone who has knowledge there is the One who is all knowing” [*wa-fauqa kulli zī ‘ilmⁱⁿ ‘alīm*] (Qur’ān 12:76). The manuscript was completed during the coronavirus pandemic, which meant a strange exile from the library exactly when I would have preferred to be around books rather than my jumble of PDFs.

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On the subject of open access, the cover image for this volume, a striking illustration of a school scene from a deluxe edition of Amir Khusrau’s *Khamsah* (Quintet), deserves special mention. The manuscript was likely made for the emperor Akbar in Lahore in the late sixteenth century and is now held in the Walters Art Museum

(Baltimore, Maryland) as manuscript W.624. The Walters has an ambition to make images of most of its collection, including the manuscripts, available through a CC0 license, which waives all copyright and allows anyone to use the high-resolution images for free. This commitment to open access is foresighted and brave since image reproduction charges are such an entrenched revenue stream for museums.

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Contents

<i>Abbreviations of Ārzū’s Major Works</i>	xii
<i>Notes on Conventions Used</i>	xiii
<i>Transliteration</i>	xv
Introduction	1
The Cosmopolitan and the Classic	6
On Method, the West, and the Non-West	9
Where This Study Will Take You	13
1. A Literate Life: Placing Ārzū and His Works in Their Social Context	15
Becoming Khān-i Ārzū	18
Early Life and Family	18
Delhi	22
Final Years in Lucknow	22
Ārzū’s People: Friends, Patrons, and Rivals	23
Ānand Rām Mukhlīṣ	25
Tek Chand Bahār	27
The Ticket to Success: Mīrzā ‘Abd al-Qādir Bedil	29
Other Poets in Ārzū’s Network	32
Patrons	35
Rivals and Enemies	37
Ārzū’s Works	45
Conclusion	52
2. Ārzū’s Fruitful Theory of Language	54
The Fruit of the Fruitful Tree	58
A Brief History of Arabic Philology	59
The History of Persian Literary Culture as Described in <i>Mušmir</i>	62
Phonetics, Vocabulary, and Regional Variation	74
Connections between Languages	80
Three Kinds of Connections	81
Figurative Language and Where Meaning Comes From	88
Conclusion	93
3. Innovation and Poetic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Persian	94
The “Indian Style” and India	101

The Texts: Munīr’s Critique and Ārzū’s Responses	114
<i>Dād-i Sukhan’s</i> Prefaces	117
The Commentary and Intertextuality	124
Hazīn’s Critique and Ārzū’s Response	126
Ārzū and the Persian Cosmopolis	129
4. Dictionaries Delimiting Literary Language	142
Mughal Lexicography before Ārzū	144
Reading <i>Sirāj al-Luḡhat</i> and <i>Chirāgh-i Hidāyat</i> together	149
Other Major Eighteenth-Century Persian Dictionaries	154
Ārzū’s Vernacular Lexicography	161
Observations on Indian Religion as “Proto-Anthropology”	176
Later Persian Lexicography in the Sub-Continent	184
5. Building a Vernacular Culture on the Ruins of Persian?	187
Beginning in the Middle: How <i>Āb-i Hayāt</i> Presents the Eighteenth Century	193
A Who’s Who of the People of <i>Rekhtah</i>	198
Shāh Ḥātim (1699–1783) and His “Contemporaries”	201
Mir Muḥammad Taqī Mir (1722–1810)	203
<i>Rekhtah in Majma‘ al-Nafā’is</i>	206
Defining the (Literary) Vernacular	208
<i>Hindi</i> outside of Delhi and the Language of Delhi	222
Urdu and the Everyday	224
Revisiting the Question of the “Unprivileged Power” of Indo-Persian	232
6. How Language Actually Works: Contrasting Europe and the Non-West	235
Language and Early Modern Thought	238
Ārzū’s Philology and Its Possible (But Unlikely) Influence on European Philology	245
Ancients and Moderns in India and Europe	250
Europe and Vernacular Politics: The Vernacular as Modernity?	256
The Pre-Colonial Language Economy	260
Multilingualism and the Individual	263
Relevant and Irrelevant Linguistic Distinctions for Pre-Colonial South Asia	266
The Social Mechanisms for Defining Language	270
“Imagine There’s No Countries”	275
Conclusion	278
<i>Bibliography</i>	283
<i>Index</i>	319

Abbreviations of Ārzū’s Major Works

‘AK	<i>‘Aṭīyah-i Kubrā</i>
CH	<i>Chirāgh-i Hidāyat</i>
DS	<i>Dād-i Sukhan</i>
ḲhG	<i>Ḳhiyābān-i Gulistān</i>
M	<i>Mušmir</i>
MN	<i>Majma‘ al-Nafā’is</i>
M ^c U	<i>Mauhibat-i ‘Uẓmā</i>
NA	<i>Nawādir al-Alfāz</i>
SL	<i>Sirāj al-Luğhat</i>
SM	<i>Sirāj-i Munīr</i>
TĞh	<i>Tanbīh al-Ğhāfilīn</i>

Notes on Conventions Used

Instead of “Hindi,” this study uses the term “*hindī*” in pre-colonial contexts to remind us that the Indic language(s) generally called “*hindī*” in the Persian sources should not be confused with today’s Modern Standard Hindi or uncritically contrasted with Urdu. As late as 1832, the poet Mirzā Ghālib’s preface to a volume of what we would call his Urdu poems refers to them as “*hindī*.” Even later, Munshī Bhagwant Raī Kākorwī’s *Nal Daman Hindī* (1859, reprinted 1869) uses the word in that sense in its title (see Alam and Subrahmanyam 2012, 205n3).

For clarity, *bait* is always translated as “couplet” even though the form should technically be called a “distich” when the two lines do not rhyme.

Years are generally cited in both the sources’ Islamic lunar date (AH) as well as Common Era (CE). Converting years according to a formula leaves a range of error ± one year unless the exact date is known because the Islamic lunar calendar cycles over the solar calendar. The dating systems are generally obvious from the context (namely that tenth- to twelfth-century dates are Islamic while seventeenth- to nineteenth-century dates are Western), and ambiguous dates are marked.

Translations from Arabic, Hindi, Persian, Urdu, and European languages are mine unless noted. The principal exceptions are passages from Āzād’s *Āb-i Hayāt*, which are cited by page number from the 1907 Urdu edition but with English text provided from Frances Pritchett and Shamsur Rahman Faruqi’s translation. Quranic passages are drawn from the M. A. S. Abdel Haleem translation.

The crucial term *tażkirah* has no good English equivalent so it appears in the original throughout. The name is derived from the Arabic root *z-k-r* which has to do with remembering, including remembering people for the purpose of praising them. In Persian and Urdu, *tażkirah* in the context of literary communities refers to a book containing a number of

entries on individual poets, including in most cases anecdotes about them and selections of their poetry. It has often been rendered into English as “biographical dictionary” but both parts of that translation are misleading: “Biographical” obscures the implied purpose of the work, namely preserving the memory of the poets of the tradition and their works, while “dictionary” suggests that it is about words rather than people and is organized alphabetically, which is not necessarily the case. Especially in Arabic, *tażkirah* can also mean a “memoir” which refers to a different sort of work. It has this sense in the title of Shaikh Muhammad ‘Ali Ḥazīn’s autobiography *Tażkīrat al-Aḥwāl* [*Tażkirah* of (My) Circumstances]. The rendering of “*tażkirah*” as “memorative communication” (as in Hermansen and Lawrence 2000, 150), while undoubtedly more correct than other options, is too unwieldy for our purposes.

Transliteration

Marked or Ambiguous Consonants

t	ତ	ଟ	kh	ଖ	ଙ୍କ	sh	ଶ	ଶ
th	ଫୁ	ଫୁ	d	ଦ	ଙ୍ଗ	s ¹	ସ	ସ
s	ଥ	ଥ	dh	ଧ	ଙ୍ଘ	z	ସ୍ତ	ସ୍ତ
j	ଜ	ଜ	zh	ଝ	ଙ୍ଝ	t̪	ତ୍ପ	ତ୍ପ
jh	ଝା	ଝା	r	ର	ଙ୍ର	z̪	ତ୍ରୋ	ତ୍ରୋ
ch	ଚ	ଚ	rh	ର୍ହ	ଙ୍ର୍ହ	χ	ୱ	ୱ
chh	ଛା	ଛା	zh	ଝ୍ର	ଙ୍ର୍ଝ୍ର	gh	୳	୳
h	ହ	ହ	s	ସ	ସ	q	୭	୭

Vowels and special marks

‘	ؑ	(hamza)
y/i/e/ai	ؒ	“ye” as semi-vowel and vowel (<i>ma'rūf</i> and <i>maj'hūl</i>)
w/ū/o/au	ؑ	“wāw” as semi-vowel and vowel (<i>ma'rūf</i> and <i>maj'hūl</i>)
ؑ	ؑ	the vocalic “r” which cannot be specifically represented in Perso-Arabic script but appears here in the transliteration of some Sanskrit words
ā	ؑ	<i>alif maqsūrah</i> (a word-final “ye” pronounced as/ā/that appears in some Arabic words)
܂	܂	quiescent (unpronounced) <i>wāw</i> as in <i>khwāndan</i>
܂	܂	<i>nūn-ghunnah</i> (nasalization of the preceding vowel)
܂	܂	<i>tanwīn</i>
܂	܂	sign marking the rare cases in which “h” follows a consonant that could be aspirated but in which the two are actually separate sounds (e.g. <i>maj'hūl</i>)

¹ Nota bene that in Devanagari sources this transliterates the letter “়” (as in “*bhāṣā*”), which is unrelated to the Perso-Arabic letter “়.”

There is something here for everyone to dislike, but this system appears to be the best compromise between accurately representing orthography and approximating pronunciation for the primary research languages of this study, namely Persian and Hindi/Urdu. Furthermore, it can completely represent all the letters in Arabic, from which the other languages in question have heavily borrowed. The great contradiction in scholarly attention to diacritical marks is that people who know the words already do not generally need them, and people who do not know the words are bewildered by the infestation of dots marching across the page—the present work takes a completist approach and attempts to show all diacritical marks (except in place names and the names of modern scholars).

The *maj'hūl* vowels [“o” and “e”] have been lost in standard modern dialect of Tehran (the collapse of the vowels probably started in the seventeenth century) but are preserved in most eastern Persian dialects, including Indo-Persian, and are therefore marked here (on present conditions see, for example, Henderson 1975; Hodge 1957; in a historical context Baevskii 2007, 163).

The unpronounced “*he*” at the end of some words is marked as [ah] in both Urdu and Persian sources. Thus, for example, the word زندج (living) will appear as “zindah.” The *iżāfat* construction is written [-i] in both Persian and in Urdu, as in the famous diamond “*koh-i nūr*.”

The Arabic prefix “*al-*,” which assimilates to the following consonant when it is one of the so-called “sun letters,” has been represented here as it is written rather than as it is pronounced. Thus, for example, the name “Sirāj al-Dīn” is pronounced [sirāj ud-din]. The Arabic *tā' marbūṭah* (ة) is not specially marked and is transliterated as “-t” or “-h” as context requires. Furthermore, the Arabic case inflections reflected in the pronunciation are not noted except in direct quotations from Arabic.

Devanagari sources follow the transliteration scheme of the *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*, except that “w” has generally been preferred to “v.”

Introduction

In the eighteenth century, the lamp of intellectual achievement in Persian literature and scholarship burned brightly in India even as the glory of the Mughal Empire's political order faded. In recent decades, scholars have reexamined the narrative of late Mughal political decline, and have nuanced our understanding of the implications of the loss of Delhi's centralized control over the provinces.¹ This study is not concerned with that political history. Instead it focuses on the intersection of literary culture—especially the scholarly apparatus behind it—with social and political thought. How did the cultured elite who staffed the imperial bureaucracy make sense of the world through poetry and *belles lettres*? The research presented here is intellectual history and biography focused on that specific question, namely reconstructing how people critically analyzed and used literary language. This study is not a literary history, but rather a history of thought as expressed through language that is largely “imaginative” (such as poetry) or in service of imaginative language such as critical and analytical writing.²

Why was there an efflorescence of Persian literary and philological scholarship in Delhi in the first half of the eighteenth century? Why was Persianized *hindī*—what would come to be known as Urdu—emerging as a literary language (for poetry if not yet for prose) without becoming an administrative language until a century later? How was India [*Hind*,

¹ See, for example, Marshall 2003; Alam and Subrahmanyam 1999; Bayly 1993, 35ff.; Alam 1986; Wink 1986.

² I use the word “imaginative” here in the sense of language that creates the possibility of meaning rather than establishing literal fact. I follow Northrup Frye in my understanding of this distinction: “In literature the standards of outward meaning are secondary, for literary works do not pretend to describe or assert, and hence are not true, not false, and yet not tautological either, or at least not in the sense in which such a statement as ‘the good is better than the bad’ is tautological. Literary meaning may best be described, perhaps, as hypothetical, and a hypothetical or assumed relation to the external world is part of what is usually meant by the word ‘imaginative’” (Frye 2000, 74).

2 INDIA IN THE PERSIAN WORLD OF LETTERS

or more narrowly, *Hindūstān*] constructed as a cultural space, and how was it linked to the wider Persian-using cosmopolis that stretched across South and Central Asia from the Ottoman Balkans in the west to the Bay of Bengal and frontiers of China in the east? These are enormous questions, each one deserving of a detailed historical study, and my scope here is significantly more modest: This study approaches these three fields through a particular inflection point in each of them, the career of the poet-philologist Sirāj al-Din ‘Ali Khān (1688–1756), commonly known by his pen-name [*taķhalluṣ*], Ārzū.³ Ārzū is at the center of all of these transformations because he was a great Indian Persianist, an important early teacher of Urdu composition in Delhi, and a keen cultural observer whose ability to situate India in the rest of the Persianate world was probably unparalleled in his time. By circumscribing this research so that it focuses on the thought of one remarkable individual, I hope to give others an anchor for larger questions about the early modern South Asian world.

Ārzū’s work is an important entry point into many historical questions. It is lamentable but not surprising that there is no monograph in English about him, when Sir William Jones (an eighteenth-century British philologist to whom he has been compared) has been the subject of dozens of recent books and articles.⁴ Furthermore, why, given that Ārzū’s works set a standard for meticulously detailed analysis, were all but a couple of them ignored by colonial-period scholarship? This colonial connection is worth noting, if only in passing, as part of what Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi has called the “genesis amnesia” of Oriental studies, namely that not enough attention has been paid to why certain non-Western texts and not others became part of the West’s scholarly canon.⁵ The narrative of the eighteenth century as understood by

³ “Sirāj al-Din” means “Lamp of the Faith” and is probably an homage to Ārzū’s famous ancestor, the Sufi master Chirāgh-i Dihli [“Lamp of Delhi”] (d. 791/1389). (*Sirāj* is the Arabic cognate of the Persian word *chirāgh*.) Likewise, Ārzū’s student Lālah Ṭek Chand, known by his pen-name Bahār, refers to his teacher as “*Sirāj al-muhaqqiqīn*” [Lamp of the Scholars] and “*Sirāj al-shu‘arā*” [Lamp of the Poets] (*Bahār-i ‘Ajam* 2001, preface). Khān is a title ultimately derived from the Mongol tradition.

⁴ In 2015, Habib University (Karachi, Pakistan) recognized Ārzū’s importance by inaugurating a center named for him, the Arzu Center for Regional Languages and Humanities.

⁵ Tavakoli-Targhi 2001.

Europeans, as John Dowson admits in *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians* (1867–77), is based overwhelmingly on the most “English” of the Persian histories, Ghulām Ḥusain’s *Siyar al-Muta’akhkhirīn* [Deeds of the Moderns, 1783], to the neglect of the other materials available. Dowson writes: “In fact, the native side of the history of Ghulām Husain’s days, as it appears in the works of English writers, rests almost entirely upon his authority,” that is, as told in *Siyar al-Muta’akhkhirīn*.⁶ Both James Mill and Lord Macaulay, two key architects of colonial historiography, approved of this work, and its adoption was no doubt helped by being translated into English in 1789 before other relevant texts were available in European languages. Why does engaging with the development of the colonial canon matter for pre-colonial history? The master narratives that still shape our understanding—since, after all, many of the translations gathered in *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians* have not been superseded despite the collection’s obvious flaws—are based on a colonial engagement with the pre-colonial past. In many cases, this colonial discourse has silently displaced the tradition’s own narratives, so that ideas about Indic language and literature presented as “culturally authentic” in fact have a much newer origin than is generally believed.⁷ My goal here is to strip away the accretions of interpretation and historical happenstance (that one text was translated into English before another, for example), and face the eighteenth-century Indo-Persian milieu on terms that would have been more familiar to its participants. This involves reconstructing the circumstances under which philological knowledge was created and put into practice.⁸ In part, such an analysis requires understanding pre-colonial India—and indeed the whole of the Persian cosmopolis—as a multilingual zone, including the recognition that even within Iran the

⁶ Elliot and Dowson 1877, 194ff. In the 1770s, a period in which British colonial scholars were particularly interested in history, these scholars tended to consult recently prepared Persian historical summaries instead of the original chronicles (Teissier 2009, 141–2).

⁷ Allison Busch has made a similar case about recent Hindi literary criticism: She observes that “the voice of the postcolonial speaks in English, whereas the Orientalist voice is still alive, and speaking in Hindi” (Busch 2011, 14).

⁸ As Roger Chartier has written: “The historian’s task is thus to reconstruct the variations that differentiate the *espaces lisibles*—that is, the texts in their discursive and material forms—and those that govern the circumstances of their effectuation—that is, the readings, understood as concrete practices and as procedures” (Chartier 1994, 2).

cosmopolitan poetic language co-existed with unstandardized local dialects of Persian. The present analysis begins with the assumption that everything we think we know about language ideology, particularly how languages build nations, must be rigorously tested before it can be applied to the early modern period.

Ārzū was a significant and influential thinker even if few non-specialists know his name today. He settled in Delhi near the beginning of the emperor Muḥammad Shāh’s reign (probably in early 1720) and had a successful career for just over thirty years in the capital before taking up a post in Lucknow and dying there soon after. He was survived by two generations of students and by his works, which included commentaries, a body of Persian poetry, three dictionaries, a *tažkirah*, and a treatise on language called *Muṣmir* [lit. “fruitful”], which is the subject of Chapter 2. It is notable that besides the sheer volume and range of his scholarly and creative works, his colleagues and students were among the most important Persian scholars and Urdu poets of their generations. He is regarded as one of the first intellectuals to take Urdu literature seriously (although it should be noted that not a single line of Urdu survives that is unquestionably his work) but was also arguably the greatest Indian Persianist of his day. He was referred to as a “*marja*” [a refuge or point of reference] and as “Lamp of the Researchers” [*sirāj al-muhaqqiqīn*] and was at the center of most of the famous literary debates of his time. As a scholar, he drew upon an unusually broad range of research materials and correspondingly employed an encyclopedic critical approach that compared numerous sources. He drew deeply from the resources of the Arabic tradition, for example basing his *Muṣmir* on *al-Muzhir fi ‘Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā’ihā* [The Luminous Work Concerning the Sciences of Language and Its Subfields] written by the fifteenth-century Egyptian polymath Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, while also having easy access to indigenous Indic traditions. Ārzū was a keen, detail-obsessed observer of society and tradition who sought to correct cultural misconceptions, whether those held by Indians or non-Indians, and to record regional usages faithfully, even if he found them ineloquent or inappropriate for poetry. However, his ethnography, if we can call it that, was based on his interest in language, which was in turn focused on the practice of poetry. Since he does not fit easily into any of our contemporary disciplines, I will refer to him as a “philologist.”

The term “philology” has seen its stock rise and fall since it was coined in late Antiquity. After hitting rock bottom during the postmodern turn of the 1980s and 1990s,⁹ there has been recent scholarly interest in reclaiming the term.¹⁰ Philology literally means, of course, “the love of words,” but throughout history it has referred specifically to ways of studying language and literature. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it has meant variously a devotion to books, the careful study of literature (especially Greco-Roman Classical texts), and the systematic study of language in order to discover its structures.¹¹ In the last sense, it came to be synonymous with “historical linguistics,” although this usage is now rare. So why choose as the key term in this study one which has little resonance for people today? Precisely because it is capacious and ambiguous: It is a word that forces us to think historically. For example, we might be tempted to call Ārzū a linguist, but he certainly would not get hired in a modern university’s Department of Linguistics, whose members have entirely different pre-suppositions about the nature of language and its relationship to literature. Avoiding the term “linguistics” prevents the false assumption that for someone like Ārzū to be worth our attention, he must have had the remarkable foresight—before there was such a thing as “linguistics”—to have thought about the development of language in terms that are familiar to us. (In fact, his works demonstrate a sophisticated sense of the historicity of language, but one that is quite unlike ours.) Furthermore, linguistics is narrowly focused on language as its object, but philology acts upon a body of *texts* (rather than on a set of linguistic

⁹ Through a process of sloppy synecdoche, philology has been called to account by post-modern philosophers like Paul de Man for the sins of all the modern human sciences and even blamed for the rise of fascism (Pollock 2009). The translator of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff’s *Geschichte der Philologie* laments having had to title his translation *History of Classical Scholarship* for the sake of clarity because as far as the name philology is concerned “it is deplorable that we in England have ceased to use this valuable term correctly” (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1982, vii). For an influential (and famously broad) early eighteenth-century definition of the term as proposed by Giambattista Vico (1688–1744), see Burke 1985, 84 and Manson 1969, 46.

¹⁰ See, for example, *Philology* (Turner 2014), *World Philology* (Pollock et al. 2015), and the journal *Philological Encounters*, which has been published since 2016.

¹¹ It has also, from early on, had a pejorative sense in English as the *Oxford English Dictionary* attests, e.g., Henry Cockeram’s *The English Dictionarie, or an Interpreter of Hard English Words* of 1623 gives “loue of much babbling” as the definition for “phylologie.” Two other entries for this sense contrasted philology unfavorably with philosophy since philology (by this definition) is the study of mere words while philosophy gets at truth directly.

data), and indeed Ārzū and his peers generally made their living or their reputation or both as practicing poets. No one, it goes without saying, expects linguists to be poets today. The idea that a language can be abstracted from a literary tradition is therefore totally alien to Ārzū's scholarship. It is also important to dispense with the presumption that composing literature or engaging with it was a leisure-time activity, a domain of play separate from serious business. While mocking bad poets is a staple of Persianate literature, there is no sense (before the colonial encounter) that reflecting on language or composing verse are inherently indolent activities. The Islamicate tradition never gave up on Aristotle's famous formulation that poetry "is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular."¹² In seeking to position aspects of Ārzū's life-world as separate from basic features of our own experience, whether in the present-day West or elsewhere, the term "philologist" throws us a lifeline since it encompasses "literary scholar," "linguist," and "litterateur"—all of which accurately but incompletely describe Ārzū.¹³

The Cosmopolitan and the Classic

This study will return often to the concept of the cosmopolitan, taking as given that for centuries there existed a Persian cosmopolis stretching from the Balkans in the west across Central and South Asia to the Bay of Bengal and Chinese frontier territory of Xinjiang in the east. This vast region was the zone where Persian language and literature, and its corresponding ethical and political culture, was common currency, just

¹² *Poetics* 1451b, trans. Butcher. Indeed, some of the greats of the tradition, like the *tažkirah* compiler Muhammad 'Aufi (died c. 1232–3 CE) and the poet Amīr Khusrau, described the craft of poetry as *'ilm* [learning, often associated with religious studies], and Khusrau even went so far as to compare it to divine revelation (Keshavmurthy 2011; Gabbay 2010, 27ff.).

¹³ However, it should be made clear from the outset that there is no single pre-modern Persian term that captures an equivalent meaning "philologist" because someone like Ārzū could be slotted into perhaps a dozen or more common categories such as *ahl-i qalam* [people of the pen] or *sukhan-dānān* [knowers of speech/poetry]. He was an *adib*, that is someone who dealt with *adab*, but while this term contains the sense of philology (see Bonebakker 1990), nothing distinguishes general poetic practice from inquiry into the nature of language. It is worth also problematizing the applicability of the term "literature," which has no exact analogue in pre-modern Persian since *adabiyāt* is a nineteenth-century Turkish coinage (De Bruijn 2009).

as Latin and Latinity was a “European sign” that maintained a similar cultural zone in the West.¹⁴ Sanskrit, of course, linked South and Southeast Asia in the same way for centuries. Part of the appeal of the cosmopolitan as an object of analysis is precisely that it has no long scholarly genealogy in contrast to its obvious importance throughout world history.¹⁵ It is a real but nonetheless difficult-to-locate phenomenon that can serve as a historiographical bulwark against the nationalist thinking that is often the default mode for modern people, and which distorts our understanding of the past. A cosmopolis is not merely a linguistic zone—for example, where most elites are educated in Persian—but a *textually constituted entity*. A textual canon existed across the whole of the Persian cosmopolis, with some texts virtually universal, such as the works of the thirteenth-century writer Sa‘dī, and others less common in circulation. Indeed, many texts were written in the cosmopolitan language but never left the place where they were written. The texts that make a cosmopolis are not constitutive of a national language but are anchored in a tradition that cannot be mapped neatly onto a single extant political unit even if there is a sense of where it originated. The texts can be plausibly claimed by different groups in forming their identities. All of the disparate regions in the Persian cosmopolis shared an appreciation, for example, for Firdausi’s epic *Shāhnāmah* [Book of Kings, c. 1000 CE]—today claimed as the text that created an Iranian national identity but in fact composed in present-day Afghanistan on the Indian frontier—just as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* were touchstones across the Sanskrit cosmopolis and localized as required. In the case of the Persian cosmopolis, the early modern Mughals, Ottomans, and Safavids—the three great empires of the cosmopolis—all used similar curricula largely derived from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Central Asia and Iran.¹⁶ The lyric poetry of Hāfiẓ and ‘Attār (to pick two influential examples) was quoted from Istanbul to Khotan, from Tashkent to Hyderabad, as was the political philosophy of Niżāmī ‘Arūzī. The works of Sa‘dī were probably read by every single child in the world educated in the Persian medium for more than half a millennium.

¹⁴ Waquet 2001, 121.

¹⁵ Pollock et al. 2000, 577.

¹⁶ Robinson 1997, 154.

By framing this analysis around cosmopolitanism, I am also necessarily invoking something that can be called “the classical,” which like “philology” requires quite a bit of explanation in today’s world. We are perhaps more familiar with the concept of “classical” as the textual “canon,” a substituted term that is deliberately not as explicitly honorific as “classical,” but still denotes a body of texts elevated above others that provided an identity for a literate elite.¹⁷ This identity based on the mastery of these classical texts, an identity that could certainly have local inflections but was by definition cosmopolitan, was on par with or more important than what we consider standard identity markers today (nation, language, class, and so on). Not only did the classics build pre-modern elite communities, but for us they flag important historical moments: When an attempt is made to redefine which texts are classical and how critics should approach them, it can be an illuminating historical discontinuity, such as when Renaissance Latinists became confident enough to question ancient editors of classical texts.¹⁸ While the classical canon is inevitably represented as static, even in many cases divinely ordained, the reality is that it is contested and constructed. The South African novelist J. M. Coetzee observes that,

The classic defines itself by surviving. Therefore, the interrogation of the classic, no matter how hostile, is part of the history of the classic, inevitable and even to be welcomed. For as long as the classic needs to be protected from attack, it can never prove itself classic.¹⁹

In making this provocative claim, Coetzee is drawing upon a contrast between the classic as an object of veneration versus that of the classic as something to be questioned, even derided as a force that retards progress. Such tension appears as early as the first century CE in the works of the Roman grammarian Quintilian, who is ambivalent about Quintus Ennius, an early Latin poet who was by then already outmoded: “Ennius we must venerate as we do groves whose age makes them holy, full of great oaks that nowadays have less beauty than sanctity.”²⁰

¹⁷ Guillory 1993, 6.

¹⁸ D’Amico 1988, 9.

¹⁹ Coetzee 2001, 14.

²⁰ *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.85–90, quoted and translated in Steele 1990, 121.

This study considers Ārzū's own interventions in the Persian canon: He attempted to maintain the unity of the Persian cosmopolis through careful attention to the classics while at the same time broadening the range of permitted interpretations of Persian texts. A hallmark of early modernity was this blend of the continued centrality of the classics alongside the development of new textualized knowledge. The modern impulse to cast progress and tradition as opposites can obscure the fact that historically there was no inherent contradiction between venerating a textual canon and supporting aesthetic development.

On Method, the West, and the Non-West

Before starting to read texts historically, we should posit that historical study is necessarily a conversation with a text, in which the ways that we the interpreters pose the questions condition our understanding of the replies we receive. The present study is guided by Hans-Georg Gadamer's dictum that “at the beginning of all historical hermeneutics, then, *the abstract antithesis between tradition and historical research, between history and the knowledge of it, must be discarded.*”²¹ At first glance, this seems a willfully obfuscatory position—why can we not just read a historical text and extract information from it? Furthermore, does this view not presuppose that only emic analyses (that is, ones based on the tradition’s own assumptions) are legitimate?²² It is obvious that the purpose of the study of history is gathering knowledge about the past, but intellectual history, the goal of this project, is not just a matter of collecting names and dates but of sustained interpretation.²³ For

²¹ Gadamer 2006, 283–4.

²² Walter Mignolo observes that Gadamer’s hermeneutics is ill-equipped to think transculturally because it is “monotopic,” presuming that the interpreter stands within the tradition being interpreted. This is frequently not the case, especially in colonial situations. Mignolo proposes a “pluritropic” approach as an alternative “that reflects on the very process of constructing (e.g., putting in order) that portion of the world to be known” (Mignolo 2003, 15–25).

²³ “History as a science has, as it is known, no epistemological object proper to itself; rather, it shares this object with all social and human sciences” (Koselleck 2004, 94).

historically conscious interpretation, we must situate ourselves vis-à-vis the text and the “variety of voices in which the echo of the past is heard” that constitute the tradition we are studying.²⁴ What we call a tradition is actually a web of relationships between texts, the strands of thought and rhetoric that interpreters follow from one text to another. A tradition is not simply a Great Books curriculum and in no way stands outside of history—traditions are made and remade; traditions die or, in some cases, are deliberately killed off. Thanks to tradition we cannot approach any text, even one entirely foreign to us, with a blank slate. Thus, we must be conscious of our predisposition to reach certain conclusions (what Gadamer and the hermeneutical tradition call “prejudices”) that shape—and sometimes deform—our understanding of history. Of course, a scholar must be able to research a tradition without necessarily using its categories; a purely emic interpretative project would have no resonance outside the society to which the particular tradition in question belongs. However, we must recognize that when our study crosses not only boundaries of time but of culture, our ability to think historically is constrained not just by the boundaries of tradition but more significantly by our individual horizons as scholars.²⁵ When one has access to the tradition in question by means of a university education (as I do in the case of Urdu and Persian literature) rather than acquiring it through familial inheritance, this attention to one’s own position in history is especially important. Treading carefully given all we now know about cross-cultural power imbalances and epistemic violence, cultural distance can be a benefit: It allows us to listen closely to voices in a text that the mainstream of a tradition tends to drown out. It also side-steps some thorny questions of taste, principally whether a literary work that was appreciated in its time remains enjoyable to modern-day inheritors

²⁴ Gadamer 2006, 285.

²⁵ For Gadamer, “horizon” [*Horizont*] is a technical term: “The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point . . . A person who has an [sic] horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small” (Gadamer 2006, 301). The Perso-Arabic term “*hadd*” [boundary] is sometimes used in a similar sense. One way in which Gadamer understood historical interpretation was as a “fusion of horizons” [*Horizontverschmelzung*], in which meaning is found in the overlap between the historical subject’s horizon and the interpreter’s.

of the tradition or not.²⁶ Perhaps the assertion that cultural distance is a possible benefit will strike some as naïve after interventions like Edward Said's *Orientalism*, but Said never argued that outsiders are unable to assess a tradition fairly—though many uncritical readers have assumed exactly that—but rather that their predispositions, both institutional and individual, must be taken into account.²⁷ No one, internal or external to a tradition, can claim a neutral vantage point because history itself conditions the questions that motivate our inquiry into the past.

We can nuance Gadamer's historical philosophy by considering Quentin Skinner's method: For Skinner, “the understanding of texts . . . presupposes the grasp of what they were intended to mean and of how that meaning was intended to be taken.”²⁸ He cautions us against applying external standards of rationality to historical texts because such an approach makes us dependent on the degree of “cognitive discomfort” we feel in guiding us to read something figuratively or literally.²⁹ Attempting to read texts in relation to other contemporary texts and the constellation of meanings they contain is entirely compatible with Gadamer's thought. However, when it comes to the Indo-Persian and Urdu tradition, there is a deep structural problem in our current prospects for approaching the past. For reasons having to do with colonialism and the nationalist response to it, scholars have been generally

²⁶ On listening to voices outside a tradition's mainstream, see Gadamer 2006, 297; compare Foucault 1972, 9 on “discontinuity.” There is a gap in interpretation when a literary work that delighted people when it was written is no longer enjoyable in the present because of how tastes have changed. It is a difficult problem because such impressions cannot—and should not even if they could—be excluded from interpretation, but they are frequently given so much weight that people in effect blame writers for not writing in a way that resonates with a certain reader centuries in the future. The Urdu writer and literary reformer Altāf Husain Hālī (1837–1914) observed something similar in justifying the vast gulf between the new naturalistic poetic style [*nechral shā’irī*] of which he was a proponent, and the classical tradition: He notes that the Persian poets Zuhūrī, ‘Urṣī, Tālib, Asir and others were great in their time (the sixteenth century), but tastes have changed and their work no longer appeals to readers, but that does not diminish their greatness (*Yādgār-i Ghālib* 1986, 124).

²⁷ Said approvingly quotes Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*: “The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory” (Said 1979, 25). This footnote is not an appropriate vehicle for a wide-ranging critique of Said's theories and their potential for misinterpretation and misuse, but Brennan 2006, 115 is a good summary of my misgivings. Westerners are not the only people in history to produce essentializing ethnographies (e.g., as cited in Subrahmanyam 1997, 761).

²⁸ Skinner 2002, 86.

²⁹ Skinner 2002, 41.

unwilling or perhaps unable to attempt anything like a Skinnerian reconstruction of the intellectual framework of the Delhi literary scene in the period immediately before colonialism.³⁰ In other words, questions are not typically posed in order that we might consider what the authors of the texts might have intended and what that tells us. More frequently, the texts are asked to demonstrate momentum towards either enabling colonial rule or an anti-colonial national consciousness. The historiographical argument in this study is that many of the questions that have been framed about eighteenth-century Indo-Persian (and by extension Urdu) literary culture by later scholars would have had little or no relevance for those living in the period under discussion. The eighteenth century has been thoroughly studied and important arguments made, but especially in the case of intellectual history there has to some degree been a failure to engage with eighteenth-century writers on their own terms. Often the eighteenth century was studied with a focus on economic and political history as a way station to colonial history,³¹ but recent work on the cultural and intellectual history of the eighteenth century in South Asia is beginning to rectify this.

Dwelling on historiography, the philosophy of how we conceptualize and write history is especially important when the historical subject in question is commonly remembered as a founder, “the First Person to have done X,” a claim often made about Ārzū (e.g., first important teacher of Urdu, first critical lexicographer in Urdu, first to see the historical affinity between Persian and Sanskrit). We are obliged to remember that historical subjects were not necessarily particularly invested in having the world turn out the way that we know it did after their deaths. Thus, we should renounce any goal of showing what Ārzū got “right” and “wrong” by measuring his insights against modern linguistics (which in any case would require the implicit assumption that *our* approach to analyzing language is right and any other approach

³⁰ An additional obstacle in applying Quentin Skinner’s method in the Indian context is that, as Jonardon Ganeri observes, trying to understand how a text would have been received by contemporaries demands specific knowledge about individuals’ circumstances that will almost always be lacking for pre-colonial India (Ganeri 2011, 64–5).

³¹ For example, Alavi 2002 and Marshall 2003, two edited volumes that focus on eighteenth-century economic and political history.

is primitive or wrong). Our thinking about how to understand language in the abstract is nonetheless informed by modern linguistics, as well as by the historical analysis and mythmaking on the relationship between Latin and the vernacular languages in Europe. My only real *idée fixe* when I first undertook this project was the recognition of Ārzū as an inflection point in Indian intellectual history.

Where This Study Will Take You

Chapter 1 explores Ārzū’s life and social milieu. Who were his patrons and what was his network of colleagues in Delhi and beyond? The source material is primarily *tažkirahs*, but includes miscellaneous biographical statements gleaned from other works (such as prefaces). Chapter 2 addresses Ārzū’s engagement with the long tradition of literary criticism in Persian and Arabic primarily through a reading of his treatise *Muṣmir*. He combines ideas by diverse thinkers in order to create a new criticism which is based on research [*tahqīq*] and a sophisticated theoretical understanding of language, including its transformation over time. It was arguably the most advanced theoretical study of language in the pre-modern Persian tradition but was superseded by the Western discipline of linguistics and largely forgotten. Chapter 3 reconsiders the well-known but simplistic paradigm that Iranians reacted negatively to a supposedly distinctly Indian, decadent style of Persian literature, which was later called the “*sabk-i hindī*” [Indian style]. Instead of this over-determined and anachronistically nationalist paradigm, eighteenth-century poets were far more concerned with old versus new styles in Persian poetry. Ārzū was arguably the first to develop a rigorous criticism to address poetic innovation associated with the “fresh speech” [*tāzah-go’i*] movement. Chapter 4 discusses lexicography, a genre in which Ārzū was influential and which can be understood as a textual tool for relating different parts of the Persian cosmopolis to each other. It considers the importance of Ārzū’s dictionary of Indic terms, *Nawādir al-Ālfāz*. Chapter 5 argues that Ārzū’s theory of language is intentionally capacious so that it can apply to Indian vernacular language as well as Persian. Ārzū’s crucial intervention in vernacular poetics was to suggest

that the Indic poetic practice of *rekhtah* (which later became a synonym for Urdu) could be standardized along the lines of Persian, and thus that an Indic language could be a cosmopolitan literary medium in its own right. Indeed, Ārzū's defense of "fresh speech" in Persian carries over into the vernacular sphere through intermediaries and is most likely the basis for Urdu literature as it came to be. This discussion frames the larger question of how language is defined today compared to how it was understood in the pre-colonial period. It advances the argument that language was classified according to people's concept of its function (that is, what linguists would call a "domain") rather than as a linguistic identity or through the phylogeny developed in the wake of colonial-era linguistic surveys. Chapter 6, the final chapter, proposes a comparative method for understanding roughly parallel social transformations around knowledge and language in early modern times in Europe and the Persianate World. Why were changing relationships with the canon generally assumed to be constitutive of modernity in the West and evidence of aesthetic and intellectual decline in the Persian cosmopolis?

1

A Literate Life

Placing Ārzū and His Works in Their Social Context

In Ānand Rām Muķliš’s dictionary *Mir’āt al-Īstilāḥ* [The Mirror of Expressions, 1158/1745], biographical notices appear alongside definitions of certain words and expressions. Thus, under “ārzū” we find:

“Ārzū” has the meaning “hope” and “desire,” and is also the pen-name of Khānsāhib Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Khān (God bless him), whom the author knew intimately for thirty years, free from hypocrisy, in a friendship greater than words can describe. Now when his illustrious name has advanced from the pen’s tongue, the manners of affection demand that I write down a few lines at this juncture and in the writing of an example of his excellence I complete it as decoration for these pages: “His circumstances completely like a rose in color and scent: / Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Khān Ārzū” The specifics of his praised rank are a decoration to the folios of night and day and the ornament of the page of time... He is a master of the science [*ilm*] of Arabic, lexicography, and prosody, and the art [*fann*] of history, music, and *hindī*.¹

Much of this finely wrought metaphorical language is lost on us, both as a matter of interpretation and aesthetic taste, but nonetheless Muķliš’s deep respect for Ārzū comes through clearly. He notes that he has been Ārzū’s close friend for thirty years, and lists a number of Ārzū’s special qualities, namely knowledge of Arabic, lexicography, prosody, history,

¹ *Mir’āt al-Īstilāḥ* 2013, 18–20; checked against the British Library’s manuscript, *Mir’āt al-Īstilāḥ* 1850, ff. 20a–21a. The flowery rhetoric does not lend itself to easy translation so only a sample has been provided here. On the text, see Rieu 1879–83, 997. A sometimes faulty but nonetheless useful English translation of the whole work is Mukhlis 1993. For more information on the dictionary, see Chapter 4.

music, and *hindī*.² The range is impressive, and suggests that the set of skills that are brought to bear on poetic composition and criticism is larger than we might expect. History and *hindī* may seem like outliers, but, as we see in the following chapters, they were valued by Ārzū and his circle as philological and aesthetic tools. Muḥkliṣ's account is filled with complex imagery of a lush garden, an extended tribute to Ārzū's talent as a poet and a claim that his talent has received divine sanction. Muḥkliṣ's remarks are a good place to start in assessing Ārzu's life, social milieu, and works.

Although Ārzū's career has long been widely recognized as important by scholars and critics, until recently he had more often been invoked as a symbol than as an object of study.³ He has, for example, been taken as the father of Urdu poetry but the contours of his intellectual engagement with vernacular literature have not been traced extensively. Most often, he has been represented as a patriot defending India against Iranian chauvinism, and as the person whose innovative theories on linguistic origins the colonial philologist and jurist Sir William Jones (1746–94) stole and made European. Without dismissing out of hand these popular ideas about Ārzū—to the degree that impressions of an eighteenth-century philologist can be said to be “popular”—this study seeks to place them not only in their immediate historical context but in a comparative early modern framework.

The reasons behind Ārzū's relative obscurity offer us a useful opening point in explaining the constitution of present-day literary aesthetics and linguistic knowledge systems that we take for granted. While nineteenth-century scholars of Persian still engaged with Ārzū and he was highly

² The critical edition (*Mir'āt al-İştilâh* 2013) prefers the reading from some manuscripts that he was a master of “Indian music” [*mūsiqī-yi hindī*] rather than “music and *hindī*” [*mūsiqī wa hindī*]. However, I doubt the critical edition's reading because it loses the rhetorical symmetry of describing three things as “*ilm*” and three things as “*fann*.”

³ No work in English gives a complete account of Ārzū's life and social context. In Urdu, however, Professor Rehana Khatoon's *Aḥwāl-o Aśār-i Khān-i Ārzū* [The Life and Works of Khān-i Ārzū] provides a useful overview of the available source materials (Khatoon 1987). An account of Ārzū's teachers, contemporaries, and students is Khatoon 2004b. The editor's introduction to Khatoon's *Muśmīr* is the fullest account in English (Khatoon 1991) and a substantial entry on Ārzū in *Encyclopædia Iranica* is the most up to date (Keshavmurthy 2012). An Iranian scholar who has worked extensively on Ārzū, Mahdi Rahimpoor, has observed that no comprehensive account of Ārzū's life exists in Persian (Rahimpoor 2008b), which apparently remains true.

respected by some—the German-British Orientalist Henry Blochmann, for example, calls him the “best commentator whom India has produced”⁴—his achievements have always been bracketed off as particularly Indian rather than relevant to and part of the Persian tradition as a whole. He was after all an Indian scholar, not Iranian, and by that time national identity had replaced more cosmopolitan forms of belonging. By the twentieth century, scholars in Iran who tried to modernize the study of Persian literature completely ignored Ārzū.⁵ ‘Alī-Akbar Dihkhudā (1879–1956), the lexicographer and literary critic whose *Lughatnāmah* is the Persian equivalent of a comprehensive lexicographical project like the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is one example of such a modernizer. *Lughatnāmah* relies heavily on dictionaries compiled in India—because lexicography was far more developed there than in early modern Iran⁶—and yet in a biographical note on Ārzū, Dihkhudā makes four mistakes in succession: He misstates Ārzū’s name, falsely claims Ārzū was an Iranian resident in India, incorrectly cites the title of one of Ārzū’s works, and misattributes a famous work written by another Indian to Ārzū.⁷ Ārzū’s historical placement goes some way towards explaining why such errors have crept into modern historiography: For an important and well-connected figure, there is surprisingly little source material available. Although there was an explosion of *tažkirah*-writing towards the end of Ārzū’s life continuing in the decades after his death, besides these *tažkirahs* (which often repeat the same general information or by contrast disagree even on basic facts) there are virtually no other sources available for a biographical study. Because the historically attested biography is so thin, we turn to his circle of friends and enemies, which is to say the networks he was a part of and opposed, and glean

⁴ Blochmann 1868, 25.

⁵ An important exception is Muhammad Reza Shafī’i Kadkani (b. 1939), who reads Ārzū carefully and often sympathetically (Rahimpoor 2008a, 335).

⁶ Discussed at length in Chapter 4.

⁷ Shamisa 2002, 21. The misattributed work is Wārastah’s *Muṣṭalahāt al-Shu’arā* [Idioms of the Poets], which is described in detail in a discussion of Wārastah further in the chapter. Dihkhudā’s four mistakes appear under the headword “ārzū” (*Lughatnāmah* 1994, 66). There is, however, a separate entry for “khan-i ārzū” (*Lughatnāmah* 1994, 8266) where Dihkhudā notes simply that Ārzū is an Indian poet whose poems are often cited in *Farhang-i Ānandrāj* [Dictionary for Ānand Rāj, 1306/1888–9] the largest Persian dictionary compiled before the *Lughatnāmah* itself. The mistakes are the same in the original fascicles and the revised 1994 edition.

what we can from critical works by Ārzū and his contemporaries that form the bulk of the texts addressed in the present research.

Becoming Khān-i Ārzū

Ārzū's life follows the typical career path for a Mughal man of letters, from early education in a familial and small-town environment to advanced education and urban network building to a career in full flower in the capital. He spent his early years between Gwalior, a backwater that was nevertheless of some cultural and administrative significance, and Agra, a former imperial capital that remained one of the empire's great cities even after its eclipse by Delhi. An education and poetic apprenticeship in Agra prepared him for a career in Delhi, the capital and focus of cultural life in the early years of the eighteenth century. He spent more than three fruitful decades in Delhi before moving to Lucknow in middle age as the increasingly independent rulers of Awadh transformed the province into a new seat of culture in northern India through lavish patronage. It was to be a brief stay in Awadh because he only lived two more years.

Early Life and Family

The basic facts about Ārzū's early life are unclear because even reputable sources offer conflicting accounts. He was born either in Gwalior (in present-day Madhya Pradesh) or in Akbarabad (today's Agra), 120 kilometers to the north in present-day Uttar Pradesh. In any case, he had family ties to both places. The date of his birth was almost certainly 1099/1687–8 but 1101/1689–90 has also been widely accepted. Ārzū's account of himself, his own entry in his *tažkirah Majma‘ al-Nafā’is* [Collection of Subtleties, 1164/1750–1], does not mention either the date or place of his birth.⁸ In *Safinah-yi Khwushgo* [Khwushgo's Notebook], Ārzū's close friend and disciple Bindrāban Dās Khwushgo refers to 1099 AH, and

⁸ MN 2004, 1:186ff.

provides Ārzū's father's chronogram for the occasion of his son's birth, namely “*nuzul-i ḡhaib*” [a gift from the unseen world], whose letters add up to 1099. Indeed, Ārzū's entry in *Safīnah-yi Ḫwushgo* includes a long quotation from Ārzū describing his own life, so it is the most reliable source available.⁹ Ḫwushgo does not specify where Ārzū was born but mentions that his father came with the emperor Aurangzeb's (r. 1658–1707) army to Gwalior, so Ārzū was either born or spent his early childhood there. His *nisbat* [toponymic surname] is at times given as “Gwāliyārī” [from Gwalior] or “Akbarābādī” [from Agra] as well as more rarely “Dihlāwī” and “Shāhjahānābādī” [from Delhi].

Ārzū had an impeccable mystical and poetic lineage through both of his parents.¹⁰ On his mother's side, he claimed descent from the twelfth-century Iranian mystic poet Farīd al-Dīn ‘Attār through Muḥammad Ghauš (d. 1653). Muḥammad Ghauš was a politically connected, musically inclined Shāṭṭārī Sufi in Gwalior. Ārzū's illustrious ancestor is known to history as a translator of Yogic texts, the teacher of Tānsen (the most famous musician of the emperor Akbar's court), and as an ally of the first Mughal emperor, Bābur, when Bābur conquered Gwalior.¹¹ Ārzū's father was descended from the Chishtī Sufi saint Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd (d. 757/1356), known as “Chirāgh-i Dihli” [The Lamp of Delhi]. One *tazkirah* writer begins his entry on Ārzū with the words “*nasab-i sharīfash*” [his noble lineage] and nearly all of them mention something to that effect.¹² Given how frequently such lineages are referenced, they clearly mattered a great deal in literary high society because Persian poetry, even on what could be called “secular” subjects, is shot through with Sufi imagery. Ārzū's father, Shaikh Ḥusām al-Dīn, whose *takhallus* [pen-name] was Ḥusāmī, was a soldier-poet in the

⁹ See *Safīnah-i Ḫwushgo* 1959, 312ff. Ḫwushgo's text was first completed in 1147/1734–5, was corrected by Ārzū after 1155/1742–3, and was later revised up to 1162/1748–9 (*Safīnah* 1959, editor's preface). Mahdi Rahimpoor argues conclusively for 1099 as Ārzū's birth year (2008a, 241).

¹⁰ Compare, for example, *Iqd-i Šuraiyā* (1978, 28) and *Tazkirah-yi Riyāz al-Ārifin* (1977, 8). *Muntakhab al-Ash‘ar* [A Selection of Verses], compiled in 1748 and available as Bodleian ms Elliott 247, has very short entries but still mentions his native place as Gwalior and his descent from Muḥammad Ghauš, suggesting that these facts were important to the compiler (f. 28; Sachau and Ethé 1889, 239ff.).

¹¹ Ernst 1996; Nizami 2002.

¹² *Khulāsat al-Afkār* [Essence of Thoughts], a *tazkirah* begun in 1206/1791–2, Bodleian ms Elliott 181, f. 31a. On the text, see Sachau and Ethé 1889, 302ff.

Mughal mold, and much of what we know about him comes from Ārzū's own *tažkirah*.¹³ He was elevated as a *mansabdār* [salaried nobleman] under Aurangzeb, and was well acquainted with high-ranking nobles [*umara'-i 'umdaḥ*]. He did not frequently read his poetry in front of people, Ārzū says, because this would be “contrary to the path of soldiering” [*khilāf-i tariqah-yi sipāhīgarī*]. Although he was not formally educated in political philosophy, he was a confidant of two important officials, the Mir Munshī [imperial chief secretary] Fāzil Khān and Mīr Muḥammad Amīn. The best known of his works is *Husn-o Ishq* [Beauty and Love], a Persian adaptation of the Awadhi [eastern *hindī*] romance *Madhumālatī*.¹⁴

Ārzū's early education was undertaken by his father and followed the pattern typical for students across the Persian cosmopolis. Khwushgo reports that before the age of five or six Ārzū had read Sa'dī's *Bostān*, *Gulistān*, and *Pandnāmah*, and that he studied Arabic until age fourteen.¹⁵ His father helped him memorize “one or two hundred couplets” by Modern [*muta'akhkhirin*] poets, and at fourteen Ārzū developed an interest in writing Persian poetry. Khwushgo provides the detail, nestled within Ārzū's autobiographical quotation, that Ārzū first wrote poetry while visiting Mathura. The historical context of this fact is not obvious, so perhaps it is mentioned by way of glorifying Khwushgo's own hometown, which he compliments hyperbolically as “ground that awakens Judgment Day and a tumult-exciting place.”¹⁶ It could also be a way for Ārzū to demonstrate his connection to vernacular poetics, since Mathura was, and indeed still is, a center of Krishna-worship and *hindī* poetry. In any case, the mention of Mathura implies that Ārzū's childhood was peripatetic, since he would have spent time in three places: Agra,

¹³ MN 2004, 1:359–60.

¹⁴ Behl 2012, 335. Behl corrects the misunderstanding that this text was a translation of *Padmāwat* and notes that there is an illustrated manuscript in the private collection of the late Simon Digby. A manuscript in Berlin (described as “*Padmāwat*”) was composed in 1071/1660–1 and dedicated to Aurangzeb (Pertsch 1888, 929–30). Ārzū writes that his father composed a *qīṣah* on the well-known—and frequently retold—story of Kāmrūp and Kāmlatā, but “did not find leisure” (presumably to complete it). Strangely, Khwushgo claims that Ārzū wrote a *mašnawī* called *Husn-o Ishq* himself so perhaps these were conflated even though they are supposedly on different subjects. The title, “Beauty and Love,” is somewhat generic and has been used by several poets.

¹⁵ Safinah 1959, 313.

¹⁶ “*khāk-i qiyāmat-khez wa sar-zamīn-i shor-angez*” (Safinah 1959, 313).

Gwalior, and Mathura. One of Ārzū's childhood teachers was Mīr Ĝulām 'Alī Aḥsanī, about whom we know nothing except that he was active in Gwalior and corrected Ārzū's verses.¹⁷ Another was Mīr 'Abd al-Šamad Suķhan, who in his early days was in Gwalior before working for nobles in Agra and Lahore.¹⁸ Ārzū knew him briefly in Gwalior.¹⁹ When Ārzū was a budding poet of fifteen or sixteen, Suķhan corrected his work, and even fifty years later Ārzū kept scraps of paper with Suķhan's corrections on them.²⁰ Suķhan was eventually posted to Gujarat, where he died in Ahmedabad, but at some point his calligraphy had become famous in Delhi.

Upon his father's death in 1115/1703, Ārzū joined the entourage of Prince A'zam Shāh, who happened to be an important literary patron in Persian and *hindi*.²¹ When the imperial army marched to the Deccan with a contingent including the prince's forces, Ārzū was part of the campaign for nine months. The aged Aurangzeb died shortly thereafter on March 3, 1707, and the inevitable succession struggle commenced. A'zam Shāh declared himself emperor immediately after his father's death in Ahmadnagar (present-day Maharashtra). Though his claim was made in the imperial encampment, it lasted a mere four months. His brother, Prince Mu'azzam (who took the regnal name Bahādur Shāh, r. June 19, 1707–February 27, 1712), killed him on the battlefield that June.²² Ārzū himself had already returned to Gwalior because—at least in his telling—his mother had asked him to come home, which we can probably read as a convenient excuse to avoid a tricky political situation. After the bloody resolution of the princes' competing claims to the throne, Ārzū relocated to Agra and then back to Gwalior. He resettled in Agra during the brief reign of Jahāndār Shāh (r. February 1712–February 1713), and spent five years there as a religious student and participant in the poetic scene.²³

¹⁷ MN 2004, 1:87–8. Not even Ārzū had access to his *diwān*, so he must have been a relatively marginal figure.

¹⁸ MN 2004, 2:716.

¹⁹ *Safinah* 1959, 213.

²⁰ MN 2004, 2:716.

²¹ Busch 2010, 297.

²² See Richards 1996, 253; cf. Chandra 2002, 55.

²³ He studied religious science under Maulānā 'Imād al-Dīn, known as Darwīsh Muhammād, and had his verses corrected by Shāh Gulshan (d. 1140/1727), Mirzā Ḥātim Beg Ḥātim (note that this is not the poet Shāh Ḥātim Dīhlawī), 'Azmatallāh Kāmil, Muhammād Muqīm Āzād, the great Naqshbandī Sufī Nāṣir 'Alī Sirhindī (d. 1108/1696), and others. While both Ḫwushgo

Delhi

Ārzū visited Delhi before settling there. He tells us that he first came in the beginning of the reign of Farrukhsiyar (1713–19) in an unsuccessful search for work. He then went to Agra and entered the service of Mirzā Khān in Gwalior. He returned to Delhi shortly after Muḥammad Shāh became emperor (that is, after September 1719), and remained there, he tells us, for thirty years (at the time of writing *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is* in 1751–2).²⁴ During this period he wrote nearly all of his works and made the personal connections that enabled his career. Soon after settling in Delhi he must have met Ānand Rām Mukhlīṣ, who introduced him to his future patron Ishqāq Khān and facilitated his entrée into literary high society. He also came to know the great poet Mirzā ‘Abd al-Qādir Bedil and his circle before Bedil’s death in 1720. This short-lived association with Bedil brought him great prestige. While he lived in Delhi, he witnessed the invasion of the Iranian ruler Nādir Shāh and the general massacre (*qatl-i āmm*) of the city’s inhabitants by the invading troops in March 1739. The violence in the capital and subsequent looting of both city and imperial treasury are generally regarded as heralding the end of Mughal power, although the last Mughal emperor would not be deposed until 1857.

Final Years in Lucknow

The best contemporary sources on Ārzū’s life, namely *Safīnah-yi Khwushgo* and Ārzū’s own *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is*, were both completed in

and Ārzū’s accounts mention Darwīsh Muḥammad, only Khwushgo lists the poets with whom Ārzū was associated in Agra. If Nāṣir ‘Alī’s death date is correct then he obviously could not have corrected Ārzū’s verses in the 1710s.

²⁴ MN 2004, 1:187. Āzād Bilgrāmī concurs on these facts, giving 1132/1719–20 as the date of Ārzū’s arrival (*Sarw-i Āzād* 1913, 228). The year 1719 was a tumultuous one for imperial politics. The Sayyid brothers, who had helped Farrukhsiyar take the throne in 1713, now decided to betray him. He was blinded in January and strangled towards the end of April. They put his young nephew Rafī‘ al-Darajāt on the throne, but he promptly died and was succeeded by his brother Rafī‘ al-Daulah (who reigned for about four months as Shāh Jahān II). Afterwards Muḥammad Shāh took the throne and built a coalition that succeeded in breaking the power of the Sayyid brothers. (The classic account of these events is Irvine 1922.)

Delhi before Ārzū settled in Lucknow in Awadh. Thus, there is little we can say about this final period of his life.²⁵ The author of *Khulāṣat al-Afkār* [The Pith of Thoughts], writing in the 1790s, suggests that Ārzū left Delhi because of the “desolation” [*kharābi*] of the city.²⁶ Ārzū’s own writings give no indication of his thoughts on leaving the capital so this motivation is perhaps an interpretation at several decades’ remove. Whatever the situation in Delhi, Ārzū no doubt moved to Lucknow in 1754 to be closer to a new patron, Nawab Shujā‘ al-Daulah.²⁷ Ārzū’s nephew Mīr Taqī Mīr cruelly refers to this period as “chasing in the desert of greed” and implies that Ārzū was unsuccessful in getting the Nawab’s patronage.²⁸ All the sources that mention it agree on the date of Ārzū’s death, 23 Rabi‘ II 1169/January 26, 1756, and most state that his body was taken to Delhi for burial. We are not told by whom or why such trouble was taken.²⁹

Ārzū’s People: Friends, Patrons, and Rivals

Given the arc of Ārzū’s career, it is unsurprising that he was tied into multiple literary and political networks. He was personally linked with the literary communities of Delhi, Agra, and Gwalior, both in Persian and in vernacular literary circles,³⁰ and his friends and disciples represented a remarkable cross-section of the elite. Like the political class itself, his interlocutors included people from all over India, Central Asia, and Iran. Two of Ārzū’s closest friends, Ānand Rām Mukhlīṣ and Tek

²⁵ The main source is Azād Bilgrāmī’s *tažkirah Khizānah-yi ‘Āmirah* [Royal Treasurehouse, 1164/1762–3]. Bodleian ms Ouseley Add. 6, p. 206.

²⁶ *Khulāṣat al-Afkār* by Abū Ṭalib (Bodleian ms Elliott 181, f. 31a). The work was begun in 1206/1791–2 and completed sometime before 1210/1795–6 (Sachau and Ethé 1889, 302ff.).

²⁷ Although several sources are precise in locating Ārzū in Lucknow, some scholars have speculated that instead of going to Lucknow, Ārzū settled in Faizabad (130 km to the east). Faizabad and not Lucknow was the first capital of Awadh, but there is no evidence to suggest that the *tažkirah*-writers are wrong to refer to Ārzū’s stay in Lucknow (Khatoon 1987, 36; cf. Khatoon 1991, 18–23).

²⁸ Trans. Naim 1999, 76.

²⁹ For example, *Khizānah-yi ‘Āmirah* (Bodleian ms Ouseley Add. 6, p. 206).

³⁰ People whose connection to Ārzū is only relevant for our purposes because of Urdu poetic society (whatever Persian they wrote) will be dealt with in Chapter 5. The list includes Ābrū, Mazhar, Mazmūn, Mir, Mir Dard, Saudā, and Yakrān.

Chand Bahār, were Hindus (more specifically *khattiris*).³¹ Many of Ārzū's eventual colleagues and students were first brought together as disciples of the Sufi poet Bedil, whose death shortly after Ārzū's arrival in Delhi led to a new arrangement in which Ārzū (perhaps in part because of his own Sufi credentials) became teacher to many of them and a sort of master of ceremonies in Bedil's annual memorial [‘urs].³² Tracing the diverse group of people with whom he interacted is important as background for our discussions of contemporary literary debates in the following chapters because disputes are often both personal and philosophical.

The source material available to us for reconstructing the literary life around Ārzū is almost exclusively in the form of *tažkirahs*, a category of evidence that needs to be interpreted with care. Literary *tažkirahs* are not historically minded documents and so have little interest in hard facts like dates and places, and it is generally fruitless to read them in pursuit of such information.³³ Because *tažkirahs* are concerned above all with transmitting good poetry to posterity, their prefaces often cite the number of couplets recorded rather than the number of people included. In many cases, the volume of poetic quotations so outweighs the text of the biographical entries that they are better understood as poetic anthologies arranged by author. Soft historical facts often fare no better than biographical specifics: The language is frequently stereotypical, with flowery variations on “he was a great poet” rather than real critical content. But if *tažkirahs* are not historical documents, then what are they? They are literary representations of social networks and the memory thereof.³⁴ *Tažkirahs* were deliberate in their presentation of how poets were connected both personally and aesthetically, and often we can reconstitute

³¹ Many Hindus were written out of the history of Indo-Persian. For example, Mir Ḥusain Dost Sanbhalī's *Tažkirah-yi Husainī* (1875) does not contain any of the Hindus mentioned in this chapter except Chandar Bhān Brahman. For a good overview of Hindu Persian poets, see Pellō 2008. On Persian-using Hindu administrators, see Kinra 2010.

³² Tabor 2019, 86–7.

³³ However, they gradually become more historical. The watershed moment, the compilation of Āzād's *Āb-i Hayāt* in 1880, is discussed in Chapter 5.

³⁴ An idea developed in Hermansen and Lawrence 2000 (and applied in, for example, Kia 2011). It should be noted, however, that especially in Urdu *tažkirahs*, compilers are sometimes concerned more with particular conceits, such as (in one extreme example) including only verses that mention parts of the body, than with representing an actually existing network of poets (Pritchett 1994, 66).

these ties into an understanding of poets' intellectual and aesthetic concerns. When used correctly, namely by tuning our interpretation to the rhetoric of representing a community of poets, they can tell us a great deal.

Ārzū's own *tažkirah Majma‘ al-Nafā’is* is a guide to the people whom Ārzū respected as his teachers and students or as poets in general, and those whom he would rather have held at arm's length. Muḥkliṣ and Bahār, both intellectuals in Ārzū's mold, were Ārzū's closest friends and we consider them first. Then we can address the influence of Bedil, who was teacher to all of them, before turning to some of the more peripheral figures whom Ārzū mentions. We consider his patrons separately. Finally, we consider his enemies, and through them the complexity and stakes of eighteenth-century Indo-Persian literary debate.

Ānand Rām Muḥkliṣ

The present chapter began with a lexicographical affirmation by Ānand Rām Muḥkliṣ (d. 1164/1750–1) of his friendship with Ārzū. Muḥkliṣ had been Bedil's student, but after Ārzū settled in Delhi and Bedil died, he became Ārzū's student and arranged for Ārzū to receive the trappings of nobility—namely an estate [*jāgīr*], an imperial rank [*manṣab*], and a title [*khiṭāb*] of “*khān*”—required to move in the empire's highest circles.³⁵ Muḥkliṣ could accomplish this because he was one of the most important political functionaries in Delhi: He was *wakīl*, which is to say the personal representative at court, both of the imperial *wazīr*, Qamar al-Dīn Khān (known by his noble title *Istimād al-Daulah*), and of ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Khān (known as *Saif al-Daulah*), governor of Lahore and Multan.³⁶ He had received the title “Rajah of Rajahs” [*rā’ī-yi rāyān*] for his service. Despite the fact that Muḥkliṣ's skills clearly commanded the respect of those around him, later scholars have been wary of accepting their

³⁵ Khwushgo reports that Ārzū's courtly title was “*Istīdād Khān*” (*Safinah* 1959, 312), but none of the other texts under discussion here mention it.

³⁶ The best English-language account of Muḥkliṣ's life is the prefatory material in *Mir’āt al-İştilāh* 2013. In Urdu see ‘Abdullah 1967, 122ff. On Qamar al-Dīn Khān and ‘Abdul Ṣamad Khān, see Beveridge and Prashad 1979, 2:488–90 and 1:71–3.

verdict. Sayyid 'Abdullah, a twentieth-century Pakistani scholar, feels the need to say that Muḥkliṣ could not have had pure [*theth*] Persian because he was an Indian [*hindūstānī*] and worse than that a Hindu.³⁷ Contemporary accounts configure Muḥkliṣ's relationship with Persian differently: He was entrusted with composing a letter to the Safavid king to commemorate the ascension of Muḥammad Shāh—hardly a task for someone with imperfect Persian.³⁸ Furthermore, 'Alī Qulī Khān Wālih Dāghistānī, writing in 1169/1748, praises him as the most highly fluent Hindu Persian writer of his time.³⁹

Six letters sent by Muḥkliṣ to Ārzū are the only specimens of anyone's correspondence with Ārzū that have been preserved, as far as I have been able to ascertain.⁴⁰ They appear in *Manṣūrāt-i Ānand Rām* [Ānand Rām's Prose], an unpublished miscellany of Muḥkliṣ's writings, which includes a set of letters gathered in 1149/1736. Unfortunately for historians, the criteria for inclusion in such a collection have little to do with historical value but rather with rhetorical force: Such letters were meant to serve as models of elegant writing (and indeed as a delivery vehicle for poetry), and not necessarily as a historical record. The letters pertain to the period when Muḥkliṣ was in the Deccan on campaign with I'timād al-Daulah in 1147/1736–7 fighting the forces of the Maratha Peshwa Bājī Rāo.⁴¹ Muḥkliṣ expresses his longing for Ārzū's company, sends some poetry, and describes the itinerary. A decade later, when Muḥkliṣ was again traveling, he recorded in his *Safarnāmah* [Travelogue], which covers events in 1745, that he met Ārzū on the road.⁴² Muḥkliṣ's

³⁷ 'Abdullah 1967, 125. A recently published monograph on Muḥkliṣ (James 2011) is somewhat disappointing because it likewise cannot conceive of its Hindu subject except as a brilliant imitator.

³⁸ Though as with much of the ceremonial correspondence at this level, whether it was sent or not is an open question. It is contained in *Manṣūrāt-i Ānand Rām* [Ānand Rām's Prose], an unpublished miscellany of Muḥkliṣ's writings (Khuda Bakhsh ms HL 882 ff. 56b–67a; see Khuda Bakhsh Library 1970, 9:109).

³⁹ *Ta'zirah-yi Riyāz al-Shu'arā* 2005, 4:2209.

⁴⁰ A few letters ascribed to Ārzū are to be found in a *majmū'ah* [miscellany] in the Collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, but I have not been able to access the manuscript (no. 420; Ivanow 1985, 184).

⁴¹ The letters are *Manṣūrāt-i Ānand Rām* ff. 3a–5a, 5a–6a, 6a–9a, 14a–15a, 19b–20b, and 25a–27a. The third letter is dated 25 Shawwāl of Muḥammad Shāh's seventeenth regnal year (= 9 March 1736) and the fifth is headed with a notice that it dates from the campaign against Bājī Rāo.

⁴² Alam and Subrahmanyam 1996, 145.

best-known work, the lexicon *Mir'āt al-Īstilāh*, was edited after his death by Ārzū who added marginal notes and a preface.

Muķhlīṣ was at the center of literary life in the capital. He was a favorite disciple [*shāgird*] of Bedil, and hosted Bedil's former students at home.⁴³ He owned a remarkable library because his wealth allowed him to have a copy made of any book which he came across.⁴⁴ He borrowed books from Ārzū.⁴⁵ His social circle was broad, as we learn from the circumstances of the composition of *Hangāmah-yi Ishq* [The Tumult of Love, 1739]. According to the preface, Ārzū, Muḥammad Qulī Khān, Ma'niyāb Khān Shā'ir (d. 1157/1744), Rāo Kirpā Rām, Rā'i Fath Singh, and "other friends" accompany the author to the fair of a Sufi saint.⁴⁶ Afterwards, he cannot sleep and so a servant narrates part of the *hindī* poem *Padmāwat*, which he decides to turn into Persian prose for "people interested in this art [of Persian composition]" [*ahl-i žauq-i īn fann*].⁴⁷ In Chapter 5, we pick up the argument that it is no accident that stories moved back and forth between *hindī* and Persian in the company of such elites.

Tek Chand Bahār

The closeness of Ārzū's friendship with Bahār is clear from the repeated references in Ārzū's *Khiyābān-i Gulistān*, a commentary on Sa'di's *Gulistān*, to Bahār's being "among humble Ārzū's friends."⁴⁸ No one else gets this sort of treatment in that text. Bahār himself says in the preface to his dictionary *Bahār-i 'Ajām* [The Spring of Persian, 1152/1739] that Ārzū had been his close friend for twenty years. He was likely

⁴³ Ārzū mentions one such gathering in which Ārzū, Payām and 'Atā (all disciples of Bedil like Muķhlīṣ himself) met Mukhlīṣ's house (*MN* 2005, 64). Muķhlīṣ corresponded with Payām, as demonstrated by the two letters addressed to him preserved in *Manṣūrāt-i Ānand Rām*.

⁴⁴ Jalibi 1984, 2.1:164.

⁴⁵ Such as the *dīwān* of the seventeenth-century poet Salik Qazwīnī (*Mir'āt al-Īstilāh* 2013, 384–5).

⁴⁶ Muḥammad Qulī Khān must be the same person as the author of the *Muraqqā-i Dihli*. He was in Delhi in the entourage of Aṣaf Jāh I from 1738 to 1741.

⁴⁷ *Manṣūrāt-i Ānand Rām* f. 137a–b. A second translation from *hindī* into Persian in the same collection is *Kārnāmah-yi Ishq* [Book of Love, 1731]. The latest work included in the manuscript is dated 1746.

⁴⁸ "az yārān-i faqīr-i ārzū ast" (*KhG* 1996, 22, 33, 89, 111).

Ārzū's exact contemporary, but we know little about his life.⁴⁹ There is no entry for him in Ārzū's *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is* and other slightly later *tazkirahs* have sketchy entries.⁵⁰ For example, Mīr Ḥasan tells us only that he knew Persian idioms well [*az iṣṭilāḥāt-i fārsī bisyār khabar dāsh*], was Ārzū's friend, and was a prolific writer.⁵¹ The idea that he was a prolific writer is difficult to substantiate in the usual context of writing a great deal of poetry because he left no *dīwān*, a book of selected poetry that generally formed a carefully curated part of a poet's legacy. He was the author of at least five critical works, of which the most important is his massive dictionary *Bahār-i ‘Ajām*. Arguably, simply completing a dictionary on the scale of *Bahār-i ‘Ajām* would qualify someone as a prolific writer.⁵²

Bahār-i ‘Ajām's sources are worth discussing. They demonstrate an encyclopedic grasp of the tradition, as in Ārzū's own lexicographical projects, but also a surprising willingness to use texts written by people who did not get along with one another philosophically or personally. The Bodleian manuscript provides a list of works from which the dictionary is derived: It mentions well over 200 poetic collections, dictionaries, and commentaries. Ārzū's own works in the list include a *dīwān* of *ghazals*, his *Sikandarnāmah* and *Gulistān* commentaries, the dictionary *Sirāj al-Lughat*, and “several treatises” [*ba‘z rasā‘il*] besides.⁵³ Indeed, Bahār highlights in the preface that Ārzū receives the special

⁴⁹ Abdullah 1967, 162ff. The evidence for the composition date is a chronogram (“yādgār-i *faqir-i haqir bahār*”) which yields 1152/1739, twenty years into Ārzū's stay in Delhi, and so precisely tracks with Bahār's statement that he had known Ārzū for twenty years (*Bahār-i ‘Ajām* 2001, 1:xxx). The work was subsequently revised and this has confused some scholars about when it was first compiled.

⁵⁰ I have checked both the critical edition of *MN* (2004) and the table of contents of the comprehensive Bodleian ms (Elliott 399). The omission is puzzling but perhaps Bahār was a literary scholar rather than a practicing poet since he apparently left no volume of selected poetry [*dīwān*].

⁵¹ Abdullah 1967.

⁵² He wrote three treatises called *Jawāhir al-Hurūf*, *Nawādir al-Maṣādir*, and *Ibtāl-i Zurūrat*. Blochmann calls Bahār's dictionary *Bahār-i ‘Ajām* “one of the grandest dictionaries ever written by one man” and notes that it was the only one of Bahār's works that was readily available even though the others had been lithographed (Blochmann 1868, 28–30). It has most recently been published in an edition prepared by Kazim Dizfulyan (*Bahār-i ‘Ajām* 2001). Bahār also wrote a well-known commentary on Sa‘dī's *Bostān* called *Bahār-i Bostān*. He was also a *rekhtah* poet (that is, he wrote in the Persianized vernacular) according to Mir (Nikāt 1979, 164) and Shafiq (*Chamanistān-i Shū‘arā* 1928, 44–8).

⁵³ Ms Caps. Or. B 15, f. 2b (on this ms see Sachau and Ethé 1889, 1018).

honor of being referred to as “*sirāj al-muhaqqiqīn*” [Lamp of the Researchers] throughout the book. Bahār expresses his deep devotion to Ārzū and uses works by Ārzū’s friend Sābit, and yet also acknowledges his great debt to Wārastah’s *Muṣṭalahāt al-Shu‘arā* [Idioms of the Poets], and refers to Ārzū’s archnemesis Shaikh Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥazīn in highly complimentary terms, namely as “*hażrat-i shaikh al-‘arifin*” [the exalted *shaikh* of the wise].⁵⁴ Bahār is clearly a partisan of Ārzū and yet has no qualms about relying upon the works of Ārzū’s enemies like Wārastah and Ḥazīn (whose particular enmity towards Ārzū is described in this chapter).

The Ticket to Success: Mīrzā ‘Abd al-Qādir Bedil

Bedil (1054–1133/1644–1720) was arguably the most important Persian poet of his time anywhere in the Persian cosmopolis. His remarkable career took him from Patna, where he grew up in a family with Central Asian roots, to other parts of India, and eventually to Delhi in 1096/1685.⁵⁵ He mentored dozens of students and set a standard for Persian literature: Friend or foe, every Indo-Persian writer who came after felt the need to engage with his style. He counted among his students great religious figures and some of the most powerful nobles of the empire.⁵⁶ For example, Shaikh Sa‘dallāh Gulshan (d. 1141/1728–9) was an important Naqshbandī Sufi, whom Bedil taught and respected as being especially divinely inspired in his poetry.⁵⁷ Another student was Nīzām al-Mulk Ḵasaf Jāh, who eventually carved out an autonomous province in Hyderabad and the eastern Deccan for himself and his descendants.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ *Bahār-i ‘Ajam* 2001, 1:xxix–xxxii.

⁵⁵ Ārzū notes that Nasrābādī’s *tažkirah* incorrectly connects him with Lahore and that he lived in Delhi for “about thirty years” (MN 2004, 240–1). ‘Abdul Ghani cites a chronogram for 1075/1664 as the year Bedil left Patna but it is unclear how long he stayed in other places (including Mathura) before settling in Delhi for the first time (Ghani 1960, 30–1). He settled there permanently in 1096/1685 (Ghani 1960, 61). The standard intellectual biography of Bedil in Urdu is Hadi 1982.

⁵⁶ A comprehensive list appears in Ghani 1960, 82ff.

⁵⁷ MN 2004, 3:1369. On Gulshan’s role in developing Urdu literature, see Chapter 5.

⁵⁸ *Safinah* 1959, 114. However, as Munis Faruqui has argued, Nīzām al-Mulk’s motivation for gaining political independence in the Deccan emerged from his weakness and marginalization at the imperial court (Faruqui 2009).

Like Ārzū, Bedil had been a member of the establishment of Prince A'zam Shāh, although much earlier than Ārzū.⁵⁹ Furthermore, *tażkirah* writers imply that he was a major proponent of bringing non-Muslims into Sufi poetic circles.⁶⁰

Ārzū became closely linked to Bedil, despite apparently having little direct contact with him. He was Bedil's student twice, first during the time he stayed briefly in Delhi at the beginning of Farrukhsiyar's reign and again when he settled there permanently.⁶¹ Not long after his arrival the second time, Bedil died; his death cast a very long shadow. Ārzū took up the training of many of Bedil's students, as is clear from *Majma' al-Nafā'is*. He also had a special role in Bedil's 'urs [death anniversary], a major annual event in the Persianate Sufi circles of Delhi.⁶² Bedil's poetic circle was part courtly aesthetics—indeed Khwushgo rhetorically frames it as a royal court—and part Sufi lodge [*khānaqāh*]. Khwushgo gives the most intimate account of Bedil, including his dining habits. The great poet would apparently eat two and a half or three *ser* [approx. 3 kilograms] of food at a sitting.⁶³

Bedil's literary style is controversial to say the least. He is the bête noire of Iranian critics of the twentieth century, and is held up as the exemplar of the excesses of the so-called "Indian Style."⁶⁴ Recent critical literature often implies that he started out as a good poet in the classical mold before something went terribly wrong.⁶⁵ Without a doubt, Bedil's poetry

⁵⁹ Siddiqi 1989. ⁶⁰ Pellò 2014.

⁶¹ The phrase in *MN* is ambiguous, lit. "Humble Ārzū [was] in the service of this great man twice" [*faqīr-i ārzū do bār bah khidmat-i īn buzurgwar*], which could even be interpreted to mean that he only met Bedil in person on two occasions. That meaning is unlikely but still the timeframe in question is undefined.

⁶² *Muraqqa'* 1993, 81. It took place each year on the fourth of the month of Ṣafar. Khwushgo is perhaps implying that Ārzū took up Bedil's mantle by using virtually the same honorific formula in his entries for each of them, namely "qiblah and *ka'bah* of significations" [*qiblah-o ka'bah-yi ma'āni*] and "qiblah of the word and *ka'bah* of significations" [*qiblah-yi lafz wa ka'bah-yi ma'āni*], respectively (*Safinah* 1959, 312, 104). The *qiblah* is the direction in which Muslims pray and the *ka'bah* is the black cubic building in Mecca towards which the *qiblah* is directed. On the importance of Bedil's 'urs as a socio-cultural event, see Tabor 2019.

⁶³ *Safinah* 1959, 109. ⁶⁴ E.g., Shafi'i Kadkani 1981, 152.

⁶⁵ E.g., Siddiqi 1989. Even 'Abdul Ghani, who admires Bedil's style, could not resist putting decline at the center of his analysis: In his telling, Bedil's poetic genius was not properly recognized because of the cultural rot that supposedly set in after Aurangzeb's death (Ghani 1960, vii–viii).

is complicated and not to everyone's taste, but we cannot assume that his difficulty was the result of a failure to understand proper Persian as opposed to an aesthetic choice.⁶⁶ Gardezi, a nineteenth-century *tazkirah* writer, calls him "master of his own style" [*şâhib-i tarz-i khwud*], which was generally thought to be the highest form of poetic achievement. (Ārzū uses a similar phrase in describing him.) Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has argued that "it can be said that most of the criticism of the Indian Style poets' use of Persian emanates from Bēdil's (dis)reputation as an undisciplined writer."⁶⁷

We can compare Bedil to other roughly contemporary poets, who were nodes in their own networks of teachers and students: Another poet with such influence, albeit in the generation before Bedil, was Mirzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Šā’ib (d. 1080/1669), who had come to India in Shāh Jahān's reign but returned to his native Isfahan, where he died. His students Rizwān and Sābiq and acquaintance Fitrat are mentioned in *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is*. Likewise, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḳhān Tanhā, who was controversial in his time (which was the latter part of Aurangzeb's reign, that is, the end of the seventeenth century), had students (e.g., Ma‘jiz and Niśar) and continued the tradition of his own teacher Mirzā Jalāl Asīr Isfahānī (d. 1049/1639). *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is* emphatically declares that Mirzā Afzal Sarķhwush (d. 1127/1715) was not a student of Bedil's. Rather Sarķhwush had his own establishment of students and was in that sense a rival to Bedil.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Indeed, the most biting comment on Bedil is probably a later fabrication: Hazin supposedly said, "Bedil's prose is unintelligible. If I manage to go back to Iran, there is no better present to make my friends laugh" [*naṣr-i bedil ba-fahm namī āyad, agar murāja‘at-i irān dast dahad barā'i rīshkhand-i bazm-i ahbāb rah āwardi bahtar azīn nīst*] (quoted in Ghani 1960, 259). The difficulty is that Ghani cites Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād's *Nigāristān-i Fārs* [Persian Picturebook] as the source for Hazin's now quite famous insult, and in this work Āzād—who expresses his contempt for Bedil's style—tends to make up or at least misattribute quotations. I have not been able to trace the quip to an earlier work, but scholars have theories about where Āzād might have found it if it is indeed authentic (Mikkelsen 2017, 525n65).

⁶⁷ Faruqi 2004b, 59, cf. 24. It was a contemporary objection as well: Faruqi points to Āzād Bilgrāmī's stylistic objections in his *tazkirah Khizānah-yi ‘Āmirah* but notes that Āzād concedes that Bedil did have the right to experiment, citing Ārzū. A full discussion of that passage appears in Chapter 3.

⁶⁸ Pellō 2014.

Other Poets in Ārzū’s Network

Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is is an index of other people Ārzū respected, including many who do not appear frequently in other *tažkirahs*, but with whom Ārzū claimed a personal relationship. It includes people from diverse parts of India and a number of Hindus, especially Punjabis in high positions in Delhi. If the function of *tažkirahs* is not recording history but building a notional community, then Ārzū assembled the most geographically and confessionally diverse group possible and strove to keep ties with nobles who moved around India. *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is* aims to be a comprehensive account of the Persian tradition, with some 1,800 poets represented in the most complete manuscripts, but clearly the stakes are different in the entries on Ārzū’s contemporaries and near contemporaries. Indeed, Ārzū carefully represented himself as anointed successor of the two major poetic networks in Delhi, those of Bedil and of Sarķhwush.

In these entries, Ārzū situates himself relative to other poets, constructing for the reader a map of his close friends, friends with whom he maintained relationships by letter, students, teachers, and—usually maintaining the requisite politesse—his rivals and enemies. Ārzū had an epistolary relationship with Mīr Ghulām ‘Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī (d. 1200/1785). Āzād had been educated by his uncle, the noted Islamic scholar Sayyid ‘Abd al-Jalil Bilgrāmī, and Ārzū was keen to know Āzād in part because of his family’s spiritual credentials. Āzād settled in Aurangabad, and Ārzū refers to their relationship as “friendship in absentia” [*iḥklāṣ-i ḡhāyibānah*]. Ārzū sent him a message to get to know him (later for his own *tažkirah*, Āzād likewise asks Ārzū for an account of himself).⁶⁹ He replied with poetry, two *ḡazals* in Persian and a *qaṣīdah* in Arabic. Their relationship is important for our purposes because it gives some sense of Ārzū’s readership: Āzād was familiar with *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is* and *Dād-i Suķhan*.⁷⁰ Likewise Ārzū had an epistolary relationship with Shāh Faqīrallāh Āfarīn and similarly with Sharaf al-Dīn Payām.⁷¹ (Mukhlīṣ

⁶⁹ MN 2004, 1:164.

⁷⁰ They are mentioned in the entry on Bedil in *Khizānah-yi ‘Āmirah*.

⁷¹ See Kia 2011, 229–30.

also corresponded with both of them, as we know from letters preserved in *Manṣūrāt-i Ānand Rām*.) Another of Ārzū's acquaintances was Mīr Ḥaidar Tajrīd, a soldier who came from Surat to Delhi, spent time with Ārzū, and eventually left for a posting in Bengal.⁷² Ḡulām Nabī Nasīm has a similar biography: He was originally from Amroha (present-day Uttar Pradesh), lived in Delhi before settling in Khudabad (then the capital of Sindh). Although Nasīm missed his friends in Hindustan (presumably meaning Delhi specifically), Ārzū reports, he was content in Sindh.⁷³ He knew Ārzū for a little over thirty years. Mīrzā Afzāl Sarķhwush (d. 1127/1715) made an impression on Ārzū although they knew each other only briefly during Ārzū's first interval in Delhi during the reign of Farruḵsiyar.⁷⁴ He mentions being a young poet and reciting for Sarķhwush, who recognized his talent (according to Ārzū) by declaring "I have never seen the thought of any young man reach this level" [*tā hāl fikr-i hīch naujawān bah īn pāyah na-dīdah-am*]. Ārzū corroborates the story by twice invoking Sarķhwush's sense of "justice" (that is, his good poetic judgment) and noting that his poetry is read even in Iran. Ārzū follows his anecdote by mentioning Sarķhwush's teachers (Muhammad ‘Alī Māhir and later Mīr Mu‘izz al-Dīn Fiṭrat) as well as the fact that he was "contemporary and stylistically similar" [*mu‘aṣir wa hamṣarāḥi*] to Bedil. Ārzū praises Sarķhwush's *tażkirah Kalimāt al-Shu‘arā* [Words of the Poets], which was itself a project designed to corroborate Sarķhwush's own poetic lineage. Clearly Ārzū was trying to establish himself as being tied into two major poetic networks in Delhi, that of Bedil and of Sarķhwush.⁷⁵ There are many other poets with whom Ārzū claims a relationship. Those actively involved in the literary debates in Delhi will be discussed further in the context of Ḥazīn: They include Qizilbāsh Ḳhān Ummīd, who defended Ārzū, Šābit and his son Šabāt, and Rāsīkh (who were all defended by Ārzū), and Girāmī (whose interaction with Ḥazīn Ārzū recounts).

⁷² MN 2004, 1:315.

⁷³ “az āshnāyān wa khwīshān-i hindūstān dil-ash giriftah wa bī hīch ranjīdah” (MN 2004, 3:1701).

⁷⁴ MN 2004, 2:676.

⁷⁵ He also notes having met Muhammad Ḥusain Nāji in the company of Sarķhwush (MN 2004, 3:1691; cf. *Safinah* 1959, 317).

Ārzū's circle also included a large number of Hindus, including some who had converted to Islam. Besides Bahār and Mukhlīṣ, Ārzū's most important non-Muslim confidant was Bindrāban Dās Ḳhwushgo. He was a student of Ārzū's for twenty-five years and also connected to Bedil, Sarḳhwush, and Gulshan. There does not appear to be any extant collection of his poetry, but his *tażkirah Safinah-yi Ḳhwushgo* provides important information about Delhi's poetic scene.⁷⁶ Ārzū wrote a preface for it and edited it, which then as now implies some degree of endorsement. By the time Ārzū was compiling *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is* (which highly praises the *Safinah*), Ḳhwushgo had retired from imperial service and had become an ascetic wandering about Allahabad, Patna, and Banaras. Another Hindu interlocutor of Ārzū's was Gurbakhsh Ḥuzūrī. He was a Kanbo from Multan who had known Ārzū continuously for forty years, perhaps the longest of anyone mentioned in *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is*.⁷⁷ His work was prolific and in the style of Ḡhanī Kashmīrī (d. 1069/1668). Jai Kishan ‘Ishrat was a young Kashmiri Brahmin who had been Ārzū's friend for fifteen years. Like Ārzū, he was in Mū’taman al-Daulah's service before joining the service of his son Najm al-Daulah after the father's demise.⁷⁸ Ārzū reckons his *maṣnawī Rām-o Sītā* [Rām and Sītā], a telling of part of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story, superior to the well-known mid-sixteenth-century *maṣnawī* of the same title by Shaikh Sa‘dallāh Masiḥā of Panipat. The apex of his bureaucratic career was his appointment as *dīwān* [chief revenue officer] of all of Kashmir, a plum posting in his native land. Another Kashmiri Hindu connection is with Sālim, who was a protégé of Ḡhanī and was thought to be a Kashmiri Brahmin who converted to Islam.⁷⁹ Ārzū mentions that as a child he had studied Sālim's *dīwān*.⁸⁰ Ikhlaṣ Khān Wāmiq was a Khattri from Kalanaur (Punjab) who converted to Islam—Ārzū's account of his conversion is

⁷⁶ The work provides little information about its author, who probably died not long after Ārzū. He probably finished it in 1147/1734–5, gave it to Ārzū in 1155/1742–3, and made some changes up until 1162/1748–9 (Rahman 1959). It has three parts: The first discusses 362 Ancient poets, the second 545 (or 811 in the Khuda Baksh ms) middle-period poets from Jāmī (1414–1492), and the third—published as *Safinah* 1959—deals with 245 Modern poets (Sprenger 1854, 131). It is obviously the third section that is of most interest to us. In a separate work, Khwushgo apparently recorded the sayings [*mafūzāt*] of Bedil, but this text is no longer extant. See Pellò 2014, 28.

⁷⁷ MN 2004, 1:396.

⁷⁸ MN 2004, 2:1139.

⁷⁹ *Safinah* 1959, 38; on Sālim see Tikku 1971, 140–3.

⁸⁰ MN 2004, 2:603–4.

extremely complimentary.⁸¹ Ārzū had met him as a child in the company of his father. While he was a good prose writer possessing his own personal style [*ṭarz*], he was never properly a poet. One young friend of Ārzū's was Bāl Mukund Shuhūd, a Kayasth whose ancestors worked as administrators in Bengal and Bihar (Ārzū parenthetically notes here that Kayasts were frequently Lords of the Pen [*arbāb-i qalam*] or administrator-secretaries).⁸² He wrote Ārzū a cordial letter two years before moving to Delhi, which is evidence that Ārzū was in demand as a mentor in the capital. Indeed, Ārzū gave him his *taķhalluś*, which is the usual prerogative of a teacher.⁸³

A few of Ārzū's family members appear in his *tażkirah* in addition to his father Ḫusāmī. The Persian and *rekhtah* poet Mir was Ārzū's estranged nephew. Shaikh Ḥafizallāh Āsim (d. c. 1742) was Ārzū's maternal cousin who had also been in the service of Prince A'żam Shāh and later became a member of the emperor's household troops [*wālāshāhī*] because of his connections. Ārzū tells us nothing specific about him except that he was a good poet and died in Agra.⁸⁴ Another poet, 'Āqil Khān Rāzī, was a distant relation of Ārzū's through his mother's connection to Muhammad Ghauš, which Rāzī also claimed.⁸⁵

Patrons

After Ārzū settled in Delhi, he received patronage from two of the most important noble families in the Mughal Empire. The first was that of Ishāq Khān and his descendants. They were Mughal administrators of recent Persian origin, and were connected by marriage to Shujā'

⁸¹ MN 2004, 3:1784. He began his career in Aurangzeb's reign, and under Farrukhsiyar received the rank of 7000 and wrote a history of that emperor's reign. He is mentioned in the *Ruq'āt-i Ālamgīrī* [Epistles of Aurangzeb] in a letter instructing the paymaster to make a record of his having been promoted (*Ruq'āt-i Ālamgīrī* 1908, 159). My thanks to Prof. Muzaffar Alam for this reference.

⁸² Although later historians have often imagined Hindu administrators during the Mughal period as having had an internal conflict between their personal identity as Hindus and their use of supposedly "Islamic" Persian as the medium of administration, Rajeev Kinra has argued compellingly that this expectation is anachronistic and unsupported by the evidence (Kinra 2015).

⁸³ MN 2004, 2:855.

⁸⁴ MN 2004, 1:181.

⁸⁵ MN 2004, 1:455.

al-Daulah, the Nawab of Awadh, who was Ārzū's patron towards the end of his life.

Ishāq Khān, known by his title Mü'taman al-Daulah, was Ārzū's first noble patron in Delhi. His father, Ghulām 'Alī Khān, had come from Shustar in southwestern Iran and risen to the position of imperial *bakāwal* [superintendent of the kitchen]. Ishāq Khān was born in Delhi and himself rose to a position of trust in the imperial establishment, namely as the emperor Muḥammad Shāh's *Khān-sāmān* [house steward or chief of staff]. This was the position he held for twenty-two years until his death in 1152/1740–1. In an account of his having interrupted a meeting between Muḥammad Shāh and Nādir Shāh—the latter upholding the pretense that Muḥammad Shāh was his “guest” even though he had just routed the Mughal army at Karnal—Ishāq Khān is described as Muḥammad Shāh's *atāliq* or childhood protector/tutor. Nādir Shāh was pleased with Ishāq Khān's answers to his questions, and pronounced him worthy of being Wazir of India. According to Ārzū, he had a poetic temperament, writing under the pen-name Ishāq.⁸⁶ He receives considerable, albeit expected, adulation in Ārzū's *Majmā' al-Nafā'is*. Ārzū writes that he was in his service for “just over twenty years,” which means that he must have entered Ishāq Khān's employ around the same time as he relocated to Delhi the second time.⁸⁷

After Ishāq Khān's demise, Ārzū received patronage from the late nobleman's sons and maintained his associations with the most important people in the empire. The eldest son, Mirzā Muḥammad (later called Najm al-Daulah), was Ārzū's patron for a decade until he died on the battlefield in 1162/1750. His brother Mirzā Muḥammad 'Alī Sälār Jang took Ārzū to Lucknow and introduced him to the Nawab, Shujā' al-Daulah, who was also his brother-in-law.⁸⁸ Shujā' al-Daulah was the son of Ṣafdar Jang, who had emigrated from Khurasan to India. Soon

⁸⁶ MN 2004, 1:181–2. The brief account of him in *Ma'āṣir al-Umarā* unusually cites a couplet of his (trans. Beveridge and Prashad 1979, 1:690).

⁸⁷ For biographical details, see *Ma'āṣir al-Umarā* 1891, 3:774–6 (trans. Beveridge and Prashad 1979, 1:690–1). On the meeting with Nādir Shāh, see Irvine 1922, 2:354. On his poetry, see MN 2004, 1:181–5. Ṣā'ib Tabrizī (d. 1086/1676) and Jalāl Asir Isfahānī (d. 1049/1639) were both influential poets of the recent past. They both referred to the “freshness” [*shīwah-yi tāzah*, etc.] in their style (see Chapter 3).

⁸⁸ *Khulāṣat al-Afkār* f. 31a.

afterwards Sālār Jang became imperial *bakhshī* [paymaster] under the new emperor Shāh ‘Ālam.⁸⁹ In Lucknow, Ārzū began receiving a monthly stipend of 300 rupees from Shujā‘ al-Daulah. The arrangement was cut short, however, when Ārzū died just over a year later.

Rivals and Enemies

Ārzū’s conflicts with his contemporaries are of more than just biographical interest because they demonstrably shaped Ārzū’s development as a scholar and reveal the vibrancy of the intellectual scene. The literary battles waged in Delhi were a tremendous inspiration for Ārzū, and he turned from relatively neutral critical projects that he had been pursuing (such as his commentary on Sa‘di’s *Gulistān*—a text that was read by nearly every early modern student of Persian in the world) to more polemical works. He was compelled to face the question of poetic authority, framed as differences between Ancient and Modern poets. Chapter 3 considers the substance of these debates, but this section gives an account of the dramatis personae.

To set the scene, we should observe that major poets were constantly generating corrections of others’ work, and this practice often developed from informal critiques into well-defined factions or lineages. There were those like Zāhid ‘Alī Khān Saķhā, whose entry in *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is* begins with praise but then takes a darker turn when Ārzū begins suggesting corrections to his verses.⁹⁰ Recording the critique in this way is obviously a play for poetic power and not the friendly advice it might have been had Saķhā been Ārzū’s own student (or had the critique been offered in another forum). Rival networks of poets were shown to have inherited the faults of their teachers: For example, ‘Abd al-Latīf Khān Tanhā was a linchpin of one such poetic lineage. Ārzū implies that he did not know Tanhā personally, but many of his close friends met Ārzū [*ba‘zī az yārān-i makhsūs-i ū bā faqīr mulāqāt nimūdah*], and they

⁸⁹ On the importance of the position of *bakhshī* see Richards 1996, 63–4.

⁹⁰ He was an Iranian who came to India during the unrest in Afghanistan. Ārzū had met him twice (*MN* 2004, 2:703). Hazin’s *tażkirah* mentions him and notes that his father had stayed with Hazin (*Tazkirah-yi Hazin* 1955, 95).

reported that he was melancholy and a heavy drinker. Some accused him of being abstruse in his poetry—apparently a characteristic of the work of his own teacher Mīrzā Jalāl Asīr (d. 1049/1639)—and Ārzū does not mount a defense, damning him with silence. He merely mentions that Tanhā has two important students in India. They are so devoted to his style [*ṭarz*] that they think of it, according to Ārzū, as “the primary tradition.”⁹¹ One of them was the Afghan Muḥammad Niẓām Muṣjiz (d. 1162/1748–9) and the other was Nuṣratallāh Ḫān Niśār, who was of Iranian ancestry. Ārzū knew Muṣjiz personally and found his style problematic, but was more positively disposed towards Niśār.

A more serious network of rivals was centered around Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥazīn, who had arrived in India in 1734. Ḥazīn’s sometime traveling companion, ‘Alī Qulī Ḫān Wālih (d. 1169/1756), known as Wālih Dāghistāni—his name implies a connection to Dagestan in the Caucasus but he was born in Isfahan—was deeply shaped by Ḥazīn although he had disclaimed his friendship with him by the time he had finished writing his *tażkirah Riyāż al-Shu‘arā* [The Garden of Poets, 1161/1748].⁹² While by then no longer associated with Ḥazīn, he was no friend to Ārzū (although his *tażkirah* entry on Ārzū is complimentary). He was associated with Faqīr and Wafā, who was probably by extension also Ārzū’s adversary. Another among Ḥazīn’s students was Mullā Bāqir Shahīd.⁹³

The most famous rivalry, which has attained the status of folklore in some circles, was between Ārzū and Ḥazīn personally. Ḥazīn’s circumstances are important for understanding both his social position as a poet and his demeanor. He had seen the Safavid establishment, of which he was a member (and which was the source of his wealth and prestige), utterly torn down by Nādir Shāh.⁹⁴ He arrived in Delhi a deeply frustrated man, having been chased around Iran and eventually having to leave his homeland altogether. He writes in his memoirs that an English

⁹¹ “*sunnat al-awwalin*” (MN 2004, 1:299).

⁹² This is a significant work because it was the first transregional *tażkirah* in over a century (Kia 2011, 218). With over 2,000 entries, it is on the scale of Ārzū’s own MN which would follow in a few years’ time.

⁹³ On Faqīr see Kia 2011, 228; on Shahīd see *Tażkirah-yi Mardum-i Didah* 1961, 167.

⁹⁴ See Kia 2009.

official had urged him to go to Europe instead of India, but he chose to continue on to India.⁹⁵ When he arrived in Sindh, he hoped he would not be recognized. He traveled through Sindh and Punjab before arriving in Delhi, where he stayed a little over a year before returning to Lahore. In 1738, with Nādir Shāh's troops massing in Peshawar, Ḥazīn fled with a troop of hired bodyguards via Sirhind to Delhi where, unfortunately for him, Nādir Shāh's troops headed next. In Delhi, he witnessed the fall of the city and the general massacre of its inhabitants. He wrote his memoirs there in 1742, feeling unwell and melancholy over the destruction of the Safavid dynasty and the life he had known. He presided over lavish poetic gatherings in Delhi, according to Dargāh Qulī Khān, but eventually retired to Benares where, according to Hākim, who met him twice there, he lived simply and wore a Sufi robe.⁹⁶ Why was Ḥazīn accorded the respect he received from so many people in India? Ārzū, who is obviously not a neutral party, gives us little notion in *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is*. Three possibilities are Ḥazīn’s spiritual authority (he is related to Shaikh ‘Alī Wahdat of Lahijan, for example), his connections with the erstwhile Safavid court, and his poetic lineage. The idea that he was popular in Delhi because he was an Iranian, and that Indian Persian users were desperate for an Iranian to sort out their failing Persian, falls well short of a satisfactory explanation.

How were the literary debates in Delhi of this period remembered? Āftāb Rāy, who wrote in the late nineteenth century and thus took for granted that Indo-Persian was inferior to Iranian Persian, declares that: “Whenever [Ārzū] made objections against Shaikh Ḥazīn, he was in the wrong. Envy is a calamity that makes a man blind.”⁹⁷ This is a statement of opinion more than fact from well over a century after the events, but it is nonetheless historically instructive. For Āftāb Rāy, no Indian Persian writer could stand up to a well-regarded Iranian. Some scholars have

⁹⁵ Ḥazīn’s own account of the journey (*Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* 1830, 251ff.; analysis at Kia 2011, 186ff.). It is fascinating that Āftāb Rāy’s *tażkirah Riyāz al-Ārifīn* [Garden of the Wise, 1883] makes Ḥazīn’s arrival in India sound accidental since it does not mention that he was basically driven out from his home (*Tażkirah-yi Riyāz al-Ārifīn* 1977, 1:188–9).

⁹⁶ *Muraqqa‘-i Dihlī* 1993, 80; *Tażkirah-yi Mardum-i Didah* 1961, 66.

⁹⁷ “*har chand dar bāb-i shaikh-i lahiji kih niwā-hā bar āwardah ammā yaksar khārij az āhang ast. hasad bad balā’i ast kih ādam rā kūr mī kunad*” (*Tażkirah-yi Riyāz al-Ārifīn* 1977, 8).

made the sensible case that Ḥazīn diluted Ārzū's prestige and that this was the main reason behind his hostility towards the rival master poet.⁹⁸ However, Ārzū's own case against Ḥazīn rested on real stylistic disagreements: Preferring the style of the so-called Ancients, Ḥazīn denigrated recent developments in poetry, positioning himself as able to adjudicate the difference in quality. By contrast, Ārzū supported contemporary poetic innovation as an extension of rather than a departure from the tradition, and accused Ḥazīn of inconsistency and capriciousness in his aesthetic judgments. The effects of this disagreement rippled outwards in Delhi's literary community. Qizilbāsh Ḫān Ummīd defended Ārzū when, according to Ārzū's telling, he received a barrage of criticism after releasing *Tanbih al-Ğāfilīn*.⁹⁹ Hākim, who had himself been at the receiving end of Ārzū's sharp jabs, merely writes that some of Ārzū's criticisms in *Tanbih al-Ğāfilīn* are unfair.¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, he quotes *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is*'s back-biting entry on Ḥazīn nearly in full.

This section considers the personal enmity between Ārzū and Ḥazīn so that we can reconstruct their substantive disagreements in Chapter 3. In *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is*, Ārzū offers no assessment of Ḥazīn's poetry, which is one of the most vicious things that the genteel standards of *tażkirah*-writing allowed one to do.¹⁰¹ Instead he concentrates on summarizing Ḥazīn's flight from Nādir Shāh. He practically rants that Ḥazīn had been an ungrateful guest in India after being welcomed (and provided for from the imperial treasury) and that his purpose in writing a particular treatise was to denigrate everyone there, "from the beggar to the king." Ārzū notes that while Ḥazīn was free with his criticism of India before, with the passing of time, he has accepted that there are consequences to insulting his hosts. Ārzū is wonderfully sarcastic on this point: "Thank God that now all the faults of India have turned into graces!"¹⁰² Ārzū continues by questioning whether Ḥazīn had actually written three *dīwāns* before the most recent, which he claimed as his fourth (the others

⁹⁸ Kia 2011, 208ff. ⁹⁹ MN 2004, 1:169–70.

¹⁰⁰ *Tażkirah-yi Mardum-i Didah* 1961, 66.

¹⁰¹ MN 2004, 1:379–80. Further analysis of the numerous ways in which Ārzū slights Ḥazīn in MN is Kia 2011, 196ff.

¹⁰² "ammā al-hamdu li-llāh kih alḥāl hamah-yi qabā'iḥ-i hind bah ḥasanāt badal shud" (MN 2004, 1:379).

having been lost in the bloodshed). He recounts the bitter rivalry between Mīr Muḥammad Afżal Ṣābit and Ḥazīn. Ḥazīn's apparent plagiarism was called to the attention of Delhi's poetic community by Ṣābit's son Muḥammad ‘Azīm Ṣabāt after Ṣābit's death in 1151/1738–9.¹⁰³ Ārzū defended both of them.¹⁰⁴ A strange incident when the poet Girāmī came to Ḥazīn with twenty raucous friends and left the Shaikh confused is also related by Ārzū in the entry on Girāmī.¹⁰⁵ These personal spats and how they are reported are our main source of knowledge about what Ḥazīn stood for: He was a prolific author of prose tracts but apparently not of literary criticism and whatever critical works he wrote (with the exception of a brief *tażkirah*) have probably been lost, making it difficult to reconstruct his aesthetic program.¹⁰⁶ Ḥazīn's prose works may have been difficult to obtain even during his

¹⁰³ Wālīh enters the fray—and demonstrates his complex relationship with his former friend—by quoting about half of the couplets to which Ṣabāt objected, as well as a large proportion of Ārzū's tract against Ḥazīn, *Tanbih al-Ğhāfilin* (*Tażkirah-yi Riyāz al-Shu'arā* 2005, 1:632ff.). After devoting pages to these attacks on Ḥazīn, he nonetheless avers that Ḥazīn is among the greatest poets of his time [*dar in juzw-i zamān sar-āmad-i sukhānwarān*]. In his entry on Ārzū (*Tażkirah-yi Riyāz al-Shu'arā* 2005, 1:347) he notes that Ārzū objected to 500 of Ḥazīn's couplets as “disjoined” [*nā-marbūṭ*], a fundamental violation of poetic norms.

¹⁰⁴ He also defends a poet called Rāsīkh, although against “Indian Persianists” who objected to a technical point in one of his couplets (*MN* 2005, 82).

¹⁰⁵ *MN* 2004, 3:1362–3. Ārzū describes Girāmī, the son of a Kashmiri nobleman, somewhat ambivalently as being “very far-seeking [i.e. creative?]; he is greatly [concerned] with making of new words and fresh meanings, even from a different language like *hindī* or ‘European’ [*firangi*]” and so open-minded, the proverbial “Sunni with a Sunni and a Shi'a with a Shi'a” (and, extending the saying, he is even “a Yogi with a Yogi, a Christian with a Christian, a Jew with a Jew, and a Hindu with a Hindu”), that he lacks his own “religion and sect.” Girāmī, several sources including Ārzū suggest, had a reputation for uncouth behavior and being indulged by hangers-on (personal communication with Nathan Tabor, October 2014). When Ḥazīn first arrived in Delhi, Girāmī went to see him with a group of some twenty students and friends, and started to recite. Or rather—here Ārzū appears to be telling the story from Ḥazīn's perspective—Girāmī “raised a clamor up to the dome of heaven in an uncouth accent.” Ḥazīn, we are told, could only sit in stunned silence. Mukhlīṣ also describes Girāmī and his father (*Mi'rāt al-Isṭilāh* 2013, 496–8).

¹⁰⁶ His *tażkirah*, *Tażkirat al-Mu'āśirin* [*Tażkirah* of (my) Contemporaries, 1165/1751], has been published as *Tażkirat al-Mu'āśirin* 1996 and *Tażkirah-yi Ḥazīn* 1955. It contains just a hundred entries and provides little in the way of literary criticism. The poets included are all Iranians and mostly from Isfahan, in stark contrast to the inclusive project of Ārzū's *MN* released the same year, which contains over 1,500 entries on poets from around the Persian cosmopolis. Mahdi Rahimpoor has identified and published a small tract by Ḥazīn in which he comments on 24 couplets from Khāqāñī's *qaṣīdahs* in response to Ārzū (Rahimpoor 2012, 241, 249–56). The arguments in that work are framed in ad hominem terms, namely that only ignorant people with poor Persian (read: Indians) would raise objections to Khāqāñī's verses. On Ḥazīn's prose works, which included tracts on horses [*farasnāmah*], theology, ethics, and so on, see Storey 1953, 1,2:845–7. Ḥazīn completed a treatise on administrative ethics, *Risālah-i*

lifetime. Such circumstances would explain why Ārzū reproaches him with the objection—seemingly irrelevant to judging his merit as a poet—that no work of Ḥazīn’s about philosophy or theology [*‘ilm-i hikmat wa kalām*] has come to Ārzū’s notice. The implication appears to be that Ārzū objected to having to take Ḥazīn’s reputation for scholarship on trust and wanted to judge for himself as to whether Ḥazīn’s work was actually up to the mark. The aesthetic conversation between the two major figures in Delhi is therefore one-sided, which is perhaps a reason for later scholars to have interpreted these debates more as personality clashes rather than disagreements over fundamental aesthetic questions. There is no treatise in which Ḥazīn lays out a case against Ārzū, and so we must reconstruct his objections. In contrast, Ārzū develops the case against Ḥazīn across several works, considered in Chapter 3 alongside the replies of Ḥazīn’s proxies.

A lack of extensive primary sources outside of Ārzū’s treatises makes it difficult to reconstruct how partisans of Ārzū and Ḥazīn advanced their arguments during the conflict or indeed how strongly they supported their contender. One such proxy for Ḥazīn is Siyālkotī Mal Wārastah. He lived in Lahore and Delhi, but the circumstances of his life are something of a mystery because he does not appear in many *tażkirahs*.¹⁰⁷ Wārastah wrote at least one work critical of Ārzū that is still extant. It is titled *Jawāb-i Shāfi* [The Categorical Answer], and is unusually specific about the circumstances of its composition: Wārastah wrote it after a visit in 1163/1750 from Ḥakīm Beg Khān, known poetically as Ḥakīm, who now lived in Delhi but was originally a fellow Lahori. Ḥakīm brought a copy of his *dīwān*, whose margins were filled with Ārzū’s criticisms. Wārastah tried to answer Ārzū’s objections by writing *Jawāb-i Shāfi* in defense of his friend.¹⁰⁸ But it is more complicated than that because Wārastah

Dastūr al-‘Uqalā [Essay on the Manners of the Wise], in Delhi in Rabī II 1153/June 1740. In noting the work’s place of composition, namely India, the colophon adds in Arabic “God save us from it” [*najānā-llāh minhā*] (British Library Delhi Persian ms 1207, 55b).

¹⁰⁷ The fullest account of Wārastah’s life is ‘Abdullah 1967, 139–62, which draws on *Gul-i Ra’nā* and other sources. Pellō notes that in his *Tażkirah-yi Bīnażīr* [The Unique *Tażkirah*] ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Iftikhār (d. 1190/1776) defends his own *ustād* [teacher] Āzād Bilgrāmī against Wārastah’s criticism by arguing that Hindus should not “imitate Muslims and get involved in the Islamic sciences” (Pellō 2014). This line of criticism is surprisingly rare, as far as I can tell.

¹⁰⁸ Browne 1896, 234. Based on the incipit, this is the same text I consulted at the Amiruddaulah Public Library in Lucknow under the title *Jawābat-i Itirāzāt-i Ārzū* [Replies

perhaps wrote a second work called *Rajm al-Shayāṭīn* [Stoning of the Devils], which is frequently cited as a response to *Tanbih al-Ğāfilin*, Ārzū's broadside against Ḥazīn.¹⁰⁹ The twentieth-century scholar Sayyid ‘Abdullah, however, has concluded that *Rajm al-Shayāṭīn* is the same work as *Jawāb-i Shāfi*.¹¹⁰ The identification of *Rajm al-Shayāṭīn* as a text written against *Tanbih al-Ğāfilin* is the strongest evidence that Wārastah was a partisan of Shaikh Ḥazīn—‘Abdullah makes precisely that claim with *Rajm al-Shayāṭīn* adduced as evidence but then four pages later observes that the *Rajm al-Shayāṭīn* does not in fact exist as a separate work! Since *Jawāb-i Shāfi* is a defense of Ḥākim (and not Ḥazīn) against Ārzū, the case that Wārastah was a vocal defender of Ḥazīn against Ārzū becomes more circumstantial.¹¹¹

It is beyond doubt, however, that Wārastah had a pro-Iranian orientation since Iranian informants are the key to his lexicographical project, *Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Shu’arā* [Idioms of the Poets]. In the preface, Wārastah describes his research technique: Whenever he could not understand a word or expression in his study of Persian poetry and could not find a satisfactory dictionary definition, he would “appeal to the idiom-knowers of the land of Iran.”¹¹² In other words, he would ask a Persian

to the Criticisms of Ārzū]. It is incorrectly attributed to Ḥākim himself (Muradabadi 2000, 8). The date for copying given by the catalogue, 1107 AH, appears to be a misprint for 1207 AH (= 1792 CE).

¹⁰⁹ There was a work known by the name *Rajm al-Shayāṭīn* extant in the early nineteenth century, but it is nowhere to be found in manuscript catalogues and has never been published. It is mentioned, for example, in an obscure *tazkirah* by Qāzī Muhammad Sādiq Akhtar called *Aftāb-i Ālamtāb* [The World-Inflaming Sun, 1269/1853]. The *tazkirah* is massive, describing some 4,000 poets, but the only known copy is held in a private collection in Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh. Although Akhtar appears to endorse an idea that is crucial in Arzu’s work, namely that Indians can show the same talent in literary Persian as Iranians, he sides with Wārastah in the particular context of Ḥazīn versus Ārzū. He calls *Rajm al-Shayāṭīn* “extremely good” [*bisyār khüb*] and states explicitly that it is a response to Arzu’s *Tanbih al-Ğāfilin* (Qasmi 2008, 355–8).

¹¹⁰ ‘Abdullah 1967, 145. Cyrus Shamisa concurs, but is concerned by the fact that the phrase “stoning the devils” does not appear in any manuscript of *Jawāb-i Shāfi* (Shamisa 2001, 30). The most accessible text of *Jawāb-i Shāfi* is Cambridge University ms Add 795, ff. 109–30. Remarkably, it is bound together with Ārzū’s dictionary *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*. It is also available in the Delhi Persian manuscript collection at the British Library (Delhi Persian 428g).

¹¹¹ Three other works by him, though not relevant to the present discussion, are worth mentioning: They are an anthology of couplets arranged by keyword (Sprenger 1854, 146), a selection of ornate prose compiled by him (Rieu 1879–83, 1006–7), and a treatise on rhetoric, which has been published (*Matla’ al-Sā’dain* 1880).

¹¹² “ruju’ bah muḥāwarah-dān-i īrān diyār” (*Muṣṭalaḥāt* 2001, 37).

speaker from Iran.¹¹³ This is certainly different from Ārzū's textually based approach, but it is not a matter of natural language—Wārastah's object is literary language, specifically, he says, that of the “*tāzah-go'iyān*.” Blochmann argues that this proves Wārastah lived in Iran for the fifteen years he says he was engaged in research, but such a conclusion ignores the fact that there were many Iranians in India whom he could have asked, and indeed there is no evidence he ever traveled.¹¹⁴ Wārastah's objectives were considerably different from those of Mukhlīs since when it came to gathering data, Mukhlīs was interested in documentary and social practices, while Wārastah was narrowly concerned with the poetic practices of certain people. In fact, Wārastah cites the authority of Iranian speakers [*muḥāwarah-dān-i īrān*] only when a word or phrase does not appear in one of the dictionaries he had at hand, and he still feels the need to provide poetic quotations for virtually every entry. This becomes problematic if we assume an unbridgeable gap between Iranian Persian and Indo-Persian. For example, he cites Ṭughrā several hundred times and although Ṭughrā was originally from Mashhad in Iran, his poetry is famously studded with Indic words. Indeed, Ārzū often cites him as evidence for how Indic words are used in Persian. Wārastah's attention to Indian-born Indo-Persian poets is slight, but he does quote from Ārzū, Ghānī Kashmīrī and Šābit. His extremely sparing use of Ārzū's works as a source was almost certainly intentional. The text refers to Ārzū only perhaps a dozen times (the published edition is nearly 800 pages), always as the “author of *Sirāj al-Lughat*” [ṣāḥib-i sirāj al-lughat], and demonstrates that Wārastah was familiar with several of Ārzū's works.¹¹⁵ There are a meager five references to *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, Ārzū's lexicon of recent words and expressions, the most relevant of his works for Wārastah's

¹¹³ The obvious term in our own context for such a person, namely a “native speaker” of Persian, is misleading in the pre-modern context (see Dudney 2017b).

¹¹⁴ Blochmann 1868, 30.

¹¹⁵ He cites *Sirāj-i Munīr* once (*Muṣṭalahāt* 2001, 139, headword “*bā kasī dast-o baḡhal raftan*”). There is an elliptical reference apparently to *Nawādir al-Alfāz* (discussed in Chapter 4), or rather a text he calls Ārzū's “essay of research into *hindī* words” [*risālah-yi taḥqīq-i luḡhāt-i hindī*] (*Muṣṭalahāt* 2001, 171, headword “*pazīrah*”). It is possible that he means another work, perhaps one now lost, since the relevant headword does not appear to be present in NA. There are two references to Ārzū's commentary on Sa'dī's *Gulistān*, KhG (*Muṣṭalahāt* 2001, 203 and 453, headwords “*pas kār nishāndān*” and “*rozgār asf*”).

project, and all but one of these are in the margins of the Lucknow manuscript used for the critical edition.¹¹⁶ While he was definitely not Ārzū’s friend, it is difficult to conclude more about his program from what we know, which is that he only used Iranian informants.

In Delhi’s literary circles, loyalties and lineages were crucial. However, this should not obscure the fact that there were aesthetic and philological issues at stake that were larger than individual disagreements. As we consider in the next section, Ārzū was particularly productive as a critic towards the end of his life.

Ārzū’s Works

Before considering the arguments developed over the course of Ārzū’s career, I must provide a sketch of his major works, focusing particularly on his critical rather than literary compositions. The list of critical works given in Ārzū’s entry on himself in *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is* in 1750–1 corresponds to nearly all of the extant titles (his treatise *Mušmir* is missing because it had not yet been written), but all of his poetry is listed unhelpfully as a “*kulliyāt*” [complete works].¹¹⁷ The list given in the preface to *‘Atīyah-yi Kubrā* [The Great Gift] provides a fuller account of his poetic output, but contains some ambiguities and entirely leaves out Ārzū’s lexicographical works.¹¹⁸ The most obvious explanation for this omission, namely that Ārzū had not completed his dictionaries before writing that text, is confounded by the fact that *‘Atīyah-yi Kubrā* references Wārastah’s *Mustalahāt al-Shu‘arā*, which is a comparatively late text (possibly completed in 1752) and in fact itself references Ārzū’s dictionary *Sirāj al-Lughat*. Textual interpolation was common, but it is a less than satisfying explanation in this case.

Ārzū’s surviving literary works are in a fragmentary state because there is no surviving *kulliyāt* in which they are all collected. Tracing his literary output is outside the scope of this study, but we know that he wrote *ghazals*, *rubā’is* [quatrains] and *māsnawīs* in Persian. The preface

¹¹⁶ *Mustalahāt* 2001, 42, 47, 69 [a longish quotation in the text], 132, 308.

¹¹⁷ MN 2004, 1:189.

¹¹⁸ AK 2002, 50.

to ‘Atīyah-yi Kubrā lists five *mašnawīs*.¹¹⁹ Of these the only one which has been traced and published is *Shor-i Ishq* [The Clamor of Love].¹²⁰ A *mašnawī* entitled *Mihr-o Māh* [The Moon and the Sun] is not mentioned elsewhere but Ārzū is noted as the author in the colophon.¹²¹ It is thought that he completed seven Persian *dīwāns*, some of which were later combined. All are rather rare.¹²² Whatever *rekhtah* poetry Ārzū may have written is in even greater doubt. Earlier sources, for example Shafiq (d. 1808) in his *Chamanistān-i Shu‘arā* [Garden of the Poets], believe there was a *rekhtah dīwān*.¹²³ By the late nineteenth century, the idea had taken hold that Ārzū never collected his vernacular work (e.g., as is claimed in *Āb-i Hayāt*). However, because no vernacular *dīwān* is available we only have *tažkirah* quotations, which do not appear to be particularly unusual or interesting.

We can divide Ārzū’s extant critical oeuvre into commentaries, dictionaries, and general critical works (including his *tažkirah*) before considering works of uncertain attribution in all categories.

Commentaries: These can be broadly divided into commentaries on the Ancients and on the Moderns. Three in the first category are a

¹¹⁹ Khwushgo mentions a *mašnawī* on the theme of Mahmūd and Ayāz responding to Zulālī called “*Husn-o Ishq*” [Love and Beauty] (however, this is apparently a mistake for “*Shor-i Ishq*”), a *Sāqināmah* called “*Ālam-i Āb*” [The Drinking Bout], an untitled *mašnawī*, another called “*Josh-o Kharosh*” [Fervent and Tumult], a then unfinished *mašnawī* in response to Šanā’ī, 25,000 couplets, a collection of *ruba’iyāt* [quatrains], *muḵhammasāt* [cinquains], *tarji‘-bands* [poetry based on refrains], chronograms, correspondence called *Payām-i Shauq* [Message of Desire], and other *mašnawīs* (*Safinah* 1959, 314–15). The prose works mentioned are miscellaneous prose, two essays on “*ma‘āni-o bayān*” (obviously ‘AK and M’U), *SL*, *KhG*, the *Sikandarnāmah* commentary and commentary on ‘Urfi’s *qaṣidahs*. Khwushgo mentions that Ārzū has accomplished all of this by age 47, which means that all of these works can be safely dated before 1735.

¹²⁰ Ansari 1940.

¹²¹ Raza Library Rampur mss. 4327f. and 4328f. Oddly, the cataloguer refers to the text as *Muhr-o Wafā* [Seal and Trust] even though the title is clearly written in the colophon (along with Ārzū as the author). There is also a copy in Manchester University’s John Rylands Library (Persian ms 620).

¹²² Some manuscripts include Aligarh Habib Ganj 47/77 (Razvi and Qaisar 1981, 207). Two in the Asiatic Society’s Curzon collection are identical to each other and apparently with the one noted by Sprenger, which was in imitation of Mirzā Shaffā Shirāzī who also used the pen-name Aśār (d. 1702) (no. PCC 295 and PCC 296; Ivanow 1926–8, 212–13; cf. Sprenger 1854, 337–8; Khuda Baksh Library 1970, 9:220). The only serious investigation of the *dīwāns* appears to have been carried out by S.M. Asghar of Aligarh Muslim University. I have not been able to review this work but some of his conclusions appear in Keshavmurthy 2012. Ārzū’s poetry appeared in various collections [*majmū‘āt*], such as one in Berlin (Pertsch 1888, 118) and another in Salar Jung ms 2359, which belonged to Tipū Sultān (Ashraf 1966–88, 6:131–4).

¹²³ *Chamanistān* 1928, 6.

commentary on Sa‘di’s *Gulistān* called *Khiyābān-i Gulistān* [Road to the *Gulistān*, 1708–9 revised 1738–9], another *Shikūfah-Zār* on Nizāmī’s *Sikandarnāmah*, and lastly *Sirāj-i Wahhāj* [The Blazing Lamp], a commentary on Ḥāfiẓ.¹²⁴ Works dealing with the Moderns are a direct contribution to the literary debates in Delhi after Ḥazīn’s arrival, while those on the Ancients are probably from earlier in Ārzū’s life and are somewhat more abstract. Commentaries on Modern writers include one on ‘Urfī’s *qaṣīdahs*,¹²⁵ *Sirāj-i Munir* [A Lamp for Munīr], *Dād-i Sukhan* [Justice in Poetry or A Gift of Poetry], and *Tanbih al-Ğāfilīn* [An Admonition to the Heedless]. These last three works are discussed at length in Chapter 3.

Lexicography: Ārzū’s Persian lexicographical project was in a sense itself a commentary. His *Sirāj al-Luğhat* [Lamp of Language, 1147/1734–5] was largely concerned with correcting the earlier dictionaries *Burhān-i Qāti‘* [The Decisive Proof, 1654] and *Farhang-i Rashidī* (1652). *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* [Lamp of Guidance] is often referred to as the second volume of *Sirāj al-Luğhat* (although it is only perhaps one-fifth the length),¹²⁶ but it has the different goal of elucidating the usage not of the Ancients but of the Moderns, namely words and phrases that do not

¹²⁴ The *Sikandarnāmah* commentary was published in the margins of the Bombay lithograph edition of the poem (1277/1860–1). Ārzū apparently wrote two different *Sikandarnāmah* commentaries, *Shikūfah-Zār* covering the first part of Nizāmī’s text and a second commentary (without a specific name) covering the second, but it seems likely that Ārzū considered them a single work. An edition of *Shikūfah-Zār*, based on the Aligarh Muslim University manuscript (no. 89165525), has been published (*Shikūfah-Zār* 2013). I thank Owen Cornwall for sending it to me. Other copies in manuscript are Raza Library, Rampur mss. 3965f. and 3985f.; National Archives of India (Fort William College collection no. 145) where it is given the alternative title *Shigūfah-yi Rāz* [Flowering of the Secret]; Hardayal Public Library, Delhi, no. 98; and Berlin, see Pertsch 1888, 752, 764–5. I have not been able to check whether these mss. cover only the first part of Nizāmī’s text (like the published edition of *Shikūfah-Zār*) or the full poem. *Khiyābān-i Gulistān* appears in a recent critical edition (KhG 1996) and is quite common in manuscript. Its start date is fixed by chronogram (1119 AH). *Sirāj-i Wahhāj* appears in Rampur ms 2452B, ff. 199b–207b, which was copied in 1236/1820–1 and contains a number of Ārzū’s works, and at Aligarh as ms University 3 Farsi 119.

¹²⁵ There are three mss. of this commentary in the British Library (Delhi Persian 1286A, 1286C, and 1286D). The Salar Jung Library (Hyderabad, India) copy (ms 1765; Ashraf 1966–88, 5:70–1), dated 1803, bears the seals of the ruling family of Awadh.

¹²⁶ The date of SL is fixed by chronogram [*yād būd sirāj al-din ‘ali khān*] and presumably since CH is often referred to as its second volume, CH was written sometime later. SL has never been printed but appears in a very readable ms copy at the British Library as India Office Islamic ms 1783 (= Éthé 2513). CH has been published since the nineteenth century in editions of *Ghiyāṣ al-Luğhat* (a “student’s dictionary,” completed in 1242/1826 by Muḥammad Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Rāmpūri). A modern edition is CH 1984.

appear in older dictionaries. As I argue in the following chapters, this attention to new usages and how they fit into a longer tradition is characteristic of Ārzū’s thought. A third work is *Nawādir al-Alfāz* [Wonders among Words, 1743], a dictionary of Indic words. Although it does not define itself as a dictionary of *hindī* but rather is a dictionary of Indic words used in a Persianate context—as we will consider in depth in Chapter 4—it might in fact be the oldest critical dictionary of *kharī boli hindī*, which is to say the vernacular usage of the Ganges-Yamuna plain that yielded both Modern Standard Hindi and Urdu.¹²⁷ Taken together, Ārzū’s lexicons represent an innovative and deliberate project of codifying an expansive Persian literary culture: In *Sirāj al-Luḡhat*, he reconsiders the oldest part of the New Persian poetic tradition with novel research techniques like the application of *tawāfuq al-lisānain* (the recognition that some Indic and Persian words are the same) and thus, in a sense, makes it new. In *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, he formalizes recent developments in the tradition and gives them a certain stature, including finding antecedents, thus making the new old. In *Nawādir al-Alfāz* he brings Indic languages into the discussion.

General critical works: Ārzū makes expansive claims of innovation in his philological works. ‘Atiyah-i Kubrā [The Great Gift], his work on *bayān* [clear discourse], an aspect of rhetoric, claims to be the first treatise in Persian to deal specifically with that subject.¹²⁸ *Mauhibat-i Uzmā* [The Great Gift], his work on *‘ilm-i ma‘āni*, which we can imperfectly translate as “semiotics,” does not make such a sweeping claim but seeks merely to “elevate” [*afrākhtan*] the subject.¹²⁹ As the titles suggest, the two are companion pieces (but were likely written a few years apart).¹³⁰ Ārzū’s critical magnum opus, *Muṣmir* [Fruitful], deals with “the science of the elements of language” [*‘ilm-i uṣūl-i luḡat*] and is

¹²⁷ NA has been published in a critical edition as NA 1951.

¹²⁸ ‘AK 2002, 50. Āzād Bilgrāmī agrees on its originality (*Sarw-i Āzād* 1913, 228).

¹²⁹ M’U 2002, 95.

¹³⁰ Lithographed together as early as 1832 (Storey 1953, vol. 1, pt. 2:836). The modern critical edition, edited by Cyrus Shamisa, is ‘AK/M’U 2002. As far as the dates, ‘AK was written before M’U (and probably before *TḠh* and *DS* since those would have certainly been mentioned in preface had they been written). The early 1740s is the likeliest date of composition. M’U refers to *Sirāj-i Wahhāj* (pp. 107, 128), ‘AK (p. 172), *KhG* (p. 181), and *TḠh* (p. 128). Mention of the last implies that M’U was written in the late 1740s.

the subject of Chapter 2. Although based on an Arabic model, it is, as it claims to be, the first text to apply those techniques to Persian and Indic languages. *Muṣmīr* was almost certainly Ārzū’s final work since it refers to every other of his extant critical texts, and is obviously the product of a long career of thinking about the nature of language and literature. It was possibly completed after he had left Delhi for Awadh, but there is no firm evidence for this. Ārzū’s *tażkirah*, *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is* is preserved in many collections in various fragmentary states.¹³¹ The last work mentioned in the catalogue of Ārzū’s oeuvre in *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is* is the text itself, namely a *tażkirah* of Ancient and Modern poets together, which if completed “by the grace of God” would contain some 40,000 couplets. That translates to several thousand entries (though many of them have little in the way of biographical information since the work was intended as a *safinah*—a selection of representative verses from different poets¹³²—and only later repurposed as a *tażkirah* with biographies). The most complete manuscript, that in the Khuda Bakhsh Library, includes listings for 1,835 poets. It is apparently the only one with so many, suggesting a process of revision (by Ārzū or one of his followers) that we cannot trace. *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is* draws extensively on an influential Safavid *tażkirah*, *Tażkirah-yi Naşrābādī* (completed 1091/1680),

¹³¹ Mahdi Rahimpoor argues that *MN* was started in 1129/1717, completed in 1164/1750–1, and expanded until 1167/1753–4 (Rahimpoor 2008a, 343). Sprenger’s catalogue mentions an edition with 1,419 entries and that a certain Mr. Hall had a good copy of the “second half” and another in album shape and abridged (1854, 132–4). The two latter mss. made their way to the India Office Library (Ethé 1903, 351–2). The ms in the Salar Jung Library also purports to be complete (Ashraf 1966–88, 2:157–8). The Bodleian ms (Elliott 399) is written illegibly, but its table of contents suggests that it contains around 1,400 poets (the catalogue gives precisely 1,419 but apparently on Sprenger’s authority rather than an actual count, Sachau and Ethé 1889, 255). On the mss. see Storey 1953, vol. 1, pt. 2:834–40. A complete or nearly complete three-volume critical edition (on the basis of three Pakistani mss. and the Khuda Bakhsh ms) has recently been published in Islamabad (*MN* 2004). The recent Tehran edition (*MN* 2005) is just a recompilation of Abid Reza Bidar’s 1970 edition, including his mistakes. Bidar’s edition is a selection of 109 poets out of 1,835 in the Khuda Bakhsh ms. His selection criteria were that the poets were Ārzū’s contemporaries (that is, belonging to the twelfth-century AH) and that some particulars of their lives were given.

¹³² A *safinah* appears to be more curated than a *bayāz* (a notebook used for recording interesting poetry at *mushā’irahs*), but it does not, as we can infer from Ārzū’s preface to *MN*, include a complete set of biographical data on the poets as a *tażkirah* often does. However, the fact that *Safinah-yi Khyushgo*, a very biographically complete *tażkirah*, carries the title it does undercuts this definition.

for information about earlier poets.¹³³ The influence of *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is* in the eighteenth century is demonstrated by the fact that ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm Ḥākim (who had fallen out with Ārzū) quoted it extensively when he prepared his own *Tažkirah-yi Mardum-i Dīdah* [*Tažkirah* of People (I Have) Seen, 1761].¹³⁴ The list of works in ‘Atīyah-yi Kubrā mentions “other prefaces” among Ārzū’s works—we know of his prefaces to *Safinah-yi Khwushgo* and Muḥkliš’s *Mir’āt al-İstilāh* but he no doubt contributed introductions to a number of his students’ *dīwāns*.

Non-extant works and works of uncertain attribution: ‘Atīyah-yi Kubrā mentions five works that cannot be traced beyond the simple descriptions given. These are *Risālah-yi Ādāb-i Ishq* [Essay on the Art of Love] described as “on research in the manners [ādāb] of love,” *Miŷār al-Afkār* [The Touchstone of Thoughts] “on the rules of conjugation and syntax of Persian,” *Payām-i Shauq* [Message of Desire] “in answer to the letters of the dear/excellent” (in other words, a collection of correspondence), *Gulzār-i Khiyāl* [Rose-Garden of Thought] describing the Indian festival of Holi, and *Ābrū-yi Suķhan* [Chief of Speech, or Honored in Speech] “in description of tanks, fountains, fruits, and vines.” There are a few manuscript texts that cataloguers have attributed to Ārzū for which there is no confirmation of his authorship: For example, *Zawā‘id al-Fawā‘id* [Increases in Useful Things], a dictionary of Persian infinitives [*maṣādir*] and abstract nouns [*mushtaqqāt*] derived from them, appears in the same manuscripts as other works by Ārzū but no author is attributed in its introduction.¹³⁵ There is also a dictionary of Sufi terms at Princeton University’s Rare Books and Manuscripts Library purporting

¹³³ Ārzū quotes *Tažkirah-yi Naṣrābādī* where relevant and sometimes provides commentary on Naṣrābādī’s information. *Tažkirah-yi Naṣrābādī* itself absorbed material from two other important seventeenth-century *tažkirahs* but unlike Ārzū’s work does not acknowledge them as sources in the text (Fotoohi 2011).

¹³⁴ The title is a play on words since it could also be translated as the *Tažkirah of the Pupil of the Eye*. Ḥākim’s text has eighteen entries with quotations directly from *MN* (with a further forty-eight in which no quotation from *MN* is present).

¹³⁵ For example, Raza Library (Rampur) ms 2520f., which is written in thick illegible *shikastah*, contains *Zawā‘id al Fawā‘id* and *Mušmir* together. Another copy appears in the Asiatic Society of Bengal’s Curzon Collection in a *majmū‘ah* [miscellany] containing three works by Ārzū, *Zawā‘id al Fawā‘id* possibly by Ārzū, and works by eleven other authors (no 969, see Ivanow 1926–8, suppl. 2:27–30). Lastly, another *majmū‘ah* in Iran contains *Mušmir*, *Zawā‘id al Fawā‘id*, *Dād-i Sukhan*, a tract by Ḥażin on Khāqāni’s *qaṣīdahs* and Wārastah’s *Jawāb-i Shāfi* (Rahimpoor 2012, 243). Rahimpoor reports that there are scattered references to

to be by Ārzū.¹³⁶ Likewise, a versified Persian grammar at the Asiatic Society of Bengal is attributed to him.¹³⁷ However, Sirāj al-Dīn was hardly an uncommon name, and there are several people with whom Ārzū is easily confused.¹³⁸ Lastly, *Ihqāq al-Haqq* [Administering Justice, or Establishing the Truth], another text criticizing Ḥazīn, is not mentioned in either of Ārzū's lists of his own works, but the mid-nineteenth-century scholar Imām Bak̄hsh Ṣahbā'ī wrote a reply to a text of Ārzū's that he cited by that name.¹³⁹

Ārzū is now relatively well published and the major texts in his philological oeuvre (with the exception of *Sirāj al-Lughāt*) have been

Ārzū's other works in the first person (e.g., “as I wrote in *Dād-i Sukhan*”) in this manuscript (Rahimpoor 2012, 215). Such references are reasonably strong evidence of Ārzū's authorship but it is not impossible to imagine them as interpolations. Because a text under the title *Zawā'id al Fawā'id* is also attributed to ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ Hānsawī, it is possible that authorship has been wrongly assigned to Ārzū. However, there might in fact be two works in the same relationship as another pair of works by ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ and Ārzū: Since Ārzū's NA is often catalogued as *Āghārā'ib al-Lughāt*, the title of ‘Abd al-Wāsi’s work that he revised and expanded into NA, it is possible that Arzū actually wrote a *Zawā'id al Fawā'id* revising a text by ‘Abd al-Wāsi’. This is Rahimpoor's preferred conclusion.

¹³⁶ Islamic Manuscripts, Third Series no. 771. It is the second work bound in the codex (of four total) and the title is given as “*Intikhab-i Ba'zi Iṣṭilāhāt-i Ṣufiyah*” [A Selection of Several Sufi Expressions]. The text gives the attribution “Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Khān” and someone (in this case Charles Rieu of the British Library) has assumed this to be Ārzū. There is no incontrovertible evidence for or against attributing this work to Ārzū. The inside cover reads “Presented to Samuel Bochart, the celebrated traveller and linguist 22nd July MDCXLVIII (1648) by Ch Tarravins,” but this perhaps only applies to the first text contained in the codex, which is described as “Fragment of a treatise on Hindi dramas or ballets.” It is more interesting than the dictionary of Sufi expressions since what is being described is not theater as such but apparently *rāsa-lilā* [Krishna’s dance with the cowherdesses]. It uses Indic terms; for example, *gopī* [cowherdess] is glossed as “the beloveds of Krishna” [*mahbūb-hā-yi kānhah*]. Assuming that the seventeenth-century date applies to this text, it is probably among the earliest examples of a European scholar’s engagement with Hinduism. (Bochart, who lived from 1599 to 1657, was a French Protestant philologist and Bible scholar.)

¹³⁷ Ivanov 1926–8, 387–8. The colophon calls the work Ārzū’s but the ms is incomplete so it is difficult to judge the correctness of this statement.

¹³⁸ For example, Sirāj al-Dīn Ḥusainī Aurangābādī (fl. 1169/1755) used the *takhallus* Sirāj. He lived around the same time as Ārzū, and like Ārzū was a literary scholar—for example, compiling selections from some 680 poets—and a poet in *rekhtah* (Sprenger 1854, 148–51). Another poet with whom Ārzū is accidentally conflated is Sirāj al-Dīn Sirājī Khurāsānī (d. 1254). This is somewhat surprising since he lived five centuries before Ārzū and indeed his *dīwān* appears to be the oldest extant *dīwān* of any Indo-Persian poet (Ahmad 1972). Another Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Khān was from Mohan near Lucknow and used the *takhallus* Müjīd. He was appointed *munshi* to the Supreme Court in Calcutta and was a poet there (Sprenger 1854, 171; Rizvi 1986, 2:233–4).

¹³⁹ Rahimpoor 2008a, 345. Some scholars do not believe that Ārzū was the author of *Ihqāq al-Haqq* (Khatoon 2004a, 96). On other works that have been attributed to Ārzū but for which there is not good evidence, see Keshavmurthy 2012.

made available. Still, a number of his titles do not apparently survive even in manuscript (some of these may eventually turn up in the archives, but we are unlikely to find anything truly surprising). Although recent decades have seen a growing number of Ārzū's works enter publication, it is striking that more of his works were not published earlier given the respect he commanded during his lifetime. The most influential of his works still only in manuscript form is probably *Sirāj al-Luğhat*, which appears in virtually every major Persian manuscript collection. In terms of published works, the ones that were lithographed in the nineteenth century are *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, *Khiyābān-i Gulistān*, the *Sikandarnāmah* commentary, and *'Aṭiyah-i Kubrā* and *Mauhibat-i 'Uzma*. It was only in the late twentieth century that the most important philological works, including *Muṣmir*, were published. We now have the opportunity to re-evaluate Ārzū with access to a much wider range of his writing.

Conclusion

This chapter located Ārzū within his overlapping networks of friends, students, and teachers, and in relationship to rival poetic networks. Although the complexity of interpersonal relations in this elite community is unsurprising, it is important that we understand these relationships as a basis for analysis of the substance of the debates to be discussed subsequently. Ārzū began his life well positioned for a central role in the literary society of his time because of his Sufi inheritance, his education in Agra, and his youthful service under Prince A'ẓam Shāh. Once he reached Delhi, became Khwushgo's friend, and entered Bedil's circle, he had the resources he needed to become a popular and influential teacher. Thus, he consolidated the networks of both Bedil and Sarkhwush around himself. Arguably it was the particularly acrimonious debate over aesthetics after the arrival of Shaikh Ḥazīn that pushed him from the safety of commentaries on the classics to the reappraisal of the role of poetic authority—and of the nature of poetic language—that characterized his later works. While later critics have concentrated on the personality politics of Persianate aesthetic bickering, with Ḥazīn playing the role of arrogant but ultimately justified Iranian exile and Ārzū that of the jealous

Indian epigone, it is important to see the substantive disagreements between them as well as the way in which they represented alternative networks of poetic authority. Ārzū's circle, as reflected in his *Majma' al-Nafā'is*, was broad, and while many Indians flocked to Ḥazīn, his own *tażkirah* necessarily represents his community as exclusively Iranian because it was a project to recover the Safavid cultural legacy.

2

Ārzū’s Fruitful Theory of Language

Ārzū frames the subject of *Muṣmir*, the text discussed at length in this chapter, as an account of “*ilm-i uṣūl-i luḡat*” or “the science of the elements of language,” which we can translate more simply as “philology.”¹ Ārzū drew upon centuries of Arabic and Persian scholarship to build a philology that was anchored in this tradition with its various grammatical, rhetorical, and historical sub-fields but far exceeded his sources in considering multilingualism and other contemporary topics. *Muṣmir* represents arguably the most sophisticated early modern theory of language in Persian. Unlike linguists of today, however, Ārzū was concerned primarily with literary language and engaged with non-literary language only insofar as it potentially influenced the former. The logic of Ārzū’s philology also contains within it an aesthetic program—the creation of good poetry—that is foreign to modern linguistics, which attempts not to correct usages but merely to record them as they are. Reconstructing Ārzū’s thought through *Muṣmir* provides insights into a Mughal-era conceptualization of language that is both familiar to and radically different from our own understanding. I argue that a hallmark of the intellectual practices of the global early modern period was reverence for tradition, particularly for traditional categories in knowledge systems, combined with the repurposing of such categories, sometimes radically transforming them. *Muṣmir* is heavily invested in a philological tradition that stretches back a millennium, but it vastly extends the possibilities of that tradition: It is thus a paradigmatic early

¹ M 1. The editor of *Muṣmir* has taken great pains to trace many of the references in the text, including passages quoted directly from other sources, notably *al-Muzhir* and *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*. However, the text is written out in her own handwriting and poorly photocopied, making it difficult to read. Its publication in 1991 came before computer typesetting was available in Pakistan, and the publisher did not hire a professional scribe to prepare a fair copy for reproduction. Furthermore, manuscript material that came to light towards the end of the project was simply appended (again in poor-quality photocopy).

modern text. It also represents the zenith of Ārzū's own development as a scholar.

Little can be ascertained about the history of the work itself. It is undated, but since it makes reference to nearly every one of Ārzū's other extant critical works, we can surmise that it was compiled at the very end of his life, perhaps during the brief period when he lived in Lucknow before his death in early 1756.² In contrast to Ārzū's practice in other critical writing, he appears to cite no contemporary scholars in *Mušmir* (although he quotes couplets by many recent poets, including Shaikh Hazīn, as evidence). The text seems to be unique in the Persian tradition in that it is structured on an Arabic philological treatise that was never—as far as I can tell—used as a model by anyone else writing in Persian.³ The work in question is Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's *al-Muzhir fī 'Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā'iḥā* [The Luminous Work Concerning the

² The extant manuscripts of *Mušmir* are not helpful for dating the work. The published edition is based on two manuscripts at Aligarh Muslim University and one at the Raza Library (Rampur). None of the three is complete. At Aligarh: Munir 'Ālam Collection 3/21 is 336ff. long at fifteen lines per page and was copied in 1271/1854. University Collection Persian *lughāt* 22 is 126ff. long with an average of twenty-six lines per page and is undated. It is written in a poor *shikastah* in thick, illegible pen. At Rampur: Raza Library ms 2520f. contains *Mušmir* together with *Zawā'id al-Fawā'id* [Increases in Useful Things], a lexicon of Persian verbs and nouns derived from them that is attributed to Ārzū (see Chapter 1). The manuscript consists of 94ff. of which approximately two-thirds are *Mušmir*. It is written in *shikastah* and undated. A second *Mušmir* manuscript at Rampur has come to light, namely 2620f. The text is a brief fragment (corresponding to the first forty or fifty pages of the printed version, with some omissions and interpolations) and is written in an elegant *nasta'liq*. Some 150 blank pages follow the text so we can assume that a calligrapher was engaged to transform the other copy into something more pleasant to read but the task was never finished. There is a manuscript in the Curzon Collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (PCC 550), which is in poor condition and lacks a colophon (Ivanow 1926–8, 387). Among the manuscripts I was unable to consult are the copy in the Zakir Husain Library of Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi), which is no. 1339 [C125/1] (Iran Culture House 1999, 329–30), and in the Punjab University Library (Lahore, Pakistan), no. AP1-2-15, a portion of which has been appended to the published edition in facsimile. There appear only to be two manuscripts in any collection outside of South Asia and both of these are in Iran: One is in the Tehran University Library (Persian ms 4755), according to the union catalogue of Persian manuscripts in Iran (Dirayati 2010, 8:1272). The other appears to be in the Astan Quds Razavi Library in Mashhad in an anthology containing two works by Ārzū, one almost certainly by him (*Zawā'id al-Fawā'id*), and one each by two of his rivals (Hazīn and Wārastah) that was copied in 1246/1830 (Rahimpoor 2012, 248). Rahimpoor consulted the manuscript as a microfilm (no. 18631) and provides no details about the original, such as whether it is actually held in the same collection.

³ The work, *Al-Muzhir*, came to at least one other Indian scholar's attention in the nineteenth century. Nawāb Ṣiddiq Ḥasan Khān of Bhopal (1832–1890) prepared an Arabic treatise based upon it called *Al-Bulḡha fī Usūl al-Lughah* [A Sufficiency in the Elements of Philology], about which see Haywood 1956. The work was published in Istanbul in 1296/1879 at the Jawa'ib

Sciences of Language and Its Subfields].⁴ Ārzū's title *Muṣmir*, meaning "fruitful" in Arabic, is meant to echo "*muzhir*" [luminous], and Ārzū explicitly acknowledges his debt to al-Suyūṭī in the preface and implicitly through the text's structure. Indeed, al-Suyūṭī claims to be the inventor of '*ilm-i uṣūl-i luḡat*', the same term that Ārzū uses and which I am translating as philology.⁵ *Muṣmir* departs extensively from al-Suyūṭī's model but the fundamental questions concerning (what we would call) semiotics, phonetics, and morphology are mostly engagements with *al-Muzhir*. Ārzū's key contribution in these sections is to bring Indic language into the discussion and presumably to make the Arabic tradition better known to Persian-using Indians, many of whom lacked a strong grounding in Arabic. A particularly important achievement for Ārzū, as he himself notes, was to be the first scholar writing in Persian to invoke al-Suyūṭī's concept of *tawāfuq al-lisānain* [correspondence of languages], which is a rigorous way of thinking about how the same words can appear in two or more languages. It is likely that Ārzū chose *al-Muzhir* as his model precisely because its broad scope, as compared to other philological or rhetorical treatises, allowed him to make so many interventions.

Al-Muzhir's author, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (849–911 AH/1445–1505 CE), was a Cairene polymath thought by modern scholars to be "the most prolific author in the whole of Islamic literature"; his corpus has been estimated to include nearly 1,000 works.⁶ Like many intellectuals in

Press by Ahmad Farīs Shidyaq, an important figure in the Nahda (the late nineteenth-century Arab "Renaissance" movement). The work is a remarkable artifact of cosmopolitanism since the first half is largely an abridgement of *Al-Muzhir* and the second half is a bibliography of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and *hindī* dictionaries and philological works. It does not appear to engage with Ārzū's scholarship in any way, but it does praise the Indian languages Persian and Urdu (Haywood 1956, 172). I thank Professor Barbara Metcalf for pointing me to *Al-Bulḡha*.

⁴ *Al-Muzhir* 1998. A Polish scholar has translated the first chapter (Czapkiewicz 1989) but the non-native English presents an obstacle to interpretation. That *al-Muzhir* remained important and even came to the notice of Europeans is proved by the preface to E. W. Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon* (1863), which notes that *al-Muzhir* is "a compilation of the utmost value to students in general, and more especially to lexicographers."

⁵ "I have originated the science of the principles of language [*uṣūl-i luḡat*] and its study, and nobody has preceded me in this. It follows the same lines as Prophetic tradition and principles of jurisprudence" (quoted in Sartain 1975, 70).

⁶ Geoffroy 2002.

the Arab world in this period, he was of Persian descent.⁷ His father's family had settled in Baghdad and later the Upper Egyptian town of Asyūṭ (the origin of his name). Like his father, he became a well-known jurist in the Shāfi‘ī legal school and his works were read across the Islamic world, including in South Asia.⁸ His juridical training and reputation matter a great deal because the study of the philosophy of language in an Islamicate context was intimately connected with the techniques for research in Islamic law [*fiqh*.]⁹ *Al-Muzhir*, like *Muṣmir*, is most likely the author's swan-song—the evidence being that it is not mentioned in his autobiography—and so is the product of a lifetime of study.¹⁰ Al-Suyūṭī's career was a high-water mark for Arabic scholarship, but his polymath endeavors are also a reflection of philology's interdisciplinarity.¹¹ *Al-Muzhir* is actually structured as a compilation of other people's opinions, which al-Suyūṭī adjudicates (or in some cases, such as in the divine or conventional nature of language, he takes no personal position). This commentarial structure in which an explication of previous scholars' views is followed by the author's own interpretation is precisely the pattern that Ārzū adopts in those sections of *Muṣmir* derived from al-Suyūṭī. While the subject of *al-Muzhir* is a specifically Arabic philology, al-Suyūṭī nonetheless uses Persian examples when appropriate. For example, in order to establish that multiple words exist for the same concept, he points out that “*mard*” [man] and “*sar*” [head] in Persian have the same meaning as Arabic “*insān*” and “*rā’s*.¹² Ārzū builds on al-Suyūṭī's awareness of Persian to generalize his theories into a framework that addresses primarily Persian but also has Indic language as an integral component. Ārzu's ambition to

⁷ On his father's side. His mother was supposedly a Circassian slave who gave birth to him in a library, which led to his receiving the odd nickname Ibn al-Kutub [son of the books] (Geoffroy 2002). Ibn Khaldūn (732–808/1332–1406), a Maghrebian scholar who lived a couple of generations before al-Suyūṭī, noted that most great Muslim intellectuals, both religious scholars and otherwise, were not Arabs (*Muqaddimah* 2005, 428).

⁸ Sartain 1975, 40, 48.

⁹ The grammarian al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) was the first to apply the word “*qānūn*” [law] to grammar, probably under some Hellenistic influence since the Arabic word is derived from Greek *kanōn* (Versteegh 1980, 21–2).

¹⁰ Sartain 1975, 107. His other important works on language are *al-Iqtirāḥ fi ‘Ilm Uṣūl al-Naḥw* [Impromptu Account of the Science of the Rules of Grammar] and *al-Ashbāh wa’l-Naẓā’ir fil-Naḥw* [Resemblances and Similarities in Grammar] (Balhan 2001, 12). On al-Suyūṭī as a legal thinker, see Hernandez 2017.

¹¹ Loucel 1963–4, 58; cf. Cantarino 1975, 1.

¹² Czapkiewicz 1989, 48.

create a general theory of language is striking and ripples throughout his works.

This chapter begins where the text begins, namely by addressing some fundamental questions about the origins and extent of Persian literary culture. It continues with Ārzū’s account of what we would call morphology and phonetics, which are concerned with sound changes within words: Which of these changes are meaningful and which are incidental? Can people who speak local varieties of Persian be considered experts of the language? The next section considers the connections between languages, of which the concept *tawāfuq al-lisānain* [correspondence of languages] is crucial and has been of most interest to scholars. The discussion concludes with a brief account of semiotics and particularly of figurative language, important topics in a number of *Muṣmīr*’s chapters. These themes too demonstrate Ārzū’s interest in how meanings may have changed over time.

The Fruit of the Fruitful Tree

Ārzū’s *Muṣmīr* is self-evidently an important work, but its place in the Persian intellectual tradition has not been settled. Although scholars have recently become more interested in the text, much scholarship has focused exclusively on its explication of *tawāfuq al-lisānain* (a concept that explains how words in different languages are related), which is often invoked as a totem of Indo-Persian scholarly achievement that can call into question Orientalist assumptions that the Persian literary and critical tradition was moribund by the time Europeans encountered it. However, *tawāfuq* is addressed in only a small part of the text—albeit one that Ārzū himself flags as important—and there is considerably more to *Muṣmīr*. The various philological questions explored in the text from the broad to the more abstruse are relevant to other literary and social questions, and are worth considering if we are to have a complete picture of early modern Indo-Persian views on language. *Muṣmīr* has never received a lengthy treatment in any European language except in the published edition’s English introduction and a one-off article in Italian. Scholars have written about it in Urdu and Persian, though not, so far as I have been able to

discern, comprehensively.¹³ Many scholars have leaned on others' opinions that *Muṣmir* is historically significant, rather than themselves engaging with the text, its ideas, or its intellectual genealogy in the tradition of Arabic philology.

A Brief History of Arabic Philology

In the same way that the explication of law in Islam was viewed as a rigorous science, philology followed precise rules often derived from methods of legal enquiry. The formulae “*tahqīq ān ast*” and “*dar tahqīq pāiwast*” appear scores of times in *Muṣmir* to introduce a definitive argument. Both mean more or less “the truth as established through research.” This is not literary interpretation as we typically think of it; its rules and norms are unfamiliar to modern English readers both in content and in rigor.¹⁴ Islamicate philology considers discourse primarily on two levels, that of the utterance [*lafz*], which covers what we would call phonetics and morphology, and of its meanings [*ma’āni*], either in the abstract or as part of a syntactic unit (a literary trope or a sentence).¹⁵ Discourse in its broadest sense (utterances intended to produce a meaning) is known as *kalām*.¹⁶ A similar term, *bayān*, literally means “clear

¹³ The most comprehensive treatment in Persian appears to be Mahdi Rahimpoor's *Bar Khyān-i Ārzū* (In Praise of Ārzū), a collection of essays in which two chapters deal exclusively with *Muṣmir* (Rahimpoor 2012, 109–28, 129–40). The editor's introduction in *M* 1991 (in English) helpfully—if sometimes misleadingly—summarizes the contents of each chapter. The Italian article Pellò 2004 is narrowly focused on the question of *tawāfiq* and related topics in *M*'s chapters 28, 29, and 32. On *Muṣmir* generally, see *passim* Alam 2003, 175 and Kinra 2011, 374. *Muṣmir*'s editor's biography of Ārzū (in Urdu) contains a lengthy analysis of the text (Khatoon 1987, 129–39, 157ff.). See also Husain 1940.

¹⁴ Recent work that has considered representation in Rajput and Mughal painting as a formal system—with the previously all-too-common subtext that formalization presupposes a lack of creativity—has been illuminating (Aitken 2010; Minissale 2006). From the disciplinary perspective of comparative literature, a now slightly dated but evocative discussion of “literature as system” is Guillén 1971.

¹⁵ For the Arabic grammarians, “*lafz*” or “*qaul*” is seen as merely a string of sounds in contrast to “*kalām*” [meaningful utterance] (Cantarino 1975, 46; Versteegh 1993, 100). The present chapter skips over the crucial distinction in Islamicate poetics between ‘*ilm-i lafzī*’ [the science of wording] and ‘*ilm-i ma’awī*’ [the science of (making) meaning], which are typically considered subsets of ‘*ilm al-bādī*’ (see Windfuhr 1974, 335–6).

¹⁶ Poetry and prose are considered not separate kinds of expression but as two different aspects of “*kalām*,” which is to say that poetry = prose + meter (Grunebaum 1981, 2:336).

speech,” although it too is often translated as “discourse.” The philological sub-discipline known as the science of discourse [*‘ilm al-bayān*] has generally been framed as the study of speech acts, that is, whether the implication of an utterance in fact corresponds to the situation it is attempting to describe.¹⁷ Both *bayān* and *ma‘āni* were seen by rhetoricians as falling under a broader category of *balāghah* (often translated as “rhetoric”), which is distinguished from the focus on form in morphology [*sarf*] or syntax [*nahw*].¹⁸

The application of this philological framework to secular literature and by extension to natural language is a departure from its original function, which was qur’anic exegesis. Traditional Arabic philology had just two acceptable sources for data—pre-Islamic poetry and the Qur’ān itself. *Hadīs* (the sayings and recorded practice of the Prophet of Islam) was almost unanimously considered to be unusable as linguistic data by classical Arabic philologists.¹⁹ There is a stark contrast between this narrowly focused study of language and philology as it was practiced in Ārzū’s time. However, philology continued to be guided by its origins in *hadīs* scholarship because the use of poetic quotations as examples of permitted usage, known as *asnād* (sg. *sanad*), is derived from the concept of a chain of transmission in *hadīs* scholarship.²⁰ Within the philological tradition (no less than for *hadīs* scholars), it is crucial to be able to show that a competent person was the originator of a particular usage (or practice). A second important philological technique derived from religious scholarship is that of *qiyās* (usually translated as “analogy”).²¹ In

¹⁷ Versteegh 1997, 124. Of course, in this context “speech acts” refers not to spoken communication but to literature. In that sense *‘ilm-i bayān* is the study of metaphorical language.

¹⁸ See Baabaki 1983. The term *sarf* is commonly translated as “morphology” while *nahw* refers to grammar generally or in the narrow sense of syntax (on *nahw* see Troupeau 2012). *Sarf* and *nahw* have been used in overlapping senses by different authors so drawing a clear, universal distinction between them is not possible.

¹⁹ Suleiman 1999, 16–17. ²⁰ Al-Suyūṭī says as much (Loucel 1963–4, 69).

²¹ See Versteegh 1997, 47; Versteegh 1980. Its complexity as a legal term is clear from Kholeif 1966, 150ff. Sibawayh’s (fl. late eighth century CE) use of it implies that for him it was a term without a settled meaning. In philology, *qiyās* is “based on drawing inferences about similar accidental grammatical effects exhibited by divergent structures” (Marogy 2010, 27). Sibawayh is probably responsible for transforming *qiyās*: In the early days it was a productive tool of grammar (that is, a way of creating forms of words that are not attested in the sources) and indeed even a basis for correcting the forms of words of the Qur’ān, but after Sibawayh it became purely descriptive (Versteegh 1993, 37–9).

legal reasoning, *qiyās* is the process of determining whether a rule defined with regards to a particular situation also applies in another situation, such as the famous debate as to whether the Qur'ān's prohibition on wine [*khamr*] applies to other intoxicants, such as date-wine [*nabīz*]. In philology, *qiyās* is the means by which the rules of language, specifically the patterns of words, are established on the basis of other word patterns. Al-Suyūtī defines grammar as "nothing but analogy [*qiyās*] which is to be followed."²² This analogical concept of language is also the basis for Ārzū's understanding.

Al-Muzhir draws from several different strands of Arabic linguistic and aesthetic thought. Although untangling this interwoven intellectual tradition is outside the scope of this chapter, there are a few key developments that are important for understanding *Al-Muzhir* and hence *Mušmir*.²³ The tradition of grammar proper that crystallized in the late ninth-century grammarian Sibawayh's *Kitāb* [lit. Book] was the first attempt at systematizing Arabic grammar. It was so influential that it was widely quoted into early modern times.²⁴ Although Sibawayh was from a Persian-speaking background, he settled in Basra (present-day Iraq) and was later regarded as an important link in the transmission of the work of the Basran school of Arabic philological thought. An important turn in philology came when the Persian scholar Al-Jurjānī (d. 1078) criticized Sibawayh for concentrating solely on word forms and instead took the study of language in a more rhetorical direction (i.e., towards *balāghah*). He in turn influenced the Khwarazmian scholar Sakkākī (d. 1229) who divided up philology (which he called *'ilm al-adab*) into two grammatical disciplines, *'ilm al-ṣarf* and *'ilm al-nahw*, and two rhetorical disciplines, *'ilm al-ma'āni* and *'ilm al-bayān*.²⁵ His formulation of *bayān* was particularly innovative. Lastly, lexicography (*'ilm al-luḡah*) was exceptionally important since dictionaries are frequently

²² "innamā al-nahw qiyās yuttaba'" (translated in Suleiman 1999, 25ff.). The Arabic philologists Ibn Fāris (tenth century) and Al-Sa'labi (eleventh century) referred to the study of language as "law" [*fīqh*] (Haywood 1960, 100).

²³ Versteegh 1997 is a comprehensive account of the Arabic grammatical tradition.

²⁴ See Versteegh 1997, ch. 3.

²⁵ Versteegh 1997, 123–4. *Al-Muzhir* appears uninfluenced by *'ilm al-bādi'*, the study of rhetorical devices that is usually considered the third sub-category of rhetoric.

quoted.²⁶ These developments in the tradition set the parameters in which al-Suyūṭī in the fifteenth century and Ārzū in the eighteenth century added their own understanding of language to the existing science of philology.

The History of Persian Literary Culture as Described in *Muṣmir*

Muṣmir begins with a historical analysis derived from *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* [Dictionary for Jahāngīr, 1608] and *Dabistān-i Maẓāhib* [School of Religions, mid-seventeenth century], along with some significant interventions by Ārzū. It seeks to establish where the name “Persian” [*fārsi/pārsī*] comes from, what the dialects of Persian are (both in the past and at present), whether it is theologically permissible to use Persian as opposed to Arabic, and what the genesis of poetry was. Taken together, Ārzū’s engagement with these questions goes to the heart of the Mughal understanding of the history of Persian. He ratified and in some cases refined the views expressed in an important intellectual project of Akbar’s reign, namely *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*. Although many of the conclusions that Ārzū or the sources he cites had reached are based upon historical and textual presuppositions that are no longer tenable, it is nonetheless useful to examine them in detail because of how they shaped the Mughal worldview.

When discussing the history of the Persian language, Ārzū primarily relies upon *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* but frequently compares it with other dictionaries to establish alternative pronunciations and meanings. *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* was a remarkable effort in which the emperor Akbar himself took an interest. It was compiled by the courtier Mir Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusain Injū, whom Akbar had commanded during a halt in Srinagar to compile “a book containing all the authentic Persian words, archaic usages, and idiomatic expressions.”²⁷ (The dictionary is named for Jahāngīr because death claimed Akbar three years before its

²⁶ On lexicography in Arabic, see Haywood 1960 and Baalbaki 2019.

²⁷ The relevant passage is carefully translated and interpreted in Kinra 2011, 369–70.

completion.) Injū came from a noble family in Shiraz—his cousins were high officials in the court of the Safavid ruler Shāh Tahmāsp I—and spent time in the Deccan before entering Akbar's service. He rose in the imperial hierarchy and became a confidant to Jahāngīr. He even acted as Jahāngīr's envoy to his rebellious son, Prince Khusrau, and was appointed governor of the *šūbah* (province) of Bihar towards the end of his career.²⁸ His experience shows that for the Mughals, dictionary-making was not an activity to be undertaken by low-paid secretaries but could bring prestige to a member of the highest echelons of society. It was, in fact, a hugely resource-intensive project. Injū used forty-four sources, which he lists in his preface. Thus, to a large degree, he consolidated the lexicographical tradition in his one book of some 9,000 entries. The *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* is not just a lexicon but also contains an elaborate introduction [*muqaddamah*] and appendix [*khātimah*.²⁹ The introduction is a substantial work in twelve chapters, including a history of the Persian language. A detailed description of the methodology of the lexicon's compilation is provided in a separate preface. The appendix consists of five sub-lexicons, one of which is a list of Middle Persian ("Zend and Pazend") words, which was clearly useful for Ārzū.³⁰ Injū tells us that he relied on a Zoroastrian informant for the Middle Persian material. The other main sources for Ārzū's history of Persian are four of the major dictionaries of the language then available: *Majma' al-Furs* (1600, compiled in Isfahan), also known as *Farhang-i Surūrī* after its compiler, *Farhang-i Rashīdī* (1654), *Burhān-i Qāfi'* (1652, compiled in the Deccan), and Ārzū's own *Sirāj al-Luğhat* [Lamp of Language, 1147/1734–5]. Ārzū discusses

²⁸ Beveridge and Prashad 1979, 1:742. Injū's son apparently married the daughter of 'Abd al-Rahīm Khān-i Khānān, the greatest literary patron of Akbar's reign besides the emperor himself.

²⁹ *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*'s odd feature for the modern reader is that it is arranged by the second letter of each headword then by the initial letter. Indeed, the first page of the modern printed edition contains a notice that an index, in proper alphabetical order, has been provided at the end of the book for the reader's convenience.

³⁰ The five sections of the appendix are (1) Metonyms and Expressions [*kināyāt wa iṣṭilāḥāt*], (2) Compound Words from Persian and Arabic [*luğhāt-i murakkabah az pārsī wa 'arabī*], (3) Words in Which Appear One of the "Eight Sounds" [*luğhātī kih yakī az hūrūf-i hashtagānah dar ān yāftah shudah*], (4) Zend and Pazend Words [*luğhāt-i zīnd wa pāzind*], and (5) Strange Words [*luğhāt-i ḡharībah*]. In number (3), the "eight sounds" must refer to the sounds native to Arabic but not found in Persian before the Arab conquest. In number (5), "ḡharīb" is being used in the technical sense, namely as a loan word or calque. This section includes Indic words such as "ağrah" [the city of Agra] and "pāni" [water].

these various dictionaries and declares *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* to be the best, even though *Farhang-i Rashiďi* and *Burhān-i Qāti'* are later and each represents something of a repudiation of *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*.³¹ The only two non-lexicographical works drawn into the conversation are *Dabistān-i Mažāhib*³² and Muhammad ‘Auffī’s *Lubāb al-Albāb* [The Piths of Intellects, 1221 CE]. ‘Auffī’s text is regarded as the first Persian *tažkirah*, although its author does not use that term (instead he calls it “*tabaqat*”). The *Dabistān*’s author was probably a Zoroastrian who went by the pseudonym Mūbad Shāh but also used a Muslim name when it suited him.³³ With its methods that strike us as proto-anthropological (the author observes, and in some cases infiltrates, various religious groups), this text is not a rigorous history, although it was taken as such by later writers such as Ārzū. Instead, its historical descriptions represent how a certain sect of Zoroastrians memorialized their tradition. While Ārzū approaches the material critically, emending it as necessary, his richly imagined history of Persian literary culture diverges from our present understanding because of the constraints of his sources. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable intellectual achievement. Let us explore that here.

The origin of the name for Persian (*pārsī* or *fārsī*) is tied up with ancient history, as described by Injū and mostly taken word for word by Ārzū. Pārs son of Pahlaw son of Sām son of Noah [*nūh*] was king of a

³¹ M 39ff; see also Kinra 2011, 373.

³² A complete but inaccurate English translation by Anthony Shea and David Troyer under the title *The Dabistān, or School of Manners* was published in 1843. A chapter had earlier been translated by Francis Gladwin (born 1744 or 1745, died 1812) so it was of interest to British orientalists, and indeed the Persian text was first published in Calcutta in 1809 in moveable type (Ali 1999). The first European to study the book was Sir William Jones in 1787. He was pleased to learn of an “authentic” source of knowledge about Zoroastrianism since he had famously dismissed as an obvious forgery the other important potential source, the Zend-Avesta. The Zend-Avesta was brought to the attention of European scholars by Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805), who published it in 1771. Although Jones destroyed Anquetil-Duperron’s reputation over the matter, it became clear soon after his death that Anquetil-Duperron had been right and Jones wrong (Browne 1929, 45ff.).

³³ Shea and Troyer’s translators’ preface repeats the mistaken conclusion of Jones (which had been repeated by Gladwin) that the *Dabistān*’s author was Muhsin Fāni (d. 1081/1670), a Kashmiri Sufi poet and friend of Dārā Shukoh. In fact, a quatrain of Fāni’s is quoted in the preface but that of course is not evidence that he wrote the whole work. The identity of the author and his role as “ethnographer in disguise” has been addressed by the late Aditya Behl (Behl 2011; cf. Ali 1999; Sheth 2019).

territory that was named after him.³⁴ All of Iran was contained in this ancient territory, which supposedly stretched from the Amu Darya [*rūd-i jaihūn*] in the east to the Euphrates [*āb-i furāt*] in the west and from the Gates of Alexander [*bāb al-abwāb*] (in Derbent, in present-day Russia near the border with Azerbaijan) in the north to the Persian Gulf [*daryā-yi ‘umān*] in the south. Within this great swathe of territory, the eastern region was known as Khurasan because, Ārzū and Injū argue, “*khurāsān*” means “East” in “ancient Persian” [*pārsī-yi qadīm*]—he does not make the distinction between Old Persian and Middle Persian, referring to all historical Persian as “ancient”—and this was the region to the east of Persepolis [*istakhr*.³⁵ After the coming of Islam, the capital was moved to Isfahan (400 km to the north) and the towns to the west became known as “*irāq al-‘arab*” [Arab Iraq] and the nearer ones as “*irāq al-‘ajam*” [Persian Iraq]. The language of Pārs’s kingdom was “*pārsī*” and the Arabs, unable to pronounce “*p*,” turned it into “*fārsī*.” The Zoroastrian period in Persian history was apparently a golden age of beauty, rhetoric, “cleanliness” [*pākizagī*], good horsemanship, and so on. Before the Persians were Zoroastrian, they were supposedly Sabian [*ṣābi‘ah*], the exact meaning of which is hard to reconstruct.³⁶ What comes out of all of this is that the distribution of ancient Persian was thought to track closely with that of contemporary Persian. However, Ārzū adds a very important caveat, which does not appear in Injū: He notes that although Persian is “the medium of (careful) speech and writing” [*madār-i takallum-o tarassul*] across Iran and Turan (i.e., Central Asia), and to some extent India, the language of the masses [*‘awāmm*] across that region is often different. This insight allows Ārzū to move beyond the idea that language distribution is historically static as

³⁴ M 2–4; *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* 1975, 14–15. A similar discussion of Pārs appears in Ārzū’s *Gulistān* commentary (*KhG* 1996, 11). An alternative lineage for Pārs through Japhet [*Yāfiś*] son of Noah is also given.

³⁵ M 218–19 also discusses “*khurāsān*” as “east.”

³⁶ Sabians are mentioned in the Qur’ān (e.g., 22.17) alongside Jews, Christians, and Magians, but the term seems to be used in various conflicting ways such as serving as a general term for non-Muslims who nonetheless believe in God (Pedersen 1922). See also Roberts 2017 on historically attested Sabians. Ārzū’s rival Shaikh Ḥazīn claims to have encountered them around Shustar in south-central Iran, where supposedly the last remaining population lived (*Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* 1830, 160). Perhaps here it refers to the proto-Islamic religion of Abraham.

is implied by Injū's conclusion that Persian is spoken where Pārs's ancient kingdom was. Theorizing the considerable linguistic variation across territories even where Persian is natively spoken is key to Ārzū's conception of the Persian cosmopolis. Because the poetic language of even native speakers may be imperfect—affected as it is by non-standard local usages—non-native speakers have as much (or in some cases more) ability to write Persian poetry as native speakers.

After concluding their discussion of how the language got its name, Ārzū and Injū address the dialects of Persian. It has, they argue, seven dialects [*gūnah*], of which three are current and four are historical curiosities. The four extinct dialects are “*hirawī*,” “*sakzī*” or “*sagzī*,” “*zāwālī*,” and “*sughdī*.” They are extinct in the sense that one cannot eloquently write complete sentences in them but if “one brings a word [from one of them] into a couplet or a poem then this is permissible.”³⁷ Besides this brief reference, these four dialects are not mentioned again in the text. Of the four, only “*sughdī*” or Soghdian, finds a place in today's standard dialectology of Persian.³⁸ The three current dialects have the familiar names “*fārsī*”/“*pārsī*,” “*pahlawī*,” and “*dari*,” but these have different meanings from the ones we know today. As defined by Injū, they are:

Parsi is simply defined as the poetic language of the territories of Pārs whose capital was at Persepolis, the original city founded by Kiyomarš (the mythical first king in the *Shāhnāmah* and the first human in Zoroastrian belief).³⁹ He includes a quote from *Tafsīr-i Dailamī*

³⁷ “*dar baitī balkih dar ḡħażali agar yak kalimah biyāwarand rawā bāshad*” (M 4; *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* 1975, 15). The transliteration of “*zāwali*” is conjecture.

³⁸ “*Hirawī*,” according to Steingass, refers to an archaic dialect of Herat (in modern western Afghanistan). On Soghdian, see Windfuhr 2009, 279. It is puzzling that Choresmian [*khwārazmī*], the native language of al-Bīrūnī (d. post 442/1050), is not among these dialects since al-Bīrūnī cites Choresmian words in his famous *Chronology of Ancient Nations* (Cereti and Maggi 2005, 149). Perhaps Soghdian was thought to include all of what we now call the northeastern group of Middle Iranian languages, of which Choresmian is a part. As is the case for a great deal of Middle Iranian material, manuscripts in Soghdian were unknown for centuries until they were rediscovered in the early twentieth century (Cereti and Maggi 2005, 101).

³⁹ *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* 1975, 15–16; M 4. Ārzū discusses Kiyomarš in his dictionary *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* (CH 1984, 1204).

[Dailamī's Commentary, fourth/tenth century] supposedly spoken by God to the Prophet Muhammad in this language.

Dari has had several related meanings in history, including being defined from as early as the tenth century as New Persian literary language generally (especially in contrast with Pahlavi or Middle Persian).⁴⁰ Some people, writes Injū, attribute special eloquence to Dari because it is apparently the dialect of Persian in which full forms of words are always used.⁴¹ Another possibility is that it is a dialect of Balkh, Merv, and Bukhara (the cities are located in a region today split between northeastern Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan). Injū's preferred explanation is that it was the language of the imperial court [*dargāh-i kayān*], presumably meaning the Sassanian Empire's capital Ctesiphon (near present-day Baghdad). The quotation from Injū includes a supposed reference to *ḥadīṣ* which says, improbably, that the “Arabic language of the people of Paradise [*jannat*]” is actually Dari Persian.⁴²

Pahlavi, according to Injū, might be named for Pārs's father Pahlaw who was connected with the region known as Pahlah (which consists of Isfahan, Ray, and Dinawar in western Iran). Another possibility, which Injū prefers, was that since “*pahlaw*” can mean “city” (he cites a couplet by Firdausī as evidence), Pahlavi was thus urban speech. We now understand Pahlavi to be Parthian, a Middle Persian prestige dialect which was written in a script derived from Aramaic under the Parthian Empire (248 BCE–224 CE) and adopted by the Sassanians (224–651 CE). In imprecise usage, the term “Pahlavi” can also refer to

⁴⁰ On historical meanings of “*dari*” (which encompass all the meanings proposed by Injū), see Lazard 1993 and 1995, and Paul 2005.

⁴¹ Persian has a number of words with a longer and a shorter form, generally maintained for metrical purposes. Thus Dari prefers “*ishkam*” [belly] to “*shikam*,” “*ba-raw*” [go!] to “*raw*,” “*ba-go*” [speak!] to “*go*.” Instead of the second, Ārzū uses the example of “*abar*” [upon] instead of “*bar*.” In the eleventh-century etiquette manual *Qābūsnāmah*, secretaries are warned against using “unrestrained Persian” [*pārsī-yi mutlaq*], presumably meaning Persian without Arabic words, and especially “the Dari Persian which is not well-known” (*Qābūsnāmah* 1956, 187; Hanaway 2012, 102).

⁴² Ārzū adds an additional possibility derived from Majd al-Dīn ‘Alī Qūsī’s dictionary (*M 8*). Ārzū consulted that lexicon when compiling *Sirāj al-Lughat* and praised it highly in the preface, but it is apparently no longer extant.

Middle Persian in general, especially its continued liturgical usage by Zoroastrians after the Sassanian Empire's collapse.⁴³

This triad of Parsi/Dari/Pahlavi is, in fact, attested from such an early moment that it predates the formation of New Persian: It goes back at least to the eighth-century writer Ibn al-Muqaffa' (ca. 721–57), who does not appear to be mentioned by name in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Persian works but was widely cited by earlier Arabic authors, including the earliest known transmitter Ibn al-Nadīm (ca. 987).⁴⁴ Ibn al-Muqaffa' was an Iranian from a Zoroastrian convert background who settled in Basra, became an important man of letters in Arabic, and most famously wrote the Arabic translation of *Kalila wa Dimna*. He defines Parsi (written in Arabic as "fārsī") as literary Middle Persian, which was still spoken by some Zoroastrian priests [*maubads*] (to whom Ibn al-Muqaffa' also adds "the learned ['ulamā'] and those like them"), as well as being the spoken register of the Pars region. Dari he viewed as the language of Ctesiphon and environs ("a Persephone island in an Aramaic speaking area," according to John R. Perry), and modern scholars, notably Gilbert Lazard, have interpreted this to mean that it was a northern dialect of spoken Parsi that had mixed in Parthian influences. Dari's spread as far as Balkh in the east, on the opposite side of the Persian-using world from Ctesiphon, can be explained by its being an administrative and contract language. Pahlavi (or "fahlawi" in its Arabicized pronunciation) is the language of five regions called the Fahlah, consisting of Isfahan, Ray, Hamadan, Nahavand, and Azerbaijan, a territory in present-day western Iran which largely overlaps with Ārzū's description of the Pahlah.

After laying out the various definitions provided by Injū, Ārzū reveals his position: The division of the three modern dialects is irrelevant; there is only one, unitary literary dialect of Persian. If Dari is the language of the court and Pahlavi is the language of the city [*pahlaw*] then, he argues, obviously the two are different names for the same thing.⁴⁵ The only

⁴³ Browne 1929, 79ff.

⁴⁴ Lazard 1995, especially the quotation on p. 49; Perry 2009.

⁴⁵ Although the cross-over between Middle Persian and New Persian dialects is contested, scholars have now come to a conclusion parallel with Ārzū's, namely that Dari is not an "eastern Persian" but rather a universal literary dialect integrated into New Persian wherever it was used (Khanlari 1994; Clinton 1998; Smyth 1994, 292n6).

distinction is perhaps that each of the two names were used at different times (he does not elaborate here but suggests in the following pages that Pahlavi came first and then Dari). Since the usage of the court [*urdū*] is the most eloquent and since the Farsi of the court is the accepted variety then in fact all three, Dari, Pahlavi, and Farsi, are the same.⁴⁶ Thus, he concludes,

it is a fact that [*bah-tahqīq paiwast kih*] the most eloquent of languages is the language [*zabān*] of the court [*urdū*] and the Persian of that place is respected, but a dialect [*zabān-i khāṣah*] of other places is not accepted in poetry or belles lettres [*inshā*]. A poet, whichever place he may be from, for example Ḫāqānī from Shirvan, Nīzāmī from Ganjah, Sanā'ī from Ghazni and Ḫusrav from Delhi, composed in the established [*muqarrar*] language and that is none other than the language of the court.⁴⁷

We consider the implications of this sweeping statement of poetic unity in the next section. It is no exaggeration to call this stylistic flattening of the whole geography of the Persian cosmopolis the key to Ārzū's thought. At the historical cusp of the nationalisms that would start to divide up the Persian cosmopolis into the nation-states we know today, Ārzū anchored his criticism in the well-known but apparently never before so carefully formulated cosmopolitan ideal that every poet and literary scholar across the cosmopolis was judged by the same standard, which was not only translocal but transnational.

Having defined Persian, Injū and Ārzū faced a crucial theological question: If the language of religion is Arabic, then is it permissible even to use Persian?⁴⁸ They cite a relevant quranic passage to demonstrate that although Arabic is significant as the medium of the final revelation (i.e., the Qur'ān), it has not been the sole language of divine

⁴⁶ It is important to note here that the colonial-era identification of Urdu as the “camp jargon” of India on the basis that “*urdū*” can mean military camp fails the historical test. The word is cognate with “horde” (as in the Mongol unit of polity), and so refers to the seat of power rather than to a common bivouac.

⁴⁷ *M* 13.

⁴⁸ Discussed in *M* 14–17; *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* 1975, 17–22. See also Browne 1929, 12ff.

revelation: “We have never sent a messenger who did not use his own people’s language to make things clear for them” (14:4). Although Ārzū’s discussion of the commentarial tradition is somewhat difficult to follow, in essence many commentators have agreed that Arabic is not the sole language with divine sanction. According to one commentator, it is even permissible to use a Persian translation of quranic passages during prayer [*namāz*]. Furthermore, the sons of Pārs were referenced in the Qur’ān and Persians mentioned in *ḥadīṣ*.

The discussion in *Mušmir* now shifts to the origin of poetry, using *Lübāb al-Albāb* and *Dabistān-i Mažāhib* as the key sources. The first poem ever composed was a *marṣiyah* [dirge] sung by Adam for his slain son Abel (it was presumably in Arabic, but this is left open).⁴⁹ According to *Lübāb al-Albāb*, the first Persian poem was composed by the king Bahram Gür (the historical Sassanian ruler Bahrām V, r. 420–38). *Dabistān-i Mažāhib* offers another possibility: The first Persian poetry was composed in the age of the Ābādiyān, the followers of Ābād, the first prophet sent to Persia.⁵⁰ One of the kings in that mythical period, Farhūsh, had seven incomparable [*bī-qiyāṣ*] poets who each produced a poem for every day of the week. Ārzū does not adjudicate between these various possibilities,⁵¹ but instead changes the subject to one that is more familiar to us: Ārzū argues that the language of Zoroaster’s time was “obviously” Pahlavi, and the commentary upon it (*Zend*) and upon that (*Pazend*) were also in the Pahlavi language. From our perspective, this claim is incorrect, but it is incorrect in a telling way: Ārzū cannot distinguish between what we call Old Persian and Middle Persian. From

⁴⁹ This is an extension of the story as told in Genesis 4:8 and Qur’ān 5:30. For a good discussion of this section in *Lübāb al-Albāb* and its larger context, see Keshavmurthy 2011, esp. 109ff. A fascinating Sanskrit cultural parallel on the theme “poetry is born in grief” is recorded regarding the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*: Vālmiki witnessed a hunter kill one of a pair of mating birds, and he spontaneously uttered the first *śloka* [couplet] as he lamented the death and cursed the hunter.

⁵⁰ M 18. Ārzū reports this as fact but of course we are discussing an event which would have occurred in mythical time. Ābād was believed to be author of the *Dasātīr*, which scholars later concluded is a forgery written during Akbar’s reign. It has its own fascinating theory of language (Sheffield 2014).

⁵¹ Yet another possibility, which Ārzū hints at in just a few words, is that (as the anonymous author of the *Tārikh-i Sīstān* reports) the secretary of the Saffarid king Ya‘qūb bin Laiṣ (r. 867–79) composed the first Persian poetry because his king could not understand an Arabic poem that was read out (Hanaway 2012, 105).

our perspective, Pahlavi is Middle Persian while the language of Zoroastrian scripture, Avestan, is a variety of Old Persian (there is a gap between the two of approximately 1,000 years). Ārzū is correct that the Zend is a commentary on the ancient Zoroastrian scripture, the Avesta, however Pazend is not a second-order commentary but rather a script in which the Zend is written.⁵² Ārzū also incorrectly attributes authorship of the “Zend” and “Pazend” to Zoroaster, but of course—assuming that Zoroaster was an actual person and not a historical composite in the same way that the poet Homer almost certainly was—the commentaries were written many centuries after Zoroaster’s life.⁵³ This line of thinking does not appear to be derived either from *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* or *Dabistān-i Mažāhib*, and represents an attempt by Ārzū to tie up various historical loose ends: He refers to Zoroaster as “*Ibrāhīm Zardusht*” or “Abraham-Zoroaster,” and so melds the Islamic and Zoroastrian historical traditions by choosing a side in a long-running debate over whether the two prophets were in fact the same person.⁵⁴ Furthermore, he brings India into the picture by referring to “the letter Zoroaster wrote to the emperor of India and which was repeatedly read.” I have not been able to trace any origin for this anecdote, but the conclusion Ārzū draws from it is crucial: He argues that “the basis of these languages is Pahlavi, and after that Dari, afterwards the common usage [i.e., present-day languages], as the research concludes, and it [i.e., Pahlavi] has indeed fallen out of use.”⁵⁵ The phrase “these languages” is ambiguous but since Ārzū has been discussing both India and an Iranian prophet, it is reasonable to assume that he means

⁵² The prologue to Nizāmi’s *Haft Paikar* [The Seven Beauties, 1197 CE] makes a claim that the poet’s project is exegetical by invoking Zend, which was widely known among Islamicate writers to be an exegesis [*ta’wil*] on Zoroastrian scripture: “This poem’s design I have adorned / with seven brides, like Magian Zend” (4:33; translated in Meisami 1987, 299).

⁵³ M 20.

⁵⁴ For an example from c. 1400 in which a Muslim author rejects the Zoroastrian claim that because both Ibrahim and Zoroaster dealt with a holy fire they are the same person, see Yohannan and Jackson 1907, 187. The same conflation of Zoroaster and Abraham appears in M 3, 82.

⁵⁵ “az maktūbī kih zardusht ba-pādishāh-i hind niwistah wa mukarrar ba-muṭāl‘ah dar āmadah chunān dar yāft mishawad kih asl-i in zabān-hā pahlawī ast ba’d az ān dāri sipas muta’ārif hazā ākhir al-tahqīq wa ān bi'l-fil matrūk al-istī'māl ast” (M 20).

that both Indic languages and contemporary Persian are derived from “Pahlavi” (or, as we would call it, Proto-Indo-Iranian). While for us it is evident that over time one language can change into another or branch off into multiple languages, before the advent of modern historical linguistics this was far from obvious.⁵⁶

Once these preliminary, Persian-specific matters are dealt with, the text continues by engaging with *al-Muzhir*. There are various discussions of how Arabic concepts entered Persian—for example, a section on words in Persian for which the native Persian word was “forgotten” and replaced by an Arabic equivalent and another section on “foreign” words.⁵⁷ The difficulty for a Persian writer attempting to engage with the Arabic tradition on this level is that throughout the Arabic philological tradition, Arabic was generally represented as a closed system. (While philologists were aware of the various dialects in contemporary Arabic, this fragmented Arabic was not the object of their study since they were interested in the Qur’ān and its particular language.) Traditionally, the most eloquent spoken Arabic had been regarded as that of the Bedouin tribes who had little contact with people outside their communities. At the annual oratorical contest at Mecca, these Bedouins almost invariably bested other Arabs, such as the Levantines, whose Arabic had been “corrupted” by contact with Syriac speakers, and the Yemenis, whose speech changed through contact with Indic and other languages.⁵⁸ While al-Suyūṭī was aware of the influence of other languages on Arabic and vice versa—after all, he wrote a lexicon of words in the Qur’ān with analogues in other languages⁵⁹—others were unwilling to accept Arabic

⁵⁶ Cf. Foucault 1994, 291–4.

⁵⁷ The discussion on “forgotten” Persian words is based on Imām Ṣa‘libī, and Ārzū takes him to task for being wrong about his examples (*M* 55ff.). On foreign words, the discussion is *M* 80ff.

⁵⁸ *M* 9, cf. Suleiman 1999, 22. “Syriac speakers” is a conjecture on the basis of the word “*nīṣārī*,” meaning Nazerene (a term for Christian and Judeo-Christian sects). That Yemen is singled out is noteworthy because it was, of course, on the maritime crossroads of India, the Middle East, and Africa, and so would have been teeming with languages.

⁵⁹ Bell 1924. In his *Lubb al-Lubāb*, al-Suyūṭī lists seven sound combinations that suggest an Arabic word was originally Persian (Asbaghi 1987, 7–8). The extremely influential *Tafsīr* of Ṭabarī (b. 224–5 AH/839 CE) also deals with the question of the relationship of Persian and Arabic and more generally addresses loan words from other languages in its introduction (Tabarī 1987, 1:12–15).

as anything less than an originary language.⁶⁰ Indeed, al-Suyūṭī's section on *tawāfiq* begins with a quotation from the grammarian Ibn Jumhūr (fl. third/ninth century) claiming that "there is nothing in God's book [the Qur'ān]—praise be upon it!—except the Arabic language."⁶¹ In *Muṣmir*, such views on "pure" Arabic are not well connected to any discussion of Persian, but because Ārzū posits Persian as a courtly language, there is an inherent contradiction: The best Arabic is unmixed and yet Ārzū acknowledges that courts are places where languages do mix. For example, the word *barsāt* [rainy season], "an obviously Indian" term whose invention Ārzū connects to the "people of the court" [*ahl-i urdū*], is derived from the Persian word "*bārīsh*" [rain] plus the Arabic feminine plural ending "-āt."⁶² Thus Arab views on linguistic purity cannot apply directly to Persian, but Ārzū hedges against this inconsistency by making proper Persian equivalent to courtly usage and therefore unmixed, because whatever expressions come into the Persian of the court and are accepted there are, by definition, Persian. While his discussion appears to relate to both formal and informal language, his focus is on written literary language. Indeed, in his discussion of the Meccan oratorical contest, he asserts that all Arabs *wrote* in an identical style even if they *spoke* different dialects. This emphasis on the production of literature over casual speech requires Ārzū to offer a nuanced account of the phonetics of regional speech as well as to some degree regional vocabulary, in order to determine which words are universal (and therefore literary) and which are local (and therefore unliterary).

⁶⁰ The problem of a divine origin of language versus language as an agreed upon convention was one of the major threads of debate in Arabic philology. Those inclined to the view that God handed language to man often pointed to Qur'ān 2:31: "He taught Adam the names [of things], then He showed them to the angels and said, 'Tell me the names of these if you truly [think you can]'." The first chapter of *al-Muzhir*, in which al-Suyūṭī deals with this question, does not record his personal opinion (Loucel 1963–4, 68). Early Arabic grammarians noted the foreign origin of various Arabic words, which is somewhat surprising given how vehemently the possibility was opposed by later exegetes (Versteegh 1993, 88–91).

⁶¹ "laysa fi kitāb allāhi—subḥānahi—shay' baḡhair lugḥat al-'arab" (*al-Muzhir* 1998, 209).

⁶² M 212.

Phonetics, Vocabulary, and Regional Variation

Ārzū's contention that there is a single literary Persian used across the vast territory of the Persian cosmopolis is not based on the linguistically suspect claim that there is no variation across that region. He is clear—as we should also be—that what is under consideration is literary language and not everyday communication. For one thing, his project is not pure description (as in a modern linguistic survey) but also an aesthetic endeavor: The goal is not only to describe usage but to set a standard at the same time.⁶³ Ārzū recognized that regionalism is inevitable, even in a formalized dialect like literary Persian, and so understood the need to deal with variation in a theoretically sophisticated way. The cosmopolitan tradition always feels the pull of the local as it simultaneously exerts its own force on the local language and culture.⁶⁴ He posits a structure of authority that flows from the imperial court, arguing that:

The truth as established by research is that the respected [i.e., standard] Persian is that of the royal court, which has been established after the mixture of crowds and troops; thus, in the poetry of the eloquent and the prose of the articulate there is no other language, and if ever, because of the demise of its authority, [the royal court] ceases to exist, then the eloquent and articulate of every city and province use in conversation that [language] which has been established and do not mix [it] with the language of their country.⁶⁵

⁶³ The underlying philosophy of grammar, namely the system of Hellenistic and traditional Arabic grammar, likewise followed rational principles (that is, it strove for an ideal) rather than empirical (that is, observation-based) ones (Versteegh 1980, 21–2).

⁶⁴ These interactions are not inherently good or bad in Ārzū's eyes, but they are inevitable and so must be dealt with. Ārzū's understanding of them is considered further in this chapter and again in Chapter 5.

⁶⁵ “wa haqq-i tahqiq ān ast kih zabān-i mu’tabar-i fārsi zabān-i urdū-yi pādishāhi ast kih ba’d ikhtilāt-i firaq wa jumā’at qarār yāftah lihažā dar sh’ir-i fuṣḥā wa našr-i bulāghā zabān-i dīgarān nīst wa agar ahyān^{an} sabab-i qalat-i ḥukm ‘adam dārad wa ānchih muqarrar shudah faṣīḥ-o balīgh az har shahr wa ulkāhⁱ kih bāshad badān takallum namāyad wa ba-zabān-i mulk-i khywud maķhlūṭ na-sāzad” (M 9).

Thus, according to Ārzū, primary responsibility for controlling good taste lies with the people of the imperial court and then with sub-imperial elites.⁶⁶ In Persian, in contrast to the Arabic tradition's veneration of Bedouins, the guardians of language are urbanites.⁶⁷

The existence of regional vocabulary in Persian literature is an issue because regional vocabulary is by definition unaesthetic—however, it can later become universal and accepted in Persian. It is likely that Persian lexicography originated to address the need to explain unfamiliar dialect words that appeared in poetry, and the process of being codified in dictionaries made many such originally local words universal across Persian.⁶⁸ Ārzū engages with *al-Muzhir* in a number of chapters dealing with vocabulary: on the eloquent [faṣīḥ] or rather correctly formed words, on the “despised and base” [*raddī-o mažmūm*], on the “universal and rare” [*muttarad-o shāz*], and finally on the “unfamiliar and strange” [*wahshī-o ḡharīb*]. Eloquent words, according to Arabic rhetoricians, are ones that have “purity” [*khulūṣ*] and common currency.⁶⁹ This is in part a historical argument because, as Ārzū notes, every period has a different

⁶⁶ Contemporary Europe had a similar system of linguistic authority: Standard French in the seventeenth century was thought of as that of “the court and the city” [*la cour et la ville*], reflecting a courtly/urban bias just as in Ārzū’s formulation (Burke 2004, 99–100). Claude de Vaugolas (1585–1650), a founding member of the Académie Française, argued that more specifically the standard was to be set by “the soundest part of the court” [*la plus saine partie de la cour*], which included women, the administrative establishment, and townspeople who had dealings with the court. This was the accepted linguistic standard of that period in France as well as in Poland (where it was called “*dworski mowy*” or “courtly speech”), Denmark, Russia, England, and elsewhere.

⁶⁷ In my discussion of NA, Ārzū’s lexicon of Indic words, in Chapter 4, I argue that this view extends to the vernacular as well. On early Arabic grammarians’ use of Bedouin data (before the tradition generally came to acknowledge only the Qur’ān as admissible evidence), see Versteegh 1983, 146–9.

⁶⁸ Baevskii 2007, 29. The creation of dictionaries was a catalyst for maintaining the remarkable homogeneity of literary Persian over nearly a millennium. Regionalism was a concern even in the early years of the Persian cosmopolis: For example, the eleventh-century CE writer Nāṣir Khusrau met a poet called Qatrān in Tabriz (northwestern Iran) who “wrote good poetry but did not know Persian well” [*sh’irī nekū mi guft ammā zabān-i fārsī nekū namī dānist*] (quoted in Hanaway 2012, 124). It is not clear whether Qatrān “did not know Persian well” because he was an Azeri Turkish speaker or whether he was not familiar with the literary language, but context implies the latter: He read the *diwāns* of Manīk and Daqīqī with the help of Nāṣir Khusrau, all three of whom were from Khurasan in the east. Thus, Nāṣir Khusrau had an easy access to their particular usage, which Qatrān did not.

⁶⁹ M 61–75, esp. 71. The Arabic tradition tends to cast correct and incorrect usage in aesthetic terms, where for example a “*ḥasan*” (lit. beautiful) form corresponds to our idea of grammatically “well formed” structure and “*qabīh*” (lit. hideous, ugly) to an incorrect form (Carter 1973, 148). The terminology is not standardized, even in the same work, but as in modern linguistics it is an examination of the form itself and not the correctness of the information being transmitted.

set of acceptable vocabulary since words pass out of common usage.⁷⁰ The “despised and base” words are glossed as “the worst words” [*badtarīn luḡāt*], a direct translation from *Muzhir*, but Ārzū’s discussion has nothing to do with vocabulary as such but rather with dialectical pronunciations that are not reflected in written language.⁷¹ In a not altogether unexpected but still amusing twist of history, two standard features of modern Iranian Persian are given as examples of this category,⁷² namely the interchangeable pronunciation of the letters “*qāf*” and “*ghain*” (i.e., the sounds “*q*” and “*gh*”) and the tendency to turn “*ān*” into “*ūn*” (e.g., pronouncing “*dukān*” [shop] as *dukūn*).⁷³ The discussion of the “universal and the rare” is derived from Ibn Jinni’s analysis of the matter.⁷⁴ Ārzū simply endorses his views on dialect variations in pronunciation as applicable to Persian as well as Arabic. The “unfamiliar and strange” words are those which are rarely used.⁷⁵ In the Arabic

⁷⁰ M 62. The Roman poet Horace (65–8 BCE) makes a similar observation in his *Ars Poetica*: “As leaves in the forest are changed in the fleeting years / the oldest fall first: thus words die of old age / and the newly coined flourish and thrive, as in the prime of youth” [*ut silvae foliis pronus mutantur in annos, / prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit aetas, / et iuvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque*] (vv. 60–2).

⁷¹ M 75–77. As dismissive as Ārzū is of these dialectal usages here, it is notable that in a discussion in an earlier text, *TḠh*, he allows similar usages to stand if poetic masters had made them (*TḠh* 142–3).

⁷² Modern Iranian Persian is, of course, a relatively recent standard based on the local speech of Tehran, which was not a place of much importance until it became the Qajar capital in 1795. It was not, apparently, a prestige dialect before the spread of mass media in Iran.

⁷³ One of the fourteenth-century satirist ‘Ubaid Zākāni’s anecdotes turns on the confusion between “*q*” and “*gh*” and demonstrates that it was a common mistake in his time: A person asks “Do they make [that is, spell] ‘fried food’ [*qalyat*] with ‘*qāf*’ or ‘*ghain*’?” The reply is that “They make fried food with neither ‘*qāf*’ or ‘*ghain*’ but with meat” (*Risālah-yi Dilgushā* 1955, 114). I thank an anonymous reviewer for the reference. In his discussion of Yahyā Kāshī in *MN*, Ārzū notes that the people of Kashan in particular pronounce “*ān*” as “*ūn*” (*MN* 2004, 3:1843). I am grateful to Nathan Tabor for the reference. Ārzū’s nephew Mir relates an anecdote that the emperor Muhammad Shāh set a verbal trap for the nobleman Ṣafdar Muhammad Khān, who was originally from ‘īraq (i.e., western Iran), by quoting a line of Sa’di. When the nobleman completed the couplet, his accent turned the words “*k-ān sokhtah*” (“that this inflamed”) into “*kūn sokhtah*” (“inflamed anus”) (Naim 1999, 137). Mir suggests that the sound change in question (*ān* > *ūn*) is a matter of pretension in poetry, even though it is the colloquial accent of the nobleman’s birthplace.

⁷⁴ M 78–9. For him there are four kinds of words: (1) Universal in Analogy and Use [*muttarad dar qiyās-o istīmāl*], (2) Universal in Analogy and Rare [*shāz*] in Use, (3) Universal in Use and Rare in Analogy, and (4) Rare in Analogy and Use. The precise distinctions are not entirely clear.

⁷⁵ “*dar musta’malat kamtar āmadah bāshad*” (M 80–3). The term “*wahshi*” might have been used in the technical sense of unintelligible language as early as the sixth century CE (Bonebakker 1970, 81).

tradition, there is some disagreement as to whether using such words is permitted at all. According to Ārzū, words which are known but whose meanings are unclear (because they are so rarely used) are avoided by the eloquent. However, since Persian is a mixed language, this rule can never be absolute.

More important for our purposes is a two-part discussion on whether borrowings [*taṣarrufāt*] from Indian (and other) languages are permitted in Persian.⁷⁶ It begins in a short chapter which frames the question through *al-Muzhir*⁷⁷ and returns, without particular reference to *al-Muzhir* this time, in several later chapters. When the discussion is not framed by Arabic, Ārzū is philosophically uncompromising: If Arabic, Turkish, and Armenian [*arāmanah*] words could be borrowed into Persian over the years, what logic could prohibit Indian words?⁷⁸ Great masters have used *hindī* words in Persian and their usage of them is “unquestionably correct” [*bī-takalluf durust*]. Thus, the question is not whether Indic words are allowed in Persian in the first place (“in the doctrine of the present author they are not forbidden in the present time” [*ba-mażhab-i mu'allif darin zamān mamnū‘ nīst*]) but rather in what frequency and to what degree they can be changed.⁷⁹ He notes that

⁷⁶ Blochmann defines *taṣarruf* as follows: “The change in spelling, form, meaning and construction, which an Arabic word, apparently without any reason, undergoes in Persian, or which an Arabic or a Persian word undergoes in Hindustani, is called *taṣarruf*” (1868, 32). For him it is necessarily a kind of corruption, but Ārzū appears to have viewed it as a normal process. A good reconstruction of the aesthetic consequences of *taṣarruf* for Ārzū is Keshavmurthy 2013, 37–8.

⁷⁷ M 36–9; 160–75. In the first chapter, Ārzū summarizes a passage in which al-Suyūti considers whether Arabic had in fact borrowed Persian words, a possibility that many Arabic grammarians denied.

⁷⁸ M 160. He takes up this argument again in *Mauhibat-i ‘Uzma* and the second preface to *Dād-i Suḥan*, discussed in Chapter 3 of this study. Early Persian dictionaries were not concerned with where words came from. As Solomon Baevskii notes, “They make no explicit distinction between assimilated loanwords in Persian and *Fremdwörter* or outright foreign lexis; but in general it is clear that fully assimilated Arabic and (in lesser volume) Turkic vocabulary in Persian is not labeled for etymology” (Baevskii 2007, 142).

⁷⁹ This translation is based on Cyrus Shamisa’s emendation of M 1991’s “*darīn zabān*” [in this language] to “*darīn zamān*” (Shamisa 2002, 31). The latter is the *lectio difficilior* (the preferred reading because of its greater complexity) since it addresses an argument about chronology which Ārzū introduces just above: He points out that the influence of Arabic on Persian began during the Arab conquests of Iran (a millennium before) but that Turkish and Arabic words continued to be taken into Persian subsequently. The ongoing process of borrowing is the analogy for borrowing Indic words into Persian, and therefore borrowing them “at the present” [*darīn zamān*] is not prohibited.

Arabic and Turkish words have even replaced some common indigenous Persian words over the centuries. However, there is a sense that care must be taken in deploying Indic terms. Ārzū's friend Muķhlīš is explicit in reserving the right of bringing *hindī* words into Persian for "people of [aesthetic] might and exceptional talent" [*ahl-i qudrat wa istīdād-i mukhtar*].⁸⁰

The considerable variation in pronunciation across the Persian cosmopolis does not concern Ārzū except to the degree that it is liable to corrupt the literary form. For example, by the seventeenth century Iranians had begun to stop distinguishing *maj'hūl* vowels (the sounds "e" and "o") from *ma'rūf* vowels ("i" and "ū"), but to Ārzū, this change is worth mentioning but it is not in itself significant.⁸¹ Such a shift is not in the same category as the "despised and base." *Muśmir* has several chapters devoted to various phonetic transformations. The discussions are largely derived from *al-Muzhir*. The topics, which in Arabic are generally taken together as part of *nahw*, include *ikhtilāf* [variance in gemination], *qalb* [transposition], *ḥaẓf* [elision], *ibdāl* [exchanging, i.e., sounds], and *imālah* [changing "ā" into "ī"].⁸² The most relevant for our purposes is *ibdāl*, which refers to when a sound is exchanged for one with a similar articulation point [*qurb-i maṄhraj*] in the mouth.⁸³ It explains a number of historical sound changes, including changes to *hindī* words in Persian, such as "*rānā*" [*hindī* for king] being pronounced as "*ra'na*" [Arabic for beautiful or tender] and "*garbhsūt*" [cloth with cotton warp and silk weft] turned into "*garsūt*".⁸⁴ The book ends with a lengthy (and to the modern reader tedious) account of the characteristics of all the letters in the Perso-Arabic alphabet, going letter by letter.⁸⁵

The phonetics of languages used alongside Persian require a descriptive apparatus in order to consider the integration of foreign words into

⁸⁰ Quoted in Shamisa 2002, 32.

⁸¹ M 84. See Khan 2004, and cf. a longer discussion in *TGH* 142–3.

⁸² *Ikhtilāf*, which Ārzū claims is very common in Persian, involves either reducing a geminated consonant (that is, one pronounced twice in succession, as in, for example, "n" in "cannot") to a single consonant or geminating a single consonant (M 90ff.). A chapter heading refers to *qalb* as a subset of *ikhtilāf*, but in fact it seems to be entirely different, namely when two contiguous sounds in a word are switched (M 117ff.). *Haẓf* is, of course, the loss of a sound (M 99ff.). *Imālah* is described at M 158–60; cf. Owens 2006, 197–229. On Ārzū's discussion of phonetics, see Rahimpoor 2012, 109–28.

⁸³ M 135ff.

⁸⁴ M 171, 174.

⁸⁵ M 244ff.

Persian. Expressing non-Arabic sounds in written Arabic had a long tradition and this was expanded by Persianate intellectuals.⁸⁶ The descriptive system adopted by Ārzū and by some earlier writers, like the author of *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, is simple yet capable of expressing virtually all of the sounds in Arabic, Persian, and Indic languages. The four Persian letters that Arabic does not have ("p," "ch," "z," and "g") are analogized to their Arabic letter with the equivalent form.⁸⁷ Thus, for example, "p" [پ] is referred to as "the Persian 'b' [پ]." In a manuscript culture where the marks that distinguish letters from similarly shaped letters are often not written in or simply get lost as ink fades and paper crumbles, such long-form orthography [*taqaiyud*] prevents ambiguity.⁸⁸ Representing Indic language presents a greater challenge because it includes aspirated and retroflex sounds, which are not phonemes found in either Arabic or Persian.⁸⁹ The aspirated consonants, which are consonants spoken with more breath than their unaspirated counterparts, are described aptly as a letter "mixed with 'h.'" Thus "ph" is called "the Persian 'b' mixed with 'h'" [*bā-yi fārsī maḵlūṭ bā hā*]. Retroflexes, formed by curling the tongue back towards the roof of the mouth, are unique to Indic languages (and Pashto) within the Persian cosmopolis, and are simply analogized to Arabic as the uniquely Persian letters were. Thus, the retroflex "ṭ" is called "the Indian 'ṭ'" [*tā-yi hindī*]. For a sound like "ṭh," which is both retroflexed and aspirated, the two operations are combined to yield "the Indian 'ṭ' mixed with 'h'" [*tā-yi*

⁸⁶ Ibn Khaldūn proposed a kind of phonetic triangulation: He rejects the usual scribal practice of replacing a foreign letter with the single closest Arabic equivalent, instead deciding "to represent such non-Arabic (sounds) in such a way as to indicate the two (sounds) closest to it, so that the reader may be able to pronounce it somewhere in the middle between the sounds represented by the two letters and thus reproduce it correctly" (*Muqaddimah* 2005, 31). He is primarily concerned with the representation of Berber.

⁸⁷ M 135.

⁸⁸ A letter described by this system is *muqaiyad* [lit. "fettered"] because it is no longer subject to misinterpretation (Blochmann 1868, 13). *Taqaiyud* (which Blochmann calls *qaid*) was common well into the twentieth century, even when it had become easy to typeset vowel marks in Persian. Surprisingly, though, transliteration into roman script was generally preferred to vowel marks in published dictionaries until recently (Baevskii 2007, 163).

⁸⁹ In *hindī*/Urdu the aspirated letters are "bh," "ph," "th," "dh," "ṭh," "ḍh," "rh," "jh," and "chh." The digraphs "lh" [لھ], "mh" [مھ], and "nh" [نھ] are each considered a single phoneme in some dialects, e.g. Braj, and of course are not consonants. The retroflex consonants are "ṭ," "ṭh," "d," "ḍh," "ṭ," and "ṭh." The retroflex nasal ("ṇ") and sibilant ("ṣ") are ignored. An alternative but far clumsier system to distinguish the Indic letters used in *Tuhfat al-Hind* is discussed further in Chapter 4.

hindī makhlūṭ bā hā].⁹⁰ This sort of precision is important when words pass between languages because sounds change in the process, and the nature of the phonetic transformation can help us determine the words' relationship. Ārzū repeatedly refers to the difficulty faced by non-Indians in pronouncing Indic sounds, which leads to mistakes when the word becomes a Persian word. Although some of his conclusions are tentative, he uses the logic of phonetics to probe how Arabic, Persian, and Indic languages are linked.

Connections between Languages

Ishtirāk or “sharing” describes the existence of the same word in two or more languages. This is of obvious interest for modern scholars because it could be interpreted as historical linguistics *avant la lettre*. It is, however, important to point out that Ārzū's project was limited: He was interested not in drawing up a family tree of languages but merely in explaining how a word could be shared between languages. The approach he took, as in much of his scholarship, was to innovatively extend the tradition as it stood. In *Muṣmir*, he describes three processes that can explain instances of *ishtirāk*.⁹¹ None of these is entirely

⁹⁰ To my knowledge, there has been no study of the development of modern Urdu orthography from Persian orthography. While the aspirates had apparently been written in throughout the Mughal period (although not with *do-chashmi* “he” [س] as in modern Urdu), differentiating “h” retroflexes from their nearest Persian equivalents does not appear to have been common before the nineteenth century. The modern method for making retroflexes, the letter “?̪” [𠁼] written above the letter as in “?̪” [𠁼], was one of at least three competing possibilities. Another common method was using four dots in a block above the letter as in [𠁼] for “?̪.” An undated autograph manuscript of the poet Rāsikh of Azimabad (d. 1824) from approximately 1810 now in the collection of Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has the unusual feature of a vertical line [՚] placed above letters to mark them as retroflex. In general, there was a great deal of inconsistency in orthography in Urdu manuscripts produced for personal consumption before around 1810 so it is not surprising that retroflexes, which would have been obvious from context, were not often marked (conversation with Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Allahabad, 5 June 2011).

⁹¹ Elsewhere he proposes a five-part scheme: In his lexicon *CH*'s entry for “*ang*” he notes that words can be shared as a result of (1) *tawāfq*, (2) *ittifāq*, (3) *tafrīs*, (4) *iltizām*, or (5) *muhannad* (*CH* 1984, 1017–18). The first three are addressed in *Muṣmir*. *Iltizām*, which has been defined by one modern scholar as “signification on the basis of an association” (De Brujin 1988), is an odd category because Ārzū does not describe it except to say that it is as in the work of the poet Tūghrā (whose penchant for using Indic vocabulary is clear from the number of times Ārzū cites him, cf. Abidi 1982, 51–2). Perhaps therefore it means something like “arbitrarily using a non-Persian synonym.” *Muhannad* is considered further in the chapter in the context of *tafrīs*.

satisfactory from the perspective of modern historical linguistics, but the logic is fascinating and self-consistent.

Three Kinds of Connections

The simplest of the three is *Persianization* [*tafrīs*], which is the process by which a foreign word is borrowed into Persian and experiences phonetic changes that mold it into a Persian word. Persianization is thus defined as when the root [*jauhar*] of a word is taken from another language into Persian and generally undergoes a phonetic transformation.⁹² Ārzū argues that this is a long-standing phenomenon, and indeed that most of the words had been borrowed into Persian “before the mixing of Persian and *hindī*.” This is a surprising statement, but its meaning becomes clear after some examples⁹³ and the remark that

the words mentioned [as examples] are in the book *hindī* [*hindī-yi kitābī*] of the people of India, which is completely different from the Indian language current in this country and Persian is not mixed with it, insomuch as the aforementioned language [i.e., “book *hindī*”] is still present in the world.⁹⁴

Context makes it clear that the “book language” is Sanskrit since it differs from presently spoken languages and is primordial. It is, as Ārzū notes, unaffected by the large-scale borrowing of Persian vocabulary that the spoken Indic languages had experienced from the Delhi Sultanate period into Ārzū’s time. Thus, in another work, he introduces the concept of *muhannad* [making Indic], which is the opposite of *tafrīs* since it refers

⁹² “ān taṣarruf ast dar jauhar-i kalimah az jihat-i taḡhayyur-i talaffuz yā ḡhair-i ān” (M 211, cf. 61ff.).

⁹³ Namely “ushtur”/“ushtur” [camel], “angusht”/“angusht” [finger], and “nāb”/ “nāf” [navel]. The first of each of the pairs is the *hindī* pronunciation and the second the Persian.

⁹⁴ “alfāz-i maẓkūrah ba-zabān-i kitābī-yi ahl-i hind ast kih muğhāyarat tamān ba-zabān-i hindī mustā’mal-i in mulk dārad wa fārsī rā badān muṭlaq ikhtilāt nīst chunānkhār bar ‘alām zabān-i maẓkūr zāhir ast” (M 211–12). The word “muğhāyarat” from the Arabic root ḡh-ī-r in addition to opposition has the sense of exchange or bartering, which would change the interpretation of how book *hindī* relates to contemporary *hindī*.

to a Persian word that has been borrowed into an Indic language.⁹⁵ He notes that *muhannad* is his own term, and observes that such borrowings of Perso-Arabic terms are especially prevalent in Indic (official) documents [*dafātir-i hindī*].

Persianization is an ongoing process as Indic words, especially names, continue to be brought into Persian, but there is an important distinction to be drawn between recently Persianized words and those that entered Persian centuries before. The poet Tughrā, for example, refers to “*barwach*” (for “*bharūch*,” a town in Gujarat near Ahmedabad formerly written in English as “Broach”) and Ārzū disapproves of the transformation of “*ū*” to “*wa*,” calling it “unmotivated” [*bi-żarūrat*].⁹⁶ When words have been recently Persianized, phonetic changes have often occurred because of “a lack of research and inattention to the literature of Indians” [*adam-i taḥqīq wa iṭnā’ ba-kalām-i hindiyān*].⁹⁷ (This probably at least partially explains why using *hindī* words in Persian for the first time is reserved for expert poets.) For example, “*arhant*” [an enlightened person or Jain saint] has been incorrectly written in the dictionary *Burhān-i Qāṭi* and elsewhere as “*arhaft*” because in Perso-Arabic script “*f*” and “*n*” (which both have a dot above) can look somewhat similar.⁹⁸ A common pattern of mistakes is discernible in the name of the *Mahābhārata* character Bhīma, which has been infelicitously rendered into Persian as “*bahīm*” because Iranians assumed that “*bh*” (a single sound in *hindī*) represented the two separate sounds “*b*” and “*h*.⁹⁹ Since there are no aspirates in Arabic or Persian, Ārzū says that Iranians are generally unable to avoid such a “gross mistake” [*khatā-yi fāḥish*]. However, there is an important case in which an allowance is made for usages that are wrong by Indic standards, namely when an incorrect spelling has been sanctified by usage. For example, in

⁹⁵ CH 1984, 1018.

⁹⁶ M 217. The term *żarūrat* (literally “necessity”) came to have a technical meaning in criticism indicating that the poet was compelled to use a particular form. Blochmann glosses it as “poetical license” in describing Tek Chand Bahār’s *Ibtāl-i Zarūrat* [The Refutation of “Zarūrat”], a treatise that argues that all correct poetic expressions rest on previous authority and any that do not are simply wrong (Blochmann 1868, 29).

⁹⁷ M 216.

⁹⁸ M 214. This section corrects the spelling of a number of Hindu concepts such as Maheshwar and Brahma, also providing fascinating definitions.

⁹⁹ M 215. Likewise, “*gur*,” glossed as “rock candy” [*qand-i siyāh*], is incorrectly rendered as “*gor*”—both spellings are current in Persian, but the chief [*sar-guroh*] of Modern poets, Ṣā’ib Tabrizī, uses the former and only it is correct.

Aurangzeb's chancery, an order was given that Indian place names written with a vocalic "he" at the end, such as Bengal ("bangālah") or Malwa ("malwah"), should henceforth be written according to the Indic manner with an "alif" at the end, that is "bangālā" and "malwā."¹⁰⁰ This change was wrong, argues Ārzū, because Persian has a history of spelling such names the former way, as in the famous verse of Hāfiẓ, when the poet boasts about the extent of his readership:

*shakkar shikan shawand hamah ṭūṭiyān-i hind
z-īn qand-i pārsī kih bah bangālah mī rawad*

[All the parrots of India will turn to sugar crunching
From this Persian candy that goes [as far as] Bengal.]

Because a master-poet [*ustād*] like Hāfiẓ has written it this way, this usage is beyond reproach, even though it is wrong from the perspective of Indic language. This is a mechanism of authority that operates like the Sanskrit "*ārṣa prayoga*" or the usage of a *ṛṣi* [sage] that is invoked as justification for grammatical exceptions in a language whose very name [*sāṃskṛtam*, lit. refined] represents it as perfect. In Chapter 3, we consider how the usage of the Ancients [*mutaqaddimīn*] structures authority in Persian discourse. Ārzū implies that there is a limit to what precisely should be taken from one language to another but does not elaborate. Elsewhere, however, he writes that "an expert knows that the grammatical logic [*qiyās*] of one language does not apply to another and that the requirements [*aḥkām*] of each language are distinct—this is a basic principle."¹⁰¹ In this case, the "-ah" ending is proper Persian but it would be wrong to use it in the "idioms of India" [*muḥāwarāt-i hind*], by which Ārzū presumably means vernacular languages, or write it that way in "Indic script" [*ba-khatt-i hindi*], just as it is wrong to write such

¹⁰⁰ M 213. In Hindi-Urdu today, words ending in "-ah" and "-ā" are pronounced identically, but for Ārzū there was a distinction as there is in modern Iranian Persian.

¹⁰¹ "ammā muḥāwarah-dān mī dānād kih qiyās-i zabāni ba-zabān-i dīgar nabāyad kard chih aḥkām-i har zabān 'alāhidah ast wa īn asli ast" (M 221). For example, Arabic words are combined in Persian to form compounds that do not exist in Arabic and this is unproblematic (M 38). Ārzū objects to the mistake (committed even by good lexicographers) of uncritically correcting Persian text based on Arabic (M 43).

names with “-ā” in Persian.¹⁰² Using Indic words in Persian properly takes finesse and so Ārzū concludes that one should not use an Indic word unnecessarily if there is a good Persian equivalent.¹⁰³ The sorts of words that are unquestionably allowed are “the idioms of the court and chanceries of the emperors of India which are accepted by the nobles of the court,” and he provides a number of examples, such as “*sarbāzī*” in the meaning of “*sardār*” [ranking officer].¹⁰⁴ There is no judgment passed on poets who use Indic words (as long as they are used properly), and Ārzū cites his own verse to show that he himself does so.¹⁰⁵ He is keen to know where words come from so that their proper usage can be established.

The concept of Persianization is based on the model of Arabicization [*ta‘rīb*], the equivalent process by which a word enters Arabic and changes. Ārzū catalogues at length the shared words in Arabic and Persian in a section that engages with *al-Muzhir* called “A Description of Several Problems and Examples Connected with the Arabicization of Persian Words.”¹⁰⁶ In fact, the chapter begins with a lengthy list of Arabic words from *al-Muzhir*. Ārzū’s contribution here is to demonstrate convincingly that many of the “Arabicized” words that scholars like al-Suyūtī, and before him al-Ša’labī, had assumed were natively Persian were in fact of Indic origin. These include “*filfil*” [pepper], the Arabic equivalent of Persian “*pilpil*” which in fact was originally Indic “*pīpal*,” and likewise “*fil*” [elephant] which is Indic “*pīl*.¹⁰⁷ The latter example is noteworthy because Ārzū states that “*pīl*” is the word in “*hindī-yi kitabī*” (that is, in Sanskrit).¹⁰⁸ Ārzū notes that this is the meaning that “has been heard from several people of knowledge of India” [*az ba‘zī ahl-i ‘ilm-i hind shinīdah*

¹⁰² However, in practice many pre-modern *hindī* texts written in Perso-Arabic script did not carefully distinguish between “-ah” and “-ā,” just as they often failed to distinguish between homonymic Arabic letters (for example, confusing “z” and “z̄”).

¹⁰³ M 222.

¹⁰⁴ “*muṣṭalahāt-i urdū wa dafātir-i pādishāhān-i hind wa qarār dādah-yi buzurgān-i darbār*” (*M* 222).

¹⁰⁵ M 221.

¹⁰⁶ “*asl: dar bayān-i ba‘zī az masā‘il wa amšalah kih muta‘alliq ast ba-ta‘rib-i alfāz-i fārsiyah*” (*M* 179–209). The section in *al-Muzhir* specifically addresses Persian words that have become Arabic (1998, 211–35).

¹⁰⁷ M 186, 182, respectively.

¹⁰⁸ Following the usual practice when Indo-Persian works cite Sanskrit lexemes, Ārzū has left the ending off—modern scholars would cite the word as “*pīlu*.”

shudah]. This and similar statements are solid evidence that, contrary to the claims of some scholars who assume that Ārzū himself knew Sanskrit, he in fact did not but depended on informants.¹⁰⁹ There are dozens of examples in the lengthy section, which no doubt serve to anchor the discussion in the prestige of Arabic.

Another way of explaining the existence of the same word in two languages is *coincidence* [*ittifāq*]. This phenomenon is the result of the *independent* phonetic transformation of two words in different languages such that their form becomes identical in each language.¹¹⁰ For example, the word “*jārū*” [broom] is found in both Persian and *hindī*. In *hindī*, according to Ārzū, it is a compound formed from “*jhārnā*” [to sweep] and “*rūb*” [sweeping].¹¹¹ In Persian, it is the shortened form [*mukhaffaf*] of “*jārob*” [broom]. For Ārzū, coincidence appears to be the least productive of the three kinds of linguistic connections because he only gives this single example and does not discuss coincidence again in *Mušmir*. However, in the Arabic philological tradition it was an important concept since it is the term used by T̄abarī to explain non-Arabic words in the Qur’ān. T̄abarī means something slightly different by “*ittifāq*” because for him it refers to a word’s existence in multiple languages (similar to how Ārzū uses the term “*ishtirāk*”), not necessarily that the word developed independently in different languages.¹¹²

The most significant of the three processes of word-sharing is *tawāfuq*, a term perhaps best translated as *correspondence*. Ārzū defines it as the kind of shared word that is “fixed in its root and neither [word] has been taken from the other.”¹¹³ What he means is that the root of the word is identical in both languages—in contrast to Persianization, in which it has

¹⁰⁹ Elsewhere, however, he cites “grammar books of the Indians” [*kutub-i nahw-o ḥarf-i hindiyān*] (*M* 173). He does not give any descriptions or titles so it is unclear what exactly he means, but presumably this is a reference to the kind of literary manuals available in Braj Bhāṣā or Sanskrit.

¹¹⁰ We can think of this as equivalent to “convergent evolution,” in which organisms develop similar traits independently, such as bats and birds both developing wings through separate evolutionary chains. Obviously Ārzū was not thinking in such Darwinian terms, but for us the parallel is almost unavoidable.

¹¹¹ The word in *hindī* is actually “*jhārū*” (with an aspirate and a retroflex unlike in Persian), but Ārzū ignores the distinction as irrelevant.

¹¹² Gilliot 1990, 95.

¹¹³ “*wa ān ishtirāk ast dar aşl waż̄ kih hīch yakī az dīgarī aķhż na-kardah bāshand bi-‘ainihi*” (*M* 209–10).

been phonetically transformed in the target language—and that one language has not borrowed the word from the other. In fact, the word need not be identical in both languages, but the difference cannot be in its root (however that is to be defined). Thus, for example, “*das*”/“*dah*” [ten] and “*mās*”/“*māh*” [moon] are the result of *tawāfuq* since the sound change is trivial.¹¹⁴ This is suggestive because if a word did not develop independently in two languages as in coincidence and if it was not borrowed from one language to another as in Persianization then only one possibility is left for us: The languages in which it appears must have developed from a common ancestor. Unfortunately for his readers in the distant future, Ārzū never explicitly draws such a conclusion with regards to *tawāfuq*. Perhaps it depends on some kind of theory of similitude that we, trapped in the mental habits of modernity, cannot access.¹¹⁵ In that case, some kind of fundamental sameness could exist in two languages without necessitating the conclusion that they are sister languages.

We cannot assume that when Ārzū describes *tawāfuq* he has an understanding of history that would be familiar to us, but he certainly considers language in the past. For example, noting the aftermath of the Arab conquest of Persia as a time when Arabic words came into Persian in large numbers, in identifying the transformation of Pahlavi to Dari to Farsi, and in recognizing that “book *hindī*” (Sanskrit) is “unmixed” with Persian in contrast to modern Indic languages. Unlike Persianization, which continues into the present, correspondence is limited to the past, as in the example of “*ānk*” [notation, number], which Ārzū argues cannot be the result of correspondence as it does not appear in the works of the Ancients [*qudamā*] or the “Middles” (*mutawassītān*, that is poets who fall between the Ancients and the Moderns), or indeed any modern work except that of the (now obscure) poet Tāṣīr, but rather is spread by present-day merchants [*saudāgarān-i ḥāl*].¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ M 210. He also gives “*nīst*”/“*nāst*” [“is not”] as an example of *tawāfuq*, so certain more significant sound changes are also permitted (M 213). A fuller discussion of this particular example appears in Chapter 5.

¹¹⁵ Michel Foucault describes a parallel similitude in early modern Europe in *The Order of Things* (Foucault 1994, esp. 17–30).

¹¹⁶ M 217. The entry for “*ang*” in Ārzū’s lexicon *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* has a similar definition as given in Mušmir and exactly the same Tāṣīr quote (but with the spelling “*ang*” instead of “*ānk*”). He notes in the definition that in *hindī* it is known as “*ānk*” and “*ang*” is Persianized. On Tāṣīr, see MN 2004, 1:309.

The use of the term *tawāfuq* itself is not new as it appears in *al-Muzhir*, but the purpose to which Ārzū puts it is both innovative and crucial to his intellectual project. Al-Suyūṭī's section on *tawāfuq* in *al-Muzhir* is perfunctory, and upon comparison it is clear that Ārzū has taken a relatively minor concept and transformed it into a central tenet of his philology.¹¹⁷ He writes

Until now, no one had discovered the correspondence [*tawāfuq*] between *hindī* and Persian; even in the lexicographers' every effort, researchers in this art [i.e., lexicography] were not aware of what is *hindī* and what is Persian and otherwise. But humble Ārzū—a person who is derivative [in thought], an old man, and incapable—established this for the first time, while correcting some Persian words, as in the books written by him, such as *Sirāj al-Lughat*, *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, and so on. It is strange that Rashīdī [i.e., 'Abd al-Rashīd al-Tattawī, author of the dictionary *Farhang-i Rashīdī*] and others were in India, and yet never noticed the degree to which there is correspondence in the two languages.¹¹⁸

Correspondence is mentioned in *Muṣmir* in no fewer than six chapters.¹¹⁹ Since the concept appears in *Sirāj al-Lughat*, Ārzū must have been thinking about it by at least the early 1730s. Besides *Sirāj al-Lughat* and *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, it also appears repeatedly in *Nawādir al-Alfāz* (his dictionary of Indic words), and is mentioned once briefly in *Mauhibat-i 'Uẓmā* and once at length in *Khiyābān-i Gulistān*.¹²⁰ This common thread in Ārzū's work also provides an opportunity for Ārzū to research Indian culture and to bring it to a Persianate readership. These

¹¹⁷ *Al-Muzhir* 1998, 209–11. Shams-i Qais (fl. seventh-century AH/thirteenth-century CE) earlier used the term *tawāfuq* in a different sense, namely as “harmony” of lines and half-lines in a couplet (Windfuhr 1974, 337). This appears to be the same concept that the Persian/Urdu tradition later called *rabī*. Ārzū himself appears to use the word in this sense at M 68.

¹¹⁸ “tā al-yāum hichkas ba-daryāft-i tawāfuq-i zabān-i hindī wa fārsī bā-ān hamah kaśrat-i ahl-i lughat chih fārsī wa chih hindī wa dīgar muhaqqiqān-i in fann mutawajjih na-shudah-and illā faqīr-i ārzū kasīkh muttabī’ wa pīr wa in ‘ājiz bāshad wa in rā aslī muqarrar kardah wa binā’i taṣhīl-i ba’zī alfāz-i fārsiyah ba-din gužashtah chunānkīh az kutub-i muṣannafah-yi khwud misl-i sirāj al-lughat wa chirāgh-i hidāyat wa ghairah niwishtah-am [sic] wa ‘ajab ast az rashīdī wa ghairah kih dar hindūstān būdah-and wa hīch lihāz na-kardah-and kih dar in do zabān chih qadr tawāfuq ast” (M 221).

¹¹⁹ M 59, 65, 115, 171, 175–9, 195, 209, 213, 217, 218, 221, 251, 269.

¹²⁰ *MU* 2002, 100; *KhG* 1996, 113–14.

discussions lead to fascinating—if occasionally perplexing—observations, such as a wonderful learned discussion of the etymology of Kandahar (a city in Afghanistan), in which he floats the possibility that the name is derived from the name of Queen Gāndhārī in the Sanskrit epic *Mahābhārata*. Citing the geographer Mir Ġhiyās al-Dīn Mansūr as his authority, he argues that the city is technically located just within Indian territory on the basis that India has been defined as the place where the black antelope [*ahū-yi siyāh*] is found. The black antelope, or blackbuck (Antilope cervicapra), is identified with India because of its ritual significance to Brahmins, since its skin is made into a mendicant's seat (*kusha* grass is used similarly).¹²¹ Despite this fascinating proto-anthropology, *tawāfiq* also leads to what are now historically unpalatable conclusions, such as Ārzū's reference to the correspondence of Pahlavi and Arabic, a linguistic impossibility if *tawāfiq* means that the languages have a common origin.¹²² We must be careful, in recognizing the value of Ārzū's scholarship, not to impute to him motivations or ideas that he could not possibly have thought, simply to sooth our discomfort over what (from our perspective) he got wrong.

Figurative Language and Where Meaning Comes From

Now let us turn to the last of the major themes addressed in *Mušmir*, meaning and figurative [*majāzi*] language. The importance of *Mušmir*'s discussion of these topics lies not in the account itself. Rather its value for us is in its application: The proper or improper use of metaphorical language is the substance of the analysis in the critical works to be dealt

¹²¹ M 218. While some of Ārzū's information comes from scholarly texts including “old Persian histories of India” (M 172), often it is uncited and presumably derives from Ārzū's personal knowledge.

¹²² M 59, 195. Arabic and Persian (whether Pahlavi or any other form) are not genetically related; the former is a Semitic language and the latter Indo-European. Al-Suyūṭī appears to suggest (in a quote from Ibn Jinnī) that the words shared between Arabic and other languages had a common origin. If al-Suyūṭī provided a fuller description of *tawāfiq* that might clarify the issue, I have not found it. Europeans made precisely the same mistake: The Anglo-Irish Orientalist and diplomat Gore Ouseley (1770–1844) wrote to his brother William in 1792 that “Arabic is doubtless the mother of Persian; but, by the same rule, we should begin with Sanscrit, which is mother and grandmother of them both” (*Biographical Notices* 1846, xviii).

with in Chapter 3, such as Ārzū's *Tanbih al-Ğāfilīn* and *Sirāj-i Munīr*. For the sake of completeness and because the supposed demerits of a particular kind of figurative language, namely *iħām* (loosely translated as “punning” or more exactly as “amphibology”),¹²³ loom so large in the history of Urdu criticism, we should sketch the terminology of metaphor and simile operative in Ārzū's thought. Western and Islamicate conceptualizations of figurative language share an Aristotelian heritage, but the Islamicate tradition developed a more nuanced—and, in Ārzū's case, historically minded—approach to metaphor.¹²⁴ Ārzū refers to *tashbih* [simile], *isti‘ārah* [metaphor/trope], *kināyah* [metonymy], *tamṣil* [allegory], *majāz-i mursal* [“free trope”], and *iħām*, all of which are different basic approaches to rhetorical comparison. However, in the Arabic tradition of rhetoric, which the Persian tradition inherited, the terms relating to metaphorical language had considerable overlap, creating difficulty for later scholars.¹²⁵ For example, *isti‘ārah* and *bādi‘* [literary ornament] were considered synonyms in early works, but eventually the former came to be considered a particular subset of the latter.¹²⁶ Furthermore, the basic concepts can be joined up, as in *isti‘ārah bi'l-kināyah* [metonymic simile].

In four chapters near the beginning of *Muśmir*, Ārzū engages with the debates on meaning presented in *al-Muzhir*: He agrees with al-Rāzī and his followers on the question of whether every meaning has a separate word for it and vice versa—it does not, they conclude.¹²⁷ The discussion

¹²³ Amphibology is “ambiguity deriving from grammar, morphology, or syntax” (Dupriez 1991, 31–2). Another term that could plausibly translate “*iħām*,” namely semantic syllepsis, is “a figure by which a word or expression is used simultaneously in its literal and figurative senses” (Dupriez 1991, 440–1).

¹²⁴ On Aristotle and Arabic poetics, see Bonebakker 1970, 92–5 and Cantarino 1975, 64ff. Good overviews of metaphor in Persian literature are Garcin de Tassy 1873; Meisami 2003, 319ff.; Seyed-Gohrab 2012. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi translates “*kināyah*” as “implication,” but I have preferred “metonymy” here.

¹²⁵ Even were this not the case, the translations of these concepts will necessarily be imprecise. Noting Earl Miner's concern that various common critical terms in the West (for example, “representation,” “fiction,” and “originality”) presuppose that the goal of literature is mimesis—which is not necessarily the case for non-Western literatures—Julie Meisami has argued that we can still use such terms as long as we reflect on the systemic differences (Meisami 2003, 4).

¹²⁶ Meisami 2003, 320.

¹²⁷ M 21–3. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606 AH/1210 CE) was, depending on the source, either the greatest legal scholar of his time or a dangerous enemy of orthodoxy. He was born in Ray (now a suburb of Tehran) but traveled throughout Central Asia. He was prolific in Arabic and Persian, writing more than 100 books primarily on jurisprudence and philosophy (Kholeif 1966).

is partially what we might call anthropological, in that Ārzū observes that *hindī* does not have an indigenous word for *hammām* [bath-house] because Indians bathe in rivers, while there is a Persian word for bath-house, *garmābah*. Both the Arabic-derived *hammām* and the indigenous Persian *garmābah* co-exist in Persian and mean the same thing (likewise the religious terms *namāz* [prayer] and *rozah* [fasting] which are available in Persian alongside their Arabic equivalents *ṣalāt* and *ṣaum*). He picks up a discussion from Qāzī ‘Azud al-Dīn on the philosophical problem of determining whether a word describes the quality of a particular person or of a general category to which a particular person might belong.¹²⁸ A discussion with a surprising relevance for modern semantics follows, namely whether words share the same nature as their referents [*madlūlāt*].¹²⁹ In Structuralist terms, this is asking whether the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary or not.¹³⁰ Here Ārzū disagrees with his Arabic source (*‘Ibād bin Sulaimān al-Żamīrī* as quoted in *al-Muzhir*) and notes that while there are onomatopoetic words in which the connection is clear, for most words the relationship is arbitrary. The Arabs did not properly consider other languages in this regard, he argues, and such a comparative method would have demonstrated that onomatopoetic words in one language are not so in another. The next discussion is again derived from al-Rāzī, specifically from *Kitāb-i Maḥṣūl*, a text also known as *al-Maḥṣūl fī ‘Ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh* [Collection of the Knowledge of Jurisprudence], and deals with how to establish the meanings of words.¹³¹ Ārzū summarizes the conclusions relating to Arabic and writes “because religion is Arabic, one is powerless to question this.”¹³² He provides some possibilities to explain how meaning can be established in Persian, which is obviously not constrained by being the language of Islamic scripture as Arabic is. These discussions are taken up in greater detail in *Mauhibat-i ‘Uzmā* [The Supreme Gift], Ārzū’s treatise on *‘ilm-i ma‘āni*, which roughly translates to semantics.¹³³

¹²⁸ M 23–5.¹²⁹ M 25–7.¹³⁰ See Czapkiewicz 1990.¹³¹ M 27–34, 49–55.¹³² “chūn dīn ‘arabī ast nāchār ast iḥtiyāṭ dar ān” (M 28).¹³³ The discipline *‘ilm al-balāghat*, usually translated as “rhetoric,” is divided into three parts: “(1) *‘ilm al-ma‘āni*, the semantics of Arabic syntax; (2) *‘ilm al-bayān*, the theory of figurative speech proper; and (3) *‘ilm al-bādi‘*, the remaining forms of rhetorical embellishment” (De

Considerably later in the text, Ārzū discusses the distinction between “the real” [*haqīqat*] and “the figurative” [*majāz*.]¹³⁴ This question is considered part of ‘ilm al-bayān, the subject of Ārzū’s ‘Aṭīyah-i Kubrā [The Greatest Gift]. In *Muśmir*, the description is in keeping with the tradition: *Haqīqat* involves using a word in its narrow, specific meaning, while *majāz* refers to its use in any extended sense. A key distinction between the two is that *qiyās* is operative in *haqīqat* while in *majāz* it is not.¹³⁵ This is a technical discussion in part derived from Ibn Jinnī as quoted in *al-Muzhir*, and concludes with another endorsement of al-Rāzī’s views. ‘Aṭīyah-i Kubrā is another matter: It begins with the claim that no one has written a Persian book on ‘ilm-i bayān specifically and suggests—in perhaps the most boastful sentence in all of Ārzū’s oeuvre—that “this essay is the first [such] book which has been revealed from the sky of lofty thought onto the terrain of Persian verse.”¹³⁶ It defines the terminology of metaphorical language (*tashbih*, *isfārah*, etc.), and while not in fact the only Persian text to describe such categories, it is rather rare since most of the theorizing of metaphor in the Islamicate context, though written by Persian speakers, took place in Arabic works.¹³⁷ The most interesting intervention is a claim, which is not quite explicit, that metaphor is culturally bound: He points out that in Persian poetry unlike in Indic poetry, a lover’s face is compared to the color red [*rang-i tilā*], and in Indic poetry unlike in Persian poetry, the eyes are compared to fish.¹³⁸ He closes this discussion somewhat defensively by arguing that the examples given may be found in the works of the masters [*asātīzah*]. The significance of this careful analysis of categories of metaphorical language is that it is the primary mode of criticism in Ārzū’s debates with particular poets. The texts in question, which we will consider in Chapter 3, are *Tanbih al-Ğāfilīn*, *Sirāj-i Munīr*, and *Dād-i Suķhan*. In

Bruijn 1988). An important difference between Western and Arabo-Persian terminology is that the word “*khīṭābat*” [oratory] is “applied strictly to the spoken word in public addresses, and is not used in any wider sense” (Bonebakker 1970, 76; *bādi* discussed at 85).

¹³⁴ M 222–30, cf. AK 2002, 69ff.

¹³⁵ “dar haqīqat qiyās jāri ast wa dar majāz nah” (M 224).

¹³⁶ “pas īn risālah awwal kitābi ast kih az āsmān-i fikr-i buland bar zamīn-i sh’ir-i pārsī nāzil shudah” (AK 2002, 51). For an analysis of this text, see Dudney 2017a.

¹³⁷ On ‘ilm al-bayān versus ‘ilm al-mā’āni in Arabic and Persian, see Van Gelder 2009.

¹³⁸ AK 2002, 65.

many cases, the arguments take on a temporal aspect because the traditionalist poets against whom he is contending claim that a certain use of metaphor is new, but Ārzū is able to show that in fact it has a long history.

Although it is not discussed in *Muśmir*, one category of metaphorical device that deserves special mention is *īhām*. Ārzū defines *īhām* as follows: “Sometimes a word contains two meanings, one literal and the second extended. Thus, the poets on the amplitude of common meaning construct the extended one and equally allow both.”¹³⁹ Interestingly he observes that not just poets, but people employing everyday speech [*ahl-i rozmarrah*] also use it.¹⁴⁰ Husain Wā’iz Kāshīfī’s fifteenth-century *Bada’i al-Afkār fī Ṣanā’i al-Ash’ār* classifies *īhām* on the basis of whether additional words are included that point to the literal meaning or not.¹⁴¹ In Mir’s discussion of types of *rekhtah* (i.e., Urdu or mixed Persian-*hindī* poetry) in the conclusion [*khatimah*] of his *tazkirah Nikāt al-Shu‘arā*, he defines *īhām* as involving a near [*qarib*] and a far [*ba‘id*] meaning in which the poet actually means the far one and the reader must know to dispense with the near one.¹⁴² *īhām* was also seen by some Indian writers as being a bridge between *hindī* and Persian: Ānand Rām Muķhlīṣ quotes a Persian verse by the seventeenth-century poet Salim in which the word “chāk-hā” (*chāk* means “rip” in Persian but “wheel” in *hindī*) appears and he notes that it is “not without *īhām* in the language of the people of India.”¹⁴³ Oddly, the modern critic Shafī’i Kadkani claims that *īhām* is frequently employed in Indo-Persian poetry because Indians are non-native speakers of Persian—his explanation that they would therefore focus on an individual word (and not its larger context) is

¹³⁹ “gāhī lafż mushtamil do ma‘nī bāshad yakī haqīqī wa duwwum majāzī. goyā shu‘arā banā bar tausī‘ah-yi ma‘nī-yi ‘umūm majāz wa mustarak har do ja’iz dāshṭah-and” (DS 1974, 26). On its history, see Chalisova 2004. Prashant Keshavmurthy has argued, in a personal communication, that devices like *īhām* recapitulate Ārzū’s distinction between the interpretation of poetry by laymen and experts since they invite a simple interpretation and a nuanced interpretation. See Chapter 3 for an analysis of this distinction.

¹⁴⁰ The linguist George Lakoff observes that “the locus of metaphor is thought not language” and that the traditional distinction between metaphorical and literal language cannot hold because most discourse involves some kind of metaphor (Lakoff 1993).

¹⁴¹ Chalisova 2004. I thank an anonymous reviewer for the suggestion to point to Kāshīfī’s definition.

¹⁴² *Nikāt al-Shu‘arā* 1979, 161.

¹⁴³ *Mir’āt* 495. The symbolism in Salim’s quatrain is very convoluted.

unconvincing to me.¹⁴⁴ However, it is certainly true that the ambiguity and misdirection inherent in *ihām* became an important aesthetic tool for early modern Persian and later Urdu poets.

Conclusion

The way in which Ārzū classifies figurative language is, as we consider in Chapter 6, arguably characteristically early modern since he has reverence for existing categories and the tradition that produced them, while at the same time filling those categories with innovative ideas. Despite being a significant scholarly achievement, *Muśmir*'s direct influence on Ārzū's contemporaries and later generations appears to have been minimal. According to the twentieth-century scholar Sayyid ‘Abdullah, Wārastah—whom we met in Chapter 1 among Ārzū's “rivals and enemies”—mentions *Muśmir* in his treatise *Matla‘ al-Sa‘dain* [The Setting of Venus and Jupiter].¹⁴⁵ That quotation appears to be the only substantive reference to *Muśmir* before ‘Abdullah's rediscovery of the text in the Punjab University Library in the mid-twentieth century. *Muśmir* is a particularly useful text for scholars today because it distills virtually all of his important ideas into one text written at the end of his life, but its influence cannot be accurately gauged because Ārzū's major ideas, such as *tawāfq* as applied to Persian and *hindī*, are not restricted to this one work.

¹⁴⁴ Shafī'i Kadkani 1981, 160. For further context, see Dudney 2017a.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Abdullah 1967, 142. *Matla‘ al-Sa‘dain* was published by Naval Kishore in 1880.

3

Innovation and Poetic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Persian

Rhetoric was the common ground of poetry, history and oratory; it could mediate both between the past and present and between the imagination and the realm of public affairs. Encouraging men to think of all forms of human discourse as argument it conceived of poetry as a performing art, literature as a storehouse of models.

(Greenblatt 1980, 162)

In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century India, Persianate literary culture was experiencing a transformation that we can call a crisis of authority.¹ Let us define authority (in the context of literature) as broadly and cross-culturally as possible: It is a tool to judge whether some aspect of a composition is a success or a failure.² The Persian tradition does not approach the question of assessing literary merit with such a catch-all term, but it is useful to combine the concept of *sanad*, or literary precedent, with the idea of the consensus [*ijmā*] of contemporary poets. The crisis of authority in this period sprang from a poetics that explicitly valued newness, the “*tāzah-goī*” or “Fresh Speech” movement. Although “freshness” had been invoked by earlier poets, its

¹ A condensed version of part of this chapter appeared as Dudney 2016.

² We should note Gadamer’s discomfort with this term: “The concept of tradition, however, has become no less ambiguous than that of authority, and for the same reason—namely that what determines the romantic understanding of tradition is its abstract opposition to the principle of enlightenment.... It seems to me, however, that there is no such unconditional antithesis between tradition and reason” (Gadamer 2006, 282). Gadamer’s implication that the very idea of tradition must be historicized is crucial since the post-Romantic view of tradition as a constraint to be overthrown by enlightenment (or perhaps “development”) has little relevance for an emic analysis of a non-Modern, non-Western intellectual tradition.

crystallization into a wide-spread tendency became an insurgent threat to the smooth operation of literary precedent because in many cases poets and readers approved of compositions that contained phrases and literary images for which there was no obvious precedent.³ Thus critics had to struggle with the relative value of precedent and consensus. Specifically, we can consider how Ārzū simultaneously reiterated the importance of tradition as a unifying factor across the Persian world of letters while systematizing the expertise of living poets. This chapter will use his influential disagreements with the long-dead Abū al-Barakāt Munīr Lahorī (1019–54 AH/1610–44 CE) and with his contemporary Shaikh Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥazīn Lāhījī (1103–80/1692–1766) to offer a necessarily revisionist account of how this crisis of authority played out. In Ārzū’s framing, Munīr and Ḥazīn both stood for a literary purism that valorized the works of the pre-*tāzah-go’ī* poets and claimed themselves to be the present-day guardians of this earlier poetic style. Ārzū by contrast defended the new poetics on the basis that its aesthetics were not a departure from the Persian tradition taken as a whole. He documents this through careful scholarship, in the process arguing that Munīr and Ḥazīn’s judgments are often capricious rather than anchored in research.

The historiographical difficulty is that the rupture caused by *tāzah-go’ī* has almost without exception been unhelpfully framed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars as a centuries-long contest between Iranian and Indian aesthetics. From the nineteenth century until recently, the interpretation that there was a degraded, particularly Indian Persian (often called the “Indian style” [*sabk-i hindī*] in Persian poetry) had been almost universally held (even by Indians themselves). However, recent scholarship has shown this to be an anachronistic framing.⁴ We will return to the relevant eighteenth-century critical

³ For example, in *Haft Aurang* the fifteenth-century poet Jāmī described his fourteenth-century predecessor Ḥāfiẓ as writing fresh [*tāzah*] poetry (Ingenito 2009, 163). I thank the anonymous reviewer for the reference.

⁴ Alam nicely frames the issue (2003, 182). Just as Allison Busch has taken modern Hindi critics to task for their arbitrary assessments of the quality of early modern courtly Hindi literature (the *rīti* tradition), we need to revisit the standards used to determine what good Persian style is (Busch 2011, preface, 14). Sheldon Pollock has called attention to the failure of modern critics to engage with traditional commentaries—we can take that as inspiration for this chapter to discuss critical works rather than the poems they analyze (2009, 254–5).

texts, including Lutf ‘Ali Beg Āżar’s *tažkirah Ātashkadaḥ* [The Fire Temple, 1174/1760], and trace the later scholarly interpretation that has accreted to them. On the one hand, I will historicize the anti-Indian sentiments of nationalist Iranian critics and Indians’ later lack of confidence in their own Persian. On the other, I will use the analogue of the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, a roughly contemporary debate in Europe over a roughly similar crisis of authority, in order to reconsider the narrative of decline and cultural failure that is generally used to explain the fortunes of Indo-Persian. But first we have a party to attend….

Munīr, a young literary luminary during the reign of Shāh Jahān, records a terrible soirée. In the preface to his *Kārnāmah* [Commentary], he describes how it began:

Because I brought only a book of poetry besides myself, although it was my collected poetry, I chose silence; I was a spectator on the margins of this assembly and I heard the conversation of the people who see fine points, and the bright light—the burning of the lamp of cleverness—entered my intellect through the sight of my eyes and through my ears. And in the beauty of the conversation I beheld the poetry of the bright-faced ones.⁵

The recitation [*mushā’irah*] quickly goes awry. Soon,

in succession poetry emerged in that assembly, and the speech of the lords of poetry appeared in it. All began to slander the earlier [*pīshīn*] poets, and to destroy the praise of the earlier master versifiers; they undertook the slandering of the deceased caravan of meanings and then the rest began to praise the still-living people on the journey of poetry-knowing.⁶

As the assembled poets disrespect the exemplary writers from centuries before, they heap praise upon their own contemporaries and near contemporaries. Someone says of ‘Urfī Shīrāzī (d. 999/1591) that

⁵ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 3. The text has been published in an edition including Ārzu’s response, *Sirāj-i Munir* [A Lamp for Munir]. Munir’s prose was well-regarded enough to appear on a Mughal syllabus in 1688 (Syed 2012, 289). On his life, see Mohiuddin 1971, 221ff. For a useful summary of the rhetoric of these passages, see Alam 2003, 182–3.

⁶ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 3.

This master versifier is the lord of fresh style [*tarz-i tāzah*] and the manifestation of unguessable grandeur, writing such fine poetry and bestowing delicateness on his verse, adorning each hair with the ringlet [*turrah*] of poems and adorning the face of meanings in a most pleasing way. The color of his words is the blush on the face of meaning and the ink of his verse is the best example of the fine-points [*mawādd*, pl. of *māddat*] of poetry.⁷

Similar hyperbolic praise is lavished upon Ṭālib Amulī (d. 1036/1627), Zulālī (d. 1031/1622 or 1034/1625), and Žuhūrī Turshīzī (d. 1035/1626). Then the assembly turns to denigrating two classical-style poets, Ražī⁸ and Kamāl Iṣfahānī (d. 635/1237), before putting two of the tradition's other revered poets in their place:

If [Amīr] Khusrau [d. 725/1325] had managed to converse with [these Modern poets], he would have acquired the delicacy of their sweet poems, and if Salmān [Sāwaji, d. 778/1376] had lived in their time he would have learned Persian from their wives [*ahl-i bait*.]⁹

These comments are hyperbolic, and it becomes clear to the reader that Munīr is not describing a real event but has invented the occasion to serve his rhetorical purposes. In the face of the absurd idea that Khusrau and Salmān Sāwaji had something to learn about poetry from more recent poets' families, Munīr finds himself obliged to spoil the mood of

⁷ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 4.

⁸ Identified by the editor, in my view incorrectly, as Mīr Ražī Dānish Mashhadī (d. 1072/1661–2), a poet of Shāh Jahān's reign who settled in the Deccan. Since context demands that this be a classical poet, the likelier Ražī is Ustād Ražī al-Dīn Nishāpūrī, whom Ārzū notes has affinities with the omni-talented thirteenth-/fourteenth-century poet Amīr Khusrau, who praised him (MN 2004, 2:454). In fact, Khusrau mentions Ražī Nishāpūrī in the famous critical preface to his *dwār Ghurrat al-Kamāl*. Further evidence comes from the introduction to Munīr's *kulliyāt*, which refers to Ražī al-Dīn Nishāpūrī as one of the poets whom Munīr counted as a significant influence (quoted in Akram 2009, 351).

⁹ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 6. Although “*ahl al-bait*” can refer to the family of the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants, who especially in Shi’ism are seen as forming a spiritual lineage from the Prophet to the present day, context here suggests that we must read the phrase literally as “people of the house” or wives. I thank Nathan Tabor for our helpful dialogue on this point.

the imaginary gathering by jumping to the defense of the older poets. He declares,

I, who am the mirror-bearer of justice [*a'īnah-dār-i iṣṭāf-am*], saw that these iron-hearted ones were bandying about ideas that were far off the mark of justice and their poetry was no more than an imitation [lit. a face reflected in a mirror] and in no way assumed [its own] form. So I said, “Justice Knowers! The face reflects badly in the shining of the mirror of justice and the distraction of its own thoughts. As you speak, each mirror of yours is in the image of the mirror of imitations and you view the mirrored face backwards [since] you consider these [Modern] poets more worthy than those. So don’t talk rubbish and prefer and exalt these fresh receptacles [*mā'bān*] over those who have come before, and don’t follow the path of infidelity to justice!”¹⁰

As this passage and its reference to “fresh receptacles” implies, Munīr saw a stark divide between the Ancients [*mutaqaddimīn*], who wrote well in his estimation, and the Moderns [*muta'akħkhirīn*], whose “fresh speaking” had driven them to disrespect the aesthetic achievements of the Ancients. By the seventeenth century, the tradition had generally begun to consider as Ancients the poets from Ḥāfiẓ in the late fourteenth century back to the earliest New Persian poet, Rūdakī, in the tenth.¹¹ Given that *Kārnāmah* has been cited as the first salvo against “Indian style” excesses in poetry, it is surprising that Munīr’s framing of the debate in the preface has nothing to do with Iran versus India. Indeed, the only mention of either place at the beginning of *Kārnāmah* is an expression of hope that Indians and Iranians both will be convinced by

¹⁰ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 6.

¹¹ Still, Ārzū refers to the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ as “*namak-i tāzah*” [fresh-flavored, lit. fresh salt], which we can probably read as an echo of *tāzah-goī* even though Ḥāfiẓ came well before that movement (*M* 1991, 11). Some sources consider the classical period to have ended with Jāmī (d. 1492), referring to him as “the final poet” [*shā'ir-i khātam*] (see Browne 1959, 26; Losensky 1998, 193). Akbar’s poet laureate Faizi (d. 1595) writes of Jāmī that: “In his society no one appeared after him / And he is the seal of prose and poetry” (trans. Sharma 2012a, 239). A detailed recent appraisal of Jāmī’s place in the canon and his role in shaping it is Lewis 2018.

his claims.¹² Furthermore, one of the Ancients slighted at the imaginary gathering, Amīr Ḳhusrau, was an Indian, while all four of the Moderns whom Munīr believes to have received unearned praise were Iranian by birth. Munīr was concerned with stylistic chronology and not geography.

If Munīr's attacks on his contemporaries seem intemperate, they are not at all out of place. The early modern Indo-Persian literary scene was contentious, and research [*tahqīq*] could be a weapon.¹³ Some two generations separated Munīr from Ārzū, but nonetheless Ārzū felt the need to criticize him at length in two works, which will be introduced later in the chapter. This debate between the living and the dead was hardly the unfair contest it would seem to be because Munīr had many defenders among Ārzū's contemporaries.¹⁴ However, the feud that would become much better known was Ārzū's disagreement with Shaikh Ḥazīn, his exact contemporary. Ārzū's broadside against Ḥazīn, *Tanbīh al-Ḡāfilīn* [Admonition to the Heedless, ca. 1157/1744], is a critical tour de force which has been framed as the most coherent Indian response to the charge that the Persian used in India was inferior to Iranians' Persian (although that was not its stated intention).¹⁵ Driven from Isfahan by political unrest,

¹² “I hope that the poetry-knowers of India and the meaning-makers of Iran will not revile my correct speaking and will be apologetic” [*ummidwāram kih sukhan-shināsān-i hind wa ma’ni-rasān-i īrān bar rāst guftārī-yi man kajmaj zabān girift nakunand wa pozish dar pažirand*] (*Kārnāmah* 1977, 7).

¹³ For example, Munīr refers to “*sulh-i kull*,” the concept of tolerance famously put into practice by the emperor Akbar, but which refers etymologically to an armistice (*Kārnāmah* 1977, 7). Similarly Ārzū writes of Mūhammad Afzāl Šābit that “sometimes he is at peace and sometimes he is at war with me at a poetic recitation” [*bā faqīr bar sar-i shīr-i bait al-ḥal gāhi sulh wa gāhi jang dāshť*] (*MN* 2005, 69). Thanks to Rajeev Kinra for bringing my attention to the possibilities of “*sulh*.” Another set of rhetorical key terms having to do with justice, *inṣaf* and *dād*, will be explained further in the chapter.

¹⁴ Notably Wārastah but also lesser-known poets like Ḥākim Lahorī (Akram 1977, 39). The staying power of the debate between Munīr and Ārzū was such that it would be rekindled in the mid-nineteenth century by Imām Bakhs̄ Shāhba’ī in a work called *Qaul-i Faīsal* [The Last Word] (published by Naval Kishore as *Risālah-yi Qaul-i Faisal* n.d., see also Naim 2006).

¹⁵ Ḥākim is best known for his *Tažkirah-i Mardum-i Dīdah* [Biographical Dictionary of People (I Have) Seen, or Biographical Dictionary of the Pupil of the Eye] composed in 1761–2 and which frames many entries around long quotes from Ārzū’s *MN* (*Tažkirah-i Mardum-i Dīdah* 1961; Storey 1953, I.ii: 829). Ārzū claims Ḥākim as a friend, citing a difficult-to-translate verse by him on their friendship: “*zi dunyā wa z māfi-hā, zi dunyā wa z māfi-hā / hamīn yār ārzū dāram, hamīn yār ārzū dāram*” (*MN* 2004, 1:396). Ḥākim, despite his apparent friendship with Ārzū and respect for him, writes in his *tažkirah* that *Tanbīh al-Ḡāfilīn* is mostly unfair, namely that Ārzū has committed “*sitam-sharīkī*” or “partaking in oppression” (*Tažkirah-i Mardum-i Dīdah* 1961, 66). Arzu’s criticism of Ḥākim’s *diwān*, discussed in the context of Wārastah in Chapter 1, might have strained their relationship.

Hazīn came to India in 1147/1734 and was treated as a celebrity, as Ārzū himself notes in the preface to *Tanbih al-Ğāfilin*.¹⁶ In Indian cultural memory, including in folk tales, Hazīn is the archetypal haughty Iranian émigré, irascible and judgmental.¹⁷ This narrative is not the whole story because Hazīn had numerous Indian supporters, and in any case says little about India, good or bad, in his autobiography.¹⁸ Likewise, Ārzū does not object to any Iranian chauvinism on Hazīn's part but rather to his literary conservatism, demonstrating that in many of Hazīn's verses, Hazīn violates his own precepts and uses expressions for which there is no precedent. The far more explosive accusation was laid by Mīr Muḥammad 'Azīm, known by his pen-name Šabāt (1122–61/1710–48): He accused Hazīn of plagiarizing some 500 verses.¹⁹

¹⁶ *TĞh* 1981, 1.

¹⁷ Perry 2003; Khatak 1944; Kirmani 1986, 30. Mana Kia has argued convincingly that Hazīn's apparent dislike of India needs to be seen through the lens of his personal experience, and should be understood not as indicting Indian culture so much as lamenting his inability to return to his devastated native land (Kia 2009). Faruqi on the other hand points to Hazīn's "pure malice" (Faruqi 2004b, 17).

¹⁸ The chapter in which he purports to describe India (*Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* 1830, 275–83) is devoted to Iranian rulers' relations with India and says practically nothing about the place itself. However, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this study, in *Majma' al-Nafā'* Ārzū accuses him of having been an ungrateful and insulting guest in India.

¹⁹ Crucially the objection is not that words of others were copied but rather that themes were: "Šabāt pointed out 500 couplets from the *diwān* of the Shaikh [i.e., Hazīn] whose themes were in the form of others' themes" [šabāt pānṣad bait az diwān-i shaiķh rā bar-āwardah kih mazāmīn-i ānhā ba-jinsah az digarān ast]. This is cited by Hazīn's friend and erstwhile traveling companion Wālih in his *tazkirah Riyāz al-Shu'ara'* [Garden of the Poets, 1161/1748] (*Tazkirah-yi Riyāz al-Shu'ara'* 2005, 647ff; also quoted in Akram 1981, 30; partial trans. Faruqi 2004b, 37). According to Wālih, what raised Šabāt's ire was a comment by Hazīn on a verse of his father's. (He was the son of the well-known poet Muḥammad Afzal Šabit.) Hazīn wrote that the verse's theme [mazmūn] was not very good and was, in any case, "stolen" [duzdīdah ast] from some other poet. In a fit of pique at this negative comment on a single verse, Šabāt copied out 500 verses by Hazīn along with the verse he had supposedly plagiarized in each case. Wālih's entry on Hazīn is the longest in the *tazkirah*, taking up nearly forty pages in the printed edition and leaving Hāfiẓ in second place at just over thirty pages (Ārzū by contrast gets about a page). Remarkably he includes a lengthy selection of *Tanbih al-Ğāfilin* (shortened either intentionally or because it was copied from a manuscript recension we apparently no longer have) as well as the couplets Šabāt accused Hazīn of plagiarizing (*Tazkirah-yi Riyāz al-Shu'ara'* 2005, 635–47, 647–57). Before introducing the selection of Hazīn's work, he argues that the previous two dozen pages of criticism notwithstanding, Hazīn is a world-renowned poet [*sarāmad-i sukhānwarān-i 'ālam*] as his quoted verses prove. We can speculate as to why so much of Hazīn's entry in a *tazkirah* by his friend and traveling companion is taken up by criticism of Hazīn. Mana Kia has argued that it was in order to shame Ārzū and Šabit rather than to lend support to their position (Kia 2011, 219). Clearly, however, the Ārzū–Hazīn debate was important enough to merit inclusion at length.

Another significant instance of plagiarism was the wholesale inclusion by 'Aṭā'allāh Nudrat of entries from *SL* and *CH* (as well as from *Bahār-i 'Ajam*) in his own dictionary (*MN* 2005, 121).

The “Indian Style” and India

From Munīr’s preface in *Kārnāmah*, it is abundantly clear that his concern in the work was defending the honor of the Ancients against the free-wheeling Moderns. But this was not the frame adopted when later critics and historians reflected upon the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rather, those who are aware of Munīr’s work have preferred to view his criticism as the first salvo in an attack on the “Indian style” [*sabk-i hindī*.²⁰ The label “Indian style” purports to describe the poetic modes popular across the Persianate world from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth century. However, because the name refers to a specific place, India, many critics have claimed explicitly that the supposed degeneracy of the literature of the period springs from the Indian environment.²¹ There has been an undeniable South Asian influence on Persian literature for centuries, mostly in the form of word borrowings. It remains an open question whether Indian philosophy and Sanskrit literary culture (whether mediated through vernacular poetries or directly) had a more subtle influence.²² However, there is no evidence that such mixing was marked as foreign to the Persian cosmopolis, and

(Note that this is not the same Nudrat who was a Hindu disciple of Bedil and friend of Mukhlīṣ.) However, it is worth noting that plagiarism in the context of scholarly work was regarded differently from poetic plagiarism. A full discussion of this contrast is outside our present scope.

²⁰ The editor of *Kārnāmah* and SM himself writes that “Munir is the first critic who objected and raised his voice against the Sabk-i-Hindi in Lahore, in the first half of the eleventh century A.H., whereas this style of poetry was criticised in Isfahān at the end of the twelfth century A.H.” (Akram 1977, English introduction).

²¹ For example, M. J. Borah connects the historian Firishtah’s claim that Hindus began to take up the study of Persian seriously during Sikandar Lodi’s reign to the *sabk-i hindī* debate by arguing that “with the growing influence of the Hindu scholars who began to study Persian to qualify themselves for the service of the State, the difference in the style of India and Persia proper became more marked” (Borah 1934, 36; cf. Mohiuddin 1960, 24–5). This “Hinduiszation” of Persian has often been assumed but never satisfactorily demonstrated. One recent history of Iranian emigration makes precisely the same claim that *sabk-i hindī* came about because of contact with “Hindu philosophy and thought” [*‘aqā’id wa andeshah-yi hindū-ān*] (Raff 2004, 334ff.). For wider context see Kinra 2007.

²² For example, Faruqi suggests that Bedil’s definition of *sukhan* [speech, poetry] echoes the thought of the fifth-century Sanskrit grammarian Bhartṛhari (Faruqi 2004b, 19). He also speculates that there might be a connection between Sanskrit poetries and the “meaning-creation” [*ma’nī-āfirīn*] typical of early modern Persian poetry but admits “direct evidence is lacking as yet” (Faruqi 2004b, 31ff.). If the evidence is not yet available, we can at least consider the possibility that polyglot litterateurs of the Mughal period like ‘Abd al-Rahīm (Naik 1966; Sharma 2009; Lefèvre 2014) might have been a locus for such interactions.

in the early modern period it apparently produced none of the anxiety that later Persian critics felt towards anything that could not be given a properly documented Iranian provenance. The idea that India corrupted Persian literature has been a convenient license for such critics to voice their disapproval of all Persian literature of the period. What was so objectionable to these critics and how did it connect with their interpretation of early modern politics?

Mughal and Safavid-period literature has often been dismissed as the product of overwrought formalism obsessed with wordplay at the expense of emotion and truth. One twentieth-century Indian scholar writes, “Poetry produced under the Moghuls in the twelfth century AH [roughly, the eighteenth century CE], in India, is degenerate, stereotyped, and imitative. There is nothing new, creative or original about it.”²³ Ehsan Yarshater writes of such poetry that “Within its span the Indian style developed organically, followed a normal curve within certain limits and constraints, and finally exhausted itself into a lifeless and forced poetry.”²⁴ Discussions of the “Indian Style” have consistently been framed in terms of taste, obscuring its rickety conceptual framework.²⁵ Both fair-minded scholars and ideologues have time and again conflated these literary characteristics with cultural decline. But where does the formulation that complexity accompanies intellectual or aesthetic

²³ Khatak 1944, 57.

²⁴ Yarshater 1986, 965. We can add to this list Shafi'i Kadkani, who tries to rescue Iran from the worst excesses of the Indian Style by positing that however bad things were in Iran, they were far worse in India (Shafi'i Kadkani 1981, 150ff.). Yarshater 1988 offers some choice quotes from the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics.

²⁵ Cf. Hasan 1998, 6. The great Cambridge Persianist Edward Granville Browne, for example, justifies his exclusion of Indian poets on the grounds that his book would have become too long and because much had already been written about them in British India itself. However, after this milquetoast protest, he declares that “so far as a foreign student may be permitted to express an opinion on matters of literary taste, this Persian literature produced in India, has not, as a rule, the real Persian flavour, the *blar* as the Irish call it, which belongs to the indigenous product” (Browne 1956, 106–7). He continues in a vein that proves beyond a doubt that we in the twenty-first century need to reconsider his judgments. He concludes, “therefore the omission of Amír Khusraw from this chapter is as justifiable as the omission of Walt Whitman from a modern English literary history, especially as a very long notice of the former is given in Elliot’s *History of India*.” The only Indian literary production he includes in this work, which was crucial in shaping the later Western understanding of the Persian canon, is that of Mughal-period Iranian émigrés. An important recent corrective to Browne’s project is Alam 2003.

decline come from?²⁶ And why “Indian”? The style was neither invented in India nor particularly associated with India, except to the extent that Persian poets, both Indian and Iranian, could at that time find better opportunities for patronage in Mughal India than in Safavid Iran.²⁷ Ārzū himself notes the importance of Bābā Fīghānī of Shiraz (d. 1591) in forming the literary style that would later become dominant, and Fīghānī had no ties to India.²⁸ Nor did practitioners of the “Indian Style” ever refer to themselves as such. In fact, the term itself is no older than the early twentieth century. It was popularized by Muḥammad Taqī Bahār (1886–1951) in the introduction to his history of Persian literature, *Sabkshināsī*.²⁹ He ties temporal divisions in Persian literature to place, so the oldest style is “Khurasani,” the middle style is “Iraqi,” and the late

²⁶ The rhetoric of scholarship on Persian as it was used in South Asia involves some fascinating logical contortions. For example, in his history of thirteenth-century literature, Mumtaz Ali Khan (who is himself Indian) writes of a particular work that “It is free from those artificialities, affectations, intricacies and wordplays [sic] which detract from the value of some of the contemporary works, like the *Lubāb al-Albāb* and the *Tāj al-Māthir*” (Khan 1970, 58). By his own admission, the texts he has mentioned as flawed were *greatly admired* in their time, so on what basis is he calling the style tedious? He is simply giving voice to his own unexamined prejudices. (Here I use “prejudice” in Gadamer’s technical sense of a presupposition “that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition,” Gadamer 2006, 271ff.) Another such example is Khatak 1944, 57–8.

²⁷ Browne 1959, 26ff. See also Ghani 1930, 278ff.; Dale 2003, 199ff.; Yarshater 1988, 251; Lewisohn 1999. There is the fact, which troubled Iranian nationalists, that most of the dictionaries of the Persianate world during that period, arguably the golden age for Persian lexicography, were produced in India (Perry 1998, 329, 338–9; Tavakoli-Targhi 2001, 106–7). For a balanced recent account, see the editor’s preface to the 2001 edition of Tek Chand Bahār’s dictionary *Bahār-i ‘Ajām* (Bahār the eighteenth-century lexicographer should not be confused with the critic Muḥammad Taqī Bahār mentioned in this chapter).

²⁸ M 11; cf. Losensky 1998. The closest he ever got to the sub-continent was a stint in Herat in western Afghanistan.

²⁹ Bahār 1942. The pattern for Bahār is primeval cultural greatness followed by decline and lastly the return to greatness exemplified by his contemporaries. It is a kind of self-Orientalization that can also be observed in the Urdu tradition. The logic is exactly the same as Muḥammad Husain Āzād’s *Āb-i Hayāt* (discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this study). What is relevant here is that Āzād strains credulity trying to support his historically impossible argument that the tradition of Urdu poetry began “naturally,” became decadent, collapsed, and then recaptured its earlier simplicity under the benevolence of India’s British colonial masters (*Āb-i Hayāt* 1907). A dispassionate analysis shows Āzād’s framework to be deeply lacking. It is certainly a product of its time (1880, the zenith of British colonialism in India) just as Bahār’s work reflects the nationalism of late-Qajar and post-Qajar Iran (Smith 2009, 196ff.). Bahār “draws a border around literature of strictly Iranian origin, distinguishing it from—and elevating it above—Persian poetry written outside those lines” (Smith 2009, 199). This project of ethnic purification in Persian literature has been so successful that it is only recently that Iranian scholars have begun to take Indo-Persian seriously.

style is “Indian.”³⁰ It is a deeply misleading frame of reference; I am certainly not the first to argue that the term “Indian Style” (as in Bahār’s teleological formulation) is so freighted as to be irredeemable, and that we should just stop using it.³¹ However, it represents an attempt to explain an underlying phenomenon which is both real and worth understanding, namely the transformation wrought by *tāzah-go’ī*. Unlike “*sabk-i hindī*,” “*tāzah go’ī*,” also known as “*ṭarz-i tāzah*” (“fresh style”) or “*ibārat-i tāzah*” (“fresh expression”), was a contemporary label used by both its adherents and detractors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³² It is important to understand that in Bahār’s formulation *sabk-i hindī* is a stylistic category referring to a specific historical period, and not an analysis of linguistic and stylistic variations particular to Indo-Persian throughout history.³³ It is therefore not the same as observations throughout history of an “Indian accent” [*lahjah-yi hindūstāniyān*] or a particular “mode” [*rawish*] of Persian in India.³⁴

While some aspects of this multifaceted debate can and should be interpreted as an Iranian identity defining itself against an Indian identity and vice versa, considering the crisis of authority in simple ethnic terms (especially when we modern readers necessarily understand those terms anachronistically as corresponding to national identities) stops well short of a satisfactory explanation. To that end, let us dispense

³⁰ This same scheme is taken up by later scholars, e.g., Heinz 1973. In his earlier work, Ehsan Yarshater used the term “Safavid style” instead of “Indian style” (Subtelny 1986, 58). This however further confuses the issue because it implies that India played no role in Persian letters (at a time when it obviously did). The best compromise, if we accept the periodization, seems to be the ungainly term “Safavid-Mughal” (as in Losensky 1998).

³¹ Kinra 2007, 142n20. The interested reader can consult Kinra 2007 and Faruqi 2004b on this question. Good context is also provided in Hanaway 1989 and Smith 2009, 196. Faruqi memorably writes that Bahār has “a blind arrogance that better suits a provincial administrator than a literary historian and critic” (2004b, 21). Oddly, Bahār wrote a cheerful poem about how he pines for India (quoted in Barzegar 2001, x–xi). Bracketing off the question of whether this was a formal exercise or heartfelt, it nonetheless suggests that he did not develop his tripartite literary model out of antipathy for India, the namesake of the nadir of literary excellence in his system.

³² Shafi’i Kadkani introduces another term, “incidentalist style,” as an alternative (Shafi’i Kadkani 1981, 147). On *tāzah go’ī* in the Ottoman context, see (the delightful but occasionally uncritical) Andrews and Kalpaklı 2004, esp. 352; and Darling 2012, 179.

³³ The Iranian literary scholar Zabih Allah Safa argues that *sabk-i hindī* is the correct term on the basis that South Asia was at the center of Persian letters at the time, but admits that scholars debate whether the style has an Indian origin (Safa 1984, 523–4).

³⁴ See Alam 2003, 149; Dudney 2017b.

with the “Indian Style” as a frame of reference and consider instead the cultural politics of literary innovation: Early modern literary debates in Persian were framed primarily in terms of temporality, that is, old styles versus new styles. Cultural geography, which is to say India versus Iran, is a distant secondary concern in the critical literature until the end of the eighteenth century.³⁵ As early as the mid-eighteenth century, writers in Isfahan began to rebel against *tāzah-go'i*, and their criticisms were increasingly inflected by the idea that the place in which Persian literature is composed matters. They advocated a return to the literary style that existed before *tāzah-go'i*, and because literary trends diffuse unevenly, India remained a stronghold of *tāzah-go'i*.³⁶ By the nineteenth century, Indians had fully assimilated these critiques and themselves privileged Iranian Persian over their own.³⁷ Hints of nationalistic sentiments in literature, an entirely secondary concern in the eighteenth century, take on a special salience for us because we, and several generations of scholars before us, have been accustomed to thinking of literature as constitutive of a nation rather than of some other cultural unit, either smaller or larger than a nation. This is why Benedict Anderson warns us to contrast the modern nation-state, which we take for granted, with “large cultural systems that preceded it.”³⁸ Despite sharing a name, eighteenth-century India is not the post-1947 Republic of India, just as Safavid Iran is not today’s Islamic Republic of Iran. The understanding that we are dealing with unfamiliar political formations

³⁵ It was a distant concern but not a non-existent one. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi notes that “the earliest opponents of Indian Persian, like ‘Ali Ḥazīn and Wālīh Dāghestānī, were themselves distinguished poets of the Indian Style and they were disdainful of the Indian register of Persian, and not of the Indian Style of Persian poetry” (Faruqi 2004b, 17). While he is correct in the narrow sense that Ḥazīn and Wālīh would today be considered “Indian Style” poets, his account must be nuanced by noting that both frequently stated their opposition to contemporary poets while only rarely mentioning India (such as in the example he cites, which is the exception rather than the rule). To ignore this introduces anachronism. Furthermore, Faruqi does not consider Munīr in this context.

³⁶ Yarshater 1986, 965. And indeed it can be argued that the then-emerging Urdu literary tradition, whose relationship to Persian I address in Chapter 4, retained some of the stylistic complexity which was the hallmark of *tāzah-go'i*.

³⁷ Of course there are some exceptions among Indian scholars, who themselves stereotype the other way: Wahid Mirza declares, for example, that Amir Khusrav has a “peculiar finesse” lacking in all Iranian poets except Jāmī and Naṣīrī (Mirza 1935, 206).

³⁸ Anderson 1983, 19.

with relatively familiar names is crucial.³⁹ This also requires reflecting on where such “fore-meanings” (to use Gadamer’s terminology) come from, namely at least in part from critical texts that provide a compelling if problematic framework for the tradition in question.

Lutf ‘Ali Beg Āżar’s *Ātashkadaḥ* [Fire Temple, 1174/1760], the *tažkirah* associated with the genesis of the *bāzgasht-i adabī* [literary Renaissance] movement (itself an anachronistic label popularized by Bahār in the early twentieth century), was precisely such a category-establishing work.⁴⁰ It divides up poets by region of their birth and effectively ghettoizes India as a place where poetry was produced because so many of the important writers were immigrants.⁴¹ Although he does not explicitly state his disapproval of Indian poets, either collectively or as individuals, his blind spots are clear from the content: Hundreds of pages are devoted to Iranian poets, while Indians are represented in a section containing a meager seventeen entries.⁴² Most of these are just a few lines, with the accounts of just three poets, Faiżī, Ḥasan Dihlawī, and Amir Khusrau, spanning more than a page. He mentions just seven poets

³⁹ As Hans-Georg Gadamer argues, “Just as we cannot continually misunderstand the use of a word without its affecting the meaning of the whole, so we cannot stick blindly to our own fore-meaning about the thing if we want to understand the meaning of another” (Gadamer 2006, 271).

⁴⁰ *Bāzgasht-i adabī* was not a label used by poets of its time, but instead, like *sabk-i hindī*, was popularized by Bahār in the early twentieth century (Smith 2009, 197; Schwartz 2014). The structure of *Ātashkadaḥ* is explained in Matini 2011. In a rich analysis of the work’s concept of geography, Mana Kia warns against conflating awareness of place with nationalism (Kia 2014b, 90). The 1861 Bombay lithograph has been reprinted as *Tažkirah-yi Ātashkadaḥ* 1998.

⁴¹ On Āżar and the earlier but in a sense like-minded *tažkirah* writer Muhammad Tāhir Naṣrābādī, see Alam 2003, 176. Āżar’s description of India notes simply that it is hot and large, that “its customs and laws are often contrary to those of the people of Iran and indeed Turan” [*rusūm wa qawā’id-i ānjā akṣar khilāf-i ahl-i īrān ast balkih tūrān*], has bizarre fruits that are not found in Iran, and lastly that complete information about it is not available in Iran but can be constructed on the basis of books and manuscripts (*Ātashkadaḥ* 1999, 417). No mention is made of India’s centuries-long role supporting Persian literature or indeed welcoming Iranian intellectuals. On the contrary, Āżar exoticizes it and interprets it at a distance, perhaps akin to James Mill (who famously wrote in the preface to his history of India, “As soon as everything of importance is expressed in writing, a man who is duly qualified may obtain more knowledge of India in one year in his closet in England, than he could obtain during the course of longest life, by the use of his eyes and ears in India,” quoted in Majeed 1992, 139).

⁴² *Ātashkadaḥ* 1999, 423–38. The list of poets in the Bodleian Library catalogue’s entry on *Ātashkadaḥ* demonstrates just how stark the difference in numbers is (Sachau and Ethé 1889, 261ff., esp. 288). Dividing Indian and Iranian poets was not new, as this structure had been used in *tažkirahs* such as Naṣrābādī’s (1083/1672, enlarged 1092/1681), but it takes on a new significance under Āżar (since the *Tažkirah-yi Naṣrābādī* at least includes Iranian-born Mughal nobles in the India section). Ārzū extensively uses Naṣrābādī as a source in his own *MN*.

from Delhi, and the only one whom he quotes at length is Amīr Khusrav.⁴³ Furthermore, many poets deeply associated with India whom Āżar included were given a non-Indian provenance—after all, they had not been born in India—and poets who had long stints in India and were respected in their time, such as Shāh Jahān’s poet laureate Abū Ṭālib Kalīm (d. 1061/1651), were condemned. Kalīm was prolific but Āżar’s assessment is that he “has not a single verse worth remembering” [*shīrī kih qabūl-i tażakkur bāshad nadārad*] except in a few ǵhazals.⁴⁴ He goes on to damn Kalīm with faint praise by noting that his poetry was “accepted” [*musallam*] because of special favor from the Mughal emperor and Indian nobles. (This implies that while people read his work, it was not necessarily any good, objectively speaking.) As a further example, let us consider the four poets to whom Munīr objects: In the short entry on Ṭālib Āmulī, Āżar observes that Ṭālib “was for a time in India among the most respected in the service of Shāh Salīm [i.e., Jahāngīr]” and “in poetry [he] has a particular style which is not sought by eloquent poets.”⁴⁵ Zuhūrī merits a one-line notice.⁴⁶ ‘Urfī he acknowledges as a well-known poet whose *dīwān* he has come across many times but dismisses him as having “a few verses which are not empty of eloquence” [*chand shīrī kih kħālī az faṣāḥat na-būd*].⁴⁷ In contrast, he heartily approves of Zulālī as a poet whose poetry is “lucid” [*roshan-żamīr*]. Tellingly, the most obvious difference between Zulālī and these other poets is that he never spent time in India.⁴⁸

Āżar’s generation of Isfahan-based poets have no connection to the sub-continent.⁴⁹ By the time he was writing, a major change in the career

⁴³ The work’s twentieth-century publication history appears to recapitulate the problem: Tehran-based Amir Kabir publishers released the first three volumes of the work, edited by Hasan Saadat Nasiri, in 1957. The fourth and final volume edited by Mir Hashem Muhammadi, which contains all of the entries for the poets from India and Turan, was not released until 1999.

⁴⁴ Ātashkadah 1999, 48.

⁴⁵ “wa muddati dar hindūstān dar khidmat-i shāh salīm az mu’tabarīn būdah... wa dar shā’irī tarz-i khāṣṣi kih maṭlūb-i shu’arā-yi faṣīḥ nīst dārad” (Ātashkadah 1957, 2:870–1).

⁴⁶ Ātashkadah 1957, 1:130. ⁴⁷ Ātashkadah 1999, 191.

⁴⁸ Ātashkadah 1957, 2:767; cf. Ghani 1929–30, 193, 298–9 on the observation that Āżar harshly judges poets who made a living in India.

⁴⁹ They were the students of Sayyid Mir-‘Alī Muṣṭaq (d. 1757), a group including Āżar himself, Hāfiṭ, Sabāhī, Bidgoli, and Ṣahbā (Smith 2009, 200). Indeed, Sunil Sharma has argued that *Ātashkadah* was concerned above all with preserving a Safavid legacy in the wake of the collapse of the Safavid state (Sharma 2012b, 52).

paths of Iranian litterateurs had set in, namely that India was no longer an important rung in the advancement ladder for them. It had become a strange place onto which critical judgments could be projected at a distance. No one from their time into ours, notes the Urdu critic Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, has ever written a study of “the theory and practice of the language” used by Indo-Persian poets specifically.⁵⁰ The Indian Persianist Muḥammad ‘Abdul Ghānī, writing at roughly the same time as Muḥammad Taqī Bahār, argues that there would be no need for such a study because “the Indian style was essentially Persian, and was founded on the same model as obtained in or what was brought from Persia.”⁵¹ He notes that the idea that Indian usage was stylistically inferior—or even markedly different—from that of the rest of the Persian cosmopolis “now seems, perhaps more than it was a few years before, to be making impression [sic] on European minds, for the persons responsible for expressing such views have a far-reaching and authoritative voice.”⁵² Yet despite the lack of any rigorous analysis, the assumption remains on the part of many scholars in the West, in Iran,

⁵⁰ Faruqi 2004b, 61; cf. Alam 2003, 139n9. The difficulty is the slippage between the categories Indo-Persian and so-called “Indian Style” by any name (see Dudney 2017b). For example, Muḥammad Taqī Bahār includes a list of characteristics of “*sabk-i tāzah*” in his posthumously published article “*Ṣā’ib wa Shiわh-yi Ū*” [*Ṣā’ib and His Style*] (Bahār 1970). These are the usual generalities about an obsession with newness in expression that made eloquence all but impossible for the poets of this period (as well as decrying the *ghazal*, the iconic literary form of the period, as promoting facile thinking). He says of “*sabk-i tāzah*” that after it was developed in Safavid Iran “it then created a breach [as in a metaphorical wall] between Iran and India, and reached its zenith in India” [*az īrān bah hindūstān nīz rakhnah kard wa dar hindūstān takmil gardid*]. Thus he implies that the faults in Ṣā’ib’s poetry are somehow related to India without engaging at all with how Indo-Persian poetics might be different than Iranian Persian poetics.

⁵¹ ‘Abdul Ghani 1930, 3:278.

⁵² ‘Abdul Ghani 1930, 3:278. This is particularly in reference to his teacher, E. G. Browne, with whom he had a somewhat tense relationship. The preface to ‘Abdul Ghani’s later book, *Pre-Mughal Persian in Hindustan* [1941], remarkably includes a facsimile of a 1923 handwritten letter from Browne in which he writes “Professor ‘Abdu'l Ghānī appears to cling to what I regard as the delusion that Indian Persian is better than Persian Persian—a matter of constant conflict between us” (Ghani 1994, xxvii–xxix). ‘Abdul Ghani clarifies that he simply disagrees with Browne’s assessment that Indo-Persian is automatically inferior to Persian produced in Iran. Browne’s four-volume history of Persian literary culture was extraordinarily influential in Europe and in the former Persian cosmopolis. It is telling that the Pakistani scholar Sayyid ‘Abdullah cites as his authority the colonial researcher Henry Blochmann in his discussion of “*isti'māl-i hind*” [Indian usage of Persian] (‘Abdullah 1967, 267ff.; Blochmann 1868, 32ff.). Blochmann’s analysis, although largely unobjectionable, is still problematic because it rests mainly upon nineteenth-century sources (and for that matter nineteenth-century attitudes about standard Persian) while claiming to provide a general history of Indo-Persian usage.

and in India that Indo-Persian went irreparably wrong when measured against an Iranian standard of eloquence. A transhistorical Iranian standard was reified after Ārzū's lifetime by a group of poets apparently seeking a break with the past by bracketing off Iranian literary culture from the traditions of the Persian cosmopolis as a whole, although this motivation may also be a later accretion to the critical tradition. For Āżar, Šā'ib Tabrīzī (1592–1676), who stayed in India during the reign of Shāh Jahān, was one of the people who had utterly spoiled Persian literature. Āżar writes that

From when he first tossed off verses, the ways of thinking established by the eloquent among the ancients were closed off, the accepted principles of bygone masters were lost as well as the niceties of poetry after Šā'ib, who was the inventor of an unpleasant new style [*tarīqah*].⁵³

But even Āżar here frames the issue primarily as that of a degraded new style that should be replaced by a universally accepted old style.⁵⁴ By contrast, Ārzū's own assessment of Šā'ib is extremely positive, since Ārzū sees him as the “leader” [*sar-guroh*] of the Moderns.⁵⁵ Views like Āżar's became dominant across both India and Iran in the nineteenth century and were recapitulated throughout the twentieth: Iranian scholars (along with most Indian Persian scholars) could find little commendable in the *tāzah-go'i* poets. However, after the Iranian Revolution poets previously dismissed as decadent and unpleasantly difficult to interpret have started to get their due in the Iranian academy.⁵⁶

⁵³ “az āghāz-i sukhān-gustari-yi īshān ṭuruq-i khayālāt-i matīnah-yi fuṣahā-yi mutaqaddimān masdūd wa qawā'id-i musallim-i ustādān-i sābq mafqūd wa marātib-i sukhānwāri ba'd az janāb-i mīrzā-yi mushārlaihi kih mubdi'i tarīqah-yi jadidah-i nāpasandidah būd” (Ātashkadaḥ 1957, 122–3).

⁵⁴ Even in the nineteenth century, the Iranian nationalist scholar Rizā Quli Khan Hidāyat (1800–72) condemns this period in the strongest terms (“the poets, following their sick natures and distorted tastes, began to write confused, vain, and nonsensical poems”) in the preface to his *tazkirah Majma' al-Fuṣahā'* without specific reference to India (trans. Parsinejad 2003, 22; *Majma' al-Fuṣahā'* 1957).

⁵⁵ M 215.

⁵⁶ For example a special issue devoted to Bedil (no. 39–40, Winter 2007/Spring 2008) of *Qand-i Pārsi*, the journal of Iran Culture House, New Delhi, contains a number of articles by important Iranian scholars. Bedil's complexity has been recast as philosophical depth rather

In the Persian cosmopolis, the distinction between *motaqaddimīn* and *mota'akhkhirīn* was long-held and took on a special salience in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Five centuries before Ārzū, it appears in Amīr Khusrau's programmatic introduction to *Ĝhurrat al-Kamāl* [The Perfect New Moon, 1294], his third *dīwān* [book of collected poems].⁵⁷ This categorical division remains into the eighteenth century, albeit with the textual canon having been profoundly expanded. For example, Ārzū's Persian lexicon is structured around this division: The first volume deals with words and expressions used by the Ancients while the second, much slimmer volume deals with the Moderns' usages.⁵⁸ The Moderns may be further sub-divided into “*mu'āśirīn*” [(living) contemporaries] and “*mota'akhkhirīn*” [Moderns, living or dead], but there is no significant distinction between contemporaries and Moderns as there is between Ancients and Moderns.⁵⁹ Ḥazīn wrote a *tažkirah* of roughly 100 contemporary poets—completing it in just nine days apparently—entitled *Tažkirat al-Mu'āśirīn* [*Tažkirah* of [Our] Contemporaries, 1752].⁶⁰ Crucially, views on imitation were very different from those in our society and so the Ancients had an important role to play in

than cultural degeneracy. The preface to the volume grandly declares “the present decade has been the decade of Maulānā [the poet also called Rūmī] and the coming decade will without a doubt be that of Bedil” [*qarn-i hāzir qarn-i maulānā būd wa qarn-i āyandah bī hīch gumān az ān bedil ast*] (Qazwah 2008, 8). It is worth observing that Bedil's popularity, while it waned in Iran and India, never eroded in Afghanistan, where Persian speakers are said to hold him in as much esteem as Hāfiẓ.

⁵⁷ In this case the distinction is drawn between “*motaqaddamān*” and “*mu'āśirān*” (*Dibāchah-yi Dīwān-i Ĝhurrat al-Kamāl* 1975, 38; Kinra 2008, 347). Also Niżāmī 'Arūzī writing in the twelfth-century CE advises all would-be poets to memorize 20,000 lines of the Ancients and 10,000 of the Moderns (Zipoli 1993). In Arabic the division of Ancients from Moderns is practically primordial. For example, Ibn Qutaybah (d. late ninth-century CE) writes “I have not regarded an ancient with veneration on account of his antiquity nor any modern with contempt on account of his being modern” (trans. Nicholson 1907, 287).

⁵⁸ Naqvi 1962, 109–18. The second volume generally goes by the title *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*. It consists of words and expression used by the Moderns which do not appear in the major dictionaries (Ārzū mentions *Farhang-i Jāhangīrī*, *Farhang-i Surūrī*, and *Burhān-i Qāti'* as examples in the preface).

⁵⁹ A similar division of convenience has the “Middles” [*mutawassītīn*], e.g., in *Safīnah-yi Khwushgo*; see Husain 1937, 224 on Amīr Khusrau as the first of the “Middles.” The application of such a tripartite division in Urdu, as in Mir Ḥasan's *Tažkirah-yi Shū'arā-yi Urdū* [*Tažkirah* of Urdu Poets], will be addressed in Chapter 4.

⁶⁰ Storey 1953, 1,2:848. The claim of the improbably short writing time is Hazin's own, but he does not explain why he compiled it so quickly (*Tažkirat al-Mu'āśirīn* 1996, 228).

contemporary poetic practice.⁶¹ While outright plagiarism [*sariqat*] was generally condemned, thematic and formal imitation was institutionalized in the practice of writing poems in imitation of earlier masters [*istiqbāl*, lit. “welcoming”] and quoting them in order to reply [*tazmīn*.⁶² To choose two examples at random, Ṭālib (sixteenth and seventeenth century) acknowledges himself a follower of Amīr Ḫusrau (thirteenth century), while Abū al-Fażl (sixteenth century) acknowledges his debt to Abū al-Faraj Rūnī (eleventh century).⁶³ Thus, when Ārzū takes the side of the Moderns in the debates of his time, he is not in any way rejecting the Ancients but rather proposing a poetics that could cope with newness. He is so respectful of the Ancients that, as we saw in Chapter 2, he is willing to allow their mistakes in “Persianized” [*tafrīs*] words borrowed from Indic languages to stand because these have in his view become standard Persian. Moderns, however, must use recently borrowed Indic words in Persian correctly.

For us, Persian poetry, especially in the early modern period, is striking because of its rich and sometimes bewildering intertextuality—poets frequently reference other poets and depend on them for *sanad*, which we can formally translate as “warrant.” A *sanad* is an example of usage in which a particular poet used a particular word, phrase, or

⁶¹ This is also true of pre-modern and early modern Europe, where it was a virtue to write in the style of other people, for example Cicero in prose and Virgil in poetry (Bailey 1930, 205). “The sixteenth-century theorists of poetry,” argue Nagel and Wood, “had another name for pastiche: *imitatio*, or the transformation of text into text. The literary text of the Renaissance was understood to be the altered double of a predecessor text. Acceptable doubling was literary creation itself; unacceptable doubling—duplicitous doubling—was plagiarism” (Nagel and Wood 2010, 297).

⁶² The different levels of plagiarism were theorized as part of *ilm-i balāghah* (rhetoric). For a detailed analysis of the tradition’s distinction between permitted borrowings and plagiarism, see Losensky 1994 and Zipoli 1993. On the influential thirteenth-century critic Shams-i Qais’s views on plagiarism, see Clinton 1989, 117–25. The Orientalist Francis Gladwin glosses *tazmīn* as “when the Poet applies to his purpose some lines from another author; but in case the author so quoted be not well known, it is incumbent on him to mention the name, in order to obviate the imputation of plagiarism” (Gladwin 1801, 33). The classic account of plagiarism in Arabic theory is Grunebaum 1944 (although his assumption that imitation was equivalent to the classical Greek concept of mimesis was later criticized).

⁶³ Hadi 1962, 113; Ghani 1930, 63. To this list we could add the nineteenth-century poet Ḥalīb, who acknowledges himself a follower of ‘Urfī, Ṣā’ib, and Zuhūrī. Ḥalīb writes, for example, “ḡalīb az aurāq-i mā naqsh-i zuhūrī damīd / surnah-yi hairat kashīm dīdah ba-dīdān dahīm” [Ghalib! The color of Zuhūrī shines from our pages / Let us apply to collyrium of wonder in our eyes and engage them in the act of looking] (quoted in Rahman 1970, 48 with misprint of “taqsh” for “naqsh”).

metaphor in a particular meaning, and like a royal warrant, it implies a transaction of asking for and receiving approval from one's betters.⁶⁴ This is central to the enterprise of Persian poetry and yet modern critics have often failed to "allow intertextuality as a legitimate literary device."⁶⁵ Intertextuality—when a literary text cites or otherwise responds to a previous literary text—is one way in which *sanad* is embedded in the tradition. It has often been misinterpreted by later critics as "mere imitation" rather than a crucial component of the system of aesthetic control in Persian poetry. If we consider the painstakingly researched critical works that Ārzū and other poet-scholars have written then it becomes clear that the search for *sanad* was the ordering principle for literary scholarship in Persian.⁶⁶ In Ārzū's case, it raised questions about the history of language (discussed in Chapter 2) that we would recognize as his society's equivalent of our modern discipline of linguistics. For us, linguistics is an entirely separate realm of enquiry from literary criticism: It is the study of "languages themselves for their own sake."⁶⁷ In the pre-modern Persian tradition, there was no such distinction between the study of language and the appraisal of literature. We

⁶⁴ It is worth noting that the term's semantic range spans the secular and the religious. The Arabic root S-N-D literally refers to "making something rest upon something else." It refers to the chain of transmission (usually in the synonym *isnad*) in scholarship used to establish the authenticity of *hadīs*, but in Ottoman and Indo-Persian usage also refers to an officially sealed (and therefore authenticated) document or proclamation (Bosworth 2011, 703).

⁶⁵ Faruqi 2004b, 22. Likewise, critics have generally failed to see the importance of humor and mixed registers in Persian literature (Perry 2012, 90). It is axiomatic that whenever a literature is elevated to the status of a classic, critics attempt to save the tradition from its unsavory parts either by omitting them or trying to explain them away. In the Urdu tradition, a good example is the poet Mīr, who is generally described as a serious and somewhat dour man, but students of his (Persian prose) *Zikr-i Mīr* know that that text ends with several pages of ribald jokes, many about the sexual deviance of Pathans. For many modern readers, it would be inconceivable that the Mīr who wrote the serious poetry could be the same Mīr who collected dirty jokes, but of course he was.

⁶⁶ It is useful to consider John Searle's concept of the "constitutive rule," namely a principle without which a system ceases to be itself. For example, imagine a game of chess without the Queen's move—it would still be a game of strategy involving pieces moved around a board in turns but it could not meaningfully be called "chess" (Taylor 1985, 34). Failing to recognize the function of *sanad* (or rather dismissing it as the mark of degeneracy) similarly deforms modern criticism of the Persian poetic tradition. A text by Ārzū's friend Tek Chand Bahār called *Ibtāl-i Zarūrat* [Refutation of Poetic License], which was lithographed in 1268/1851–2, argues that good poetry should not allow changes made out of poetic necessity [*zarūrat-i shīr*] (Blochmann 1868, 29–30). In other words, he appears to argue (contrary to Ārzū, who is trying to account for poetic innovation), that absolutely everything in poetry must rest on proper *sanad*.

⁶⁷ "les langues en elles-mêmes et pour elles-mêmes" (Auroux 1989, 30).

must therefore be receptive to critical concerns that seem very different from our own and avoid imposing anachronistic judgments on the material.⁶⁸ Thus we should focus on what appears to have truly concerned Ārzū, namely that new poetic styles presented novel issues of interpretation. The old system of *sanad* was threatened by people's enjoyment and approval of verse that did not have an obvious precursor.

In Europe, imitation [*imitatio*] was also a guiding principle in literature until the Modern period.⁶⁹ The Ancients and Moderns debate in Europe emerged from Renaissance questions about which literary and bureaucratic models were to be imitated, the more recent scholastic tradition or the rediscovered literature of Antiquity. In the words of Ingrid Rowland,

The drive to purge Latin of its medieval vocabulary also marked a rebellion against its development into a bureaucratic and technical language. Medieval Latin was the Latin of laws, contracts and of traditional university education. Medieval theology and philosophy had acquired pinpoint precision, but precision could also sound excruciatingly dull.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Foucault's eloquent summation of the state of knowledge in pre-modern Europe can be a guide for the Persian tradition as well: "To us, it seems that sixteenth-century learning was made up of an unstable mixture of rational knowledge, motions derived from magical practices, and a whole cultural heritage whose power and authority had been vastly increased by the rediscovery of Greek and Roman authors. Perceived thus, the learning of that period appears structurally weak: a common ground where fidelity to the Ancients, a taste for the supernatural, and an already awakened awareness of that sovereign rationality in which we recognize ourselves, confronted one another in equal freedom" (1994, 32). Foucault also reminds us of the value of seeing each Persian critical work as "a node within a network... caught up in a system of reference to other books, other texts, other sentences" (Foucault 1972, 23).

⁶⁹ The Aristotelian formulation of mimesis (the imitation of nature) gave way to the imitation of other authors. An interesting parallel is that the eighteenth-century Orientalist Sir William Jones disagreed with Aristotle's formulation and so apparently coincidentally held a view on imitation of nature that was compatible with Perso-Arabic literary theory (Mukherjee 1968, 43). (On the pitfalls of applying Western notions of mimesis to Perso-Arabic literature, see Meisami 2003, 4.) A good eighteenth-century expression from the Western perspective of the tension between imitation as necessity and as a sign of cultural degradation is Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* [History of the Art of Antiquity, 1764] on the Greeks (Stern 2003, 69).

⁷⁰ Rowland 1998, 14; cf. Auerbach 1993, 121. Likewise, Janet Coleman argues that the transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is best understood as a "genre shift" (Coleman 1992, 573ff.).

Humanists, particularly those associated with the Roman Academy, sought to recover what they saw as the natural grace of classical Latin and from the fifteenth century onward took deliberate steps to bend literary usage back towards the Classics. Many of them were bureaucrats in the Papal establishment and could change the Latin of the Church from within. Famously “nuns” became “Vestal Virgins,” “churches” became “temples,” and so on.⁷¹ This was not a simple substitution of vocabulary but rather the smallest unit of an enormous cultural reorientation that found its expression in literature, architecture, the arts and political philosophy. From the beginning, Renaissance humanists had a sense that they were separated from the Ancients not just in time but by different modes of living, but this had not necessarily called into question the desire to order society and culture on the basis of Antiquity.⁷² By the seventeenth century, this devotion to the Ancients was itself critiqued. People began to rebel against what Quentin Skinner has usefully called “the mythology of doctrines,” namely that for any given subject an ancient writer “will be found to enunciate some doctrine on each of the topics regarded as constitutive of the subject.”⁷³

The Texts: Munīr’s Critique and Ārzū’s Responses

Returning to the primary sources, let us consider Munīr’s *Kārnāmah*. Throughout the text, his mode of attack is expressing his strong opinions about which metaphors are meaningful and which are nonsense. He rejects metaphors not used by the Ancients, although Ārzū shows that in some cases he has made the mistake of thinking there was no precedent for a certain usage when there actually had been. When Ārzū comes to the defense of the Moderns two generations after Munīr’s attack on them, he does not reject the primacy of the Ancients but rather makes space for the Moderns by developing a poetics that could assess their works rather than dismissing them out of hand. Munīr’s haphazard approach stands in contrast to Ārzū’s careful theorization of literary criticism, and their personalities differed considerably. Munīr was

⁷¹ Rowland 1998, 199.

⁷² Auerbach 2003, 321.

⁷³ Skinner 2002, 59.

recognized as brilliant at an early age, had a brief and controversial career, and then died young, aged just thirty-four.⁷⁴ Ārzū on the other hand invokes his old age in the preface to his *Dād-i Sukhan* [Justice in Poetry, or A Poetic Gift, ca. 1746], noting that he had been a student of poetry from the “whiteness” of childhood through the “blackness” of youth into the “yellow sun” of old age.⁷⁵ Temperament perhaps goes some way to explain why Munīr, the literary *enfant terrible* of his time, vaguely states a program to defend the Ancients vigorously against the Moderns, while Ārzū, the critical *éminence grise* of his own time, speaks from a lifetime of poetic experience when he lays out his interest in both the theory and practice of literature. Ārzū nonetheless has only compliments for Munīr in his *tazkirah Majma‘ al-Nafā’is*. He writes that Munīr’s “like in the art of poetry has not been seen in India since Faiṣī. In the art of *belles lettres* he is a follower of the style of Amīr Khusrau . . . By any measure he is accepted by the proven authorities of the perfect people of India and Iran.”⁷⁶ Such politeness is de rigueur for the *tazkirah* genre, but critical works like *Kārnāmah* and *Dād-i Sukhan* had more scope to be vicious.

The two works that Ārzū wrote in reply to Munīr are *Sirāj-i Munīr* [The Shining Lamp, or The Lamp for Munir] and *Dād-i Sukhan*. The dating is uncertain but *Dād-i Sukhan* was probably written in 1746 and *Sirāj-i Munīr* was written at some point before that with *Tanbih al-*

⁷⁴ By his own estimate, Munīr had written 100,000 couplets. He adds, demonstrating that he was not a particularly humble man, that “each and every couplet is elevated by the sparkle of meaning” [*har yak bait al-sharaf-i kaukahab-yi ma nī ast*] (*Kārnāmah* 1977, 27). Munīr took his pen-name at fourteen, and entered the service of Saif Khān, the governor of Agra and brother-in-law of the empress Mumtāz Mahal, at age 25 in 1045/1635. He was apparently well received in Agra. On his patron’s death in 1049/1639, he went to Jaunpur before returning to Agra and dying there in Rajab 1054/September 1644 (Memon 2011).

⁷⁵ DS 1.

⁷⁶ “miśl-i i‘ī bah fann-i shi‘r ba‘d-i faiṣī bah hindūstān bah ham narasidah. dar fann-i inshā muttabī‘-i ṭarz-i amīr khusrāu ast . . . bah har ḥāl az musallam al-ṣubūtān-i ahl-i kamāl-i hind wa irān ast” (MN 2005, 116–7).

Ārzū also notes the existence of the following works of Munīr: His *Sāz-o Barg* is a *mašnawī* “in praise of the betel-leaf and specifically Indian items” [*dar sitāyish-i barg-i tanbul wa ghairah wa ashyā-yi makḥṣūsah-yi hind*] and he has also written a *mašnawī* “describing the flowers of Bengal” [*dar ta‘rif-i gulhā-yi bangālah*] which must be *Mazhar-i Gul* [A Show of Flowers], also called *Mašnawī dar Sīfat-i Bangālah* [A *mašnawī* on the character of Bengal]. *Sāz-o Barg* was published in Lucknow 1889 and since reprinted (Memon 2011).

Ĝħafilin falling between them, most likely in 1744.⁷⁷ It is worth summarizing the contents of each because this will help demonstrate how interconnected the Indo-Persian critical tradition is.

Sirāj-i Munīr is a direct response to Munīr's *Kārnāmah* with which I began this chapter.⁷⁸ In *Kārnāmah*, Munīr critiques four poets, 'Urfi, Tālib, Zulālī, and Zuhūrī, who were his elder contemporaries and some of the most respected poets of the day. Ārzū notes that what unites Munīr's four targets is that they are "Modern" [*muta'akhkhir*], clearly setting up a conflict between old and new styles.⁷⁹ Munīr's criticism is sharp throughout but he claims in his preface that he is not an enemy [*khaṣm*] of any of the poets.⁸⁰ In other words, he presents his remarks as a reasoned critique rather than a personal attack. He analyzes some fifteen verses by each poet. In *Sirāj-i Munīr*, Ārzū takes each of those verses, quotes at least part of Munīr's commentary, and then comments on the commentary. The non-polemical commentary that Ārzū wrote on the *qaṣidahs* of 'Urfi before he wrote *Sirāj-i Munīr* is excluded from this discussion.⁸¹

Dād-i Sukhan is based on a similar principle but with an added layer: First, Muḥammad Jān Qudsī (d. 1056/1646–7), a poet laureate under Shāh Jahān, wrote a *qaṣidah*. Then his contemporary Mullā Shaidā (d. 1042/1632) commented on some lines of which he disapproved. This commentary was counter-commented by Munīr, and finally Ārzū has added his contribution to the debate in *Dād-i Sukhan* while citing the

⁷⁷ *Dād-i Sukhan* must be the latest of the critical works, since it mentions both *Sirāj-i Munīr* and *Tanbih al-Ĝħafilin* (DS 6) while *Sirāj-i Munīr* mentions neither of the other texts. A manuscript at Punjab University (Lahore) has a colophon stating that *Dād-i Sukhan* was written in Muḥammad Shāh's thirty-eighth regnal year—however, we cannot accept this since Muḥammad Shāh's rule only lasted thirty years (Akram 1974, xx). Ārzū mentions in *Dād-i Sukhan*'s preface that he is now an old man, which puts the composition date not earlier than the 1740s. The editor has concluded that *Dād-i Sukhan* was written in 1746/1159 on the basis that the regnal year "38" was probably a scribal error for "28" (Akram 1974, xxi). The preface to *Tanbih al-Ĝħafilin* mentions that it was written approximately ten years after Hazīn arrived in India (Hazīn writes in his autobiography that he arrived in Sindh at the beginning of Shawwal 1146 = March 1734). It was perhaps composed at the same time as *Dād-i Sukhan* because it does, in fact, contain a single reference to *Dād-i Sukhan* (*TGh* 31). Otherwise this must be an interpolation.

⁷⁸ The context is explained in Alam 2003, 182ff.

⁷⁹ SM 33.

⁸⁰ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 7.

⁸¹ The commentary on 'Urfi is unpublished and the three manuscripts in the British Library's Delhi Persian Collection (Delhi Persian mss. 1286A, 1286C, and 1286D) are all nineteenth-century copies.

positions of his predecessors. Additionally, *Dād-i Sukhan* begins with three fascinating prefaces on critical theory that Ārzū himself claims are unique in the tradition.⁸²

Tanbih al-Ğāfilin, or in its full and gloriously Arabicized title *Risālah-yi Tanbih al-Ğāfilin fi I'tirāzāt 'alā Ash'ār al-Hazīn* [lit. The Essay of Admonition to the Heedless, in Objections to the Verses of Hazīn], is altogether simpler since it consists only of Ārzū's objections to some 300 verses of Hazīn. It follows the same pattern as the two works against Munīr in that it criticizes specific lines of Hazīn. Ārzū also apparently wrote a shorter second tract against Hazīn called *Ihqāq al-Haqqa* [Administering Justice, or Establishing the Truth], but no manuscript of it exists and we only know about it because Imām Bakhs̄ah wrote a text in the nineteenth century in response to it. It was Ārzū's spat with Hazīn (rather than with Munīr) that captured the imagination of Indo-Persian scholars in the nineteenth century because it fit so well into the narrative of Indians versus Iranians.

Dād-i Sukhan's Prefaces

Ārzū's prefaces to *Dād-i Sukhan* attempt to establish the limits of literary interpretation in a way that the tradition never had before: *Where does poetic authority come from?* is the implicit question. Ārzū writes that the prefaces are based on his own ideas [*gumān-i khwud*] and deploys a standard formula for when an idea is uncontested: (literally) “May God make it true!”⁸³

The first preface deals with mistakes in poetry and suggests a method for deciding whether a strange usage by an otherwise qualified Persian poet is in fact a mistake. Ārzū himself admits that this is a “very difficult” [*khailī mushkil*] task. He accepts that usage shifts over time, but also that native speakers inevitably make mistakes because making mistakes is an integral part of language use.⁸⁴ Ārzū invokes vernacular poetic practice

⁸² DS 2–14.

⁸³ “*khudā kunad kih wāqi'ī bāshad*” (DS 2).

⁸⁴ This has, of course, become a crucial principle in modern linguistics, which recognizes that speech errors occur even when the underlying linguistic concept is sound in a person's mind. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that in this preface Ārzū invokes *rekhtah*, a vernacular literary practice that would come to be called Urdu, and such a reference to something outside

(“*rekhtah*”) in order to make his case, which appears to be a new development in Indo-Persian intellectual history.⁸⁵ He proposes that the solution for determining whether a mistake has been committed is an assessment based on both the record of previous poets’ acceptance of a usage and consensus among respected poets. Specifically, if a usage is picked up by poets “whose standing is beyond reproach and accepted by others” [*kih pāyah-ash māfauq-i radd wa qabūl-i dīgarān ast*] then it becomes an accepted usage [*dākhil-i taṣarruf*.⁸⁶ Crucially, the Ancients are by definition beyond reproach—being cited for centuries has proved their worth—but the Moderns are not. It may seem obvious that an expression becomes accepted if people accept it, but Ārzū is making a more subtle claim: Just as the Ancients’ works became *sanad*, contemporary poets are also producing works that will potentially become *sanad*. For example, a formula that appears in *Tanbih al-Ğāfilīn* is that “the Shaikh [i.e., Ḥazīn] is the only *sanad* for” a particular usage.⁸⁷ Indeed, Ārzū implies with his careful refutations of various usages that he is fearful that an ugly expression will become *sanad*.⁸⁸ He points out a metrical fault in a Modern poet and then asserts that research [*tahqīq*]

the Persian tradition implies that this is a universal formulation about poetry. A thorough discussion of Ārzū’s ambition to make his literary theory universal and therefore applicable to Urdu/“*hindi*”/“*rekhtah*” will be taken up in Chapter 4.

⁸⁵ Cf. *TGH*, in which Ārzū mentions some *rekhtah* poets and notes that “a Mughal [in this context, an Indian-born Muslim and therefore a native speaker of *hindi*] and a non-Mughal is equivalent in the mistake in his own language” [*muğħal wa ghair-muğħal dar ġħalat bah zabān-i kħwud musāwi ast*] (*TGH* 76).

There are some earlier claims of the vernacular on Persian such as the thirteenth-/fourteenth-century poet Amīr Khusrau’s boast in the *mašnawī Nuh Sipīhr* [The Nine Heavens] and the preface to his third *diwān*, *Ğhurrat al-Kamāl* [The Full Moon] that India is great because its inhabitants can learn other languages, including Arabic and Persian, but outsiders can never master Indian languages (see the discussion in Gabbay 2010). The nature of *rekhtah* as a mixed form invites some comparison between the vernacular and Persian such as the Deccani poet Nuṣratī Bijāpūri’s (1600–74?) statement that “Some beauties of Hindi poetry cannot / Be transported to Persian properly” (translated in Faruqi 2004b, 33). I have not, however, come across any *rigorous* comparison between the two languages before Ārzū.

⁸⁶ *DS* 7.

⁸⁷ For example, *TGH* 124.

⁸⁸ The critical literature on Arabic, from which Persian criticism took important inspiration, is quite different because Arabic is the language of divine revelation in Islam and therefore requires special considerations. For theological reasons, Arabic grammarians have throughout history been concerned with the corruption of language [*fasād al-lughah*] (Auroux 1989, 247). For example, the Arabic literary theorist ‘Abd al-Qāhir Jurjānī (d. 471 AH/1078 CE), who is arguably the most important theorist on *balāghat* in the tradition, frequently refers to the idea that if someone changes the rules of a language then he can no longer be called a speaker of it—clearly Ārzū has moved far from this view (Baalbaki 1983, 11–12).

points to similar mistakes in the work of some of the Ancients but “to name them would be a slight against propriety.”⁸⁹ Likewise, he cautions that “to take up a mistake of one of the greats [*buzurgān*] is a great mistake [*khaṭā-yi buzurgī*.]” Poets therefore need to be vigilant lest future writers treat their slips of the pen as *sanad*, as has happened in a few, thankfully rare, cases. After all, as they say in a different literary tradition, even Homer nods.⁹⁰

The second preface deals explicitly with the question of whether (non-native) Indian speakers of Persian are competent to make changes in Persian usage to vocabulary and expressions. Indeed, he refers to the usage of the poets who might be making such changes as “the idiom [*taṣarruf*] of the mighty lords of India who have brought poetry and *belles lettres* [*inshā*] to the seat of perfection.”⁹¹ He appeals to history to observe that Iranians had accepted Turkish and Arabic words and constructions [*tarākīb*], and as these were pulled into Persian, their meanings changed considerably from Turkish as it was spoken in Central Asia [lit. Turan and Turkistan].⁹² He most directly addresses tensions between Iranians and Indian Persianists when he writes that the objection of Iranians against Indians’ idiomatic usage [*rozmarrah*] are unfounded.⁹³ Mastery, however, is crucial: He notes that a certain

⁸⁹ “*burdan-i nām-i išān sūr-i adab ast*” (*DS* 3). Similarly in *MN*, he points out a metrical fault in a couplet by a contemporary poet called Girāmī (d. 1156/1743), calling it “apparently a mistake” [*ḡhālib^{an} sahw*] and also sighing “but this particular mistake indeed appears in the meter of several of the masters” [*lekin sahw-i mažkūr dar bahr-i ba’zī az asātižāh niz wāqi’ ast*] (*MN* 2005, 111). Shams-i Qais, apparently dealing with the same issue that not all *sanad* is good *sanad*, counsels would-be poets to take care to only imitate good poets and not bad ones (Clinton 1989, 116).

⁹⁰ The Roman poet Horace in his *Ars Poetica* notes his irritation at what we might call the “continuity errors” in the Homeric epics with the line “I become annoyed whenever good Homer nods” [*indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*] (359). As Indians became increasingly self-conscious of their supposedly defective Persian, the scope of *sanad* accepted from Indian poets was seen to narrow to the impossible standard of poets whose verse was absolute perfection: The poet Ğhālib (1797–1869) famously argues that besides Amir Khushrau, he himself is the only good Indian poet of Persian, because even “even master Faiżī [a poet laureate under the emperor Akbar] fumbles once in a while” (translated in Faruqi 2004b, 5).

⁹¹ “*taṣarruf-i sāhib-i qudratān-i hind kih fann-i shi’r wa inshā rā bah ‘arsh al-kamāl rasāniḍah-and*” (*DS* 7).

⁹² He makes an identical case in *Mušmir* (*M* 38–9).

⁹³ For example, he writes of a particular expression that differs by a single word in India and Iran that the Indian form is acceptable: “The criticism of the Persians is unfounded against our idiom ‘what leaves from his purse [*kisah*]’ as opposed to ‘[what leaves] from his purse [*girih*]’” [*i’tirāz-i fārsiyān bī-jā-sī kih rozmarrah-yi mā az kisah-yi ū chih mī rawad ast nah az girih-i ū*]

expression has become standard in Indo-Persian “through strength and not because of weakness and error.”⁹⁴ Ārzū notes that Amīr Ḳhusrau is one such master [*ustād*] whose usage was innovative rather than mistaken. He is recognized by all the great poets of Iran and Turan, and indeed, Ārzū tells us to preclude any possibility that Ḳhusrau is only appreciated by Indians; his works are cited in important dictionaries by non-Indians (namely *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* “by one of the nobles of Shiraz” and Surūrī’s *Majma‘ al-Furs* “by a poet established in Kashan”).⁹⁵ Abū al-Fażl’s *Akbarnāmah* is likewise acclaimed by Iranian men of letters.

In the third preface, Ārzū divides his contemporaries into groups according to their different methods of poetic interpretation. The fundamental distinction is between common readers [*‘awāmm*] and connoisseurs [*khawāṣṣ*], although a poem should ideally appeal to both even if common readers will miss the subtleties of its meaning. However, the usage of expert poets should not be subject to the whims of common readers who lack the training to understand literary subtleties. Crucially, simply being a native speaker of a language does not qualify one as an expert because literary judgment requires particular training. Ārzū mentions a famous quotation from “one of the greats of India [addressed] to one of the contemporary poets of Iran” (which is elsewhere attributed to Abū al-Fażl with ‘Urfī Shīrāzī as his interlocutor) that “We have learned your language from your most eloquent [i.e., written works by classic authors], and you have learned it from your old men [*pīrzāl-hā*].”⁹⁶ He

(DS 8). Amīr Ḳhusrau is cited as *sanad* for this expression in M 38, although the context of the quotation does not allow us to determine what the expression actually means. On the use of “*rozmarrah*” as a technical term, see Chapter 4.

⁹⁴ “az rū-yi qudrat ast nah az rāh-i ‘ajz wa dali” (M’U 2002, 98). This is parallel to a crucial distinction in Persian poetics between two kinds of error, *ghalat-i ‘āmm* and *ghalat-i ‘awāmm*, where the former is a mistake sanctified by usage (“which all eloquent people use” [*tamām fuṣḥāhā bādān takallum kunand*]), while the latter is a mistake born of simple ignorance (M’U 2002, 98; cf. Blochmann 1868, 33).

⁹⁵ It is worth pointing out that both men in fact had Indian connections: Injū, the author of *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, although originally from Shiraz, was resident in India when he compiled his dictionary at the behest of the Mughal emperor. Surūrī, although he wrote and revised his dictionary in Kashan, compiled the second edition after receiving a copy of *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* from India. Furthermore, there is some evidence, which is perhaps spurious, that he came to India in Shāh Jahān’s reign and died there (Blochmann 1868, 16–17).

⁹⁶ DS 9, cf. M 33. For the nineteenth-century poet Ghālib, there is an addendum, namely a withering response from ‘Urfī, to the effect that of course the great poets of Iran, whose work Indians study, learned from these very same old people (Faruqi 1998, 27). Faruqi notes that he has not been able to trace this incident back before Ghālib but in fact this must be the same—a

contrasts “*ahl-i zabān*,” literally “people of the language” but here most likely meaning what we would call native speakers, with “*ahl-i tahqīq*,” or “people of research,” namely those who mine previous poets’ works for precedent. Even more explicitly, he declares that native speakers [*ahl-i muḥāwārah*] and non-native speakers [*ghair-i īshān*] are equivalent [*musāwi*] because what matters is the ability to assess precedent.⁹⁷ Furthermore, Ārzū argues that the best kind of interpretation is a holistic one that does not fall into the trap of following a single narrowly focused interpretative style. He lists six or seven (depending on how one counts) different sorts of people whose interpretations or compositions are restrictive.⁹⁸ For example, one category is that of the “*arbāb-i ma‘āni*” (lit. “Lords of Meanings”) who focus on questions of semiotics to the exclusion of other concerns. Another, the *arbāb-i bayān* (lit. Lords of Discourse) focus only on simile [*tashbih*] to the exclusion of all else while the *bādīyān* (“inventors”) concentrate on literary ornamentation, including *īhām*. Ārzū has a particular distaste for the interpretative practices of schoolmasters known as *nāzims* in India [*mullayān-i maktabī...kīh dar hind nāzim khwānand*] whom he considers charlatans.⁹⁹ On the other hand he considers interpretation “according to the taste of the poets” [*muwāfiq-i mažāq-i shu‘arā*] to be a useful catch-all for other considerations such as whether an expression from everyday language [*rozmarrah*] is appropriate for poetry.

The crucial role of expertise in determining whether an expression is eloquent Persian is echoed by Ārzū’s close friend Ānand Rām

version nearly identical with Ghālib’s is quoted by DS’s editor from a manuscript of Ārzū’s contemporary Mirzā Muhammad ‘Ali Tamannā apparently quoting the Shāh Jahān-period critic Jalālā-yi Ṭabāṭabāī (DS lxi).

⁹⁷ M 30.

⁹⁸ A thorough analysis (in Urdu) of the third preface is ‘Abdullah 1977, 142–7. See also Keshavmurthy 2013, 35.

⁹⁹ This particular teacher says that in a couplet in which both lines end “*ya‘nī chih?*” [so what?], a verb must be expressed rather than implied. The pedantry is obvious in English as well: No right-thinking person would suggest that the phrase “so what?” is wrong and must instead be “so what is it?” In this context, Ārzū scornfully brings up the question that began the debate he is trying to settle in *Dād-i Suḥān*: the objection by Shайдā to Qudsī’s use in a couplet of the word “*tang*” [tight, narrow] to refer to grief rather than to a space. (In the former case, he says, it is a matter of quality [*kaifiyat*] of the grief while in the latter it is a matter of quantity [*kammiyat*] of the space. He implies that only truly stupid people would not see the obvious difference.)

Mukhlis, who writes in *Mir'āt al-Īstilāh* [The Mirror of Expressions, 1158/1745] that

Yahyā Kāshī has used the word “squirrel” [*gilahri*] in his *mašnawī* satirizing gluttony even though it is a *hindī* word. As I have written above, for masterful poets [*khudāwandān-i isti'dād*] whatever they say goes and it is a warrant [*sanad*] for beginners.¹⁰⁰

We can be certain that the ideas developed in this work have Ārzū's stamp of approval because the manuscript was given to Ārzū to correct three months after Mukhlis's death in 1164/1751. Ārzū writes,

Ask not of my dejection:
Now there is no enthusiasm in poetry for me.
My heart was Ānand Rām Muķhlis;
After his death, I find no enjoyment.¹⁰¹

A remarkable parallel to Ārzū and Muķhlis's views on poetic mastery is the entry for Bedil in Āzād Bilgrāmī's *tažkirah Khizānah-yi 'Āmirah* [The Royal Treasury], which declares that as a master, Bedil has the right to innovate.¹⁰² The passage cites as evidence Ārzū's discussion of Bedil in *Majma‘ al-Nafā'is*, in which he makes the same claim, as well as *Dād-i Sukhan*.

Later critics have had some difficulty accepting the formulation that the masters have free rein. For example, the last lines of *Dād-i Sukhan* are

¹⁰⁰ “yahyā kāshi lafz-i gilahri rā dar mašnawī kih ba-hajw-i akūlī āwardah ast wa hāl ānkih huruf-i hindī ast hamān ḥarf-i faqīr ast kih dar aurāq-i guzashtah niwistah-am kih ba-khudāwandān-i isti'dād harchih ba-gūyand mīrasad wa in barā'i mutabaddiyān sanad ast” (f. 252b in British Library ms Or 1813 (= *Mir'āt al-Īstilāh* 1850); *Mir'āt al-Īstilāh* 2013, 660; see Rieu 1879–83, 3:997). The passage to which he refers is an observation [*naql*] that is missing in the British Library ms but appears in *Mir'āt al-Īstilāh* 2013. It says: “Let it be known that some venerable people believe that a *hindī* word should not be used in a Persian verse because it degrades the verse. Nevertheless, Hakim Ḥāziq—a master of language—has used the word ‘chūri’ [bangle] in the verse quoted above. Likewise, Mullā Ṭughrā has a large number of *hindī* words in his verses. This means that these [restrictions] are for novices and beginners. It is allowed for the master-poets [*ahl-i qudrat*] who are free from obligation.”

¹⁰¹ “afsurdagī-yi marā ma-pursid / aknūn na-buwad ba-shi'r shauq-am / dil būd ānand rām muķhlis / az murdan-i ū na-mānd žauq-am” (*Mir'āt al-Īstilāh* 1850, f. 10a).

¹⁰² *Khizānah-yi 'Āmirah* 252–3.

paraphrased in the English introduction by the work's editor Sayyid Muhammad Akram as follows:

The Persian poets belonging to the countries other than Iran, who are experts in language and rhetoric and have long experience in poetic exercises, are qualified to amend or modify the meaning of words and idioms and use indigenous idioms in case of poetic emergency.

A more literal translation would go like this:

Thus it is clear that if someone neither Iranian nor Turanian [that is, a Central Asian] has followed excellence and has conversed with the Masters of Idiom then his utterance is *sanad*, but to the degree that he takes all the [necessary] pains, only as God has willed [i.e., only under exceptional circumstances].¹⁰³

The phrase “poetic emergency” is an overstatement because it makes the poet’s use of a non-Persian word seem like something that simply occurs once and has no consequences, but in fact Ārzū observes that the usage becomes *sanad* and is thus available for other poets to use. Akram’s translation also shifts focus away from the question of poetic mastery, which is a recurring theme in Ārzū’s works. Additionally, leaving out “Turaniens” is significant because Ārzū is not looking specifically to Iran for guidance but rather across the Persian cosmopolis. Indeed, Akram makes Ārzū sound more conflicted and cautious than he is: Ārzū asserts that any expert, native speaker or not, can change cosmopolitan Persian by introducing non-Persian words under exceptional circumstances. The default position for us, with our concepts of mother tongue and national language, is to grant native speakers primacy in linguistic and stylistic judgments. We cannot assume this holds for the eighteenth century, and Ārzū’s project is a case in point. The term “*ahl-i zabān*” [lit. people of the language], commonly translated into English as “native speakers,” has

¹⁰³ “pas bah wużū‘ [sic, misprint for ‘wużūħ’] p̄aiwast kih ġhair īrānī wa tūrānī agar tatabbu‘ bah kamāl dāshtah wa suħħbat-i šāhibān-i muħāwarah namūdah bāshad qaul-i ū sanad ast, ammā bah īn martabah rasīdan mashaqqat tamām mī khwāhad illā māshā’ allāh” (DS 64).

not been fully explicated by scholars. It exists within a constellation of other related, albeit somewhat less common, terms like “*ahl-i muhāwarah*” [lit. people of the idiom]. How do we distinguish between these? Or should we not in some cases? It is risky to assert that, for example, the idea “that proper poetic usage was authoritatively guided by the poetic idiom of Iranian masters was a largely dominant view” in India.¹⁰⁴ At least from Ārzū’s perspective, we should not refer to “Iranian masters” but “masters of the Persian language.”¹⁰⁵

The Commentary and Intertextuality

Commentaries [*shurūh* sg. *sharḥ*] were an important vehicle for intellectual activity in early modern Persian. However, modern habits of mind that fetishize originality and the Orientalist prejudice that finds a “stagnant East” everywhere one looks have conditioned us to see commentaries as a derivative form of scholarship inferior to the free-standing treatise.¹⁰⁶ To dismiss commentaries is to overlook a great deal of intellectual endeavor because the commentary form was everywhere, whether as independent works, marginalia [*hāshiyah*], or the habit of invoking extracts to anchor a discussion. For example, the sophisticated philological discourse in *Muṣmir* is built upon extracts from *al-Muzhir* and the many earlier works *al-Muzhir* commented upon. Lexicographical works and *tazkirahs* frequently digested earlier works, sometimes to add information but also to nuance or even disagree with earlier interpretations. Some commentaries represented a particular engagement with the past such as Āzād Bilgrāmī’s *Shifā’ al-‘Alīl* (Cure for the Ailing, 1196/1782), a commentary in Arabic correcting 180 infelicitous rhetorical choices in the work of the Arabic Golden Age poet

¹⁰⁴ Kia 2011, 191.

¹⁰⁵ In Islamicate scholarly culture there is certainly scope for recognizing the achievements of non-native speakers, namely that the greatest philologists in Arabic were mainly from Persian-speaking backgrounds. The first major grammar of Arabic was written in the eighth-century CE by Sibawayh from Fars (Marogy 2010, xi). Ārzū was well aware of such transcultural connections that enabled both Arabic and Persian literary culture to develop in the early centuries after the Islamic conquest of Iran.

¹⁰⁶ Recent scholarly interventions include Ahmed and Larkin 2013 and Van Lit 2017.

al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965).¹⁰⁷ Such commentaries could serve to showcase a scholar's erudition (or to advance a position in a debate, as in the commentaries discussed in this chapter) but others were important as pedagogical tools. Persian manuscript libraries are stuffed with commentaries on works commonly used by students such as the *Gulistān* of Sa'dī, a thirteenth-century didactic work that was read by nearly all Persian learners across the early modern world.¹⁰⁸ It is likely that for early modern Persian litterateurs, compiling a commentary was seen as a rite of passage from student to independent poet as Ārzū's first commentary *Khiyābān-i Gulistān* seems to be. While commentaries could take the form of a simple gloss to help students understand difficult words or metaphorical constructions, in general they create intertextuality. This intertextuality could work on several levels, between the source text [*matn*] and the commentary [*sharh*] but also drawing upon both reference works and literary works (for example, to compare a metaphor used by one poet with another poet's usage). This textual layering has led some scholars to use the analogy of hypertext, in which a discourse is built up by cross-references to other texts—the form of a commentary is a reflection of the arguments its author is making.¹⁰⁹

While Ārzū's critical prefaces in *Dād-i Sukhan* are self-evidently interesting for the modern reader, it takes considerable patience to get through the bulk of the texts, which in the typical manner for pre-modern Persian commentaries are a series of discussions of individual couplets. These analyses usually turn on whether a metaphor is properly used or not. Most of the entries in both *Dād-i Sukhan* and *Sirāj-i Munīr* are prosaic, basically taking the form “*Munīr's criticism*: The metaphor used in this line has no meaning. *Ārzū's response*: In fact, it does have meaning for the following reason . . .” (On a few occasions, Ārzū admits that he agrees with *Munīr's critique* of a line.) *Munīr's comments* are frequently pointed barbs. For example, one of ‘Urfī's couplets that he really dislikes has, according to him, “not a whiff of meaning and is in need of perfume” [*bū'i az ma'nī na-dārad wa shāyistah-yi ṭib ast*], while

¹⁰⁷ Toorawa 2008.

¹⁰⁸ On Mughal *Gulistān* commentaries, see Kia 2014a. Ārzū's friend Tek Chand Bahār wrote *Bahār-i Bostān*, a commentary on Sa'dī's other famous didactic work, *Bostān*.

¹⁰⁹ See the taxonomies provided in Van Lit 2017.

elsewhere he sneeringly proposes that two bad couplets should be Zulālī's epitaph.¹¹⁰ Although the Ancients are in dialogue with Moderns through an unbroken tradition of *sanad*, there can be disagreement over the different standards to which they are held.¹¹¹ For example, in a case where Munīr claims that 'Urfī has misused a metaphor [*isti'ārah*], Ārzū retorts that, in fact, that particular kind of metaphor is only used by the Moderns so judging it according to the style of the Ancients [*tarz-i qadim*] is impossible. This formulation crops up several times.¹¹² If one accepts, as Ārzū necessarily does, that consensus of contemporary poets is part of the production of *sanad*, then a survey of poetic interpretation as practiced by them would be helpful, which is precisely what Ārzū has provided in the third preface of *Dād-i Sukhan*. In any case, it is the commentary form that allows questions about *asnād* to be adjudicated. Commentaries were, of course, the battleground for the debates described in this chapter. Their engagement with the tradition was by definition productive and contentious rather than mindless copying of what had gone before.

Hazīn's Critique and Ārzū's Response

The exact occasion that gave rise to *Tanbih al-Ğhāfilīn* is not recorded. The preface only provides the context that everyone, young and old, was reciting Hazīn's poetry and Ārzū noticed that some of it was incorrect. So, he put pen to paper to try to make sense of Hazīn's poetic missteps. Ārzū does not lay out a program but instead praises Hazīn (including as "Seal of the Moderns" [*khātam-i mutā'akhkhirīn*]—perhaps ironically given Hazīn's preference for the Ancients), while slyly introducing the idea that he is a bigot. When Ārzū notes that Hazīn fled from Iran to

¹¹⁰ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 10, 19.

¹¹¹ In *Muśmir*, Ārzū implies that Indic words that had been borrowed into Persian but used incorrectly by the Ancients were allowed to stand, but new borrowings had to follow the Indic spelling. For example, Bengali is written in Persian as "*bangālah*" (i.e., ending with the letter *he*) while people in Indic languages write and say "*bangāla*" (i.e., ending with *alif*). Other more recent interventions, where a Persian poet has mispronounced a borrowed Indic word, are rejected as unsound (*M* 1991, 213).

¹¹² *SM* 47, cf. 43, 53, 66. Alam 2003, 183 analyzes the passage from *SM* 53.

India, he quotes a relevant quranic verse: “whoever enters it is safe” [*man dakhala-hu kāna āmin^{an}*], a reference to the holy precincts of Mecca (3:97). By changing the reference from the Islamic Holy of Holies to India, Ārzū highlights Ḥazīn’s apparent ungratefulness in coming to India and then disrespecting the poetic achievements of its inhabitants. In the body of the text, Ārzū seems to suggest that Ḥazīn, being a Shī‘ah, would be horrified by the ritual pollution if a Hindu fuller [*gāzur*] bleached his *pirāhan* [loose shirt].¹¹³ Elsewhere Ḥazīn is cited as claiming that no Indian ever says his prayers five times a day (the implication being that Indian Muslims were bad Muslims).¹¹⁴ As Mana Kia has argued, the idea that Ārzū did not like Ḥazīn simply because he was not Indian is contradicted by *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is*, in which some entries for Iranian émigrés are highly positive and some negative.¹¹⁵ Wālih, however, does accuse Ārzū of targeting Ḥazīn out of personal enmity and a desire for revenge.¹¹⁶ Having addressed their strained personal relationship in Chapter 1, I will take the literary criticisms at face value in this section.

Ārzū himself selected the verses of Shāikh Ḥazīn’s that he wished to critique, unlike in *Dād-i Sukhan* and *Sirāj-i Munīr*, in which his choices were constrained by the verses that Munīr had already picked. Ārzū does not summarize which kinds of poems to which he objects in *Tanbīh al-Ğāfilin* but his contemporary Mir Muḥammad Muhsin of Agra does. Muhsin’s *Muḥākamāt al-Shu‘arā* [Judgments of the Poets] completed in 1180/1766, the year of Ḥazīn’s death, lists three categories of objections raised by Ārzū:

The first [applies] to an expression outside of usage, which is not found in the verse of the teachers, each of whom is a mighty lord of the art of speech, namely ‘Attār, Rūmī, Sanā’ī, Khwājah-yi Kirmānī, Sa‘dī, Amīr Khusrau, Ḥasan Dihlawī, Khaqānī, Anwārī, Kamāl Ismā‘il, Ḥāfiẓ, ‘Urfī,

¹¹³ *TGh* 133.

¹¹⁴ Qasmi 2004, 76. The most frequently cited evidence that Hazin was not a bigot is a chapter in his autobiography, in which he declares that he learned about other traditions (*The Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* 1830, 62–4). Additionally, there are some verses (possibly spurious) in which he praises the inhabitants of Benares, the place he finally settled in India.

¹¹⁵ Kia 2011, 196.

¹¹⁶ Kia 2011, 220. See Chapter 1 for more on their personal disputes.

Nazīrī, Zuhūrī, Ḥakīm Shafā’ī, Ṣā’ib, Qudsī, Kalīm, and Salīm. The second [applies] to an unconnected expression that renders the couplet meaningless and often comes into ‘Alī Ḥazīn’s verse. The third concerns idioms that appear in several of Ḥazīn’s unsuccessful couplets and that Ārzū, considering the appropriateness of the word (which is the edifice of the workshop of speech), has rectified with another [i.e., a new] hemistich and the verse shows a complete improvement through these subtleties. Thus as God Almighty has commanded in the Holy Qur’ān: “Above everyone who has knowledge there is the One who is all knowing.”¹¹⁷

Muhsin’s analysis correctly identifies the sorts of objections that appear throughout Ārzū’s text, but his list of poets (other than being an index of important figures in the tradition) is apparently arbitrary, mixing Ancients and Moderns. A fourth objection, which Muhsin has not mentioned, although it appears several times in *Tanbih al-Ğāfilin*, is that of plagiarism [*sariqat*].¹¹⁸ One couplet of Ḥazīn’s, for example, is so obviously the result of plagiarism that Ārzū declares it must be a copying mistake.¹¹⁹ The not-so-subtle implication is that only a fool would make such an error.

Ārzū’s overall strategy is to demonstrate Ḥazīn’s failure to live up to Ḥazīn’s own apparently conservative standards. He writes “obviously because Ḥazīn is so devoted to the discourse of the Ancients, he takes nothing at all from the Moderns.” Interestingly, despite Ḥazīn’s allegiance to the Ancients, he too uses the rhetoric of freshness in his

¹¹⁷ “awwal bar ‘ibārat-i ḡhair musta’mal kih dar shi’r-i ustādān-i ṣāḥib-i qudrat-i fann-i sukhān mānānd farīd al-dīn ‘attār, maulwī jalāl al-dīn rūmī, hakīm sanā’ī, khwājah-yi kirmānī, shaikh sa’dī, amīr khusrāw, ḥasan dihlawī, maulānā khaqānī, anwārī, kamāl ismā’īl, khwājah hāfiẓ, maulānā ‘urfī, maulānā naṣīrī, maulānā zuhūrī, ḥakīm shafā’ī, mirzā ṣā’ib, qudsī, kalīm wa salīm yāftah ni-mī shawad. duwwum bar ‘ibārat-i bi-rabt kih shi’r rā bī ma’ni mi kunad wa akṣar dar shi’r-i ‘alī Ḥazīn āmadah. siwwum az rāh-i tasarrufat kih ba’zī miṣāri‘-i shaikh-i nārasā wāqī‘ shudah wa ḥazrat Ārzū bah sabab-i munāsibat-i lafżī kih binā’i kārkhanāh-i sukhān [ast] ba-rāh-i rāst miṣāri‘-i digar rasānīdah wa shi’r az in daqā’iq tarraqqī-yi kull mī nimāyad. līhāzā haqq ta’āla dar qur’ān-i sharīf irshād farmūdah: fauqa kulli zī ‘ilmīn ‘alīm (12:76)” (quoted in Akram 1981, xlv–xlvi). Muhsin’s text remains unpublished and the editor has taken this from the Punjab University Library ms.

¹¹⁸ Akram 1981, xlvi.

¹¹⁹ TGH 87; cf. 73, 125.

poetry.¹²⁰ In one of the couplets cited by Ārzū, Ḥazīn refers to “my fresh speech.” Ārzū refers to freshness many times and it becomes a sort of slur, the implication being that the expression [‘ibārat] may be fresh but also incorrect for one reason or another. Thus, the idea—which animates Muḥammad Taqī Bahār’s dim view of the “Indian style”—that the search for “freshness” in poetry necessarily represents a rebellion against tradition and the rules of composition cannot hold.

We know something of the reception history of the text from accounts Ārzū gives of his friends. Qizilbāsh Khān, known by his pen-name Ummīd, was originally from Hamadan in Iran but had lived in the Deccan for forty years.¹²¹ Ārzū describes him as a good friend who had died three years before the composition of *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is*, which would put the year around 1747. Ummīd was confronted by an Indian who was “a follower of the poets of Iran” [*mu‘taqid-i kalām-i shu‘arā-yi īrān*] who said that someone (namely Ārzū) had criticized Ḥazīn. Ummīd replied that “there is no doubt of the Shaikh’s literary acumen but at the same time it is clear that what this person (namely Ārzū) has said is not to be dismissed.”¹²² “Subḥānallāh!” [Thank God!] Ārzū declares parenthetically. He goes on to describe how when *Tanbīh al-Ğāfilīn* became widely copied, “no Mughal or non-Muslim Indian [*hindū*]” made any sort of counterattack. Wālih included a large citation of *Tanbīh al-Ğāfilīn* in his *tažkirah* and sent it to Isfahan. Ārzū admits that the inclusion of so much of his text was not a ringing endorsement of his views, “especially criticism by an Indian of an Iranian” [*khuṣūṣ^{an} i‘tirāz-i hindī bar īrāni*], and yet he is bemused that Wālih went to the trouble.¹²³

Ārzū and the Persian Cosmopolis

Although he never lays it out in exactly these terms, Ārzū’s project in the critical works considered in this chapter is maintaining the unity of

¹²⁰ Jane Mikkelsen argues compellingly that “Ḥazīn’s model of freshness appears to be essentially conservative” (2017, 524).

¹²¹ MN 2004, 1:169–81.

¹²² “dar zabān-dānī shaikh shubhah nist ammā ī qadr ham yaqīn ast kih ānchih falānī—ya‘nī faqīr-i Ārzū—guftah bāshad bī-chīzī na-khyāhād būd.”

¹²³ MN 2004, 1:170.

Persianate literary culture. In the second preface to *Dād-i Sukhan*, he appears to deal narrowly with the question of Iranian versus Indian usage, but actually is making a larger point about the abiding interconnectedness of the Persian-using world. This was not an oversight but a deliberate choice. As a keen researcher he was aware, perhaps more acutely than any of his predecessors, of regional differences within the Persian cosmopolis. For example, in *Mušmir*, he quotes a learned joke: An Indian emperor asked an Iranian on a lark [*az rāh-i shokhī*] if it is true that Iranians mix up the pronunciation of the letters “*qāf*”/q/ and “*ghain*”/gh/. The Iranian’s supposed reply is the punchline: “No, that’s a mistake [*qalat*]!” (The humor is that in the indignant answer he mispronounced “*ghalat*,” proving that Iranians confuse the two sounds—indeed, in standard Iranian Persian today the two sounds are pronounced identically.) Ārzū observes a number of other phonetic variations peculiar to Iran such as the loss of the *maj’hūl* vowels (that is, the distinction between the sounds “i” and “e,” and “ü” and “o”) and the shift in pronunciation of the suffix “-ān” into “-ūn.”¹²⁴ In other places he notes local lexical differences, such as objecting to one of Ḥazīn’s usages, namely “*bīrūn raftan*” [to go out] versus simply “*raftan*” [to go], and noting that it is not used that way in India.¹²⁵ He concedes that perhaps it is an idiomatic usage.¹²⁶ However, he believes that literary Persian is tied to a courtly standard rather than to a locale (samples of ineloquent local speech from Shiraz, Qazwin, Gilan, and Khurasan, for example, appear in *Mušmir*).¹²⁷ He observes in *Mušmir* that

it is a fact that [*bah-tahqīq paiwast kih*] the most eloquent of languages is the language [*zabān*] of the court [*urdu*] and the Persian of that place is respected, but a dialect [*zabān-i khāṣah*] of other places is not accepted in poetry or *belles lettres* [*inshā*]. The poets of every place (for example, Khāqānī was from Shirvan, Nizāmī from Ganjah, Sanaī

¹²⁴ M 76; *TGH* 142–3. In the discussion in *Mušmir* (see Chapter 2 of this study), he implies that this regional usage should never be used for poetry, but in *TGH* he suggests that if relatively recent poetic masters used such regionalisms (even though this usage would have been “distasteful to the Ancients” [*pīsh-i qudmā makrūh*]) then they would be acceptable.

¹²⁵ *TGH* 123.

¹²⁶ “*shāyad muḥāwarah-yi ahl-i zabān bāshad*” (*TGH* 123).

¹²⁷ M 5.

from Qazwin, and Ḫusrau from Delhi), all composed [literally “spoke”] in the established [*muqarrar*] language and that was none other than the language of the court.¹²⁸

Ārzū’s predecessors were not particularly concerned with defining regionalism in such terms. Instead, Indians occasionally complained that Iranian parvenus were taking jobs (for example, Munīr hints that being Iranian makes it easier to be accepted as a Persian poet).¹²⁹ Munīr was clearly concerned with style and not geography. But this does not mean that there was no recognition of differences between Iranians and Indians, in particular of their role in elite society. In the conclusion [*khātimah*] to *Kārnāmah*, Munīr carps about the difficulties he faces in becoming a respected poet. He mentions that the four social advantages for a poet (none of which he possesses) are being old, rich, loud-voiced, and having a “connection to Iran” [*nisbat-i īrān*].¹³⁰ Being Iranian is an automatic advantage—he claims that an Iranian can make a hundred mistakes in Persian and no one will say anything, but an Indian’s brilliant work will be met with stony silence rather than praise. Munīr declares himself an Indian, but then somewhat disparages India, saying that it produced only five excellent poets (Mas‘ūd-i Sa‘ad-i Salmān, Abū al-Faraj Rūnī, Amir Ḫusrau, Ḥasan Dihlawī, and Faīzī).¹³¹ Munīr’s observations on the status of Indian poets, like Ārzū’s need to settle the question of whether Indians can change Persian usage, must have been based on some actual social pressure, such as favoritism shown towards Iranians. The idea that talent-less Iranians were being rewarded was stated even more openly by Shaidā, who was born in Fatehpur (in today’s Uttar Pradesh between Kanpur and Allahabad). He is quoted by Khwushgo as saying:

¹²⁸ M 13.

¹²⁹ Muzaffar Alam argues that “Mughal India thus virtually emerged as a kind of Iranian colony” as compared to the considerably fewer numbers of Iranians resident in South Asia during the Delhi Sultanate period (Alam 2004, 147). However, recognizing both the strong influence of Persian and the vast number of Iranian migrants to India in this period should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that even then the vast majority of Persian writers in India were Indian-born because even local officials were using Persian to some extent (Alam and Subrahmanyam 2004; Alam 1998, 328).

¹³⁰ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 25–6.

¹³¹ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 27.

Because of my being Indian, Iranians do not respect me... The fact is that being Iranian or Indian is not a reason to boast. A man's standing is connected to his personal standing and if Iranians declare "the Persian language is ours" then their language/tongue does not bring them success, and if the tongue does find success, it is not in knowing taste because they do not have poetic talent even though they flail for it.¹³²

No doubt a long list of other such complaints could be compiled, but the remarkable circulation of scholars, administrators, and poets in the triangle formed by India, Central Asia, and Iran must have had a diluting effect on regionalism over the centuries.¹³³ Movement, both of people and of texts, ensured that writers kept abreast of developments in other parts of the Persian cosmopolis. Ārzū has no qualms about passing judgments on Iranians, such as calling a poet called Tanhā "well-spoken" [*khüb-go*], which is admittedly a term of art (meaning "he composes poetry well") but still maintains its literal force, in which case Ārzū, an Indian, is implicitly claiming the prerogative to determine whether or not Tanhā, an Iranian, speaks Persian well.¹³⁴ After all, the right to appraise native speakers is one he arrogates to himself—and all well-versed poets—in the prefaces to *Dād-i Sukhan*. In his opinion, the loss of the *maj'hūl* vowels in Iran is a unique handicap to following metrical rules because of the difficulty of constructing correct rhymes.¹³⁵ Ārzū also apologizes for the fact that Indians have not fully learned the new kind of Iranian Persian but then turns the apology on its head. He writes that "We Indian people have not taken up this really new Persian; we bear the load of the insufficiency of our understanding, but according to

¹³² *Safinah* quoted in Akram 1974, xxxiv.

¹³³ See, for example, Ghani 1930 for a side-by-side comparison of Indo-Persian and Iranian correspondence that shows a remarkable similarity. As far as the mobility of people and texts during the early modern period, the family of the *tazkirah* writer Muḥammad Tāhir Naṣrābādī (born ca. 1025/1616) is an excellent example. His grandfather and uncle had settled in India, but he himself had been born near Isfahan (Sprenger 1854, 88). A recent volume on circulation in South Asia has the following excellent formulation: "'Circulation' therefore, in this volume, is also meant as a kind of shorthand for the capacity of Indian society over the centuries to generate change" (Markovits et al. 2003, 11). It should be noted that among Indians, Ottomans, and Safavids, the Ottomans are the outlier in that they traveled outside their respective empire less than people from the other two empires and received fewer outside visitors (Robinson 1997, 164).

¹³⁴ MN 2005, 66. ¹³⁵ *TGH* 142–3.

the idiom-knowers, this kind of discourse [i.e., Hazīn's expression] does not spring from eloquence.”¹³⁶

Despite Ārzu's confidence in such transnational judgments, the Persian cosmopolis fractured irrevocably soon after his death.¹³⁷ Stefano Pellò has argued that Persian ceased to be viable as a cosmopolitan language when it became the national language of an emerging Iranian state.¹³⁸ In the literary sphere, the groundwork was laid by the regionalism inaugurated in Āżar's generation, and by the nineteenth century it necessarily led to the preference of a national usage that excluded cosmopolitan possibilities.¹³⁹ It remains to be studied whether, as some have claimed retrospectively, an unbridgeable divide had opened up between Indian and Iranian usages. One twentieth-century scholar who has made a case for this, Momin Mohiuddin, tries to lay the blame on “*taşarrufat*,” which he glosses as “changes in spelling, form, meaning, and construction” that inevitably come about because (he claims) Indians were bad Persianists and thus the “purity of the idiom” was lost.¹⁴⁰ For example, he contends that there were no proper Persian grammars available, that Indians were bad Arabists and therefore bad Persianists, and that while introducing “Hindawi words into pure Persian was considered unpleasant,” they did it anyway. While for Mohiuddin *taşarrufat* represent a cultural failure, for Ārzū they are

¹³⁶ “mā mardum-i hindūstān fārsī rā khüb nau bar na-kardah-im, bar qusūr-i fahim-i khwish ḥaml mī kūnim pish-i muḥywārah-dān in qism-i kalām az bulaghā šādar na-shawad” (TGH 122).

¹³⁷ Though prior to this moment, even in the seventeenth century, the Persian cosmopolis was somewhat fragmentary, no doubt because of its sheer size. For example, the geographer and economist *avant la lettre* Muḥammad Mufid Mustaufi writes in 1680 in his geography of Iran prepared in India that he does not really know anything about the rulers of Iran, the Safavids (Fragner 1999, 100–1). He has no excuse since they had been in power for nearly two centuries! Āżar himself admits that people in Iran know the poetry of the Delhites he has deigned to include in *Ātashkadah* (1999, 523). This can serve as an index of how aware Iranians were of Indian-born poets at this time.

¹³⁸ The politics of the Persian language in early modern Iran were more complicated than most people realize: The Safavid state was shot through with Turkish. The origins of the dynasty were in (Azeri Turkish-speaking) Azerbaijan, and Turkish remained an important language even after Shāh ‘Abbas I moved the capital to Isfahan. Recent research (Floor and Javadi 2013) has demonstrated that it was widely spoken at court, and that literary translations were made not only from Turkish to Persian but from Persian to Turkish.

¹³⁹ On language planning in nineteenth-century Iran and the debate over whether it was desirable to cleanse Persian of Arabic, Turkish, and Mongolian accretions, see Parsinejad 2003.

¹⁴⁰ Mohiuddin 1960; cf. Fragner 1999, 100–1. A more critical definition of “*taşarruf*” appears in the discussion of *Muṣmir* in Chapter 2.

inevitable because languages change over time, even at the hands of educated native speakers. The end of the Persian cosmopolis was not a matter of mutual incomprehensibility—at least this has never been satisfactorily demonstrated as a cause—but of the assertion of national identities whose claims of cultural self-sufficiency overpowered the claims of the cosmopolis.

The key to Ārzū’s claim for a universal Persian literary culture is that it does not depend on pretending that India is not different (culturally or politically) from Iran or elsewhere. Rather it assumes that for poetry, the difference does not matter: The Persian cosmopolis is capacious enough to contain the differences and everyone who uses Persian has access to the same literary tradition, regardless of variation in local dialects and so on. As we have seen in the discussion of Muṣmir’s account of the historical development of Persian in Chapter 2, Ārzū believes in a standard Persian that is immanent across the whole of the cosmopolis. He notes that Persians used Arabic and Turkish for centuries, and changed both languages in the process, which is unobjectionable. Ārzū argues explicitly—for perhaps the first time in a work of literary criticism—that Indians are allowed to modify Persian usage, provided they are properly trained. His lexicon *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* is designed in part to serve as an extended justification of Indians’ correct usage. He states that he has included two kinds of lexemes:

The first part consists of words that have a difficult meaning and which Indian people often do not know; the second are vocabules whose meaning is often widely known but there is debate as to the correctness of having them in the speech [*rozmarrah*] of the eloquent of the people of the language.¹⁴¹

He continues with an even more explicit description of how his dictionary is an intervention:

¹⁴¹ “qism-i awwal alfāżī-ast kih ma‘āni-yi ān mushkil būd wa akşar ahl-i hind bar ān *ittīlā’* na-dāshṭand qism-i duwwrum lugħāti kih ma‘āni-ān agarchah ma‘rūf wa ma‘lūm būd lekin dar saḥīḥ būdan-i ān az rozmarrah-yi fuṣahā-yi ahl-i zabān ba‘zī rā taraddud ba-ham-rasīdah” (Cambridge University ms Add. 795, 1a; checked with British Library ms Or 2013, Or 264, and I.O. Islamic 71).

because some of the Persian-speakers of India use loanwords/calques [*taṣarruf*] in Persian on the basis of influence from *hindī*, it is necessary to research a number of words. Thus this text is useful for the Persian-speakers of India who use old words differently from the language-knowers of Iran and Turan that are usually equivalent for experts in the language and other people, but in this text there are many words that have been researched and these people will be unable to answer because they [the meanings of the words] are connected at length with external research.¹⁴²

Thus research is able to demonstrate that deliberate Indian interventions in Persian are in fact deliberate and not simply the product of a poor understanding of Persian.

Ārzū's compromise to keep India an integral but unique part of the Persian cosmopolis is probably best expressed by the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah. He writes, of our own time, that "the position worth defending might be called (in both senses) a partial cosmopolitanism."¹⁴³ Contrary to the assertions of some modern South Asian scholars that Ārzū was a great patriot,¹⁴⁴ he gives little indication of defending India per se but rather concerns himself with the entirety of the Persian cosmopolis by defining the relationship of the part to the whole. The domain of poetry itself requires justice to be done, as evidenced by the very title of *Dād-i Sukhan* (Justice in Poetry) or by Munīr's earlier claim that he was a "mirror-bearer of justice."¹⁴⁵ Poetry can fit into a system of universal values, perhaps akin to Giambattista Vico's early eighteenth-century understanding of Ancient Roman law as a kind of poetry.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² "chūn barkhī az fārsī goyān-i hind rā taṣarruf gūnah dar zabān-i fārsī ba-sabab-i ikhtilāṭ-i zabān hindī dasī dādah āwardan bā'zī az alfāz kažā-i bar sāhib-i tahqīq zurūrī-st pas in nuskhah muṣīd ast bar fārsī goyān-i hind kih bah zabāndānān-i īrān wa tūrān rā ba-khilāf lughāt-i qadimah kih dar akṣar an ba-zabān-dān wa ḡhair zabān-dān musāwī-ast balkih dar in nuskhah bā'zī az alfāz-i st. kah az chand kas zabān-dān tahqīq kardah shud wa ānhā dar jawāb 'ajiz shudand ākhir kār az jā'i dīgar ba-tahqīq pāiwast" (Cambridge University ms Add. 795, 1a).

¹⁴³ Appiah 2006, xvii.

¹⁴⁴ E.g., Zaidi 2004, which argues that Ārzū could not bear to have people speak ill of India and so wrote out of love for his country.

¹⁴⁵ *Kārnāmah* 1977, 6. Indeed Ārzū also expresses the hope that his own book will be justly received (DS 2).

¹⁴⁶ Stern 2003, 79.

The Persian cosmopolis as a geographical concept does not map easily onto our concrete sense of geography. It is best understood not as a place so much as a set of practices. The formula “Iran, Turan, and Hindustan” is the most common designation (though Turan, corresponding roughly to our “Central Asia,” is usually not well defined, and Hindustan typically did not include southern India), but this should not be read like a list of modern nation-states. Of course, people were conscious of being from a place, but this must be carefully distinguished from identities available to people in our time (including, for example, different ways to be “of” a place). A cosmopolis should not be understood as homogenous, since everyone has a sense of a belonging to a smaller locality (whether that be nation, region, city, or something else) with particular local customs. Even though the set of cosmopolitan texts may be the same, the interpretation of them may be different in different places because of localized commentarial traditions, which Sheldon Pollock has called “vernacular mediations.”¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the intellectual and economic topography of a cosmopolis allows culture to flow more strongly in certain directions.¹⁴⁸ It is made up of many horizons, to use Gadamer’s term for what a historical subject is able to comprehend around him or her, and there is no expectation that anyone’s horizon take in the whole cosmopolis or indeed that anyone even know its full extent.¹⁴⁹ There is also certainly scope for local cosmopolitanism, which appears paradoxical on its face but is actually quite reasonable, namely that the cosmopolitan idiom can be employed in a text meant for a local audience.¹⁵⁰ More study is warranted in the case of Indo-Persian texts, but Ārzū’s critical works probably had a broad audience in mind since he is typically careful to

¹⁴⁷ Pollock 2009, 954.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Brennan 2006, 3.

¹⁴⁹ “A person who has an [sic] horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small” (Gadamer 2006, 301–2).

¹⁵⁰ Yigal Bronner and David Shulman take issue with what they see as Pollock’s willingness to flatten regional differences in the Sanskrit cosmopolis since some texts were written in the cosmopolitan language but not meant to circulate. They write that “Every Sanskrit poem is, of course, local or regional in that it was composed in a particular place by a poet speaking some vernacular as his or her mother tongue (and writing in some local script). This is not, however, sufficient to qualify a text as regional in our terms... First and foremost, a regional Sanskrit work aims at a local audience. It is not meant to travel the length and breadth of the cosmopolis, nor did it do so” (Bronner and Shulman 2006, 6).

gloss Indic words and explain Indic cultural practices that Indians would have been familiar with.

This brings us back to an interpretative problem. Can we distinguish between tropes and actual analysis of the local? Scholars have often drawn conclusions about various poets' opinions of India on the basis of poetic tropes. For example, India and its inhabitants are often described as black. This is precisely the imagery Munīr uses (the five Indian poets he singles out as great are blazing suns against the black night of India). Obviously this is a literary commonplace rather than a rigorous observation—elsewhere India is frequently described as paradise [e.g., as "*hindūstān jannat nishān*"], which is similarly a trope.¹⁵¹ In an oft quoted couplet, Salīm Tīhrānī (d. 1674) declares that

The means of acquiring perfection do not exist in Iran:
Henna has no color until it arrives in India.¹⁵²

In a similar vein but apparently with the opposite sentiment, Ṭālib Amulī writes "The parrots of India are in fact mortified to see such a nightingale coming forth from the garden of Iran."¹⁵³ While such quotations have often been interpreted as definitive historical evidence, this is an error stemming from our modern incapacity to engage with a literary tradition that depends on tropes and a different conception of history from our own.¹⁵⁴ In the absence of other data, historians have often tried to read

¹⁵¹ Such rhymed epithets, reflective of the *saja'* tradition of rhymed prose composition, should not be taken literally. Ārzū for example refers to Qazwin as "*jannat-ā'in*" [the heaven-like] (MN 2005, 70).

¹⁵² "*nīst dar irān zamīn samān-i taḥṣīl-i kamāl / tā nayāyad sū-yi hindūstān hīnā rangīn na-shud*" (quoted in Khatoon 2004a, 86 and elsewhere; discussed in Alam 2003, 160n99). More examples at Dadvar 1999, 210.

¹⁵³ Translated in Hadi 1962, 103.

¹⁵⁴ To take another example: The poet Mir 'Alī Sher Nawā'ī (1441–1501) of Herat, who later joined the first Mughal emperor Bābur's entourage, was an important poet in both Chagatay Turkish and Persian. Bābur acknowledges that "no one composed so much or so well in the Turkish language as he did" but as far as his Persian, Bābur observes "some of his lines are not bad, but most are flat and of low quality" (translated in Thackston, *Bāburnāmah* 1993, 2:354–5). Nawā'ī's *Muḥkāmat al-Luḡhātīn* [Judgment of the Two Languages, 1499] is a famous work defending Turkish against Persian. It also mentions Arabic and *hindī* as two possible contenders to Persian but dismisses Arabic as too lofty and *hindī* as too base. He uses the story of Noah's curse on his son Ham to explain Indians' dark skin and ineptitude. (This was, of course, also a common explanation among early modern Europeans for differences among human

poetry in a straightforwardly biographical or sociological way, while failing to engage with the complexities of the rhetorical system of symbolism and form that the poets were actually drawing upon. A more complex case is the drawn-out argument for India's greatness in the works of Amīr Khusrau (whose patriotism is even more over-determined in the historiography than Ārzu's). Khusrau casts India in the mold of a heaven-blessed, legitimately Islamic land, and makes an early argument for Indo-Persian cosmopolitanism. He claims in the preface to his *dīwān Ghurrat al-Kamāl* [The Prime of Perfection, 1293/4] that while inhabitants of other countries can only master their native tongues, Indians can pick up any language.¹⁵⁵ They are therefore unquestionably good at Persian (as well as Arabic and *hindī*). In another work, *Ijāz-i Khusrawī*, he writes that just as desert Arabs used to drinking brackish water cannot appreciate rose water, the writers of Khurasan and Transoxania cannot appreciate good writing such as that produced in India where the “old mode” [*qarār-i qadim*] of writing persists as well as a delightful new style.¹⁵⁶ This appears to be a serious argument about literary stylistics imposed upon geography, and yet it is rendered suspect by the political context in which it was written: The King's realm must be shown to be the most civilized on earth.

There is a marked difference between these pre-modern constructions of Indianness in Persian literature and nineteenth-century ones. The first comprehensive study of the differences between Indian Persian and the Persian of Iran seems to have appeared at the turn of the nineteenth century. Muḥammad Ḥasan Qatil (1759–c. 1820), a Delhi-born Khattrī

(populations.) Nawā'i writes that “There is none among them whose skin is not black as the black of ink and whose speech does not resemble the scratching of a broken pen.” He goes on to describe Indian writing—presumably he means one of the Brahmi-derived scripts like Devanagari—as like “the footprint of a raven” and incomprehensible except to Indians (translated in Devereux, 1966, 24–5). The connection drawn here between dark skin and ineptitude is interesting but tells us little more than that Nawā'i was somewhat aware of Indian culture (as we would expect of a Central Asian at this time) but considered it barbaric. It might be a stretch to connect his moralizing about dark skin with the common trope of the “blackness of the Hindu” in Persian poetry.

¹⁵⁵ Analyzed at Gabbay 2010, 31. A similar claim appears in *Nuh Sipīr* [The Nine Heavens], whose classification of Indian languages has been addressed in Chapter 2 (1950, 172ff).

¹⁵⁶ *Ijāz-i Khusrawī* 1876, 66; in English translation see *Ijāz-i Khusrawī* 2007, 35.

who converted to Shī‘ah Islam, wrote three works that dealt with Indian Persian usage (as compared to Iranian and Turanian usage) and his views were influential.¹⁵⁷ Although Qatil was a careful scholar, he was a prescriptivist who argued that Indians—like himself it should be noted—had no real claim over Persian usage and must submit to the judgments of Iranians and Turanians. Views along these lines became increasingly dominant in the nineteenth century. Munīr’s strategy of self-aggrandizement by suggesting that few Indians are good Persian poets is of an entirely different order from that pursued by Mirzā Ghālib (1797–1869), who wrote in both Persian and Urdu two centuries later. For Ghālib, the only good Indian-born Persian poet—besides himself of course—is Amīr Khusrau.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, Ghālib went so far as to apparently invent a native Iranian tutor, ‘Abd al-Şamad, for himself (there is no independent confirmation of the man’s existence—he was supposedly a Zoroastrian convert to Islam who stayed with Ghālib’s family in Agra). Thus, Ghālib is entirely dismissive of Indians’ achievements in Persian literature whereas Munīr offers praise for his homeland, albeit in a rather backhanded way. Ghālib was not alone in the nineteenth century in his disdain for all things Indo-Persian.¹⁵⁹ Imām Bakhs̄ahbā’ī’s *Qaul-i Faiṣal* [The Definitive Word], the last major text in the Indo-Persian tradition to engage with Ārzū’s *Tanbīh al-Ğāfilīn*, states that Indians simply took good Persian style from Iran and contributed nothing in return. His argument, fascinatingly, rests in part on the idea that Iranian immigrants to India cannot learn Urdu properly and thus Indians are similarly unable to master Persian.¹⁶⁰ (In fact, in *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is* Ārzū praises a number of Iranian immigrants, notably Ummīd and Zamīr, for their facility in the Indian vernacular—Ummīd apparently understood subtleties in *hindī* poetry that even a native Indian

¹⁵⁷ The definitive study of Qatil’s linguistic observations is Pellò 2016. Pellò convincingly explains Qatil’s views as the result of a double “conversion” in which Qatil’s turn to Islam was accompanied with a turn to Iranian aesthetic/cultural purism. The Orientalist Henry Blochmann drew heavily upon Qatil’s data later in the century.

¹⁵⁸ Faruqi 2004b, 5.

¹⁵⁹ The classic analysis is Faruqi 1998.

¹⁶⁰ *Risālah-yi Qaul-i Faiṣal*, 4ff. Sahbā’ī’s comments on each couplet have been printed as footnotes in the published edition of *TĞh*.

[*mughal-bachchah*] often did not.)¹⁶¹ The later *tažkirah* tradition likewise comes to judge harshly any perceived deviations from Iranian usage. Āftāb Rāy of Lucknow's *Riyāz al-Ārifin* [Garden of the Wise, 1883] is such an example of linguistic purism. It was simply unthinkable by then that Indian-born writers—in particular Hindus—could make any claim on Persian even though this had been commonplace a century before.¹⁶² Of Bedil's numerous Hindu disciples, Āftāb Rāy mentions only Muķhlis, and seems uninterested in Persian-writing Hindus despite the fact that he was himself a Persian-writing Hindu.

Although eighteenth-century litterateurs were conscious of regional variation in Persian, the best way to understand their critical debates is not through the overdetermined concept of *sabk-i hindī*, or the “Indian Style.” Instead of a narrowly nationalistic frame of Indians versus Iranians, we should be thinking in terms of something universal, namely Ancients versus Moderns, as we have seen with reference to the disagreements between Ārzū and Munīr.¹⁶³ It is tempting to map literary disagreements onto the factionalism of the eighteenth-century Mughal court, but within the contemporary philological discourse this was not the framework through which these debates played out. The crisis of authority in poetry led Ārzū to think about the relationship between the tradition and contemporary poetic practices, and to consider both historical usages and regional variations across the Persian cosmopolis. He recognized that languages are porous and fluid—a crucial development in the amplification of Urdu literature to be addressed in

¹⁶¹ Ummid's *hindī* pronunciation (or perhaps fluency in speaking) was apparently poor because Ārzū notes that “his tongue did not take to the Indian accent” [*zabān-ash dar lajhah-yi hindī khwub na-mī gardad*] despite having lived in India for nearly forty years and understanding *hindī* well (MN 2004, 1:169).

¹⁶² “Although there are still some among ignorant Indians who consider him to be among the most sublime writers, he is absolutely worthless in the opinion of those who really know the Persian language. His Persian, like that of Nāṣir ‘Ali [Sirhindi (d. 1694)], is worse than Hindi” (translated in Pellò 2016, 219 with modifications by me for clarity; original *Tažkirah-yi Riyāz al-Ārifin* 1977, 1:123).

¹⁶³ Snobbishness on the part of Indians around Indian Persian is attested only in rare examples before the nineteenth century. For example, Mirzā Muḥammad Rafī’ Saudā (1713–80), a writer in both Persian and *hindī*, is shocked that when one of his contemporaries, Mirzā Fākhir Makīn, was asked to correct a large selection of poetic quotations he refused to work on the verses by Indian Persian poets and only deigned to consider what Iranians had written (*Ibrat al-Ğāfīlin* 2011, 43). Saudā wrote *Ibrat al-Ğāfīlin* to criticize Makīn and their falling out is dramatized in *Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 156–61.

Chapter 4—while at the same time arguing for a cosmopolitan standard determined by the consensus of good poets. To arrive at what Ārzū and his contemporaries were concerned with, we must peel away the interpretations of the last two centuries that have anachronistically reframed the debates on authority as discussions of nationalism, socio-political decline, and, of course, poor taste.

4

Dictionaries Delimiting Literary Language

Percy Bysshe Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry" concludes bombastically that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."¹ If we are willing to grant poets that expansive role, then it is worth also sparing a thought for the unacknowledged parliamentary staffers who help the poetic legislators legislate. In the early modern Persian cosmopolis, lexicographers played such a consequential supporting role by shoring up a baseline of words and expressions that counted as eloquent Persian available to poets. Early modern dictionaries, which with rare exceptions focus on poetic language, reflect a set of conscious choices about usage in contrast to the modern comprehensive dictionary, which is typically (if falsely) represented as a passive record of natural language. Pre-modern Persian lexicography is a system of knowledge to be unpacked because, as Walter Hakala has written, "lexicographical works reflect dominant cosmographies."² Pre-modern dictionaries represent a form of standardization, albeit one that is unfamiliar to us today. This included providing a stock of available poetry since most dictionaries, *Burhān-i Qāṭī*³ being the famous exception, provided poetic quotations to illustrate their definitions. Especially in the early days of Persian lexicography, authors often referred to their dictionaries as embedded in a real literary community. For example, they might justify a dictionary's compilation on the basis that friends struggled to read poetry of a certain kind. An author might also reference a personal engagement with the canon, for example declaring that from an early age he read poetry

¹ Shelley 1840, 14. The essay was written in 1821 but first published posthumously in 1840.

² Hakala 2016, 12; reviewed in Dudney 2017c. Hakala focuses on nineteenth-century developments in Urdu lexicography but his approach can be applied to reconstruct the Persian lexicographical tradition before the colonial encounter.

but strained to understand its meaning, and so assembled the dictionary in the course of study for himself and anyone else interested.³

That pre-modern Persian dictionaries connected the various geographies of the literary world is suggested by the striking consistency of their being a product of the edges of the Persianate world rather than of its core. During the Safavid-Mughal period, South Asia produced by far the most dictionaries in Persian, and the origin of New Persian lexicography was likewise not in Iran but in Khurasan to the northeast.⁴ Dictionaries at that time were hardly compiled in Iran proper, leaving a gap of nearly three centuries between Surūrī's *Majma' al-Furs* (first edition 1008/1600, Isfahan) and the next major lexicon, Rizā Qulī Khān Hidāyat's *Farhang-i Anjuman-ārā-yi Nāshirī* (1288/1871, Tehran).⁵ Pre-modern Persian dictionaries reflect the tension between the local and the universal in the Persianate world of letters because their origins lay in the need to clarify unfamiliar expressions appearing in literary works that had been written in different places from the ones where they were being read.⁶ This process was especially pronounced as the focus of literary patronage shifted from Khurasan (on the eastern edge of the Persianate world) to Iraq (on its western edge) around the twelfth-century CE, and again when the Mughals established themselves as the world's premier patrons of Persian letters in the sixteenth century. The contributions of lexicographers were crucial both for the debates over style relating to the position of the Ancients vis-à-vis the Moderns described in Chapter 3, and the expansion of north Indian vernacular literary culture described in Chapter 5. Dictionaries compiled across the length and breadth of the Indian sub-continent had always either

³ For example, Fakhr al-Din Mubārak Shāh Qawwās Ghaznawī, the author of *Farhang-i Qawwās* (late thirteenth or early fourteenth century), the earliest extant Persian dictionary from the Indian sub-continent, claims he wrote it for friends (Baevskii 2007, 73). Tek Chand Bahār calls *Bahār-i Ajam* the fruit of a research project that has taken him from youth [*jawāni*] up until his present age of fifty-three (*Bahār-i Ajam* 2001, 1:xxix).

⁴ On dictionaries written in South Asia, see Naqvi 1962 (in Persian) and Blochmann 1868. Remarkably, the last comprehensive survey in English on the subject seems to be Blochmann's. Baevskii 2007 is a survey of the whole Persianate world but only covers the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, and Perry 1998 addresses the nineteenth century through a narrow selection of works.

⁵ Perry 1998, 338.

⁶ Baevskii 2007, 29–30.

included some Indic words or used *hindī* equivalents to gloss the word being defined.⁷ The tendency for lexicographers to include *hindī* increased from a few stray words at first to relatively frequent glosses in the seventeenth-century to eighteenth-century dictionaries whose compilers actively sought out information on vernacular usage.

Here I focus on the Persian lexicographical tradition as it developed in the first half of the eighteenth century. I begin by sketching the history of lexicography in Persian, with particular attention to the dictionaries to which Ārzū directly responds in his own works (namely *Burhān-i Qāfi*, *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, *Farhang-i Rashīdī*, and *Majma‘ al-Furs*). The next section considers the place of Ārzū’s Persian dictionaries (*Sirāj al-Luğhat* and *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*) within the tradition and measured against each other. Ārzū’s third dictionary, *Nawādir al-Alfāz*, is a lexicon of Indic words and has never been properly understood in light of his commitment to Persian or the state of affairs in Persianate vernacular circles in his time. Comparing Ārzū’s lexicographical scholarship to that of his Hindu friends Tek Chand Bahār and Ānand Rām Muķhlīṣ provides an opportunity to explore the tradition’s understanding of cultural difference. The chapter concludes with a sketch of Persian lexicography after Ārzū, arguing that Persian lexicography remained important in South Asia well after the East India Company’s general abolition of Persian in administration in the 1830s, the point at which the Persian language is widely but inaccurately believed to have become moribund in the sub-continent.

Mughal Lexicography before Ārzū

Across the vast distances of the Persian cosmopolis, dictionaries were crucial in constructing a shared literary language from as early as the fourteenth century. In that respect, the works of Ārzū and other eighteenth-century lexicographers fit into a pattern that was set centuries

⁷ “We may notice that nearly every province of India can point to a lexicographist” (Blochmann 1868, 2–3). On glossing see Shirani 1966 with helpful commentary in Hakala 2016, 55.

before. In contrast to our sense of what lexicography seeks to accomplish in recording language generally (or rather a subset of language representing “proper” usage), pre-modern dictionaries were concerned primarily, and in most cases exclusively, with poetry. The social practice of poetry, along with the philological apparatus like dictionaries that poets depended upon, was arguably the chief affective tie between the disparate parts of the Persianate cosmopolis.⁸ Given this regulatory function, it is remarkable that the Indian sub-continent and not Iran was the locus of pre-modern Persian dictionary-writing, as Henry Blochmann, a nineteenth-century Orientalist associated with the Calcutta Madrasah and the Asiatic Society of Bengal who was the author of the last comprehensive account in English of Mughal-Safavid period lexicography, observed in 1868.⁹ Patronage appears to be a key factor, as we would expect for such time-consuming projects, and some major Indian dictionaries including *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* and *Burhān-i Qāṭī* were dedicated to royal patrons, the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627), and ‘Abdullāh Qutbshāh (r. 1626–72), the seventh ruler in the Shi‘ite dynasty of the Deccani state of Golconda. Besides patronage, something less tangible, perhaps that dictionary-writing had a prestige in the sub-continent that it did not have in the Safavid Empire, also explains the stark contrast in the fate of the tradition in Mughal India and Safavid Iran.

Between 1600 and the late nineteenth century, just one of the perhaps two dozen major Persian dictionaries of the time was compiled outside of South Asia. That work, *Majma‘ al-Furs*, was first written in Isfahan in 1008/1600. Even so, Blochmann considers it “half-Indian” because its author not only spent time in India but revised his dictionary after receiving a copy of *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* in 1621, which had been produced for the Mughal court in the meantime.¹⁰ *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* [Dictionary for Jahāngīr, 1017/1608] was compiled by the courtier Mīr Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusain Injū for Akbar (but named for Jahāngīr because

⁸ On the history and importance of dictionaries see Baevskii 2007; Perry 2012, and *passim* Perry 1998.

⁹ Blochmann 1868, cf. Perry 1998 and Tavakoli-Targhi 2001, 106–7. The best work in Persian on Indo-Persian lexicography is Naqvi 1962.

¹⁰ Storey 1984, 25.

Akbar had died three years before its completion). The other two important seventeenth-century dictionaries are *Farhang-i Rashīdī* (1064/1654), compiled in Thatta, Sindh, and *Burhān-i Qāṭī* (1062/1651), compiled in Golconda in the Deccan. Both were intended to provide corrections to *Majma‘ al-Furs* and *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*.¹¹ Since these dictionaries are connected to each other and provide the basis for eighteenth-century Persian lexicography as well as European efforts to compile reliable Persian dictionaries, it is worth considering the circumstances of their composition in more detail.

Farhang-i Jahāngīrī was the great Mughal lexicographical project because it was supported by the emperor Akbar himself.¹² The general facts about Injū’s life are sketched in the “who’s who” of the Mughal nobility, *Ma’āṣir al-Umarā*: He first came to the Deccan from his ancestral home, Shiraz. He arrived in Akbar’s court in the 1580s, was promoted to the rank of six hundred then of a thousand, and capped his political career by cementing an important political alliance between Bijapur and the Mughal Empire. He escorted Ibrāhīm ‘Ādil Shāh’s daughter to Agra to marry Akbar’s son Prince Daniyāl in 1603/1013.¹³ The dictionary was such an achievement that *Ma’āṣir al-Umarā* mentions it.

Injū frames his background and the lexicographical project in the preface in tropes familiar across the Persian lexicographical tradition: He had always had a poetic temperament but was constantly encountering words in poetry that did not make sense to him. He therefore made a study of obscure Persian words for thirty years beginning at age ten. What motivated the composition of the dictionary was an audience in 1005/1596 with Akbar in Kashmir in which the emperor declared that he wanted “a book containing all the authentic Persian words, archaic usages, and idiomatic expressions” in Persian (the “*pārsī*,” “*dari*,” and

¹¹ However, as Blochmann notes, the lack of words in *Burhān-i Qāṭī* specific to Surūrī’s second edition means that Burhān must only have used the first edition (1600) of *Majma‘ al-Furs* (Blochmann 1868, 16).

¹² Naqvi 1962, 81–7; *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* 1975, ii.

¹³ For the year he entered Akbar’s service, Naqvi says 993–4 AH (1585–6 CE) but Blochmann (1868, 66ff.) says 1581 (although in fact *Ma’āṣir al-Umarā* does not specify so it is unclear what his source was).

“*pahlawi*” words).¹⁴ For Akbar, the recovery of these words would be a part of his imperial legacy. The method was, as Rajeev Kinra puts it, a “scientific turn” in lexicography, as it depended upon forty-four dictionaries enumerated at the beginning of the work. It was a mining of the lexicographical tradition but also depended upon histories and commentaries as well as poets’ *dīwāns* to seek out words not mentioned in earlier dictionaries.¹⁵ As Muzaffar Alam has noted, the text emphasizes purification and correctness, but I differ with him in his interpretation that these dictionaries “were all oriented to update the language in the light of the current usages in Iran.”¹⁶ The difficulty with focusing on Iran is that, as Ārzū would argue explicitly in the following century, literary Persian was not the spoken language of any particular place. Mughal lexicography was not meant to reorient Indian Persian specifically towards usage in contemporary Iran but towards correct usage in general, whether that was Iranian or otherwise. As we have seen, the modern concept of the “native speaker” as the source of authentic knowledge of a language does not map onto the pre-modern idea of an authorized user of the language.

The three other major sixteenth-century dictionaries are connected with *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, demonstrating the core unity of the lexicographical tradition of the time. *Majma‘ al-Furs*, also sometimes called *Farhang-i Surūrī* after its author Muḥammad Qāsim Kāshānī whose pen-name was Surūrī, has two editions, an Iranian first edition and a possibly Indian second edition. The first edition (1008/1600) was dedicated to the Iranian ruler Shāh ‘Abbās I and was followed by a revised edition that engaged with *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*. The second edition was written after 1028/1619, around the time its author left Isfahan for India, sometime between 1032/1623 and 1036/1626.¹⁷ *Burhān-i Qāṭī*

¹⁴ The preface to *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (1975, 1ff. esp. 4) is contextualized with the relevant passage translated in Kinra 2011. See Chapter 2 of the present book for a discussion of the meanings of “*pārsī*,” “*dārī*,” and “*pahlawi*” as Ārzū has adapted them from *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*.

¹⁵ *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* 1975, 5–7, 9–10. ¹⁶ Alam 1998, 336, 340–1.

¹⁷ The European traveler Pietro della Valle met him in Isfahan in 1032 AH, setting the date after which he must have left, and he appears to have arrived in Lahore by 1036, if an inscription in one of the manuscripts at the British Library is authentic (Rieu 1879–83, 2:498). Blochmann dates the second edition to 1038 but this appears to be a misreading for 1028, the year in which Surūrī read *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (Blochmann 1868, 16; Rieu 1879–83, 2:499).

was dedicated to another ruler, ‘Abdullāh Qutb Shāh of Golconda (r. 1626–72).¹⁸ Its author was Muḥammad Ḥusain bin Khalaf Tabrīzī, known by his pen-name Burhān. Other than his composition of the dictionary, Burhān is a historical cypher despite having been in a position that allowed him to dedicate his dictionary to a ruler.¹⁹ *Burhān-i Qāṭī*²⁰ is unusual among the major lexicons of its time in that it omits poetic quotations, which in other dictionaries serve to provide evidence for usage. As in *tažkirahs*, the citations in dictionaries serve a second important purpose, namely providing a repository of vetted poetic quotations that readers could draw upon. *Burhān-i Qāṭī* became popular later because it was expansive (with around 20,000 entries), having absorbed much of *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* and *Majma‘ al-Furs*, and is conveniently presented in strict alphabetical order.²¹ However, in being comprehensive it uncritically repeats mistakes in pronunciation and interpretation committed by earlier lexicographers.²² *Farhang-i Rashīdī* by ‘Abd al-Rashīd bin ‘Abd al-Ğafūr is an outlier both geographically, having been compiled in Sindh rather than in the imperial metropole, and because it has no dedication. Although *Farhang-i Rashīdī* appears to have no dedication, the Arabic dictionary ‘Abd al-Rashīd had written two decades earlier, *Muntaķhab al-Lughāt-i Shāh Jahān* (1046/1636), was dedicated to Shāh Jahān.²³ *Farhang-i Rashīdī* explicitly lists four improvements on *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* and *Farhang-i Surūrī* and gives

¹⁸ Naqvi 1962, 93–101.

¹⁹ His birth and death dates have not been established, and although it is assumed that he left for the Deccan after completing his studies at Tabriz, in fact it might have been a father or grandfather who emigrated (Dabirsiaqi 1989; Naqvi 1962, 96–7).

²⁰ Pre-modern Persian dictionaries tend to be arranged in the same hierarchy of headings as other pre-modern works, with a chapter [*bāb*] for each letter and a sub-chapter [*fāṣl*] for each of the next letters, with headwords sometimes appearing in more or less random order in the sub-chapters. *Burhān-i Qāṭī* and *Farhang-i Rashīdī* are alphabetically arranged but other dictionaries used more unfamiliar ordering systems: *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* is perhaps the strangest since it is organized by second letter then first letter. *Majma‘ al-Furs* is organized by last letter then by first letter.

²¹ Dabirsiaqi 1989.

²² Although Storey follows several catalogues in stating that *Farhang-i Rashīdī* is dedicated to Shāh Jahān, I do not find any such dedication in the printed edition (Storey 1984, 35). Blochmann implies that this is because the dictionary was compiled when Shāh Jahān “was the prisoner of his perfidious son Aurangzib, for whom Rashīdī has no words of praise” but it was completed (according to a very clear chronogram that Blochmann reads correctly) in 1064/1653 and Shāh Jahān was not imprisoned until June 1658 (Blochmann 1868, 20–1; Richards 1996, 160).

specific examples of mistakes from the previous works.²³ He notes that such mistakes are more prevalent in *Farhang-i Surūrī* than in *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*. From the perspective of usability, *Farhang-i Rashīdī* is interesting in that it separates out metaphors [*isti‘ārāt*] into their own category at the end of each sub-section.

Just as the important seventeenth-century dictionaries were written in response to one another, the eighteenth-century lexicons also aimed to correct and amplify earlier works. Ārzū’s stated project in *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* (discussed in detail in the following section) was correcting errors in *Farhang-i Rashīdī* and *Burhān-i Qāṭī*. In *Muṣmir*, Ārzū discusses these various dictionaries and declares *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* to be the most accurate of them even though *Farhang-i Rashīdī* and *Burhān-i Qāṭī* were both written later.²⁴ Some of the prefatory material in *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* is the centerpiece in Ārzū’s construction of the Persianate past, as we have considered in Chapter 2. *Farhang-i Rashīdī*’s *muqaddamah* [introduction], which is a brief summary of Persian grammar, was the basis of ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ Hānsawī’s Persian grammar, perhaps the most widely used primer in the eighteenth century.

Reading *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* and *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* together

A notable trend in lexicography over the Mughal period was the increasing awareness of cultural and linguistic differences between parts of the Persianate world as well as between contemporary and earlier usage. Ārzū’s Persian dictionaries, *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* and *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, mirror this recognition because while *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* is a workmanlike

²³ ‘Abd al-Rashīd lists the faults of the two previous dictionaries as: (1) superfluous or repeated verse quotations; (2) incorrect vowelings and definitions for words; (3) including Arabic and Turkish words without specifically noting them as Arabic or Turkish rather than Persian; and (4) repeating the same words under different spellings, which he notes is particularly a problem in *Farhang-i Surūrī*. An additional category is the outright mistake [*sahw-o ghalaṭ*], which he states is again particularly a problem in *Farhang-i Surūrī*, and this includes misspellings involving letters that look nothing alike. He takes the unusual step of providing in the preface a sample of the mistakes in this class that he has corrected (*Farhang-i Rashīdī* 1875, 1:1–3; quoted and translated in Blochmann 1868, 21–4). ‘Abd al-Rashīd claims that he can support all of his corrections with quotations.

²⁴ M 1991, 39ff.; Kinra 2011, 373.

correction of two earlier dictionaries, *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* (which is *Sirāj al-Luğhat*'s second volume but has generally been treated as a standalone work, including by its author) contains words that had never appeared in earlier dictionaries. *Sirāj al-Luğhat* was completed in 1147/1734 and only survives in a few manuscript copies.²⁵ Later in life, Ārzū wrote in *Muṣmir* that his *Sirāj al-Luğhat* was based on “examination and research” [*tanqīh wa taḥqīq*] and bragged that “some people say that until now no such book of Persian lexicography had ever appeared” and that it makes over 1,000 corrections to *Burhān-i Qāṭī* and other dictionaries.²⁶ In *Sirāj al-Luğhat*'s preface, he praises *Farhang-i Rashīdī* for its careful use of quotations and *Burhān-i Qāṭī* for being the most voluminous dictionary.²⁷ However, he wrote the *Sirāj al-Luğhat* to fix their shortcomings, which he notes are especially prevalent in *Burhān-i Qāṭī*, and so does not repeat quotations that are in *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, *Farhang-i Surūrī*, or *Farhang-i Rashīdī* (*Burhān-i Qāṭī*, of course, has no quotations to cite). His list of sources, besides *Farhang-i Rashīdī*, *Burhān-i Qāṭī*, *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, and *Farhang-i Surūrī*, includes *Farhang-i Qūsī*, *Mu'abba al-Fuzalā'*, *Farhang-i Mūnisī* (?),²⁸ *Kashf al-Luğhāt*, and some commentaries on Sa'dī's *Gulistān* and Rūmī's *Maṣnavī*. He particularly highlights *Farhang-i Qūsī*, a dictionary by someone called Majd al-Dīn 'Alī Qūsī, “one of the learned people of Iran,” which in Ārzū’s estimation is very good but not well known (indeed, I have been unable to trace this work beyond Ārzū’s mention of it). *Kashf al-Luğhāt wa al-İştilāhāt* is a relatively well-known mid-sixteenth-century dictionary by 'Abd al-Rahīm bin Aḥmad Sūr and *Mu'abba al-Fuzalā'* a relatively unknown work by 'Abd al-Rahīm's teacher Maulānā Muḥammad bin Shaikh Lād

²⁵ SL 1747, f. 2a. The manuscript is an early copy dated 1160/1747 made at Delhi by a Hindu scribe, Ratan Singh Munshi (Ethé 1903, 1353). It was owned by Richard Johnson (1753–1807), who, given the titles inscribed on f. 1a, probably acquired it during the period he was posted in Lucknow as assistant to the resident (1780–2). (On Johnson, see Marshall 2004.) The manuscript later entered the East India Company Library in Calcutta, where it was consulted by Sir William Jones, and eventually the India Office Library (now housed in the British Library).

²⁶ “chunānkh bāzī goyand kih tāhāl dar fann-i lughāt-i fārsī kitābī chunīn didah na-shudah” (M 1991, 47).

²⁷ SL 1747, f. 2a.

²⁸ Blochmann reads this name as “*Farhang i Mūnisī*” but in the British Library ms to which I had access it appears to be—equally improbably—something like “*Farhang-i Jūsī*” (Blochmann 1868, 26; SL 1747, f. 2a.). Neither title is traceable.

Dihlawī, completed in 925/1519.²⁹ *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* is a hefty tome—the British Library's manuscript weighs in at 682 folios—and it is clearly an achievement but perhaps not the unique phenomenon that Ārzū implies that it was in *Mušmir*. After all, both the dictionaries to which *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* is a response were themselves similar projects of responding critically to earlier dictionaries, albeit with errors that Ārzū sought to remedy. *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* plainly states correct pronunciations and definitions but in effect hides its work from the reader because it neither quotes verses nor introduces the reader to the false pronunciations or definitions being corrected. It is unsurprising therefore that the text remained rare and that later European scholars drew upon the often inaccurate *Burhān-i Qāṭi*³⁰ without realizing that Burhān's errors had been corrected.³¹

The second volume of *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* is *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, a lexicon based on a very different principle since it deals with expressions used by the Moderns not found in earlier dictionaries (or at least not found in a particular meaning in early dictionaries).³¹ It was apparently completed in the same year as the first volume of *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* (that is, in 1734) because its brief preface mentions no details specific to the completion of the second volume. *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* states that the words included are of two kinds: “The first type are words whose meanings were difficult and often the people of India did not have information about them; the second are vocabules whose meanings were well-known, but there is doubt about their being correct in the usage of the eloquent among the *ahl-i zabān*.³² The strategy in *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* is to recognize the Indian context of its intended readership explicitly: It offers Indic-language equivalents for the names of objects to clarify what they are,

²⁹ Naqvi 1962, 146–8, 66–8; Ethé 1903, 1:1337–8. *Mu'abba al-Fuzalā'* divides words based on whether their origin is Persian, Arabic, or Turkish. *Kashf al-Luḡhāt wa al-Iṣtilāḥāt* is apparently also known under the title *Kashf al-Luḡhāt wa al-Muṣṭalaḥāt*.

³⁰ Blochmann writes that “the critical remarks on the *Burhān* are so numerous [in *Sirāj al-Luḡhat*], that the *Burhān* should never have been printed without the notes of the *Sirāj*” (Blochmann 1868, 25).

³¹ In his study of Indo-Pakistani Persian dictionaries, Naqvi claims that some words in CH had in fact appeared in earlier dictionaries (Naqvi 1962, 116).

³² “*qism-i awwal alfāzī-ast kih ma'āni-yi ān mushkil būd wa akṣar ahl-i hind bar ān iṭṭilā' na-dāshṭand qism-i duwwum luḡhāti kih ma'āni-yi ān agarchih ma'rūf wa ma'lūm būd lekin dar saḥīḥ būdan-i ān az rozmarrah-yi fuṣahā-yi ahl-i zabān ba'żī rā taraddud ba-ham-rasīdāh*” (British Library ms Or 2013).

but more fundamentally observes the variations within Persian literary language by frequently employing the formula “the people of India say ...” or “in India they say ...” to introduce a particularly Indian usage in Persian. Thus, *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, a dictionary of contemporary poetry, engages directly with Indians’ usage, unlike *Sirāj al-Lughat* and other previous dictionaries. For example, nowhere in *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* does Ārzū imply a dichotomy between “Indians” [*mardum-i hind* or *ahl-i hind*] and “*ahl-i zabān*.” Rather, for parts of the Persianate world populated by what we would think of as native speakers of Persian, he refers to “*ahl-i tūrān*” and “*ahl-i wilāyat*,” i.e., Central Asians and Iranians.

Chirāgh-i Hidāyat’s pattern of citations gives us information about the texture of Persian literary culture. One scholar has totaled the number of named poets cited as *asnād* in the text as 184 across 2,075 words and phrases.³³ (Unlike *Sirāj al-Lughat*, which has virtually no citations, *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* provides a citation for every single entry.) I have analyzed the frequency of references in the first 445 citations (through the letter “*b*”), which represents roughly a quarter of the total, to discover the ratio by which poets are cited.³⁴ In those 445 citations, three poets are quoted more than 50 times each: (1) Taṣīr, (2) Wahīd, and (3) Salīm. One is quoted more than 40 times: (4) Ashraf. Two are quoted more than 20 times: (5) Tuğhrā and (6) Şā’ib. Quoted more than ten times: (7) Shīfa’ī, (8) Aśar, then the anonymous poets taken together, (9) Mīr Najāt, and (10) Zuhūrī. To give a sense of proportion, each of the top four represents between 10 and 15 percent of the total quotations (that is, Taṣīr, Wahīd, Salīm, and Ashraf together provide just under half the total citations), while Zuhūrī represents 3 percent of them. Many of the 184 poets are quoted just once. Besides these poets in the top ten, some others worth mentioning are Kalīm (13) and Yaḥyā Kāshī (14), two important Safavid poets who settled in Kashmir, and Ārzū himself (18). A few poets who are among the Ancients get a look in, for example, Salmān Sāwajī and Ḥāfiẓ are quoted a couple of times each. This list represents a kind of virtual literary network that is unavailable to us through any other means. The most commonly cited poets are all

³³ Perry 2002 citing Darvesh Bahriddin, whose Tajik article was not available to me.

³⁴ By compiling a spreadsheet that accounts for every quotation.

basically from the eleventh century AH, which is to say roughly the seventeenth century CE. All were born in or near the Safavid lands, indeed some (for example, Ṣā'ib and Shifā'i) spent their careers at the Safavid court. Some Indian-born poets like Ğhanī Kashmīrī and Munīr Lahorī appear further down in the list. Most of the poets had a connection to India, especially to Kashmir during Ẓafar Khān Aḥsan's (d. 1073/1662) governorship there. Ṣā'ib's own sojourn in the Indian sub-continent was famously brief (he became friends with Aḥsan in 1624 when Aḥsan was governor of Kabul, accompanied him to the Deccan and to the Mughal court, but left for Isfahan when Aḥsan took up his post in Kashmir in 1632).³⁵ Taṣṣir, Aśar, Shifā'i, and Mīr Najāt appear never to have left the Safavid lands. It is somewhat surprising how many of the poets here—and among the rest of them if we were to consider further down the list—are obscure. Taṣṣir is a case in point: He is the most cited poet in the dictionary and must have been important in Ārzū's time, but he is virtually unknown today. Of course, literary canons are reshaped in every generation and the eighteenth century's assessment of the significant literature of the seventeenth century is very different from the view from the twenty-first century. *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* gives us a snapshot, admittedly a crude one, of which poets' works were considered worthy of inclusion and available to the author at the time when it was written.

Chirāgh-i Hidāyat is a half-way house between the conservative lexicography of *Sirāj al-Lughat*, which merely seeks to correct earlier dictionaries, and dictionaries of natural language. Although every entry is accompanied by a literary quotation, Ārzū frequently refers to research, especially from the “ahl-i zabān,” and provides details that are not strictly speaking connected with literary language, such as equivalents in Persian as used by Indians (presumably in less formal Persian) or the equivalent word in *hindī*. He sometimes invokes a distinction between common people [‘awāmm] and more careful users of the language.³⁶ Literary research is combined with some degree of independent fact-checking. For example, in defining the word “pādshāh” [king] he notes that although the word was originally spelled with a “p” Indians changed

³⁵ Losensky 2003.

³⁶ For example, in the entry for “palang” (CH 1984, 1046).

the word to “*bādshāh*” because the sound was “improper” [*qabīḥ*] in *hindī* (because, although he does not explicitly say so, “*pād*” refers to flatulence).³⁷ The word “*pā-yī chirāgh dāshtan*” [lit. to have the base of the lamp], which Ārzū defines as “to have hope of profit” and notes that “it is [in] the language of merchants [*ahl-i bazār*.]”³⁸ For “*jahānābād*” (a shortening of “*shāhjahānābād*,” which is to say Delhi) he has a theory that Iranians heard the common people use the short version and adopted it.³⁹ Some specifically Indian concepts, such as “*jigar-khwār*” (a kind of vampirical witch) and “*chandāl*” (broadly a member of an “untouchable” caste but with other more precise meanings), are explained in a way that is both literary scholarship but also reflects observation.⁴⁰ In some cases, for example research into words that are originally Arabic, such as “*tamāshā*” and “*tamīz*,” one sees Ārzū’s general philological method at work.⁴¹

Other Major Eighteenth-Century Persian Dictionaries

Ārzū’s interventions in Persian lexicography came during a fruitful period in Persian dictionary-making, the 1730s and 1740s. Ārzū’s friend Ṭek Chand Bahār was working on *Bahār-i ‘Ajām*, which with around 10,000 entries and copious citations might be the longest pre-colonial Persian dictionary ever compiled and it uses *Sirāj al-Lugħat* as a source. Ārzū’s rival Wārastah compiled *Muṣṭalahāt al-Shū’arā* [Expressions of the Poets], which is far shorter than *Bahār-i ‘Ajām* (containing about 2,000 idiomatic expressions) but more polemical because in addition to engaging with the mainstream dictionary tradition it also draws upon and privileges the views of Iranian informants. *Mir’āt al-İstīlāḥ* by Ānand Rām Muķhlīś is a significant achievement, especially from a modern perspective of what a dictionary should be, because it goes beyond *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*’s cursory observations on society to employ what we could call a proto-anthropological method. Although it accompanies its definitions with literary quotations like *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, the

³⁷ CH 1984, 1044.

³⁸ CH 1984, 1045.

³⁹ CH 1984, 1074.

⁴⁰ CH 1984, 1071, 1081.

⁴¹ CH 1984, 1061.

quotations are frequently just excuses to describe something Muḥkliṣ has seen or heard about.

Bahār-i ‘Ajam, the peak of the Mughal lexicographical tradition in terms of sheer volume, invokes Ārzū as an inspiration. Remarkably, Bahār claims to have used only two works by contemporary writers [*mu’allafāt-i muta’akhkirin*] during the initial composition of the dictionary, namely Ārzū’s *Tanbih al-Ğāfilin* and “a short tract” by Mir Muḥammad Afżal Šābit.⁴² He looked at other contemporary critical works in the course of revisions. Ārzu’s own *Sirāj al-Lugħat* comes first in the list of reference works consulted. One fact worth noting is that both Ārzū and his intellectual nemesis Shaikh Hazin are both represented in the text. Indeed, Bahār states that he will use the honorific “Lamp of the Researchers” [*sirāj al-muhaqqiqīn*] for Ārzū and “Shaikh of the Wise” [*shaikh al-‘arifīn*] for Ḥazīn. Bahār expresses his deep devotion to Ārzū and uses works by Ārzū’s friend Šābit, and yet also acknowledges his great debt to Wārastah’s *Muṣṭalahāt al-Shu‘arā*, and refers to Ḥazīn in highly complimentary terms.⁴³ Bahār was clearly a partisan of Ārzū, and yet like Muḥkliṣ, had no qualms about relying upon the works of Ārzū’s enemies. Bahār could play both sides of the contemporary debate over literary style as he was concerned with the contemporary as it affected the written record, which was what actually interested him. His access to the tradition was encyclopedic: Some manuscripts, including the one held in the Bodleian, list 200 or so sources, including poetic collections, dictionaries, and commentaries.⁴⁴ This range demonstrates an encyclopedic grasp of the tradition, as in Ārzū’s own lexicographical projects, but also a surprising willingness to use texts written by people who did not get along with one another philosophically or personally. Ārzū’s own works in the list include a *dīwān* of ġħazals, his *Sikandarnāmah* and *Gulistān* commentaries, the dictionary *Sirāj al-Lugħat*, and “several treatises” [*bāz rasā’il*] as well.⁴⁵

Some later scholars, following Blochmann, have been confused about the date of *Bahār-i ‘Ajam*. The preface has an ambiguous chronogram

⁴² *Bahār-i ‘Ajam* 2001, 1:30.

⁴³ *Bahār-i ‘Ajam* 2001, 1:xxix–xxx.

⁴⁴ Ms Caps. Or. B 15, f. 2b; on this ms see Sachau and Ethé 1889, 1018.

⁴⁵ Ms Caps. Or. B 15, f. 2b.

best read as 1152 (= 1739), but Blochmann erroneously claims that the first edition was not completed until 1752 and the final (seventh) revision was completed by Bahār in 1782.⁴⁶ The preface also clearly states that Bahār was fifty-three years old at the time of its completion, meaning (if the dating proposed here is correct) that he was born in the late 1680s and thus exactly the same age as Ārzū. By extension if they had been friends for twenty years in 1740 then that means they met around the time when Ārzū settled in Delhi. Further evidence is the fact that ‘Atā-allāh Ḫān Nudrat’s dictionary *‘Ain-i ‘Atā*, completed in 1749, cites both *Sirāj al-Lughat* and *Bahār-i ‘Ajām*, suggesting that those dictionaries were circulating in Delhi and more importantly that *Bahār-i ‘Ajām* was by then long finished.⁴⁷ In fact, Bahār’s pupil Indarman completed an abridgement in 1182/1768 and context makes it clear that Bahār had died by then.

Muṣṭalahāt al-Shū’arā is somewhat like *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* in that Wārastah’s aim, like Ārzū’s, was to collect expressions that appeared in poetry but that the lexicographical tradition had not yet captured. He explains that he came across expressions “unfamiliar to Persian tongues” [ḡharībah-yi fārsī-zabānān] and used research [taḥqīq] during a fifteen-year search [talāsh] to discover their meanings.⁴⁸ The emphasis on the authority of Iranians to declare the meaning of an expression, including in some cases resting authority on “muḥāwarah-dānān-i īrān” [lit. the “idiom-knowers of Iran”], is different from Ārzū’s project. Although Wārastah explicitly mentions checking with Iranians [zabāndān-i īrān-

⁴⁶ The Bodleian catalogue (Sachau and Ethé 1889, 1018) incorrectly calculates the chronogram as 1162 by reading “bā dah sāl” [with ten years (more), i.e., 1152 + 10] for “māddah-yi sāl” [derivation of the year] following the British Museum Catalogue (Rieu 1879–83, 502), which repeats the mistakes of Sprenger’s *Oudh Catalogue*. Sprenger, for example, refers to Bahār’s use of a treatise by Ānand Rām Mukhlis but in fact it is by Muḥkliṣ Kāshi (that is, Mirzā Muhammad Mukhlis of Kashan) and not by Ānand Rām. The argument for the date of the final edition (1782), furthermore, comes from assuming an incorrectly late date of composition for Wārastah’s *Muṣṭalahāt al-Shū’arā*. If Bahār revised the text in 1782 then he would have been approximately ninety-five years old. Naqvi reports the correct date of composition (1962, 154).

⁴⁷ The ms is British Library IO Islamic 1813. Nudrat also mentions *Farhang-i Majd al-Dīn Qūsi*—the same untraceable dictionary used by Ārzū in SL—as a source (Ethé 1903, 1:1354). According to Ethé, Nudrat claims to have worked on his dictionary for twenty years, which is probably an exaggeration given how heavily it uses *Bahār-i ‘Ajām* and SL, neither of which would have been finished when he started work. Ārzū complains in MN about how much of Ārzū and Bahār’s text Nudrat included in the dictionary (MN 2005, 121).

⁴⁸ *Muṣṭalahāt al-Shū’arā* 1985, 1.

dīyār] there is no reason to assume, as Blochmann does, that this meant that Wārastah traveled in Iran.⁴⁹ The title is a chronogram for the year he started writing, 1149/1736–7, which points to a likely completion date of 1164/1751 since he implies the writing took fifteen years.⁵⁰ Wārastah died in 1180/1766–7.

Muğhlîş's *Mir'ât al-İştilâh* (1158/1745) is a favorite source for students of eighteenth-century social history because it frequently observes actual practices. Charmingly it tells us details such as which flowers are grown in Delhi, and revels in seemingly off-topic anecdotes and sayings. Ārzū revised the work after Muğhlîş's death in 1164/1751 so we can assume his endorsement of the contents. *Mir'ât al-İştilâh* is somewhat different from previous dictionaries in that it contains a great deal of “proto-anthropological” observations as well as long digressions describing, for example, particular people that Muğhlîş knew such as Ārzū or objects like the Peacock Throne. Additionally, it ends each letter's section with a series of adages (*amṣāl*). Despite these unusual features, it fits squarely into the tradition of poetic dictionaries because it generally uses poetic quotations for authority, as other dictionaries do. This is worth highlighting because it was written after Nâdir Shâh's conquest of Delhi had completely changed the political relationship of the Mughal Empire with Persia.⁵¹ One sometimes hears the anecdote that Muğhlîş chased after soldiers in Nâdir Shâh's army with a notebook to ask them about how they used Persian (the idea being that they had correct “native-speaker” Persian), but this is an anachronism—he would not have thought them worth talking to because they certainly did not have the right educations or lineages to be master poets. In the work there is a deep attention to administrative terminology and, as the work's editors note, to calligraphic and painting terminology.⁵² Some evidence for definitions

⁴⁹ Blochmann 1868, 30.

⁵⁰ Naqvi's interpretation of the chronogram does not take into account the assimilation of the “al-” in the title so he cites 1180 as the start date, which is impossibly late (Naqvi 1962, 159; *Mustalahât al-Shu'arâ* 1985, ii).

⁵¹ The editors claim that 1156 AH (i.e., 1743 CE) was the year he started writing it on the basis that 26 Muharram 1156 is the first named date in the text.

⁵² *Mir'ât al-İştilâh* 2013, 42ff., English introduction. In the entry for “*dar-pardah*” Mukhlîş mentions his own collection of paintings in the winter bedroom, including one of Holi [*majlis-i holi*], which he claims is worthy of Mâni and Bahzâd (2013, 354). There is a lot of fascinating material here: Firstly, that the Hindu festival is described with the word “*majlis*,” a word with

comes from Mukhlîş himself and some from named people (some of whom may be traceable), but the favorite technique remains quoting a verse as *sanad* as nearly all Persian dictionaries of the past had done. There is a lot of fascinating material in the text, but there is a risk in casting Mukhlîş in the role of a present-day anthropologist lest we forget that he is embedded in a literary-cultural system.

Although Mukhlîş seems interested in Iranian Persian as opposed to Indo-Persian, I believe that scholars have overinterpreted the reason for this orientation. He mentions equivalent administrative positions in Nâdir Shâh's court and in India, but it seems a reasonable assumption that this was not because the Iranian terms were more "correct" but rather because the Iranians were, at least for a time, in charge.⁵³ The editors of the critical edition claim that "It can be seen from a close reading of the text that after finishing the work, he got it authenticated from speakers of the language just arrived in India."⁵⁴ They do not cite text in support of this proposition and implications of the claim are somewhat misleading. Mukhlîş asked authorities about certain headwords but this is no different from the tradition (in which the second-best evidence for a definition, failing finding authoritative poetic *sanad*, was to ask someone) and certainly does not represent "authentication" of the text by native speakers in *toto*.

Mukhlîş's *Mir'ât al-Îstilâh* differs from most other pre-colonial Persian lexicons in that it focuses on general vocabulary—often bureaucratic terminology and flora and fauna—rather than poetic usage, and its entries are frequently more encyclopedic than straightforward definitions. For example, he might praise someone in an entry (such as Ārzû, Âşaf Jâh, or Qizilbâsh Khân Ummîd) or include a tangentially

overtones of Persianate sociability. Secondly, that the quality of the work is referenced with the Ancient painter of Persianate legend, Mâni, and the by-then-storied Timurid-Safavid painter of late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Shiraz and Tabriz, Kamâl al-Dîn Bahzâd.

⁵³ The editors note that his work *Guldastah-yi Asrâr* is a compilation of specifically Iranian chancellery terms—he studied Nadir Shah's court's letters to come up with the list of terms. They mention this in the context of Mukhlîş's introductory statement of his goal for composing *Mir'ât al-Îstilâh*, namely presenting words not recorded in contemporary dictionaries (precisely Ārzî's project in *Chirâgh-i Hidâyat*). By juxtaposing the two works, the editors introduce an Iranian standard where Mukhlîş does not imply one. In any case, I have not come across the text in any catalogue.

⁵⁴ *Mir'ât al-Îstilâh* 2013, English introduction, 33.

related anecdote, joke, or saying. Indeed, Muğhlîş's dictionary can be thought of as being like a *tażkirah* in terms of building a community through memory. The text is crowded with everyday details unavailable in other works: The entry on coffee [*qahwah*] complains of high prices in the two Chandni Chowk coffeehouses, and we know what sorts of flowers grow in Shahjahanabad from the entry on “*gul-i ja‘fari*” [a kind of yellow flower].⁵⁵ There is a strong sense of the author's desire to know about objects and social practices that contrasts with other lexicographers. Unconstrained by the need to provide evidence on the basis of poetic quotations, which would be the case for a typical Persian *farhang* [lexicon], Muğhlîş is himself often the authority on the meaning of a word or phrase. Interestingly, he also calls upon various informants who had traveled outside of India and even takes the opportunity of Nâdir Shâh's invasion to learn about Iranian chancellery practices first-hand.⁵⁶ He frequently draws comparisons between Iranian and Indian usages in Persian but does not give Iran primacy and instead merely provides a sketch of how terms are used in other parts of the Persian cosmopolis. *Mir’ât al-İştilâh* is undoubtedly a text intended for an Indian readership since it frequently quotes *hindî* equivalents of Persian terms and expressions, including *hindî* adages [*amṣâl*]. Arguably the most delightful is that “laddus [sweets] are not distributed during war” (the equivalent Persian saying has “halva” as the sweet in question).⁵⁷ Although Muğhlîş was Ārzû's close friend, he sometimes cites Ārzû's archrival Hâzin, for

⁵⁵ *Mir’ât al-İştilâh* 2013, 570–2, 621.

⁵⁶ Some examples from the text: “*Düd-i mash‘ali*” means lamp-black (but here is described as a deep blue color like the *nâfarmân* flower) and the information was provided by Şâfdar Muhammad Khân, who had acted as an envoy to the Safavid court during Muhammad Shâh's reign (*Mir’ât al-İştilâh* 1850, 260). “*Şa‘lab farush*” refers to a seller of a kind of hot sugar-syrup beverage. Hâji Nazîr, who recently returned from Iran, explained the drink and noted that he had had it himself in Mashhad but only in the winter months (*Mir’ât al-İştilâh* 1850, 171). “*Farmân bi'l-mushâqqah*” refers to an oral order of the king that does not require the chancellery's seal and the evidence for this usage is provided by documents from Nâdir Shâh's chancellery (*Mir’ât al-İştilâh* 1850, 409). Likewise, “*mîrzâ-yî daftâr*” (a clerk in the imperial establishment) was a term that Mukhlîş heard repeatedly from people around Nâdir Shâh (*Mir’ât al-İştilâh* 1850, 490–1). The invasion also brought new material things to Mukhlîş's attention, such as “*chüb-dast*” (a kind of stick) seen in Delhi when Nâdir Shâh's soldiers came (*Mir’ât al-İştilâh* 1850, 198–9).

⁵⁷ The Persian expression “*dar jang halwâ baķhsh namîkunand*” is rendered into *hindî* (in sumptuous calligraphy in the British Library's copy) as “*laraqî meṁ ko'i ladđû nahîm batê*” (*Mir’ât al-İştilâh* 1850, 265). It appears among several hundred sayings.

example, on the fact that “*mahtāb*” appears in works of ancients in the meaning “moon.”⁵⁸ Clearly there were limits to personal animosity if Ḥazīn could find a place in a work by one of Ārzū’s most ardent partisans. Significantly, Ārzū received the text after Muḥkliṣ’s death and added marginal notes and a preface.

Although it was especially common in Persian dictionaries of this time to provide the equivalent *hindī* term (for example, in *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*), *Mir’āt al-İştilāh* perhaps includes them more frequently than in any other dictionary. Furthermore, Muḥkliṣ appears to have shared Ārzū’s relatively permissive views on how a *hindī* word can be adopted in Persian poetry. After the entry for “*maniyyār*” (an Indic word for a kind of jeweled bangle), Muḥkliṣ writes in a “*fā’idah*” (a heading which we can perhaps translate as “useful note”):

It ought to be known that some venerable persons believe that an Indic word should not be used in a Persian verse because the verse is thereby devalued. In one of the couplets written by the same master [*ustād*] Ḥakīm Ḥāfiq [who provided the previous example] has used the word “*chūri*” [bangle]. Likewise, Mullā Ṭughrā has a large number of Indic words in his verses. It means that these restrictions are [only] for inexperienced and beginner poets. It is quite lawful for the master-poets who possess the ability to use them.⁵⁹

A large number of Indian concepts appear in *Mir’āt al-İştilāh*. For example, “*qashqah*,” the sandalwood mark placed on the forehead by upper-caste Hindus called a “*tikah*"; “*bīrah-yi pān*,” the chewable preparation of areca nut and spices wrapped in betel leaves, which is accompanied by a *fā’idah* describing of various presentations of *pān*; and administrative terminology relating to land grants in India.⁶⁰

Some entries relate to the Iranian local or customs with no analogue in India. For example, “*sā’lab farosh*” a seller of hot syrup (i.e., salep)

⁵⁸ *Mir’āt al-İştilāh* 1850, 477.

⁵⁹ *Mir’āt al-İştilāh* 2013, 660–1 (the British Library ms, *Mir’āt al-İştilāh* 1850, has a lacuna here). Muḥkliṣ goes on to cite Yahyā Kāshī’s use of the word “*gilahri*” [squirrel] in support of the same principle of mastery (this part is in the British Library ms on f. 252b).

⁶⁰ *Mir’āt al-İştilāh* 2013, 566, 148, 51–3. In *hindī*, “*bīrah*” is written “*bīrā*.”

typically found in bazārs in Iran. Hāji Nażīr, who recently returned from Iran, is cited as Muḵliş's informant. Others include names of particular places, such as streets, rivers, or gardens in Isfahan and Herat, such as “āb-i shīrāzī,” a metonym for wine but also the name of a river in Isfahan, and “bāgh-i bulbul” [Nightingale Garden], which was apparently in Isfahan.⁶¹

Others present contrast or loosen comparisons between India and Iran. For example, “bar sar sang nishāndan,” a punishment in which hot stones are put on someone's face, which Muḵliş notes is originally Iranian but now is practiced in India as well. “Kamar-chīn” refers to an Indian robe [*jāmah*] which is not worn in Iran. The reason is that it is pleated and men's robes are not pleated in Iran, where indeed the only people who wear pleated robes are “courtesans and dancing boys” [*loliyān wa atfāl-i raqqāṣ*]. In the entry for “dast gardān” [money given as a loan] Muḵliş conflates the festivals of Nowroz and Diwali. In the entry for “turunj-i tilā” [lit. golden orange], a groom-picking ceremony of the “sultans of ‘Ajam” is compared to the Hindu *swayamvara* [here: *sīmbar*], the ceremony in which a princess chooses the groom as in the Sanskrit epics.⁶² Muḵliş cites a number of proverbs in both Persian and *hindī*.

Although a smattering of Indic words had always made an appearance in Persian lexicographical works, by the eighteenth century such words were frequent even in general purpose literary dictionaries like *Bahār-i ‘Ajam*.⁶³ Muḵliş goes further than some of his contemporaries and positions his lexicography at the interface of Persian literary culture and a largely *hindī*-speaking life-world. Ārzū has a similar project of exploring the edges of Persian in *Nawādir al-Alfāz*.

Ārzū's Vernacular Lexicography

The knowledge that Indic loanwords existed in Persian was certainly not novel in the eighteenth century—*Majmū‘at al-Furs*, which probably

⁶¹ *Mir’āt al-İştilâh* 2013, 250, 13, 99.

⁶² *Mir’āt al-İştilâh* 2013, 111–12, 594, 359–60, 211–12.

⁶³ On various *hindī*-derived words in *Bahār-i ‘Ajam*, see Ali 2002. See Karomat 2014 on Indic words in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Persian dictionaries.

dates to the fourteenth century, marked some words as Indian in origin⁶⁴—but a critical engagement with this borrowing, such as Ārzū's description of linguistic sharing [*ishtirāk*] between Persian and Indic languages, only developed in the eighteenth century. The Indic words that had by then become part of the Persian poet's available stock include common items, e.g., “*pāni*” [water], as well as South Asian toponyms, e.g., “*pānipat*” (a place in modern-day Haryana). The two of those together leads to delightful examples like Mullā Ṭughrā's tongue-in-cheek declaration in the mid-seventeenth century that:

Whoever drinks the water [*pāni*] of Panipat
Sprouts a parrot-like gift of the gab.⁶⁵

Poets of this time reveled in such wordplay, which in the case of this couplet works on several levels: water is contained within the name of the town and leads to green foliage (like the proverbial greenness of parrots, who are also known for their ability to talk), and the expression for eloquence “*ratb al-lisāni*” literally means “moistness of the tongue.” Indic words had by this time become another arrow in a poet's quiver of verbal effects.

Ārzū wrote *Nawādir al-Alfāz* sometime before 1156/1743 towards the end of an illustrious career as a Persian poet and lexicographer but also—as we consider in depth in Chapter 5—as a promoter of vernacular literature.⁶⁶ There is seemingly a contradiction in Ārzū's legacy in that

⁶⁴ On this dictionary, which should not be confused with the seventeenth-century *Majma' al-Furs*, see Baevskii 2007, 64. The preface refers to the difficulty of reading the *Shāhnāmāh* because of its multidialectal style (*Farhang-i Majmū'at al-Furs* 1977, 1–3). By my count there are three Indic [*hindawi*] words in the dictionary, namely “*laund*” [defined as “the impetuosity of the effeminate” (*khez-i mukhannaṣ*)], “*land*” [penis], and “*rāī*” [an Indian king] (*Farhang-i Majmū'at al-Furs* 1977, 62, 62, 263). Without mentioning the term's Indic origin, the dictionary *Burhān-i Qāṭī* defines “*laund*” as either an “immoral woman” or a “boy who commits bad acts” [*pisar-i badkārah*], an obvious sexual euphemism (*Burhān-i Qāṭī* 1850, 2:230).

⁶⁵ “*zi pānipat ānkas kih noshidah pāni / cho ḫūṭi shudah sabz ratb al-lisāni*” (quoted in Hasan 1998, 9). Ṭughrā (d. before 1026/1667–8) was born in Mashhad and came to India in Jahāngīr's reign, becoming *munshi* to Shāh Jahān's youngest son, Prince Murād Bakhsh. He seems to have been one of the most enthusiastic users of Indic words in Persian (see Dudney 2017b).

⁶⁶ The evidence for the date of composition is found in the definition for “*baisākh*” [Vaiśākha, the second month of the Hindu calendar that falls in April–May]. See NA 1951, 96; cf. NA 1951, xvi and ‘Abdullah 1965, 46, which both mistakenly cite the year as 1165 rather

he is recognized as a towering figure in *rekhtah* (that is, in *hindī* poetry written according to Persian conventions) by his contemporaries and yet his extant work in the vernacular consists of a few couplets that would not fill a page and whose attribution is uncertain anyway. What is the source of Ārzū's reputation in *rekhtah*/Urdu if not a collection [*dīwān*] of poetry such as the cherished volumes left to posterity by his contemporaries like Shāh Ḥātim and Mīr? The answer to the riddle is not found in how Ārzū wrote Urdu poetry, but rather must be how he thought *about* Urdu. His ideas about vernacular composition were clearly passed down to other poets, who respected him in the first place because he was a great Persianist. His embedding of arguments about the vernacular in works nominally about Persian literature will be considered in the next section. Here I turn to the importance of Ārzū's dictionary *Nawādir al-Alfāz* as a bridge between Persian literary culture and the burgeoning vernacular composition that Persian-language poets were increasingly interested in exploring.

Nawādir al-Alfāz is the first critical dictionary of *hindī*/Urdu in Persian, and thus represents an attempt to bring the tools available for Persian literary criticism to bear upon the vernacular.⁶⁷ The definition of language in the eighteenth century in India and elsewhere was based not on structure but rather on what we would call socio-linguistic criteria: A language was defined less by a set of formal characteristics than by its users and the contexts in which they used it.⁶⁸ For that reason, people who had good literary judgment in one language could apply it to another language. Furthermore, Ārzū—like modern socio-linguists—acknowledges that languages are fundamentally porous. He recognizes that from ancient times Indic words had been entering into Persian, and that *hindī* freely borrowed Persian words and grammatical structures, a

than 1156. Walter Hakala has calculated that the lunar date 24 Muḥarram 1156 corresponds with a date in the Hindu month Vaiśākha, which is not true for the year 1165, conclusively showing that 1165 is a repeated typo for 1156 (personal communication, 15 January 2014).

⁶⁷ Here “critical dictionary” is somewhat of a hedge because certainly there were earlier lexicons, such as a Persian dictionary composed in Gujarat that had a chapter on *hindī* words used in poetry (Faruqi 2001, 73) and a *hindī*-Persian dictionary probably composed in Rajasthan in 1764 (Truschke 2012b, n148).

⁶⁸ I have tried to theorize this user-based perception for Braj Bhāṣā by considering colonial-era misinterpretations of how language was used in India (Dudney 2010a).

process which arguably intensified in his own time.⁶⁹ The key difference between the cosmopolitan Persian tradition and the localized *hindī* tradition was that the former had been constituted by centuries of both poetic practice and scholarship while the latter was based only on poetic practice. We see a parallel in early modern Europe, where Latin existed alongside vernacular literatures that had flourished for centuries but did not develop a written critical tradition until they were influenced by Latin.⁷⁰ The techniques for classifying and assessing the literature (or rather the words, phrases, and literary tropes) of the cosmopolitan language shaped the vernacular literature and standardized its usage. The twentieth-century critic Sayyid ‘Abdullah refers to this process as “washing out the stain of lack of gravitas [*be-i‘tibāri*]” that kept Urdu from being fit for serious writing, but such rhetoric, implying shame over Urdu’s undeveloped early state, clearly represents a modern Urdu speaker’s feelings projected onto the past.⁷¹

Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has written that “with his vast erudition in comparative philology, considerable wit and elegance of style, Khan-e Arzu left a model in *Nawādir-al-Alfāz* which our later lexicographers unfortunately did not follow closely” when they applied themselves to writing dictionaries of Urdu in Urdu.⁷² In the present discussion of the

⁶⁹ Compilers of much earlier Persian dictionaries were aware of linguistic borrowings. Numerous individual lexemes in these dictionaries make reference to a language of origin, such as one surprising entry in *Majmū‘at al-Fars* [A Persian Collection, fourteenth century?]: “*land bah zabān-i hindī nām-i kir ast*” [“In the *hindī* language, ‘*land*’ is the word for *penis*”] (quoted in Baevskii 2007, 64).

Beyond individual entries, some prefaces note patterns of borrowing. For example, the Delhi Sultanate-period *Dastūr al-Afāzīl* [Canons of the Learned, 1342 CE] contains, according to the preface, “Arabic, Turkish, Mongolian, Pahlavi, Persian, Afghan [Pashto], Jewish [Judeo-Persian?], Christian [Aramaic?]; the tongues of the Magians, Syrians, philosophers and Tajiks; Hebrew; words from the dialects of Rayy, Hijaz, and Transoxania, poetical idioms from every city, scholarly coinages, and popular sayings” (translated in Baevskii 2007, 81). See also the preface of *Burhān-i Qātfī*, which has a similar list. This kind of multilingual consciousness also exists in the Arabic tradition, as in Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyū‘ī’s *Mutawakkilī*, a lexicon of originally non-Arabic words found in the Qur’ān and arranged by presumed language of origin (Bell 1924).

⁷⁰ See, for example, Burke 2006. New Persian literature itself seems in the historical record to appear fully formed in the tenth century but there was no well-established critical tradition in Persian until the thirteenth (Clinton 1989). Arabic had been a strong influence on Persian literature long before the Arabic-derived critical tradition began in Persian. This is a point that certainly would not have been lost on Ārzū and his contemporaries. Obviously Persian influenced vernacular literature long before people began writing critically about Urdu.

⁷¹ ‘Abdullah 1965, 45.

⁷² Faruqi 1990b, 29.

work, I will advance two related arguments. Firstly, Ārzū consistently places *rekhtah*-style *hindī* into the same linguistic and cultural frame as Persian, most explicitly through the concept of *tawāfiq* (the idea laid out in *Muṣmir* that there is an underlying genetic relationship between Persian and Indian languages). Although he never argues for it specifically—in part, we can assume, because it would have been obvious to his readers—this means that Persian discursive practices could be applied to Urdu poetry just as Arabic practices had been applied to Persian or Persian had influenced Turkish literary culture. The rich canon of Persian literary theory could be brought to bear on the vernacular because even if vernacular criticism was underdeveloped at this point, the deep linguistic bonds between the languages mean that the theory of Persian literature was not foreign to *hindī*. Secondly, I build on the argument in Chapter 2 in the context of *Muṣmir* that Ārzū was trying to establish a Delhi-centered standard for *hindī* poetry along the lines of how a standard Persian came into existence. While he is content to record non-Delhi usages, he rejects any that would not meet with approval in the capital. His approach is therefore comprehensive in its research but considerably narrower in its conclusions.

Although its methodology is original, *Nawādir al-Alfāz* is a correction of an earlier lexicon, Mīr ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ Hānsawī’s *Gharā’ib al-Luḡhāt* [Rarities of Words, late seventeenth/early eighteenth century] with a considerable number of additional entries. Ārzū often invokes quotations from the previous work with the phrase “*dar risālah ...*” [in the treatise ...], and sometimes full-throatedly disagrees with ‘Abd al-Wāsi’s interpretations, many of which are indeed simplistic. Some manuscripts of *Nawādir al-Alfāz* lack the new title and just call it *Gharā’ib al-Luḡhāt* or “a correction” [*taṣhīḥ*] of *Gharā’ib al-Luḡhāt*.⁷³ As he states in his preface, Ārzū has kept all of the words that appeared in *Gharā’ib al-Luḡhāt*, even though he occasionally questions ‘Abd

⁷³ For example, the British Library’s copy, ms Or. 12,015, is catalogued as *Gharā’ib al-Luḡhāt*, and indeed even has enclosed a letter from one Zulfishan Noor who wrote on February 3, 1938 that *Gharā’ib al-Luḡhāt* is by Ārzū (with no mention of ‘Abdul Wāsi’) and “is a recognised book among research workers.” He urged Sir Gerard Clauson, who later presented this copy to the British Library, not to bear the expense of publishing the work because it is widely available in manuscript. The mss of NA at Aligarh Muslim University are catalogued similarly.

al-Wāsi's reasons for including some of them (for example, “*takiyā*”). Although he praises ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ in the preface as “one of the successful learned men and famous scholars of heaven-resembling India” [*yakī az fużalā-yi kāmgār wa ‘ulamā-yi nāmdār-i hindūstān jannat-nishān*], it is clear that he finds ‘Abd al-Wāsi’s scholarship lacking because he then uses four synonyms for “mistake” to describe the research in *Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt*.

Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt is of historical interest as an old dictionary of the vernacular but it is not a particularly sophisticated work. For the editor of the published edition of *Nawādir al-Alfāz*, Sayyid ‘Abdullah, the primary explanation for the difference in depth between *Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt* and *Nawādir al-Alfāz* is that ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ was a schoolmaster while Ārzū was a philologist writing for other scholars. Unfortunately, we know little about ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ because services to education did not merit inclusion in poetic *tažkirahs* of the time.⁷⁴ He composed popular educational texts, including a *niṣāb* [a rhyming, multilingual dictionary for schoolchildren], some Persian grammar books, and at least two poetic commentaries [*sharḥ* pl. *shurūḥ*].⁷⁵ Indeed, he wrote what appears to be the most popular Persian grammar of its time in India.⁷⁶ As his name implies, he is connected with the town of Hansi in present-day Haryana (about 130 km northwest of Delhi), and Ārzū occasionally hints that his usage is provincial. *Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt* itself is undated and the four manuscripts I have consulted were copied decades too late to give any indication of the original date of composition.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ NA 1951, iv. On ‘Abdul Wāsi’ see Hakala 2016, ch. 2; Dudney 2019a.

⁷⁵ On ‘Abdul Wāsi’s *Niṣāb-i Sih Zabān* [*Niṣāb* of Three Languages] see ‘Abdullah 1965, 92–3. In the Aligarh Muslim University Library, his commentary on the *Bustān* of Sa’di is ms J Per. 301 and two copies of his commentary on *Yūsuf* and *Zulaikha* are mss J Per. 240 and J Per. 302. On some important *niṣābs*, see Baevskii 2007, 101, 123–4. The most famous Indian *niṣāb*, *Khāliq Bārī*, is attributed to Amīr Khusrau but this has generated controversy. Internal evidence suggests it was written centuries after his death by someone else named Khusrau, possibly in the tenth/sixteenth century (NA 1951, ii). However, more recent scholars have argued that there is no compelling evidence against Amīr Khusrau’s being the original author and that anachronistic features of the text are interpolations (Hakala 2010, 259ff.).

⁷⁶ The preface notes that it was based on *Farhang-i Surūrī*, *Farhang-i Jahāngiri*, and *Farhang-i Rashidī*. It was published by the Naval Kishore press (*Risālah-yi ‘Abd al-Wāsi’* 1862).

⁷⁷ Rampur ms 2543 gives 1205/1790 and ms 2544 gives 1281/1864. The oldest ms in existence appears to be from 1159/1746, which is still far too late (NA 1951, xlivi). The undated manuscript in the Cambridge University Library (Eton Pote 291) came into the collection of

Another text, the late seventeenth-century *Tuhfat al-Hind* [“A Gift from India”] by Mīrzā Khān, is worth mentioning in the context of *Nawādir al-Alfāz*.⁷⁸ It is notable because it appears to be the only Persian treatise on *hindī* grammar from the pre-colonial period.⁷⁹ Some manuscripts include an appendix [*khātimah*], which is a dictionary about the same length as the rest of the work.⁸⁰ The appendix is one of the oldest lexicons of an Indic language in Persian (other than *niṣābs*, which were, after all, not dictionaries but rather *hindī*-medium teaching aids for Arabic and Persian).⁸¹ It is of little interest for us as a dictionary because although it has some 3,000 entries, most are just a spelling followed by a single-word Persian gloss. A comparison of a number of entries suggests that none of the definitions match up with any in

E. E. Pote, a colonial officer, before 1788 (Margoliouth 1904, 2–6) and is probably not much older than that since it has the Swiss adventurer Antoine Polier’s seal (under his Mughal title Arsalān Jang) dated 1196/1782.

⁷⁸ The dating is uncertain, as is the patron and indeed the author, who is otherwise unattested. Rieu’s British Museum catalogue claims that the patron was Jahāndār Shāh and that the text was written before 1676 (1879–83, 1:62). William Irvine argues that Kukaltash Khān, Jahāndār Shāh’s foster brother, was the patron and that the work must have been completed between 1695 and 1706 (Irvine 1898). Ziauddin’s editor’s preface and the corrigenda to the Bodleian catalogue agree that it was written for Aurangzeb’s eldest son, Prince Muḥammad A’zam Shāh (Ziauddin 1935, 2–3; Beeston 1954, 102). That seems best supported by the evidence and would put the date before 1707 when A’zam Shāh was killed. I have seen a manuscript in the Aligarh Centre of Advanced Study in History (ms 67 formerly Univ. Coll. 98), which clearly lists both Kukaltash Khān and Jahāndār Shāh as dedicatees. It seems most likely that these were later insertions. Another possibility is that somehow two texts written for different patrons were merged (see Bhatia 1987, 17–21), but this is presently speculation and is rendered unlikely by the fact that the whole work appears to use the same solipsistic system for describing Indic sounds.

⁷⁹ Ziauddin 1935, 8; cf. Bhatia 1987, 21. A very short section of it is published with a translation and some useful context as *Grammar of the Braj Bhakha* 1935. I have consulted the two Bodleian manuscripts as well as an edition published in Tehran (*Tuhfat al-Hind* 1975). The author does not identify the part of the work dealing with phonology and grammar (the introduction) or the work as a whole with any of the traditional Arabic linguistic disciplines (Rampur ms 2543 ff. 2a–3b). I am therefore using “grammar” as a shorthand description of the work’s contents rather than defining its genre as “*sarf wa nahw*,” the usual Perso-Arabic term for “grammar.”

⁸⁰ For example, Bodleian ms Elliott 383. The complete appendix (a lexicon of Indic words) has been published as *Tuhfat al-Hind* 1983. Although unpublished before the twentieth century, it attracted the attention of Sir William Jones who drew on it extensively for his essay “On the Musical Modes of the Hindus” (this fact is curiously not mentioned in Zon 2006).

⁸¹ The *Sharh-i Sundar Singār* [Commentary on Sundar], a lexicon of the work of the Braj poet Sundar, is several decades older. The Indie Office Library’s copy was compiled in the nineteenth century by Garcin de Tassy from a glossary originally dated 1686 vs/1636 CE (Ethé 1903, 1:1538). It describes the unvoiced retroflex stop [ṭ] as “*tā-yi hindī*” [Indian “t”] meaning that its transliteration system is identical to or close to Ārzū’s and unlike that of *Tuhfat al-Hind*.

Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt or *Nawādir al-Alfāz*. Furthermore, its system of describing Indic sounds is unique.⁸² It therefore appears not to have had any direct influence on either *Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt* or *Nawādir al-Alfāz*.

As in the case of the more mainstream Persian dictionaries, *Nawādir al-Alfāz* and *Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt* are not dictionaries in the modern sense of being comprehensive and general-purpose lexicons. Even though they are crossing linguistic boundaries, their contents are selective and are meant to serve as a tool for literary composition and interpretation. The preface of *Nawādir al-Alfāz* states (in relation to *Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt*'s purpose) that the goal was to define “Indic words that people of the lesser provinces use rather than the Persian, Arabic or Turkish” synonyms.⁸³ Both *Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt* and *Nawādir al-Alfāz* spell out Arabic and Persian synonyms, implying that their purpose is as much about helping the reader build his Persian and Arabic vocabulary as it is about defining Indic words, and *Nawādir al-Alfāz* frequently quotes Arabic and Persian dictionaries, including Ārzū's own *Sīraj al-Luğhat*. ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ only rarely quotes dictionaries.⁸⁴ Indeed, many of Ārzū's corrections have to do with ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘’s Perso-Arabic synonyms rather than with any doubt about the Indic word being defined. For example, Ārzū rejects ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘’s inclusion of *takiyā* [pillow], arguing correctly that it is itself an Arabic word (and therefore out of place in a dictionary of Indic words), and then gives the *hindī* synonym, *gerīḍwā*.⁸⁵ Although numerous

⁸² *Tuhfat al-Hind*'s transliteration scheme is an awkward admixture of Arabic terminology for degrees of “heaviness.” It is described at Ziauddin 1935, 11–12. The terminology used in *Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt* and NA, as well as Ārzū's other works, is both simpler and more accurate. A fuller account of Indo-Persian schemes for representing Indic sounds is given in Chapter 2.

⁸³ “*lughāt-i hindī kih fārsī yā ‘arabī yā turki-yi ān zabān-zad-i ahl-i diyār-i kamtar būd*” (NA 1951, 3). Walter Hakala's analysis of NA is illuminating (Hakala 2016, 51–63). Neither *Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt* nor NA appears in the most comprehensive list of Persian dictionaries compiled in South Asia (Naqvi 1962, 333ff.). Oddly, Ārzū's description of *Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt*'s function is more clearly articulated than ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘’s own vague explanation. *Ĝharā'ib al-Luğhāt*'s preface is excerpted in NA 1951, iv. I have compared it to Rampur mss 2543 and 2544. Hakala graciously provided photographs that made this comparison possible.

⁸⁴ For example, for “*rā’itā*” he cites a variant from *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (NA 1951, 260). As far as I have been able to establish, he has only used that dictionary, which is also frequently cited by Ārzū in *M*.

⁸⁵ NA 1951, 149–50. Platts and the *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary* (McGregor 1993) both give this word with dental “d” rather than retroflex “d” as Ārzū has. Another example is the

Indic concepts are described in *Nawādir al-Alfāz* (such as the months), it is not primarily a dictionary of Indian cultural practices. For example, the word *Diwālī* (the Hindu festival) is carefully defined in *Mušmir* but does not appear in *Nawādir al-Alfāz* itself, as it certainly would have if Ārzū had thought of the work as a lexicon of Indian traditions.⁸⁶

Besides adding entries and correcting ‘Abd al-Wāsi’s Arabic and Persian, Ārzū has made other fundamental improvements. Since *Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt*’s entries are grouped into chapters by first letter but are randomly arranged within each chapter, it is difficult to locate particular words. Ārzū himself notes this shortcoming in the preface to *Nawādir al-Alfāz*, and has organized *Nawādir al-Alfāz* according to the more usable system of chapter by first letter and sub-chapter by the second letter. Also, Ārzū incorporates a great many learned sources and highlights ‘Abd al-Wāsi’s lack of research in matters of practical knowledge, such as zoology or botany—or more precisely, how words for animals and plants had been used in literature.⁸⁷ Furthermore, with the possibilities opened up by the concept of *tawāfuq*, *Nawādir al-Alfāz* is able to make much more sophisticated observations about language than *Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt*. By acknowledging that Persian and Sanskrit are related, Ārzū can discuss the origins of words and trace their meanings through history.

While *Nawādir al-Alfāz* is widely available in manuscript, the unrevised *Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt* is rare.⁸⁸ As Walter Hakala has argued, Ārzū

entry for “*tikkā*” which Ārzū notes is just a misspelling of Arabic and Persian “*tikkah*” [small piece, as in a meat dish] (NA 1951, 150). For “*thag*” [robber], Ārzū corrects ‘Abd al-Wāsi’s gloss “*mushtag*” to “*mushhang*” [robber] (NA 1951, 164).

⁸⁶ M 1991, 174.

⁸⁷ For example, ‘Abdul Wāsi’ tries to identify the *papihā* [a kind of cuckoo], which “is a small, sweet-voice bird” [murḡī ast kūchak wa ḫhwush āwāz], with the *shukhish* bird even though the *papihā* itself is not found in Persia [dar wilāyat mahl-i naṣar ast] (NA 1951, 105). The problem, as Ārzū notes, is that there are many species of “small, sweet-voiced” birds that can be analogized to the *papihā*. Ārzū also throws in a learned reference to the tenth-century CE poet Rūdaki’s use of *shukhish*. He concludes that the *papihā* is actually a *ṣa’wah* [finch]. See also the entry on “*totā*” [a kind of parrot], which includes a discourse on which birds are represented in poetry as eating sugar (NA 1951, 156; cf. SL f. 201a on “*toti*” noting that the *hindī* word is “*totah*” [*sic!*]).

⁸⁸ The only manuscript of *Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt* in a Western collection (and that is not NA under the wrong title) appears to be Cambridge University Library ms Eton Pote 291. On other mss., see NA 1951, xlivi ff. The published edition of *Nawādir al-Alfāz* is unfortunately not satisfactory for the purpose of determining exactly what Ārzū added to the original work. The problem is that it uses a symbol “[=]” to indicate, according to an editor’s note, that a particular

effectively writes ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ out of the tradition.⁸⁹ Ārzū’s attention to detail and philological questions is clear, to choose one example, from the entries for “*ajwā’īn*.” *Ārza’ib al-Lughāt* in one recension has the following:

It is a seed that is mixed into bread and baked during the cold period and is useful for ending flatulence. In Persian: Aniseed.⁹⁰

And in another:

It is the name of a seed: Aniseed.⁹¹

And now Ārzū’s definition:

The name of the well-known seed, aniseed—both *nānkhwāh* and *zinnyān* (spelled “zi-nn-yā-n”)—and this word is actually cognate [*mushtarak*] in Persian and *hindī* although in Persian it is “*jiwānī*” and “*jiwā’īn*” with the same meaning. On reflection, it is no secret that the source is the *hindī* word because people have written it in the meaning “life-making.”⁹²

An entry like this demonstrates that the focus is entirely different in the two works. Ārzū gives two synonyms—it is a “well-known seed” so there is no reason to define it any more carefully than that or indeed to

entry in *Nawādir al-Alfāz* incorporates ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘’s full definition (NA 1951, 5). But upon consulting manuscripts of *Ārza’ib al-Lughāt*, it becomes clear that a number of the entries marked “[=]” either do not exist in the earlier work or are in fact completely different.

⁸⁹ Hakala 2016, 59.

⁹⁰ “*tukhmi bāshad kih ānrā bar ru’i nān rektah pazand dar dafa‘-i burūdat wa nafkh ba-ghayat mufid ast b.f. [-bah fārsī] nān-khwāh*” (Rampur *Ārza’ib al-Lughāt* f. 12). Steingass defines the synonym *nān-khwāh* as follows, “Aniseed (in some places it seems to mean caraway-seed), which frequently is baked in bread on account of its flavour and stomachic qualities; bishop’s weed; one who begs his bread.”

⁹¹ “*nām-i dānah-yist nān-khwāh*” (Cambridge *Ārza’ib al-Lughāt* f. 6b).

⁹² “*nām-i dānah-yi mashhūr nānkhwāh wa zinnyān ba-kasrah za’ī ma’jmah wa tashdid nūn wa taḥṭāni ba-ālif-i kashidah wa nūn wa īn lafż nīz mushtarak ast dar fārsī wa hindī balkih dar fārsī ‘jiwānī’ wa ‘jiwā’īn’ badīn mā’nī āmadah bar muta’ammil poshidah nīst kih aṣl lafż-i hindī ast chirākah bah mā’nī-yi zindah kunandah niwīshah-and” (NA 1951, 10).*

mention indigestion—but then he makes a linguistic argument that the Persian word is originally Indic because it is related to the Indic word for life, “*jiwan*.⁹³ This sort of reclamation of an Arabic or Persian word as Indic appears across scores of entries, such as on *pān* [the betel leaf chewed in India], both of whose “Persian” synonyms, namely *tanbūl* and *tānbūl*, are originally, in fact Indic [“*har do lafz̄ dar aṣl hindī ast*”].⁹⁴ Furthermore, references to *tawāfuq* frequently appear and they are often accompanied by a statement to the effect of “as I have noted in *Sirāj al-Luḡhat*.⁹⁵ Ārzū’s project in *Nawādir al-Alfāz̄* is therefore fundamentally linked to the project in his Persian lexicographical works. One such example, a lexicographical tour-de-force, is “*tan sukh*” (defined as a wondrous and rare thing, especially cloth).⁹⁶ Ārzū traces phonetic and semantic variations through *hindī*, Arabic, and Persian. He makes reference to the fact that “dictionaries note” [*dar kutub-i luḡāt marqūm ast*] that in both *hindī* and Persian “*tan*” means “body” and “*sukh*” means “happy,” but that it can particularly mean a kind of fine cloth from Bengal.⁹⁷

The best example of Ārzū’s attention to language at its most fundamental is the entry for “*ast*,” which does not appear in *Āghārā’ib al-Luḡāt* and for which there is absolutely no reason to provide a definition except to make a case about language:

⁹³ In fact, it seems more likely (as Platts notes) that it is related to Sanskrit “*yawāni*” which refers to a similar plant. Just as in European studies of etymology at this time, Ārzū mostly depends on his intuition to match the forms of words and is working with only of a small set of sound changes compared to the full panoply now available to historical linguists. That his intuition is frequently right by modern standards is a testament to his intellect and erudition.

⁹⁴ NA 1951, 104.

⁹⁵ See, for example, the entry on “*kes*” [i.e., *kesh*, hair] which he connects by *tawāfuq* with the Persian *gesū* [lock of hair] (NA 1951, 358).

⁹⁶ NA 1951, 153.

⁹⁷ This requires us to speculate as to which dictionaries he means in relation to *hindī*. Presumably he is referring to the kind of literary manuals available in Braj Bhāṣā or Sanskrit, such as “the grammar books of the Indians” [*kutub-i nahw wa ṣarf-i hindiyān*] mentioned in *Mušmir* (M 173). It does not appear, however, that he mentions any of these by title. Allison Busch has noted that in Abū al-Fazl’s chapter on Indian literature [*sāhitya*], he instructs his interested readers to consult “works on this subject” implying that there was a corpus of reference materials in Persian or perhaps in Braj itself (Busch 2010, 284). Nonetheless, Ārzū might simply be referring to Persian dictionaries since these do contain stray references to Indic words.

“Ast” is connected with “ast” [i.e., “is”] as proven by the Persian “nāst” [i.e., variant of “is not”] with “n” as the first [letter] like “nāstik”⁹⁸ meaning “atheist” and “denier of God” in *hindī* because of linguistic concordance [*tawāfuq-i lisānain*], and “hast” [i.e., emphatic “is”] in Persian is a variant of “ast” because the “a” in both languages has changed into “h.”⁹⁹

While entries like “ast” point to a philosophical project of describing the nature of language, Ārzū is also obsessed with observed details. He has an astonishingly precise entry on *chhatrī*, which ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ has defined both as a trellis [*baram*] for growing vegetables and a particular kind of bird perch, a meaning which, according to Ārzū, it never has in *hindī* [“*dar hindī īn rā chhatrī na-goyand*”].¹⁰⁰ He goes on to define its construction precisely as a kind of wooden frame made of small pieces of wood lashed together. It does not matter whether you put pigeons or vegetables on it, but the key to the definition is the way in which it is constructed. And, he helpfully adds, if you seat birds of prey on the perch, then it is called “*patwāz*.” Similar erudition is on display in his discussion of *chapātī* [flat-bread], which he turns from a common foodstuff into a historical concept.

[As defined] in the treatise [i.e., *Gharā’ib al-Lughāt*]: “thin bread cooked on a pan with the hand.” Originally “*chapātī*” was a Persian word; *chapāt* in Persian is a slap and since it is cooked by smacking with the palm, they call thin cakes *chapātī*. However, in credible books “*chapātī*” means unleavened bread that is cooked with “*chapāt*” or spread hands. Some say the “*alif*” [i.e., the long “ā”] fulfills a metrical requirement in poetry but it is originally *chapātī* [i.e., with the long “ā” already in the word instead of added to fill out the meter in a poem];

⁹⁸ This same Sanskrit-derived word is also adduced as evidence in *M* (1991, 213). Ārzū notes that *Burhān-i Qāfi* incorrectly defines it as a particular historical person. Ārzū correctly identifies it as a philosophy.

⁹⁹ “*ast rābt-i kalām ‘ast’ dar iśbāt chunānkhī dar fārsī ‘nāst’ ba-nūn muqābil-i ān lihāzā nāstik ba-mā’ni-yi nāfī wa munkir-i khudā ast dar hindī pas az tawāfuq-i lisānain bāshad wa hast’ dar fārsī mubaddal-i ‘ast’ bāshad chirākīh alif ba-har do zabān mubaddal bah hā shawad” (*NA* 1951, 23).*

¹⁰⁰ *NA* 1951, 198.

most likely when they refer to thin cakes in this sense [i.e., cooked with spread hands], these are not *chapātī* in the familiar meaning.¹⁰¹

Another such example is *lāṭh*, which Ārzū defines in the general meaning of a wooden or stone pestle in *hindī* but notes that in Delhi it refers specifically to the stone columns on two buildings constructed by the fourteenth-century ruler Firoz Shāh.¹⁰² As in the example of *lāṭh*, careful observation often reveals a stark contrast between a broad, common [*āmm*] meaning and a specific [*khāṣṣ*] meaning. The gap presents an obstacle for either understanding the *hindī* word or providing an accurate Persian gloss for it.¹⁰³ In the entry for “*dand*” [fine, penalty], for example, Ārzū constructs a historical argument demonstrating that ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ has chosen an overly specific kind of fine in Persian to translate “*dand*,” which is a more general concept of punishment.¹⁰⁴

Ārzū relies on two different kinds of data, written sources and personal observations. Although the works cited are from the mainstream Persian tradition, he considers these texts able to shed light on Indic concepts. He uses Persian dictionaries (primarily his own *Sirāj al-Lughāt*, but with reference to others, especially *Burhān-i Qāṭī*, *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*, and *Farhang-i Surūrī*), “credible books” [*kutub-i mu’tabarah*], and some important Arabic lexicons.¹⁰⁵ He also refers to technical works like Imām Damīrī’s *Hayāt al-Haiwān* [Animal Life, 773/1371].¹⁰⁶ Sometimes he quotes Persian poets, such as Rūdakī or Sa’dī.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ NA 1951, 194. Thanks to Prashant Keshavmurthy for offering his exegesis on the humble *chapātī*.

¹⁰² ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ had defined it apparently incorrectly as a structural beam. The word in fact refers to the two Ashokan pillars brought by Firoz Shāh to Delhi from Meerut and Topra (Haryana). I thank Zirwat Chowdhury for clarifying the reference. The text says: “A huge and long stone which had been mounted on two of the buildings of Feroz Shāh in Delhi they call ‘lāṭh’” [sang-i kalāni darāzi rā kih bar do ‘imārat az ‘imārat-i sultān feroz shāhī dar dīlī naš kardā būdānd ān rā lāṭh khwānand] (NA 1951, 388).

¹⁰³ See the editor’s remarks on NA 1951, vii.

¹⁰⁴ NA 1951, 253.

¹⁰⁵ The phrase “credible books” appears, for example, in the fascinating entry on *chaudhari* (NA 1951, 217). The Arabic dictionaries include *al-Qāmīs* [The Ocean, fourteenth–fifteenth century CE], *Muntakhab al-Lughāt* [Selection of Words, 1046/1636], and *Kanz al-Lughāt* [Treasure of Words, ninth century CE] (see Rieu 1879–83, 2:503, 510–1). All three dictionaries are cited together in, of all things, the entry on *panirwāla* [cheese-monger] (NA 1951, 121–2).

¹⁰⁶ NA 1951, 156. This particular text, written in Arabic by Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405), was translated into Persian by Shaikh Mubārak (the father of Faizī and Abū al-Fazl). See Hadi 1995, 362; al-Damīrī’s death date is from Kopf 2012.

¹⁰⁷ NA 1951, 106, 199.

Other entries, especially ones in which Ārzū’s objection hinges on ‘Abd al-Wāsi’’s usage in *hindī*, depend on personal observation. For example, ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ gives “*chhanīl*” as a headword and Ārzū sputters “no one knows where this word comes from! We who are among the people of India and who are in the Royal Court [i.e., Delhi] have never heard [it]!”¹⁰⁸ He frequently cites himself as a source. For example, in the entry on *chhatrī*, he writes, “I have not heard” [*na-shinidah-am*] the word used in a particular meaning. There are a number of entries in which Ārzū directly criticizes ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ for his Haryana dialect.¹⁰⁹ One withering example appears for “*gupchup*.” Ārzū writes,

But what is known as “*gupchup*” to the eloquent has the meaning of a delicate sweet, eating which one is struck dumb; in the meaning given [by ‘Abd al-Wāsi’], it is perhaps the usage of the compiler’s own locale [*waṭan*].¹¹⁰

The usages appearing in standard texts, such as Persian dictionaries, and the knowledge of people in the court, including Ārzū himself, necessarily trump the definitions offered by ‘Abd al-Wāsi’. This superiority of the metropole can be fruitfully connected to the discussion of *faṣāḥat* [linguistic purity] in *Muṣmir*, namely that members of the courtly elite refine a language by pruning local usages. The refined language, although originally the language of a place, becomes a translocal literary standard. Furthermore, since Ārzū conceives of Persian as being originally anchored to the royal court [*urdū-yi mu‘allā*] but then available in a standard form across the Persianate world, perhaps the vernacular literary practices of the royal court would have had the same kind of portability.

Ārzū’s lexicographical method, which should be counted as a breakthrough in Indo-Persian intellectual history, fused a sophisticated

¹⁰⁸ “*mal‘üm nist kih luğhat-i kujā ast; mā mardum kih az ahl-i hind-īm wa dar urdū-yi mu‘allā mī bāshim na-shinidah-īm*” (NA 1951, 214).

¹⁰⁹ The editor gives references for several such entries (NA 1951, ix).

¹¹⁰ “*lekin ānchih gupchup mashhūr-i fuṣahā-st bah ma‘nī-yi shirinī ast nāzuk kih ba-khw-urdan-i ān āwāz-i dahan bar nayāyad, bah ma‘nī kih āwardah shāyat musta‘mal-i waṭan-i muṣannif bāshad*” (NA 1951, 363).

historical understanding of language and literature with keen cultural observations. It is important to remember that Ārzū was not a modern anthropologist content to record usages as they appear in society, but rather was making an intervention in the language—one that intermixed things as they were with things as he thought they should be. The process of language standardization is inevitably about exercising power, because a standard is defined by those with the power to define a standard. Of course, by “power” in the pre-modern context we refer both to the instrumental exercise of it like chancellery directives on proper usage—which is familiar in modern language planning theory—and more importantly to the prestige that causes one’s usage to be thought worth following—as Ārzū argues, poets are constantly creating *sanad* for later generations. It would be anachronistic for us to criticize Ārzū for being an elitist (in the sense of narrowing the criteria for writing good Urdu and limiting it to a small group of practitioners) because, of course, much intellectual history is the study of the inner lives of the literate elite of a society.¹¹¹

Tracing his influence up to the present day through dictionaries and other critical works remains to be done. We can say that *Nawādir al-Alfāz* does not appear to have figured into Urdu dictionaries compiled later by Indians but the colonial state used it.¹¹² In particular, the words and definitions in *Nawādir al-Alfāz* could be fruitfully compared with later Hindi and Urdu with attention to both geographical and temporal variation in usage, but that is a project whose scope far exceeds my present aims. It is difficult to assess the correctness of Ārzū’s definitions by contemporary standards because the language had been thoroughly transformed by the efforts of indigenous and colonial language reformers before John T. Platts compiled the now standard *Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English* in 1884. When one of Ārzū’s definitions seems a little too pedantic, there is little we can do. For example, *dādā* is defined by ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ as “paternal grandfather,” a meaning shared in modern Hindi/Urdu, but Ārzū corrects that to “maternal and paternal grandfather” [*jadd-i mādarī wa pidari*] on the basis of the dictionaries

¹¹¹ Cf. LaCapra 1985, 79.

¹¹² However, an 1825 medical vocabulary draws upon NA and *Āl-Lughāt*, the two sources other than Gilchrist and Shakespear listed for “Hindee” (*A Vocabulary*). Hakala has also discovered that NA was used by H. M. Elliot (Hakala 2016, 65ff.).

al-Qāmūs (Arabic) and *Burhān-i Qāṭī* (Persian).¹¹³ In this case it is not clear whether Ārzū's meaning is actually current or whether he had fallen prey to the malaise common among lexicographers that was noted by the German classicist Christian Lobeck (1781–1860): "Who among us does not have his own Utopia? And where can we rest from the crush of everyday concerns but in the ethereal land where Etymology reigns?"¹¹⁴

Observations on Indian Religion as "Proto-Anthropology"

How do the eighteenth-century lexicographers describe Indian religious practice and philosophy? In the texts under discussion, the modern understanding of Hinduism as one of the "world religions" does not appear.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, there is a concept of community [*qaum*], broadly or narrowly defined, which has certain practices and beliefs; there is also a sense of the sacred as a distinct aspect of human existence, especially in terms of rituals, festivals, and geography. An obvious first step is to ask how these sources define who is a Hindu, and the answer is that Hindus are not Muslims. Ārzū contrasts "*mardum-i hindūstān*" [the people of India] with "*hindiyān*" [Indians] but it is unclear whether by the latter he means Hindus in a religious communitarian sense (of course with the caveat that this is not necessarily in the same way we would understand the term today) or if he is contrasting people resident in India with native-born Indians including Muslims.¹¹⁶ Bahār, citing Ārzū, is however explicit on this point:

Khan-i Ārzū says that "*hindū*" is a particular community and thus it cannot refer to Muslims who are resident¹¹⁷ in this country, and the

¹¹³ NA 1951, 232.

¹¹⁴ "quisnam nostrum non suam Utopiam habet? aut ubi tandem a turba quotidianarum rerum requiescere possumus nisi in illa aetherea regione ubi Etymologia dominatur?" (quoted in Allen 1948, 60).

¹¹⁵ The standard account of how Orientalists conceived of Hinduism as a *religion* rather than a belief system is King 1999.

¹¹⁶ CH 1984, 1156.

¹¹⁷ When dealing with Persianate pre-modernity, we need to rethink our concept of what it means to be of or settled in a place. While the term "*sākin*," especially in its literal English translation "resident," implies a temporary state of affairs, it is important to note that it does not

correct term for a resident of India is “*hindī*”; this is supported by the writing of many because it is most preferable.¹¹⁸

The term “*hindī*” is also defined as referring to a wide range of Indian things, notably a kind of sword.¹¹⁹ The poetic trope of the Hindu as heart-stealer or slave was still very much in force and thus before introducing the straightforward definition of Hindus as a community, Bahār mentions that “Hindu” has been used to mean “thief,” “shepherd,” “slave,” “infidel,” and “resident of India.”¹²⁰ The literary tradition in whose service these dictionaries have been compiled—and Sufi thought itself—has reciprocity built into it: “*dīn*” [faith] is one pole and the other is “*kufr*” [unbelief].¹²¹ In *Mir'āt al-İştilâh*, faith is delightfully compared to “*bādām-i dū-mağhz*” [lit. an almond of two marrows], which refers to the occasional oversized almond containing two piths. The poet Shaukat Buķhāri (d. ca. 1695) has written: “Unbelief and Islam have a common root; / A double-almond does not have two flowers.”¹²² There is symbolic movement across these categories—*kufr* can be transgressively valorized in literature—but of course, India and its non-Muslim inhabitants have generally been associated with *kufr* in literature, especially with black magic. For example, *jigar-khwār* literally means a “liver-eater” and this

necessarily have this connotation in Persian. The opposite problem in interpretation exists with the term “*waṭan*,” often translated as “homeland,” but since people can “become settled” [*tawattur*] this translation is sometimes misleading. Consider the poet Aḥsanī, whose “ancestors chose to settle in Gwalior” [*ajdād-ash tawaṭṭun gwāliyār iṄkhiyār namūdah*] (MN 2005, 49). One’s native place is “*waṭan-i aṣl*” (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001, 14). The usage of “*millat*” as “nation” and “*waṭan*” as “fatherland” is a nineteenth-century development (Parsinejad 2003, 129). *Waṭan* also has a technical sense in pre-modern Indian polity (namely as heritable rights which generally not even the king could remove), which need not concern us here except as further evidence that the term has various meanings (Perlin 1985, 452ff.).

¹¹⁸ “*khan-i ārzū mī farmāyānd kih hindū qaumī-yi makḥüş wa lihāzā bar musalmānāni kih sākin-i mīnulk-and iṭlāq-i ān namī tawān kard wa salīḥ bah ma'ni-yi sākin-i hind hindī ast wa ānkih az kalām-i ba'zī mustafād mī shawad binābar taḡlib ast. hindūān jam' wa buland az sıfāt-i ū ast*” (Bahār-i ‘Ajam 2001, 3:2139).

¹¹⁹ E.g., *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* 1975, 2:1915; *Bahār-i ‘Ajam* 2001, 3:2140.

¹²⁰ “*gāh bar duzd iṭlāq kunand wa gāh bar pāsbān wa gāh bar ḡulām wa 'abīd wa gāh bar kāfir wa gāh bar sākin-i hind*” (*Bahār-i ‘Ajam* 2001, 3:2139).

¹²¹ A relevant definition in *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* for *dīn* is “a path and way and a faith and a rite” [*rāh wa rawish wa kesh wa 'ādat*] (1975, 2:2283). Notably, Abū al-Faẓl uses the same word in the context of Hinduism, referring to people outside the four castes as being “outside of this religion” [*bīrūn azin dīn*] (*Ā'in-i Akbarī* 1869, 55).

¹²² “*dārad yak aṣl kufr-o islām / bādām-i dū-mağhz rā dū-gul nīst*” (quoted in *Mir'āt al-İştilâh* 1850, 70).

refers to a witch who consumes the livers of children with her eyes in order to steal their vitality. As Indic synonyms, Ārzū offers *dāyan* [witch] and rather more obscurely *bhaṭī*, and argues that although various Iranian writers (including Ṣā'ib) have referred to this practice, it is specifically Indian. Ṣā'ib writes: “[The beloved’s] gaze is a running sore in the wound of my heart / Her dark eye is a Hindu *jigar-khwār*.¹²³ This tropology is well known so we should turn to definitions that seem to stand apart from the tropes.

It is easy to compile a list of carefully described religious practices and concepts in these texts: Ārzū discusses “*arhant*,” “*mahīshwar*,” and “*birhamā*” in the context of correcting earlier dictionaries that had badly mangled the pronunciation or definition of these words.¹²⁴ “*Arhant*,” for example, has often been written “*arhaft*” because the letters “n” and “f” look similar in Perso-Arabic script. Iranian poets lacked cultural context so “they have made many mistakes regarding the meanings of these words” [*dar miyān-i ma‘ānī-yi ī alfāz ḡhalat bisyār kardah-and*]. Ārzū sets the record straight by defining “*arhant*” as: “A person who through the practice of austerities is kept out during the transmigration of souls and has reached perfection, and this is an expression of a group of Hindus whom they call *sarāwakī* [i.e., a Buddhist or Jain].”¹²⁵ With Brahma and Shiva, he follows the familiar Islamic pattern of referring to each of them as an angel [*firishtah*] rather than a deity. *Birhamā* is defined simply as “an angel who is entrusted with creation” while *Mahīshwar* is “an angel endowed with destruction, and this is an expression of a different group [*gurohī-yi dīgar*] of Hindus” (Maheshwar is an epithet of the god Shiva so presumably this group are Shaivas, his devotees).¹²⁶ Of course an ethnography written from within a living culture does not require analysis but can simply reference

¹²³ “*dar zukhm-i dil-am rishah-yi dawānidah nigāh-ash / hindū-yi jigar-khwārī buwad chasm-i siyāh-ash*” (CH 1984, 1071). Perhaps “*bhaṭī*” is connected with the “*bhāṭī*” tribe, who are traditionally bards.

¹²⁴ M 1991, 214.

¹²⁵ “*shakhṣī ast kih az kaṣrat-i riyāzāt az tanāsukh bāz māndah ba-aṣl rasidah bāshad wa īn iṣṭilāḥ-i gurohī az hindūān ast kih az ānhā rā sarāwakī goyand*” (M 1991, 214). On *tanāsukh* [metempsychosis], see Walker 1991. On Indo-Persian studies of Hinduism in general, see Ernst 2003, which does not unfortunately deal with how Persian philology approaches Hinduism.

¹²⁶ Ārzū’s account of these figures is rather brief in contrast to Abū al-Fazl’s more detailed description (*Ā’īn-i Akbarī* 1869, 5).

something, and so the analysis does not go any deeper than this. Ritual objects are also discussed. For example, Ārzū notes in *Nawādir al-Alfāz* that “*arthi*” refers to a bier used by Hindus but not by Iranian Zoroastrians or Indian Muslims.¹²⁷ Festivals are described with precision. For example, he cites ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ on the idea that since Holī is a festival that Hindus [*hindū’ān*] have in the month of Phagun involving the throwing of rose-water and *gulāl* [powdered dye] during the day and the lighting of fires at night, it is identical to the Iranian Sadah festival.¹²⁸ In fact, Ārzū argues, they are different. Sadah is solely Iranian and Holī is solely Indian although the dates sometimes coincidentally overlap and both are similar to a Zoroastrian celebration. In another work, he describes the festival of Dīwāli as a day and night celebration in which Hindus put lamps in their homes.¹²⁹

These definitions raise two obvious questions: Firstly, is there a difference in the treatment of Zoroastrianism and Hinduism, or are they both the non-Muslim Other? Secondly, is there any interest in doctrinal and social differences among Hindus? Besides Brahmins, whose activities are sometimes analogized to those of Sufis, the distinctions do not seem to be particularly important, although Ārzū is aware of Shaivas, Jains, and Buddhists as particular groups of Hindus (in the broad sense of “non-Muslim Indians”). Caste is treated as equivalent to community: For example, *Bārīs*, who are a torch-bearer [*mash‘alchī*] sub-caste, are called “a specific community” [*qaumī-yi makhsūṣ*].¹³⁰ Also consider the term “*chandāl*,” which Ārzū historicizes in *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*.¹³¹ He writes that it originally meant “the most base people” [*firomāyah-tarīn mar-dum*] who were watchmen and originally pig-keepers, but also gained some authority by becoming menial servants to the imperial court and the nobility. Under Akbar, the “*kalāl*” [*sic*], a related group, were licensed as a community to sell liquor. The poet Mullā Ṭughrā uses it to mean watchman, which is the sense, Ārzū tells us, that it has in Kashmir. For us, it is significant that the *chandāls* are disadvantaged by religious taboos but Ārzū’s description of them makes no reference to religion at

¹²⁷ NA 1951, 20–1.

¹²⁸ NA 1951, 445.

¹²⁹ M 174. He cites a verse by Muhsin Tāsīr.

¹³⁰ NA 1951, 59.

¹³¹ CH 1984, 1081.

all.¹³² Mentions of Shī'ah practices in *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* do not seem much different from references to particular Hindu groups—they are noted as the practices of a community, which happens to be Muslim.¹³³

Within the philological literature, there are frequent comparisons between Islamic practices and those of other communities. The key to cultural study in this tradition appears to be the possibility of universal similitude. In the European context, we can fall back on Foucault's observations in *The Order of Things* that pre-modern Western knowledge was constituted by finding sweeping similarities across words and things.¹³⁴ (For us, the tendency is to divide things rather than analogize them.) We can find evidence of a similar habit of mind in the Persianate tradition to what Foucault has described: In *Nawādir al-Alfāz*, the entry for *upāsanā* gives simply “*parastish*” and “*ibādat*” (all meaning “worship”) and for *upās* it has “*rozah*” and “*saum*” (all meaning “fasting”).¹³⁵ It is noteworthy that both Persian and Arabic equivalents are given for the Indic word. Since the Arabic and Persian meanings are seen as functionally equivalent, adding an Indic term implies that it too is seen as identical. Religious practices are often analogized, with Sufis and Brahmins being unproblematically considered in the same frame. For example, in *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*, under the heading “*tā'i jauzī ba-kaf dāshṭan*” [lit. to have a bit of nut in the hand], Ārzū explains that holding a piece of nut to represent a begging bowl is a tradition of the *qalandars* and *faqīrs* (both of whom are religious mendicants) of Iran and Turan so that they would not have to present an empty hand to people they meet.¹³⁶ He notes that Brahmins have the same practice in India but

¹³² The idea, presented among others by Abū al-Fazl, that *chandāls* are the offspring of a Brahmin mother and a Shudra father does not appear in Ārzū's definition (*Ā'in-i Akbari* 1869, 55). Perhaps this is because that particular definition is not relevant for poetic usage.

¹³³ He refers to Shi'ism as “*mažhab-i imāmiyah*” (CH 1984), “*jaridah*” (1070), “*dast-o dahan ba-āb kashidan*” (1110), “*saqifah sāzī*” which is apparently a reference to *taqiyah* or keeping one's true religious denomination hidden (1144), and “*kār dast bastah kardan*” which claims that Iranian Shī'ahs who come to India begin to pray like [Sunni] Hanafis, 1191).

¹³⁴ He writes, “Knowledge therefore consisted in relating one form of language to another form of language; in restoring the great, unbroken plain of words and things; in making everything speak” (Foucault 1994, 40, cf. xxii, 17, 218, 232).

¹³⁵ NA 1951, 5.

¹³⁶ CH 1984, 1055; cf. *Mir'āt al-İstilāh* 1850, 147, where it is noted that the “Hindu mendicant” [*hindū darwīsh*] called Bābā Majnūn (whose name is of course derived from Persian!) has a *takiyah* [an abode of (Islamic) mendicants].

using betel-nut or coconut. Another example, which is on the level of folk religion, involves divination [*fāl*]. One method, Ārzū tells us, depends on finding significance in the random utterances of others, and this is practiced particularly by women in India. In Iran, besides this method, keys are also thrown for divination although this is not practiced in India. The verse he quotes as evidence, by Muhsin Ta’ṣir, includes both kinds of prophecy in the same line.¹³⁷

Besides observations of certain analogous rituals, we see figures from each tradition universalized. One in particular is Adam, who is mentioned in the benediction [*ḥamd*] at the beginning of *Bahār-i ‘Ajām*. The context is that humankind, the “children of Adam,” are grateful to their creator “whose kindness has been available to all.”¹³⁸ The invocation of Adam would not surprise anyone who has read other Persian texts written in India by non-Muslims. However, it is notable that as part of Bahār’s traditional declaration of self-deprecation he specifically refers to his Hinduness. In *Mir’āt al-İştilâh*, which was likewise written by a non-Muslim friend of Ārzū’s, Adam appears under the heading “*qadamgāh-i ādam*” [lit. step-place of Adam], a location on the island now called Sri Lanka:

The step-place of Adam [peace be upon him] they say is a place in Serendip because when Lord Adam [peace be upon him] came down to the Island of Serendip his blessed foot first touched the hill which is the step-place, and it is well-known that because of that blessing a mine of gems was found there.¹³⁹

There is no caveat here such as “Muslims believe . . .” but rather this is presented as a straightforward statement of fact. The unanswerable question then is whether Adam has been absorbed into Mukhlīṣ’s own

¹³⁷ CH 1984, “*fāl-i gosh*” 1180. Ta’ṣir is a somewhat obscure Iranian poet, on whom see MN 2004, 1:309 and *Tažkirah-yi Naṣrābādī*.

¹³⁸ *Bahār-i ‘Ajām* 2001, xxix.

¹³⁹ “*qadamgāh-i ādam* (*alaihi al-salām*) nām-i jā-ist dar sarāndip goyand chūn hazrat ādam (*alaihi al-salām*) ba-jazirah-yi sarāndip nuzūl farmūdand dar kūhi kih qadamgāh ast awwal pā-yi mubārak-i išhān ba-ān rasidah wa mashhūr ast kih ba-barakat-i ān kān-i yāqūt dar ānjā paidā shud” (*Mir’āt al-İştilâh* 2013, 564). Abū al-Faḍl notes that Indic sources, which otherwise discuss various ancient events, do not mention Adam’s fall (*Ā’īn-i Akbarī* 1869, 193).

framework of belief as a universal progenitor or whether the use of Persian enforces an Islamic framework on non-Muslim writers.

When non-Muslim figures have entered the Persianate repertoire, they have generally been bleached of any religious significance and made purely historical. This is true for Zoroastrian figures centuries before and Hindu figures more recently. Thus, Ārzū mentions Kiyomarš as “the first king of Persia [‘ajam],” which is how he is presented in the *Shāhnāmah*. Ārzū provides a long discussion of the history of the name (concluding that it was originally “*gayomart*” derived from “speaking man” [*go + mard*]), but does not mention his religious significance to Zoroastrians, namely as either the first man or the first person to worship Ahura Mazda.¹⁴⁰ The appearance of Hindu figures follows a similar path: Bhīma, a character from the *Mahābhārata*, appears occasionally in Persian poetry as a synecdoche for a mighty warrior (sometimes with his name incorrectly rendered as “*bahīm*”).¹⁴¹ No mention is made of the fact that in the *Mahābhārata* his father was the wind god Vāyu and that this supernatural origin accounts for his incredible strength. Likewise, Gāndhārī, a character from the same epic, is thought to have possibly given her name to the city of Qandahar (in modern-day southwestern Afghanistan).¹⁴² We must, however, be cautious in interpreting the Sanskrit epics as having anything to do with the other religious practices described here because Ārzū, like other Indo-Persian writers, describes the *Mahābhārata* as a history [*tāriḵ*]. He writes that “the Indians’ history *Mahābhāratah* is the complete account of the circumstances of their war.”¹⁴³ Bhīm is mentioned alongside King Bhoja, who was a historical king in central India in the eleventh century.¹⁴⁴ Thus, invoking such figures in poetry presents no religious problem since they have effectively no religious content.

Returning to the question of religious practice, the willingness to carefully describe non-Muslim practices and define parallels with Islam

¹⁴⁰ CH 1984, 1204.

¹⁴¹ E.g., Farrukhī writes as quoted by Ārzū.

¹⁴² M 1991, 218.

¹⁴³ “*tāriḵ-i mahābhāratah-i hindiyān tamām-i ahwāl-i jang-i išhān ast*” (M 1991, 218). On the Sanskrit epics as history and the context for their translation into Persian, see Truschke 2012a.

¹⁴⁴ For example, *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī*’s entry for “*bahū-o bahīm*” [sic] (1975, 2:2158).

does not imply syncretism or an abandonment of Islam as the baseline against which other religio-cultural systems are judged.¹⁴⁵ Occasionally there are entries such as *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat's* “*chirāghān-i roz-i isfand*,” namely the Persian tradition of lighting lamps on the third day of Farwardīn (the first month in the Zoroastrian calendar).¹⁴⁶ Ārzū declares that it is “obviously a Zoroastrian practice that remained in Iran and under Islam some ignorant people have maintained this practice to the present, just like some customs of the Hindus, which some ignorant Muslims practice here.”¹⁴⁷ So much for syncretism. Clearly in Ārzū's view, each community has customs proper to itself and although customs are often shared between communities, a practice with a non-Muslim origin may be suspect. Ārzū engages in what Stephen Gregg has called “hierarchical inclusivism,” in which someone recognizes that there are religious systems besides one's own but accepts them only on the terms of one's own religion.¹⁴⁸

The Persian philological tradition did not, at least in my interpretation, have much of a stake in actual religious practice. This is parallel to the principle that everyday language only enters into pre-modern Persian dictionaries if it impacts poetic language because the sort of knowledge the philological tradition deals in is textualized. However, this approach is not the same as Orientalist preference for religious texts to be interpreted “from the source” as opposed to observing supposedly corrupted folk religion¹⁴⁹ but rather textualization within the Persianate literary tradition. Once a practice or belief is pulled into Persian literature then other sources, whether written or based on personal observation, can be introduced to nuance the literary interpretation. This is obvious in Ārzū's gloss of Mathura, a city associated with Krishna devotion. He

¹⁴⁵ A compact description (and critique) of syncretism in this context is Ernst and Stewart 2003.

¹⁴⁶ He cites Surūrī as his reference but Steingass's dictionary claims that the lamps are lit on the third day of the five intercalary days added to Ābān (the eighth Zoroastrian month).

¹⁴⁷ “*wa in zāhir^{an} rasm-i majūs bāshad kih dar irān māndah wa dar islām nīz ba'zī juhalā ān rasm rā ba-hāl dāshtah-and chunānkih ba'zī rusūm-i hindūān kih ba'zī az musalmānān-i jāhil nīz az injā ba-jā ārand*” (CH 1984, 1077–8).

¹⁴⁸ Gregg uses the term in the context of Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) who employs “a system of thought which valorises one philosophical or religious approach above others, but that accepts the presence of spiritual or religious truths within other traditions, *in relation to one's own tradition*” (Gregg 2019, 120). I thank Anand Venkatkrishnan for introducing me to the term.

¹⁴⁹ As King 1999 describes at length.

calls it “the name of a city which in Hindu belief is a [place] of holy sites of the Hindus.” But what is really at stake is not this description but rather that he has checked “histories of India written by Persians” to see how they spelled the name, and they rendered it “*matūrah*.¹⁵⁰ Is this indifference best thought of as a special flavor of secularism?

Later Persian Lexicography in the Sub-Continent

As a coda to this discussion, I will selectively consider some dictionaries from the nineteenth century, when colonialism had remade both the intellectual landscape and the opportunities for patronage. The indigenous tradition of literary lexicography co-existed with the colonial state’s survey-based approach, and both methods were applied to lexicography in Indian vernacular languages such as Urdu.¹⁵¹ Literary lexicography reached its zenith in the *Farhang-i Ānandrāj*, the largest pre-twentieth-century Persian dictionary. *Farhang-i Ānandrāj* was one of the important sources available to the Iranian compilers of *Lughatnāmah*, which depended heavily on Indian sources without acknowledging the significance of this relationship to the project of defining Persian.¹⁵² The fashioning of a modern national language for Iran took Persian out of circulation as a cosmopolitan language because the diversity that sustains transnational intellectual networks is by definition an obstacle to a nationalist project.

Lexicography continued to be funded by Mughal successor states, including by the British colonial state, as well as generally remaining a mark of scholarly achievement. *Ghiyāṣ al-Lughāt* (1242/1826–7) compiled by the schoolteacher Muḥammad Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn bin Jalāl al-Dīn bin Sharaf al-Dīn Rāmpūrī became widely used as a student’s dictionary.¹⁵³ Several lithographed editions of the work have *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* in the margins.¹⁵⁴ Some dictionaries have been lost or nearly lost such as *Miftāh al-Khaṣā’iñ*, which was completed in 1228/1813 in Delhi by Jayarām Dās

¹⁵⁰ M 1991,172.

¹⁵¹ On Urdu lexicography, see Hakala 2016.

¹⁵² Tavakoli-Targhi 2001, 106–7.

¹⁵³ Blochmann 1868, 31; *Ghiyāṣ al-Lughāt* 1842.

¹⁵⁴ Storey 1984, 49.

and now exists in the Delhi Persian collection at the British Library but apparently nowhere else.¹⁵⁵ The last of the Persian dictionaries compiled along traditional lines, *Farhang-i Ānandrāj* (1889), has approximately 50,000 entries and is therefore probably the largest dictionary compiled in the Persianate world before the twentieth century. Besides its length, the work is remarkable because of where it was written, namely at the edge of the Persian-using world, in what is today the southeastern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. The dictionary is dedicated to the maharajah of Vizianagaram, Ānand Gajapati Rāj. The maharajah's *mīr munshī* (chief secretary) Muḥammad Pādshāh bin Ḡulām Muḥī al-Dīn, known by his pen-name Shād, collated every available Persian dictionary, including some European sources, to produce the work.

*Burhān-i Qāṭī*¹⁵⁶ enjoyed a somewhat surprising renaissance in the nineteenth century, despite its drawbacks as a lexicographical source. The ruler of Awadh, Nawab Ghāzī al-Dīn Haidar Shāh, wrote—or more likely put his name on—a dictionary called *Haft Qulzum* [The Seven Seas, 1822], which was largely derived from *Burhān-i Qāṭī*.¹⁵⁷ Because *Burhān-i Qāṭī* was the first major Persian dictionary to be prepared for a published edition by Europeans (it was published in Calcutta in three editions between 1818 and 1834), it became well known in British India and Europe.¹⁵⁸ By far the most surprising episode is *Burhān-i Qāṭī*'s role in the career of the Persian and Urdu poet Mirzā Ghālib (1797–1869). In 1278/1862, Ghālib wrote and published a pamphlet called *Qāṭī-i Burhān*, which took Burhān to task for some 400 errors. Ghālib was not a lexicographer and argued his case ferociously on the basis of his own opinion and taste rather than research. The work touched off a pamphlet war late in Ghālib's life and, in Blochmann's words, "it seriously damaged his reputation as a *critical scholar*."¹⁵⁸

Although there was considerable interest on the part of the British colonial state to have a convenient general purpose English–Persian

¹⁵⁵ It apparently only survives in the Delhi Persian collection at the British Library (Delhi Persian 554A–F).

¹⁵⁶ It was published at the royal press in Lucknow with an English title page so it was a showpiece.

¹⁵⁷ Storey 1984, 32–3.

¹⁵⁸ Storey 1984, 34; Ramezannia 2010, 187ff. The first edition was published in Lucknow and a second edition was printed in Delhi in 1865 under the title *Dirafsh-i Kāwayānī*.

dictionary, this was not to come to fruition until the end of the nineteenth century. The indigenous dictionaries, though their poetic focus was not well suited for administrative purposes, were nonetheless more useful than the highly criticized European dictionaries with their outright misunderstandings. Blochmann's critique of Johann August Vullers's *Lexicon Persico-Latinum Etymologicum* (1855) runs for a full ten pages and so negates the dictionary's aims of being a carefully researched, scientific dictionary.¹⁵⁹ Another major project, Captain Thomas Roebuck's edited version of *Burhān-i Qāṭī*^c with appendices (1818), is full of errors both from the source material and introduced by the editor. *Burhān-i Qāṭī* was widely corrected within the indigenous lexicographical tradition and in choosing it as a streamlined but reasonably comprehensive source Roebuck appears to have ignored this inconvenient fact and let the errors stand. A dependable Persian–English dictionary did not become available until *A Comprehensive Persian–English Dictionary* was published by Francis Joseph Steingass in 1892, which remains the standard dictionary of pre-modern New Persian in English. Like the dictionaries that came before it, Steingass compared and digested earlier dictionaries.¹⁶⁰

The history of Iranian lexicography of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is outside the scope of this discussion, but the obscured connections between India and Iran need to be understood. Iranian lexicographers like Dihkhudā depended upon research material produced in India while meticulously placing India outside of the tradition they considered their own. While Steingass did not apparently make use of *Farhang-i Ānandrāj*, it is cited in the *Lughatnāmah*. That a dictionary composed on the southeastern coast of India in a place where the language used by most of the population was Telugu should be the culmination of traditional Persian lexicography is a remarkable reminder of the vibrancy of an institution that is wrongly thought of as having died out in South Asia decades or more earlier.

¹⁵⁹ As in Blochmann 1868, 41–51. The earliest Persian lexicon in a modern European language (as opposed to Latin) was John Richardson's in 1777, revised by Charles Wilkins in 1820 (Baevskii 2007, 3).

¹⁶⁰ It is primarily a revision of Francis Johnson's 1852 *A Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English*, which was itself an expansion of Charles Wilkins's dictionary, which was in turn an abridgment of an earlier dictionary by John Richardson. Steingass also heavily depended on Vullers's 1855 *Lexicon Persico-Latinum*. See Dudney 2019b, 385.

5

Building a Vernacular Culture on the Ruins of Persian?

Hidāyat, from the time that I began to compose in *rekhtah* [i.e. Urdu],
The custom of Persian has departed from India.¹

Hidāyat Dihlawī (d. 1805)

Scholars and critics have generally assumed that Indians started using Urdu more widely in the eighteenth century because Mughal politics were in a shambles and feckless nobles could no longer fund poetry in Persian, the language of cosmopolitan prestige.² In this interpretation, taking vernacular literature seriously was an act of desperation, an attempt to fill a political and cultural lacuna with a kind of “poor man’s Persian,” namely a Persianized form of the vernacular. For example, S. K. Chatterji has written:

The first Urdu poets, deeply moved by the manifest decay of Muslim political power in the eighteenth century, sought to escape from a world they did not like by taking refuge in the garden seclusion of Persian poetry, the atmosphere of which they imported into Urdu.³

¹ “hidāyat kahā rekhtah jab se ham ne / rawāj uth gayā hind se fārsī kā” (quoted in *Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 111n35).

² For example, Jalibi 1984, 2:149 and Sarkar 1920, 147; Sarkar 1949, 16; cf. Syed 2012, 298. A similar assumption exists for the Ottoman context: Steps towards modernity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have generally been seen as synonymous with Westernization rather than as internal developments (because the Ottomans supposedly would only have turned towards the West if their politics were in decline). Scholars have begun to question this tautological reasoning (e.g., Hamadeh 2004, 34ff. and İslamoğlu 2012). On the funding of cultural activities during times of turmoil, it appears little useful scholarship has appeared since Lopez 1959 on that issue during the Renaissance.

³ Chatterji 1942, 216; Rai 1984, 242.

However, such escapist sentiments are not actually reflected in the sources written by Ārzū's circle. Another common explanation for Urdu's rise to prominence is, of course, nationalist sentiment, namely that proud Indians took the initiative to write in an indigenous Indian language rather than in "foreign" Persian. But this too is a misleading framework because it generally reflects assumptions about citizens' relationships with modern nation-states onto pre-modern political formations. Contemporary statements that imply that vernacular language was part of an Indian identity have been given undue weight, while the actual process required to develop a literary idiom and its accompanying language ideology have not widely been considered in the context of the eighteenth century. The Urdu literary historical tradition credits Ārzū with having developed such a language ideology, but the relationship between the ideas addressed in Ārzū's surviving works, which are nominally about Persian alone, and the Urdu tradition have not been developed in detail. Here I consider how Ārzū's ideas on language and the members of his circle influenced the vernacular literary tradition of Delhi.

This chapter addresses the development of what came to be called Urdu with neither nationalist nor declinist preconceptions. Instead, my proposition is that the standardization of vernacular poetic practice in the mid-eighteenth century was a catalyst in building the consciousness of a pre-existing, dispersed community of language users across India. It is self-evident that a language grammatically similar to that of Delhi and its hinterlands (the so-called *kharī bolī* or "upstanding speech") had made it across the length and breadth of South Asia well before the eighteenth century.⁴ It was known by a number of different names and exhibited considerable variation in vocabulary and grammar. When poetry was composed in this dialect following Persian poetic rules, it was known as *rekhtah*. By the end of the eighteenth century, *rekhtah*,

⁴ The exact mechanism by which *kharī bolī* spread so successfully is unclear, but it is frequently connected with Muhammad bin Tughluq's briefly shifting the capital of the Delhi Sultanate to Daulatābād (near Aurangabad in present-day Maharashtra). In any case, sources are patchy until it is a fait accompli: For example, Simon Digby's research into a set of early seventeenth-century texts show "heavily Persianized vocabulary" and "uncompromising Urdu grammatical structures" even though the texts were produced far from Delhi in Gujarat or Rajasthan (Digby 1995).

which had originally referred to a poetic practice, had become synonymous with Urdu, a new term denoting a language which was derived from the phrase *zabān-i urdū-yi mu‘allā* [language of the Royal Court]. As noted in Chapter 2, Ārzū used this phrase in reference to standardized Persian, and the transference of the phrase strongly implies a parallel between his idea of how the literary standard functions in Persian (namely, as an urban literary language that displaces local variations as the eloquent idiom for poetry) and a vision for the development of vernacular poetics.

This transformation is both overdetermined and undertheorized: The key intervention in this chapter is that conflating the terms *rekhtah* and *zabān-i urdū* in this way, as most scholars have since, elides crucial differences between literary style in the vernacular and vernacular language itself. A prerequisite to such an analysis is contrasting the ways of defining linguistic usage in early modernity to later definitions. In the South Asian context, today’s divisions into languages, dialects, and other formally bounded categories were promulgated (or at least formalized) mostly in the colonial period.⁵ Our socio-linguistic terms were obviously unavailable to people in the eighteenth century and we must tread carefully in ascribing current perceptions of language usage to early modern conditions. Let us take the most obvious example, the concept of *zabān*, a term shared between Persian and *hindi*-Urdu. It is generally translated as “language” but does not necessarily designate what we mean by that word today.⁶ Instead, it has an inherent ambiguity akin to that of its literal English translation, “tongue.” Rather than attempting to show whether definitions of language used in the eighteenth century were precursors to modern definitions, a better way to understand the rise of Urdu is as a series of rhetorical acts, both overt and subtle. By recovering the rhetoric of early Urdu through critical texts that address

⁵ These formal boundaries have been further reified by the reorganization of Indian states on the basis of language in the late 1950s.

⁶ Formal linguistics defines a language according to “mutual intelligibility” (Campbell and Mixco 2007, 91–2). Socio-linguistics modifies this definition to require a standardized dialect that has been defined by a speech community. An example of why historical contextualization of seemingly obvious terminology is Ronit Ricci’s observation that the definition of translation, seemingly a simple act of (as the Latin literally means) “bringing over” a text from one language into another, is itself culturally bound (2011, 31ff.).

vernacular composition in eighteenth-century northern India, we come closer to accepting the polysemy of the tradition and that the intentions of people then do not necessarily map onto what we, with historical hindsight, know of the tradition's later development.

In the early eighteenth century and before, composition in the Persian-influenced *kharī bolī hindī* that was later known as Urdu was a kind of novelty act in Delhi and did not attract much attention from scholars and critics. Serious poetry in north-central India had been written either in Persian or in another literary dialect of *hindī*, such as Braj Bhāṣā or Awadhī.⁷ This changed sometime between 1720, when the collected works of the poet Walī Muḥammad, known by his pen-name Walī, arrived in Delhi from the south where *kharī bolī hindī* (sometimes under the names *dakanī/dakhinī* or *gurjī*) had already been a medium of serious poetry for well over a century, and 1752, when Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Mir wrote *Nikāt al-Shū'arā* [Subtleties of the Poets], the first northern Indian *tażkirah* to deal primarily with vernacular poets.⁸ To the present-day observer, it can seem as though an Urdu literary culture (with its corresponding social network) appeared fully formed in those three decades since there is virtually no analytical writing on Urdu before the 1750s. Ārzū is an important exception: His critical writings deploy a conceptual framework designed to account for the vernacular although they are nominally about Persian literature.⁹ Of course, complex literary systems do not appear *ex nihilo* but rather reconfigure and amplify what

⁷ Āzād says as much in *Āb-i Hayāt* (cf. Jalibi 1984, 2:148). A full account of these dialects is beyond the scope of the current project, but as with the broader question of what is Hindi and what is Urdu, defining them is beset with issues of arbitrary determinations and anachronism.

⁸ On Wali and his reception in mid-eighteenth century *tażkirahs*, see Dhavan and Pauwels 2015. The hedge "north Indian" is required because Ḳhwājah Khān Ḥamid of Aurangabad's *Gulshan-i Guftār* [Flower-Garden of Speech], a brief account of thirty poets, is dated 1165/1751–2, and might be earlier (Gorekar 1970, 107). It also claims to be the first account of *rekhtah* poets. Interestingly, many of the poets Ḥamid discusses are from southern India (*Gulshan-i Guftār* 1929, 3). *Nikāt al-Shū'arā* is undated but a reference to Ānand Rām Mukhlīś, who had died in 1164/1751, suggests it was finished soon afterwards. It was definitely finished before Ārzū's death in 1756.

⁹ Sadiq 1964, 79. We should not be concerned by this lacuna because the great programmatic statement in favor of the vernacular in medieval Europe, Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, is also a rather limited project: "Dante elevates the vernacular poets to the dignity of a standard. Promoting the vernacular languages to the status of authority is one of his unique achievements ... Yet Dante never mentions more than the first line of any poem or discusses its content in detail, nor does he articulate a theoretical framework for their evaluation" (Shapiro 1990, 42).

exists in their environment. In the short preface to *Nikāt al-Shū‘arā*, Mīr deals with the question of origins:

Let it not be hidden that in this art [*fann*] of *rekhtah*, which is poetry in the style of Persian poetry in the language of the exalted court of Shahjahanabad Delhi, there has been until now no book written that has placed the lives of the poets of this art upon the page of history.¹⁰

This is both a claim about the definition of the practice of *rekhtah*—and it is obvious that we must call it a practice or art [*fann*] rather than a language given how Mīr has explained it—as well as about the history of criticism concerning *rekhtah*. It is not the natural language of Delhi but rather the result of what we could see through the socio-linguistic lens of “language planning,” namely an attempt to make a language hew to a particular set of principles.¹¹ Mīr continues by minimizing the contribution of the Deccan:

Although there is *rekhtah* in the Deccan, since a poet of connected [verse] has not appeared from there, I have not begun with their names, and the condition of their lines being imperfectly connected [in sense to the previous line] means that collecting them is often nothing but wearisome, but I shall write about some of them.¹²

¹⁰ “pūshīdah na-mānad kih dar fann-i rekhtah kih shā‘irī-st ba-ṭaur-i shī‘r-i fārsī ba-zabān-i urdū-yi mu‘allā shāhjahānābād dihlī kitābī tāhāl tasnīf na-shudah kih ahwāl-i shā‘irān-i īn fann ba-safhāh-yi rozgār bamānad” (*Nikāt al-Shū‘arā* 1979, 9).

¹¹ A standard definition, which is deliberately left broad: “Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes” (Cooper 1989, 45). Obviously this usually refers to governmental efforts, but there is no reason not to extend the idea to hegemonic influence rather than direct administration.

¹² “agarchih rekhtah dar dakkān ast, chūn az ānjā yak shā‘ir-i marbūt bar-na-khwāstah lihāz̄ shurū ba-nām-i ānhā na-kardah wa tabā‘-i nāqīs-i māsrūf-i in-ham nīst kih ahwāl aksar malāl andoz gārdād, magar ba‘zī az ānhā nawishtah khwāhad shud” (*Nikāt al-Shū‘arā* 1979, 9). *Rabṭ* (of which “marbūt” is the adjective) refers to the logical and aesthetic connection between the two lines of a couplet. As the couplet is the unit of meaning in much Persian poetry, especially in the *ghazal*, properly constructing this internal connection is one of the key measures of mastery in the Persian poetic context. For example, Wālih in his entry on Ārzū notes that Ārzū objected to 500 of Ḥażin’s couplets as “disjointed” [*nā-marbūt!*] (*Tażkirah-yi Riyāz̄ al-Shū‘arā* 2005, 1:347).

Delhi poets and Deccani poets were obviously aware that they were engaged in similar projects of making vernacular poetry follow Persian rules.¹³ Mir sidelines the contributions of poets from southern India, a trend that continued in later Urdu criticism (interestingly, though, Ārzū's views are more nuanced on this point). If *rekhtah*/Urdu is defined as a poetic language of Delhi then influence from further afield is problematic and is to be ignored or dismissed. One common technique, used by Mir and subsequent literary historians, is to declare the poetry of the Deccan stylistically inferior and therefore irrelevant to discussions of proper Urdu.¹⁴ Another is to show that it is an epigone of Delhi poetry and therefore irrelevant. In the latter case, the founder-poet Walī is famously reputed to have come to Delhi (probably from Gujarat), learned his craft from Shāh Sa‘dullāh Gulshan, a contemporary of the great Persian poet Bedil, and before leaving Delhi was encouraged by Gulshan to compile the *diwān* of *rekhtah* verse that would turn out to be so influential.¹⁵ In this scenario, “Deccani” literature is really just poetry transplanted from Delhi and eventually returned to its rightful home with the posthumous arrival there of Walī’s *diwān*. There are holes in this story, but true or not it serves to remind us that the purity of a Delhi poetic style is an untenable construct—just as the distinction between Delhi Urdu stylistics and Lucknow Urdu stylistics, despite having been a mainstay of Urdu literary criticism, crumbles with the slightest bit of historical probing.¹⁶ The language of Delhi was always influenced by that of other regions and vice versa.¹⁷ This chapter, however, is not specifically concerned with tracing the pre-history of Urdu in the Deccan. Here my goal is to follow the primary sources to disentangle the relationship between eighteenth-century conceptions of linguistic geography from

¹³ Jalibi 1984, 1:335. ¹⁴ Qā’im, for example, does the same (Faruqi 2004a, 840).

¹⁵ As argued by Muhammad Husain Āzād, whose mythologizing of the origins of Urdu is discussed in the following section (*Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 84). On the attempt to minimize Walī, including by assigning him an improbably late death date, see Faruqi 2001, 129–31.

¹⁶ An Urdu literary historian writing in the early 1990s claims to be the first to question this dogma, which demonstrates how entrenched it is (Zaidi 1993, x). Carla Petievich has admirably deconstructed it (Petievich 1992).

¹⁷ Compare Francesca Orsini’s recent call for a literary history of India that considers how the traces of different languages/literary traditions appear obliquely in the texts of any given tradition: “Multilingual history, as we have seen, requires a perspective open to elements and agents not immediately present in the texts, an awareness that each text and author exists in a context that is more complex and varied than the one he gives us to believe” (Orsini 2012, 243).

our present understanding of language in northern India. Critics like Ārzū, even as they were claiming to develop a Delhi-based literary standard, themselves considered how Delhi's language fit into a pan-Indian vernacular literary tradition.

Nikāt al-Shū'arā, though it positions itself as originary, is not the first critical engagement with the literary practice called *rekhtah* and the language that would eventually be called Urdu. Scattered references in Ārzū's works and the fact that he composed a lexicon of vernacular words, *Nawādir al-Alfāz*, demonstrate a sustained engagement with the vernacular, in particular one that people of taste (namely Persian users) can shape. Focusing on metropolitan usage as Ārzū does is a different approach to that of another important Persian text describing vernacular language, *Tuhfat al-Hind* [A Present from India, late seventeenth century], which is about the *hindī* dialect Braj Bhāṣā rather than the *khārī bōlī* that is the basis of Delhi speech. The formulation in Inshā'ullāh Khān Inshā and Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Qatīl's *Daryā-yi Latāfat* [The Sea of Refinements, 1807] approximately a century later appears to build on Ārzū's definitions but with a tighter focus that excludes the transregional possibilities that Ārzū saw.¹⁸

This chapter begins with prosopography, that is, tracing the contours of the community of the *rekhtah-goyān* [*rekhtah* poets] of Delhi in the mid-eighteenth century. It continues with definitions of *rekhtah*/Urdu/*hindī* and its many other names in the context of the richness of available linguistic forms in northern India, and closes with a reexamination of attitudes towards Persian and Urdu that follow from debates in the mid-eighteenth century over what we can call the language ideology of Urdu.

Beginning in the Middle: How *Āb-i Hayāt* Presents the Eighteenth Century

In 1880, roughly mid-way between our time and Ārzū's, Muḥammad Husain Āzād published *Āb-i Hayāt* [The Water of Life], the first comprehensive history of Urdu poetry. It is a Janus-faced work that looks

¹⁸ Concerning Ārzū's possible influence on that work, see NA 1951, xxxviii.

back nostalgically and reverently towards the Urdu poetic tradition while also striving to be a “modern” (in other words, British-emulating) literary history that could help Urdu poetry transcend its supposedly decadent and immoral past. It is stuffed with well-worn anecdotes about each of the poets like a traditional Persian *tažkirah* but attempts to systematically demonstrate civilizational development over time like a contemporary Western historical text.¹⁹ Āzād was the first person to have been able to write such a book—no one before would have felt the need—while at the same time being one of the last to be able to access the living tradition that had been swept away by the wholesale cultural reorientation in the wake of the 1857 uprising against colonial rule.²⁰ *Āb-i Ḥayāt*’s influence cannot be overstated; its fluid style and wealth of stories are so beguiling that people have frequently overlooked the fancifulness of many of Āzād’s historical claims. For example, he prefacing an absurd declaration about the historical origin of Urdu with the phrase “everyone knows this much.”²¹ His fashioning of the Urdu poetic canon, of which Ārzū is a part, is a powerful reminder that when we read a text our understanding of it is shaped by an interpretative tradition.

Āb-i Ḥayāt makes much the same case as this study in that it argues that Ārzū’s career is a significant historical juncture. He offers the striking formulation that Ārzū is to Urdu poetry as Aristotle is to logic.²² Earlier *tažkirahs* had similar hyperbole, for example referring to Ārzū as the “Abū Ḥanīfah” of Urdu poetry (Abū Ḥanīfah being the founder of the dominant tradition of interpretation in Islamic jurisprudence in South and Central Asia).²³ However, because Āzād’s subject is the development of Urdu literary culture, he ignores Ārzū’s Persianate

¹⁹ The work is divided into five historical ages [*daur*, pl. *adwār*], each of which is meant to show a discrete development (or decline) compared to the last.

²⁰ It is a textbook case of what Pierre Nora has called “historicized memory” (Nora 1996).

²¹ “*itnī bāt har shakhs jāntā hai*.” He argues that Urdu was derived from Brāj Bhāṣā, a *hindī* literary dialect which he claims entirely lacks artifice. Unfortunately, since Brāj Bhāṣā literature is actually full of complex rhetorical devices, he has to make up his own supporting examples.

²² *Āb-i Ḥayāt* 1907, 115.

²³ For example, “On the basis that the Islamic Scholars (may their blessings endure) are called [descendants of] Abū Ḥanīfah Kūfi (may God be pleased with him) thus it is fitting that they call poets of the *hindī* language [i.e. Urdu] descendants of Khān-i Ārzū” [*ba-maśābah-yi kih ‘ulamā’-i ahl-i ḥaqq rā dāmat barakātuhum imām hamām qiblah-yi anām abū hanīfa kūfi razī allāh ‘anhu mī goyand agar shu‘arā'-yi hindī zabān rā ‘ayāl-i khān-i ārzū goyand sazā-st*] from *Majmū‘ah-yi Naḡhz* [A Delightful Collection, 1806] by Qudratallāh “Qāsim” (quoted in NA 1951, editor’s preface 12; Das 1991, 426).

intellectual life.²⁴ Literary histories of Urdu like Āzād's frame Ārzū's career in terms of his foundational role in Urdu literature; but except in passing they do not connect it with his Persian scholarship, which forms the vast bulk of what he wrote and significantly is what earned him the respect of his peers. This omission is not surprising given the precipitous decline in Persian's prestige in South Asia, but it does mean that Urdu literary historians' assessments of Ārzū are incomplete. This is not to say that they get their facts wrong, as judged from a philosophically suspect "neutral" vantage point, but rather that they cannot fully answer the questions we wish to pose. However, their interpretations shape our own understanding of the tradition and indeed their interpretations comprise much of the tradition. Ārzū has not received his due in the annals of South Asian intellectual history, we can conclude, because he was a Persian scholar first and a *hindī* poet a distant second. Furthermore, any attempt to prove Ārzū to be an Indian patriot who shaped an indigenous language (Urdu) so that it could replace a foreign language (Persian) is anachronistic in its conception of national and linguistic identity, and—more importantly—finds no unambiguous contemporary textual support.

If we look more closely at Āzād's analysis of Ārzū then we see that it suffers from a problem common to much of his scholarship, namely the need to slot writers into a narrative of the development of Urdu literature that the available evidence cannot sustain. According to *Āb-i Ḥayāt*, Ārzū was one of the poets who "took poetry that was founded on wordplay [*jugat*] and double meanings [*žū-ma'ni*] and pulled it into the Persian style and manner of expression."²⁵ This statement falsely implies that there was no wordplay in Persian poetry. When Persian influenced Urdu poetry, it supposedly stripped away the indigenous tendency to engage in wordplay. This is nonsensical on its face, and furthermore contradicts Āzād's contention that the Indic tradition from

²⁴ Āzād's *Sukhandān-i Fārs* [The Persian Poet, 1872] deals primarily with the early history of Persian and the most recent poet discussed in detail is 'Urifi (1555–91). Ārzū makes a cameo appearance as an example of an Indian patriot who cared about the philosophy of language [*falsafah-yi lisān*] and had not yet ceded the field to Europeans (*Sukhandān-i Fārs* 2005, 10).

²⁵ "aur jis shā'irī ki bunyād jugat aur žū-ma'ni lafżoñ par usse khinchkar fārsī ki tarz aur adā-yi maṭālib par le ă'e" (*Āb-i Ḥayāt* 1907, 115–16).

which Urdu is derived lacked wordplay.²⁶ Throughout his work, Āzād focuses on—indeed, it is fair to say that he is obsessed with—the literary device called “*ihām*,” or punning. *Ihām* has a long history in Persian poetics and a critical analysis of it first appeared seven centuries before Āzād in the work of Rashīd al-Dīn Watwāt (d. 578/1182–3).²⁷ Furthermore, Amīr Ḫusrau, the master poet of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Delhi, boasted of having invented a new style of *ihām*.²⁸ Great classical poets, including Ḥāfiẓ, mastered *ihām* and it was an important tool in courtly discourse since it often provided an opportunity for a clever turn of phrase at the right moment.²⁹ The device clearly has an impeccable pedigree in Persian and yet Āzād flatly claims that *ihām* (or in its Indic variant “*jugat*”) is a fault that Urdu inherited from “Hindi” and, even more improbably, that the process of Persianization of Urdu poetry was mostly about scrubbing the *ihām* out of it.³⁰ There was an eighteenth-century conversation about *ihām*, but it came later and was far less central than Āzād has made it.³¹

The reason Āzād should frame all of Urdu literary history as a campaign against wordplay is obvious when we consider that he spent much of his life working for the colonial state: Nineteenth-century Britons had imbued Romanticism so deeply that in general the only kind of contemporary poetry they valued as serious art was that of poets such as William Wordsworth with their descriptions of apparently spontaneous

²⁶ The claim is especially nonsensical in the context of eighteenth-century Persian composition, which was much maligned by later Iranian and colonial literary critics precisely because it was supposedly baroque and elevated wordplay above sense (as discussed in Chapter 3).

²⁷ See the discussion in Chapter 2.

²⁸ *Ijāz-i Ḫusrawī* 2007, 1:41; see also Gabbay 2010, 36ff.

²⁹ For some examples of Persian *ihām*, see Hasan 1998, 20–1.

³⁰ “This master of invention [the Urdu poet Mirzā Muḥammad Raffī Saudā (1706?–81)] ... compiled verbal devices, Persian constructions, and original themes, and made such excellence that people forgot punning [*ihām*], alliteration, and the other verbal devices that were the foundation for Hindi *dohrās*” (*Āb-i Ḥayāt* 1907, 54). The term “*jugat*” is derived from Sanskrit “*yuktih*” referring to combining or yoking whereas the etymology for “*ihām*” is “to make one suppose” (Platts 1884, 384; Chalisova 2004).

³¹ On how different *tazkirahs* address *ihām*, see Gorekar 1970, 122. Ghulām Hamadānī Muṣṭafā’s late eighteenth-century *tazkirah Riyāz al-Fuṣahā* [Gardens of the Eloquent] notes that the meanings of Ārzū’s verse were predicated upon *ihām* because it was the “age [daur] of *ihām*” (*Tazkirah-yi Riyāz al-Fuṣahā* 1985, 38). Mīr contrasts *ihām*-style *rekhtah* with “*andāz*”-style in the afterword of his *Nikāt al-Shū’arā*. He does not define “*andāz*” (which literally means “measure” or “mode”), but presumably for him it means poetry without *ihām*—needless to say, Mīr himself uses *ihām* in his supposedly “*andāz*”-style poetry.

emotional reactions to natural scenery or events. Thus there was no room for the perceived artificiality of *ihām* and similar devices.³² After Āzād's full-throated denunciation, this humble rhetorical device has often been considered a pernicious evil that stifles genuine emotion. With a few exceptions, twentieth-century critics of Urdu literature have not historicized Āzād's thought.³³ For example, Muhammad Sadiq, who wrote in the 1960s, views the apparently disastrous consequences of *ihām* on a poet's creativity in exactly the same way as Āzād.³⁴ However, the modern critical obsession with perceived artificiality as epitomized by *ihām* means that Sadiq has a warped frame of reference for what, for example, the oeuvre of the early eighteenth-century *rekhtah* poet Shāh Ḥātim (b. 1699) represents.³⁵ Sadiq tries to argue that the preface [*dibāchah*] to Ḥātim's second, revised collected works, entitled *Dīwānzādah*,³⁶ takes a position against *ihām*. Indeed, the critic tries to have it both ways, admitting that Ḥātim frequently used punning in his poetry while implying that the very existence of the *Dīwānzādah* (in whose preface the poet explains the aesthetic considerations that compelled him to release a thoroughly revised edition of his collected works) is in fact a direct attack on *ihām*. But since *ihām* was commonly discussed at the time, and there certainly was a contemporaneous turn against it, why does Ḥātim not mention it even once in the preface? There are far more interesting aesthetic judgments that Ḥātim *does* mention, but Sadiq does not consider them because they are irrelevant to the *ihām*-centric narrative he wishes to present. Similarly, Āzād provides no analysis of the significant scholarly interventions that Ārzū

³² It is worth pointing out that the equivalent work for the Indo-Persian tradition, Shibli Nu'māni's *Sh'ir al-'Ajam* [Persian Poetry, 1907–25], is likewise driven by the same unspoken preoccupation with English poetics (Faruqi 2004b, 11ff.). For some telling examples of how damaging this assumption has been for Urdu criticism, see Faruqi 2005.

³³ For a trenchant complaint about Urdu critics' tendency to reproduce mythology as fact, see Faruqi 2008.

³⁴ Sadiq 1964, 75ff. On the same page he provides a couple of useful definitions of *ihām*, which the interested reader can consult. Another recent history of Urdu literature similarly calls *ihām* part of an awkward, artificial phase in Urdu poetry (Hasan 1995, 102).

³⁵ He frames the poet's career in terms of *ihām*: "Ḥātim's life spanned nearly the entire eighteenth century, and therefore represents the rise and fall of the *ihām* ideal" (Sadiq 1964, 78).

³⁶ A *dīwān* is the term for a poet's selected works in Persian or Urdu, so *Dīwānzādah* is a cheeky title meaning "son of the *dīwān*."

made in Urdu literature except in the most general terms, and it is worth enumerating them.

If, as Āzād himself has written, Ārzū was primarily a Persian writer, then why discuss vernacular literary practice in this study at all? *Hindī* has to be included precisely to keep us from the temptation of treating Ārzū as two separate people, namely a great Indo-Persian philologist and an important figure in Urdu literature. The tendency to address his achievements in the two languages separately means that we have not appreciated the fact that his theories on language and aesthetics, ostensibly about Persian only, are actually broad enough to encompass *hindī* as well. Without his engagement with the vernacular, his philosophy of language in Persian would not have been as rich, and without his standing in Persian, he would not have been in a position to influence vernacular poetry. There is also a practical problem: It is difficult for us to know how to split up Ārzū's life-world between the vernacular and Persian—Āzād states with a brazen certainty that “Khān-i Ārzū was not an Urdu poet; nor did people of that time consider Urdu poetry to be an accomplishment.”³⁷ But did Ārzū himself feel that way about vernacular composition?

A Who's Who of the People of *Rekhtah*

The social networks of the Delhi *rekhtah* community can be reconstructed largely on the basis of *tažkirahs*. These are among the few relevant sources that we have, and they compel us to dispense with the idea that vernacular poetry represents the language of commoners winning out over that of elites, for these texts record elites in dialogue with other elites.³⁸ Here, as in many cases in Europe and India, the texts do not offer examples of the masses undermining the elite through their

³⁷ *Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 116.

³⁸ The first *dīwān* of Urdu poetry to have a prose preface in Urdu was that of ‘Abd al-Walī ‘Uzlat of Surat (1692/3–1775), according to Jalibi (1984, 2:327). Indeed, all criticism on *rekhtah* was written in Persian until Mirzā ‘Ali Lutf’s 1801 *Gulshan-i Hind* [Rose-Garden of India], which was the first Urdu *tažkirah* actually in Urdu (Gorekar 1970, 105). This did not become common until decades later. As late as 1846, Sa‘ādat ‘Ali Nāṣir claimed that his *Khush Ma’rikah-i Zebā* was the first *tažkirah* of Urdu poets to be written in Urdu, which is not of course true, but

language choices. Nor, in that case, do elites appear to be speaking on behalf of the masses as might be expected. Rather, the people developing the vernacular for their own purposes were the very same elite who are experts in Persian. A perfect illustration is the *rekhtah* poet with the pen-name Āftāb, who happened to be the emperor Shāh ‘Ālam II (r. 1759–1806) and participated in these very same literary networks (his teacher was Mīrzā Fakhr Makīn).³⁹ This has not stopped later scholars from making flowery pronouncements on the proletarian nature of vernacular poetry. N. S. Gorekar, for example, argues that “in its infancy, Urdu was quite simple and homely and could cope with the requirements of the people whose needs were few and whose outlook on life was limited.”⁴⁰ Likewise, Jadunath Sarkar says of the Mughal period that “the Muhammadans of that age (except the Hindi-speaking portion) had no vernacular religious poetry for the masses.” He presumes that Urdu was invented to fill that role.⁴¹ Many eighteenth-century vernacular poets, such as Mīr Dard and Mazhar, were well-known Sufis, but it is unlikely that their language choice for verse was motivated by a desire to spread religious messages.⁴² Bedil, arguably the most influential Indo-Persian

as Pritchett argues, he must have believed it was or at least expected his readers to believe it since it figures so prominently in the introduction (Pritchett 2003, 882–4). Nāsir provides no satisfying explanation of why he should write in Urdu: He merely says that “yakrangi” [uniformity] is better than “dorangi” [diversity]. (There is apparently no connection to the British and their language planning that is clear in some other early Urdu critical prose works.) The Urdu translation in 1842 of Shams al-Dīn Faqīr’s Persian rhetorical treatise *Haddīq al-Balaghah* by Imām Bakhs̄h Shāhbā’ī of Delhi College was an important moment in making Urdu teaching texts available in Urdu. The preface highlights the fact that Shāhbā’ī not only translated the text but replaced the Arabic and Persian examples with Urdu ones.

³⁹ He was also a Braj poet as attested by a few surviving snippets (Marshall 1967, 436). Shafiq identifies Aftāb as the emperor Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1719–48), which is obviously wrong since earlier *tazkirahs* do not mention him (*Chamanistān-i Shū’arā* 1928, 245).

⁴⁰ Gorekar 1970, 101.

⁴¹ Sarkar 2008, 322. His division of Hindi-speaking Muslims from Muslims generally (who, presumably, would be speaking Urdu or some kind of proto-Urdu) is anachronistic because it presumes a split between Hindi speakers and Urdu speakers with Urdu, in this view, being an exclusively Muslim language. Sarkar unhelpfully conflates spoken language with literary language. Likewise, I am not convinced by Tariq Rahman’s argument that there was a conscious “Muslimization” (his term) that is the best framework for explaining the development of Urdu (Rahman 2010, esp. 90).

⁴² Similar questions are explored in Pollock 1995 and 2000. Richard Eaton has argued that in the Deccan it was in fact the case that Deccani Urdu was adopted for spreading a religious message, though he offers some caveats (Eaton 1978; cf. Guha 2004). As Pollock reminds us, the European case is complicated by the fact that so many people had a basic knowledge of Latin that it could hardly be said to be restricted to the cloister and the court (2006, 460–1; cf. Briggs

poet of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century but also credited as a *rekhtah* master poet by Mir and others, was also an acclaimed Sufi. If language choice is the crucial criterion then why should Dard and Mazhar be remembered as religious popularizers and Bedil not? Another important point is that being a Sufi, even a self-proclaimed mendicant, does not make someone a representative of demotic religion. The records we have of this early Urdu literary culture were kept by and represent an elite community. However much we should like to know about how other strata of society used language, there is little data for the pre-colonial period that could help.

Ārzū came from this same charmed circle, being a part of both the Mughal aristocracy and having a Sufi lineage. He is recognized in most *tazkirahs* of Urdu poets as the first important teacher of Urdu composition in Delhi. Indeed, he had earned his moniker “the Abū Ḥanīfah of Urdu poetry” within a generation.⁴³ Mir’s *Nikāt al-Shū’arā* uses the slightly less hyperbolic formulation that all teachers of Urdu were taught by Ārzū: “All teachers connected with the art of *rekhtah* are classmates [studying under] this great man.”⁴⁴ Besides the Persian poets mentioned in Chapter 1 who also composed in the vernacular, his name is linked to Mir, Mirzā Jān-i Jānān Mazhar, Mirzā Muḥammad Rafī’ Saudā, and Khwājah Mīr Dard, all of whom attended *rekhtah mushā’irahs* held at his house.⁴⁵ These younger contemporaries of Ārzū ended up being the most important Urdu poets of the mid- to late eighteenth century. He was a personal mentor to Shāh Mubārak Ābrū (1685–1733), Sharaf al-Dīn Maẓmūn (1689?–1735?), and Ghulām Muṣṭafā Yakrang (d. 1737). In *Tanbīh al-Ğāfilīn*, Ārzū says of them that “each of the three is a master

2003). Given what we know of how Sufis used Persian in India, it seems likely that they too expected to be understood even if they were delivering much of the content of their message to their followers in the prestige language.

⁴³ See *Majmū’ah-yi Naḡhz* [A Collection of Delights] by Qudratallāh Qāsim (1750–1830) dated 1806 (Abdullah 1965, 42). The twentieth-century scholar Nabi Hadi reports that the phrase appears in an earlier *tazkirah* by Ārzū’s student Hakim Husayn Shuhrat Shīrāzī but I have been unable to trace the reference (Hasan 2001, 850). According to Ārzū, Shuhrat was probably from a Bahraini Arab background but raised in Shiraz before coming to India (MN 2004, 2:848).

⁴⁴ “hamah üstādān mazbūt-i fann-i rekhtah hamshāgirdān-i ān buzurgwār-and” (quoted in Abdullah 1965, 43). Likewise Mir Ḥasan in 1191/1777 calls Ārzū “teacher of the teachers of Hindustan” (*Tazkirah-yi Shū’arā-yi Urdū* 1985, 13).

⁴⁵ Āb-i Hayat 1907, 164.

and established in the art of *rekhtah*" and notes that they have all sought correction [*islāḥ*] from him.⁴⁶ Despite Ārzū's obvious importance in the social fabric of the Delhi poetic community, the only Urdu composition of his that we can trace is a dozen or so couplets quoted in eighteenth-century *tažkirahs*, none of which is particularly inspired or historically interesting. While in Ārzū's case—and that of most of his contemporaries, Hātim being an important exception—there was no interest in collecting one's Urdu poetry and distributing manuscripts of it, there was a thriving community of *rekhtah* poets who were becoming ever more serious about it. The systematization of *rekhtah* poetry is what concerns us here, and we can trace it through the careers of poets tied to Ārzū either directly or indirectly. The first of these is Shāh Hātim, whose career is unusual in that he actually wrote (Persian) prose explaining some of his aesthetic choices.

Shāh Hātim (1699–1783) and His “Contemporaries”

Zuhūr al-Dīn Hātim was a native of Delhi. He began composing *rekhtah* poetry in his late teenage years and the first volume of his works [*dīwān*] was compiled in 1144/1732, which makes it one of the earliest Urdu *dīwāns* compiled in Delhi. Some of the *ghazals* are dated 1131/1718–19 or one year before Wali's *dīwān* is said to have arrived in Delhi, and they are not appreciably different from later ones.⁴⁷ The influence of Wali on *rekhtah* stylistics might therefore be overstated—or perhaps we simply have the dates slightly wrong. Hātim was well connected politically, and wrote two *maṣnawīs* for the emperor Muḥammad Shāh (one of which is

⁴⁶ “*har sih ustād wa mustanad-and dar fann-i rekhtah*” (TGH 1981, 76). Sayyid Fatḥ ‘Ali Khān Huṣainī Gardezi, in his *Tažkirah-yi Rekhtah-Goyān* [Tažkirah of Rekhtah Poets, 1752] also mentions that Mażmūn was Ārzū's student (1995, 155). Gardezi's *tažkirah* was one of the two important *tažkirahs* probably written in response to Mīr's *Nikāt al-Shu‘arā*. The other, Qayām al-Dīn Muḥammad Qā’im's *Mak̤hzan-i Nikāt* [Treasury of Fine-Points] composed two years later, claims in the preface that its author had not seen any other *tažkirah* of *rekhtah* poets, which was possibly disingenuous since Qā’im was in Delhi when Mīr and Gardezi wrote theirs (Gorekar 1970, 108–9).

⁴⁷ *Dīwānzādah* 1975, 10.

a delightful account of coffee) in 1749.⁴⁸ The preface to his *Dīwānzādah* (1169/1755–6) is an important early intervention in Urdu stylistics. He writes in it that the need had arisen to replace his first *dīwān*, which was by then hard to find and, more importantly, stylistically out of date. He had pared down the number of poems and so gave the new edition the cheeky name *Dīwānzādah* (literally “born of the *dīwān*” or the “*dīwān*’s son”).⁴⁹ He asserts that since certain words have an inherent ugliness/inappropriateness [*qabāḥat*], he has tried to give them up. The words he lists are all Sanskrit-derived, like “*jag*” meaning “world.” Many have seen this as the first salvo in the *Kulturkampf* whose armistice terms in the early twentieth century were that Hindi was to be “the language of Hindus” (and hence the national language of India) and Urdu “the language of Muslims” (and of Pakistan).⁵⁰ The fact that he also argued for the correct spelling of Persian- and Arabic-derived words has been interpreted as an “Islamicization” of Urdu. However, there is no compelling reason to read Hātim’s interventions (namely rejecting certain words and respelling others) as a rejection of a non-Muslim other. Instead he appears to follow Ārzū in the concern for setting a literary standard. He certainly knew Ārzū’s work because although he does not mention Ārzū by name, the contemporary poets he does mention are connected with Ārzū.

In *Dīwānzādah*’s preface, Hātim invokes Ābrū (1685–1733), Mazmūn (1689?–1735?), Mazhar (1689–1791), Shaikh Ahṣanallāh (d. 1737–8), Mir Shākir Nājī (1690?–1744/47?), and Yakrang (d. 1737) as his “contemporaries” [*mu‘āṣirān*].⁵¹ This can be taken as an index of the

⁴⁸ Additionally, his Persian *dīwān*, mentioned by Azād in *Āb-i Ḥayāt* (1907, 113) but subsequently thought lost, has been published as *Dīwān-i Fārsī-yi Hātim Dihlawī* 2010. The coffee *mašnawi* and its context in eighteenth-century connoisseurship has been explicated in Hakala 2011.

⁴⁹ Besides *Dīwānzādah* itself, see Mushafi’s *Tažkirah-yi Hindi* (1985, 88–9). For Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Hātim was the person who brought “elitism” into *rektah* by insisting that it follow rules that require a knowledge of Persian and Arabic (Faruqi 2004a, 850). Thinking about his intervention as setting a literary standard is perhaps more useful than the implied criticism of “elitism.”

⁵⁰ The classic study is King 1994 and for Hindi specifically Dalmia 1997. A notable text from the debates around the proper national language for independent India is R. S. Shukla’s *Lingua Franca for India (Hind)*, which attempts to prove that Sanskritized *khaṛi bolī* Hindi is natural while Urdu is artificial (Shukla 1947).

⁵¹ In his own 1168/1754 *tažkirah*, Qā’im Chāndpūrī mentions Hātim as an associate of Ābrū and Mazmūn (quoted in *Dīwānzādah* 1975, vi).

important Delhi-based *rekhtah* writers of the first third of the eighteenth century. Ārzū claims to have mentored three of the six of them in vernacular poetry. Ārzū also knew Māzhar and Nājī personally, as he reports in *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is*.⁵² The leading light of the next generation was Ārzū’s nephew Mīr.

Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Mīr (1722–1810)

As Ārzū’s nephew, Mīr had an impeccable introduction into Delhi literary society.⁵³ He arrived from Agra most likely in 1739 and stayed with Ārzū. C. M. Naim is undoubtedly right to infer that Ārzū’s intervention transformed Mīr from somewhat of a bumpkin into a confident metropolitan poet.⁵⁴ Mīr praises Ārzū to the skies in his entry in *Nikāt al-Shū‘arā*, which is hardly unexpected in a *tazkirah*, and acknowledges him as his teacher.⁵⁵ Despite this public expression of admiration while Ārzū was alive, Mīr’s quasi-autobiographical narrative, *Žikr-i Mīr* [The Recollection of Mīr], which was written perhaps two decades later, tells a different story. Mīr says nothing of what he learned in Delhi from Ārzū except that he had read “a few insignificant books” at Ārzū’s house.⁵⁶ While Mīr was staying with Ārzū, Sa‘ādat ‘Alī, “a Sayyid from Amroha,” advised him that he should write in the vernacular, whereupon his work became extremely popular.⁵⁷ At some point during Mīr’s stay, as Mīr

⁵² MN 2004, 3:1583, 1691.

⁵³ Ārzū was his *khālū*. In current usage, this means “mother’s sister’s husband” but previously it also meant “maternal uncle.” It is in this latter sense that Ārzū and Mīr are related since Ārzū was his stepmother’s brother (Naim 1999, 66; *Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 194).

⁵⁴ Naim 1999, 15.

⁵⁵ *Nikāt al-Shū‘arā* 1979, 10–1. Mīr also respected Ārzū as a critic in Urdu, at least in one important case (Faruqi 1996, 99). Thanks to Owen Cornwall for the reference.

⁵⁶ Naim 1999, 66–9.

⁵⁷ One source, *Nishtar-i Ishq* [Love’s Lancet, 1233/1817] by Husain Quli Khān ‘Ashiqi of Azimabad (i.e., Patna), reports that Ārzū had a similar conversation with Saudā (1968, 84–5; translated in Alam 2004, 180–1). There is a crucial difference in the two conversations as reported, namely that Mīr’s conversation with the Sayyid had no sense of pitting Indians against Persians in their mastery of Persian whereas the putative conversation between Saudā and Ārzū explicitly states that Indians cannot rise to the level of Iranians in Persian (Indians hold a mere lamp to the sun of the Persian of Iranians) and furthermore that Persian itself is worn out as a literary medium. The conversation reported in *Nishtar-i Ishq* is problematic as evidence in my view: Firstly, it appears unsourced in a *tazkirah* written more than fifty years after Ārzū’s death.

himself explains it, Ārzū received a letter from Mīr's stepbrother and his entire demeanor towards his nephew changed. Mīr admits that this situation drove him mad and they eventually had a falling out over supper, which led him to stumble down the road towards Jama Masjid in a daze. He made it as far as Hauz Qazi, where he was recognized by someone who helped him secure a patron and move out of Ārzū's house. The exact cause of this family split is not recorded.⁵⁸ *Žikr-i Mīr* was almost certainly not meant for public consumption so it is no surprise that Mīr felt free to render a vicious final assessment of Ārzū in its pages: Towards the end of his life, Ārzū "went chasing in the desert of greed, that is to say he journeyed to Shuja-ud-Daulah's camp [Lucknow] . . . But he received nothing but a fistful of air and, buffeted by Time, died."⁵⁹

Mīr expressed some ambivalence about the relative value of the vernacular and Persian. While writing a *tažkirah* of *rekhtah* poets represents a significant commitment to *rekhtah* poetry, he also spent two years trying to be a Persian poet exclusively.⁶⁰ The lack of any statement in prose expressing his opinion of *rekhtah* justifies a brief diversion into discussing the references to *rekhtah* in his poetry. He writes, for example,

Why was *rekhtah* in this lofty rank, Mīr?
Whatever "ground" [zamin] emerged, I bore it away to the sky.

Secondly, while the statement as reported does not directly contradict the arguments about the universality of literary language that Ārzū presents throughout his works (as described in Chapter 4), it is less nuanced than his other invocations of Iranian literary competence and concedes more than he concedes elsewhere. It is possible that this iconic conversation never happened, but it has nonetheless been adduced as evidence without mentioning these concerns (e.g., Syed 2012, 298).

⁵⁸ We can speculate with Naim that Ārzū might have disliked Mīr's Shi'ah tendencies or that perhaps Mīr had an affair with a member of Ārzū's household. The former possibility is also suggested by Āzād (*Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 194).

⁵⁹ Translated in Naim 1999, 76. The evidence that it was not meant for a wide readership comes first in its rarity since it was lost for nearly a century and a half and only published in 1928 (Faruqi 2005, 173). There is also an unflattering reference to the current king Shāh 'Ālam II (r. 1759–1806), who "slanders the title [of Emperor] and is a prisoner of the Firangis" (i.e., the British are the real power behind the throne) (Naim 1999, 80). Lastly, as Naim has shown, throughout the text Mīr uses expressions from Ārzū's lexicon *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat* with such frequency—sometimes a dozen appear on the same page—that it appears the text was meant to be pedagogical (Naim 1999, 13–14, 19). It could have been a lesson in Persian composition intended for a member of the family enlivened by being cast in the form of an "autobiography." In fact, it tells us surprisingly little about Mīr and his life.

⁶⁰ As reported by Ghulām Hamadānī Muṣṭafā (1747/50?–1824) in his *tažkirah* *Iqd-i Šuraiyā* [The Necklace of the Pleiades] (1978, 95).

And also,

What respect does *rekhtah* receive—although I
in this art was equal to Nazīrī?⁶¹

Trying to discern the poet's personal feelings on the basis of poetic utterances is a minefield because of how poetry works rhetorically, namely as formal speech embedded in a system of metaphor, but let us try.⁶² In both couplets, the speaker (for simplicity, we can just call him "Mir") is expressing his prowess in composing *rekhtah*, which is a continuation of the venerable Persian tradition of poetic braggadocio [*tafakhkhur*]. In the first couplet, *rekhtah* is in an exalted state because Mir has raised it from its earth-bound position to the sky. (As a technical poetic term, *zamīn* refers to the combination of meter and rhyme.) In the second, Mir questions whether *rekhtah* has any value because even someone like himself, who writes it as well as Nazīrī (d. 1612) wrote Persian, supposedly gets no recognition.⁶³ We can surmise that the value of *rekhtah* was still up for negotiation at the time Mir was writing. In another poem he says,

I had fallen in love with a Turkish lad—what *rekhtahs*
I composed
Gradually going from Hindustan, my poetry went to Iran.⁶⁴

⁶¹ "rekhtah kāhe ko thā is rutbah-yi a'lā merīn mīr / jo zamīn niklī use tā āsmān maiṁ le gayā" (1056, 7) and "kyā qadr hai rekhte kī go maiṁ / is fann merīn nazīrī kā badal thā" (1057, 4), as printed in *Kulliyāt-i Mir* 2003.

Such rhetorical anxieties over *rekhtah* continue into the nineteenth century, as encapsulated in Ghālib's famous line: "If anyone would say, 'How could *rekhtah* be the envy of Persian?' / Just once, recite to him the speech of Ghalib—"Like this!" [jo yih kahe kih rekhtah kyōñikih ho rashik-i fārsī/guftah-i ghālib ek bār parh ke use sunā kih yūm] (116, 10), as printed in *Dīwān-i Ghālib* 1982.

⁶² We should remember when discussing poetry that "formal speech requires a positional rather than a personal identity" (Kennedy 1998, 67).

⁶³ In the context of European vernaculars defining themselves against Latin, Peter Burke has referred to this as the "humility *topos*" (2004, 18). Allison Busch has noted a similar rhetoric in the work of the Braj poet Keshavdas (1555–1617): "In a family where even the servants did not know how to speak / the vernacular, Keshavdas became a slow-witted Hindi poet" (*Kavipriyā* 2.17, translated in Busch 2011, 23). He framed his linguistic defection—he was a pandit with full knowledge of Sanskrit—apologetically as a desire to educate vernacular poets (Busch 2011, 44, 54).

⁶⁴ "turk bachche se 'ishq kiyā thā rekhte kyā kyā maiṁ ne kahe / raftah raftah hindusitām se shīr mirā īrān gaya" (1554, 6).

This verse unusually has “*rekhtah*” used in the plural, presumably to mean “poems written in *rekhtah*.” Such a usage again cautions us against thinking of *rekhtah* as an exact synonym for what later became known as Urdu.⁶⁵ Unexpectedly, we find the trope of the poem’s making its way to a distant place, namely Iran—it is safe to assume that there was no actual readership for *rekhtah* poetry in Iran. We can perhaps read it as a joke (“I was so desperate that my poetry went everywhere, even to Iran where people couldn’t understand it”) or perhaps it is a fossilized trope whose logic we are not meant to question. Now let us turn to how Ārzū references *rekhtah*.

Rekhtah in Majma‘ al-Nafā’is

Mid-eighteenth-century critical works that are nominally about Persian contain various references to vernacular composition. Ārzū’s *Majma‘ al-Nafā’is*, a *tažkirah* of writers in Persian compiled at roughly the same time as Mīr’s *Nikāt al-Shu‘arā*, mentions several poets who also composed in the vernacular. Some of these are Ummīd (1678–1746), Mīr Dard (1722–85), Mirzā Roshan Żamīr (seventeenth century), Mazhar (1689–1791), and Nisbatī (fl. mid-eighteenth century). Although Mīr refers to Ummīd as a “Mughal” (which means either Central Asian-born or of Central Asian descent), Ārzū states that he is from Hamadan in western Iran and spent nearly forty years in the Deccan.⁶⁶ Ārzū knew Ummīd in Delhi and reports that he had difficulty speaking *hindī*, literally “his tongue did not turn well in the *hindī* speech” [*zabān-ash dar lajhah-yi hindī khüb namī gardad*], which is of course ambiguous as to whether he lacked fluency entirely or merely had trouble pronouncing

⁶⁵ Imre Bangha has traced the term to a seventeenth-century musicological treatise in which it means a bilingual text set to both a *rāga* and a *tāla*, that is to musical scale and rhythm (2010, 24).

⁶⁶ *Nikāt al-Shu‘arā* 1979, 13; *MN* 2004, 1:169. Ummīd appeared in Chapter 3 of this study as a defender of Ārzū’s *TGH*. In *Āb-i Hayāt*, Azād notes that Ummīd and Mir Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muhammad Fitrat were Iranians who composed in Urdu (*Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 75). Fitrat appears in *MN* and other *tažkirahs* but his composition in *hindī* is not mentioned—in any case, Azād only mentions them to make the case that before Wali, *rekhtah* poetry was an aesthetic failure. He backhandedly (and anachronistically) suggests that there was no good poetry because native Indians did not care enough about their own language to write in it.

Indic sounds. The latter case, a difficulty with pronunciation, is implied by Ārzū's observation that Ummīd was so good in *hindī* verse that he noticed subtleties that even a "Mughal" (meaning in this context an Indian-born Muslim) might not.⁶⁷ Mīr Dard's father was an important spiritual leader in the Naqshbandī order. Ārzū reports that Dard was a talented poet "especially in the *rekhtah* which is now in fashion in India" [*siyamā rekhtah kih al-hāl dar hindūstān rawāj dārad*], adding that "he writes good Persian as well."⁶⁸ Zamīr was thought to have been an Iranian soldier in Surat, but Ārzū writes that in fact not he but his ancestors were Iranian and that he was a newsletter-writer [*waqā'i-nigār*] in Surat and not a soldier. Of his *hindī*, Ārzū says that despite his official duties he was "nonetheless very assiduous in every linguistic exercise [*zabān-bandī*] such that he mostly composed *hindī* poetry under the pen-name 'Nehī' which means 'lover'."⁶⁹ Ārzū concludes the entry with (what strikes me at least as) a rather awful couplet of his own composition:

Let those two black curls on desire's [or "Ārzū's"] glowing face
be the *hindī* poem of Mīrzā Roshan Zamīr.⁷⁰

Another poet whose *rekhtah* Ārzū mentions is Mazhar, a Naqshbandī Sufi like Dard who in contrast to the general trend wrote in the vernacular but abandoned it in later life. Ārzū writes that "previously he sometimes composed *rekhtah*—which is poetry of *hindawī* and Persian mixed—in a particular style; now having understood it to be against his

⁶⁷ See Dudney 2017b on Ummīd and other Iranian emigres. I thank Mana Kia for bringing to my attention a significant discrepancy between the two recent editions of MN (MN 2005 says "*mī gardad*" following MN 1970 where MN 2004 says "*namī gardad*" and the latter reading fits the context far better).

⁶⁸ "*jārsī ham khüb mī gūyad*" (MN 2004, 1:440).

⁶⁹ MN 2004, 2:956. Nehī is derived from Sanskrit "*snehi*" [lover] which in turn is derived from "*sneha*" [oiliness, love]. It goes without saying that Ārzū's interest in a poet with a Sanskrit-derived pen-name puts us well outside the Hindi/Urdu paradigm of today.

⁷⁰ "*ān do gesū-yi siyah bar rū-yi rakhsān-i ārzū / sh'ir-i hindī bwud az mīrzā roshan zamīr*" (MN 2004, 2:956). (In MN 2005, 97, the second hemistich is reported as "*sh'ir-i hindī būdah az mīrzā'i roshan zamīr*.") Presumably the two curls are being compared to the two hemistichs of a couplet.

nature, he has given it up.”⁷¹ Another poet, Nisbatī, was from Thanesar—Ārzū begins the entry by explaining where Thanesar is, namely between Delhi and Lahore—and his father was from Iran. Along with Ābrū, he was a student of Ārzū’s but has now become “a peerless master in the art of *rekhtah* poetry.”⁷² Another friend of Ārzū’s hailing from what is today Haryana is Ḳhwājah Muhammad ‘Āqil (d. 1143/1730) of Sonepat, who composed not only in *rekhtah* but also in Braj using the name Budhwant, which means “clever” like his Persian/*rekhtah* *taḵhalluṣ* ‘Āqil.⁷³ The range of ‘Āqil’s vernacular literary activities dramatizes what we consider in the next section, namely how the ideology of the vernacular differs for us and for the eighteenth century.

Defining the (Literary) Vernacular

“Vernacular literature” is a term necessarily defined in opposition to a high-prestige, cosmopolitan literature.⁷⁴ While this seems to lock any analysis of it into a potentially unhelpful and ahistorical binary, there are two points to keep in mind: Firstly, the elite of eighteenth-century South Asia (as well as, for that matter, Latinate Europe) themselves conceived

⁷¹ MN 2004, 3:1583. Gardezī says Mažhar is from Bukhara (*Tažkirah-yi Rekhtah-Goyān* 1995, 152).

⁷² “*dar fann-i rekhtah-go’i ustād bi-mišlast*” (MN 2004, 3:1649).

⁷³ MN 2004, 1:1122–3; *Safinah-i Khwushgo* 1959, 178–82 (which provides the detail of his Braj pen-name). He was a friend of Ārzū and a disciple of Shuhrat. Ḳhwushgo quotes a couplet written by ‘Āqil to Ārzū and Ārzū’s reply. His *diwān* is available in Aligarh’s Habib Ganj collection as ms H.G. 47/66.

⁷⁴ We can say of “vernacular” that “the term describes, not a language as such, but a relation between one language situation and another, with the vernacular at least notionally in the more embattled, or at least the less clear-cut, position” (Somerset and Watson 2003, x). Etymologically, it can be traced back to the Latin grammarian Marcus Terentius Varro’s (116–23 BCE) invocation of “*vernacula vocabula*” in *De Lingua Latina* [On the Latin Language], an influential text of which just two books survive. “*Vernacula*” is derived from “*verna*” meaning “a slave born in one’s own house” and so vernacular language is literally the non-standard Latin vocabulary of the lower class of a particular place. The definition of vernacular used in this study and in most people’s understanding of the term today has only the most tenuous link with Varro’s definition.

of such a distinction between different categories of language use.⁷⁵ Secondly, “vernacular” is a markedly broad and open category. If the cosmopolitan is defined as being transregional then a number of vernacular traditions—in that they were “not Persian” and “not Sanskrit”—such as Braj exhibited a similar capacity for movement, albeit on a smaller scale.⁷⁶ In this section I catalogue the complexity of vernacular–cosmopolitan literary cross-influence, while in the pages that follow I offer a theoretical framework for language ideology in pre-colonial India. Here I challenge the idea that Urdu is exceptional because its Persian influence somehow set it in a category apart and made it incommensurate with other vernacular language use in northern India.⁷⁷ Instead, in the period under discussion, it was a kind of literary idiom that was seen in the context of other vernacular literary idioms.

Later definitions of Urdu can be distilled down to their colonial and post-colonial political motivations, which have little relevance for the pre-colonial period. One influential early twentieth-century guide to Urdu poetics, *Bahr al-Faṣāḥat* [Sea of Eloquence], for example, argues that Urdu is a creole, that is, a mixture of various languages created in the course of everyday contact.⁷⁸ It also paraphrases the claim made famous

⁷⁵ The tri-partite scheme of the late seventeenth-century *Tuhfat al-Hind* has Sanskrit [*sahāskirt*] as the divine language used for technical writing, the vernacular [*bhākhā*] as the language of “the world in which we live,” and Prakrit [*parākrit*] as a mixture of Sanskrit with the vernacular primarily employed for praise poetry. Of course, this definition of Prakrit is problematic from our perspective, but in the context of an intellectual system in which the evolution of one language into another was not obvious, this is a logical conclusion. On the category “*deshi*,” another term for vernacular, see Pollock 2006, esp. 397ff.

⁷⁶ This is the guiding principle for R. S. McGregor in his summary of the history of Hindi (McGregor 2003), and has also been painstakingly developed by Allison Busch, for example in Busch 2003, 2010, 2011.

⁷⁷ George Grierson, the linguist and literature scholar responsible for the Linguistic Survey of India, implies as much when he claims that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a flourishing vernacular literary culture while the eighteenth century was rather barren (Grierson 1889). In order to make such a claim about the exact time when Urdu literature came into its own, one would have to wrongly assume that Urdu was excluded from the category “vernacular.”

⁷⁸ “Because the Urdu language is made up of several languages together, they call it ‘*rekhtah*’” [*chūn-kīh zabān-i urdū kā’i zabānorū se mil kar bani hai is liye is ko rekhtah kahte hain*] (*Bahr al-Faṣāḥat*, Khan 2006, 1:36; cf. Syed 2012, 295). This falsely implies some sort of a creole language situation, when in fact the term *rekhtah* referred specifically to verse that mixed Persian and the vernacular until it was conflated with “*zabān-i urdū*.” The historically improbable idea that Urdu was a creolized military language (in some tellings deliberately conceived by the emperor Akbar as part of a syncretic project) is very common among educated South Asians today.

in Muhammad Ḥusain Āzād's declaration that "Everybody knows this much—that our Urdu language has emerged from Braj Bhasha. And Braj Bhasha is a purely Indian language."⁷⁹ Frances Pritchett is right to ridicule this linguistically dubious assertion, but we should briefly analyze its rhetorical force.⁸⁰ Positing a creole and a Braj Bhāṣā origin for Urdu is a political claim, namely that Urdu is an authentically Indian language. This is a rhetorical position that became necessary in the mid-nineteenth century when Hindi, written in the unimpeachably indigenous Devanagari script, began commonly to be contrasted with Urdu, written in the imported Perso-Arabic script. In the eighteenth century, however, all evidence points to the conclusion that *rekhtah* and other *hindī* vernacular literary idioms like Braj were seen as part of the same genus in a literary eco-system before they were redefined into Urdu and Hindi. The other important intervention here is to abandon the idea that the influence of Persian on Urdu made Urdu irreducibly "foreign," a thesis which T. Grahame Bailey's *History of Urdu Literature* (1932) clearly illustrates:

What was called "polishing" the language was "Persianising" it; poetry became more and more artificial and un-Indian.... In Urdu everything now became foreign, artificial and exotic. Urdu critics have themselves often admitted that the old Hindi poets were far truer to nature.⁸¹

Leaving aside the dated idea that good poetry is necessarily true to nature, what remains is an overwrought argument that Persian deracinated whatever it touched in India. This is rooted in the colonial discourse of the delegitimation of the "foreign invader" Mughals rather than in any indigenous view of language. In the context of the eighteenth

⁷⁹ *Āb-i Ḥayāt* 1907, 6; *Bahr al-Faṣāḥat*, Khan 2006, 1:37.

⁸⁰ Pritchett 2001. The claim is "linguistically dubious" because *kharī boli* and Braj have different grammars, and clearly evolved (even the sparse records of their early history show) along parallel paths with mutual influence rather than having one branch off from the other. Nonetheless, Āzād's position is that Amir Ḳhusrau wrote some *dohṛās* in a mixture of Braj and Persian, and that this is the ultimate origin of Urdu (*Āb-i Ḥayāt* 1907, 67).

⁸¹ Bailey 1932, 40.

century, before Hindi and Urdu were defined against each other, the logic would have been incomprehensible.⁸²

Here I consider *rekhtah*'s literary culture along two axes. First, I investigate how the vernacular and Persian were seen as compatible. It is self-evident that they were, since *rekhtah* was developed as verse that mixed the two, but it is worth tracing the argument in the context of the eighteenth century and specifically recovering the ways in which Persian actually influenced the vernacular.⁸³ That the community of *rekhtah* writers was largely coterminous with that of the most influential Persian litterateurs in Delhi has been established. Second, I describe the implications of the fact that many of what today we consider separate dialects and even languages were referred to simply as “*zabān-i hindī*” [Indian language] in the eighteenth century. Since *rekhtah* (and later Urdu) as well as the literature of dialects folded into what is today called “Hindi” are all premised on “*zabān-i hindī*,” we should take this as an invitation to view all the vernacular literary dialects in the same frame. There had been no census or linguistic survey, so judgments about language existed in a “fuzzy” rather than an “enumerated” life-world, to use Sudipta Kaviraj's distinction.⁸⁴ Language use must therefore have been defined more by function—whether it was suitable for poetry on particular subjects or for use in communicating with a particular group,

⁸² In the modern period, though, “linguistic nationalism renders the geographical distribution of the language coterminous with that of the nation itself, so that any attack on the national language becomes, by substitution, a violation of the national borders, an illicit incursion. It is a logic that has a great deal in common with the notion of ‘homeopathic magic’ that Frazer discerned among tribal peoples: if you can suppress its impurities, you can maintain the essentialist purity of the nation itself” (Herzfeld 1992, 113).

⁸³ Arzū's friend Tek Chand Bahār defines *rekhtah* as follows in *Bahār-i 'Ajam*: “It is a thing which is mixed in its form and that is very felicitously joined together, and discourse mixed with two or more languages, and this is metaphorical; and ‘*rekhtah* hemistich’ and ‘*rekhtah* meaning’ [refer to when] the hemistich and meaning [in question] are found without deliberation and without effort” [chizi ast kih dar qālab rizanad wa ān khaili khwush qimārah mī bāshad wa kalām makhlūṭ bah do zabān yā zyādah, wa īn majāz ast, wa miṣra'-i rekhtah wa ma'ni-yi rekhtah, miṣra' wa ma'ni kih bī-takalluf wa bī-tā'ammul yāftah shawad] (2001, 2:1135). Bahār here references the earlier definition of *rekhtah* internal to Persian literature, namely an effortlessly constructed line of verse. Bailey is thus wrong in claiming that the term “*rekhtah*” had no “literary significance” before being applied to Urdu (1932, 3).

⁸⁴ See Kaviraj 1992. Cf. Fumaroli 1984, 144 on functional definitions of language in early modern France.

for example—than by any other pre-determined criterion.⁸⁵ At some point the language of Delhi began to be seen as a fit medium for the *ghazal* and other Persianate genres of poetry rather than just a means for having informal conversations and communicating with people who were less likely to have access to Persian.

Although every one of Ārzū’s extant works is written in Persian and is nominally about Persian literature, he mentions Indian vernacular language in all of his major critical works, and refers to *rekhtah* by name in at least two, *Dād-i Sukhan* and *Tanbih al-Ğāflin*.⁸⁶ *Dād-i Sukhan* puts forth a theory of poetic mastery, as we explored in Chapter 4, that takes into account the fact that mistakes in language use are inevitable. The end of the first preface, quoted at length here, shows clearly how this insight is connected to vernacular poetic practice:

Thus in this regard, whatever we have come to call a mistake if it is [committed] by some person whose standing [in matters of literary judgment] is above repudiation and acceptance by others, it shall be a new idiom [*dākhil-i taşarruf*],⁸⁷ not a mistake. [Arabic:] *Consider this, for it is a stumbling-block for understanding minds*, and furthermore when considering that this occurs in the practice of the poets of *rekhtah* of India (this is poetry in the *hindī* language of the people of the Court [*urdū*] of India, especially in the style of Persian poetry, and it is presently popular in Hindūstān [i.e., northern India] and formerly it was current in the Deccan in the language of that country), and I have seen many leaders [*muqtadā*] in this art [i.e., of composing *rekhtah*] who have made mistakes in their own idiom, and this made me aware that as the people who know *hindī* and Persian are equivalent in their

⁸⁵ “A bi- or multilingual world of interacting language communities is the historical norm (and the contemporary one in many parts of the globe). The greatest challenge for a historian’s history of language, in our own largely monoglot environment, is to recreate that world and explain its workings” (Evans 1998, 18). Such a reconstruction is the project in Orsini 2012.

⁸⁶ I analyzed both works in Chapter 4. Perhaps significantly, both were written in the same late period in Ārzū’s career, the mid-1740s.

⁸⁷ Literally, “[something which has] entered into [accepted] usage”; an accurate paraphrase would be “included among authoritative poetic innovations.”

circumstances so an error of the Indians can be considered analogous to that of the Persians.⁸⁸

This argument on the basis of vernacular poetic praxis shows clearly that the vernacular is not an incidental inclusion in Ārzū's work but rather integral to his critical enterprise in his later years. *Nawādir al-Alfāz*, Ārzū's vernacular lexicon (discussed in Chapter 4), demonstrates the porousness of language by recording the Indic origins of vocabulary. *Nawādir al-Alfāz* is not actually a dictionary of a vernacular language as such but rather a tabulation of words of vernacular origin used in Persian. The formal philosophy of language that underpins this possibility of sameness between Persian and vernacular has been considered in detail in Chapter 2. Thus, Ārzū can consider the concept of simile [*tashbih*] as common to *hindī*, Persian, and Arabic but note that poets in each tradition use different similes (for example, only in *hindī* do poets refer to eyes as being like fish).⁸⁹

Besides the tendency to consider Persian and *rekhtah* poetic practices to a large degree interchangeable, the tradition frequently compares Urdu poets stylistically to Persian poets. Such comparisons are prevalent in Urdu verse itself, as for example in the verse in which Mīr compares himself to Nazīrī, but are also deeply embedded in the critical tradition. For example, the critic Qatīl writes in his work on Persian composition *Chār Sharbat* [Four Cold Drinks, 1217/1802] that Saudā has the same stature and style in *rekhtah* that Zuhūrī (d. 1616), a great seventeenth-century poet active in the Deccan, has in Persian.⁹⁰ In *Āb-i Hayāt*, Āzād dutifully invokes a Persian stylistic predecessor for many of the Urdu

⁸⁸ “pas dar īn şūrat ān chih mā ān rā ḡhalat̄ guftah āmadīm agar az chunān kasī ast kih pāyah-ash māfiq̄ rad wa qabūl-i digarān ast, dākhil-i taṣarruf khwāhad būd nah ḡhalat̄ fa-tā’ammal li-ānna-hu min mazālli aqdām al-āfhām wa nīz ba-dān kih nażar-i īn majrā ahwāl-i shū’arā-yī rekhtah hind ast wa ān shī’rī ast bah zabān-i hindī-yi ahl-i urdū-yi hind, ḡhālib^{an} bah ṭariq-i shī’r-i fārsī wa ān alḥāl bisyār rāyaj hindūstān ast wa sābq dar dakkan rawāj dāsh̄t bah zabān-i hamān mulk, wa mā bisyār kas rā didim kih maqtadā-yī īn fann būdand wa ḡhalat̄ dar muḥāwarah-yī khyud kardah-and wa mā rā bar-ān iṭlā’ ḥāsil shudah, wa chūn zabāndān-i hindī wa fārsī az ‘ālam-i khyud musāwi ast ḡhalat̄-i hindīyān maqaiyas ‘alaihi fārsiyān tawānād būd” (DS 1974, 7).

⁸⁹ AK 2002, 65.

⁹⁰ As cited by Āzād (*Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 155). The tendency to conflate a poet's Urdu style with a Persian model is a hallmark of early *tażkirahs*, although *Nikāt al-Shū’arā* does comparatively less of this (Gorekar 1970, 121). To take a very different example, we can see the same trend in

poets he discusses, so this was still an accepted mode of criticism into the 1880s. Perhaps the most remarkable comparison of a Persian and a *hindī* poet comes from Ḫwushgo quoting Ārzū: In the entry in *Safīnah-yi Ḫwushgo* for Rūdakī, Ārzū's marginal note says the equivalent of Rūdakī in *hindī* is Sūrdās.⁹¹ He invokes the famous blind Braj poet in order to make the historical claim that just as there are many spurious compositions attributed to Rūdakī so there are to Sūrdās.⁹²

Why would Ārzū, an important early proponent of literary style that became Urdu, refer to the language of Gwalior, his native place (at the northern tip of modern-day Madhya Pradesh), as “the most eloquent” [*afṣah*] language of India? After all, *zabān-i gwāliyār* [lit. the tongue of Gwalior], which for our purposes we can treat as synonymous with Braj Bhāṣā, was quite different from the language of Delhi that he was promoting as a literary standard.⁹³ Was it the pride of a native son or is there more to this? In fact, Ārzū's statement only makes sense if we assume a cosmopolitan view of literary language, in which the boundaries of dialects as we understand them have little role to play.⁹⁴ Recent research has called into question the idea that a pure “Hindi” literature was untainted by Persian (and by extension Muslim) culture while Urdu soaked up Persian. At the edges of the current Hindi canon of pre-colonial texts cluster works that brim with Persian vocabulary and imagery. They defy critics' efforts to categorize literatures through a prism of Hindi as a Hindu language and Braj as a literary medium for

early modern English letters: Richard Carew's *The Excellencie of the English Tongue* (1595) claimed that Virgil's style could be found in the Earl of Surrey's work and that Shakespeare and Marlowe wrote like Catullus (Vance 1997, 7).

⁹¹ Keshavmurthy 2013, 34–5.

⁹² On the modern scholarly understanding of how the followers of the sixteenth-century *hindī* poet Sūrdās wrote poems in his style and signed them as if Sūrdās had written them, see Hawley 2009.

⁹³ NA 1951, 26. He conflates the language “of Braj and of Gwalior” as “most eloquent” or “very elegant” at NA 1951, 48. For further discussion of the term “*zabān-i gwāliyār*” see Busch 2011, 8n13, 121 and McGregor 2001, 21. Amrit Rai mentions but fails to deal with this conundrum (Rai 1984, 248).

⁹⁴ We can speculate that *hindī* regionalism functioned somewhat along the lines of the *rītis* in Sanskrit. The formal constraints of these styles, such as Vaidarbī and Gaudī, are carefully defined, but they apparently developed from stereotyped regional forms (Chari 1993, 137). They never lost their nominal attachment to places even though most uses of them by the time literary scholars defined them had little or nothing to do with the actual usage of the places with which they were associated. It is entirely possible that the spoken *hindī* of elites in Gwalior had taken on characteristics of *kharī boli*, while still being imagined as being more like Braj Bhāṣā.

poems about Krishna.⁹⁵ Take Sāwant Singh (1699–1764), the ruler of Kishangarh (in present-day Rajasthan) and a Krishna devotee, who wrote poetry under the name Nāgaridās. While later Hindi critics have tried to present him as a Braj poet in the traditional (Hindu) mode, he in fact wrote a great deal of Persianized *hindī* verse, clearly in dialogue with developments in Delhi and the Deccan, and these literary experiments have been side-lined.⁹⁶ It is the same for the noted patron of the arts ‘Abd al-Rahīm Khān-i Khānān (1556–1627), whose vernacular poetry written under the *chāp* [pen-name] Rahīm breaks later categories.⁹⁷ The *Satasāī* [700 Verses] of Bihārilāl (1595–1663), a court poet at Amber, is full of Arabic and Persian loanwords.⁹⁸ A work generally taken by modern critics to be early Urdu, Mirzā Afzal’s *Bikaṭ Kahānī* [A Tremendous Story, 1636], is in fact difficult to characterize or indeed to trace as an influence on later Urdu. It contains long phrases that are pure Persian but also contains earthy *hindī* expressions and takes the form of an Indic *bārahmāsa* [lit. twelve months] genre, which describes the different characteristics of the lover’s pining for her beloved over the twelve months of the year. (The lover here is marked as feminine in the Indian manner rather than being of ambiguous gender as is typical in

⁹⁵ It is telling that the last monograph written in either English or Hindi on the question of Persian’s influence on Hindi appears to be from 1936 (Vajpeyi 1936). Fascinatingly that text refers to *Rāni Ketakī ki Kahānī* [The Story of Queen Ketaki], an odd literary experiment by Inshā’allah Khān Inshā’, as “Hindi” that is “yet unsurpassed” (Vajpeyi 1936, 101). Inshā’ explains his project at the beginning of the work (quoted in Shackle and Snell 1990, 89–90). The special circumstances, namely the fact that most of Inshā’’s literary output now falls into the category of Urdu and that he invented the style of *Rāni Ketakī ki Kahānī* as a literary exercise akin to writing an English work with no Latin-derived words, appear not to matter to critics grasping for another pre-colonial work to include in the Hindi canon.

⁹⁶ Pauwels 2012. Pauwels has recently found ms evidence of the direct transcreation of a Persian poem into *hindī*.

⁹⁷ His poetry has been published in Devanagari script as *Rahim Granthāwali*. On Rahīm, see Lefèvre 2014. The Naval Kishore press published a large number of books under the heading “*bhākha*” that we would consider Urdu today (Phukan 2000b, 18n28).

⁹⁸ Dewhurst 1915. A good illustration of how later interventions in the Hindi tradition attempted to cleanse it of Persianate influence can be found in Thomas Duer Broughton’s *Selections from the Popular Poetry of the Hindoos* (1814), the first printed collection of Hindi verse. Broughton’s informants were mostly Brahmin soldiers who recited poems that strike modern readers as a mix of *kharī boli* and Braj forms. Many of the poems that Broughton heard contained Persian words and Broughton tells us that he suppressed these as inauthentic, even though his upper-caste informants were unperturbed by this supposed “inauthenticity.” He apologizes for including two poems in the collection that do in fact contain Persian words that escaped his notice before publication (Bangha 2000, 49–50).

Persian literature.) Shantanu Phukan has argued that the text is “a highly self-conscious literary undertaking” in contrast to the view of the influential early twentieth-century critic Mahmud Sherani, who declares the mixed style distracting and therefore an aesthetic failure (this judgment is anachronistic in that it takes a modern view of literary genres and projects them onto the past).⁹⁹ Persian even finds a place in Braj literary criticism. Bhikhārīdās (fl. 1740) notes that some Braj moves towards Persian in an “easy Persian” [*sahaj pārsī*] style but he condemns “foreigners’ language” [*jaman bhākhā*], which is apparently over-Persianized.¹⁰⁰ As I discuss in the context of *rozmarrah*, the very same debate took place at roughly the same time in the context of what is now seen as Urdu.

Nor were poets who are today associated with Persian and Urdu uninterested in *hindī* dialects other than Persianized *kharī bolī*. Ārzū’s friend Mukhlīṣ translated Muḥammad Jayasi’s *Padmāwat* into Persian prose under the title *Hangāmah-yi ‘Ishq* [The Clamor of Love, 1739]. Fascinatingly, Mukhlīṣ records that it was his Deccani servant who narrated the story to him even though its *hindī* was “an eastern dialect” (a fact to which Mukhlīṣ calls attention), and Mukhlīṣ himself was a Punjabi.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Phukan 2000a, 42. Francesca Orsini’s study on *bārahmāsa* observes that the people who wrote them were typically not connected with the Delhi court (Orsini 2010). Orsini’s attempt to put all *bārahmāsas*, regardless of whether they were later called “Hindi” or “Urdu,” into the same frame is commendable, but even so she refers to Afzal’s work as “Urdu *bārahmāsa*.” Using that frame of reference introduces a risk of anachronism because though the grammar is largely *kharī bolī*, the literary conventions are far from later Urdu practice. For example, it begins with the invocation “Listen, my [female] friends!” [*suno sakhiyōm*] which is common in Braj poetry but only finds a place in Urdu in the much later *rekhtah* genre, in which the (male) poet speaks mockingly in a female voice (Bikāt Kahāni 1979, 24). On the fact that the first recorded *bārahmāsa* is actually in Persian (Mas‘ūd-i Sa‘d-i Salmān’s *Māh-hā-yi Fārsī* [Persian Months, eleventh century]), see Alam 2003, 145ff.

¹⁰⁰ McGregor 2001, 28–9. McGregor argues that a trend towards Sanskritizing Braj (that is, preferring *tatsama*, or unmodified Sanskrit vocabulary, to *tadbhava*, or Sanskrit-origin words that have undergone phonetic changes) at this time foreshadows the nineteenth-century split between Hindi and Urdu.

¹⁰¹ See Phukan 2000b, esp. 67–8. Muhammad Shakir in the seventeenth century copied the *hindī* poem, taking care to mark all of the vowels properly, and made an interlinear Persian translation (Phukan 2000a, 36). McGregor has studied poets who wrote in both Persian and Awadhī, that is, in “eastern” *hindī* (1984, 150–4). *Tazkirah-i Huṣainī* (1875) refers to the poet Mir Ĝhulām Nabī (who wrote under the pen-name Ĝhulām and served in Šāfdar Jang’s army in Awadh) as a prolific writer of *dohrās* (*hindī* couplets) and of a “*nāyikābhed* in *rekhtah*” (2008, 332–3). *Nāyikābhed* is a genre of poetry usually associated with Braj and is a description of types of beloveds. For such a poem to be “in *rekhtah*” suggests the possibilities that “*rekhtah*” was used in this late nineteenth-century text to refer to *hindī* besides *kharī bolī* or that *nāyikābheds* were actually written in *kharī bolī*.

Covering south, east, and west, this simple interaction encompasses the whole of what we now call the “Hindi Belt.” The career of Mīr Ġulām ‘Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī (d. 1785) provides the modern researcher with other surprises.¹⁰² Unusually for a South Asian litterateur he was a serious poet and scholar in Arabic, but for our purposes what is relevant is his *Sarw-i Āzād* [Āzād’s Cypress], a Persian account of 143 Indian-born Persian poets along with a further eight who wrote in “*hindī bhāshā*.¹⁰³ All eight of the poets are Muslim, yet the voluminous quotations show that the literary medium is closer to Braj (as the label “*hindī bhāshā*” implies) than to later Urdu.¹⁰⁴ The inclusion of the Braj tradition in a book devoted to Persian poets is significant because it implies a parallel between the literary activities of poets writing in Persian and those writing in *hindī*, even if that *hindī* is not the intentionally Persianate *rekhtah*.

Āzād Bilgrāmī also wrote an Arabic account of *nāyikābhed*, an Indic poetic taxonomy of different kinds of beloveds, under the title *Subḥat al-Marjān*, and soon translated part of that work into Persian.¹⁰⁵ The Persian edition is *Ġhizlān al-Hind* (Gazelles of India, 1178/1764–5), whose title refers to beloveds as represented in Indic poetry.¹⁰⁶ Āzād provides the most exact account of Indic figurative language in Persian, and in so doing provides an argument for the compatibility of various literary traditions.¹⁰⁷ The preface of *Subḥat al-Marjān* attempts to place India in the Islamic world, both literally and philosophically. The first part of the main text catalogues “mentions of India in *tafsīr* [exegetic

¹⁰² He came from a highly learned community in Bilgram, a small town in what is today central Uttar Pradesh. He studied in the Chishti *silsilah* and was well-connected enough to meet Asaf Jāh Nīzām al-Mulk in 1737, receiving financial support from him to undertake the Hajj. Unusually for an Indian, he wrote extensively in Arabic (both in poetry and in prose) rather than just in Persian. After leaving Arabia in 1740, he settled in Aurangabad in the Deccan at Asaf Jāh's invitation. On his biography and Arabic works, see Toorawa 2009.

¹⁰³ *Sarw-i Āzād* 1913, 352ff.

¹⁰⁴ Āzād Bilgrāmī appears to be the only early modern writer to consider Indian vernacular poetics in Arabic, as in his *Subḥat al-Marjān* [The Coral Rosary, 1764]. His *Ġhizlān al-Hind* [Gazelles of India, 1178/1764] is fascinating because it is a Persian-language *nāyikābhed* text, that is, a catalogue of different archetypes of beloveds that is quite common in *hindī*. (It was published in Tehran in 2003 under the probably erroneous title *Għażalān al-Hind*.)

¹⁰⁵ Ernst 1995.

¹⁰⁶ The editor of the published edition, Cyrus Shamisa, regards the title as *Ġhazalān al-Hind*, but most other scholars have opted for *Ġhizlān al-Hind* without the first *alif* (Sharma 2009, 96n5).

¹⁰⁷ Sunil Sharma has given us a *longue durée* perspective on where Āzād fits (Sharma 2009).

commentary] and *hadīs*" and Āzād notes that a goal of his was to locate the more obscure references.¹⁰⁸ Some examples from this section appear in the preface of *Ghizlān al-Hind*. Thus, Āzād refers to Adam and his having taken his first step after being cast out of Paradise on the island of Serendib (or what is today Sri Lanka).¹⁰⁹ Adam's connection to Sri Lanka is a touchstone of the debate over India as a properly Islamic place and Āzād states that Adam's exile to the sub-continent means not that India was odious [*mağhzūb*] (as some scholars had argued) but rather paradisiacal and blessed. The second part discusses the '*ulamā*' [Islamic scholars] of India, and is therefore not relevant for our purposes, while parts three and four consist of "some Indic rhetorical figures which have been Arabicized" [*ba'zī sanā'i-yi 'ilm-i bādī'-yi hindī ... ta'rib*] and "the art of Nāyikābhed" [*fann-i nāyikābhed*] itself. These latter sections are what have been adapted into the Persian *Ghizlān al-Hind*, as the first and second halves of the text, respectively.

The first half is a catalogue of rhetorical figures [*sanā'i*] which are part of the discipline of '*ilm-i bādī*'. Some examples of figures shared between Arabic and *hindī*, he notes in the preface, are *iḥām*, *ḥusn al-ta'lil*, *tajāhul* *al-'arif*, *marāja't*, *isti'ārah*, *tashbih*, *jinās*, and *saj'*.¹¹⁰ The total analysis comes to sixty-seven specific rhetorical devices: He offers twenty-seven devices known in *hindī* and Arabic. Then he describes thirty-five rhetorical devices he has invented [*mukhtara'*] himself, which is to say that no previous theorist had ever named them as unique devices. He lists two miscellaneous *hindī* devices, one of which is attributed to Amīr Khusrau, and three "ancient" [*qadīm*] devices that are specific to Persian (and *hindī*), and thus did not appear in the Arabic *Subḥat al-Marjān*. He uses the word "*tafrīs*" to mean describing these terms in Persian. This is also the term used by Ārzū and other lexicographers to refer to what we would call lexical borrowing from other languages into Persian. The second half of *Ghizlān al-Hind* is the *nāyikābhed* proper. As in the rhetorical figures section, it contains both traditional categories and

¹⁰⁸ *Ghizlān al-Hind* 2003, 23ff.

¹⁰⁹ He mentions this again when discussing Indian beloveds (*Ghizlān al-Hind* 2003, 58ff.).

¹¹⁰ "*ba'zī mushtarak dar 'arab wa hind miṣl-i iḥām wa ḥusn al-ta'lil wa tajāhul al-'arif wa marāja't wa isti'ārah wa tashbih wa jinās wa saj'*" (*Ghizlān al-Hind* 2003, 32).

some of Āzād's own invention. The implication is that he wanted it to be literarily productive rather than a simple catalogue.¹¹¹

Āzād's rhetoric on the purpose of his addressing Indic poetry is forcefully cosmopolitan. He says of *nāyikābhed* (in the context of his project in *Subḥāt al-Marjān*) that “this rare offering, which is a speciality of the Indians, must be given in service of the Arabic of the Arabs.”¹¹² Whether he literally means that he wants an Arabic-knowing readership to have some sense of *nāyikābhed* is unclear but he makes exactly the same claim of *Ghīzālān al-Hind*, namely that it will bring the “delightfulness of the parrots of India” to “the people of temperament of Iran” [*ṣāḥib-i tab‘-i furs*].¹¹³ In both cases, at least rhetorically, these were ideas that were meant to circulate. Strikingly, in this account of *hindī* poetic practices, he does not actually quote a single line of Indic poetry. Instead, he offers us quotations of Persian poets that illustrate the argument he is making about *hindī*. Indeed, on several occasions he introduces quranic quotations or *hadīs* in discussing the characteristics of Indic poetry. The Persian poets he quotes range from Ḥāfiẓ and Amīr Ḫusrau on the classical end of the scale to recent greats like Ğhani Kashmīrī, Ṣā’ib, and Bedil to contemporary Indian and Iranian poets (including, unsurprisingly, copious quotations from his own poetry). Mīrzā Ḫān by contrast does provide examples in *hindī* as well as in Persian in *Tuhfāt al-Hind*. While Āzād reports the Indic terms for categories of *nāyikās* (beloveds), he only gives the names of the literary devices in Persian (or rather Arabic). Āzād was obviously not concerned with placing these elements in the context of *hindī* literary culture in the way that Mīrzā Ḫān had been, but rather his precision in describing the categories is a way of fixing them as universal.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ In Āzād's *tažkirah Khizānah-i ‘Āmirah* he makes a statement in the same vein that *hindī* (or at least Indic ideas) enrich Persian (translated in Alam 2003, 179). Sharma argues that Āzād depended on an oral recension of *nāyikābhed* and not a particular author's text in Sanskrit or Braj such as Keshavdās's *Rasikapriyā* or Sundardās's *Sundarśñāgār*, which in fact has a dedication to Shāh Jahān (Sharma 2009).

¹¹² “īn armāghān-i shigarf rā kih makḥṣūṣ-i hindiyān ast bah khidmat-i ‘arab-i ‘arbā bāyad sipurd” (*Ghīzālān al-Hind* 2003, 24).

¹¹³ *Ghīzālān al-Hind* 2003, 24.

¹¹⁴ However, to get at the universal, the non-universal must be addressed. Particularly thorny is the problem of *hindī* gender politics, which are the reverse of Persian and Turkish. In Indian love poetry (here called “*taḡhazulāt*”), love is portrayed from the perspective of the woman (*Ghīzālān al-Hind* 2003, 116ff.). Essentially, argues Āzād, Indian poetry always conceives of a

Several broad trends emerge in this complex vernacular environment. The first is the matter of the circulation of literary people and with them languages, styles, perceived functions of such styles, and literary tropes. It is suggestive that the *rekhtah* poet Ābrū, like Ārzū, hailed from Gwalior, a center for Braj literature.¹¹⁵ Indeed, Prince A'zam Shāh, in whose army Ārzū served, was a patron of poetry in Braj.¹¹⁶ No doubt many other prominent figures in Delhi's world of letters also came to the cultural metropole from peripheral locales where a strong vernacular literary tradition existed. The Braj country itself was brought firmly into the Mughal orbit with road connections built to Agra and Delhi during the Sher Shāh Sūrī interregnum (1538–45).¹¹⁷ With current evidence it is probably impossible to show the influence of the textual traditions of, for example, Gwalior on those of Delhi, but certainly poets of the sub-imperial courts (such as Kishangarh and Amber) were well aware of what was happening in the capital. As we saw in Chapter 1, Ārzū and other Delhi-based poets of his time spent time in the Deccan on military campaigns. Direct evidence is lacking, but the presence of so many literary elites from Delhi in the Deccan seems an obvious conduit of influence for Deccani *rekhtah* on Delhi *rekhtah* separate from Walī. Also, poets who had thought of themselves as composing in *hindawī* (a generic term for Indian vernacular poetry in use from before Amīr Khusrāu's time) began to represent themselves as *rekhtah* poets specifically.¹¹⁸ Later scholars, especially linguists, have read this teleologically as a natural evolution since the *kharī bolī* upon which *rekhtah* was based would give

woman as having a husband, and her considering him the “treasure of her life” [*sarmayah-yi zindagi-yi khwud mi shumurd*]. He further explains this by saying that in the Hindu religion [*dar din-i hindū*] when a woman's husband dies, she is obliged to commit “*sati*” (ritual immolation). Fascinatingly, he argues that women loving men is not far-fetched [*istib'ād*] on the basis of the quranic story of Yūsuf and Zulaikhā. He declares that it is indeed possible for love to flow in either direction, and to be mutual or not. This discussion is carefully framed with *hadīs* proving its Islamic acceptability at different points. Furthermore, he quotes Sā'ib to prove that Persian poets sometimes take on a feminine persona. However, this discussion never turns to the vast amount of Braj poetry that describes Krishna as a lover, which is an odd omission—as far as I can tell one committed by Mirzā Khān as well. One plausible explanation has to do with genre: perhaps such poetry was excluded from the category of “*taghazzulāt*.”

¹¹⁵ According to Gardezi (*Tazkirah-yi Rekhtah-Goyān* 1995, 39).

¹¹⁶ Ziauddin 1935, 3. ¹¹⁷ Pauwels 2009.

¹¹⁸ As in the entry on Nuṣraṭī in *Gulshan-i Guftār* (1929, 6–7).

rise to modern Hindi and Urdu.¹¹⁹ In fact, this view confuses spoken language with literary language. Since, as Allison Busch has convincingly argued, literary Braj spread outside the region in which it resembles the local spoken language largely because of Mughal patronage—a counter-intuitive notion to most modern-day Hindi scholars though well supported by evidence—then when tastes changed and a new literary vehicle became available in the form of *rekhtah* based on Deccani or Delhi *hindī*, this too could similarly have spread beyond where *kharī bolī* was commonly spoken.¹²⁰ We should also resist the temptation to see the distribution of vernacular literary practice as static. Over the course of as little as three years, Ārzū's definition of *rekhtah* shifts. In *Tanbih al-Ğāfilīn* (c. 1744) he defines it “as poetry in the *hindī* or Deccani language agreeable to [the rules of] Persian poetry,” but in the slightly later *Dād-i Sukhan* (c. 1746) he writes that it was *formerly* written in the Deccan.¹²¹ While it is of course entirely unlikely that the Deccan's vernacular literary tradition died in that short period of time, the need for Ārzū to express that it was moribund is a notable shift. These movements of taste and literary influence from metropole to periphery and vice versa need to be theorized. One framework is that of “lateral” versus “vertical” standardization.¹²² In the former, metropolitan elites are influenced by provincial elites and vice versa in matters of taste and patronage, while in the latter influence moves from elites to the populace and vice versa. In the case of *rekhtah*, the lateral model is far better at explaining its rise than the vertical model.¹²³

¹¹⁹ For example, S. K. Chatterji, who writes: “Braj-bhakha as the direct descendent of the Śaurasēni Prakrit, the most elegant Prakrit of the centuries immediately following Christ, became the dominant literary dialect in the Upper Ganges Valley, and the most cultivated; and the Muhammadan aristocracy of Northern India also felt its charm and came under its sway. Delhi Hindusthani had at first very little chance against Braj-bhakha... We have seen how the Hindusthani stands at the end of a chain—how it represents the latest phase in the history of a Common Language for Aryan India” (1942, 172).

¹²⁰ Busch 2011, 186–8.

¹²¹ “wa rekhtah sh‘irī ast bah zabān-i hindī yā dakkanī muwāfiq-i sh‘ir-i fārsī” (TĞh 1981, 76).

¹²² Lieberman 1997, 482.

¹²³ Thomas Nairn writes of modernity that “The new middle-class intelligentsia had to invite the masses into history; and the invitation card had to be written in a language they understood” (quoted in Anderson 1983, 77). Leaving aside the question of whether there was a “middle class” in late pre-modern India, there does not appear to be any evidence that the political engagement of the masses was a conscious goal of developing vernacular literary practices.

Hindī outside of Delhi and the Language of Delhi

Although Ārzū's position is unclear in this regard, many Delhi intellectuals from subsequent generations explicitly marginalized vernacular composition from other parts of the sub-continent, particularly the Deccan, as they argued for a Delhi-based standard language. Delhi vernacular literary culture was influenced by places where the vernacular had a stronger social position vis-à-vis Persian. In the Deccan, for example, the Sultan Qulī Qutb Shāh composed extensively in *hindī* in the late sixteenth century so it had a royal imprimatur. To account for Deccani vernacular literary culture is outside the scope of this study, but we can take it as given that it was rich and unjustly neglected.¹²⁴ *Kharī bolī hindī* poetry was also written in Punjab in Delhi's western hinterlands before it had taken hold in the metropole.¹²⁵ Contemporary sources tried to minimize the significance of this outside influence, as with Mīr, and there is some evidence that the tradition was keen to exclude earthier poetry, as *hindī* poetry in the Deccan tended to be, in favor of the more abstract, philosophical style that was typical in Delhi.¹²⁶ However, since even within Ārzū's lifetime a coherent network of Urdu writers developed across India, the only convincing explanation for this rapidity is that there were many people already writing in *kharī bolī hindī* across India who gained a consciousness of shared linguistic enterprise when Ārzū and other Delhi-based intellectuals created a framework for it. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi makes the related points

¹²⁴ On Deccani literature, see Matthews 1976, 1993; Hashmi 2012. “*Dakani*” as a term for a language or literature is first attested in a *mašnawī* in 1645 (Matthews 1993, 82) but it is an open question as to whether this was a southern *hindī* that defined itself against northern (i.e., Delhi) usage.

¹²⁵ Shirani 2005.

¹²⁶ See Petieovich 2017 on how some Deccani poetry was thematically more prosaic than the philosophical, mystical poetry associated with Delhi. One Delhiite who has been largely written out of the tradition is the viciously satirical Mir Ja'far Zatallī (d. c. 1125–8/1713–16), who appears in *Mir Nikāt al-Shū'arā* but not in many subsequent compendia likely because he was too radical and out of step with “serious” poetry. See Jalibi 1984, 2:90–118. The 2003 *Zatālnāmah* appears to be the first attempt at a critical edition of Zatallī's poetry, and Abhishek Kaicker's readings of several mock-bureaucratic exercises (Kaicker 2014, 336ff.) represent arguably the best attempt to placing him in a socio-political context.

that not only do we lack evidence that Wali, as later critics would have us believe, learned his craft in Delhi, but also that his work could not have been *sui generis*.¹²⁷ In other words, Wali must have been embedded in a vernacular literary sphere outside of Delhi that produced poetry that was very similar to the poetry of Delhi. This cosmopolitan aspect of Urdu literary culture was suppressed in order to cement Delhi's claim to it.

Somewhat ironically, the mid-eighteenth-century exodus of poets from Delhi, often to the greener pastures of Awadh as in Ārzū's own case, cemented Delhi's unique status as the geographical center of authentic Urdu.¹²⁸ For example, consider the poet Ghulām Hamadānī Muṣṭafī (d. 1240/1824–5), who was from Amroha (about 130 km west of Delhi) but studied in Delhi and then spent his career in Lucknow. Muṣṭafī apparently made short visits to Delhi and still felt that it alone had a claim on correct language, writing:

Some people think to themselves “We’re the *ahl-i zabān*”
But if they have not seen Delhi, how can they be language-
knowers [*zabān-dānān*]?¹²⁹

Urdu authors around the sub-continent promoted their Delhi connections in the nineteenth century as that attachment, in contrast to the philological tools available to Persian writers, had generally become the criterion of authenticity. In the 1807 treatise *Daryā-yi Latāfat*, Inshā' redefined *sanad* so that it no longer referred to a recorded usage by a previous poet but rather to a more amorphous judgment of aesthetic soundness by a person from Delhi, specifically someone born there.¹³⁰ Ironically, having been born in Murshidabad, Inshā' failed his own test of authenticity.

¹²⁷ Faruqi 2001, 138.

¹²⁸ On this migration of poets and the vexed question of describing it as “decline” or not, see Dudney 2018b.

¹²⁹ “Ba‘zōm kā gumān hai yih kih ham *ahl-i zabān* hain / dillī nahiṁ dekhī hai zabāndān kahān hain” (quoted in *Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 313; my translation).

¹³⁰ Inshā's intervention is discussed with great clarity in Hakala 2016, 89–93.

Urdu and the Everyday

In Ārzū's work, there is an assumption that literary practice is universal even though individual features in literary traditions may be different.¹³¹ The practice of *rekhtah*, with its mixture of Indic language and Persian poetics, recognizes this by its very existence. Ārzū's philological method formally acknowledges the dividing line between the two traditions as porous, and brings the centuries-old discourse of Persian literary theory to bear on the nascent Urdu tradition.¹³² Saudā, one of Ārzū's acquaintances (though not officially his student), paraphrases the advice of an unnamed friend and litterateur, whom we are probably to understand as Ārzū, in a poem:

No matter what the language, excellence lies in the quality of
the theme [*khūbī-yi mazmūm*].

Poetry does not depend on Persian alone.

You cannot always use their language correctly;

You should express colorful ideas in your own language.¹³³

The emphasis in later scholarship has been on the supposedly nationalistic aspects of this and other similar conversations recorded for

¹³¹ This section is adapted from a paper first given at the Association of Asian Studies conference (Dudney 2012) and also appears as Dudney 2018a. See also the discussion of metaphorical language in Chapter 2. The theory of *tawāfiq*, which allows for Persian and Indian literature to be considered in the same frame, is a tool for making literature universal. While *tawāfiq* between Persian and *hindī* applies only to *hindī-yi kitābī* [i.e., Sanskrit], there is a conceptual slippage between Sanskrit and the modern Indic languages. Although Ārzū states that Sanskrit is different from these modern languages, he cites words from both in explaining *tawāfiq*, and therefore we can speculate that he understood that Sanskrit was an earlier iteration of the present languages. Furthermore, the concepts of *tafrīs* and *muhannad* (the borrowing of words into Persian and Indic languages, respectively) formalized the way in which words cross over the linguistic boundaries.

¹³² Shāh Hātim recognizes the newness of the practice of *rekhtah*, pointing out that Wali's *diwān* was the first "in this art" (i.e., composing in *rekhtah*) (Diwānzādah 1975, 39). He ignores other literary experiments, including the far earlier *diwān* of Muḥammad Quli Qutb Shāh (b. 1566; r. 1580–1611), the Sultan of Golconda in the Deccan.

¹³³ Translated in Naim 1999, 177. The original is "koī zabān ho, lāzim hai khūbī-yi mazmūm / zabān-i fars pah kuchhī munhaśir sakht to nahīm / kahām tak un kī zabān tū durust bolegā / zabān apnī mem tū bāndh mā' nī-yi rangīm" (quoted in Jalibi 1984, 2:654–5).

posterity: In this reading, it is a matter of starting to use “our” language (*hindī*/Urdu) rather than “theirs” (Persian) because using Persian is artificial and forced in India.¹³⁴ Yet the view that Indians as non-native speakers of Persian cannot compose in it at the same level as native speakers is contradicted by the quote in its larger context (Saudā tells us a few lines before that Makīn, the poet correcting his Persian, could find no mistake in it).¹³⁵ It is also contradicted by Ārzū’s own writings, as we have seen in Chapter 4,¹³⁶ but a “crisis of confidence” in Indo-Persian has been taken as self-evident (perhaps under the influence of scholarship on linguistic nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe). Bracketing off the question of whether there was such a crisis in the early and mid-eighteenth century, let us consider the parameters for a dialogue between Persian and Urdu poetry. The expression “*khūbī-yi mazmūn*” in Saudā’s poem is in fact a term of art. *Mazmūn* corresponds to “*topos*” in Western rhetoric and so Saudā’s unnamed interlocutor is implicitly arguing that the construction of *topoi* is fundamental in poetry and that such *topoi* transcend individual languages.¹³⁷ Saudā’s use of the expression “*khūbī-yi mazmūn*” in an Urdu poem illustrates the point since it is a completely Persian phrase. Nor is this literary influence uni-directional (moving only from the some would say overdetermined Persian tradition to the less developed Urdu tradition). Ārzū argues at length that the use of Indic words must be allowed in Persian poetry by analogy with Persian’s own historical borrowing of Arabic and Turkish words and phrases.

Rozmarrah served as a conceptual tool for mediating between Persian and *hindī*. It appears in critical writing on poetry and yet is also anchored to the world of daily experience, therefore forming a junction between the largely formal realm of Persian and the largely vernacular world of

¹³⁴ A parallel account cited in *Āb-i Hayāt* leaves out the crucial idea that well-deployed *mazmūn* is what matters (1907, 142).

¹³⁵ Interpreting the verse is complicated by its circumstances: It comes from a satire referring to a specific incident, where the somewhat pedantic Makīn unjustly butchered some Persian verses of Saudā’s that Saudā had submitted to him for correction, and its bleak conclusion that no Indian Persian poets except Khusrav, Faizī, Ārzū, and Faqīr were any good is clearly meant to be read as a satirical exaggeration.

¹³⁶ In particular we can point to *Dād-i Sukhan*’s second preface (DS 1974, 7–9) and Muṣṭir’s chapter “*dar bayān ḏākih ḡhalat az ahl-i zabān ṣādir shawad yā na-shawad*” [In the matter of whether a mistake can arise from the (usage of the) *ahl-i zabān* or not] (M 1991, 34ff.).

¹³⁷ On the history of the term *mazmūn*, see Faruqi 2004a, 852ff.

hindī in the eighteenth century. In modern Urdu usage, the meaning of *rozmarrah* is almost always “colloquial” or “everyday” language as opposed to formal language.¹³⁸ On the other hand, in modern Iranian Persian, it usually refers to a daily allowance or occurrence.¹³⁹ In Persian in the eighteenth century and before, it meant both, as illustrated by *Bahār-i ‘Ajām*, the dictionary compiled by Ārzū’s friend Ṭek Chand Bahār.¹⁴⁰ Bahār writes:

rozmarrah: This word is used in two situations: the first in the meaning of idioms and words that are well-known among the people and the other in the meaning of ration and obligation of victuals, derived from “day” [roz] and “marrah” which is an Arabic word in the meaning of a time/turn, that is, what one receives daily and that which one says [bar zabān bu-gužarad] daily. Thus the word is shown to be not originally Persian.¹⁴¹

The difference between Urdu and traditional northern Indian literary dialects like Braj is that Urdu grammar is based on what later came to be known as *kharī bolī*, the actual spoken *hindī* dialect of Delhi.¹⁴² Poetry, which is what concerns us here, is obviously a linguistic domain bound by precise rules and is by definition not the prose of normal, everyday communication. And yet it has the notion of conversation built into it: *Sukhan*, literally “speech,” is used throughout the Persian tradition as a metonym for poetry.¹⁴³ One does not typically “write” poetry in classical

¹³⁸ The title of Shamsur Rahman Faruqi’s dictionary, *Lughāt-i Rozmarrah*, is a case in point.

¹³⁹ For example, in Hayyim 1934–6. ¹⁴⁰ Rieu 1879–83, 2:502.

¹⁴¹ “*rozmarrah: īn lafz rā dar do mauza‘ istī‘māl kūnand: yaki bah mā‘nī-yi muhāwarāt wa alfāz-i mashhūrah bain-i al-nās wa dīgar bah mā‘nī-yi rātbah wa wajh-i mā‘āsh, murakkab az ‘roz’ wa ‘marrah’ kih lafz-i ‘arabi ast bah mā‘nī-yi bār, ya‘nī ānchih har roz bah yak bār barasad wa ānchih har roz bah yak bār bar zabān bugužarad. pas lafz mustahdaš bāshad nah fārsi asl*” (*Bahār-i ‘Ajām* 2001, 2:1114). It is a concept that is far older than the eighteenth century, cf. *Madār al-Afāzil* (1001/1592): “*rozmarrah (f[ārsī]:) ānchih bā-ū rozgār gužarānand wa nīz ‘urf-i ḥāl chunānīkh goyand zabān-i rozmarrah*” [*rozmarrah* (Persian): that which one uses daily as well as present common usage which they call “everyday language” [*zabān-i rozmarrah*] (1959–70, 2:336).

¹⁴² *Kharī bolī* also happens to be the basis for Modern Standard Hindi. The later history of the differentiation of Hindi and Urdu (as described, for example, in King 1994) is outside the scope of this study.

¹⁴³ Faruqi has helpfully quoted Bedil’s philosophical definitions of “*sukhan*” (Faruqi 2004b, 19).

Persian but rather one “speaks” it [*shi'r guftan*]. Similarly, the locus of poetic appreciation (at least in South Asia) was the literary gathering, or *mushā'irah*, an oral performance involving a great deal of audience interaction.¹⁴⁴ Many poets had a *bayāz* [notebook] in which they recorded appealing poems from *mushā'irahs* and selections from these oral records often circulated in parallel to or in lieu of the “publication” of poems in a poet’s own curated *dīwān* [selected works]. However, we do not know the socio-linguistic specifics of the pre-colonial *mushā'irah*: For example, how much *hindī* was spoken at a Persian *mushā'irah* in Delhi and in what context?

The later critical consensus, as we have seen in Chapter 3, has been that Indo-Persian writers sought complexity to the exclusion of comprehensibility. Although creating complex imagery was an often-stated goal of the *tāzah-go'i* poets, comprehensibility as measured against the *roz-marrah* was in fact also a contemporary concern. Let us first return to the three prefaces of Ārzū's *Dād-i Sukhan*. In the third preface, Ārzū distinguishes between two kinds of poetic interpretation:¹⁴⁵ The first is the “path of the common people [who know] the language” [*ṭariq-i 'āmmah-yi ahl-i zabān*]. In some contexts “*ahl-i zabān*” (literally “people of the tongue”) refers to native speakers but much of the time it simply means people who use the language competently—we could think of them as the “community of language users.”¹⁴⁶ These “*ahl-i zabān*,” according to Ārzū, understand the meaning of words and the common interpretations that they have heard from their elders. Ārzū writes that “both common people and experts share in this interpretation” [“*dar īn ṭariq 'awāmm wa khawāṣṣ sharik-and*”] but he cautions that this shallow reading is not the last word. The second kind of interpretation is that to which only true experts have access. He goes on to mock a number of so-called experts like schoolmasters or people obsessed with metaphor to the exclusion of other kinds of interpretation. Ārzū's argument is simple: Knowing a language is a prerequisite for interpreting and composing poetry, but the real work cannot begin until someone masters poetic interpretation.

¹⁴⁴ See Naim 1989 and Zaidi 1989.

¹⁴⁵ DS 1974, 9ff.

¹⁴⁶ When writers wish to refer unambiguously to Iranian native speakers, as does Wārastah, they use a phrase like “*muhāwarah-dān-i īrān*” [lit. “idiom-knowers of Iran”].

Ārzū's complaint against the *mullās* [religious educators] is telling. He writes that their comprehension of poetry is "other than that of the people of the *rozmarrah*."¹⁴⁷ In other words, their reading of poetry is casuistry rather than a commonsense understanding of how the language is actually used. Indeed, Ārzū's first preface begins with a slightly tautological invocation of the *rozmarrah*. He writes, "Of that which is current [*wāqīf*] or not for the people of the *rozmarrah*, it is mostly that which is current."¹⁴⁸ What does this mysterious pronouncement mean? Simply that most poetic rules follow natural speech (with the exception of metrical requirements for certain words, which Ārzū admits trip people up). In the third preface, he describes interpretation "according to the taste of the poets" [*muwāfiq-i mažāq-i shū'arā*] and argues that it depends on comparing one's own *rozmarrah* with that of the poet in order to find the particularities in the poet's language.¹⁴⁹

A similar concern for poetry's necessary relationship with the *rozmarrah* presents itself in Shāh Ḥātim's preface to *Dīwānzādah*. Examining what Shāh Ḥātim says, before jumping to conclusions about his intentions, is important: He rejects "the *hindawī* which they call 'bhākhā'"¹⁵⁰ (in other words, *hindī* dialects like Braj) in favor of "the *rozmarrah* of Delhi." More specifically, he states that he "has chosen purely the *rozmarrah* which is understood by common people and acceptable to experts" (we can note the parallel to Ārzū's invocation of common people and experts). Thus, he is arguing not against some kind of "Hindu language" but rather for the Delhi *rozmarrah*, which Braj is patently not.¹⁵¹ On the other end of the cultural spectrum, he condemns poets who use Persian clumsily in their *rekhtah*. He lists "dar," "bar," "az," and "ū" as examples of Persian words that should not be used in the vernacular. The first three are prepositions and the last is the third-person singular pronoun (in Persian grammar they are all known as "*harf*" or what we would call an indeclinable particle). He approvingly

¹⁴⁷ "ān ghair-i fahmīd-i ahl-i rozmarrah bāshad" (DS 1974, 10).

¹⁴⁸ DS 1974, 2.

¹⁴⁹ DS 1974, 12.

¹⁵⁰ "hindawī kih ān rā bhākhā goyand mauqūf kardah" (*Dīwānzādah* 1975, 40).

¹⁵¹ The Braj poetic tradition represents its language as the everyday speech of the rustic Braj country, but this is undermined by its use in a transregional, cosmopolitan literary tradition.

cites an Urdu poem by his contemporary Shāh Mubārak Ābrū mocking people who use the wrong sort of Persian in their Urdu:

The ones whose time is spent in *rekhtah* poetry,
To them I say: Mark my words that
Whoever brings Persian verbs or particles into *rekhtah*
His deeds will be trifling; his *rekhtah* verses will be
questionable.

[*waqt jin kā rekhte kī shā'irī mem̄ ṣarf hai*
un sitī kahtā hūm̄ būjho ḥarf merā žarf hai
*jo kih lāwe rekhte mem̄ fārsī ke fa'l-o ḥarf*¹⁵²
laḡhw haim-ge fa'l us ke rekhte mem̄ ḥarf hai.]¹⁵³

Thus, not only are the conventions of Braj poetry to be eschewed, but so is using Persian in a forced, artificial way. This is crucial in the self-definition of Urdu literary culture.

The importance of the invocation of the colloquial in the development of Urdu poetry has been noted before, for example by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi regarding Mīr.¹⁵⁴ Managing the colloquial was an aesthetic

¹⁵² When Mīr enumerates the kinds of *rekhtah* in the conclusion [*khātimah*] of *Nikāt al-Shū'arā*, he notes that what he defines as the third kind of *rekhtah*, in which Persian verbs and particles appear, is “unaesthetic” [*sīwum ānkih ḥarf wa fa'l-i pārsī ba-kār mī-burdand wa in qabīḥ ast*] (*Nikāt al-Shū'arā* 1979, 161). The Arabic technical use of the word “*qabīḥ*” and other terms for proper and improper expressions is explored in Marogy 2010, 53–4. In Mīr’s classification, the first two kinds of *rekhtah* are linguistically mixed in a formal way, the first being in the style typical of works attributed to Amir Khusrau, namely with one line of the couplet in Persian and one in “*hindi*,” while the second has each language alternate at the middle of each line. The fourth we consider later in the chapter. The fifth and sixth are “*ihām*” and “*andāz*.” Mīr declares himself poet of “*andāz*.”

¹⁵³ The word-play on “*ḥarf*” is notable: In the second line, it seems to be used along the lines of the Persian idiom “*ḥarf zadan*” [lit. “to strike a word”] meaning “to speak.” In the third, context tells us that it is being used in the technical grammatical sense of an indeclinable particle. The fourth line uses an idiom defined by Platts as follows: “*ḥarf honā (-par)*, To be a stigma, stain, spot, or disgrace (upon); to be derogatory (to).” Likewise, “*fa'l*” is used in its grammatical sense as “verb” in line three but is made concrete in line four as “action.” Thanks to Frances Pritchett for her advice on translating this passage.

¹⁵⁴ In *Shīr-i Shorāgez* (Faruqi 1990a, 57ff., with condensed translation by Frances Pritchett at www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00garden/about/txtr_srf_mir_ghalib.html). Muhammad Husain Āzād admires Mīr because his poetry is supposedly similar to actual speech, which makes it close to nature [*nechar*] (*Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 202). This obviously fits into Āzād’s aesthetic program nicely but he must also explain Mīr’s borrowings from “artificial” Persian (*Āb-i Hayāt* 1907, 203ff.).

problem that concerned Mir himself. In *Nikāt al-Shū‘arā*, he notes in the conclusion [*khātimah*] that:

The fourth [style of *rekhtah*] is that which they adorn with Persian constructions [*tarkibāt*]; often a construction which is conformable to the *rekhtah* dialect appears and that is allowed, and those other than poets cannot judge it; a construction which is not familiar in *rekhtah* [i.e., which does not seem to fit] is faulty and judging [lit. “knowing”] it is likewise based on the good taste of a poet. The preference of this wretch [i.e., the author] is the same: If a Persian form is acceptable to conversation [*guftagū*] in *rekhtah* then there is no harm.¹⁵⁵

In other words, if a Persian expression is already naturalized in *rekhtah*—that is, if it is part of the *rozmarrah* (although in this case Mir uses the similar term *guftagū*)—then it is automatically acceptable. If not, then a poet’s judgment determines whether it is good *rekhtah* or an unwanted intrusion of Persian. The debate over the precise amount of Persian allowed in Urdu continued into the mid-nineteenth century. Sir Sayyid Ahmād Khān (1817–98), for example, notes that it is for the *ahl-i zabān* to decide.¹⁵⁶

Theorizing the colloquial is not a peculiarity of Urdu literary culture but was adopted from the Persian criticism of the eighteenth century. Critics of this period, including Ārzū, frequently comment on whether a Persian verse follows *rozmarrah* or not. For example, in *Dād-i Sūkhan* associating “*hukm*” [command] with “*tuğhrā*” [a seal] is called into question as a problem of *rozmarrah* since “*tuğhrā*” is connected with “*farmān*” [another kind of command] and not with “*hukm*.¹⁵⁷ It is mentioned frequently in ‘Atīyah-i Kubrā, his treatise on “*ilm-i bayān*” [rhetoric], and *Mauhibat-i Uz̄mā*, his treatise on “*ilm-i ma‘āni*”

¹⁵⁵ “chahārum ānkīh tarkibāt-i fārsī mī ārand, akṣar tarkibī kih munāsib-i zabān-i rekhtah mī uftad ān jā‘iz wa īn rā ḡhair shā‘ir na-mī dānand wa tarkibī kih nāmānūs-i rekhtah mī bāshad ān mā‘yūb ast wa dānistān-i īn niz mauqūf-i saliqah-yi shā‘ir ast wa muqhtar-i faqīr ham hāmīn ast. agar tarkib-i fārsī muwāfiq-i guftagū-yi rekhtah būd mużāyaqah na-dārad” (1979, 161; cf. Naim 1999, 179).

¹⁵⁶ Lelyveld 2011.

¹⁵⁷ DS 1974, 52.

[semiotics].¹⁵⁸ He invokes “*rozmarrah-dānān*” [*rozmarrah*-knowers] as judges of whether a metaphor has been properly used.¹⁵⁹ Mocking the *rozmarrah* of others was fair game for satirists, such as Mīr Yahyā Kāshī (d. 1653), who apparently identified with Shiraz despite his name (“Kāshī” means “from Kashan,” a city near Isfahan) and wrote some vicious lines, quoted by Ārzū, about the speech of Kashan.¹⁶⁰

The apposition of “*rozmarrah*” and “*muḥāwarah*,” two terms which occupy nearly the same semantic range in this period, is instructive. “*Muḥāwarah*” is usually translated as “idiom” and is used more frequently than “*rozmarrah*.” Shāh Hātim uses the two in a telling contrast since he mentions the *rozmarrah* of Delhi that people have in their *muḥāwarah*, so for him the latter is clearly a broader category than the former. Since they are so similar in meaning, drawing sharp distinctions between the two words is difficult; but perhaps the difference between them is akin to what we would call diachronic and synchronic analysis. That is to say that *rozmarrah* is conceptually the usage that is current at one time, namely the present, and so a diachronic phenomenon, while *muḥāwarah* can refer to a set of usages over time and therefore be a synchronic phenomenon. Thus, while *muḥāwarah* is sometimes used with a historical reference, *rozmarrah* is not used in that way, at least in the texts examined here.¹⁶¹ Ārzū, for example, refers to the “*rozmarrah* of the Persians” [*rozmarrah-yi fārsiyān*] in order to address the differences between current usages in Indo-Persian and Iranian Persian.¹⁶² This is obviously a diachronic rather than a synchronic comparison, because it is concerned with variations over space and not over time. Crucially, *rozmarrah* is not an observed speech pattern as we would expect in a modern linguistic survey—it is always useful to register the differences between the philology of this period and our present-day linguistics, lest

¹⁵⁸ The glosses of the two terms should be understood as approximate. The texts were published together in 2002, edited by Cyrus Shamisa. Further context can be found in Rahimpoor 2008a.

¹⁵⁹ ‘AK 2002, 53, 67, 91; M^fU 2002, 99, 125, 135, 136, 181.

¹⁶⁰ M 1991, 5–6.

¹⁶¹ For example in *KhG*, where he contrasts the *muḥāwarah* of different periods (*KhG* 1996, 15, 16). He does refer to “current *rozmarrah*” [*rozmarrah-yi ḥāl*] in *M^fU*, which could imply the possibility of a “non-current *rozmarrah*,” but since such a historical formulation never appears it is safe to assume that “current” is redundant in this context.

¹⁶² M 1991, 38. He also notes that the “people of the *rozmarrah*” [*ahl-i rozmarrah*] criticize Sā’ib (d. 1676), who had by this time just passed out of living memory (M 1991, 79).

we allow ahistorical expectations to creep into our analysis. Today we separate gathering linguistic data from judgments about proper usage, but this was not the case in eighteenth-century Persian, and for eighteenth-century literati like Ārzū, Ḥātim and Mīr, *rozmarrah* was subject to criticism.¹⁶³

There is an intriguing possibility that *rozmarrah* became established as a concept in Persian criticism because of contact with vernacular literature, in the same way that Latin literary culture was retooled during the Renaissance partially in response to vernacular literary movements for which Latin literature had itself provided the basis. Persian and Urdu literary culture co-existed for decades and it is important for us to understand as thoroughly as possible the contours of each. Not only did Indian vernacular languages absorb a great deal of vocabulary from Persian, but Persian itself had pulled in Indic words for centuries, as Ārzū takes pains to elucidate in *Muṣmir*.

Revisiting the Question of the “Unprivileged Power” of Indo-Persian

We know how the story ends: By the mid-twentieth century, Persian had retreated into the madrasa and a few university departments, while Hindi and Urdu had become national languages in India and Pakistan. But was it a failure on the part of Indo-Persian that led to the rise of Urdu? There is plenty of evidence that Ārzū and his circle saw themselves as equals of Iranians in matters of Persian style, and this appears to have been the dominant view well into the mid-eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century, of course, the situation had changed. The Delhi College Persian professor Imām Bakhs̄h Ṣahbā’ī (1802–57) declares in *Qaul-i Faiṣal* [The Definitive Assertion], the last major traditional work to engage with the conflict between Ārzū and Ḥazīn, that since Indians are not native

¹⁶³ Besides Ārzū’s thoughts on the matter, explored elsewhere, Shāh Ḥātim mentions “ḡhalatī *rozmarrah*” [erroneous *rozmarrah*]. The preface of Ārzū’s *CH* justifies its composition by noting that although a word’s meaning may be well known, there can still be confusion “in the *rozmarrah* of the eloquent” [*rozmarrah-yi fuṣḥā-yi ahl-i zabān*] as to its correctness. On *CH* see Chapter 4.

speakers, everything elegant in Persian necessarily comes from Iran.¹⁶⁴ Faruqi has identified a pervasive value structure in which certain urbane Indians in the nineteenth century privileged Persian written by Iranians who had never come to India over Persian written by Iranians who had come to India. They barely tolerated Persian written by Indians, but even that supposedly degenerate Persian was better than vernacular writing.¹⁶⁵ Such a hierarchy was not in place during Urdu's formative period in the latter half of Ārzū's life, and Indo-Persian was not under any threat recognized by Ārzū and his circle, either from Iran or from the vernacular. The nineteenth century then is where we must look for forceful declarations of the utility and moral good of the vernacular as opposed to Persian. By then the question is tied up with colonialism and nationalism in a way that it could never have been in Ārzū's time.¹⁶⁶

The central issue, to which I have returned again and again in this chapter, is the protean nature of *hindi/hindawi/rekhtah/Hindi/Urdu*. If we consider the relationship of the vernacular and Persian as that of an innate language versus a learned language (as in Dante's formulation of "*prima locutio*" versus "*locutio secondaria*") then this framework is complicated by the fact that *rekhtah* was not an "innate" language as such. Rather it was a consciously taught literary style of an innate language, which was not necessarily the native tongue of all of its practitioners. *Kharī bolī* had spread well beyond Delhi by the eighteenth century, but it was the spark of recognition that it could be a literary language defined in a particular way that allowed it to become a literary language associated with the prestige of the imperial court. That this happened in the milieu of the master-poets of the cosmopolitan language is in line with what we know of Europe (where the process took several centuries longer), and is not a cause for alarm over the "artificiality" of the vernacular. Most languages undergo some sort of language planning, which is to say a deliberate intervention in a language's development.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Shamisa 2002, 41. ¹⁶⁵ Faruqi 1998.

¹⁶⁶ Although I hesitate to raise a topic that cannot be covered fully here, it is important to note that Persian did not "die" in India in the eighteenth century but endured as a marker of elite Indian identity into the twentieth century even as its practical use waned. The ideology around late Indo-Persian cannot therefore be separated from the colonial encounter. There were factions in favor and against replacing Persian both among British administrators and Indian elites in the nineteenth century (see, for example, King 1994, 53–79; Mir 2006).

This chapter has narrowly focused on a mid-eighteenth-century moment, insisting that we not make conclusions about linguistic identity for which there is not contemporary evidence. Recognizing Urdu as a language available for all uses was a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century development in which *rekhtah* practice was conflated with the Persianized *kharī bolī* of everyday life in Delhi. Consolidating poetic norms and raising a literary style to new prestige actuated a network of literate *kharī bolī* users across South Asia who now could identify as users of the same language rather than merely practitioners of the same literary style. Ārzū's insight that the vernacular could work like Persian and his influence over the literary community in Delhi were crucial, but he did not set out to banish Persian from India or even necessarily to access this network. It was later generations who mobilized around language identities, simultaneously distancing Persian from Indian experience (by buying into the idea that Persian is the cultural patrimony of Iranians), and raising Urdu and later Hindi to the level of national languages.

6

How Language Actually Works

Contrasting Europe and the Non-West

The biblical story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9) describes how humankind, speaking only one language and therefore able to organize efficiently, began to construct a tower that threatened God's dominion. To put a stop to the project, "the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth" and scattered the arrogant tower-builders. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the diversity of human languages was thus often interpreted as a divine punishment. The Qur'ān also briefly relates a story along a broadly similar theme of humans disrespecting the Deity through monumental architecture: Pharaoh asks for a tower to be built up to the heavens so that he might see God for himself. However, in that telling there is no mention of language as either enabling the tower's construction or being part of the punishment.¹ Like their forebears, eighteenth-century Europeans still took the *confusio linguarum* ("mixing up of languages") described in Genesis 11 as the logical starting point for understanding language diversity and traced language families and nations through the prophet Noah's sons Japhet, Shem, and Ham.² (The fact that we still refer to the "Semitic" language family is a vestige of this system.) However, they also began to amplify an idea that every nation had a language that singly and properly expressed the character of its people.³ This view, which was not novel in the eighteenth century but

¹ Qur'ān 40:36–7. ² See Campbell and Poser 2008, esp. chs 2 and 3.

³ Saint Augustine (354–430) considered the profusion of languages in the world as an unfortunate separation of people and a reminder of humankind's rightful punishment by God. He viewed the Roman Empire's consolidation of (as he saw it) the civilized world under a single language, Latin, as a remedy (O'Daly 1999, 201). After the Roman Empire, Europeans only began to take monolingualism for granted again after around 1800 (Evans 1998, 27). Dante's distinction between innate languages [*prima locutio*, lit. primary speech] and languages whose grammatical rules had to be learned academically [*locutio secundaria*, lit. secondary

had previously been limited by its poor fit with the *confusio linguarum* narrative, crystallized into the keystone of nineteenth-century nationalism and offered a structure for linguistics as it developed into a modern discipline. The bundle of processes by which we came to our present-day understanding of languages and nations began with a multilingual world and plainly we still live in a world with a multiplicity of languages. However, *our* multilingualism is not *their* multilingualism. Yasemin Yıldız has coined the phrase “postmonolingual condition” to highlight the differences in how people have understood language before and after the divide of modernity/colonialism.⁴ When faced with an unfamiliar cosmopolitan linguistic situation, postmodern people cannot but look for the specter of the monolingual possibility that failed.⁵ (For all the multilingualism in present-day India, the hand-wringing over the need for Hindi to be a singular “national” language shows that at least the expectation of monolingualism now affects even highly multilingual societies.) Because the modern view of language, like the concept of modernity, represents itself as universal when in fact it was, at least at some point, a parochial European perspective, the arguments about eighteenth-century Persianate South Asia presented in this study are not complete without some discussion of Western parallels and, in particular, discontinuities.⁶

In examining Ārzū’s career, I have argued for the historical contingency of several concepts that often seem universal from our position on

speech] had stood for centuries, but was only widely operative from this surprisingly late date (see Farrell 2001, 16). Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) expressed a view typical of the period: “To one language alone does the individual belong entirely.” His rough contemporary Johann Herder (1744–1803) argued that “because every people is a people, it has its national culture like its language” [Denn jedes Volk ist Volk; es hat seine nationale Bildung wie seine Sprache] (quoted in Anderson 1983, 66).

⁴ Yıldız 2012, 5–6. Yıldız argues that although “*lingua materna*” (mother tongue) was a medieval Latin term, it was not “emotionalized” until the late eighteenth century.

⁵ The linguist Michel Degraff has observed “creole exceptionalism,” which he defines as the false “set of beliefs, widespread among both linguists and nonlinguists, that Creole languages form an exceptional class on phylogenetic and/or typological grounds” (Degraff 2005, 533). For a parallel in medievalists’ difficult relationship with mixed-language medieval texts, see Schendl 2000, 79.

⁶ On modernity’s false universalism, see Chakrabarty 2000, ch. 1 and Goody 2006. On the importance of not projecting the nation as a conceptual category onto the past and the difficulty of doing so within disciplinary structures that are premised around it (in this case a “post-colonial” analysis of the Middle Ages), see Gaunt 2009.

the arc of world history. The underpinnings of eighteenth-century Indo-Persian philology—that is, Ārzū’s society’s assumptions about the nature of language and how best to analyze it—are emphatically different from those of modern linguistics or even lay people’s experience of language and its relationship to identity in the twenty-first century. The conception of nation that can be implicated in the fracturing of the Persian cosmopolis had not yet been articulated in the early eighteenth century. Indeed, the now frequently invoked idea that it was national pride that caused Indians to throw off the yoke of “foreign” Persian in the eighteenth century sounds suspiciously like the anti-colonial nationalism of a much later era. The twin distortions of colonialism and modernity have made it exceptionally difficult for us to interpret the pre-colonial past except as filtered through their universalizing tendencies. This chapter turns to the possibility of comparatism and argues that early modern textual knowledge systems in Europe and the Persian cosmopolis can be understood in dialogue with each other. Twenty-first-century scholars must ourselves construct this dialogue, since it is obviously not available in the sources, but it is nonetheless an important interpretative tool. By treating the concept of literary humanism as a universal baseline, we can identify parallel intellectual trends in Europe and South Asia—the key difference is that while these developments are generally valorized in the European context as steps towards modernity and the nation-state, in the non-Western context they have been adduced as evidence of socio-political decline. When viewed together, these contradictory interpretations throw into relief a problematic trend in much of the available historiography for both the West and South Asia. It is also crucial to recognize that eighteenth-century Persianate approaches to understanding language are foreign to us not only because Orientalist scholarship separated East and West, but even more because of the divide between modernity and what came before: While Europe’s eighteenth-century scholarship was swept into the story of modernity, which allows the infelicities to be explained away as minor diversions from progress, eighteenth-century South Asian scholarship leads mostly to the historical

dead-end wrought by colonial domination.⁷ Paring back the teleology in the analysis, early modern European views on and experiences of language are more alike to Persianate views of the same period than they are to modern ones.

Language and Early Modern Thought

Scholarship that theorizes early modernity has often excluded cultural questions, instead considering economic and political structures that might characterize the period. This section considers the parallels between early modern European and South Asian philological knowledge systems. The intellectual environment in both Europe and South Asia during the early modern period is arguably distinct from other historical periods because of the prevalence of a particular approach to knowledge: Intellectuals sought to extend old categories of knowledge through radical new approaches without replacing the old categories themselves. Furthermore, rhetoric had not been dethroned in either place and thus bound together a variety of disciplines that modernity has split apart. The difficulty at the outset of such an analysis is that modernity in South Asia is typically connected with the colonial epistemic break.⁸ However, it is obviously important to take stock of what pre-dated colonialism. We find that a great deal of what Europeans took credit for bringing to India as part of “modernization” was there already in forms that Europeans either did not understand or did not want to understand. “Early modern” is inherently a teleological term—this is of course problematic from the perspective of historiography because people in the early modern period, whether in Europe or elsewhere, could not peer into the future and see modernity for themselves—but

⁷ In this regard, it is useful to observe the distinction between “modernization” and “modernity,” the former being the process of developing modern institutions and the latter the emergence “of a degree of reflective, judgmental thinking about these processes” (Chakrabarty 2011, 669).

⁸ The problem is nicely posed in Kaviraj 2005. For Partha Chatterjee, early modernity in South Asian history is the precursor to the “colonial modern” that begins in the 1830s (Chatterjee 2012, 75–6). This somewhat confuses the issue of comparative early modernities because it is at once teleological and anti-teleological.

it should not be taken to imply that anything that did not directly contribute to (European) modernity should be excluded from consideration. South Asian early modernity is not a failure but a road not taken for various historically contingent reasons, the most important of which was colonialism itself. The project of finding Europe's fundamental uniqueness that allowed "the Great Divergence," in which a handful of European states became rich, unified, and technologically advanced enough to rule much of the world, only makes sense (and breaks free of its imperialist roots) if we are prepared to investigate how Europe was *not* unique.

Whether the term "early modernity" is useful in the first place has sparked an academic debate that is worth outlining. The idea of modernity popular in the 1950s and 1960s, namely that it is based on global "convergence," has lost its luster. As Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter argued in an influential special issue of *Daedalus*, a new strategy is to think about "multiple modernities" and how the underlying pre-modern society has made these permutations of modernity.⁹ They argue that every society will develop some kind of public sphere (an idea that I take up later in the chapter). This is a proper inquiry for the sort of intellectual history that concerns us here, but often historians with a stake in the term "early modern" have not meaningfully considered cultural production.¹⁰ An intellectual history of early modernity is perhaps the fuzziest definition for it and recapitulates the problem of how to define a period which is both not modern and not quite not-modern. We cannot easily dismiss Randolph Starn's assessment that the term "early modern" is obfuscatory because it "seems to diminish the liabilities of periodization while maximizing the benefits."¹¹ Depending on how we

⁹ Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998; cf. Eisenstadt 2000.

¹⁰ Richards (1997) uses the term neutrally but his account is all technology, economy, and large states. Compare Subrahmanyam (2001), for whom "early modern" is perfectly reasonably applied to India with minor caveats. Jack Goldstone dislikes the term early modern (whether for Europe or anywhere) and uses a paradigm of "advanced organic societies" instead, but he does not consider the cultural life of such societies (Goldstone 1998). He makes the striking argument that nineteenth-century industrialization in Western Europe was made possible by the dumb luck of easily accessible coal in the right places. For Frederic Jameson, the history of modernity is the history of capitalism (Jameson 2002), but if we accept that formulation then most of the questions posed here would be irrelevant.

¹¹ Starn 2002, 302.

define modernity, we can find it everywhere in history—or nowhere.¹² Moreover, because our template is inevitably Europe we should be wary of seeking particular analogues to European early modernity in South Asia. For example, Ārzū might have some claim to be an Indo-Persian equivalent of the Italian humanist Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), but that is certainly not an argument I would want to make. A more sensible analysis would track large patterns and try to avoid teleological thinking rather than encouraging it. The sociologist Jack Goody takes such a pattern-based approach in arguing that the European Renaissance was not the key to modernity or capitalism but rather represents a particular instance of a stage in a cultural cycle (a “renascence” as he terms it) that is practically universal in literate societies.¹³ The things that constitute European early modernity must be generalized so that they make sense outside of Europe, if they were indeed present. We should not, for example, be looking for a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century Enlightenment in India because we will not find it.¹⁴ We can, however, consider if some of the individual features thought to be characteristic of early modernity are present in India and whether they are new in the Indian context. If they are indeed new, then we can speculate as to why they appeared when they did.

To take an obvious example, how does the idea of a public sphere apply in the South Asian context? It has expanded beyond Jürgen Habermas's original, rather specific conception into virtually any sort of European public activity.¹⁵ Critics have rightly pointed out that despite Habermas's argument that the public sphere depended on universal access, it actually excluded vast numbers of people (women, ethnic

¹² Indeed, the word “modern” itself, with its overtones of a break with the past, was used in that sense by Cassiodorus in the fifth century CE to mark the difference between the Pagan past and the Christian present (Habermas 1997).

¹³ Goody 2010, 7ff., 241ff. For Goody, the Renaissance has three main characteristics: revival of classics, secularization, and economic change. But he is sufficiently vague, especially when talking about the non-West, that it becomes a cautionary tale about generalizations. For example, he argues that the European Renaissance was unique in that it drew on a completely different tradition from the current one, i.e., that it brought Pagan works into a Christian domain, but then draws no conclusions from this insight (2010, 255–7).

¹⁴ Pollock 2004, 79; cf. 2007.

¹⁵ And this despite Habermas's clear warning that the concept of a bourgeois public sphere is tied to its specific time and place (Habermas 1991, vii).

and religious minorities, and so on) in any given place.¹⁶ Under a broad definition of public sphere, the circulation of Indo-Persian intellectuals must count—the public sphere is the literary language itself and the community of language users.¹⁷ An indigenous term for this intellectual common is *suhbat*, which can narrowly mean conversation but also applies to a range of public interactions.¹⁸ However, even recognizing that venue and medium of a public sphere cannot help but be different in different societies, *suhbat* seems to move so far from Habermas's conception that perhaps we are better off creating a localized genealogy of the "common" rather than trying to generalize the term "public sphere."¹⁹ There happen to have been coffeeshops and newsletters in eighteenth-century Delhi as there were in Europe, but that is not the point.²⁰ If we posit that a feature of early modernity is that high culture becomes more diffused during that period,²¹ then we can see the increasing availability of Persian education in South Asia as a marker of this trend. *Muṣmir* itself deals with the question of where the controlling authority for Persian might come from given that the language is used across such a vast and varied terrain. It is also important to consider whether the medium of a public sphere needs to be vernacular language. If not, as the Indo-Persian case suggests, then this throws up a major conceptual problem for Europeanists: Europe has mythologized its own

¹⁶ Or, more precisely, as Sudipta Kaviraj has argued, the public sphere "sloped" against certain categories of people, who were not expressly forbidden from participating but faced obstacles to access that effectively made their participation impossible. Thus, while women were not overtly forbidden from participating in Indo-Persian letters, very few did and these were extremely high-born women such as Gulbadan Begum, the sister of Humāyūn and author of the *Humāyūnnāmah*.

¹⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam has preliminarily sketched the mindset of such early modern South Asian intellectuals (Subrahmanyam 1998, 93–6). In the European Renaissance context, Grafton uses the philologist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) as a model for how reading worked as a community-builder: "Confronting ancient authorities was for him an intense and complex act, at once individual and collaborative, private and public" (1997, 132; cf. Matheson 1998, 28ff. on the sixteenth century).

¹⁸ As it also does in the Ottoman context (Andrews and Kalpaklı 2004, 106ff.).

¹⁹ The printing press, which figures so prominently in the historiography of Europe, is an irrelevance in South Asia because of its late adoption there. There is clear evidence that even in the nineteenth century previously printed texts were copied by hand when lithographic plates wore down (Baevskii 2007, 176).

²⁰ For Habermas, the coffeeshop and the newsletter arise together in a kind of symbiotic relationship (Habermas 1991, 42, 59), but we do not have enough information about the Indian case to know whether that principle applies.

²¹ Higman 1997.

march towards the vernacular. The transnational public sphere in both Europe (where its written medium was often still Latin) and the Persian Cosmopolis were both fragmenting by the end of the eighteenth century. The classical language—seen in the context of European modernization theory as retrograde—was universal enough to serve as the medium for a social common and arguably a public sphere. If we grant in the South Asian case (as we do in the European) that the public sphere took centuries to develop then what meaningful transitions do we see? We observe the domain of Persian expanding through education rather than contracting at the same time as vernacular literary production was becoming systematized.

The concept of humanism—the rough equivalent in Persian being *adab*—similarly needs to be dealt with comparatively.²² *Muṣmir* is a work that sets the stage for a kind of humanism because it establishes a cultural baseline for Indo-Persian in that it fixes the relationship of the three relevant literary cultures: Arabic, Persian, and Indic. Humanism, argues Stephen Greenblatt, has an “enzymatic function” since it absorbs culture and integrates it into a coherent discourse.²³ Rhetoric was crucial because it was the structure of that coherence. History and other humanistic disciplines were generally thought of as sub-disciplines within rhetoric. At the same time, the canon of classical texts was proof that knowledge and eloquence were inexorably linked.²⁴ Indeed, early modern works often strike modern readers as having been more concerned with style rather than content, that is, with the literariness of describing a given historical event rather than conveying to the reader what “really happened” in a positivist sense.²⁵ This was, of course, a complaint leveled by British colonial scholars against Persian historical sources because—in the familiar pattern—they held such sources up to a contemporary

²² It should be noted that although “humanities” and “humanist” have a long history, the term “humanism” itself did not emerge until the nineteenth century (Burke 1997, 12). On *adab* as Persian literary humanism, see Kia 2014a; Dabashi 2012. In my reading (and according to Sharma 2013), Dabashi’s sweeping work unfortunately recapitulates some of the methodological problems it argues against.

²³ Greenblatt 1980, 230. ²⁴ Gray 1963, 502.

²⁵ A fascinating example is the painting *Flight into Egypt* by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665). Although the story in the Gospel of Matthew specifically mentions camels as having participated in the event, Poussin omits them in the painting as they were beneath the dignity of the scene (Burke 1970, 105–6). On rhetoric and the study of history, see LaCapra 1985, 36ff.

European standard, forgetting that European scholarship of a century or two before would have also failed the same test. Attempting to extract the content while ignoring the subtleties of the form is a well-attested, if obviously problematic, historical method. Arguably the loss of formal rhetoric is the greatest intellectual barrier between modern readers and those of several centuries ago.²⁶ This holds for South Asia just as it does for the West. Even our sense of poetry and its social function is the result of the early nineteenth-century Romantic determination that poetry should be excluded from traditional rhetoric.²⁷ Because the objective of lexicography in the Persianate tradition was with few exceptions literary interpretation, Persian humanism at the analytical level is incomprehensible if rhetoric and poetry are separated. The systematization of knowledge in literary form was also an important idea in the Arabic tradition. For example, a ninth-century Baghdadi writer argues that “poetry is the mine of knowledge of the Arabs and the book of their wisdom, the archive of their histories.”²⁸ The Renaissance polymath Giovanni Pico della Mirandola’s (1463–94) argument that philosophers need not be eloquent would have been virtually unthinkable in the Persianate world.²⁹

The foundation of pre-modern humanism is a set of texts whose assumptions, specifically their categories, are taken as given.³⁰ Modernity represents an attempt to dismantle that foundation while largely keeping whatever had been built on top of it.³¹ Early modernity can therefore be seen as a transition in the construction of pre-modern knowledge systems, while only in rare cases seeking to abandon their structure. We can say that it is distinguished from previous conflicts of *Antiqui* and *Moderni* (that is, people defending old and relatively newer forms of knowledge, respectively) by degree since the amount of new knowledge generated and its relative centrality were much greater. Sheldon Pollock

²⁶ Gray 1963, 497, 514.

²⁷ Ong 1971, 6.

²⁸ Quoted in Cantarino 1975, 24.

²⁹ Gray 1963, 508ff.

³⁰ As Grafton argues, “Renaissance intellectuals shared a commitment to continuous, intensive conversation with ancient texts. This provided the foundation of their efforts to understand other cultures and religions, devise natural and political philosophies, create a personal code of conduct, and cultivate a literary style” (Grafton 1997, 6).

³¹ Which in some cases led to an awkward admixture such as the emphasis on memorization in modern Indian education (Kaviraj 2005, 518).

has observed this tension in the context of Sanskrit new intellectuals in the seventeenth century, namely that there were “remarkable new subtleties of argument and exposition but directed toward the analysis of ancient categories and the establishment of archaic principles.”³² The old philosophical categories were no longer entirely fit for new purposes, but by the same token no one could mount an effective critique that would dismantle them.³³ *Muṣmir* operates within similar constraints, since it radically expands the scope of its inquiry into language beyond what the tradition had previously countenanced (integrating, notably, Indic language), but never grapples with any question of the foundation of its categories. The transition described by Foucault in *The Order of Things*, in which the split of signifier and signified led to new ways of organizing knowledge and aesthetics in Europe, only appears to have taken place in India after the advent of colonialism. It is probably useless to speculate as to whether such a development would have taken place had Western knowledge practices not supplanted indigenous ones, but the parallel crisis in traditional categories in South Asia and the West suggests that it was at least a possibility. Whatever the case, now more than ever there is a need to “provincialize Europe,” which means that we should be wary of claims that the European experience was universal. There must be a double operation in which we also are careful to define European modernity against European pre-modernity. Marx memorably wrote that “the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living” but this cannot be taken as axiomatic for all time.³⁴ The wonderful imagery short-circuits the necessary historical reflection: Before modernity, the “dead generations” were practically alive in the texts they left for posterity, and far from being the stuff of nightmare, their guidance was actively sought.

³² Pollock 2001, 19. Jonardon Ganeri disagrees with Pollock’s assessment (arguing that even what appears to be respect for tradition in the new intellectuals’ work is actually itself radically new), but I am unqualified to adjudicate this claim (Ganeri 2011, 100).

³³ Pollock 2004, 32.

³⁴ From *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Napoleon Bonaparte* (quoted in Grafton 1992, 253).

Ārzū's Philology and Its Possible (But Unlikely) Influence on European Philology

Muhammad Husain Āzād, previously mentioned in this study as the author of the Urdu literary history *Āb-i Ḥayāt*, wrote an account of Persian philology and literary history called *Sukhandān-i Fārs* [The Persian Poet, 1872].³⁵ It is unquestionably a nationalist work—many sections begin with the invocation “My Dear Compatriots!” [‘azīzān-i waṭān!)—and seeks to prove that Europeans do not have a monopoly on the scientific study of language. He calls philology “*falsafah-yi lisān*” [lit. philosophy of language] and by the English word transliterated as “*filālājī*.³⁶ The centerpiece of the argument is a comparison of Sanskrit and Persian words to show the historical tie between the two languages, and his reasoning appears to be an extension of Ārzū’s method. However, Āzād does not cite his sources and we are not in a position to say how much of his data was derived from the indigenous philosophical tradition and how much from European historical linguistics, which had matured by this time and would have been known to the Europeans with whom Āzād interacted. Āzād’s study is framed by a radical assertion: The Anglo-Welsh polymath and colonial judge Sir William Jones (1746–94), regarded as the founding genius of European philology, probably did not come up with his famous observation on the historical ties between languages on his own but rather derived it from the works of Ārzū and Ārzū’s friend Ṭek Chand Bahār.³⁶ Evocative as the idea was in Āzād’s time—and for that matter still is in ours—the evidence suggests no particular connection between Ārzū’s theory and Jones’s except that Jones was a Persian scholar. Indeed, given

³⁵ On this work see Sharma 2012b, 55–6.

³⁶ Note that the exact statement is tentative in its wording, employing a formula that Āzād often employs when he has no solid evidence to support his contention: “God knows whether [Jones] came to this conclusion through his own efforts or with the help of the works of these two [i.e., Ārzū and Bahār]” [*khudā jāne ṣāhib ne apni ṭabīṭat ke lagāōm se yā un donoṁ kī tasnīfāt se yih nuktah pāyā*] (*Sukhandān-i Fārs* 2005, 10). Āzād mistakenly writes that Jones went back to Europe and spread his theory, but of course he died in India, and his Indian scholarship became popular in Europe once *Asiatick Researches*, the proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, began to be published in Britain in the 1790s.

the early modern intellectual climate in both India and Europe, there is an air of inevitability that a similar discovery would be made in both places at roughly the same time.

Although Jones certainly knew of Ārzū through at least one of his works and undoubtedly also from Indian informants, there is no evidence for the proposition that he could not have come to his conclusions if he had never encountered Ārzū's work: Not only were there European antecedents for Jones's theory but there is also a potential problem of chronology. The only indication we have of Jones's encounter with Ārzū's work comes from an inscription dated two years after Jones's famous proclamation of the historical links between Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek, as well as with "the Gothic and the Celtic . . . and the old Persian," in the Third Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, on 2 February 1786.³⁷ Jones's copy of the dictionary *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* is inscribed "The gift of Charles Roddam Esq 17 Febr. 1788 to W. Jones."³⁸ It continues in a different hand—presumably Jones's own—noting that "many corrections of this valuable work & many additions to it, may be found in the Sirāju'lloghah [i.e., *Sirāj al-Luğhat*] by Sirājud'din Ārzū, and in the Majmaū'llogah." Although there is no corroboration that any eighteenth-century European read or even knew of Ārzū's *Mušmir*, *Sirāj al-Luğhat* itself contains references to *tawāfuq al-lisānain* [correspondence of two languages]. We can assume, for the sake of argument, that reading *Sirāj al-Luğhat* allowed Jones to appreciate the implications of *tawāfuq*. But there is no indication that Jones took his argument from Ārzū. In fact, what little by way of evidence we do have *perhaps* implies that he encountered the *Sirāj al-Luğhat* after his 1786 lecture in Calcutta.

Thus, we have no proof that Jones knew of Ārzū before he made his famous claim, and in all of Jones's works, there appears to be no reference to Ārzū besides that single marginal note. Nor do we have any copy of *Sirāj al-Luğhat* that Jones may have owned (his *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* is heavily marked up in the margins so for us not to have his

³⁷ "The Third Anniversary Discourse" 1995.

³⁸ The manuscript is British Library ms RSPA 20. It was donated to the Royal Society by Jones in 1792 and transferred to the India Office Library in 1876, and then to the British Library when the India Office Library merged into the British Library. See Ross and Browne 1902, 18–19.

Sirāj al-Lughāt potentially represents a significant loss for intellectual history). There are, however, two extant manuscripts to which he might have had access: The National Archives of India hold a damaged but readable copy.³⁹ A stamp connects it to Fort William College and therefore to early nineteenth-century Calcutta, if not exactly to Jones's time there in the late eighteenth century. It is not dated and has no interesting marginalia. Similarly the British Library's copy has no meaningful marginalia but is inscribed "Mr. Richard Johnson" (1753–1807), an East India Company official and manuscript collector.⁴⁰ He was a friend both of Jones and the Governor-General Warren Hastings, and it is possible that Jones borrowed his copy of *Sirāj al-Lughāt*, which the colophon states was completed in 1160/1747.

If we assume, again for the sake of argument, that Jones had in fact been familiar with Ārzu's work before early 1786 (perhaps through the mediation of one of the native scholars of Persian with whom he worked), then it is still unlikely that he took his ideas from Ārzū's thought directly because similar ideas were available elsewhere. Jones was by no means the first European to consider etymologies as evidence of possible ties between languages. In his lecture, he mentions several phonetically obscure etymologies (for example that French "*jour*" comes from Latin "*dies*") as obvious fact.⁴¹ The Renaissance origin of this sort of thinking is what strikes us today as the most credulous sort of pseudoscience, but even wild speculation about the development of languages contained a kernel of the late eighteenth-century insights that would eventually become historical linguistics. Take, for example, the learned discussion by Jan van Gorp (1518–72, also called Johannes Goropius Becanus) of how "Cimbrian," the supposed ancestor of Dutch, was also the ancestor of Hebrew.⁴² While van Gorp was clearly trying above all to irritate French and Spanish speakers in his adopted city of Antwerp (who thought their languages were superior to Dutch/Flemish), this kind of magical thinking about the evolution of language did in fact lead to

³⁹ Fort William College collection ms 109.

⁴⁰ British Library ms IO Islamic 178; Ethé 1903, 1352–3. On Johnson, see Marshall 2004. Jones's letters to Johnson are cited in Cannon 1990, 366; Cannon 1970, letters 373, 509 (in which we learn that Jones borrowed Johnson's manuscript of the *Shāhnāmah*).

⁴¹ Jones 1995.

⁴² Olander 1994, 13.

sophisticated reflection on how it is possible for different languages to contain words that are the same or nearly the same. Āzād would have been unaware of this particular European tradition—which was by his time an embarrassment to serious historical linguists—when he wrote *Sukhandān-i Fārs*, so from his perspective Jones must have either invented or plagiarized the foundation for historical linguistics *ex novo*. In fact, at least a half dozen people had written works in the seventeenth century alone opining that various European languages formed some kind of a common linguistic area.⁴³ In some cases, this reasoning even extended to India and Persia. The English Jesuit Thomas Stephens, writing from Goa in 1583, probably noticed the connection between the Indo-Aryan languages and Latin and Greek two centuries before Jones, and the French Jesuit Gaston Coeurdoux certainly did in 1767.⁴⁴ George Hadley's *Introductory Grammatical Remarks on the Persian Language* (1776) concludes with “a small list of words shewing the analogy between the Persian and European Languages.”⁴⁵ Such ideas were available in Europe, and nothing in Jones's construction of the theory suggests any particular debt to Ārzū rather than to these European precursors.⁴⁶ Ārzū, as discussed earlier in this study in the

⁴³ Olander 1994, 17.

⁴⁴ Fr. Stephens (d. 1619) wrote to his brother on 24 October 1583: “The languages of these regions are very many. They have a not unpleasant pronunciation and a construction similar to Latin and Greek” [*Linguae harum regionum sunt permultae. Pronuntiationem habent non invenustam, et compositionem latinæ graecaque simile*] (quoted in Olander 1994, 20). Today he is remembered for compiling the first printed Konkani grammar (as well as writing Konkani in Roman letters) and for his literary experiments in Marathi, including the *Kristapurāṇa*, an epic poem on the life of Christ. Fr. Coeurdoux was more explicit about the connection between European languages and Sanskrit in his 1767 memoir that was known in French intellectual circles but not actually published until 1808 (Olander 1994, 20; cf. Arlotto 1969). Another possible European precursor was a word list compiled by the Leiden classicist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), in which the author observes that “they [i.e., Persians] have many of our words and scarcely different inflexions” [*et uoces plures nostras habent et flexus coniugationum haud nimis diuersos*] (Emmerick 1974). See also Tavoni 1994, esp. 45, 54–6.

⁴⁵ Hadley 1972, 215–16.

⁴⁶ Abdul Azim also concludes that Jones was most likely not influenced by Ārzū (Azim 1970, 267–9). It is important to remember that Jones did not sketch a linguistic family tree or explicate an evolutionary framework for languages. (His statement that the languages he mentions had a common origin does not imply the multiple evolutionary steps as we know them, e.g., that Proto-Indo-European became Proto-Indo-Iranian which split into the Indo-Aryan and Iranian languages which sub-divided further.) Although the first linguistic tree was drawn in the early nineteenth century, it was not a well-known image before the work of August Schleicher (1828–68), whose understanding of language was explicitly Darwinian (Auroux 1990, 228; Timpanaro 2005, 121n4). One of Schleicher's books is in fact called *Die Darwinische Theorie*

context of *tawāfiq*, does not explicitly posit a common origin for Sanskrit and Persian but rather leaves it to the reader to infer the cause of the linguistic similarity. Jones on the other hand was unequivocal about there being a “family” of languages with a “common source which perhaps no longer exists.”⁴⁷ While Jones may have found independent confirmation of his own thinking in Ārzū’s work, having encountered Indo-Persian was not a necessary precondition for the development of the theory, which after all was a more nuanced version of arguments that Europeans had long made. The Third Anniversary discourse itself opens by invoking the English scholar Jacob Bryant (1715–1804) “with reverence and affection.” In fact, Bryant’s *A New System, or, An Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (published in 1774 and subsequently revised) had recently been the subject of a dispute with Bryant on one side and Jones and Richard Johnson on the other. Jones notes in the discourse that “the least satisfactory part of [Bryant’s book] seems to be that, which relates to the derivation of words from Asiatic languages.” He locates his own thinking about language as an extension to and correction of Bryant’s work. Bryant’s project was demonstrating the development of various cultures (including that of the “Indii” and “Indo-Scythae”) from an antecedent, and it is therefore the equivalent in cultural studies of what Jones proposes regarding languages.

The project of theorizing and ameliorating Orientalism’s “genesis amnesia”—as Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi has provocatively framed the lack of recognition for non-European scholars’ contributions to the development of Western knowledge about the non-West—is important and much work remains to be done along those lines.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, however much sympathy we might have with the goal of highlighting the

und die Sprachwissenschaft [Darwin’s Theory and Linguistics, 1863]. The limitations of Jones’s project are contextualized in Robins 1996. A readable account of European philology to 1600 is Law 2003.

⁴⁷ “The Third Anniversary Discourse” 1995.

⁴⁸ Tavakoli-Targhi argues that “the breakthroughs in comparative religion and linguistics, which were the high marks of ‘the Oriental Renaissance’ in Europe, were in reality built upon the intellectual achievements of Mughal India” (2001, 21). He cites *tawāfiq* as an example (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001, 26; cf. Tavakoli-Targhi 2011, 270–1). Jones, it should be said, seems to have credited his Sanskrit teachers with introducing him to particular texts and ideas more frequently than other Orientalists created their informants, but was not as charitable when it came to his Arabic or Persian studies.

contributions of Indians to the creation of colonial knowledge and the modern world itself, the marquee claim that Ārzū through Jones sparked the development of Western historical linguistics is unsupported by any particular evidence, although the available evidence does not preclude the possibility of influence either.⁴⁹ I can only propose that we tread carefully so that we do not overcompensate for past injustices by reducing the complexity of colonial knowledge production (and the intellectual background of the people involved) to a stereotyped extraction that renders the nuances of the European half of the equation irrelevant.⁵⁰ Ārzū's historical importance is undiminished if it turns out that no path connects his insights to Western linguistics; his work would nevertheless remain as a road that could not be taken because of the colonial encounter.

Ancients and Moderns in India and Europe

The distinction between Ancients and Moderns, a workable translation of *mutaqaddimīn* and *muta'akhkhirīn*, is one that seems to hold across many traditions, and can also be thought of as classical writers versus recent and contemporary ones. It is crucial for the question of poetic authority because recent and contemporary writers are inevitably held to different standards than centuries-old ones, a distinction which informs

⁴⁹ Kinra refers to the “strong circumstantial case . . . that some form of Jones’s revolutionary thesis has its provenance with the likes of Ārzū” (Kinra 2011, 360). However, this ignores the stronger circumstantial case that Jones, as a trained classicist, was aware of European etymological research and applied it to the impressive set of languages of which he had some knowledge. None of the three scholars whom Kinra cites (Muzaffar Alam, Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, and Kapil Raj) as proponents of the influence of Ārzū on Jones appear to have engaged with possible European genealogies for the theory.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Marchand 2010 for a similar project. There is an alarming tendency, for which Said is largely, if accidentally, responsible, for scholars to simply ignore the larger context of Western scholarship when drawing inferences about Orientalist prejudice. An irony in the goal of Said’s reclamation of the non-West as a culturally dynamic space is that his study is premised on the West’s being an essentially static engine of domination from Aeschylus’s portrayal of the Other in *The Persians* (472 BCE) to the present. Much of what Said concludes in *Orientalism* about Western scholarly attitudes over a vast sweep of history is an extrapolation from the nineteenth century, as I have argued at length elsewhere (Dudney 2008). For example, when Said invokes the idea that Westerners thought of the East as unchanging because they described it in terms of classical antiquity, he fails to allow for the fact that until the nineteenth century the Classics were still frequently invoked as a template to describe society in the West.

both theoretical and practical concerns in literature. The works of the Ancients have survived, and by surviving the ravages of time and neglect have become classics that can provide guidance to contemporary poets.⁵¹ A discussion of the relationship between Ancients and Moderns in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Indo-Persian, as in Chapter 3 of this study, lends itself to a comparison with the roughly contemporary crisis of authority in Europe. The most celebrated account of this situation in English is Jonathan Swift's satire "The Battle of the Books," published in 1704. It imagines the library of St. James's Palace in London as a battlefield where books by old authors face off against books by recent authors. (A spider and a bee also enter the fray.) It is a witty allegory of the contemporary debates over authority in Western Europe. A simplified account of the intellectual currents of that period would go like this: People began to question the worth of classical texts, which no longer seemed timeless, because, for example, if Aristotle has been proven wrong through experimental science then why should Homer be held in higher regard than Modern poets?⁵² After Edward Said, it is impossible not to notice the tendency to offer broad socio-political explanations (namely "decline") for early modern literary trends in the non-West while European literature supposedly comes into being because of deliberately taken, positive steps towards modernity. Each

⁵¹ See Lianeri and Zajko 2008. They observe that "the idea of the classic is invested in a particular model of history, one which allows for a perpetual tension between the enduring and the transient and for the survival of the past in ways that are comprehensible even to a radically different present" (Lianeri and Zajko 2008, 4). This is undoubtedly true, but it is worth pointing out that most societies have seen history in this way, and it is only with modernity that the exceptionalism of the present (as in Tocqueville's image that the lamp of history no longer illuminates the future) becomes a common way of thinking. An early modern and modern use of the word "classic," which can be more precisely called "relative classic," is a work that attains perfection by the standards of its age but is not venerable enough in age to be on par with the classics of Antiquity (Lianeri and Zajko 2008, 11). In the Persianate context, discussions of *tāzah-goī* can be read as hinging on a similar tension between the absolute and the relative classic.

⁵² For example, Sir Richard Blackmore in 1716 wrote in his *Essay upon Epic Poetry* (along similar lines to what Abbé Pons had written two years before) that "Unless the Admirers of Homer will assert and prove their Infallibility why may they not be deceiv'd as well as the Disciples and Adorers of Aristotle?" (quoted in Aldridge 1973, 76–7). See also DeJean 1997.

case is overdetermined and can shed light on the other.⁵³ When I use the label “Modern” in these pages to describe an intellectual faction in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this refers to people whose orientation was towards new configurations of knowledge and a move away from the Ancients. We should resist the temptation to think of them as “the makers of the modern world” because then we are locked into a teleological and Eurocentric reasoning that undermines the effort of comparison. The turn of the contemporary against the established is an intellectual attitude that reappears from the coining of the term “*modernus*” in Latin in the fifth century through the present-day usage to refer to the particularities of our own time.⁵⁴ Of course, the constituents of each category change in every instance, and it is in studying the transformation of the categories that we find instructive discontinuities.

A brief account of the contours of the Ancients and Moderns debate in early modern Europe is in order. It finds a place here not in order to facilitate a rigorous comparison with the situation in the Persianate world in the same period, but rather because it has helped me to understand my own historical preconceptions. Additionally, it provides a sketch of a pervasive historiographical problem, namely that Europe’s march towards intellectual modernity (however exactly that is to be defined) is seen as a series of deliberately taken steps while roughly similar transformations in the non-West are often assumed to be haphazard and accidental. Of course, this is the result of the West’s being the yardstick of modernity—introducing a historical tautology since the instrument of measurement is the same as the object being measured—rather than stemming from an identifiable, operative difference between

⁵³ We can of course find evidence of so-called cultural decline if we just root around in the European tradition. For example, in 1771 Sir William Jones writes (in Latin) to his friend to dissuade him from publishing a book of Latin translations but rather to publish in French: “One can hardly believe how few worthy men there are in England who know Latin” he declares [*nam credibile vix est quam pauci sint in Anglia viri nobiles qui Latine sciant*] (Cannon 1970, 1:86). My own attempt to revisit questions of cultural decline or “decadence” in eighteenth-century Urdu literary culture is Dudney 2018b.

⁵⁴ “*Modernus*,” according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is derived from “*modo*” [just now] + *-ernus* [Classical Latin *hodiernus*, the adjective derived from *hodie* “today”]. In European intellectual history, the *moderni/antiqui* distinction is important in the twelfth century, again in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and again in the period under discussion here (see Coleman 1992, 293, 541ff.).

intellectual conditions in Europe and, say, the Persianate world.⁵⁵ We need to take the (inevitably Western) “makers of the modern world” off their visionary pedestal and find other heroes.

The idea that the conditions of the present might be better than those of an Ancient Golden Age was apparently first explicitly formulated in early modern Europe by Alessandro Tassoni in his *Dieci Libri di Pensieri Diversi* [Ten Books of Diverse Thoughts, 1620].⁵⁶ Some years later, after Tassoni’s book had been translated into French, an attack on the Ancients was delivered at the recently founded Académie Française. Charles Perrault (1628–1703), the right-hand man of the finance minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, argued in his 523-line poem “La Siècle de Louis le Grand” [The Age of Louis XIV, 1687] that literature and indeed life in general were better now than they had been in Antiquity.⁵⁷ In particular, he put Plato in his place, declaring that “Plato, who was divine in the days of our ancestors / Is beginning to sound sometimes boring.”⁵⁸ This text and his subsequent *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* [Analogy of the Ancients and the Moderns], published in four volumes in his later years, were arguably a struggle for personal legitimacy (namely getting out from under Colbert’s shadow since Colbert had installed him in the Académie in the first place) even though it had the effect of laying the groundwork for a major shift in the intellectual life of Europe.⁵⁹ Perrault was not at the head of a movement but rather a man fighting his own battles with the help of friends against particular enemies. He tangled in particular with the classically inclined poet Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, who replied to volume 2 of *Parallèle* with an epigram in 1692:

How is it that Cicero, Plato, Virgil, Homer, and all these great authors whom the university reveres, when translated in your writings appear to us to be so stupid? P...⁶⁰ it is because in lending to these sublime

⁵⁵ Marshall Hodgson has argued that the key to Western misunderstandings of the Islamicate world is not the gap between East and West but rather the yawning gulf between modern and pre-modern intellectual practices that is often ignored (Hodgson 1968, 54; *pace* Said 1979).

⁵⁶ Bury 1920, 80. ⁵⁷ Barchilon and Flinders 1981, 43ff.

⁵⁸ Translated in Barchilon and Flinders 1981, 43ff. ⁵⁹ Zarucchi 1989, 13–14.

⁶⁰ The rhyme makes it clear that “P...” is meant to be read as “Perrault.”

minds your manner of speaking, your crudenesses, your rhymes, you make them all into P...s.⁶¹

Perrault replied in kind by jabbing at Boileau's well-known misogyny in another poem.⁶² Boileau perhaps had the last laugh after Perrault's death: He said that Perrault's seat at the Académie would remain vacant because its next occupant would be obliged to give a eulogy on Perrault, and who would volunteer to "praise the enemy of Cicero and Virgil"?⁶³ These ad hominem attacks and the fact that Perrault apparently had no programmatic vision are important to note here in order to contrast the historiography of the West and the non-West: Literary debates in Indo-Persian which involve personal rivalries have been dismissed as having no consequence to a larger historical narrative (except, of course, as manifestations of the omnipresent specter of Mughal-Safavid decline), but the evidence is clear that some important Europeans credited with bringing forth Modernity were throwing literary brickbats rather than sketching detailed blueprints for an enlightened future society.

Rather than facing the situation in terms of apparently modern attitudes and practices winning out over pre-modern ones, we should pick up the common thread of the responses to perceived newness.⁶⁴ In Europe, one key technique was to bracket off the newly reinvigorated experimental sciences from the humanities.⁶⁵ Francis Bacon (1561–1626) argued for a remarkable inversion of history: If the Ancients are characterized by having knowledge which was then lost over the ages, then clearly the term "Antiquity" is misplaced because the people of Bacon's own time had their own sort of knowledge (which is to say, scientific

⁶¹ Translated (as prose) in Zarucchi 1989, 15.

⁶² Barchilon and Flinders 1981, 54.

⁶³ Translated in Zarucchi 1989, 21.

⁶⁴ A major issue in the scholarly debate over the appropriateness of the term "early modernity" to describe a global historical epoch from roughly 1500 to 1800 is the question of implied teleology: The term suggests that in the period in question people across the world were thinking "how can we become modern?" (which is, of course, absurdly anachronistic). In this debate I tend to side with Richards 1997 rather than with Goldstone 1998.

⁶⁵ In the Persianate world, the long tradition of experimental science was not apparently marked as new during this period as it was in the West. It has been argued that the Scientific Revolution could not have taken place in the West without building upon Islamic science (e.g., Saliba 2007). Could this infusion of outside ideas into Europe itself have contributed to the perception of experimentation as a new endeavor?

knowledge derived from experimentation) and it vastly exceeded what people in Antiquity could have known.⁶⁶ In other words, the Moderns are the true Ancients. Likewise, John Dryden (1631–1700), best known for his extraordinarily eloquent English translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, implies that the Ancients studied poetry and the Moderns study science, noting that all Modern poetry is inferior to Ancient poetry.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Antiquity's own concerns over hegemonic knowledge derived from literary works, as expressed in Cicero's well-known declaration that "the inconsistencies of Plato are a long story" [*iam de Platonis inconstantia longum est dicere*], could be deployed against tradition.⁶⁸ Despite its different political formations, the Persianate early modern world addressed similar aesthetic and intellectual issues but often in a different idiom. In architecture and art history, both outside the scope of the present discussion, we can see other ways in which people grappled with newness without reference to science.⁶⁹ It would, however, be a stretch to propose exact analogues between Persian and the West, as for example in calling for the recognition of *tarz-i tāzah* as the "Persian Baroque."⁷⁰ The purpose of placing the traditions side by side should be to undercut the claims to uniqueness that, particularly in the European context, are the result of not seeking out parallels in other parts of the world.

⁶⁶ Bury 1920, 54. ⁶⁷ Steele 1990, 229, 232.

⁶⁸ *De Natura Deorum*, I.30. Early modern scholars' faith in their knowledge about the ancient world gathered by reading classical texts was also shaken by the development of new kinds of archaeology and textual analysis that demonstrated inconsistencies (Bietenholz 1994).

⁶⁹ For example, development in early modern Turkish architecture need not be seen as synonymous with Westernization but rather within the framework of old and new outlined here (Hamadeh 2004, 33). In 1691, the French architectural writer Augustin-Charles D'Aviler defined "*capriccio*" as a building that did not follow "the customary rules of architecture, that is of singular and novel taste" (trans. Stern 2003, 82). This catch-all definition is a response to newness. On the deliberate reconfiguration of classical forms to mark new architectural taste in the seventeenth century as specifically French, see Ballon 1989. As Ballon argues, the Ancients could be invoked in specifically nationalist ways. On newness in art in the Ottoman and Safavid contexts, see Artan 2010 and Farhad 2001, respectively.

⁷⁰ Riccardo Zipoli in a Persian article whose title translates as "Why Is *Sabk-i Hindī* Called 'Baroque' in the Western World?" (Zipoli 1984). A recent book on the Ottomans brings up "Mannerism" as a possible framework for comparison between early modern Ottoman and European intellectual history (Andrews and Kalpaki 2004, 338ff.).

Europe and Vernacular Politics: The Vernacular as Modernity?

The triumph of a national vernacular language over a classical idiom is widely agreed to be a constituent of modernity.⁷¹ In the West, we generally speak the same language in daily life that we use (in a higher register) for administrative and literary writing. South Asia, however, is deeply problematic if we adopt this paradigm as universal. The interest in vernacular poetry in eighteenth-century Delhi was not matched by a prose tradition until considerably later, and only then largely because of the demands of the colonial state rather than Indians' preference for the vernacular over Persian.⁷² In fact, the princely state of Hyderabad, which was considered pioneering in modern Urdu-medium education in the early twentieth century, did not replace Persian with Urdu in its administration until 1884, unlike the territories directly administered by the British.⁷³ While early modern Europe had Babel as a model for multilingualism, in which the multiplicity of languages was divine punishment for human sin, South Asia simply took a complex linguistic landscape as a given. This returns us to the question of whether a singular language is required for a modern nation-state to come into being.

The path to linguistically constituted nation-states in Europe is less clear-cut than we have often been led to believe. Languages were in constant contact as Latin's influence waned in the seventeenth century, and various creolizations caution us against exclusively nationalist readings of language in the period.⁷⁴ Indeed, the multiplicity of languages was not only a reality, but this hybridity was celebrated in pre-modern European literature.⁷⁵ The process by which a vernacular went from a private, unofficial kind of language to being the mainstay of a literary

⁷¹ For example, Benedict Anderson contrasts "classical communities linked by sacred languages" with modern linguistic formations (Anderson 1983, 20). Elsewhere he argues that "the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities" (Anderson 1983, 122).

⁷² Indo-Persian prose-writing continued late into the nineteenth century even as Indo-Persian poetry waned (Qasmi 2008, 212).

⁷³ Moazzam 2012.

⁷⁴ Burke 2006.

⁷⁵ See Heller-Roazen 2012 and Gaunt 2013a on the medieval celebration of multilingual textuality; and Gaunt 2013b on why assumptions about national language do not apply to medieval French. In a specific but telling case, the Sephardic merchants of Livorno in the

common was not necessarily connected with the state. Rather, it had more to do with control over the technology of writing, which at least from our historical vantage point appears to be crucial.⁷⁶ The acceptance of the vernacular comes in two phases, the first being the insight that the language is writeable. According to Armando Petrucci, the second phase

is the conquest by vernacular languages of the right to “canonization in books,” by which complex texts in vernacular come to be conclusively and organically written in book form by themselves (that is, without being mixed or juxtaposed with other texts in “noble” written languages).⁷⁷

This second phase does not appear to have had much traction in northern India until the colonial period because Persian remained the preferred language of technical writing into the nineteenth century. This tracks with the reluctance of Sanskrit-knowing intellectuals in northern India to write technical works in languages other than Sanskrit.⁷⁸ Likewise, the “age of translation” that begins in Europe in the seventeenth century and allows for more and more classical literature to be consulted in vernacular translations rather than in Latin or Greek has no counterpart in pre-colonial northern India.⁷⁹ Until well into the colonial period, Urdu was not a language of public monuments; apparently nothing like the debate in Paris over whether the text on the Arc de

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries chose among several different possible languages in which to write letters based on the addressee’s identity (Trivellato 2009, 179). Naturally, linguistic hybridity was a typical feature of this polyglot culture.

⁷⁶ This invites the thought experiment of what we might find if we could send a digital voice recorder into the past. Our pre-twentieth-century archive is textual, so from our perspective a language only steps onto the stage of history when it is written down. The method of finding odd spelling and syntax in texts in order to reconstruct speech is hardly an exact science, and even then gives us only the faintest expression of the life-world of the past.

⁷⁷ Petrucci 1995, 175. Early vernacular texts were written in the guard pages at the front and back of Latin books, which is true of *hindi* written in Indo-Persian mss as well.

⁷⁸ Pollock 2011, 24. In both the case of Persian and Sanskrit, “northern India” is defined against the Deccan (southern India), where there were various high-level official roles for vernacular languages in contrast to the situation in the north (Eaton 2014).

⁷⁹ Waquet 2001, 2. The culture of literary/biblical translation in the Renaissance (see Newman and Tylus 2015) is very different from the Persianate world, but a worthwhile parallel to draw is that in Europe works were often translated *into* Latin for wider accessibility and likewise translations into Persian (from Arabic or Sanskrit) can be seen as making works more accessible.

Triomphe (constructed 1806–36) should be in French or Latin occurred in northern India.⁸⁰

The concept of a “mother tongue” is seen as universal and exclusively positive today, as read through the discourse of rights, such as the right to education in one’s mother tongue (enshrined, for example, in article 350A of the Indian Constitution). At other times in history, however, it had an emotionally neutral or even pejorative sense.⁸¹ Lisa Mitchell’s work in the context of South India on language as an “object of emotion” shows that present-day views on the connection of language and identity are historically contingent.⁸² A particular language has to be transformed from a speech pattern associated with a place or with a particular social function into an identity marker. It is problematic to assume that vernacular languages were emancipated from the dead hand of a classical language simply because they later became part of a national identity.⁸³ Indeed, classical languages can also themselves be identity markers, as Walter Ong argued in describing Latin as a “puberty rite” for young men (and a few young women) in Renaissance Europe.⁸⁴ Mastery over Persian functioned in exactly the same way in South Asia as a symbol that someone was ready to take his or her place in society (although for women that social role was restricted to extremely elite women wielding power from within the zenana or women’s quarters).⁸⁵ The fact that

⁸⁰ Fumaroli 1984, 152–3. In the Deccan (in contrast to north India), it appears that there were sometimes *hindi* poetic inscriptions on saints’ tombs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Walter Hakala is exploring their significance.

⁸¹ As in medieval France, where, since the twelfth century, the “mother tongues” [*maternae linguae*] were seen as the “language of children, women, knights, and people in their secular and non-religious activities” in contrast to the *patrius sermo*, the Latin of scholarship and religion (Fumaroli 1984, 139).

⁸² Mitchell 2009, 15, 19ff. On the difference between “mother tongue” and “home language,” see Das 2014, 45.

⁸³ “By 1750, the European linguistic system was very different from the medieval system, which had been divided between a living but non-classical Latin and regional dialects which were spoken rather than written” (Burke 2004, 61). Peter Burke prefers the idea that vernaculars were “discovered”—which has somewhat Nehruvian overtones (as in the *Discovery of India*)—rather than that there was a “crisis” in the classical language because the timescales in question are centuries (Burke 2004, 16).

⁸⁴ Ong 1959.

⁸⁵ In 1748, the Earl of Chesterfield wrote to his son, “Classical knowledge, that is, Greek and Latin, is absolutely necessary for everybody.... The word *illiterate*, in its common acceptance, means a man who is ignorant of these two languages” (Hall 2008, 318). In this formulation, the ability to read the Classics is equivalent to the act of reading itself as though there were no worthwhile books in English!

Persian and Latin were cosmopolitan, and therefore by definition not local, did not invalidate this role because these languages were marked as an integral part of a local cultural formation. Latin is “a language without a speech community” [*eine Sprache ohne Sprachgemeinschaft*] and has therefore been protean in its ability to fill local contexts, even being seen as advantageous in diplomacy because no nation has a particular claim upon it.⁸⁶ Persian, obviously, was a language with native speakers, but it too could function locally in a place where it was not anyone’s mother tongue.⁸⁷ Surely, one could argue, *hindī*, a kind of language use whose very name implies Indianness, is more Indian than Persian. To us it may seem that way, but the evidence that Indians might have used vernacular composition to express an Indian identity is lacking for the late pre-colonial period. Of course, centuries earlier Amīr Khusrav had gleefully declared his ability to speak “*hindawi*” a part of his Indianness (though he wrote the poem in Persian, the language of power, rather than in *hindī* itself). However, such sentiments appear to have been uncommon in eighteenth-century *rekhtah*, for example in Mir’s oeuvre, where references to composing in *rekhtah* are not explicitly connected with any identity except that of being a *rekhtah* poet.⁸⁸ This mode of vernacular composition was itself cosmopolitan, and poets made reference to their linguistic medium to showcase their universal competence as poets and not to highlight their Indianness.

The technical challenges of switching to vernacular literary composition in part recapitulates the Ancients versus Moderns debate. The

⁸⁶ Burke 2004, 44–6.

⁸⁷ Waris Kirmani overstates the case when he argues that Indians must “submit to the aesthetic judgment of Iranians” on the basis that “however rich the Persian literature of India may be as a store-house of thought and learning, Persian nevertheless remained an alien language” (1972, vii). While this certainly was the prevailing view by the late nineteenth century, it was open for debate in the eighteenth.

⁸⁸ An exception to this observation might be Mir’s couplet “*kyā jānūm log kahte hain kis ko surūr-i qalb / āyā nahiin yih lafz to hindī zabāñ ke bich*” [How should I know what people mean by “joy of the heart”?/This word has not yet come into the *hindī* language] (1370, 5). In this instance the poet’s persona is claiming to not understand a Perso-Arabic phrase that does not appear in *hindī*. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi observes that he composed a Persian verse with exactly the same conceit. In the Persian verse, “the word does not appear in my dictionary” [*in lughat jā'i nah mi-yāband dar farhang-i mā*] (www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00gar-den/13c/1370/1370_05.html).

cosmopolitan languages were tied to a long literary past while the vernacular languages were by comparison upstarts. Just as *tatabbu'* [establishing a chain of transmission] was difficult for new imagery in Persian poetry, a new literary language such as *rekhtah*-style *hindī* did not have a stock of available *asnād* [sg. *sanad*], or what I have translated as “warrants.” The solution to this aesthetic quandary was to argue that vernacular composition and the cosmopolitan literary tradition follow similar rules.

The Pre-Colonial Language Economy

What was the economy of language in northern India before colonial interventions changed the equation? Firstly, our conceptual vocabulary for defining patterns of language use (“language” versus “dialect,” “native speaker” versus “non-native speaker,” “national” versus “regional,” and so on) is not at all up to the task of capturing how language was used and categorized in pre-colonial society. Furthermore, a universal problem in socio-linguistics, the ineluctable gap between how the language user perceives his or her communication and how others judge it, is exacerbated by the colonial source material subsequently used to describe language in South Asia. The Linguistic Survey of India (1894–1928)⁸⁹ and previous smaller-scale linguistic survey projects gave the illusion of solving this problem by removing the user’s subjectivity: Thenceforth, the user’s perception would not matter because the grammar and vocabulary of his/her speech would be defined by an outside observer’s matching it to a pre-defined dialect. These speech patterns, identified as they were by formal characteristics external to the life-world of the speakers, did not, of course, correspond with how anyone understood his or her language. People do not mobilize around others’ perception of their language unless they themselves internalize that perception.

Ironically, it is the other great colonial linguistic data-gathering operation, the Census, which proves that the Linguistic Survey was not, in

⁸⁹ On its complexity, see Majeed 2011.

fact, a solution. The identification of people's mother tongues in the Census shifted wildly as different names were put to the language in question. People who were recorded as speaking "Hindustani" in one census were speaking "Hindi" in the next, and so on. The very process of census-taking forced people across the sub-continent to engage with a modern, European sense of how language works: a single mother tongue that had to be identified with a name. Previously, no one would ever have been asked what he or she called the language used in the home or in the bazaar. Furthermore, the Census did not bother with building a picture of people's other linguistic habits, e.g., knowledge of Persian or Sanskrit, or the ability to have a conversation with the people in the next district in those people's own dialect. Because the colonial sources have these inherent limitations, and there was no wide-scale study of Indian language use before the colonial period (and specifically before the late nineteenth century, when the Linguistic Survey and Census were first carried out across the sub-continent), we must do our best with circumstantial evidence to construct a model for how language worked in pre-colonial society.

The paradox of the pre-colonial Indian eco-system of language as viewed from the modern perspective can be described as follows: Most language varieties⁹⁰ were not formally defined (with a grammar, a lexicon, and so on) before the colonial period, but particular varieties were more specifically associated with particular social situations. Today in the West many people are used to using a single standard variety, generally the majority language framed officially or unofficially as a national language, when speaking to their family, writing a document at work, interacting with a government service, or writing poetry.⁹¹ In modern India, the situation is somewhat different since society remains considerably more multilingual. However, a key difference between

⁹⁰ "Variety" is a neutral term in socio-linguistics that sidesteps the problem of defining a particular kind of language use as a language or a dialect or something else. One definition is "a linguistic system used by a certain group of speakers or in certain social contexts" (Swann et al. 2004).

⁹¹ Of course these activities would likely be carried out in different registers of that particular language variety, from the informal register of the home to the highly formal register of a legal proceeding.

modern and pre-modern India is that today there are norms for Standard Hindi and English as well as standardized forms of regional languages such as Bengali and Punjabi. These languages have been developed, largely within the previous century, to function in many different registers (just as standardized languages in the West aim to fill all social functions). Previously the only standardized varieties were literary and bureaucratic languages, whose functional range was limited. In general, we can assume, this availability of unstandardized varieties created a situation in which the boundaries of language were more fluid than we understand them to be today. Indeed, the concept of heteroglossia, Mikhail Bakhtin's term for the multiple voices contained within the unitary language of the novel, applies equally well to the actual conditions (as far as we can reconstruct them) of a pre-modern linguistic environment.⁹² While this might appear to suggest that pre-modern language was a cacophony, people in the environment would have understood its protocols through life-long exposure.

I will explore three theoretical claims here. Firstly, multilingualism did not strike pre-modern Indians as unusual, because different varieties performed different social functions and one's mother tongue had no special status in society. Secondly, the characteristics that defined the functions of a particular variety are not the ones we might expect. Lastly, the mechanisms for defining language in this society focused on usage (for example, composing poetry) rather than attempting to produce a universally applicable language akin to the national languages of today. Thus, literary language and the language of the everyday—although they are intertwined in the life-world of literary people—need to be considered separately. Such a multilingual intersection operates like a one-way valve, in that the high-prestige literary language influences everyday language somewhat freely but there is far less influence in the other direction. I will avoid the well-trodden ground of how Hindi and Urdu came to be standardized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and will instead offer a general theory of what came before that process.⁹³

⁹² Bakhtin 2002, 259ff., esp. 273 and 278.

⁹³ Described in King 1994 and elsewhere.

Multilingualism and the Individual

Our received ideas about language and identity are based on monolingualism because functional multilingualism has generally become the exception rather than the rule in Western societies, except for second languages taught in school. More complex societal situations (for example, diglossia) are understood as degrees of divergence from the monolingual baseline. This is a problematic presupposition because multilingualism is the norm across much of the world today, and indeed was taken for granted in the multi-ethnic empires of Europe's past.⁹⁴ The Holy Roman emperor Charles V (1500–56) is apocryphally reputed to have spoken Spanish to God, Italian to his courtiers, French to his ladies, and German to his horse.⁹⁵ The linguistic scorched-earth politics of pre-modern England and France—which depended upon extirpating the minority languages Welsh and Occitan, respectively—should almost certainly be seen as historically contingent rather than an inevitable step in building a modern nation-state.⁹⁶ As languages of empire, English and French have become widely used second languages around the world, a fact which is notable in light of the kind of internal oppression required to make them singular and universal in their home countries, a pattern of violence that would be echoed in global colonialism later.

The imposition of a national language has not historically been the only possible way for linguistic cohesion to exist within a large polity. China, for example, has a single writing system used nearly universally, but several different spoken varieties that are not, when spoken, mutually intelligible. Indian vernacular languages, although broadly defined as

⁹⁴ Evans 1998, 18, 29. Obvious exceptions in Western Europe where multilingualism exists on a national scale are Belgium and Switzerland, but both are special cases. As far as sub-national multilingualism is concerned, the Catalan movement in Spain and the resources devoted to Welsh in Britain are both, especially in the latter case, attempts to reverse the historical tide. The fate of Irish is similar even though it is constitutionally the national language of the Republic of Ireland.

⁹⁵ Burke 2004, 28. In other versions of the story the distribution of languages is different.

⁹⁶ The 1536 Welsh Act of Union that joined Wales politically with England was uncompromising: It declares that “no personne or personnes that use the Welsshe speche or langage shall have or enjoy any maner office or fees within the Realme of Englondre, Wales or the other Kinges dominions” (quoted in Evans 1998, 21).

distinct from one another even in pre-modern times (for example, in a list Amīr Ḵhusrau provides in his poem *Nuh Sipihr* [The Nine Heavens], considered in detail later in the chapter), nonetheless share a core predicated on Sanskrit and Sanskritic culture.⁹⁷ Linguists refer to South Asian languages as a *Sprachbund* (lit. “federation of languages” in German) in recognition of this unity. Even stranger in the context of expectations based on European experience, the New Indo-Aryan languages formed an unbroken cline stretching from Afghanistan to Assam (apart from Maldivian and Sinhalese separated by water from the other languages and spoken on the islands of the Maldives and Sri Lanka). This is to say that language changes gradually across that vast swath of territory. If one traveled east to west or west to east from one end of northern India to the other, stopping in every village along the way, the speech of each new village might be slightly different from that of the previous village but would almost never vary from it significantly enough to mark a clear distinction.⁹⁸ Because one would have to travel far to encounter a difficult-to-understand language, the view from the village level would have assumed not difference but similarity to be the defining feature of people’s language. Indo-Persian scholarship’s tendency to define all Indic language use as “*zabān-i hindī*” or “*hindawi*” is perhaps not the result of imprecision (or rather ignorance of the complexity of India’s linguistic eco-system) but rather a reflection of a contemporary perception of language in India.⁹⁹

Of course, anyone who was literate or traveled encountered different language varieties. Without standardized language, people were not concerned with speaking “properly” but being understood, an experience

⁹⁷ The Dravidian languages, a group which includes the major languages of South India, are a distinct family and not genetically related to Sanskrit or the New Indo-Aryan languages of northern India such as Hindi and Punjabi. Nonetheless, the Dravidian languages also reflect a significant Sanskrit influence.

⁹⁸ Masica 1991, 25.

⁹⁹ Pace Talbot 1995, 712. Thus, in *Ā’īn-i Akbarī*, Abū al-Fażl writes “Throughout the wide extent of Hindustan, many are the dialects that are spoken, and the diversity of those that do not exclude a common inter-intelligibility are innumerable” (trans. *Ā’īn-i Akbarī* 1947, 133). This is precisely what I have argued, and it squares with the common aphorism that the language in India changes over a short distance: “*Kos kos pah badale pānī, chār kos pah vāṇī*” [Every *kos* (≈ 3 km), the water changes, and every four *kos* (≈ 12 km) the speech]. I have been unable to determine how old the expression in this and its related forms actually is.

that the language cline made possible since the view at ground level, except in the case of people who traveled long distances, was that the people over there speak differently from us but we understand them and they us. The discomfort at the core of translation studies, namely that there is an inherent loss of meaning in any translation, was not operative: It had not yet been articulated except in the special case of scripture. One surprising commonality between Indo-Persian and European writers in the eighteenth century is the shared metaphor of a change of clothes for translation.¹⁰⁰ A costume change was considerably easier than the soul-searching that often accompanies translation today. Furthermore, the idea of diglossia, either as it was originally defined by Charles A. Ferguson or in its extended form as employed by Joshua Fishman and others, cannot apply here because it presupposes linguistically measurable boundaries between languages.¹⁰¹ In everyday life, people must have accepted considerable variation in usage, essentially being what we would call multilingual without having recourse to such a concept. The vast majority of people would never have dealt directly with a standardized language and so would have had no ideological difficulty adopting terms from high-prestige languages like Persian.¹⁰² Of course, even within the life-world of the relatively monolingual village, there was sometimes a need to access religious or literary or bureaucratic language, and in these cases someone like a Brahmin or a Persian-literate village official could mediate. The exclusionary capacity of standardized languages should not be underestimated, but by the same token neither should the potential for language-facilitating transactions be ignored.

¹⁰⁰ Both Ārzū and Jones use the image. See, for example, in the preface to Jones's *Persian Grammar* on Persian works in "European dress" and M 1991, 167 on Persian garb [*libās*] for Arabic words.

¹⁰¹ In Ferguson's original conception, the high-prestige variety (H) in a society was a standardized language and the low-prestige variety (L) an unstandardized dialect of it (Ferguson 1959). That obviously cannot apply here because there was no standard, all-purpose *hindī* to be H. Joshua Fishman's extension to the theory, namely that H and L need not be related varieties, still cannot capture the complexity of early modern northern India where *kharī boli*-based *rekhtah* exhibited features of both H and L. The kind of profound multilingualism present in that society has not been adequately theorized in the framework of diglossia (one attempt is Mackey 1986).

¹⁰² Anecdotally, rural speech in India since Independence has tended to have more Perso-Arabic vocabulary than urban speech because education in "proper" (which is to say, Sanskritized) Hindi was not as widely available.

Literacy, which was comparatively rare, had a strong correlation with power, as we see in the following sections. Certain languages were not written, and this would not have struck anyone as odd: Letters were often composed in Persian not because the spoken language of the sending party would not have been understood by the recipient but because the spoken language was not, as a matter of course, written down.¹⁰³ Thus, having someone draw up a document in Persian does not have the same implication as having a translation done today. Likewise, poetry was composed in translocal varieties like Braj not necessarily for any communicative reason but because that was seen as the variety proper to poetry of a certain sort.

Relevant and Irrelevant Linguistic Distinctions for Pre-Colonial South Asia

Which distinctions between varieties are useful from the perspective of historical inquiry? For simplicity's sake, we can take a structuralist approach and posit a set of linguistic binaries, within which there is inevitably considerable overlap: The key distinction must be between local versus translocal varieties. The latter are what I have been calling cosmopolitan languages, which are different from “national” languages (even if national languages are often developed to facilitate translocal communication within the nation-state). Another crucial distinction is between “literarized” and “non-literarized” varieties, that is between varieties seen as suitable vehicles for literature and those seen as not suitable. Then there are commonly written versus non-written varieties, as well as varieties connected with religious practice and those not. We could continue drawing ever more subtle gradations, such as whether a variety is deemed suitable for facilitating commercial transactions or not.

¹⁰³ This is in stark contrast to the sense today that it is a human right to have one's own language written. Documentary linguists, sometimes for scientific and sometimes for humanitarian purposes, are attempting to give every language in the world, no matter how rare and localized, a written form.

We rapidly reach a point at which there is simply no evidence to allow us to judge one way or another.¹⁰⁴

The local and the translocal map onto the categories vernacular and classical/cosmopolitan, but the fit is problematic since there are translocal vernaculars (for example Braj) and the possibility, albeit exercised only under exceptional historical circumstances, of identifying a classical language with its place of origin. Of note is the phenomenon that Sheldon Pollock has identified as “the dialectic between cosmopolitan and vernacular that creates them both.”¹⁰⁵ That is, cosmopolitan and vernacular are not bounded categories but rather sets of characteristics interpreted against each other. Whether we think of a literature as cosmopolitan rather than classical or vice versa creates a subtle difference in framing. A cosmopolitan language will inevitably have a classical literature, because in order to become cosmopolitan it needs to exist long enough to spread and needs to have a standard to support that spread without being transmuted out of recognition. On the other hand, the medium of classical literature generally must be a cosmopolitan language. “Classical” puts an emphasis on history and tradition while “cosmopolitan” emphasizes the contemporary circulation of people and ideas (and, for that matter, written materials), and together these create the hegemonic power of a translocal language.

As I argued in Chapter 5, the boundaries of a language both in an aesthetic or geographical sense were considerably fuzzier before the modern period: Persian, like Sanskrit, appears never to have articulated its political boundaries. (Persian and Sanskrit contrast with Latin, which had the term *Latinitas* to conceptualize the boundaries of the territory Rome had Latinized.) Indeed, only from its development as a national language in Iran in the early nineteenth century did Persianate culture

¹⁰⁴ Socio-linguistic domains, which are what this thought experiment is attempting to construct, are defined based on “painstaking analysis and summarization of patently congruent situations” (Fishman 1971, 51). The pre-modern past gives us extremely little data to work from. The work of J. N. Adams (for example, Adams 2003) on bilingualism and other socio-linguistic questions in Classical Latin is remarkable for being able to do so much with so little available material.

¹⁰⁵ Pollock 2000, 616.

really become associated with bounded place.¹⁰⁶ Otherwise, there were various regional usages of Persian, which Ārzū and others noted were not appropriate as literary language.¹⁰⁷ In other words, the cosmopolitan language can have non-cosmopolitan variants of itself. The mutual constitution of cosmopolitan and vernacular are on display in the fact that one can very nearly write a high-register Bengali sentence in Sanskrit and a high-register Urdu sentence in Persian.¹⁰⁸ Pollock's observation that literary language is deliberately crafted rather than randomly created is also important in this context.¹⁰⁹ The existence of cosmopolitan languages did not in any way prohibit vernacular language from becoming literary but in fact was the catalyst for that transformation. I again return to the observation that non-literary language in this period served certain circumscribed functions (which could be expanded by developing a literature) rather than being an important bearer of identity: The amplification of the vernacular, that is the process of vernacularization, was a question of changing domains in which the vernacular variety was considered proper.

Apparently, no ethnic feeling was constructed out of non-literarized language in India before the nineteenth century, but literary communities were important frames of reference even if communities of speakers were not. If a Punjabi went to Awadh then his non-literarized spoken language would not be understood, but if he were a Sufi who composed in Persian (or even *hindi*) then he could find himself a place in a Sufi community and eventually pick up the local spoken variety. The role of the “cosmopolitan vernacular” is important because various vernaculars that became transregional built networks of language users.¹¹⁰ I advanced the argument in Chapter 5 that *rekhtah*-style *hindī* formed a large and important network whose parts assembled themselves into a

¹⁰⁶ The *Shāhnāmah*'s mytho-poetic invocations of Iran (as “Ajam” or “Irān”) are not territorial, but rather portray civilization struggling against the non-civilized across a topography of both real and imaginary places. The inscription of the real locations mentioned in the poem onto the Iranian nation-state in the nineteenth century has parallels with the Romantic nationalism of early nineteenth-century Europe.

¹⁰⁷ For the parallels in Classical Latin, see Adams 2007 on regional variation and Adams 2013 on social stratification.

¹⁰⁸ For the Bengali example, see Kaviraj 2003, 512.

¹⁰⁹ Pollock 2000, 591.

¹¹⁰ The term is Pollock's (1998).

coherent, self-aware whole in the eighteenth century. A cosmopolitan vernacular that can remain a language of power for long enough eventually becomes capable of the functions of the cosmopolitan classical language. A cosmopolitan vernacular gains prestige by developing similar formal characteristics to an established cosmopolitan variety and representing itself as an outgrowth of the classical tradition.¹¹¹ For *rekhtah*-style *hindī*, an important milestone came when people began frequently writing it down in the same script as Persian and Arabic. The rapid expansion of *rekhtah* poets' collected works came towards the end of Ārzū's life and afterwards, but Persian remained the language of administration and serious (non-poetic) thought until much later: In the eighteenth-century context and specifically in the context of Ārzū, vernacularization occurred primarily in poetry and not much in other domains.

Two other literarized languages in South Asia, namely Turkish and Arabic, complicate the situation and have, unsurprisingly, received comparatively less attention than Persian or Sanskrit.¹¹² Central Asian Turkish was at times widely spoken among the elite of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, and while a Chinggisid (that is, a Mongol) identity was often expressed, it never appears to have extended to language.¹¹³ Famously, the Mughals quickly lost their grasp of Turkish: Although Bābur wrote his *Bāburnāmah* in Turkish, by his grandson Akbar's time it had to be translated into Persian (by the remarkable ‘Abd al-Rahīm Khān-i Khānān) so that people could still access it.¹¹⁴ Arabic in South Asia appears to be largely though not exclusively connected with Islamic religious contexts,¹¹⁵ but perhaps

¹¹¹ Compare a similar observation on Middle English, namely that in “annexing Latin’s cultural authority, vernacular literatures demonstrate their ability to do anything Latin can do, while marking their difference from Latin; asserting the prestige of Latin texts and *auctores*, they also seek to assimilate that prestige, in an endless shuttling between gestures of deference and gestures of displacement whose most obvious effect is to tie the theory and practice of vernacular writing permanently to the question of its status in relation to Latin” (Evans et al. 1999, 321–2). Such “gestures of deference” and “gestures of displacement” are familiar in *rekhtah* when poets refer to Persian.

¹¹² On Arabic, see Qutbuddin 2007 and two recent PhD theses (Bahl 2018; Leese 2019).

¹¹³ See, for example, Kumar 2007, 195ff. Indians apparently learned Turkish to work for the Turkish-speaking Central Asian nobles of the Delhi Sultanate.

¹¹⁴ Lefèvre 2014.

¹¹⁵ Qutbuddin 2007. A notable exception was Āzād Bilgrāmī (discussed in Chapter 5), who used Arabic both as a literary and critical language.

mastery of Arabic was seen as necessary for mastery of Persian. This has not been systematically studied, but certainly Ārzū's Hindu friends Bahār and Mukhlīṣ had facility in a style of Persian that was essentially Arabic.¹¹⁶ They used what might appear as unambiguously Islamic phrases and concepts, but for them these must simply have been part of the conventions of Persian discourse and not necessarily religious statements. The modern distinction between secular and religious is impossibly anachronistic in such cases.

Although various distinctions such as these make little intrinsic sense to us, thinking through them is crucial so that we can consider the ways in which language was defined in the period in question.

The Social Mechanisms for Defining Language

Who decided what constituted good language? In Ārzū's conception, we see that the standard was courtly usage (whether real or imagined) and he, like apparently every other writer concerned with defining linguistic norms at this time, focused on literary language rather than the language of everyday life. Another brief mention of linguistic habits, this time in Mīrzā Khān's *Tuhfat al-Hind*, considers Sanskrit, Prakrit, and “bhāshā” in their literary functions.¹¹⁷ Mīrzā Khān notes that *bhāshā* “is the language of the world in which we live” (and indeed refers to it as especially pertaining to the language of the Braj country), but he is not interested in drawing any further distinctions and states that his reason for compiling the grammar was because poetry is written in the language. Likewise, when non-literary language comes into Ārzū's work, it is almost without exception as a prop for a discussion of literary language. The cosmopolitan and by extension the cosmopolitan vernacular are

¹¹⁶ Ārzū refers to his young friend Bāl Mukund Shuhūd, a Kayasth, who “although he has not gained that much knowledge of Arabic sciences” [bā ān kih chandān kasb-i ‘ulūm-i ‘arabiyyah nah-kardah], has made a study of Euclid [*Iqlidas*] but has not had the leisure to study it further (MN 2004, II:855). What is notable here is that Ārzū implies that a Hindu from a long line of administrators should know Arabic.

¹¹⁷ *Tuhfat al-Hind* is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The section under discussion here is *Grammar of the Braj Bhakha* 1935, 34–5.

much better represented in accounts of language than is the vernacular of the masses.

For the mass vernacular (that is low-prestige, non-literary, and non-written language patterns), linguistic standards were maintained orally, and members of the speech community would naturally imitate speakers with higher prestige. This is a familiar pattern in non-literate societies and would have been the same for such varieties. Even though writing was an available technology, it was not applied to these varieties, which of course constituted the vast majority of language used in India or indeed in the pre-modern world. There is no reason to think that anyone was concerned with setting a standard for any of these informal varieties, but of course, there is a problem with the evidence: Imprints of everyday speech form an infinitesimal fraction of the documents from this time. When people using such language interacted in formal contexts that were recorded in writing, their language would be translated, usually without even marking the act of translation, into the language of written records. For the purposes of intellectual history, we are concerned with vernacular language only as the elite used it because that is what is available to us.

The Indo-Persian tradition names various Indic regional varieties but deals with them in the most general terms. Amir Khusrau famously did so in the thirteenth century in his *maṣnawī Nuh Sipīr* [The Nine Heavens]. His account is not in any sense a linguistic survey and makes no claims as far as the mutual intelligibility of the language varieties mentioned. Indeed, the phrasing strongly implies that the list of thirteen regional varieties is not meant to be exhaustive. The argument is straightforward: In a section of the poem that is a panegyric on India, Khusrau presents the case for India's greatness in the context of language: Persian, Turkish, and even Arabic, are simply not as pleasant as the diverse languages of India. He provides a list of these and concludes that:

All these [language varieties] are *hindawī*, which from ancient times has been commonly used for every kind of speech [*sukhan*].¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ “in hamah hindawī-st kih az aiyām-i kuhan / ‘āmah ba-kār ast ba-har gūnah sukhan.” The passages under discussion here are at *Nuh Sipīr* 1950, 179–80. See Faruqi 2001, 65ff. on the problems of identifying the languages mentioned; cf. Narang 1987, 29, who makes several interpretative mistakes that Faruqi corrects. Further context available in Nath and Gwaliari

Thus, all the varieties mentioned are to be considered “*hindawī*,” which we can translate as “Indic” to reflect the broadness of its meaning. According to Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, the term does not, in Ḫusrau’s usage, carry any analytical force or refer to a specific kind of language use. Faruqi (and my translation) interprets “*sukhan*” generally, meaning that these languages are used for every kind of “speech.” *Sukhan* can, of course, mean poetry specifically, and perhaps Ḫusrau does use the term in this sense, because he is arguing that the best varieties for “delighting the heart” [*dil ba-ṭarab kardan*] (i.e., through poetry or music) are Indic. He specifies that each of the Indic varieties is proper to a defined place, fitting our definition of local (or non-cosmopolitan vernacular) varieties. Although there is no consideration of writing, the section ends with a mention of Sanskrit:

But there is a different language from these spoken ones
 This is the chosen one for all the Brahmins.
 Sanskrit is its name from ancient times;
 The masses know nothing of its hidden power.
 The Brahmin knows it, but not even every Brahmin
 For that matter knows the [full] extent of the discourse.¹¹⁹

This is obviously another rhetorical proof of India’s greatness (that is, that no other place in the world can boast of having mystical Brahmins with a secret language) rather than a careful analysis of language ideology, but it does illustrate the hegemony of Sanskrit and its transcendence of the languages of place. A list similar to Ḫusrau’s is the emperor Bābur’s account of the varieties spoken around Kabul.¹²⁰ Again, this is an inventory offered without comment on how the languages identified

1981. Alyssa Gabbay deals with Ḫusrau’s legitimation of Indic language but does not apparently consider the problem of what *hindawī* means—she appears to take it straightforwardly as the name of a defined language (2010, esp. 20ff.).

¹¹⁹ “*lek zabāni-st digar k-az sukhanān / ān-ast guzīn nazd-i hamah barhamānān / sanskrit nām zi ‘ahd-i kuhan-ash / ‘āmah nadārad khabar az kann-i mikan-ash / barhamān-ash dānad wa har barhamāni / nīz nadānad ḥadd zānsān sukhāni*” (*Nuh Siphr* 1950, 180).

¹²⁰ “Eleven or twelve dialects are spoken in Kabul province: Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Mongolian, Hindi, Afghani, Pashai, Parachi, Gibari, Baraki, and Lamghani. It is not known whether there are so many different peoples and languages in any other province” (translated in Thackston 1993, 2:270).

relate to one another, but Bābur concludes that Kabul is probably the most linguistically diverse province then under his control. At the court of his grandson Akbar, a list of languages was prepared by Abū al-Fażl to be included in *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*. While Abū al-Fażl notes that there are “innumerable” varieties in India that are mutually intelligible, he provides a list of places whose varieties would not be understood by speakers of the other varieties. We would understand the languages as (*kharī boli*) Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Telugu, Marathi, Kannada (and Tamil?), Sindhi, Pashto, Baloch, and Kashmiri, but he does not provide these varieties’ names but rather states the places where each variety is typical.¹²¹ For his purposes, language varieties were akin to geographical features rather than markers of communities or nations.

This geographical versus communitarian understanding of language encapsulates the key distinction between our noticing that there is a mutually intelligible language variety spread across most of northern India, and Indo-Persian writers of the eighteenth century’s noticing the same thing. Amrit Rai’s seminal analysis of how pre-modern *hindī* came to be Modern Standard Hindi, *A House Divided*, tries to split the difference but ends up projecting a linguistic consciousness on the past that is too much like modern Hindi to be fully credible.¹²² To avoid the possibility of such a conflation, I have made the slightly grating choice to use the term “*hindī*” throughout this study in deference to the Persian primary sources. In the Persian context, differences within *hindī* were only recognized to the degree they needed to be in a given context. For example, Bengali could be identified as “*zabān-i hindī-yi bangālah*” (lit. “the Indian tongue of Bengal”). Literary languages tend to be written languages, and so are governed by rules that are recorded for pedagogical purposes and even debated since, as I have argued, early modern writers did not separate descriptive grammar from what we would bracket off as aesthetic considerations. There were even grammars of Persian available in Sanskrit, for example the late sixteenth-century *Pārasiprakāsha* [The Illuminator of Persian], attributed to Kṛṣṇadāsa. We should remember

¹²¹ That is (in the same order): Delhi, Bengal, Multan, Marwar, Gujarat, Telangana, “Marhatta,” Carnatic, Sindh, “Afghan” of Shāl (the region between Sindh, Kabul, and Qandahar), Balochistan, and Kashmir.

¹²² Rai 1984.

these are not descriptive grammars, but rather present an idealized view of the language.¹²³

How does influence move in these languages, and does this movement of vocabulary/structure reflect the social hierarchy of language varieties themselves? Power was not exercised through a government's defining language for the populace or the nation (unlike, say, the Académie Française and other comparatively recently established institutions). It was instead a matter of determining the acceptable forms within the language of power.¹²⁴ Obviously the practices of the imperial chancellery set standards for Persian documentary conventions, but it would have had absolutely no interest in regulating language use outside that narrow compass. Poetry itself was a science [*ilm*], as Ḳhusrau shows through complex exegetical reasoning.¹²⁵ While poets like Ārzū were deeply concerned with the systematization of Persian poetry, they did not seriously consider other purposes to which the language might be put. It is hard to know whether people outside bureaucratic and poetic circles appreciated these niceties—or if that would even matter. The difficulty is that Indo-Persian was undoubtedly a link language often used for relatively informal communication, but the documentary evidence generally records only its more formal usage. We can surmise that this informal usage was how Persian came to influence so many vernacular languages in India. In a society where certain language varieties were associated with the elite, the language varieties of the non-elite tended to be undifferentiated, while elite language use filtered down into the consciousness of upwardly mobile low-level elites and non-elites. Building a majoritarian politics upon language is difficult, perhaps impossible, without the sort of enumeration that a census provides and the corresponding realization of strength in numbers. The colonial-era

¹²³ An interesting parallel is the relationship in Sanskrit thought between *śāstra* [theory] and *prayoga* [practical activity], which, as Sheldon Pollock has shown, was viewed in traditional India in precisely the opposite way from the usual Western understanding (Pollock 1985, 511). To summarize a complex argument: In the West, the formulation is that practice is followed by a descriptive theory while in Sanskrit thought practice is an adumbration of the *śāstra* even if the practitioner is unaware of it. While Perso-Arabic philological thought generally follows the Aristotelian (that is, the Western) pattern of description following practice, it also has prescriptive tendencies. More study is warranted of the meeting between the philological traditions of Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic.

¹²⁴ For example, the Sanskrit *praśasti* (Pollock 2006, 134ff.).

¹²⁵ See Faruqi 2001, 91.

consciousness of how many speakers of a language there were brought the conception of northern Indian language full circle: The Persian *zabān-i hindī* was replaced by a similar totalizing construction of Indic language, namely Modern Standard Hindi.¹²⁶ Unlike the Indo-Persian concept, this standard Hindi would be based on drawing sharp distinctions between proper and improper usage, and in particular employing (and in many cases artificially introducing) Sanskritic vocabulary as the glue that would connect the *kharī boli* core of the language with the other languages of India. The older notion of Indic language could not function for nationalist politics, but its subsequent redefinition could. Today the project of Modern Standard Hindi as a national language is complicated by the vast number of people who nominally speak it as a mother tongue but whose actual usage is at variance with the standard language.¹²⁷

“Imagine There’s No Countries”

With apologies to John Lennon, imagining a world without nation-states is in fact hard for us to do. The desire of those living in the present to find the ancient seeds of their polity and culture conscripts historiography into the unforgiving service of a false idol.¹²⁸ The study of the European Middle Ages has arguably been deeply distorted for two centuries because of the tendency to force nation-states as a unit of analysis onto a historical record for which they are ill-suited.¹²⁹ In India, more perniciously, an increasingly widely accepted pseudo-history locates various aspects of the Hindu nationalist program for modern India in what can be best described as mythical time. This is a nationalism that rhetorically

¹²⁶ See Das 2014.

¹²⁷ This has sparked regional movements in India agitating for what have been thought of as dialects of Hindi, such as Maithili, to be officially declared independent languages. Maithili was added to the Eighth Schedule of the constitution in 2003 and thus is now recognized as a language instead of a dialect.

¹²⁸ Memorably, Marc Bloch decried historians’ devotion to “the idol of origins” when there are many other more worthy questions for historical research to address (Bloch 1992, 24ff.).

¹²⁹ Chris Wickham identifies the “two grand narratives” that have caused misunderstanding of the Middle Ages in recent historiography as “the narrative of nationalism and the narrative of modernity” (Wickham 2009, 3).

erases its own true origins in the colonial encounter and seeks to represent itself as indigenous when it is patently not. Of the various possible misuses of history or departure points for pseudo-history, the identification of a language with nation is particularly tempting and has also been amplified by other disciplines such as literary studies, philology, anthropology, and linguistics. Karla Mallette observes that philology, notable as a pre-modern discipline that survived the transition to modernity, was cosmopolitan until it turned nationalist:

But more recently, Philology has been drawn into a marriage of convenience with the European nationalisms, and this has dulled her senses somewhat—or, at least, has predisposed her to see the grand sweep of history in a certain light.¹³⁰

This (unhappy?) marriage of history and philology has had several effects that we still need to pick our way through: Firstly, scholars—even from multilingual backgrounds themselves—have often discounted multilingualism as a historical phenomenon, because from the nationalist vantage point multilingualism must be a kind of false consciousness on the path to the right and proper state in which people use and identify with their national language. Hearteningly, given the number of recent studies in various historical contexts focusing on multilingualism (some of which are cited in this chapter), this reflex is arguably being widely corrected. Secondly, scholars have often not given sufficient weight to cosmopolitan languages because a cosmopolitan language does not appear to lead to the nation or indeed seems to block the full flowering of the national language—this jaundiced view is common in scholarship on both Europe and the non-West. Stepping back from expectations of the nation-state, it is obvious that people in the past could live their lives writing and speaking in learned languages like Latin or Persian, and they were not (as is often implied) yearning to express themselves in a different, vernacular language that was closer to their hearts. Lastly, scholars interpreting cultural phenomena have been predisposed to see cultural chaos outside of Europe and measured, deliberate steps towards

¹³⁰ Mallette 2013, 260.

modernity in Europe. More than anything else, these vastly different readings of broadly similar cultural developments reflect the fact that Europe was able to write its own story of modernity. In fact, Europe's march to modernity was messy and its colonizing nation-states often the product of internal colonialism of previous centuries. The cosmopolitan possibilities of pre-colonial South Asia should therefore be understood on their own terms rather than fit into an idealized European pattern. Present-day scholars must turn the interpretative lens on themselves in order to do so.

Conclusion

Contrary to later depictions of the eighteenth century as a dark time of cultural stagnation waiting to be dispelled by the dawn of European rationality or by Indian/Pakistani nationalism, this study has shown the vibrancy of Indo-Persian philological scholarship during this period. In their analysis of literary language, Ārzū and his circle posed fundamental questions about the nature of language in society. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising—as it was to Ārzū as well—that given the cultural intermixing of Islamicate northern India, it was not until the eighteenth century that a systematic enquiry into the relationship between Persian and other Indian languages took place. I have tried to situate Ārzū in a global early modern context, which is to say that his methodology maintained a deep respect for tradition while stretching that tradition’s fundamental assumptions to breaking point and sometimes beyond. This study has argued consistently that many of the received ideas about the late pre-colonial period would have been simply unthinkable to the people whose milieu we are trying to explain.

Ārzū was well positioned for a career in literature and philological scholarship. His standing in Delhi’s literary circles came from his lineage (which included descent from important literary Sufis on both sides), his family’s tradition of imperial service, and his influential friends and mentors. It was Ānand Rām Muķhlīš who facilitated his entry into Delhi high society. His close ties with Muķhlīš and Ṭek Chand Bahār, both Hindus, show the influence of non-Muslims in Persian and the multiconfessional nature of the tradition despite its Islamicate underpinnings. Ārzū did not lack for patrons, and although they would begin to fray not long after his death, the intellectual networks that had sustained Persianate intellectual culture in India were still in place during his lifetime, despite political turmoil. Both Muķhlīš and Bahār wrote important dictionaries, and both their projects are connected with Ārzū (in the

case of the former because Ārzū posthumously edited the manuscript and in the latter because Bahār used Ārzū's *Sirāj al-Luḡhat* in preparing his own dictionary). Ārzū was a mentor to a number of poets including many of the disciples of the late Bedil, who during his lifetime had arguably been the doyen of Persian poets in Delhi. Ārzū successfully established himself as a guardian of Bedil's legacy while also tapping into the other important literary network in Delhi, that of the late Sarkhwush. He makes this positioning clear in his *tažkirah Majma' al-Nafā'is*. The arrival of Shaikh Ḥazīn formalized an opposition to Ārzū since Ḥazīn, like Munīr in a previous generation, was a defender of the classical style against recent poetic developments. It was perhaps this personal conflict that caused Ārzū to stop writing relatively staid commentaries on classical texts and begin theorizing a defense of contemporary poetics, in some instances making his case vehemently.

Ārzū's theory of language recognizes the deep ties between languages, the prerogative of urban elites to set literary standards, the need to balance tradition with the consensus of living poets in order to account for changing tastes, and the principle that even a native speaker makes mistakes and so is not automatically an authority. Ārzū's expansive treatise on the theory of language (*Muṣmir*) is built upon an Arabic work (al-Suyūṭī's *al-Muzhir*) that he revisited in part so that he could scrape away whatever was irrelevant to his purposes and build within its hollowed-out categories a theory appropriate to the complex interaction of languages in his own life-world. This, I have argued, is a typically early modern approach to knowledge production. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Persian cosmopolis had begun to fragment, but Ārzū did not see the nascent changes in the way that many later scholars have understood them. Instead, he proposed a flattening of the Persian cosmopolis, in which eloquent literary language is recognized as the same across its vast expanse even though obviously local language and dialect will be different. His thinking was undeniably historical, and he theorized how words have moved from one language to another. Notably, he adapted al-Suyūṭī's notion of *tawāfuq al-lisānain* [correspondence between languages] to explain the primordial connection between Persian and "hindī-yi kitābī" [i.e., Sanskrit], which (by his own statement) is the first time this was addressed in the Persianate tradition.

From our perspective, it is very much like the fundamental principle of (Western) historical linguistics that languages branch off from one another over time, but Ārzū does not define it precisely enough for us to be sure of that reading. Although *Mušmir* was not a widely known text, the ideas it presents, such as *tawāfuq* or its discussion of metaphorical language, are present throughout Ārzū's earlier texts. Yet claims that Sir William Jones perhaps appropriated Ārzū's application of *tawāfuq* in the development of his own theories on linguistic development do not rest on a particularly sound foundation. Instead of fitting Jones into the tradition of Orientalist appropriation of non-Western ideas, we should instead consider the remarkable parallel between Indo-Persian and Western philology that allowed them to come to similar conclusions about how languages develop over time.

Our terms for explaining the transformations in the world of Persian letters in the late pre-colonial period are premised on an anachronistic periodization of Persian literary history and on similarly anachronistic nationalist assumptions. Ārzū's main concern was not with Iranian versus Indo-Persian usages, but rather with the controversy over the relatively new (and for him not satisfactorily theorized) literary style of *tāzah-goī*, which needed to be fit into the tradition. Rather than looking for evidence of cultural decline, we are better served by comparing this state of affairs to the roughly contemporary Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns in Europe, which is remembered fondly in contrast to the supposed cultural dead-end of the “Indian Style” in Persian. In the eighteenth-century Indo-Persian context, the Ancients [*mutaqaddimīn*] are the poets through Jāmī (fifteenth century) and the Moderns [*muta'akhkhirīn*] are the poets who came after, who are especially identified with the “*tāzah-goī*” style. As in Indo-Persian, the difficulty faced in Europe was assessing the relative value of tradition compared with new knowledge that was being produced. Ārzū's insight was that contemporary poets are always making literary precedent [*sanad*], just as earlier poets made the precedent that must be followed by contemporary poets. He observes that even native speakers make mistakes (he presents this by analogy with Indian poets composing in Indic languages), and so proper training in literary production rather than simply knowing a language is crucial in his view. He argues against the criticism of the

likes of Ḥazīn and Muṇīr by out-researching them: He shows in many instances that perceived faults of the Moderns to which such critics had objected were actually acceptable to the Ancients, as proved by a more careful reading of precedent-establishing works. Being attuned to the linguistic variation across the Persian cosmopolis allows him to propose a consolidation of the tradition that incorporates contemporary poetics into the longer history of literary Persian.

The development of Urdu vernacular poetry in the eighteenth century should not be understood as a deliberate attempt to replace Persian with an Indic language or to democratize the literary scene. The great Persianists of the day were the same people promulgating a standard for Urdu. Ārzū's formulation of literary Persian as a dialect that historically emanated from the royal court is exactly parallel to the definition of Urdu as the literarized vernacular of the royal court in Delhi. Poets working in the *rekhṭah* style apparently received advice from Ārzū on aspects of this standardization. The idea that the motivation for developing Urdu was that it was Indians' natural language as opposed to "foreign" Persian rests on shaky foundations. It was only during the colonial period, in a very different cultural moment, that this framing was adopted to justify eliminating Persian, a move which, however it affected Indians, undeniably helped the colonial state's political project. *Rekhtah* was developed as another avenue for poetic expression without necessarily providing any scope for a national identity, as many later literary histories claim. Indeed, people's relationship to language was entirely different in the era before the nation-state became the base unit of polity.

Reader, I owe you some parting words on cosmopolitanism. In India today, many aspects of the cosmopolitan past described in this study are now coded as "Muslim" and because of the majoritarian chauvinist turn in Indian politics, they are therefore probably irretrievable. It is an incalculable loss. Intellectual history can show us possibilities for imagining society that seem remote under current circumstances, though we must be vigilant about romanticizing the past as we are engaged in imagining it. There are conceptual alternatives to the nation-state available to us, one of which is a transnational political and aesthetic culture of the sort that the Persian cosmopolis represented. About a decade ago

when this project was in its early stages, I imagined that, both in the West and especially in the postcolonial world, we could scrape off the dead wood of nationalism and expose a living, pre-modern cosmopolitanism that could be nursed back to health. I no longer think so. No depth of knowledge of a cosmopolitan past will bring about a cosmopolitan future because what is relevant is people's inherent desire to be cosmopolitan or not. Historical knowledge cannot on its own create that orientation. Literature, on the other hand, is fundamentally imaginative and is therefore one of our most powerful tools for inspiring people to make cosmopolitan connections. However, cosmopolitanism built upon a formal literature entrenches the privilege of an elite and there is simply no way around that fact because literate cosmopolitans share a canon that they must have had the opportunity to study. Some people are always excluded from mastering this canon, either by circumstances or by institutional gatekeepers. Cosmopolitanism, I was humbled to learn in the past few years, is not a panacea even when it comes close to its ideal form. Sometimes I am hopeful about the prospects of building a more cosmopolitan culture in the communities in which I have a stake, and sometimes, especially when I consider how universities are struggling, I despair. This self-reflection may be an odd way to end an academic book, but these odd times seem to call for it. I wish you well on your own journey.

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Note: For abbreviations of Ārzū's major works used here, see Abbreviations of Ārzū's Major Works on p xi.

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Index

- Āb-i Hayāt, *see* Āzād, Muhammad Husain
- Ancients and Moderns 40, 98, 101, 110, 116, 118–19, 126, 128, 143, 243–4
see also Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns
- Arabic philology 55–7, 59–62, 72–3, 90
- Ārzū, Sirāj al-Din ‘Alī Khān:
ancestors 19–20, 35
birth 18–19
education 21
in Delhi 22
in Lucknow 22–3
patrons 35–7
Urdu, role in 200–1, 212–13
works 45–52
- Ātashkadah, *see* Āzar, Lutf ‘Alī Beg
- ‘Atiyah-i Kubrā 45–6, 48, 91
- Āzād Bilgrāmī, Mīr Ghulām ‘Alī 32, 122, 124, 217–19
- Āzād, Muhammad Husain 193–8, 210, 245
- Āzar, Lutf ‘Alī Beg 96, 106–9
- Bahār-i ‘Ajām, *see* Bahār, Ṭek Chand
- Bahār, Muḥammad Taqī 103–4, 108, 129
- Bahār, Ṭek Chand 23–4, 27–9, 154–6, 181
- Bedil, Mīrzā ‘Abd al-Qādir 22, 24, 25, 27, 29–31, 122, 199–200
- Blochmann, Henry 17, 145, 186
- Braj Bhāṣā 214–16, 220, 228
- Chirāgh-i Hidāyat 44, 47–8, 87, 134, 151–4, 179–80, 183, 184
- classical 8–9, 242,
- colonial historiography 3, 11–12, 39, 187–8, 199–200, 210–11, 242–3, 249–50, 275–6
- commentary (as a philological tool) 124–6
- cosmopolis 2, 6–9, 69, 129–33, 136, 258, 267, 281–2
- cosmopolitan versus vernacular language,
see cosmopolis; vernacular
- Dād-i Sukhan 32, 115, 116–24, 130, 212, 227, 230
- dictionaries, *see* lexicography
- Dihkhdā, ‘Alī-Akbar 17, 184, 186
- early modernity 54, 93, 238–40, 242–4
- Farhang-i Jahāngīrī 62–4, 79, 119, 145–9, 246
- Fresh Speech, *see* tāzah-goī
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg 9–11, 106, 136
- Ĝharā’ib al-Lughāt 165–6
- Gwalior 18–19, 21, 214, 220
- Hātim, Zuhūr al-Dīn (Shāh Hātim) 197, 201–3, 228
- Hazin, Shaikh Muhammād ‘Alī 29, 33, 38–42, 51, 95, 99–100, 110, 118, 125–9, 155
- hindī xiii, 15–16, 21, 48, 57, 79, 85, 139–40, 144, 159, 163, 165, 190, 198, 211, 214, 221, 225, 233, 264
- hindī-yi kitābī 81, 83
- Hindi, Modern Standard xiii, 48, 202, 273, 275
- iḥām 92–3, 196–7
- Indian style, *see* sabk-i hindī
- Jones, Sir William 16, 245–9
- Karnāmah, *see* Munīr Lahorī, Abū al-Barakāt
- Ķhiyābān-i Gulistān 27, 47, 87, 125
- Ķhusrau, Amīr 69, 97, 99, 106–7, 110, 115, 120, 134, 138–9, 196, 219, 259, 271–2

- Khwushgo, Bindrāban Dās 18–19, 34, 131–2
- Latin 7, 8, 113–14, 208, 232, 235, 242, 256, 257–8, 267, 276
- lexicography:
as source for intellectual history 47–8, 142, 147
hindī 144, 160, 161–76
Persian in South Asia 63–4, 143–4, 145–6
see also *Chirāgh-i Hidāyat*; *Lughatnāmah*; *Mir'āt al-İştilāh*; *Muṣṭalahāt al-Shū'arā*; *Nawādir al-Alfāz*; *Sirāj al-Lughat*
- linguistics, see philology
- Linguistic Survey of India 260–1
- Lughatnāmah*, see Dihkhudā
- Majma' al-Nafā'is* 18, 22, 25, 28, 30, 32, 49–50, 139, 203, 206–8
- Mauhibat-i 'Uzma'* 48, 90
- metaphorical language 59–61, 88–93, 195, 218–19
see also *iḥām*
- Mir'āt al-İştilāh* 27, 122, 157–61, 177, 181
- Mīr, Mīr Muhammad Taqī 23, 35, 203–6
see also *Nikāt al-Shū'arā*
- Mukhlīs, Anand Rām 15–16, 23, 25–7, 78, 121–2
see also *Mir'āt al-İştilāh*
- multilingualism 3–4, 211–12, 236, 262, 263–5
- Munīr Lahorī, Abū al-Barakāt 95, 96–9, 101, 114–15, 153
- Mušmir* 48–9, 56, 93, 150–1, 174, 242
- Muṣṭalahāt al-Shū'arā* 43, 45, 156–7
- Nawādir al-Alfāz* 48, 162–6, 179–80
- Nikāt al-Shū'arā* 92, 190–3, 200, 204, 230
- Orientalism 17, 58, 124, 183, 251
see also colonial historiography
- Pārs (mythical king) 64–6
- Persian dialects (as described in pre-modern sources) 66–9, 146–7
see also Persian, regional usage in
- Persian, regional usage in 66, 74–6, 130–1, 153–4
- philology 4–5, 54–6, 166, 237, 276
see also Arabic philology
- plagiarism 41, 100, 111, 128
- Qatil, Muhammad Hasan 138–9
- Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns 113–4, 135, 250–5
- rekhtah* 163, 187–9, 191, 204–6, 211, 220–1, 224, 233, 259, 269
- rozmarrah* 119, 134, 225–6, 228, 230
- Şabāt, Mīr Muhammad 'Azīm 41, 100
- sabk-i hindī* 30, 95, 101–5, 108, 129, 140
- sanad* 94, 111–13, 118, 123, 126, 152, 158, 223, 260
- Sanskrit, see *hindī-yi kitābī*
- sariqat*, see plagiarism
- Sarkhwush, Mīrzā Muḥammad Afzāl 31, 32–33, 34
- Sirāj al-Lughat* 28, 44, 47, 87, 149–51, 171, 246–7
- Sirāj-i Munīr* 47, 115–16
- Skinner, Quentin 11–12, 114
- Tanbih al-Ğāfilin* 40, 43, 99–100, 115–17, 118, 128, 139
- taşarrufat* 77, 118, 133, 135, 212
- tawāfiq al-lisānain* 58, 85–8, 165, 169
- tāzah-go'ī* 44, 94–5, 104–5
- tazikrah* xiii–xiv, 17, 24–5, 32, 64, 110, 159, 190, 194, 204
- Tuhfat al-Hind* 167–8, 193, 219, 270
- Ummīd, Qizilbāsh Khān 33, 40, 129, 139–40, 158, 206–7
- Urdu, scholars' definitions of 69, 174, 187–8, 192, 198, 202, 209–10, 222–3
see also *hindī*; *rekhtah*
- vernacular 136, 187–8, 208–9, 232, 233, 241–2, 256–7, 268, 271
see also cosmopolis
- Wārastah, Siyālkotī Mal 42–5
see also *Muṣṭalahāt al-Shū'arā*
- Wālī, Wali Muhammad 190, 192
- Wālīh Dāghistānī, 'Ali Quli Khān 38, 127
- zabān-i hindī*, see *hindī*