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Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu

DISSERTATION


submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of


DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Comparative Literature


by


Alexander Jabbari


Dissertation Committee:
Professor Nasrin Rahimieh, Chair
Chancellor's Professor Aijaz Ahmad
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2017

# DEDICATION

إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ لَسِحْرًا

وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْشِعْرِ لَحِكْمَةِ

For my parents, Debbie and Kamran Jabbari

and for my two greatest friends,

Sina Salessi and Tahereh Aghdasifar

دریغ و درد که تا این زمان ندانستم

که کیمیای سعادت رفیق بود رفیق

حافظ

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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| | |
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# ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu

By

Alexander Jabbari

Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature

University of California, Irvine, 2017

Professor Nasrin Rahimieh, Chair

"Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu" examines the modernization of Persianate literature and the emergence of modern literary historiography as a shared development between Iran and India in the 19th and 20th centuries. Focusing on the premodern *tazkirah* (literary anthology) genre as well as literary histories produced for new educational institutions, I examine how modernizing intellectuals and litterateurs appropriated the premodern literary tradition in developing the modern, nationalist genre of Persian literary history. By reading Persian and Urdu texts together, I trace intellectual and literary exchange between Iranians and Indians and contend that the Persianate literary tradition endures through the medium of Urdu. In this way, "Late Persianate Literary Culture" complicates and challenges nationalist assumptions about Persian literature and Iranian intellectual and literary history. I further argue that literary modernization was understood as a set of formal conventions, including standard typography and orthography, punctuation, and simplified prose, as well as thematic conventions, including Victorian-influenced sexual mores and a rise and fall model of history. These conventions were both products of modernizing technologies such as print, but also seen as productive technologies in and of themselves.

# INTRODUCTION

*Overview*

For centuries, Persian was the preeminent language of learning throughout a broad region consisting not only of Iran, but reaching from the Balkans in the west to China in the east, and from Central Asia in the north to India in the south. Those societies where Persian was used as a literary language, whether or not people actually spoke Persian in their daily lives, are collectively referred to as the Persianate world. "Persianate" is a term coined by Marshall Hodgson to refer not only to the culture of Persian-speakers, but more broadly to those who "depended upon Persian wholly or in part for their prime literary inspiration. We may call all [those] cultural traditions, carried in Persian or reflecting Persian inspiration, 'Persianate' by extension."[1] This term was coined on the basis of another neologism of his, "Islamicate," itself formed on the analogy of "Italianate," that is, things associated with the Italian style or manner beyond the confines of Italy itself.[2]

One of the aims of the present study is to demonstrate how Persian learning survived after the Persianate world was broken up by colonialism, nationalism, and modernization. In particular, I challenge some of the dominant narratives about Persian and the Persianate world: that influence always flowed in one direction from Persian, the prestige language, to local vernaculars such as Urdu; and that Persian learning did not survive in India after 1837, which is when the British East India Company replaced the use of Persian in official contexts with Urdu and other vernacular languages, thus—according to one influential narrative—making the Persian texts of India "homeless."[3]

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[1] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, II: 293-4.
[2] Ibid., I: 57-60.
[3] Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran.*

In the Persianate world, the encounter with modernization was marked by colonial subjugation in India and Central Asia, and loss of territorial integrity in Iran. Modernization was experienced through its technologies, including tanks, the steam engine, railways, and the printing press. I argue that this was true as well of intellectuals who experienced literary modernization through conventions that they treated as a kind of technology. However, rather than being passive receptacles or slavish imitators of modernization, these intellectuals actively participated in its production through dialogic exchange with Asian as well as European interlocutors. This reverses Benedict Anderson's famous dictum that "print-language is what invents nationalism": in the Persianate world, nationalism and the desire for modernization— motivated by apprehension about being subjugated by the Europeans—spurred intellectuals to reform and revitalize their literary traditions and invent print culture.[4]

An illustrative example can be found in the figure of Muhammad Rahim Khan II, the ruler of Khiva, in modern-day Uzbekistan. In 1874, a year after the territory was annexed by the Russian Empire, Muhammad Rahim invited an expert from Iran to establish a palace lithographic printing press, the first such publishing house in Central Asia.[5] Though the press was actively used, creating lithographed editions of hundreds of works of the Persian, Arabic, and Turkic classical literary tradition, the region had extremely limited literacy and the works produced did not circulate outside the court. This was not a case of, as Anderson argues throughout *Imagined Communities*, nationalism emerging organically out of print culture that was connecting people for the first time; instead, we can see that Muhammad Rahim understood the printing press as an

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[4] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 134.
[5] Erkinov, "How Muḥammad Raḥīm Khān II of Khiva (1864-1910) Cultivated His Court Library," 45. I draw also from Marc Toutant's conference paper, "Replacing Persian as the Main Literary Language."

instrument of modernization, something he needed to have if he wished to be modern, and a tool to be used not to break with tradition, but to protect it.

As Persianate intellectuals encountered modern European genres of writing such as the nationalist literary history, they understood them in much the same way as Muhammad Rahim understood his printing press. Like the press, literary history was a kind of modern technology, the very use of which marked one as modern. Yet, at the same time, the purpose of this modern technology was not to break entirely with tradition – quite the opposite. Fearing European domination, they sought to reform, strengthen, and revitalize tradition, in order to ensure its survival. This dissertation explores how modern Persian literary historiography emerged between Iran and India in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I examine how modernizing intellectuals in these countries engaged with the premodern Persian literary tradition, in particular the *tazkirah* genre, and argue that they understood literary modernization through a set of formal and thematic conventions. While there is a comparatist element to the project, this is not so much a comparative analysis of literary modernization in two countries (Iran and India) or two languages (Persian and Urdu), but a story of connected development. It takes Persian as its primary focus, but demonstrates how Urdu sources and Indian history are germane—even necessary—to understanding the emergence of modern Persian literary historiography.

## <u>Literature review</u>

This project brings together issues of language politics, intellectual exchange, print culture, modernization, nationalism, and sexuality in Iran and India in the 19th and 20th centuries. As such, I address below some of the extant literature in these areas, beginning with the movement to reform the Persian language and simplify its prose. This movement sheds light on Indo-Iranian intellectual connections at the turn of the century. Translation has also played a role

in the movement, but scholars have focused their attention on Persian translations from European languages, and to a lesser degree Ottoman Turkish, while ignoring the role of Urdu. Because I argue that changing sexual conventions were an important part of Persianate literary modernization, I then review some of the scholarship on Persianate sexuality, which has explored several genres (novels, poetry, travelogues, and others) while largely ignoring the genre this study focuses on: the literary history. Finally, I survey some of the approaches to the question of modernity and modernization in the Persianate world and conclude by restating the interventions this dissertation makes in the literature.

*Reforming Persian*

Suffering colonization and territorial losses at the hands of powerful European empires, elites across the Persianate world in the 19th and early 20th centuries struggled to make sense of their new, weakened place in the world. The aftermath of increased contact with Europe and disastrous wars with Russia led to Persianate elites rushing to discover the secret of European success and their own falling behind.[6] This issue, which was to become a cliché and a national obsession that persist to this day, is best summed up in the pithy question "why did Iran lag behind while the West progressed?"[7] In their efforts to answer this question, Persianate intellectuals did not necessarily distinguish between their (often uncritical) appraisal of the technologies of European modernization – modern weaponry, military organization and bureaucracy, a centralized state and institutions such as a national educational system, the printing press – and other aspects of modern European material and intellectual culture –

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[6] Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions*, 4–6.

[7] This was the title of a popular scholarly book in Persian, *Chira iran 'aqab mand va gharb pish raft?* by Kazim 'Alamdari, first published in 2001 and reprinted at least 15 times since – attesting both to the long-enduring impact of the sense of national inferiority produced by the 19th century encounter with European colonial powers, as well as the contemporary popularity of the notion of European superiority and the quest for Iran to 'catch up.'

clothing, language, literary genres, sexual mores, and so on. While European linguistic reforms

and the development of simple prose language were crucially relevant to the formation of

modern states, militaries, and other institutions, French hats may not have been the secret to

European military successes. Yet clothing, for example, was taken as seriously for reform as

anything else.[8] Modernizers strove to adopt not only what they saw as modern European

technologies, but modern European conventions altogether.

Until the modernizing reforms of the 19th and 20th centuries and the advent of mass

literacy later in the 20th, Persian literature had always been limited to an elite circle of

litterateurs. Historically, someone educated enough to read and compose Persian would also have

been expected to master Arabic (comparable to the role of Latin in early modern Europe), with

the result that Persian literature was often filled with quotations in the original Arabic from the

Qur'an and other religious texts as well as the Arabic poetic canon, thus putting Persian literature

even further out of reach of the average uneducated Persian-speaker. Classical Persian literature

considered form to be just as important as content, and prose, especially by the 19th century, had

become increasingly complex and decorative. What later modernizers came to identify as

repetition (for example, including multiple synonyms for words, or rephrasing the same sentence

multiple times), redundancy, flowery writing, exaggeration and hyperbole (eg. in praise of the

patron of a text, typically a sultan or other courtly personage), and excessive borrowing from

Arabic, had all once been standard aspects of good Persian writing. Before modernization, the

aim of many a Persianate litterateur was not to communicate something effectively or quickly,

but beautifully (according to the conventions of the time, which did not necessarily include

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[8] In 1928, Reza Pahlavi imposed European dress on Iranians by law as part of his drive to modernize the country, including the French-style 'Pahlavi hat.' See Chehabi "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes." Sartorial reform, especially headwear, was part of modernizing platforms elsewhere in the Middle East as well. On the Turkish case see Nereid, "Kemalism on the Catwalk."

succinctness), and to showcase the writer's knowledge through use of obscure vocabulary and mastery of Arabic.

As Iranians sought to catch up to Europe in developing a modern nation-state with modern institutions, their efforts entailed "a general simplification of the [Persian] literary style to make the language more amenable to modern, scientific concepts and modes of thought, as well as more direct and accessible to readers of the gradually increasing print culture."[9] Modern bureaucratic institutions like the military and public education required a simpler language suitable to their purposes.[10] However, there was a longer history of language reform dating back to the early modern period.

Precedent for Persian language reform can be found long before the particular circumstances of colonialism and modernization described above. In the 16th-17th centuries, a Zoroastrian priest (*dastur*) by the name of Azar Kayvan emigrated from Safavid Iran to Mughal India, where he and his disciplines sought to promote Iranian/Zoroastrian culture over Arab/Islamic influences, creating an Iran-centric revisionist history and theology through their literary works such as *Dasatir-namah, Dabistan-i mazahib,* and *Sharistan-i danish va gulistan-i binish*.[11] To that end, they composed their works (collectively referred to as 'Dasatiri' texts) in an artificial Persian stripped (or in their view, 'purified') of Arabic loanwords. The writers revived formerly obsolete Persian words or created Persian neologisms to replace the Arabic words commonly used in Persian. These revived terms and neologisms were preserved in dictionaries such as *Burhan-i qati'* and *Farhang-i jahangiri*, which were later used as sources by

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[9] Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 65.

[10] Tavakoli-Targhi, "Historiography," 16. Compare with similar linguistic reforms in Turkish that began in the late Ottoman period and accelerated greatly under Mustafa Kemal 'Atatürk,' creating the modern Turkish language. See Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*.

[11] Corbin, "ĀẔAR KAYVĀN"; Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 77.

19th-century language reformers in Iran.[12] The later reformers were also at the center of political, religious, and social changes that marked the era of modernization.

The process of reforming and simplifying Persian prose came to involve purging the language of its Arabic loanwords, which the reformers perceived to be "difficult."[13] However, such reforms were not solely motivated by utilitarianism. The Iranian intelligentsia of the time, imbued with nationalist views and a racialized understanding of civilization, was concerned with the 'purity' and 'integrity' of the Persian language, and considered such reforms to be a process of purification. The antimony of many language reformers to Arabic was less motivated by practical linguistic concerns than by anti-Arab and/or anti-Islamic discourses imported from European Orientalism, which juxtaposed progressive, enlightened 'Aryan' civilization with regressive, backwards 'Semitic' barbarism.[14]

*The role of India in Iranian reforms*

In the 19th century, Iranian intellectuals were developing new contacts with the Parsi Zoroastrians of Bombay, who the Iranians believed had maintained the authentic Iranian culture and religion. The Parsis trace their lineage back to Zoroastrians who fled the Arab-Islamic conquest of Iran in the seventh century CE and settled primarily in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, India. The contacts between Parsis and Iranian Muslims introduced a neo-Zoroastrian trend to Iran, which brought the formerly marginalized Dasatiri texts into the sphere of influence. Those texts served as a model for 'pure' (de-Arabicized) Persian, and, along with the *Shahnamah* of Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi, provided the literary foundation for the movement to purify Persian.[15]

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[12] Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 88.
[13] Tavakoli-Targhi, "Historiography."
[14] Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 71.
[15] Ibid., 57-60.

Political and economic developments in India played a role in Persian language reform, and ultimately in the formation of Iranian nationalism. Persian had been widely used as a court language by the Mughals and other rulers in India, and it initially maintained patronage under British East India Company rule. However, in 1837 the British abolished Persian as the official language of India on the grounds that it was, allegedly, linguistically inadequate for communicating modern thought, replacing it with English at the state level and Urdu and other vernacular languages in the local courts.[16] This became further motivation for Iranians to reform Persian, as they were acutely self-conscious of how they were viewed by Europeans. They strove to coin neologisms and write advanced Persian grammars to demonstrate the language's strength and its compatibility with modernity. The development that perhaps had the greatest impact on Persian language reform, however, was the British introduction of the printing press to India.

Initially, the printing press was brought to India and a Persian typeface was created for it in order to serve the needs of the British colonial administration as well as Christian missionaries seeking to proselytize to Indians. It was brought into greater use when it began to be used to print Persian books and newspapers. The *Shahnamah* (meaning "Book of Kings"), an epic Persian poem written by Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi in the 11th century, which records and exalts the pre-Islamic history of Iran, was especially popular in the emerging Persian print culture. Owing to its tremendous length (around 60,000 verses), it was arduous to transcribe by hand and virtually impossible to memorize in its entirety; thus, for centuries it had been primarily experienced as an oral text, with its more popular stories recited orally, though beautiful hand-made illustrated copies were also commissioned by kings. With the advent of the printing press, it became cheap and painless to reproduce, and copies of the *Shahnamah* began to circulate in India and Iran.

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[16] Tavakoli-Targhi, "Historiography," 16.

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Both its content and its language (it contained relatively few Arabic words) made it very popular amongst neo-Zoroastrians, Iranian nationalists, and Persian language reformers.[17]

The *Shahnamah* revival spawned an entire genre of imitators which mimicked its allegedly pure Persian language as well as its content. It is worth noting that, while the *Shahnamah* was (and still is) upheld as a paragon of pure Persian, it was not written with any such goal in mind. At the time of its writing Persian had not yet absorbed the bulk of its Arabic vocabulary, and so its language was quite ordinary, no more or less Arabicized than most other cotemporaneous works. Furthermore, the nation-state model and surrounding discourses about linguistic integrity would have been utterly foreign to Firdawsi, as they are very much a product of modernity.

Another important use of the printing press was the production of Persian newspapers. As Iranian intellectuals became independent from state and religious institutions, they developed as professional writers and were increasingly able to produce Persian writing outside the court. Aided by the printing press and influenced by their culturally hybrid environments in diaspora, they became prolific newspaper writers (notably in Baku, Berlin, Cairo, Istanbul, Calcutta, London, Paris, and Tiflis). In addition to being vehicles for the latest debates in sociopolitical and religious thought, their newspapers were hugely influential on the development and reform of the Persian language.

Persian-language newspapers gained larger audiences as Iran's economy became further integrated into global capital, contributing to the emergence of liberal subjectivity and modern concepts of privacy and leisure time. The combination of these cultural factors led literate Iranians to constantly seek out new reading material (rather than the traditional manner of reading which involved perusing and revisiting texts such as the Qur'an or the Divan of Hafiz),

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[17] Marashi, "The Nation's Poet," 94; Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 97-98.

rendering them ideal newspaper consumers.[18] As the newspaper market grew, it began to exert influence over the newspaper writers. Desire to reach as broad an audience as possible further contributed to the reform and vernacularization of Persian, as writers sought to make the language more accessible to as broad a base of readers as possible. Pressure to publish daily, along with their pre-existing predilection for imitating Europe, led writers to cut creative corners by translating and imitating European and Ottoman Turkish publications (which were themselves heavily imitative of European writing).[19] This caused not only creative and stylistic stagnation, but also an increased reliance on neologisms rather than using existing words or turns of phrase. That, in turn, may have undermined the reforms that sought to make Persian simpler and clearer, by introducing a body of unfamiliar and thus unclear vocabulary. Additionally, many of the language purists who sought to rid Persian of Arabic loanwords often had few qualms about importing loanwords from European languages, chiefly French and English; this was the case not only with Iranian reformers, but their Ottoman and later Republican Turkish counterparts as well.[20]

*Translation and prose simplification*

Julie Meisami also argues that "change in literary tastes and circumstances [were] motivated largely by increasing contact with the West, a major vehicle for which was, of course, translation."[21] She ties the development of new prose conventions in Persian to the translation of European-language works into Persian, especially through Dar al-Funun, Iran's first modern institution of higher learning.[22] One translated text is deemed particularly significant, by

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[18] Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals*, 50.
[19] Ibid., 16.
[20] Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, 118.
[21] Meisami, "Iran," 46.
[22] Dar al-Funun was established in 1851 and was refashioned nearly a century later into the University of Tehran. Its role as the patron of translations that modernized Persian prose is

Meisami as well as many other scholars: *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (James

Morier, 1824).[23] *Hajji Baba* is an English novel depicting the travels of a fictional Iranian, Mirza

Hajji Baba. It was translated into Persian in 1905, when it caused outrage among Iranians due to

its critical depiction of Iranian society, especially Iranian sexual mores.[24] Meisami explains that

the translation of *Hajji Baba*, like many other early translations of European works into Persian,

was not closely faithful to its source material; instead, it was more of a loose adaptation, with

decorative embellishments such as snippets of classical Persian poetry that the original lacked.

Amy Motlagh suggests that the translation was indicative of the uneasy place of Persian prose

alongside poetry in this period, explaining how early novels such as this one "feature extended

portions written in verse."[25] Nevertheless, the translation of *Hajji Baba* was still markedly

different from premodern prose works, and came to serve as a model for modern Persian prose;

as Kamran Rastegar put it, "it became recognized as a major landmark in the reworking of

Persian prose from the previous courtly and highly ornamented style into a written vernacular, a

common and widely understandable prose."[26]

 *Hajji Baba* became influential in Iran after having been a huge hit at home in Europe,

widely read and praised in its English original as well as in French and German translations.

However, it was not only Europe's prestigious literature that was translated into Persian and

remarkably comparable to that of Fort William College, an academy founded in 1800 in British
India which patronized translations that modernized Urdu prose, discussed in chapter one.

[23] For more on the significance of this book's translation, see also Rastegar, *Literary Modernity*,
126-144; Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 35-37; Rahimieh, *Oriental Responses to the West*,
21-22.

[24] Wendy DeSouza notes how the book and its translation shaped both the European image of
Iran as well as the Iranian self-image, the latter mediated by the exchange of European and
Iranian gazes (DeSouza, "The Love That Dare Not Be Translated," 70; for an elaboration of how
the European gaze(s) shaped how Iranians came to understand themselves, see Rahimieh,
*Oriental Responses to the West*, 19-23; Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 26-60 (especially
32-39); Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 35-53).

[25] Motlagh, *Burying the Beloved*, 30.

[26] Rastegar, *Literary Modernity*, 128.

impacted Persian prose, but less prestigious works as well. The influential Iranian literary

historian Yahya Aryanpur (1907-1985) notes how the early translators "wrote prefaces and

introductions to trivial, commercial crime novels, in which they discussed the necessity of

spreading knowledge and acquiring education and skill, and praised the generosity and assistance

of the sacred royal personage who was inclined towards such high and lofty goals."[27] Meisami

supports Aryanpur's claim by pointing to how these early translations were read as important

scientific works and not merely sources of entertainment: for example, the 1871 Persian

translation of Jules Verne's *Adventures of Captain Hatteras* "appeared in instalments in the

'scientific part' of the journal *Iran*, an official Government organ devoted to court news and

reports on the personal doings of the Shah."[28] Despite this criticism, Aryanpur also notes that the

simple, natural prose of the source material forced the Persian translators to write similarly, thus

helping to birth a less ornate and more natural style of Persian prose.[29]

Meisami critiques Aryanpur as overlooking the dual purpose of these translations: not

only were they seen as technologies of modernity and new conventions for writing, but they were

also read as exotic sources of entertainment.[30] I propose that the two are linked: it is their

'modern-ness,' that is, their unfamiliarity and fresh-feeling natural prose style that makes them

exotic and interesting to read. Meisami goes on to suggest that "interest in the West, while

concerned with adapting those materials which were of immediate relevancy or utility, also

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[27] Meisami, "Iran," 47.

[28] Ibid., 48.

[29] Ibid. An interesting parallel can be observed in the crime novels of the 20th century Urdu writer Asrar Ahmad 'Ibn-i Safi.' Widely popular but deemed unworthy of scholarly attention by earlier generations of Urdu literary critics, Ibn-i Safi's novels have more recently been critically appreciated by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi and C.M. Naim for their role in developing modern Urdu realist prose.

[30] Ibid., 49-50.

carried with it a strong element of 'exoticism' in its curiosity about an unfamiliar culture."[31]

Producing language in new ways is exciting, and the affective experience of altering language

has appealed to reformers in various periods and for sundry reasons, from the Zoroastrian

reformers of the 17th century to Pahlavi modernizers in the 20th.

*Sexual conventions*

In addition to the formal conventions, like prose style discussed above, Persianate literary

modernization had a particular set of thematic conventions as well. One such convention was a

Victorian-flavored puritanism in matters of sexuality, which broke sharply with pre-modern

sexual conventions. Unlike the European tradition in which the ideal of beauty was feminine, in

the pre-modern Persianate world, "notions of beauty were largely undifferentiated by gender …

that is, beautiful men and women were depicted with very similar facial and bodily features."[32]

In fact, the ideal subject of beauty in much Persianate literature was a young boy on the cusp of

puberty, with either a hairless face or the earliest traces of hair on his cheeks and upper lip.[33]

Youth at this stage were referred to as *amrad*s (among other names), and much literature was

dedicated to the depiction of their beauty and to older men gazing at *amrad*s, desiring them, and

engaging in sexual acts with them.[34] "Male beauty and male homoeroticism were considered the

superior sentiments" in literature, over the depiction of female beauty and heteroeroticism.[35]

This is not to say that the Persianate world was by and large homosexual. Persianate

society of this time expected adult men to marry women and procreate; engaging in pederastic

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[31] Ibid. This may also be read as yet another counterexample to Bernard Lewis's notorious and now widely debunked claim that 'Muslims' lacked the kind of interest in Europe that European Orientalists took in the Islamicate world. See also Rahimieh, *Oriental Responses to the West*, 13; Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 18-20.

[32] Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 11.

[33] Ibid., 15.

[34] It bears noting that *amrad*s were a separate social group, not a stage all young men necessarily passed through on the way to adult malehood (ibid., 24).

[35] Ibid., 17.

pleasures was something that generally existed alongside heterosexual activity, not instead of it. Furthermore, sexual identity did not exist as such in premodern Iran. As Michel Foucault famously explained in his *History of Sexuality*, the 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' as types, or identities, emerged in modern Europe. Thus it was that modern Europeans, with their particular understanding of sexuality, came to see Iranians as sexual deviants, and it was this judgmental European gaze that played an important role in transforming Persianate sexual conventions, as Iranians began to see themselves through European eyes. "By the early nineteenth century, Iranian men had become acutely and increasingly aware that Europeans considered Iranian older man-younger man love and sexual practice a vice."[36] The same was largely true of India.

One common response from modernizers was to separate homosociality from homosexuality and decry the latter, as Najmabadi explains:

> The anger at European readings of Iranian social and sexual mores began to reconfigure structures of desire by introducing a demarcation to distinguish homosociality from homosexuality. Iranians began to find themselves "explaining" to European visitors that at least some of the practices that the latter read as homosexuality, such as men holding hands, embracing, and kissing each other in public, were not so: the Europeans were misreading homosociality for homosexuality.[37]

In their disavowal/denial of the assumed homosexuality behind homosocial practices, Iranians inadvertently produced homosexuality as a category in Iran,[38] though as Najmabadi later points out, the existence of this category never successfully produced hegemonic sexual identities as in

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[36] Ibid., 33-34.
[37] Ibid., 38.
[38] Ibid.

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Europe.[39] Iranians internalized the European view that associated homoeroticism with backwardness, leading them to answer the central question of the Iranian experience with modernity ("why did Iran lag behind while the West progressed?") by pointing to Iranian sexual practices and mores as the source of Iran's perceived backwardness.

*Hajji Baba*, discussed above for its prose style, also exemplifies this shift in sexual conventions. In the English original, the author "uses the Hajji as a ventriloquist to express some of these anxieties" about differing European and Iranian sexual mores.[40] The book makes several pointed references to Iranian homoeroticism and homosociality (the latter of which was read by Europeans as synonymous with the former), and "it became popular [among Europeans] 'not least for its sexual eccentricity fondly supposed in 1824 to be peculiar to Oriental races.'"[41] It was condemned by Iranian modernizers Muhammad Qazvini (1874-1949), himself a literary critic, and Sayyid Hasan Taqizadah (1878-1970) as having "distorted European views of Persians,"[42] and "displeased Iranians in high circles sufficiently."[43] *Hajji Baba*'s reception in Iran can therefore be seen as emblematic of Iran's adoption of modern sexual conventions which rejected homoeroticism.

Modernizing sexual conventions can also be found in other genres of Persian literature: in travelogues (*safarnamah*) to Europe, where "by the end of the nineteenth century, male [Iranian] travelers continued to report beautiful women, but they no longer wrote about" beautiful boys as they once had;[44] in literary criticism that condemned the classical homoerotic tradition and took on a Victorian-flavored ethics of shame about sexuality, in sharp contrast to the premodern

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[39] Ibid., 57.
[40] Ibid., 35-36.
[41] DeSouza, "The Love That Dare Not Be Translated," 70.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 36.
[44] Ibid., 53-57.

tradition of speaking openly and unabashedly (even, at times, lewdly) about sexual matters;[45]

and in poetry, especially that celebrating the 'motherland.'[46] The latter represented another facet

of modernizing sexual conventions: the dual, dialectically-linked emergence of the female

beloved and the female motherland (*vatan*) as objects of desire and love in poetry.[47] "The human

beloved's femaleness marks vatan as female; in turn, vatan's femaleness consolidates the

affection of the man for the woman as the same passion that had once belonged to the domain of

male homoerotics."[48] As the preceding quote demonstrates, the conventions of modernization

(here, its sexual conventions in particular) linked sexuality and nation closely together.

*Modernization: indigenous or imitative?*

How much of the process of modernization is indigenous, and how much is imitative of

European models? There are a range of views on the subject. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi sees

Iranian nationalism – and Persianate modernity more broadly – as having developed dialectically

between Iran and Europe (mediated at times by India):

> Modernity can be viewed as a product of a globalizing network of power and
>
> knowledge that informed the heterotopic experiences of crisscrossing peoples and
>
> cultures and thus provided multiple scenarios of self-refashioning. Whereas
>
> Europeans reconstituted the modern self in relation to their non-Western Others,
>
> Asians and Africans began to redefine the self in relation to Europe, their new
>
> significant Other.[49]

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[45] DeSouza, "The Love That Dare Not Be Translated," 76-78.

[46] Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 97-131.

[47] Najmabadi explains how the term *vatan* shifts in meaning during this time period, from its origin as an ungendered Islamic concept roughly equivalent to 'hometown' to its modern reconception as 'nation,' gendered female as the mother(land) in need of male protection or the female beloved to be desired by her male lover; I discuss this at greater length in chapter one.

[48] Ibid., 113.

[49] Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 4.

Najmabadi takes a similar approach, arguing that European and Iranian modernities were constitutive of one another and pointing out that

> Power … was not an even field, but that does not mean that cultural agency flowed in one direction. That we worry about the question of agency in one direction but never consider the impact of "the East" on "the West" as an issue of denial of agency for Europe is a colonial/anticolonial legacy that continues to inform our current thinking.[50]

On the other side of the spectrum lies Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, who sees Iranian nationalism and modernity as involving "blind mimicry of European ways."[51] Mostafa Vaziri similarly sees Iranian nationalism (and even Iranian identity altogether) as a derivative discourse in his *Iran as Imagined Nation*. At the risk of evoking a cliché, I propose an approach somewhere in the middle of these poles. Iranian literary modernization, with all its linguistic, sexual, and nationalist attributes, was produced using local raw materials, so to speak: the Persian texts and concepts that were remade under modern conditions (for example the refashioning of the local concept of *vatan* into 'motherland,' as discussed above, or the use of the local genre of *tazkirah* for producing modern literary histories, as detailed in the second chapter of this dissertation). Yet if we continue with the production metaphor, we must admit that the blueprint was imported from Europe. The conventions I argue make up Persianate literary modernization—formal ones such as simplified prose amenable to bureaucratic institutions, and thematic ones such as Victorian-influenced sexual mores—all find their origins in the colonizing powers of Europe.

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[50] Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 5-6.

[51] Reza-Ebrahimi, "Self-Orientalization," 470.

*Intervention*

This dissertation makes several interventions in the scholarly literature reviewed above. One of the most significant is its reading of Persian and Urdu texts together in its study of Persianate literary modernization. A major trend in Iranian Studies over the past fifteen years or so has been the increasing attention paid to India. Influential monographs such as Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography* (2001) and Afshin Marashi's *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (2008), among others, have demonstrated the importance of India, and of Indo-Iranian networks, to the emergence of Iranian nationalism and the modern Iranian state. Though these works succeeded in challenging nationalist paradigms that had defined the field, by not using Urdu-language sources they were largely limited to sources produced by those who had some ostensible connection to Iran, whether Iranian migrants and travelers writing in Persian, or Parsis writing in English or Persian who considered Iran their ancestral homeland. Thus, Iranian Studies scholars seeking to complicate and challenge nationalist frameworks had unwittingly upheld such a framework themselves.

The other significant intervention made by this study is its primary focus on the transition from the premodern Persianate *tazkirah* genre to the modern genre of literary history modeled after European histories of national literatures. While other scholars have focused on other areas and genres (translation, the novel, poetry, travelogues, and others) as discussed above, I argue that literary histories are an especially important genre for the study of literary modernization because writing the history of Persian literature was a project taken up not only by Iranians, but also by litterateurs in various other national and linguistic contexts, revealing how literary modernization was the product of dialogic exchange across borders and between languages.

Chapter one, "Late Persianate Literary Culture," examines the origins of the Persian and Urdu languages, arguing that both languages' identities were fundamentally shaped through encounter with another language: Persian with Arabic, and Urdu with Persian. The relationship of each language to its linguistic other is shown to play a key role in modern nationalist discourses and origin myths, with Iranian nationalists emphasizing continuity with the pre-Islamic past and antipathy to Arabic, while Urdu-speaking nationalists emphasized rupture with the  pre-Islamic past and affinity with Persian. This chapter challenges two widely-held assumptions in Iranian Studies: that Persian influenced Urdu but not the reverse, and that the era of Persianate India came to a close when Persian ceased to be used as an official language of government there in 1837. By tracing the continued interaction between Persian and Urdu after 1837, this first chapter also establishes a reason for reading Persian and Urdu literary historiography together in the rest of the dissertation.

The second chapter, "From *Tazkirah* to Literary History," is the heart of the dissertation. It argues for literary modernization as a discourse produced through interaction between Iranians and Indians. Specifically, I examine how modernizers appropriated the *tazkirah*, a premodern Persianate genre that functioned as a biographical anthology of poets, in developing literary histories of Persian as textbooks for modern educational institutions. I argue that the contradictions posed by using *tazkirah*s served as an invitation for modernizers to produce modern prose through literary history, in opposition to what they saw as deficiencies in the premodern tradition. These contradictions and deficiencies included the fact that *tazkirah* writers

did not see history as linear, progressive, and teleological, nor was historical accuracy necessarily a concern of theirs.

In chapter three, "The Conventions of Modern Prose," I outline the formal and thematic conventions of the new literary histories and other prose works discussed in the second chapter. Formal conventions include standard typography and orthography, punctuation, and simplified prose, whereas thematic conventions include Victorian-influenced sexual mores and a rise and fall model of history. I suggest that these conventions, rather than just emerging organically from the material conditions of modernization, were also fetishized as a kind of modernizing technology and seen as productive of (rather than products of) modernization. The dissertation concludes by arguing that people in the Persianate world—and elsewhere around the globe— have experienced modernization through its conventions.

# CHAPTER ONE

# LATE PERSIANATE LITERARY CULTURE

"Authenticity is therefore both past and future linked contingently by the ontological void of today. The past is the accomplished future and the future is the past reasserted; history is the past in the future anterior."

(Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*)[52]

This chapter explores the terrain of Persianate literary culture from the mid-19th to mid-20th century. I first trace the linguistic origins of Persian and Urdu, arguing that the character and respective identities of these two languages have been shaped by their relationships with other languages. I then examine how the relationship between Persian and Urdu changed as nationalism transformed these languages into vehicles for national or communal identities. While contemporary accounts of Persian and Urdu literary history assume a rupture between the two languages in 1837, I argue that exchange between them persisted long after what is commonly thought.

*The origins of Persian and its relationship to Arabic*

Persian as we know it today was born out of interaction with Arabic. It is noteworthy that this fact is not part of popular narratives about Persian whereas linguistic interaction is never left out of the story when it comes to Urdu, but we will return to that later. Orientalist scholarship beginning in the 18th century identified Old, Middle, and New Persian as part of the trajectory of the development of a single language.[53] Just as the written tradition in the nascent Romance

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[52] Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*, 106.

[53] My aim here is not to challenge the scientific genealogy of the language established by philologists and upheld by contemporary linguists, but to examine how popular 'origin myths' of languages appropriate linguistic narratives. The linguistic narratives about Persian and Urdu are broadly similar: earlier literary languages (Middle Persian and Khari Boli dialects) were

languages captured regional colloquial developments that had emerged out of Vulgar Latin but had not been reflected in standard written Latin, "New Persian" – which is what we are referring to when we speak of Persian today – was a new written standard using the Arabic script which captured grammatical and morphological changes that had taken place in spoken Middle Persian, but had not been reflected in the written language. These changes were not huge and are perhaps comparable to the differences between the Middle English of Chaucer and the early modern English of Shakespeare.[54] Far more significant than grammatical changes, however, were two features that gave New Persian its identity: the Arabic script and Arabic loanwords.

Following the Arab-Islamic conquest of Iran in the seventh century CE, Arabic took on importance in Iran as a language of religion and letters, and Persian (which had previously been written with a script derived from Aramaic) began to be transcribed according to the Arabic abjad writing system. Four additional letters were created in order to represent consonants present in Persian but not in Arabic. Sharing a writing system facilitated the large-scale borrowing of Arabic vocabulary, primarily in the form of adjectives and verbal nouns (*masdar*). Persian grammar allowed for the existence of compound verbs made up of a noun or adjective followed by an auxiliary verb, which facilitated the absorption of Arabic loanwords like *qabul* "acceptance" into compound verbs like *qabul kardan* "to accept," literally "to do acceptance." Though Arabic was only used exclusively in place of Persian for around two centuries, after which various dynasties began to use Persian as a courtly language and patronize Persian

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profoundly impacted by contact with outside traditions (Arabic and Persian, respectively) and vocabularies and orthographies borrowed from the contact languages gave these languages new identities. Yet for Iranian nationalism it is the continuity with the earlier literary language (viz. Middle Persian) that gives Persian its identity, not the contact with Arabic, whereas for "Urdu nationalism" (to borrow Kavita Datla's term) it is the reverse: borrowing from other languages gives Urdu its identity, while continuity with earlier forms is downplayed.
[54] For an overview of these developments in English, see Horobin, *How English Became English*, 27–33.

literature, Persian remained in productive engagement with Arabic for the following millennium. In later periods, loanwords entered Persian from Turkic languages, and still later from French, Russian, and eventually English, but never did Persian borrow from these languages to an extent at all comparable to its massive borrowings from Arabic, which fundamentally changed the course of the Persian language.[55]

Because Arabic remained part of a proper education, literacy in Persian was almost inseparable from literacy in Arabic, and a well-educated person could be expected to know both.[56] Persian took its most important literary forms from Arabic, including poetic forms such as *qasidah* (a kind of panegyric) and *ghazal* and prose genres such as *risalah* (epistle, treatise) and *tazkirah* (biographical anthology). Persian both borrowed from and contributed to the metrics, stylistics, standard imagery, and topos of these forms, some of which flourished far more in Persian than in Arabic. Perhaps because of its patronage as a courtly language and because of the Iranian cultural and linguistic heritage on which New Persian rested—in the form of an enduring Iranian courtly culture and written tradition that predated Islam—Persian had the confidence to not only borrow from Arabic but also to innovate. The *tazkirah*, for example, flourished in Persian in a way that it never had before in Arabic; I address the later transformation of this genre at length in chapter two. In poetry, Hafiz (1326-1390) introduced a major innovation into the *ghazal* by marrying the mystical-philosophical (*'irfani*) and erotic-romantic (*'ashiqanah*) traditions which had previously been treated separately. Despite Persian's profound and enduring relationship to Arabic, modern Iranian nationalists defined Iranian

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[55] On French loanwords, see Kłagisz, "Hints on French Loanwords in Modern New Persian." On Turkic loans see Perry, "The Historical Role of Turkish in Relation to Persian of Iran" and Perry, "Persian during the Safavid Period: Sketch for an Etat de Langue."
[56] Spooner and Hanaway, *Literacy in the Persianate World*, 14-21.

identity in opposition to the Arabs and emphasized continuities between the present and pre-Islamic (thus pre-Arabic influence) culture.

*Persian and the Indian subcontinent*

Indo-Iranian connections date back millennia, but the relationship between Iran and South Asia deepened with the rise of Muslim dynasties (viz. the Saffarids, Samanids, and Ghaznavids) that began to patronize Persian as a courtly language in the ninth century. Persian entered the Indian subcontinent as a vehicle of Islam during the Ghaznavid raids, and in some ways the relationship between Persian and local languages came to mirror the relationship between Arabic and Persian during the two centuries of direct Arab rule over the Iranian lands. Persian became the language of learning and high culture in much of South Asia not only for Muslims, but for many non-Muslims as well.[57] The Sikh empire, for example, used Persian as a court language, and Hindu castes such as the Kayasthas became highly proficient in Persian and even monopolized Persian scribal positions.

While much has been written on the controversies surrounding *tazah-gu'i* ("fresh-speaking"), a style of Persian poetry that later Iranian nationalists came to call the *sabk-i hindi* or "Indian style,"[58] the English concept of "Indo-Persian" (perhaps derived from the Persian *isti'mal-i hind* "Indian usage") remains comparatively underexplored.[59] The term appears in English at least as early as 1801 as an adjective referring to the shared culture of India and Iran,[60] or in other words, not 'Persian as spoken in India' but 'something which is shared by both countries.' In today's usage this would be termed "Indo-Iranian," as in the linguistic family of

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[57] On Persian in the subcontinent, or "Indo-Persian" as it has come to be called, see Alam, "The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan."

[58] The term 'Indian style' (*sabk-i hindi*) originates with Muhammad-Taqi Bahar (1884-1951) and this designation persists, especially in Persian usage, to the present day.

[59] This term, like "Persianate," originates in English and no equivalent has yet been established in Persian usage.

[60] See for example Christie and Tresham, *An Inquiry Into the Ancient Greek Game*, 68.

Indo-Iranian languages. "Indo-Persian" appears in the second half of the 19th century as a noun referring to a particularly Indian kind of Persian, and as an adjective referring to Persian-language works composed by Indians (eg. 'Indo-Persian literature'), but the genealogy of this English term has not been addressed. Furthermore, while a great deal of scholarship has attempted to adjudicate the question of just how Indian the so-called 'Indian style' of Persian poetry really is,[61] aside from a panel at the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies biennial convention in 2015 titled "What is Indo-Persian? A View from the Late Mughal Perod," little has been done to elucidate the characteristics of Indo-Persian as a category.[62]

Persian left its mark on local languages in South Asia as well, bestowing loanwords not only for legalistic or religious concepts used by the literate elite, but also everyday items. The word for chair, *kursi*, exemplifies Persian's wide reach in the subcontinent. This Persian word (ultimately derived from Arabic) is used in many Indian languages—not only northern ones like Hindustani, Marathi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, and Gujarati, but also in southern languages like Kannada and Telugu. Hindustani's relationship with Persian later became especially important.

*The origins of Urdu*

Hindustani refers to a continuum of dialects originally spoken in northern India (including the Khari Boli dialect native to Delhi and the surrounding areas), which today have two standardized and formally recognized registers: Hindi, which is written in the Devanagari script and draws on Sanskrit loans for its learned vocabulary, and Urdu, which is written in the Perso-Arabic script and borrows from Persian rather than Sanskrit. Because they remain largely mutually intelligible at the spoken level, sharing much of their vocabulary and nearly all of their

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[61] For example, Sayyid Karim Amiri Firuzkuhi claims that this style should more properly be called the 'Isfahani style' (discussed briefly in Yarshater, "The Indian or Safavid Style," 252).

[62] Mana Kia in particular has engaged with the idea of Indo-Persian in conference papers such as "What Is Indo-Persian?" and "The Imagined Place of Indo-Persian." Another forthcoming work that addresses Indo-Persian as a category is Dudney, "Going Native."

grammar, syntax, and phonology, Hindi and Urdu are often treated together as a single language, sometimes called "Hindustani."[63] This language, whether written in the Devanagari or Perso-Arabic character, was historically a minor literary tradition in northern India, overshadowed by languages with more established literary traditions such as Braj, Punjabi, or Bengali—to say nothing of the classical literary languages of Persian and Sanskrit.[64] Literary production in Urdu increased as the Deccan sultanates and the Mughals began to patronize Urdu alongside Persian and other languages, part of a global trend towards vernacularization as outlined by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities.*

*Naming a language*

Both Persian and Urdu borrowed their endonyms from other languages, but modern speakers of those languages make very different meanings of this fact. The Persian name for the language, *farsi*, is an Arabicization of *parsi*, from Middle Persian *parsig*, referring to the Pars region (from which the English terms "Persia" and "Persian" are derived). As the Classical Arabic phonemic inventory and orthography lacks [p], it was replaced with [f] in this and other words, and the Persians themselves came to call their own language *farsi* rather than *parsi*. Modern nationalists sought to distance Iranian identity from the Arabs and to purge the language of its Arabic elements; they took to calling the language *parsi*.[65]

Iranian nationalists disavowed the Arabicized name for their language and rejected a hybrid identity in favor of one imagined to be "pure" and monolithic, emphasizing Iranian

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[63] There is an enormous body of scholarly literature delineating Hindi and Urdu from one another. See, inter alia, Rahman, *From Hindi to Urdu*; Everaert, *Tracing the Boundaries between Hindi and Urdu*; and King, *One Language, Two Scripts*.

[64] Arabic, too, was a minor literary language of India, a fact often overlooked in accounts of the South Asian literary milieu. See Ahmad, *The contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic literature* and Tahera Qutbuddin, "Arabic in India."

[65] On the Pahlavi state-led project to replace Arabic loanwords in Persian with 'native' equivalents, see Ludwig, "Iranian Language Reform in the Twentieth Century."

indigeneity and the continuity of Iranian civilization and culture before and after the Arab-Islamic conquest of Iran. In contrast, some Indian nationalists made hybridity and loanwords constitutive elements of their nascent identity, while some proponents of an Urdu-speaking Muslim nationalism emphasized the foreign origins of their identity and rupture with pre-Islamic South Asia. The language discussed above as "Hindustani" (itself originally a Persian word) was historically known by a number of other names.[66] Two such names are particularly relevant for the present discussion: *Rekhta* and *Urdu*. *Rekhta* is a loan from Persian meaning "poured," "scattered," or "mixed," referring to the mixture of Indic (Khari Boli) with Persian and other languages. *Urdu* is originally a Turkish word for "army" or "camp" and, according to a very popular narrative about the language's origins, refers to the military camps where Persian, Turkish, and Arab soldiers mingled with Indians, producing Urdu, a creole language for communication among them. I am less interested in investigating the veracity of this narrative than in exploring the work that it did for Indians and British Orientalists alike in producing an Indo-Muslim identity predicated upon exotic origins.

John Shakespear (1774-1858), celebrated British grammarian and lexicographer of Hindustani, remarks that Urdu is used "especially among the Muhammadan inhabitants" of India, but "it is also termed *Rekhtah* (scattered) on account of the variety of languages interspersed in it."[67] This refers to the ubiquitously popular idea that Urdu is a mélange of languages, viz. Indic (Sanskritic or Prakritic) vocabulary, Persian, Arabic, and Turkish. Of particular interest is the idea that Persian, Arabic, and Turkish have all separately contributed to Urdu. There is no reason to treat the Arabic element of Urdu vocabulary as separate from the Persian, as the vast majority of Arabic loanwords entered Urdu via Persian and according to

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[66] Rahman, *From Hindi to Urdu*, 16–44.
[67] Shakespear, *A Grammar of the Hindustani Language*, 1.

Persian orthography and phonology.[68] The logic of nationalism thus comes to structure the

identity of languages: words ultimately derived from Arabic, which entered Urdu via Persian,

become "Arabic loanwords" rather than Persian loans, even as they carry with them Persian

rather than Arabic phonology. A comparable argument for English would be to claim that the

transparently French phrase "Art Nouveau" used in English is actually to be counted as a Latin

borrowing rather than French, as the word *art* ultimately derives from the Latin *ars*, and *nouveau*

from the Latin *novus*. The nationalist logic that links language to nation makes a question of

etymology into a question of origins and gives Urdu an Arabic (thus Islamic) pedigree.

Aside from the name *Urdu*, the Turkish element, much of which also entered Urdu

through Persian, is negligible. One study found a total of 118 Urdu words of Turkish origin,

including several words which are also used in Persian.[69] Vahid al-Din Salim concludes that

there are 105 Turkish words out of 54,009 total words included in the comprehensive Urdu

monolingual dictionary *Farhang-i asafiyyah*.[70] English has borrowed a comparable number of

words from Japanese (eg. *rickshaw*[71], *karaoke*[72], *tycoon*[73], *soy*[74], *tsunami*[75] to name only a few),

and while popular narratives about the origins of the English language may include Germanic,

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[68] For example, many Arabic words ending with a *ta marbuta* had this ending changed to a *ta* in Persian, and this is the form in which they were borrowed into Urdu. See Perry, *Form and Meaning in Persian Vocabulary*.

[69] Türkmen, "The Turkish Elements in Urdu," 28.

[70] Salim, *Vaz'-i istalahat*, 157.

[71] "rickshaw, n.". OED Online. March 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/165604?redirectedFrom=rickshaw (accessed February 11, 2017).

[72] "karaoke, n.". OED Online. March 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/243613?redirectedFrom=karaoke (accessed February 11, 2017).

[73] "tycoon, n.". OED Online. March 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/208273?redirectedFrom=tycoon (accessed February 11, 2017).

[74] "soy, n.1". OED Online. March 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/185402?rskey=roYJJX&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed February 11, 2017).

[75] "tsunami, n.". OED Online. March 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/207116?redirectedFrom=tsunami (accessed February 11, 2017).

French, Latin, and Greek vocabulary, they would not likely include Japanese in the mix. An even smaller proportion of these Turkish loanwords are actually used to any degree of frequency in Urdu. Alongside the 105 words he alleges to be of Turkish origin, Salim gives the total number of Urdu words coming from Arabic as 7,584 and from Persian as 6,041.[76] Taken together, this would amount to 13,625 words, or a little over 25% of the 54,009 words included in the dictionary. The proportion of Perso-Arabic words used in Urdu writing is often even higher, amounting to as much as 30-40% of vocabulary in some cases. While Perso-Arabic vocabulary may be overrepresented, however, the Turkish words included in Urdu lexicons are largely obscure. For example, Erkan Türkmen's list of Turkish words in Urdu consists mostly of Turco-Persian vocabulary; arcane equestrian terms like *boz* (white horse), *yābū* (small horse), *yargha* (trotting horse), and *yāl* (horse's mane); and obscure military terminology.

Thomas Grahame Bailey (1872-1942), a Scotsman born in British India to a missionary family, says in his 1932 *History of Urdu Literature* that "Urdū was called rekhta because it consisted of Hindi into which Arabic and Persian words had been *poured*."[77] Bailey acknowledges that "it is difficult to distinguish precisely between Kharī [Bolī] and Urdu," making the distinction in "the fact that Kharī uses very few, and Urdu very many, Persian and Arabic words."[78] Bailey subscribes to the hypothesis that Urdu arose out of encounters between the Khari Boli-speaking population of North India and Persian-speaking soldiers. Even as early as 1932, he notes that "much has been written on the origin of Urdū."[79]

The concern with origins can, of course, be seen as much in the Urdu sources as in English. The great Urdu litterateur Muhammad Husayn Azad (1830-1910) explains that Urdu is

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[76] Salim, *Vaz'-i istalahat*, 156.
[77] Bailey, *A History of Urdu Literature*, 4 (emphasis in original).
[78] Ibid., 9.
[79] Ibid., 5.

also called *Rekhta*, as "different languages have made it 'mixed' [*reḳhtah*]," including Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.[80] This idea appears in Urdu writing at least as early as Mir Amman's celebrated and influential *Bagh o Bahar* (1813).[81] The reasons for identifying Urdu with Turkish (likewise Arabic and Persian) are more identitarian than linguistic. Arabic, Persian, and Turkish are seen as "Muslim languages" spoken by "Muslim nations" and thus Urdu, which is being refashioned into a communal language of Muslims in opposition to the Hindi of Hindus, emphasizes its own "Islamic character" through association. Ironically, at the same time Arabic, Persian, and Turkish are in fact being made into vehicles for *secular* nationalism elsewhere. The colonial situation in British India forced Urdu to be at the vanguard of changes that took place later in Persian (and were in fact partially motivated by Iranian nationalists' desire to avoid being colonized like their neighbors). One example is the shift in connotation of the term *vatan*.

*From "birthplace" to "homeland"*

Borrowed from Arabic (from the verb *waṭana* "to dwell, live, reside, stay"), the term *vatan* originally referred to one's birthplace or primary residence, at the scale of town or city, or sometimes province. Attachment to the *vatan* was the subject of premodern poetry in Arabic and other Islamicate languages, and it was a religious concept as well: after voyaging a certain distance from one's *vatan*, a Muslim traveler would shorten his or her obligatory prayers and be exempt from fasting during Ramadan. Travelers who stayed more than 15 days in a new locale would have to consider it their temporary *vatan* and perform their prayers and fasting just as if they were at home.[82] The Indian poet Muhammd Iqbal's 1932 *Javidnamah* clearly treats *vatan* as *country* and links it to *millat* (nation) in a Persian poem:

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[80] Azad, *Ab-e Hayat*, 6.
[81] Amman, *Bagh o Bahar*, 12.
[82] On the transformation of *vatan* in Persian from 'birthplace' to 'motherland' see Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 97-131; for an interesting development in the opposite direction in

آن کف خاکی که نامیدی وطن \ اینکه گوئی مصر و ایران و یمن

با وطن اهل وطن را نسبتی است \ زانکه از خاکش طلوع ملتی است

"This handful of earth to which you give the name 'country' [*vatan*] / this so-called Egypt, and

Iran, and Yemen

there is a relationship between a country [*vatan*] and its people [*ahl-i vatan*] / in that it is out of

its soil that a nation [*millati*] rises."[83]

Even as early a Hindustani dictionary as Fergusson (1773) defines *vatan* as country, and

links it to the Latin *patria* – though the Hindustani word carried no such gendered connotation.

Gilchrist (1787, 1790) captures both senses – *vatan* is both birthplace[84] and country,[85] with

*vatan-dost* (literally "*vatan*-friend") for patriot.[86] Shakespear's dictionary from 1834 defines

*vatan* as "native country" and lists the related terms *vatan-dost* (patriot) and *vatan-dushman*

(traitor, "*vatan*-enemy").[87] The same is true of Fallon from 1879.[88] The monolingual Urdu

dictionary *Farhang-i asafiyyah* (published in installments from 1888-1901) defines *vatan* as

place of residence or birthplace, but links it to the somewhat more expansive concepts of *des* and

*mulk* (kingdom).[89] These dictionaries do not merely capture various meanings of the word as it

evolves over time, but play a role in shaping the meaning as well. The process of lexicography

thus involves a kind of reflexivity akin to the observer effect in physics, where scientists cannot

accurately measure an object without altering it in the process of measuring.[90] In this case,

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1870s Russian nationalism, from identifying with the state to identifying with a smaller locality,
see Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, 37.

[83] Iqbal. *Javid-nama*, 56. The translation is by Arthur J. Arberry.

[84] Gilchrist, *Hindoostanee Philology*, 55.

[85] Ibid., 133.

[86] Ibid., 463.

[87] Shakespear, *A Dictionary, Hindustani and English,* 1834.

[88] Fallon, *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary*, 1186.

[89] Dihlavi, *Farhang-i asafiyyah*, IV: 651.

[90] For a discussion of reflexivity in the diagnosis of PTSD, see Salessi, "Aporia of power."

British lexicographers were forced to pair Urdu words like *vatan* with English equivalents that were laden with nationalist baggage, such as "country." Indians made use of the Urdu-English dictionaries produced by British Orientalists and shifts in meaning crept into native usage as well, thus reifying connections between land and nation that may not have originally existed.

While the semantic shift has been complete in Persian, to the extent that the modern reader may anachronistically understand *vatan* in premodern Persian poetry to connote the national "homeland" rather than the narrower "birthplace," the two meanings have persisted in Urdu. Much patriotic Urdu poetry exults the *vatan*, as in Iqbal's 1904 *Taranah-i hindi* ("Indian Anthem": "بندی ہیں ہم، وطن ہے ہندوستان ہمارا" ("we are Indians, our *vatan* is Hindustan.")[91] Meanwhile the narrow sense can be found throughout contemporary Urdu poetry in which the poet refers to his or her own birthplace, as in this line from Jan-Nisar Akhtar (1914-1976) describing the city of Lucknow: "لکھنؤ میرے وطن میرے چمن زار وطن" ("Lucknow, my *vatan*, my verdant meadow of a *vatan*!")[92]

Just as elements of the premodern cohabitate with the modern, a theme that will be explored in greater depth in chapter two, both the premodern and modern senses of the term *vatan* persist in Urdu.

*Abandoning Persian while Persifying Urdu*

As vernacular languages took on more importance and Urdu began to develop an identity as a communal, Muslim language, the British pursued almost contradictory strategies in managing the relationship between Persian and Urdu. In 1837 the British East India Company replaced Persian with Urdu and other vernacular languages as the official, or court language of company rule. On the one hand, Persian was not to be used as literary language or language of

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[91] Iqbal, *Bang-i dara*, 82.
[92] "جاں نثار اختر - نظم".

governance anymore because it was not deemed "local." According to the logic of nationalism, language constitutes a nation and thus each nation has its own language; Persian, however, did not belong to any Indian community but to the nation of Iran. On the other hand, it is the Persian character (writing system, vocabulary, grammatical constructions, and genre conventions) that make Urdu *Urdu* as opposed to Hindi. Urdu is the language of the Muslims, by this logic, while Hindi is the language of the Hindus. Therefore, the "non-local" (Persian) elements in Urdu should be emphasized to differentiate it from Hindi. The hub of linguistic transformation was Fort William College, founded in Calcutta by the British in 1800 to serve the dual purposes of cultivating Indian vernaculars into proper languages and training British officers in said languages. Scholars at Fort William College produced translations from Persian and English into Urdu (among other kinds of translations), and in the process transformed the language.

As the British had previously ruled in Persian rather than in Urdu, many British officers had been trained in Persian, and were often more comfortable in Persian than in local languages. They therefore drew from Persian vocabulary in "developing" Urdu as a language suitable for governance, in addition to the nationalist logic which also led them to promote Persian vocabulary in Urdu. Sanskrit was deemed unsuitable as a source for new terms because of ideological, national-communalist reasons. The very grammatical structure of Urdu lent itself to Persification. Like New Persian, which made extensive use of compounds for forming verbs, with an Arabic noun combined with a Persian auxiliary verb, Urdu also had a native system of compound verbs and loans that could easily absorb loans. The North Indian classes literate in Persian, especially Kayasthas for example, even went beyond British designs for the language by hyper-Persianizing their own written language.[93] It was easier to translate an existing Persian written tradition into a Persianized Urdu. Thus the Persian auxiliary verb *kardan* would be

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[93] Bellenoit, *The Formation of the Colonial State in India*, 169.

replaced with the Urdu *karna* in a compound using a Persian/Arabic word, and a Persian sentence would be rearranged according to Urdu syntax, but the core vocabulary remained the same. This led to "Urdu" translations of Persian texts that were Persian in all but syntax and grammar.[94]

This is part of the context that produced a highly Persianized language, Urdu, whose canon was being swelled with translations commissioned by the British at Fort William College from English, Persian, Sanskrit, and other literatures. Urdu had become a properly modern language suitable for scholarly writing. [95] Yet the effort to Persianize Urdu and to promote translations from Persian into Urdu is only part of the story. Iranian Studies scholarship to date has always treated the relationship between Persian and Urdu as unidirectional, with influence flowing from Persian to Urdu. It has also largely taken 1837 for granted as the end of Persian in the subcontinent. In what follows, I argue for a much more complicated relationship between Persian and Urdu, and for an afterlife of Persian in the subcontinent, where Persian learning survives through the medium of Urdu all the way up to the present day. Such a reading negotiates Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's notion of "homeless texts" by finding a modern home for the Persian texts of South Asia in Urdu. Finally, I will also argue that Indians, and Urdu, occupied an uneasy, heterotemporal position in the 20th century Iranian imagination, standing for relics of the past at the same time as they offered models for the future.

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[94] Cf. Ottoman Turkish which can have long sentences of mostly Persian words strung together with Turkish syntax and the occasional Turkish *dir* or *ediyor*.

[95] Modernizing the language—rather than Persianizing it—may have been the real aim of Fort William College. See Safadi, "The Fictional 'Fallout' from Fort William?," which argues against the narrative that Fort William College was at the heart of a plot to divide Indians through Persianized Urdu and Sanskritized Hindi.

*Revisiting the question of influence*

It is certainly true that historically Persian exercised great influence over Urdu—as described above—whereas Iranians remained, for the most part, ignorant of Urdu. However, by the colonial period, this dynamic was no longer so clear-cut. Indian scholars belonging to the Persianate tradition were attempting to bridge the gap between traditional forms of knowledge and writing and what they saw as modern, European approaches to science and historiography. Urdu writers like Shibli Nu'mani (1857-1914) were seeking native models which could be used to reform, revitalize, and preserve the Persianate or Islamicate heritage and make it compatible with colonial modernity. This was very much in line with the goals of many literary scholars and intellectual reformers across the border in Iran, and the efforts of these Urdu writers did not go unnoticed. Shibli Nu'mani's lengthy Urdu-language work on Persian poetry, *Shi'r al-'ajam*, which was an important milestone in refashioning the traditional genre of *tazkirah* writing into modern European-style literary history (which is taken up at length in chapter two), was translated into Persian and cited prominently by such Iranian literary scholars as Muhammad-Taqi Bahar and Zayn al-'Abidin Mu'taman (1914-2005).[96]

Bahar was unable to read Urdu, but learned about Shibli through conversation with Fakhr-i Da'i Gilani (1882-1964), another scholar and friend of Bahar's who was translating Shibli's writings into Persian at the time.[97] While textual influence tends more often to be one-sided (more Urdu-speakers read Persian texts than the reverse, and more Iranian intellectuals read French texts than vice-versa), this kind of conversation gives us insight into a different

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[96] Mu'taman discusses this in the unnumbered preface to his *Shi'r va adab-i farsi*.
[97] Bahar, *Bahar va adab*, 2:138-9. Gilani was an Iranian scholar who had learned Urdu while teaching Persian in India. Note that Gilani was evidently unaware that *Shi'r al-'ajam* had already been translated into Persian several years earlier in Afghanistan. For an example of a similar dynamic between Edward Browne and his Indian students, see Vejdani, 10-17. Browne himself was quite capable of reading Urdu.

dynamic, one of mutual exchange. This same dynamic can be witnessed in the relationship

between Orientalist scholars and their Asian friends and tutors; for example, Shibli received his

exposure to European thought and writing primarily through his friendship with the British

Orientalist T.W. Arnold (1864-1930). Their friendship was based on mutual exchange, as they

tutored one another in Arabic and French, respectively.

Shibli's *Shi'r al-'ajam* is a text whose influence stretched far beyond the borders of Urdu,

leaving an impression on Iranian literary scholars as well as the British Orientalist E.G. Browne.

It is also an excellently illustrative example of the long afterlife of Persian in the subcontinent.

Published in multiple volumes between 1908 and 1918, it, like many other such Urdu texts,

continues developments and conversations that had previously been taking place in Persian. I

would argue that the shift to Urdu from Persian does not have to represent a break with the

tradition of Persian learning. *Tazkirah*s and histories of Persian literature, like this one, continued

to be written in Urdu (rather than in Persian) alongside commentaries (*sharh*) on the core texts of

the Persianate tradition like the *Gulistan* of Sa'di or the *Masnavi* of Mawlana Rumi. Even today,

Persian language and literature remain fundamental aspects of a traditional religious education in

South Asia, and secular newspapers serialize Urdu translations and commentaries on Persian

texts like the *Gulistan*. In earlier times Persian was taught to Indian learners using Persian-

language texts which had very convoluted, highly specific discussions of Persian grammar and

related minutiae. It can be assumed that it was up to the teacher to help students understand these

texts by breaking them down and explaining them orally, most likely in a vernacular language

like Urdu.[98] Later Persian grammars, prosody manuals, and the like, start to be written in Urdu,

or sometimes in Persian with interlinear Urdu translation. These grammars of Persian written in

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[98] This dynamic is comparable to that of a contemporary graduate seminar at an Anglophone
institution, where the class may discuss a foreign-language text in English.

Urdu can simply be seen as a continuation of the tradition of orally teaching Persian grammar through Urdu. In any case, the link to Persian literary traditions and texts has not been lost, it is simply mediated through Urdu.[99]

*"Homeless texts" of Persianate modernity*

The previous reassessment of the link between modern Urdu and Persian significantly problematizes Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's notion of "homeless texts" of Persianate modernity. "Homeless texts," for Tavakoli-Targhi, are those important Persian works produced in India in which can be found an early modern ethos, yet which have not featured into Indian or Iranian accounts of modernity, being seen as not-Indian by virtue of being in Persian and not-Iranian by virtue of being from India, and therefore "homeless." It is certainly true that most of these texts did not feature into Iranian accounts of modernity and were, in fact, largely unknown in Iran until fairly recently. It is also true that they were not the texts secular nationalist Indians turned to in making claims of an indigenous modernity, but by ignoring Urdu, and the particular communalist form of nationalism expressed in Urdu by Indian Muslims like Shibli Nu'mani, Tavakoli-Targhi overlooks the place where these "homeless texts of Persianate modernity" do in fact have a home. For example, among the "homeless texts" he discusses are the works of Siraj al-Din 'Ali Khan Arzu, an 18th century Indian litterateur who, as Tavakoli discusses, explores the relationship between Sanskrit and Persian decades before Europeans like Sir William Jones took up the subject. Arzu, here, is a kind of early modern philologist. While Tavakoli laments that Arzu was not recognized as such and was ignored, he fails to take into account the Urdu

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[99] Urdu has even become a vehicle for the Persian tradition in some regions of South Asia where Urdu is not natively spoken, especially the Punjab, resulting in *madrasa* settings where Punjabi-speaking pupils learn Urdu to understand instruction about Persian and Arabic texts. See Rahman, *From Hindi to Urdu*, 112-133. For a fascinating parallel in northern Nigeria, where Kanuri-speaking Muslims study Qur'anic Arabic through the medium of a third language, Old Kanembu, see Dmitry Bondarev, "Qur'anic Exegesis in Old Kanembu" and Bondarev and Tijani, "Performance of Multilayered Literacy."

engagement with Arzu. Shibli Nu'mani's *Shi'r al-'ajam*, for example, cites Arzu: both his linguistic treatises and his important *tazkirah* of Persian poetry, *Majma' al-Nafa'is*. Indeed, there was never a time when the works of Arzu, among other supposedly "homeless" Persian-language works of the subcontinent, ceased to be read and commented on in India, first in Persian and later in Urdu. There was no radical break with the Persianate tradition in India; it just shifted into the written medium of Urdu.

*Language and temporality*

Urdu was disjointed and out-of-place for Iranians in the 20th century, where Urdu scholarship represents a kind of futurity at the same time as Indians stand in for something ancient. As discussed above, Urdu writing, such as that of Shibli Nu'mani, represented a kind of authentic, locally-grounded modernity for some Iranian scholars. In this sense Urdu was oriented towards the future. Yet, paradoxically, the figure of the Indian represented the past for Iranians. Indians, too, began to have a complicated relationship with Persian. Muhammad Husayn Azad saw Persian as the "ancestor" of Urdu, and for him Persian represented classical, outmoded aesthetics, while at the same time he took inspiration from the linguistic and cultural reforms taking place in Pahlavi Iran.[100]

Other South Asians, like the Urdu poet N.M. Rashid (1910-1975), who worked at Radio Tehran in the 1940s, took a different approach to the question of Persian. Rashid, a modernist poet himself, produced a volume of Urdu translations of Persian *shi'r-i naw* or free verse, with a lengthy introduction contextualizing and commenting on such modern Iranian poets as Nima Yushij, Mahdi Akhavan-Salis, Ahmad Shamlu, and others. He expresses surprise at how modernist poetic movements have developed separately but simultaneously in Persian and Urdu; for him, Persian is not Urdu's ancestor, as it is for Azad, but its contemporary, as he discusses

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[100] Azad's relationship with Persian is also discussed in chapter three.

similarities and affinities between the Persian poetry of Nima and the Urdu poetry of the influential modernist Miraji.

Afshin Marashi has argued that during Rabindranath Tagore's highly publicized 1932 visit to Iran, Tagore was presented to the Iranian public as a living relic of the ancient Indo-Iranian shared past.[101] A similar dynamic can be observed with the Indian characters in Iraj Pezeshkzad's popular Persian novel *Da'i Jan Napul'un*, set in occupied Iran during the Second World War, where the Indian characters haunt the present as specters of the Indo-Iranian past. I borrow the notion of specter from Derrida, which he deploys as a kind of absence which 'haunts' the present and challenges the binary opposition between past/present, or present/absent.[102]

The Indian characters in *Da'i jan napul'un*, namely Brigadier Maharat Khan and Taymur Khan, are consistently marked as outsiders in the novel. From the very first instance in which he is mentioned[103] until the very last[104] and in nearly all instances in between, the novel's main Indian character Maharat Khan is explicitly identified as an Indian. That is to say, he is always referred to as "the Indian" (*hindiyah*) or, when his full name and title is mentioned, it is appended by "the Indian," as in "Brigadier Maharat Khan the Indian" (*sardar maharat khan-i hindi*). It is as if the reader must constantly be reminded that Maharat Khan is not Iranian (despite his Persian name and tongue), but Indian—a foreigner. Maharat Khan is not even the character's real name; as the narrator says, "I think his real name was Baharat or Baharot but in our area they always called him Brigadier Maharat Khan."[105] Thus we see that the character's "real" name is in fact a subtle reference to India, which is "Bharat" in Hindi/Urdu, and spelled the same way as "Baharat" would be in Persian.

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[101] Marashi, "Imagining Hāfez: Rabindranath Tagore in Iran, 1932."
[102] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*.
[103] Pezeshkzad, *My Uncle Napoleon*, 218.
[104] Ibid., 496.
[105] Ibid., 218.

Taymur Khan is also marked as an outsider, described in the text as speaking affected Persian, "with the accent of someone from the Indian subcontinent."[106] As his Persian is described as unusual (in fact, in the same sentence), so are his physical features: he has a "strange face," and his facial features and hands are "heavy and shapeless like those of a person suffering from elephantitis." The text establishes a link between his physical features and his language, which is established for Maharat Khan as well: he is "a dyed-in-the-wool milky-coffee-colored Sikh"[107] who speaks Persian "in an idiosyncratic way and with an accent."[108] His dialogues are littered with Urdu words like *bahut* and *karta hai* as well as shibboleths of South Asian Persian like his use of *sahib* for 'sir.' Thus his speech harkens back to an era when Iranians and Indians alike spoke Persian and used *sahib* as a title of respect.

It seems, then, that the Indians (namely Maharat and Taymur Khan) of *Da'i jan napul'un* are forever out of place: perennial outsiders, marked as foreign, deformed in appearance and language, uneasily situated in the racial hierarchy of civilization between barbaric Arabs and progressive Europeans, and, as the novel's conclusion ultimately reveals, untrustworthy spies. It is as if they are nomads or freaks produced by the disjuncture between Iran and India, or between the premodern and the modern: their Indian features and accented Persian, above all else, mark them as out of place, both geographically as Indians located in Iran, and temporally as relics of the Persianate past. Their complicated presence provokes a host of anxieties about racial 'modernity' for the Iranian characters by seemingly disrupting the temporality of the present. This offers a model for thinking about Persian and Urdu as well. If Persian, and the Persianate tradition of India, lives on through the medium of Urdu, then perhaps it is for this reason that Urdu occupies an uneasy, heterotemporal position in the Iranian imagination: despite also being

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106 Ibid., 110.
107 Ibid., 433.
108 Ibid., 226.

a vehicle for modern ideas and for a synthesis of traditional and modern approaches to writing, it is also a relic of the Persianate past that haunts the nationally separated present.[109]

*Conclusion*

This chapter has sketched out the role of linguistic origin narratives in Persian and Urdu nationalisms, arguing that while both languages have been profoundly defined in relation to other languages, Iranians have emphasized indigeneity and continuity between the modern language and its pre-Islamic past while Urdu-speakers have emphasized their own foreignness and rupture with the pre-Islamic past. I have also traced historical relations between the two languages, demonstrating how developments in colonial India sometimes spurred developments in Iran, which sought to modernize itself in order to avoid India's fate. Chapter two will examine the emergence of modern literary historiography in Persian and Urdu, building on the framework developed here for viewing Persian-Urdu interaction. Chapter three will explore the conventions of modern writing in both languages. This chapter has also offered proof of the value of Urdu sources for Persian scholarship. A great many good scholars have studied "Indo-Persian," and the Indian subcontinent, through working with Persian texts, without the need to engage with Urdu or other languages. Indeed this is quite possible for earlier periods of history, especially as there simply was not as much written in Urdu until the 19th century. However, as I have demonstrated here, Urdu can also be a useful language beyond the borders of the subcontinent, not only for looking at the afterlife of Persian texts in South Asia, where they continue to be commented (now in Urdu rather than in Persian), but also as a source for studying Iran. South Asians produced a number of Urdu travelogues about their visits to Iran, and there were quite a number who stayed in Iran for longer periods of time, whether doing cultural work like the poet

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[109] This is not at all true of Afghanistan, which has had a much deeper and more profound engagement with Urdu over the past century and a half. I hope to address this fact in my future work.

N.M. Rashid, working at Radio Tehran, or working in the oil refineries in Abadan. By taking Urdu seriously as a language for Iranian studies, we can unpack Indo-Iranian intellectual connections that took place organically, not only those mediated through English or other languages.

# CHAPTER TWO

## FROM *TAZKIRAH* TO LITERARY HISTORY

Despite the good deal of scholarly attention it has received, literary modernization remains an equivocal concept with contested definitions. This chapter makes an argument for literary modernization as a shared discourse produced through scholarly exchange between Iranians and Indians reworking their shared Persianate literary heritage, considering literary history as an important and perhaps overlooked site for the production of literary modernization.[110] Arguing for a verbal as well as textual discourse of modernization shared between early 20th century Iranian and Indian intellectuals, I examine how these intellectuals made use of premodern materials for their modernizing projects. In this way, Persian literary history-writing in the early 20th century can be brought into the global conversation about literary modernization.

Michel Foucault conceptualizes modernity as an attitude one takes against the present.[111] It is a discourse about what it means to be modern, which, for early 20th century Iranian and Indian modernizers, often included a set of moral and aesthetic considerations about sexuality (dealt with in the following chapter), as well as what the modernizers thought of as the adoption of scientific principles and their application to tasks such as the writing of history. In other words, *modernization* as it is used here means quite simply participating in that discourse, and considering oneself modern. As Henri Lefebvre put it, modernity involves continually repeating the old and refashioning it as "new," which rings true to a large extent for how 20th century

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[110] Discussions of Persian literary modernity have most typically focused on poetry, and to a lesser degree on prose fiction, history, travelogues, and other genres. On poetry see Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry*. For travelogues see Rastegar, *Literary Modernity*, 77-100. For other prose genres see Meisami, "Iran."

[111] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," 39-40.

litterateurs refashioned the premodern *tazkirah* genre into modern literary history (*tarikh-i adabiyat*)[112] and repurposed Firdawsi's *Shahnamah* into a source for modern historiography.[113]

As Iranians writing in Persian and Indians writing in Urdu began to write for emergent national and communal readerships respectively, they appropriated the past in similar ways, seeking native models that could be used to reform, revitalize, and preserve heritage, whether "national" heritage in Iran or "Islamic" heritage in India. They differ in the importance given to the so-called great men of history, as it became important for nationalist reasons for Iranians to attach them to Persian literary history, but irrelevant to the writing of Persian literary history in India. They also part ways when ascribing blame for aspects of the shared Persianate heritage that modernizers deemed distasteful, with Iranians and Indians (as well as Arabs) all pointing fingers outside their own national borders for the origins of Persianate homoeroticism. The salience of nationalism to literary history can be observed in the three aspects of modern literary history writing that receive particular focus here: engagement with the *tazkirah* tradition, inclusion of extraliterary "national" figures alongside poets, and use of a shared set of references and sources. At the same time, this chapter analyzes how the limits of nationalism are revealed in the connections between Persian and Urdu literary histories.

Tazkirah*s and Literary History*

Modernizing litterateurs found a useful genre that could be reworked into literary history in the *tazkirah* tradition. The *tazkirah* is similar to a biographical dictionary or anthology.[114] The earliest Persian *tazkirah*s were collections of hagiographies of prominent Sufis or biographical

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[112] As I argue below, the term (and concept of) *tarikh-i adabiyat* appears in Persian as a calque of the English *literary history* or French *histoire littéraire*. I have therefore opted to refer throughout this chapter to *tarikh-i adabiyat* using the English term *literary history*, while referring to the indigenous *tazkirah* genre using the untranslated Persian term.

[113] See the discussion in Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity*, 168-238.

[114] For an overview of the *tazkirah* genre see Losensky, "Biographical Writing."

notices about princes, *'ulama'*, or poets. The latter consisted of short biographies of various

poets along with selections of their poetry. Early and influential examples of the genre, such as

Muhammad 'Awfi's *Lubab al-albab* (1221) and Dawlatshah Samarqandi's *Tazkirat al-shu'ara'*

(1487), were largely uncritical, whereas later *tazkirah*s written in the Indian subcontinent during

the Mughal era, such as Siraj al-Din 'Ali Khan Arzu's *Majma' al-nafa'is* (1751) and Azad

Bilgrami's *Khazanah-yi 'amirah* (1763), followed the same biographical anthology format but

also contained poetic criticism and analysis. Such criticism is limited and not always even

immediately identifiable; it appears sprinkled throughout biographical descriptions of poets or is

otherwise relegated to separate genres of writing. Iranian *tazkirah*s of the period were far less

critical than those produced in India, yet the abovementioned early modern *tazkirah*s from India

remained largely unknown in Iran until the latter part of the 20th century.[115]

Generally, premodern *tazkirah* writers might arrange the poets they discuss

alphabetically, geographically, chronologically, or according to other factors; some of the

chronologically ordered *tazkirah*s grouped poets into ancient (*qudama'*), middle (*mutavassitin*),

and later (*muta'akhkhirin*) periods, but beyond that, the narrative about the historical

development of Persian poetry was quite limited.[116] In some *tazkirah*s, entries for individual

poets did not even mention the time period the poet lived in. The premodern *tazkirah*s also

restricted their scope differently from the modern European literary histories; the latter genre

limits itself to those poets deemed to belong to the nation-state, whereas the boundaries of the

former were not necessarily political, and instead may have covered only those poets known to

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[115] For literary criticism in premodern and early modern Persian *tazkirah*s, see Farghadani, "Ara'-i intiqadi," and especially 28-30 for an argument that criticism developed disproportionately in the Indian *tazkirah*s.

[116] This becomes less true of *tazkirah*s written in the early modern period under the Safavids and Mughals. On early modern Persian *tazkirah*s see Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 26-55; Schwartz, "Bâzgasht-i Adabî," xvi-29; Sharma, "Redrawing the Boundaries"; and Kia, "Contours of Persianate Community."

the author, those the author considered significant, or those selected through a variety of other arrangements. Beginning in the mid-18th century, some *tazkirah*s from the Indian subcontinent began to cover Urdu poetry as well, first in Persian-language works dedicated primarily to Persian poetry; later, the 19th century saw the emergence of Urdu-language *tazkirah*s solely concerned with Urdu poetry.

Modern literary history writing was not simply invented in Europe and then exported to Asia, where it would be imitated by local scholars. Instead, the genre of literary history – in particular, Persian literary history (regardless of the language in which it is written) – developed in a dialectical relationship between Persianate litterateurs and European Orientalists.[117] That developmental process begins with the earliest Persian *tazkirah*s, which were merely hagiographies and biographical anthologies, as discussed above. Later *tazkirah*s, especially those produced in India under the Mughals, introduced some elements of literary criticism. In the 19th century, the first Persian literary histories written by European Orientalists emerged, which, by necessity, rely heavily on *tazkirah*s as sources. Although these histories do not diverge significantly from the format of the *tazkirah*, they attempt to treat all of Persian literature as a single, continuous whole structured by a sense of time that is particular to European capitalist modernity. Unlike the earlier *tazkirah* writers, the European Orientalists understood time as a linear chain extending back to the past, continually impacted by political developments and human agency rather than cosmic machinations, and literature as a product of its particular temporal circumstances.[118]

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[117] For a closer look at this relationship, see Vejdani, "Indo-Iranian" and Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*.
[118] For a discussion of nonlinear, premodern understandings of time in the Iranian context see Tavakoli-Targhi, "Tarikh-pardazi," and Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 9-45.

A sense of linear, progressive time made it possible for early Persian literary histories to introduce and apply Orientalist philology (connecting the New Persian language and literature to its predecessor Pahlavi, for example), something that was without precedent in the premodern *tazkirah* tradition. This can be observed in Riza-Quli Khan Hidayat's *tazkirah* titled *Majma' al-fusaha'* or "Assembly of the Eloquent," which commissioned first by Muhammad Shah and later by Nasir al-Din Shah, and completed in 1871. Hidayat was a poet, administrator, and man of letters in the Qajar court. While Hidayat did not depart from the *tazkirah* tradition structurally— that is to say, his work was set up in the same biographical dictionary format as that of all of his predecessors—one of his innovations was to introduce pre-Islamic Iranian languages to the *tazkirah* tradition through his preface to *Majma' al-fusaha'*. Traditionally, Persian *tazkirah*s had only addressed New Persian (that is, post-Islamic) literature, but Hidayat had been exposed to nascent Orientalist philology that had deciphered pre-Islamic languages like Avestan and Pahlavi and uncovered their relationship to the New Persian language. Though a tradition of philology and lexicology also existed in the premodern Persianate context, these subjects were dealt with in separate works rather than being treated within *tazkirah*s; modern literary history was generically unprecedented in Persianate writing by engaging literary criticism, philology, and lexicology alongside literary history and biography in the same text. The Indian litterateur Siraj al-Din 'Ali Khan Arzu, for example, had written on this topic over a century earlier, but his remarks were limited to his linguistic treatise *Musmir*, and he did not address pre-Islamic languages in his *tazkirah*, *Majma' al-nafa'is*. While Hidayat's discussion of pre-Islamic Iranian literature is limited to the preface of *Majma' al-fusaha'* and the rest of the work concerns only New Persian poets, this preface prepares the way for the later writing of modern, nationalist literary histories which construct an Iranian literary canon, wherein Avestan, Pahlavi, and New Persian literatures

came to be understood as belonging to a singular, 'Iranian' trajectory. While Indian and Iranian

litterateurs both adopted the paradigm of an Iranian national literature including Avestan and

Pahlavi, these pre-Islamic languages received far greater attention from the Iranians, for whom

writing Persian literary history was part of a nationalist project. Interestingly, the Indian

litterateurs under discussion below did not challenge this Iran-centric model of Persian literary

history, nor did they suggest an Indian national literature in which Persian could be included, but

instead gave pride of place to Iran in their literary histories, and sometimes shared their Iranian

contemporaries' prejudices against the Persian literature of the Indian subcontinent.[119] Like

many of the Persian literary histories from Iran, *Shi'r al-'ajam* (*Poetry of the Persians*) by the

Indian scholar Shibli Nu'mani (1857-1914) was written as a textbook for new educational

institutions, but Shibli had a communal readership (Muslims) rather than a national one

(Iranians) in mind.[120]

     Frances Pritchett calls Muhammad Husayn Azad's *Ab-i hayat*, or *Water of Life*, published

in 1880, both "the last *tazkira* and the first literary history" of Urdu poetry.[121] *Ab-i hayat* takes

up the task of *tazkirah* writing, that is, providing a biographical anthology of Urdu poets and

their poetry, but, under the mostly indirect influence of English writing, it brings to the task a

narrative structure and a sense of time that were unprecedented for a *tazkirah*.[122] In its more than

five hundred pages it covers a wide expanse of Urdu poetry from Vali Dakkani in the 17th

century to Azad himself in the late 19th. Shibli Nu'mani's *Shi'r al-'ajam* also can be understood

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[119] Shamsur Rahman Faruqi describes this tendency among Indians as a "loss of self-confidence, or a surge of self-hatred" (Faruqi, "Unprivileged Power," 11).

[120] Unlike the Iranians whose works were written for national institutions such as the University of Tehran, Shibli composed *Shi'r al-'ajam* during his time as an educator at the Islamic seminary Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow. Furthermore, he wrote in Urdu, which by his time had acquired a communal identity as a Muslim language. See Rahman, *From Hindi to Urdu*, 98-135.

[121] Pritchett, "Long History," 866.

[122] Ibid., 902.

with the framework Pritchett used for conceptualizing *Ab-i hayat*, as a text that has both elements

of *tazkirah* and of literary history, straddling the divide between the two genres.

 *Shi'r al-'ajam* is a monumental work on Persian poetry spanning over 1500 pages,

written in Urdu and published in five volumes between the years 1908 and 1918.[123] It was

translated into Persian on two separate occasions, first by a series of Afghan translators in Kabul,

beginning in 1925, and later by Muhammad-Taqi Fakhr-i Da'i Gilani (d. 1964) in Tehran,

completed in 1948. Shibli was an Islamic scholar, educator, and reformer from Azamgarh, India.

His life's work was to develop Islamic education in India—and ultimately develop an approach

to Islam—that could be compatible with colonial modernity, using the new European

methodologies to revitalize Islam.[124] In addition to *Shi'r al-'ajam*, his numerous other writings

include scholarly biographies of Abu Hanifah, the caliph 'Umar, and the prophet Muhammad;

his extensive biography of the prophet, titled *Sirat al-nabi,* is his best-known work. Sheila

McDonough describes Shibli's methodology in writing these religious biographies: "Historical

method he understands to mean careful scrutiny of primary sources, sifting of materials for

anachronisms and other improbable forms of evidence, and in general moving away from the

hagiographical qualities of the medieval biographies."[125] He employs the same methodology in

writing *Shi'r al-'ajam*, making careful use of all the sources at his disposal, such as Persian

*tazkirah*s and *divan*s. Unlike later Iranian nationalist literary historians like the poet laureate

Muhammad-Taqi Bahar (1886-1951), who almost exclusively made use of Iranian *tazkirah*s, he

does not discriminate in his use of *tazkirah*s produced in Iran and those produced in South Asia.

Shibli also acknowledges Orientalist scholarship, claiming that the Europeans have given more

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[123] Azad also produced a work on Persian language and literature titled *Sukhandan-i fars* around the same time, addressed below.

[124] Shibli was not alone in this endeavor; see also Guimbretière, "Āzād," on Shibli's disciple Abu al-Kalam Azad, for example.

[125] McDonough, "Shibli Nu'mani," 569.

attention (*i'tina*) to Persian literature than Muslims, and laments the latter's utter ignorance of pre-Islamic Iranian languages such as Pahlavi.[126] *Ab-i hayat* had already become extraordinarily popular and widely read by the time Shibli was writing *Shi'r al-'ajam*, and thus it is highly likely that Shibli fell under what Pritchett called "the all-pervasive influence of *Ab-e hayat*, with its naive and ruthlessly Westernizing notions of literary history."[127]

The first three volumes of *Shi'r al-'ajam* resemble the format of the majority of *Ab-i hayat*, as well as the older Persian *tazkirah*s. In these volumes, Shibli outlines periods of Persian poetry, offering biographies of the major poets of each period and selections of their poetry. The fourth and fifth volumes, however, offer literary history and criticism of a kind that cannot be found in the *tazkirah* genre. The fourth volume is divided into three main sections: the reality and nature of poetry (*sha'iri ki haqiqat aur mahiyat*), general history of Persian poetry and the influence of civilization and other causes (*farsi sha'iri ki 'am tarikh aur tamaddun aur digar asbab ka asar*), and praise and criticism (*taqriz va tanqid*). The fifth volume deals exclusively with the development of poetic forms (qasidah and ghazal) and of the following poetic genres or themes: romantic (*'ishqiyyah*), Sufi (*sufiyanah*), ethical (*akhlaqi*), and philosophical (*falsafiyanah*).

*Shi'r al-'ajam*, like *Ab-i hayat* before it, should be seen as a hybrid, transitional text between the *tazkirah* and the modern European-style literary history. The covers of various editions of *Shi'r al-'ajam* reflect this ambiguity, as it seems that publishers were unsure of how to label this text: *tazkirah*, or *tarikh* (history). The change of terms is especially interesting given that *tarikh* in fact predates *tazkirah* as a genre and has its own long history of generic conventions, yet it

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[126] Nu'mani, *Shi'r al-'ajam*, I: 6-7. Shibli shared this interest in pre-Islamic Iran with European Orientalists as well as Iranian intellectuals of the time.

[127] Pritchett, "Long History," 905. A comparable and contemporary figure to Azad can be found in Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundzadah, an influential proponent of Iranian nationalism, on whom see Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 66-75.

appears that by this time the word *tarikh* had come to be understood as the direct equivalent of the word *history* in English and its equivalents in other European languages, thus connoting modern European-style history writing.[128]

In a 1920 edition of *Shi'r al-'ajam*, both *tarikh-i 'ajam* (history of the Persians) and *tazkirah* appear on the cover, though not on the same line. A 1940 edition calls the work *tazkirah-i shi'r al-'ajam* without the word *tarikh*, whereas a 1947 edition omits the word *tazkirah* and adds a clarifying subtitle: *ya'ni farsi sha'iri ki tarikh* (that is to say, the *history* of Persian poetry). Various editions of the Persian translations are also similarly divided between identifying the text as a *tazkirah* or *tarikh*.

By the early 20th century there seems to be a proliferation of publications in the new genre of Persian literary history. In his preface to the fifth volume of *Shi'r al-'ajam*, republished in 1920, Shibli's protégé Sayyid Sulayman Nadvi (1884-1953) briefly registers his surprise at the publication of two other Persian literary histories nearly contemporaneous with *Shi'r al-'ajam*, unbeknown to Shibli: Edward Browne's *Literary History of Persia* in England, and Muhammad Husayn Azad's *Sukhandan-i fars* in Lahore. Nadvi praises Azad's *Sukhandan-i fars*, but quotes Shibli as saying that it "did not even touch" his *Shi'r al-'ajam*.[129]

Shibli's work emerges in parallel to these first European national literary histories rather than in response to them. The majority of his exposure to English literature was through indirect means such as translation, and while Shibli was well aware of the contemporary Orientalist scholarship on Persian literature, much of it—such as the pioneering works on Persian literary

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[128] On the *tarikh* genre see Meisami, *Persian Historiography*. By the early 20th century, the use of the word *tarikh* in these texts appears to connote something different than what would have been expected in its generic history. This can be understood if we consider the possibility that *tarikh* was used as a translation for *history*, thus carrying the baggage of European methodologies and secular, linear chronology.

[129] Nu'mani, *Shi'r al-'ajam*, V: 2. Nadvi met with Browne in London and may have discussed the latter's book *A Literary History of Persia* in person. See Green, "Spacetime," 410-11.

history in German and Italian—was inaccessible to him.[130] To a certain extent, Shibli used similar sources and employed similar methodology to those of the European Orientalists, and thus it is no surprise that their works are so similar. The genre of Persian literary history continues to develop with the publication of Browne's *Literary History of Persia* which appeared in English from 1902 to 1924 and in Persian translation in the following decade. While Browne (1862-1926) explicitly models his literary history on earlier European histories of English literature, he also cites *Shi'r al-'ajam* numerous times and expresses his admiration and respect for Shibli's work; later Orientalists such as Jan Rypka (1886-1968) also make use of *Shi'r al-'ajam*. Thus, Shibli's text not only reflects European influence, but also influences Europeans and contributes significantly to the development of Persian literary history.[131] Browne, in turn, influences later Iranian literary historians like Muhammad-Taqi Bahar, thereby passing Shibli's influence along down the line. These new literary histories relied heavily on *tazkirah*s as sources—just as the earlier *tazkirah*s had often cribbed or borrowed directly from one another— and responded directly to them. Some have considered *tazkirah*s and literary histories to belong to the same tradition, if not the same genre.[132] I suggest instead that the *tazkirah* tradition provided early 20th century literary historians with a useful local form they could repurpose, and ultimately transform, for use in their modernizing projects.

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[130] Such works include Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der schönen redekünste Persiens*, and Pizzi, *Storia della poesia persiana*.

[131] Farzin Vejdani notes this relationship between Browne and Shibli as well; see Vejdani, *Making History*, 149. He makes a similar argument about what he terms a "Persian 'Republic of Letters'" in ibid., 145-166.

[132] For example, one author simply conflates the two, using *tazkirah* and *literary history* seemingly interchangeably in his work (Ali, *Persian Tadkira Writing*, 5). The Encyclopedia of Islam entry claims that "it cannot be denied that the *tadhkira*s [*tazkirah*s] constitute the only form of literary history created by the tradition itself" (Stewart-Robinson, "Tadhkira," 54).

*The Last Persian* Tazkirah

One Persian *tazkirah* that was used ubiquitously as a source by literary historians, whether in Iran, India, or Europe, was Hidayat's *Majma' al-fusaha'*. Its preface, bridging the gap between pre-Islamic languages and New Persian literature as discussed above, is not the text's only innovative feature; Hidayat's biographical entries are also worthy of note. Some of Hidayat's biographies of poets are unique, such as his claim that Hafiz authored a commentary (*tafsir*) on the Qur'an, a claim most likely not repeated elsewhere, and one that Browne tactfully described as "of doubtful authenticity."[133] It is unclear where this claim comes from, and quite possible that Hidayat simply made it up to add some flavor to his entry on Hafiz, or to emphasize the poet's piety. Of especial relevance to the present study is another of Hidayat's seemingly eccentric stories: his account of the origins of Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi's 11th century epic poem, the *Shahnamah*. Hidayat begins by stating that the *Shahnamah* originated long before the time of Firdawsi as a history of the ancient kings of Iran, continuing until the reign of Yazdgird III (d. 651), but here Hidayat's account starts to diverge wildly with what can be found elsewhere in the traditional accounts of the *Shahnamah* found in other *tazkirah* sources.[134] Hidayat claims that at the time of the Arab-Islamic conquest of Iran, the *Shahnamah* fell into the hands of the Arabs, and as Iran's bounties were being divided up the book made its way to Abyssinia (*habasha*), where it was translated into "Abyssinian" (*habashi*). According to Hidayat's account, it then traveled from Abyssinia to the Deccan and Hindustan, where it circulated until Ya'qub Lays Saffar, the founder of the Saffarid dynasty, sent someone to Hindustan to bring the manuscript to Firdawsi's native Khurasan.

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[133] Hidayat, *Majma' al-fusaha'*, II: 36-37; Browne, *Literary History*, II: 274.
[134] There is nothing to this effect in *Lubab al-albab*, *Tazkirat al-shu'ara'*, *Haft Iqlim*, *Majma' al-nafa'is*, *Riyaz al-shu'ara'*, *'Arafat al-'ashiqin*, or *Atashkadah*.

Though he does not specifically cite the sources used for his entry on Firdawsi, it seems likely that Hidayat's story comes from the preface to the Baysunquri *Shahnamah* manuscript, an illuminated, gilded manuscript of the *Shahnamah* which was commissioned under the Timurids in the 15th century.[135] The Baysunquri *Shahnamah* is one of the lengthiest *Shahnamah* manuscripts in existence due to the number of extra verses and other details added to it. Its preface contains a strikingly similar story about the history of the *Shahnamah*, not to mention a good detail of other historical inaccuracies about the text, its author, and other relevant figures.[136] Qajar prince Farhad Mirza Mu'tamad al-Dawlah owned this manuscript, and since it is known that he inherited some of his other manuscripts from Hidayat (such as a treatise by 'Abd al-Rahman Jami), it seems likely that either the Baysunquri manuscript was originally in Hidayat's possession, or that Hidayat was at least able to access the copy owned by Mu'tamad al-Dawlah. According to Ahmad Gulchin-Ma'ani, Hidayat had the only manuscript of Taqi Awhadi's *'Arafat al-'ashiqin* in Iran, and Gulchin-Ma'ani criticizes him for "plagiarizing" from this earlier *tazkirah* without citing his source, so it is not at all unlikely that Hidayat would borrow from the Baysunquri *Shahnamah* without citing it, despite the fact that he does sometimes cite his sources elsewhere.

What is noteworthy in Hidayat's account of the history of the *Shahnamah* is not that it is historically inaccurate, but that it is unique; other *tazkirah* writers, many of whom likely did not have access to the Baysunquri manuscript, do not include these details in their biographies of Firdawsi. Hidayat can thus be credited for introducing this story from the Baysunquri *Shahnamah*; however inaccurate it might have been, it became something that later literary

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[135] The preface to the Baysunquri *Shahnamah* is also the source of much information in Arthur George Warner and Edmond Warner's English translation of the *Shahnamah*, 1905-1925. See Firdawsi, *Shahnamah-yi firdawsi*, 10.
[136] Khaleghi Motlagh and Lentz, "BĀYSONḠORĪ ŠĀH-NĀMA."

historians would have to engage with, even if only to negate it. For example, the story is reproduced in full in the 1911 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica's entry on Firdawsi, which concludes by noting that this story "is rejected by modern scholars."[137]

Browne, one such modern scholar, wrote that *tazkirah*s "contain few trustworthy biographical details, and consist for the most part of anecdotes connected with certain verses of … poems, and probably in most cases, if not all, invented to explain or illustrate them."[138] The German Orientalist Hermann Ethé similarly warned in his *Neupersische Literatur* that the Persians have "no special love of truth" and that the greatest caution must be exercised when reading *tazkirah*s.[139] He then went on to list 50 "indispensable" Persian *tazkirah*s in chronological order, ending with *Majma' al-fusaha'*. Despite his warning, he called this source "the latest, but in every respect richest and most valuable of all the general *tazkirah*s."[140] Ethé explained that Hidayat had made use of all the relevant works, from 'Awfi's *Lubab al-albab* to the present time, and this made *Majma' al-fusaha'* a valuable resource. Indeed it is for this very reason that Hidayat's work earned its stature, such that later literary historians and Orientalists, European, Iranian, and Indian alike, had no choice but to use it as a source even as some grumbled about its inaccuracies and exaggerations.

As the latest *tazkirah* in the genre's history, *Majma' al-fusaha'* contains a wealth of information about Hidayat's contemporaries, Qajar-era poets who were not covered by earlier sources. It was not only by virtue of being the latest *tazkirah* that *Majma' al-fusaha'* gained its particular value as a source on Qajar poetry, but also thanks to Hidayat's stature as poet and administrator which put him into personal contact with a great number of poets of his time.

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[137] "Firdousī."
[138] Browne, *Literary History*, III: 271-72.
[139] Ethé, "Neupersische Litteratur," 213.
[140] Ibid., 216.

Abbas Amanat repeats the clichés that *Majma' al-fusaha'* was "the last and most comprehensive *tadhkera* [*tazkirah*] in the long tradition of Persian biographical dictionaries," yet "suffer[ed] from…inaccuracies and distortions," and describes it as promoting the literary revival in Persian poetry contemporary to the author, and Qajar cultural renewal more generally. In this way, Amanat argues, Hidayat makes a place for Qajar-era poetry in the millennium-old Persian literary tradition.[141]

Later literary histories all seem to agree that *Majma' al-fusaha'*, despite being the most comprehensive and latest *tazkirah*, was riddled with inaccuracies, errors, and exaggerations. Why, then, did it become such a ubiquitous source? Perhaps it was not such a popular source in spite of its errors, but partly because of them. Its great expanse as a comprehensive general *tazkirah* (as opposed to the more specific *tazkirah*s which narrowed their focus to a particular region, time period, or the like) made it a model worthy of appropriation for modern literary histories with their universal scope. Working through its many errors and contradictions proved to be a productive exercise, with the faults of *Majma' al-fusaha'* serving for later scholars as a kind of invitation to comment and correct. A model for this kind of dialectical exchange in Persian poetry can be found in the form of *javab-gu'i*, which Paul Losensky translates as "speaking in reply," where one poet may respond to a poem by another poet, retaining some of the original's structure but reworking the theme, for example. As Losensky explains, in *javab-gu'i* "the model poem becomes a question that calls for an answer or a problem that demands solution. … Instead of an antagonistic opposition [between the model poem and its response], we now have the image of a careful and reasoned debate across time."[142] In this same way, modernizing literary scholars found in *Majma' al-fusaha'* an entry-point, where they could insert

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[141] Amanat, "Legend, Legitimacy, and Making a National Narrative," 318.
[142] Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 112.

themselves into a conversation by correcting Hidayat's mistakes, without writing his work off altogether.

The 20th century literary scholar Jalal al-Din Huma'i was perhaps the best example of this: an entire book of nearly 300 pages was compiled and published from his notes in the margins of *Majma' al-fusaha'* on Hidayat's mistakes, as well as poets Hidayat left out, yet in his book's introduction, Huma'i praises *Majma' al-fusaha'* and says that if he has stumbled upon anything worthwhile, it is all because of Hidayat (a double entendre as *hidayat* means "guidance"). After acknowledging that to err is human, and only God does not make mistakes, Huma'i defends Hidayat, saying "if a learned man like Hidayat in this work suffers from mistakes, it should not come as a surprise at all" and says that those who would dismiss his work on the basis of such errors are very short-sighted and unfair.[143]

*Expanding the Scope of Literature*

A development peculiar to the modern Persian literary histories produced in Iran was the expansion of scope from poets (the subject of *tazkirah*s) to writers of all genres, including scientists, who were not traditionally considered belletristic writers.[144] This may appear on first blush to be a minor innovation of little consequence, but it is in fact indicative of the broadening of scope required by Persian literary histories changing to accommodate a burgeoning Iranian national identity. While premodern *tazkirah*s also included extraliterary figures for a variety of reasons, those figures were still integrated on the basis of their Persian poetry.[145] The modern

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[143] Huma'i, *Yaddasht-ha-yi ustad*, I: 22, 119.

[144] Vejdani, *Making History*, 161.

[145] Mana Kia provides the example of the entry on Safavid Shah Isma'il I in Azar Baygdili's *Atashkadah* (1760), suggesting that "this shah is most important for who he was, rather than his poetry, most of which was written in Turkish" (Kia, "Imagining Iran," 101). Yet even this Safavid shah appears under his poetic nom de plume "Khata'i," and his brief biography is followed by one of his Persian couplets, indicating that despite the shah's great importance, he still must qualify as a poet to be included in a *tazkirah*.

logic of nationalism, however, made possible the inclusion in literary histories of scientists who had little or no literary significance, especially as Persian poets; they could be integrated instead on the basis of their status as national heroes. The absence of this development among the Persian literary histories from India is therefore understandable, as writing Persian literary history had a more nationalist valence in Iran than in India. As Farzin Vejdani illustrates, modern Iranian "history textbooks were a nationalist genre par excellence," written for modern educational institutions that strove to promote a national canon of Iranian, rather than Persian, literature.[146] Mana Kia argues that 18th century *tazkirah*s functioned to produce a cultural community of litterateurs, comprising past and present poets.[147] Her reading demonstrates how modern literary histories are at once continuous with the older *tazkirah* tradition and distinct from it: continuous in that literary histories also imagined a community comprising figures from across time, but distinct in that the basis for inclusion in the community became ethnicity rather than poetry. The treatment of Ibn Sina and 'Umar Khayyam in Persian literary histories exemplifies this point.

Scientists, in particular, became especially important to include in literary histories. One such scientist was Abu 'Ali ibn Sina (henceforth "Ibn Sina"), or "Avicenna" (980-1037), a polymath and scientist known primarily for his works on medicine and philosophy.[148] He was traditionally known as a scholar rather than a poet (though of course the two categories are not mutually exclusive) and he wrote mainly in Arabic rather than Persian. Ibn Sina was from Bukhara, located in today's Uzbekistan, but he later settled in what is present-day Iran. The

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[146] Vejdani, *Making History,* 37. Vejdani examines this point in greater detail in ibid., 156-166.

[147] Kia, "Contours of Persianate Community," 256-309.

[148] For the remaking of Ibn Sina from Muslim polymath to Iranian national figure in the first half of the 20th century, see Grigor, *Building Iran*, 112-143. By Bahar's time he was widely considered by Iranians as their compatriot, a view that remains dominant today, despite the fact that he is also currently claimed as a national figure in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan.

earliest Persian *tazkirah*, *Lubab al-albab*, does not mention Ibn Sina at all. The Qajar court poet

and literary historian Riza-Quli Khan Hidayat includes Ibn Sina and attributes some poetry to

him in his *Majma' al-fusaha'* (*Assembly of the Eloquent*, 1871), which is generally considered to

be the last *tazkirah* produced in Iran; like most *tazkirah*s that precede it, the entry on Ibn Sina

focuses on his role as a poet rather than as a scientist.[149] Shibli—positioned outside the Iranian

nationalist discourse, as an Indian—does not mention Ibn Sina at all except as an occasional

reference, whereas Bahar deals with Ibn Sina because of the importance of his prose style.

Bahar's *Sabkshinasi* (*Stylistics*, 1942) was commissioned by Iran's Ministry of Culture as a

textbook for the first doctoral program in Persian literature at the recently established University

of Tehran. Its inclusion of Ibn Sina, along with other figures important to Iran who wrote in

Arabic rather than Persian, belies the subtitle of the book: "or, the history of the evolution of

Persian prose" (*ya tarikh-i tatavvur-i nasr-i farsi*).[150] Bahar's canon is a national one comprising

Iranian literature, rather than a linguistic canon of Persian literature, as the subtitle implies.[151]

This is why Wali Ahmadi suggests that "it is necessary … to situate and examine *Sabk-shinasi*

precisely within the context of a literary history bound to a national imaginary order *and* the

institutional politics of literary studies."[152] It is literary modernization, especially its particular

understanding of the nation and narrative time, that makes such a national canon possible and

imaginable.

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[149] Hidayat, *Majma' al-fusaha'*, I: 259-60.
[150] Other Iranian historians such as 'Abbas Iqbal Ashtiyani also made sure to include in their works those Iranians who had written in Arabic rather than Persian. See Vejdani, *Making History*, 89-90.
[151] Though "Persian" (the language) and "Persian" (the ethnicity, or the nationality, as it was referred to prior to 1935) may be confused in English, the original word used (*farsi*) refers explicitly to the language.
[152] Ahmadi, "The Institution of Persian Literature," 142, emphasis in original.

Ibn Sina was also taken up by Badi' al-Zaman Furuzanfar (1903-1970), an Iranian literary scholar who taught at some of Iran's first modern institutions of higher learning, including the Dar al-Funun, which later became part of the University of Tehran.[153] His interest in Ibn Sina is primarily for his significance as a scientist and an important Iranian national figure rather than a poet; evidently the latter qualification is of secondary importance to his inclusion in Furuzanfar's work (which, like Bahar's, also covers Arabic works by Iranian writers in general). Furuzanfar merely notes that some have attributed Arabic and Persian poetry to Ibn Sina, and he quotes an Arabic *qasidah* (panegyric) attributed to him.[154] Browne claims that "of all the scientific writers of the time, none were greater than Avicenna (Abu 'Ali ibn Sina)."[155] He provides a biography of Ibn Sina[156] wherein Browne considers him a poet of Arabic as well as Persian and quotes (in translation) the same Arabic *qasidah* cited by Furuzanfar.[157] Browne later quotes a Persian quatrain "ascribed" to Ibn Sina.[158] Interestingly, Browne holds Ibn Sina up as a moral standard in his discussion of the poet Anvari, whom he describes as "longing to follow in the steps of Avicenna, yet living the life of [the famously debauched poet] Abu Nuwas."[159]

'Umar Khayyam's inclusion as a poet in literary histories of Persian may be slightly less of an innovation than the inclusion of Ibn Sina, as there is more precedence for Khayyam's poetry; although he is absent from early *tazkirah*s like *Lubab al-albab* and *Tazkirat al-*

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[153] On Furuzanfar within the context of Iranian nationalism and education, see Vejdani, *Making History*, 164-165.

[154] Furuzanfar, *Tarikh-i adabiyat-i iran*, 257.

[155] Browne, *Literary History*, II: 96.

[156] Ibid., II: 106-111.

[157] Ibid. The scholarly consensus today seems to be that Ibn Sina did write a small amount of poetry in Arabic; historically a few lines of Persian poetry were occasionally attributed to him, and beginning in the late 19th century, as his importance as an Iranian national figure grew, more and more Persian poetry was attributed to him.

[158] Ibid., II: 267.

[159] Ibid., II: 377. This is one of Browne's rare and completely indirect references to the salacious life and poetry of Abu Nuwas.

*shu'ara'*,[160] he does appear in some later *tazkirah*s.[161] Khayyam (1048-1131) was a polymath,

scientist, and ostensibly a poet, hailing from Neyshabur, a city located within the confines of

what is now the modern nation of Iran.[162] Shibli evidently took Khayyam seriously as a poet. He

begins his extensive section on Khayyam with a detailed biography, followed by a deep analysis

of his poetry.[163] As Khayyam was famous for the religious skepticism and hedonism expressed

in the poetry attributed to him, it is perhaps surprising that he would be the subject of praise by

Shibli, a Muslim religious scholar and cleric (*'alim*). Yet it is precisely Khayyam's criticism of

the clerisy (*'ulama'*) and pious ascetics (*zuhhad*) that Shibli appreciates.[164] He provides detailed,

precise information on translations of Khayyam's poetry into European languages and the

broader impact of these translations in Europe, where he notes that Khayyam has found greater

popularity as a poet than in Asia.[165]

   Shibli may have taken some of this information from Browne, who mentions that "'Umar

Khayyam, who is not ranked by the Persians as a poet of even the third class, is now, probably,

better known in Europe than any of his fellow-countrymen as a writer of verse."[166] Browne later

reiterates his point, stating that Khayyam, "thanks to the genius of FitzGerald, enjoys a celebrity

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[160] Browne himself notes Khayyam's absence in these texts. Ibid., II: 249.

[161] For Khayyam's 20th century transformation into Persian poet and Iranian national figure, see Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 110-114, and Grigor, *Building Iran*, 144-173. It should be noted that in this case, like most or perhaps all other such modern transformations, there was local precedence that was built upon; figures like Ibn Sina or Khayyam and their popularity were not fashioned out of whole cloth but rather made anew from preexisting material. *Tazkirah*s that mention Khayyam only as a poet and ignore his significance as a scientist altogether include the *Atashkadah* (Azar, *Atashkadah*, 675-685); *Riyaz al-shu'ara'* (Valih Daghistani, *Riyaz al-shu'ara'*, II: 706-7); *Majma' al-nafa'is* (Arzu, *Majma' al-nafa'is*, I: 401-2); and *Majma' al-fusaha'* (Hidayat, *Majma' al-fusaha'*, II: 731).

[162] Contemporary scholars tend to agree that the majority of Persian poetry attributed to Khayyam is apocryphal and most likely attached to his name posthumously. See de Blois, *Persian Literature*, 299-318, and Morton, "Some 'Umarian Quatrains."

[163] Nu'mani, *Shi'r al-'ajam*, I: 178.

[164] Ibid., I: 202.

[165] Ibid., I: 203-4.

[166] Browne, *Literary History*, II: 84.

in Europe, especially in England and America, far greater than that which he has attained in his own country, where his fame rests rather on his mathematical and astronomical than on his poetic achievements."[167] Browne also notes that Khayyam appears in the *Chahar Maqala* (a famous 12th century Persian prose work by Nizami 'Aruzi Samarqandi) "not in that section of the work which treats of Poets, but that which treats of Astrologers and Astronomers."[168]

Furuzanfar's treatment of Khayyam, like his treatment of Ibn Sina, primarily considers Khayyam's importance as a scientist and "great man" of Iranian history, whereas his poetry seems to be of secondary importance even in a work on Persian literary history.[169] In fact, Furuzanfar dismisses Khayyam's importance as a poet quite unsentimentally: "The quatrains that have been published in Khayyam's name, the number of some of which has reached up to 1200, are a collection of the philosophical thoughts of [various] different people and have been blindly attributed to Khayyam."[170] The inclusion of such national figures while dismissing their literary significance altogether would have been completely out of place in the earlier *tazkirah* tradition.

*New Readings of Old Texts*

At the same time that the older genre of *tazkirah* is refashioned into the new genre of literary history (*tarikh-i adabiyat*), new ways of reading old texts also appear, emblematized by modernizing literary historians' increased attention to Firdawsi's *Shahnamah* and their reading of it as *tarikh*, or history in the modern sense. Though labeling the *Shahnamah* as history is nothing new in the Persianate tradition, here what is meant by *history* is distinct from premodern uses of the word. The *Shahnamah* is an 11th century epic poem that narrates Iran's pre-Islamic history and mythology; the modernizers discussed below read it as a source for a modern

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[167] Ibid., II: 246. The reference here is to the famous translation of Khayyam's quatrains by the English poet Edward FitzGerald (1809-83), beginning in 1859.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Furuzanfar, *Tarikh-i adabiyat-i iran*, 321.
[170] Ibid., 324.

approach to history, dedicating significant space to historical analysis of the text and praising it for its precision and historical accuracy. Premodern Persianate historians, however, were interested "less in recording the 'facts' of history than in the construction of a meaningful narrative."[171] Indeed, Julie Meisami argues that, in the Persian historiography of Firdawsi's period, style and rhetoric came to take precedence over content or truth, and "message and style [were] inseparable."[172] She also suggests that premodern Persian historiography sought to represent the past "in terms of its meaningfulness for the [historiographers'] present," in contrast with the modern concern with recovering an image of the past as it was.[173] Although premodern readers of the *Shahnamah* may also have approached it as a source of historical information, Nasrin Askari argues that it was read primarily for its poetic erudition, rather than as a means of retrieving information, and that "medieval historians did not generally view the *Shāhnāma* as an historical work."[174]

Pasha M. Khan claims that the *Shahnamah* was indeed understood as history—in addition to romance—in 19th century India, but what *kind* of history was meant must also be clarified. Khan proposes that a split between *naqli* (transmission-based) and *'aqli* (rational) historiography allowed for the former to accommodate a text with romantic and apparently supernatural elements such as the *Shahnamah*. *Naqli* historians judged the soundness of a history's chain of transmission (from the informants who witnessed the original event, to the

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[171] Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 3.
[172] Ibid., 11-12.
[173] Ibid. See also Azimi, "Historiography in the Pahlavi Era," 368-69.
[174] Askari, "Medieval Reception," 85. Disagreeing with Meisami, Askari argues that the *Shahnamah* belonged more to the "mirror for princes" genre than to that of history per se. Mahmoud Omidsalar also stresses the point that while the *Shahnamah* contains a historical narrative, it was not written as a historical treatise and "strictly speaking, it is literature—*not* history" (Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics*, 6, emphasis in original). He suggests that selective reading of parts of the poem, rather than reading it in its entirety, is the "reason for mistaking the poem for history" (Omidsalar, "Review," 238).

transmitters to whom the information was relayed before their reports reached the historians), rather than the rationality of the historical narrative; thus they could treat the *Shahnamah* as a historical work on that basis. As Khan explains, "Once it has been established that the testimony [witnessing the original event] was sincerely given and properly transmitted, the report is not to be sifted by reason."[175] In this way, an 11th century epic that includes tales of demons and dragons still can be seen by modernizers as recuperable for historiographical purposes.

While premodern historians may have read the *Shahnamah* as a kind of history, for modernizers it became *the* history, and in the early 20th century it can be seen everywhere: in Shibli Nu'mani's history of Persian literature (1918),[176] in a speech given by the German Orientalist Ernst Herzfeld to the Iranian Society for National Heritage (1926),[177] in the Iranian scholar Jalal al-Din Huma'i's *Tarikh-i adabiyat-i iran* (1929),[178] and in the Iranian scholar Muhammad-Taqi Bahar's introduction to his critical edition of the *Tarikh-i sistan* (1935),[179] to name only a few examples. Rather than reading the text as history per se, the Iranian historian Hasan Pirniya (1871-1935) took a different, though also innovative, approach to the *Shahnamah* in his *Iran-i qadim* (1928), treating the text as "an artifact ... rather than a source of knowledge."[180] In other words, for Pirniya the *Shahnamah* could be appreciated as a work of art and studied as a relic of particular historical circumstances rather than being read at face value as a source of accurate historical information.

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[175] Khan, "Marvellous Histories," 542.

[176] Nu'mani, *Shi'r al-'ajam*, I: 110-23.

[177] Anjuman, *Majmu'ah*, 151-79.

[178] Huma'i, *Tarikh*, 93. Huma'i was a historian and educator who wrote one of the earliest Iranian literary history textbooks for pedagogical purposes, on which see Vejdani, *Making History*, 162-63.

[179] Bahar, *Bahar va adab*, I: 316.

[180] Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 102-3.

In the reading of the *Shahnamah* as history in the modern sense, it can be seen how the tropes of ancient modernity and *Shahnamah* as modern circulated not only textually, but also orally.[181] Textual influence was often more one-sided, as many more Iranian intellectuals were reading French texts than vice versa, and more Urdu speakers read Persian texts than vice versa. However, when examining how these ideas traveled verbally, a different dynamic—one of mutual exchange—can be observed.[182]

Shibli Nuʻmani was one of the first modernizers to write at length about the importance of the *Shahnamah* as a historiographic source. In the first and fourth volumes of his *Shiʻr al-ʻajam*, he dedicated several sections to reading the *Shahnamah* as a historiographic source and praising Firdawsi as a historian. Shibli was exposed to European thought and writing primarily through his friendship with the British Orientalist T. W. Arnold (1864-1930). Their friendship was based on mutual exchange, as they tutored one another in Arabic and French, respectively. Muhammad-Taqi Bahar was unable to read Urdu, the language in which Shibli wrote about Firdawsi, but he learned about Shibli through conversation with Fakhr-i Daʻi Gilani (1882-1964), another scholar and friend of Bahar's who was translating Shibli's writings into Persian at the time.[183] Bahar also may have discussed these ideas with his friend and Pahlavi tutor, Ernst Herzfeld (1879-1948), who delivered a speech in French before the Iranian Society for National Heritage titled "The *Shahnamah* and History." In his speech, Herzfeld groups Firdawsi together with premodern historians such as Tabari (839-923), Abu Hanifah Dinawari (828-896), and

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[181] On locating Iranian modernity in the ancient past rather than the present, see Zia-Ebrahimi, "Self-Orientalization," 465-68.

[182] This type of mutual exchange is treated in greater depth in Vejdani, *Making History*, 145-66.

[183] Bahar, *Bahar va adab*, II: 138-39. Gilani was an Iranian scholar who had learned Urdu while teaching Persian in India. Note that Gilani was evidently unaware that *Shiʻr al-ʻajam* had already been translated into Persian several years earlier in Afghanistan. For an example of a similar dynamic between Edward Browne and his Indian students, see Vejdani, "Indo-Iranian." Unlike Bahar, however, Browne read Urdu fluently, having studied it at Cambridge.

others and, like Shibli before him, considers the *Shahnamah* as an important source for Iranian pre-Islamic history.[184]

Bahar's model of Persian literary history and Herzfeld's model of Iranian art history also bear striking resemblance to one another. Bahar's division of Persian literature into periods follows the earlier tripartite model that developed throughout the history of the *tazkirah* genre and was adopted by Shibli as well. However, one of Bahar's innovations was to add ethnogeographic and linguistic characteristics ("Khurasani style," "Iraqi style," and "Indian style") to what had been a vaguely defined and largely temporal periodization, as well as to identify a fourth period of literary renaissance (*bazgasht-i adabi* or literary return). Similarly, Herzfeld divides Iranian art into periods, beginning with the Achaemenid period, when "Iran was the center of the known world," followed by the Sasanid period, the "period of Iran's modernity," then the Seljuq period, when Iran was leading the Muslim nations and Europe had just begun to emerge from savagery, and finally the Safavid period, when Iranian art had a special glory.[185] While Herzfeld's model does not map directly onto Bahar's, the two still share many similarities: four periods, the issues of center and periphery,[186] and the decline model of history that locates Iranian modernity in the past rather than the present or future.[187] These similarities indicate that Bahar and Hertzfeld were both contributing to and participating in the same discourse of modernization, a discourse that traveled as much verbally as textually.

In addition to sharing a modernizing approach to Firdawsi, there is significant overlap in Shibli and Bahar's respective Persian literary histories, and in Herzfeld's speech "The

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[184] Anjuman, *Majmu'ah*, 151-79.

[185] Ibid., 42.

[186] On the question of center and periphery in Bahar's work, see Smith, "Literary Courage," 42-78, and Smith, "Literary Connections," 199.

[187] On the decline model in narratives of Iranian history, see Vejdani, "The Place of Islam" and Zia-Ebrahimi, "Arab Invasion."

*Shahnamah* and History," in terms of the other figures they referenced as early (premodern) historians as well as contemporary Orientalists worthy of note. As can be expected, Shibli and Bahar both rely heavily on *tazkirah* sources (sharing most of their Iranian sources) and speak critically about the genre and about its earliest and most prominent examples ('Awfi's *Lubab al-albab* and Samarqandi's *Tazkirat al-shu'ara'*). However, Shibli also cites a number of European Orientalists: his friend and French tutor T. W. Arnold, the French scholar James Darmesteter, the German Theodor Nöldeke, and the Russian Valentin Zhukovskii.

Similarly, Bahar cites Herzfeld, his Pahlavi tutor, as one of the masters of the "new science" of Iranian philology (calling to mind Foucault's description in *The Order of Things* of the modernizing trend towards the breakup of traditional knowledge production into distinct new sciences which organize knowledge into increasingly specific categories). Herzfeld also uses the term *new sciences* early in his speech to the Society for National Heritage.[188] In addition to citing Herzfeld, Bahar also cites the French Orientalist Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, as well as several premodern historians, including Tabari and Abu Hanifah Dinawari. Meanwhile, Herzfeld shares with Shibli his citation of Darmesteter and Nöldeke, and with Bahar his citation of Tabari and Dinawari, among others. This shared set of references further indicates that Shibli, Bahar, and Herzfeld were active participants in the same intertextual discourse that appropriated premodern Iranian and Islamic sources as well as contemporary Orientalist sources in the writing of modern Persian literary history.

*Conclusion*

This chapter has attempted to expand on what Sunil Sharma identified as the point of conjuncture wherein Iranians, Indians, and Europeans "converged in the writing of a

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[188] Anjuman, *Majmu'ah*, 151.

comprehensive literary history without making a complete break with the *tazkira* tradition."[189]

By viewing these texts as part of a larger cosmopolitan genre of Persian literary history, a genre written not only in Persian, but in Urdu, English, German, Italian, and other languages, it can be seen that the genre of Persian literary history writing has developed through dialectical exchange between European Orientalists and Indian and Iranian litterateurs and has served as a vehicle for literary modernization, which was a verbal as well as textual discourse, sharing a particular set of boundaries and references. Literary modernization, while considered by its proponents to be something fresh and new, was more accurately a method of preserving tradition. This is best exemplified by a text like *Shi'r al-'ajam*, which negotiates the encounter with colonial modernity by using European methodologies in order to preserve, reform, and promote the best of what Shibli viewed as Islamic civilization, including Persian literature. Likewise, while the later Iranian textbooks discussed above appear fully modern, they are part of a trajectory that stretches back to the premodern *tazkirah* tradition, and they preserve some elements of that tradition even as they refashion them as a vehicle for nationalist modernization. Lefebvre's claim that modernity consists of endless repetition and refashioning of the old into the new rings true.

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[189] Sharma, "Redrawing the Boundaries," 60.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE CONVENTIONS OF MODERN PROSE

"It was a civilizing urge—

to bring closure, to come full circle,

to worship time by divvying it out

into portions, increments, sentences."

(Maurya Simon, *The Era of the Period*)[190]


"On the margin Alexander III had written 'Pardon impossible; to be sent to Siberia.' The Czarina took up the pen and, striking out the semicolon after 'impossible,' put it before that word. Then the endorsement read: 'Pardon; impossible to be sent to Siberia.' The Czar let the correction stand, good husband that he was."

(*The Typographical Journal*, 1904)[191]


  The first chapter laid out the historical relationship between Persian and Urdu and argued that they continued to interact long after the supposed death of Persian in the Indian subcontinent. The second chapter traced the emergence of modern literary historiography in both languages out of the earlier *tazkirah* tradition. This chapter explores the conventions of that modern literary historiography. I argue for the salience of several formal conventions (standard typography and orthography; punctuation; and simple, clear prose) as well as thematic conventions (Victorian-flavored sexuality, and a golden age decline and renaissance narrative structure).

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[190] Simon, "A Brief History of Punctuation," 519.
[191] Edwards, "Men and Their Methods," 108.

Perhaps the best-known work by Muhammad-Taqi Bahar, the Iranian literary scholar introduced in chapter two, is his landmark 1942 *Sabkshinasi: ya tarikh-i tatavvur-i nasr-i farsi* ("Stylistics: or the history of the development of Persian prose"). These three volumes, which survey prose in Iran from its earliest examples in ancient Iranian languages all the way through the 19th century, served as a textbook for students in the incipient doctoral program in Persian Literature at the University of Tehran. One of the goals of the text is to detail the distinctive stylistic features of Persian prose in each period, so that students would be able to recognize what period a Persian text belonged to through its stylistics. This chapter shares a similar goal: to elucidate the conventions of modern Persianate prose valued by reformers like Bahar in their literary histories. I first offer extensive background on formal conventions: standardized type, orthographic reform, the introduction of punctuation, and prose simplification. I then address the major thematic conventions (Victorian-influenced sexual mores, and a rise and fall model of history) to be found in modern Persianate literary histories.

## I. Formal conventions

*Standardizing type*

Premodern Persian could be challenging to read for many reasons. It was written in intricate, beautiful calligraphic styles that did not always lend themselves to easy reading, hand-copied by scribes whose varying levels of proficiency could further complicate reading. Its language was often convoluted and highly Arabicized, making it difficult to understand even once it had been deciphered. These factors, along with others such as the absence of mass education, kept Persian literacy largely relegated to a professional class of scribes (*dabir*, *munshi*, or *katib*). These scribes had a vested class interest in keeping Persian writing inaccessible. Their wealthy patrons also preferred works that were both beautiful objects and

challenging reads that would keep them engaged for a long time, justifying the high cost of having a book produced. As Finn Thiesen put it,

> Classical Persian books were never meant for armchair reading. The very word *book* had quite different connotations in those days. It was not a cheap mass-produced commodity, but a rarity and a luxury. Few could read one, still fewer could afford to possess one. In order to acquire a book one had to copy it oneself or pay someone a month's wage to copy it. … Certainly the reader who paid so dearly for his book would not have been satisfied with a few hours' light entertainment, and might prefer a work which could not be understood without effort. Ideally, a literary Classical Persian work should be so beautiful in form and so rich in content that the reader would return to it again and again.[192]

In India, the British broke up the scribes' monopoly over Persian writing through the introduction of print, creating a new market for books.[193] Persian print technology quickly found its way to Iran as well.[194] For the first time, books could be made cheaply available to a wider audience, and both technological developments and the change in audience impacted typographic considerations.

Historically, a number of calligraphic handwriting styles had been developed in Persian and adopted by Urdu as well. *Nasta'liq* was the most popular for writing Persian and Urdu. It could be written quickly and compactly, saving scribes time and allowing them to fit more text on a single page, a valuable feature when paper was expensive.[195] However, its sloping, cursive,

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[192] Thiesen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody*, xi.
[193] On the history of Persian printing in India before the period under discussion here, see the very fine PhD dissertation "Persian Print Culture in India, 1780-1880" by Mehrdad Ramezannia. For more on Persian and Urdu print culture in later years see Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books*.
[194] Nile Green, "Persian Print and the Stanhope Revolution."
[195] Yūsofī, "CALLIGRAPHY."

nonlinear elegance proved difficult to reproduce with typesetting technology. *Naskh*, a more linear, orderly, and consistent script was also used, especially for copies of the Qur'an (where unambiguous intelligibility was especially important), and this script lent itself much more easily to the development of type. Fort William College in India attempted to develop moveable type in *nasta'liq*, but the technical challenges proved too great. Lithography, which allowed for the inexpensive reproduction of handwritten *nasta'liq* script, helped popularize printed books among Iranians, who preferred *nasta'liq* over *naskh*.[196] It is ironic, then, that while lithographed *nasta'liq* helped make printed Persian ubiquitous, it was ultimately *naskh* that won out in Iran, and eventually nearly all works printed in Iran would come to be set in *naskh*, with *nasta'liq* reserved for ornamental purposes. This was not so in India, where *nasta'liq* retained its primacy. While typeset *naskh* became dominant by the turn of the 20th century in Iran, most printed works in Urdu were handwritten in *nasta'liq* and then reproduced with a printing press until the 1990s, following the advent of digital *nasta'liq* fonts in the early 1980s. Urdu works have also been printed in typeset *naskh*, but standardized *naskh* in Urdu differs subtly from Persian *naskh* typefaces. In particular, it captures and retains elements of the handwritten *nasta'liq* tradition, such as in the shape of the initial, medial, or word-final connected *ha*. Compare the following examples:

*har* ("every") in Persian هر and in Urdu ہر ; *shahr* ("city) in Persian شهر and in Urdu شہر ; *khanah* ("house") in Persian خانه and in Urdu خانہ

In each of the above examples of typed *naskh*, the letter *ha* (initial, medial, and final, respectively) in the Urdu typeface more closely resembles its shape in *nasta'liq*.

In printed Urdu, *naskh* is primarily used for quotations from Qur'an or other Arabic texts (while quotations from Persian are given in *nasta'liq*), and even when Urdu books are printed in

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[196] Vejdani, *Making History*, 10.

*naskh*, an Urdu typeface is used whereas Arabic text is reproduced with an Arabic-style typeface.[197] This is an older manuscript convention that has survived and been modernized. See for example a folio from Jawhar Aftabchi's *Tazkirat al-vaqi'at*, a Mughal-era text in Persian. A copy dated 1610 is written in black ink, with a quote from a verse of the Qur'an (12:21) written in *naskh* and set off in red margin, preceded by a heading in red ink, "in His exalted word" (*bi-qawlihi ta'ala*).[198] The Persian text is written in a fine *nasta'liq* hand, while a verse from the Qur'an (36:13) stands out from the text in *naskh*, also preceded by the heading "His exalted word" (*qawluhu ta'ala*). The effect produced by giving a quotation in *naskh* in a text otherwise written in *nasta'liq* is quite similar to the use of italics in English.

For many contemporary Urdu speakers, *nasta'liq* is an integral part of the language. The linguist Mirza Khalil A. Beg, writing in 1995, considered it to be one of the characteristics inherent to the Urdu script: "Urdu script is characterized by the following features … it has *nastaliq* [sic] (a fine round hand) style of writing."[199] Given the assumption that Urdu will be written in *nasta'liq*, the distinction to be made in script is not between *nasta'liq* and *naskh*, but between the Perso-Arabic script and Romanized Urdu in the Latin script, the latter of which proliferates across Urdu-language social media, web forums, and SMS messages.[200] Thus, today Urdu speakers often informally use the term "*nasta'liq*" to refer to the Perso-Arabic script in general, including *naskh*, when differentiating between the Perso-Arabic script and another writing system. This kind of synecdoche is never deployed by Iranians, for whom *naskh* and

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[197] For an example see Shibli, *Shir' al-'ajam*, I:1. The text opens with quoted lines of Persian poetry from 'Urfi Shirazi in *nasta'liq*, followed by an Arabic supplication in *naskh*, printed with an Arabic-style typeface.

[198] Jawhar Aftabchi, *Tazkirat al-vaqi'at*. For a later Persian example, see Vajid 'Ali Shah, *Mubahasah bayn al-nafs va al-'aql*, 55.

[199] Beg, "The Standardization of Script for Urdu," 232.

[200] In contemporary India, Urdu is also sometimes written in the Devanagari script. See Ahmad, "Urdu in Devanagari."

*nasta'liq* do not have the same identitarian valences. However, the question of orthography—in particular, whether to use the Perso-Arabic script or another script for writing Persian and Urdu—was the subject of significant controversy in both Iran and India.

*Orthographies*

Robert D. Greenberg notes that in the Balkans, orthographic manuals delineating different spellings for Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian "were so politically explosive that they were destroyed upon printing."[201] Orthographic issues have been no less explosive in the Persianate world. Mustafa Kemal 'Atatürk' famously engineered a switch from the Perso-Arabic script to a Latin-based one for Turkish in what came to be known as the *harf devrimi* or 'letter revolution.'[202] Attempts to impose the Perso-Arabic script on Bengali (which, unlike Urdu, uses its own writing system unrelated to Arabic) played a role in the bloody 1971 war that led to Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan.[203] In Persian-speaking Tajikistan, use of the Latin script over Perso-Arabic "symbolized … scientific and technical progress" and helped forge a Tajik identity separate from the other Persian-speaking countries.[204] While there were a series of similar proposals for new scripts proposed in Iran and India for Persian and Urdu, respectively, they ultimately failed to be adopted.

Proposals for script reform have often had an identitarian nature. One motivation for the Turkish state to adopt the Latin script for Turkish was to align Turkey with the 'progressive'

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[201] Greenberg, *Language and Identity in the Balkans*, 5. Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian are largely mutually intelligible but are officially treated as separate languages, with some differences in orthography and formal vocabulary. Recall the discussion of similar dynamics between Hindi and Urdu in chapter one of this dissertation. On orthographies in Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian see ibid., 41-47.

[202] Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, 27-39. The script is generally referred to as 'Perso-Arabic' when referring to the modified version of the Arabic script initially developed for Persian, which added additional letters that Arabic lacked.

[203] Rahman, *Language and Politics in Pakistan*, 79-102.

[204] Bergne, *The Birth of Tajikistan*, 96. The Latin script would soon after be replaced with use of the Cyrillic script.

West rather than the 'backwards,' Muslim East. However, there were practical concerns as well.

The Arabic script is uniquely well-suited to writing classical Arabic. There is a nearly one-to-one

correspondence between spoken and written consonants, and while three of classical Arabic's six

vowels are left unwritten, Arabic morphology is structured around highly regular, predictable

patterns, so that educated readers can assume the missing vowels with a high degree of accuracy,

even when encountering an unfamiliar word. However, this elegantly concise system becomes

much less effective, and much more ambiguous, when applied to languages whose structure

differs from Arabic. Words in Turkish—as well as Persian, Urdu, and other non-Semitic

languages—are not built according to predictable patterns, making it more difficult for the reader

to guess the unwritten vowels. Guessing is made all the more complicated when languages have

larger vowel inventories to be left unwritten; Turkish, for example, has eight vowels, and Urdu

ten. For these reasons, confusion abounds between words that differ only in their unwritten

vowels, such as Persian *gul* ("flower") and *gil* ("mud"), both written as *gl* in the Perso-Arabic

script.

Modernizers in the Persianate world sought to eliminate ambiguity and imprecision in all

aspects of language, thus proposals to replace the Perso-Arabic script with one deemed more

precise and scientific—typically Latin—could appear to be purely pragmatic.[205] Proponents of

the Latin script insisted that its simplicity and accuracy would increase literacy rates. Even

Geoffrey Lewis, author of the magisterial study *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic*

*Success*, believes that Latinization "has played a large part in the rise of literacy [in Turkish] …

from 9 per cent in 1924 … to 82.3 per cent in 1995."[206] But a great many other countries

witnessed similarly dramatic increases in literacy without changing their script. Iran raised its

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[205] Beg notes that script reform is often referred to as "script modernization" (Beg, "The Standardization of Script for Urdu," 227).

[206] Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, 37.

general literacy rate from about 30% in 1968[207] to 85% in 2008, without abandoning or altering

the same Perso-Arabic script once used to write Turkish.[208] Just as with the other conventions of

modernization under discussion here, reform was much more about image and identity than

about practical considerations – or at least, the two were intimately intertwined. In Iran,

proponents of script reform and/or Latinization, such as Mirza Fath'ali Akhundzadah (1812-

1878), Mirza Malkum Khan (1833-1908), and Sayyid Hasan Taqizadah (1878-1970), largely

articulated their arguments in terms of scientific precision, but their orientation towards

Westernization belies the fact that their agendas were about culture and identity at least as much

as pragmatic issues, if not more so.[209] For the Westernizers, a convention like use of the Latin

script is ultimately seen as modern and pragmatic because it is Western. Even those who

advocated modifying, rather than abandoning, the Perso-Arabic script similarly fetishized

orthography as a kind of technology through which modernization could be achieved. Though

proposals to either significantly modify or replace the Perso-Arabic script ultimately failed to

gain traction in Iran, at the time they were the subject of much controversy. In India, script

reform was no less contentious.

As discussed in chapter one, in the 19th century Urdu began to assume an identity as an

'Islamic' language, while some Iranian nationalists sought to distance themselves from Arabic

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[207] Iran Almanac, cited in Laurence D. Loeb, *Outcaste*, 132.

[208] UNESCO, "Adult and Youth Literacy," 35. In the final analysis, literacy rates depend on education and development, not script. This is why today Japan and Taiwan boast some of the highest literacy rates anywhere in the world, despite their famously difficult writing systems, while Somalia, which uses a simple, largely phonetic version of the Latin alphabet, has one of the lowest literacy rates. John R. Perry similarly inveighs against what he terms the "alphabetical fallacy" behind the "pseudo-scientific" assumption that the complexity of a writing system is directly tied to literacy. See Perry, "Comparative Perspectives on Language Planning in Iran and Tajikistan," 158.

[209] See Algar, "Malkum Khan, Akhūndzada and the Proposed Reform of the Arabic Alphabet," and Perry, ibid. Taqizadah later changed his views, abandoning the idea of adopting the Latin script for Persian.

and Islam. For Urdu-speakers, use of the Perso-Arabic script was an important—even constitutive—element of the language's identity, and proposals to change the script were seen by some as sacrilegious, threatening to undermine the language's Muslim identity.[210] The British in particular promoted Urdu in the Latin script (called "Roman Urdu" or "Roman Hindustani" in their terminology) for a number of reasons. It was used in the military in order to give unified instructions to Indian soldiers from various provinces who might not have shared literacy in a single script (or been literate at all). Some Christian missionaries favored the Latin script not only for cultural reasons, but because evangelical material could be translated into local dialects and transcribed in the Latin script for easy use by proselytizers. Ease of use also motivated the British to use the Latin script in preparing much of their educational materials for training officers in local languages. In addition to the British, some Indian secular nationalists, like Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945), were in favor of writing Urdu and other local languages in the Latin script in order to promote national unity in face of the great diversity of scripts found in the Indian subcontinent.[211] Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) conceded that the army's use of "Roman Hindustani" made it possible to quickly grant literacy to millions of previously unlettered Indian soldiers.[212] Among the Indian languages which do not use a variation of the Perso-Arabic script, the majority of the larger languages have their own unique scripts, tied to the identity of their speakers. While there was a greater degree of flexibility and fluidity in the past, with languages being written in various scripts, as the languages took on independent ethnic (and, in some cases, national) identities in the modern period, associations between language, script, and people hardened.

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[210] The Turkish script change was initially met with hostility on the same grounds; see Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, 32.
[211] Bose, "Free India and Her Problems," 146.
[212] Azad, *Selected Works of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, III: 49–50.

South Asian languages written in variations of the Perso-Arabic script were not exempt from this trend and developed independent standards which make each language visually distinct; recall the discussion above of Persian and Urdu's differences in print typefaces. Persian orthography has not changed dramatically since the Arabic script was first modified to represent New Persian in the ninth century. Urdu, however, was until quite recently written according to Persian orthography, without such modifications to differentiate sounds unique to Urdu. As can be seen from the plethora of orthographic manuals or *imla' namah*s that were produced over the past century or so, the development of the orthographic conventions now more or less standard in Urdu has been an ongoing process that unfolded over a considerable period of time.[213] Urdu orthography underwent several transformations, with individual writers and publishers taking rather idiosyncratic approaches to the writing system, and different symbols used at different times to represent retroflex consonants (those produced with the tongue curled back in the mouth). The manifestation of narcissism of small differences in orthography can be seen in the representation of retroflex consonants in three South Asian languages written in the Perso-Arabic script: Urdu, Pashto, and Sindhi. The voiceless retroflex stop [ṭ] – put less technically, a "retroflex T" – is pronounced the same but written differently in each of these languages. Each language has followed the same principle for creating a new letter to represent this sound by modifying the Arabic letter ت (representing the non-retroflex [t]). However, the three languages have developed three distinctive modifications: ٹ in Urdu (previously written as ٿ), ټ in Pashto, and ٿ in Sindhi. In addition to these modifications, others continued to strive to reform the Urdu script for various purposes.

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[213] I thank Walt Hakala for suggesting this avenue for investigating the standardization of Urdu orthography.

In 1919, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1872-1953), the famed Indian translator of the Qur'an into English, published a "Note on Urdu Orthography" in which he lamented inconsistent spelling and orthography in Urdu.[214] He took particular issue with inconsistent spacing between compound words. Ali calls for a distinction between final *choti ye* (what he calls a "deep and round" shape), *bari ye* ("turned back"), and a third ("shallow and long, left-hand end not turned up").[215] He notes that this distinction is already made by careful writers, but blames lithographic presses for the "lazy practice" of only distinguishing between the first and second forms – though this tripartite distinction did not ultimately catch on. He further calls for the same distinction to be made with the medial *ye*, to distinguish between [ī], [ē], and the diphthong [ai]; this distinction, while also observed by some writers, similarly failed to become standard. The essay discusses other distinctions, some of which became part of the standard conventions of Urdu type (such as calling for discarding the "antiquated" four dots then used to mark retroflex letters in favor of the superscript *ta*) whereas others failed to gain popularity, such as an idiosyncratic way of writing the letter *waw* to denote the diphthong 'au.'[216] Elsewhere, Ali clarifies that his goal in reforming Urdu orthography is to pave the way for effective moveable type in Urdu, lamenting that "no modern language can make progress, or even hold its own, which depends upon lithography and is not able to use the latest resources of the printing-press."[217]

There are many other aspects of orthography which the present study cannot address in detail. Why exactly did *naskh* replace *nasta'liq* for printed Persian but not for Urdu? What are

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[214] Yusuf Ali was educated in Bombay, in both the reform-oriented Islamic school Anjuman Himayat al-Islam as well as the Scottish missionary Wilson College. He was both a personally pious Muslim and a dedicated servant of the British.

[215] Yusuf Ali, "Note on Urdu Orthography," 31.

[216] Ibid., 33-34.

[217] Yusuf Ali, "Social and Economic Conditions During the Middle Ages of Indian History," 361.

the origins of the various strategies used to represent retroflex consonants and other unique sounds in Urdu, and how did their current forms become accepted as standard? Study of orthographic reform in Persian also deserves greater attention. While much has been written on the Iranian script reformers discussed above, in Afghanistan—which is outside the scope of the current project but, it should be noted, was influenced by developments in both Iran and in India and which engaged much more closely with Urdu—there was a 1953 proposal for an entirely new orthography for Persian.[218] This unique script and the circumstances of its development should also be attended to.

The aim of this section has been to outline some of the orthographic conventions of modern writing in Persian and Urdu. Through highlighting the ways in which orthography intersects with identitarian concerns, modern orthography can be seen to be not (only) a natural outcome of modernization (developing out of print technology and the exigencies of modern institutions), but (also) a convention used by modernizers to mark their work as modern. Along with orthography, another such convention was the introduction of European-style punctuation to Persian and Urdu.

*Punctuation*

In an article published in the final years of his life in 1990, the Iranian writer Muhammad 'Ali Jamalzadah (1892-1997) references the story about a semicolon saving a man from Siberian exile, cited as an epigram at the beginning of this chapter. This anecdote appears in a number of

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[218] See Yusufi, "Rasm al-khatt." Though published in 1953, the journal indicates that the author, Muhammad Akbar Khan Yusufi, had devised this proposal 30-40 years earlier. Yusufi argued that the Perso-Arabic script slowed down the acquisition of knowledge (*'ulum*) because of the need to learn two or three forms for each letter (ie. initial, medial, and final), the absence of short vowels, and other deficiencies. He claimed the Latin script was similarly unsuitable because of the need for digraphs to represent a single sound. Yusufi's script was designed to more adequately represent Persian as well as Pashto and even Arabic, and was fully cursive, so that one would never need to lift their pen from the page while writing.

English-language journals and books in the first years of the twentieth century, both in didactic contexts emphasizing the importance of proper punctuation and in collections of amusing tidbits and odd facts. Jamalzadah addresses the issue of punctuation (*nuqtah-guzari*, *'alamat-guzari*), explaining that the French call it "*punk tuvasion*" (transliterated into Persian), and clarifying, in Latin characters between parentheses, "(Pumctua = tiom)" [sic].[219] He explains that not only the French, but "all the people of the West" (*tamam-i mardum-i maghrib zamin*) place great importance on punctuation. By his time of writing, punctuation had become familiar to educated Iranians, but this had not always been the case. As he says, "you must certainly know well that among the Westerners [*farangiha*] there are many of these symbols," naming several examples: the period (*nuqtah*), exclamation mark (*nuqtah-yi ta'ajjub*), question mark (*nuqtah-yi istifham*), colon (*du nuqtah*), parenthesis (*parantiz*), comma (*virgul*), semicolon (*nuqtah va virgul*), and dash (*khatt*), among others. Jamalzadah notes that "it is impossible for them to end a sentence without a punctuation mark," whereas Iranians have no such custom, except for the use of blank space in handwritten letters to separate subjects. However, "in the last hundred years" (that is, 1890-1990) younger Iranians who studied European languages have become familiar with the use of punctuation and have begun using it in their own Persian writing and even in poetry. He goes on to argue for the importance of adopting punctuation, especially in the journal *Kilk* in which he writes. Worthy of note is that Jamalzadah himself uses punctuation very sparingly in his article, and some sentences run on for over half a page with nary a comma or period to break them up.

Print came comparatively late to the Arabic-script languages such as Persian and thus so did punctuation. In premodern Persian writing, a page was not traditionally broken up by

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[219] Jamalzadah, "Shivah-yi nuqtah guzari va..." The use of *m* here rather than *n* in spelling 'punctuation' may be a misreading of French handwriting wherein *n* resembles an English *m*.

sentences marked by terminal periods as in English, but contained extremely long run-on sentences wherein the conjunction *va* ("and") served the role of the comma, thus a list in English of "X, Y, Z" would have been rendered in Persian as "X *va* Y *va* Z." Other conventions were used to separate sections of text, such as a larger and/or bolded heading for the next section appearing on the same line of text, or an image such as a circle or a flower serving the role of a period at the end of a section. Below are two hypothetical examples in English to give the reader a sense for these conventions:

> end of a section containing biographical detail about a poet **COUPLET** this
>
> would be a couplet by the poet
>
> in the year such-and-such the poet moved to the court of so-and-so ✿ the weather
>
> in that clime was pleasant

Of note is that these were not at all standardized practices and varied heavily from work to work, author to author, and scribe to scribe. Furthermore the two strategies for demarcating lines or ideas described above (bold headings and images) were only two possibilities among several others.[220] The manuscript tradition also made use of borders (*jadval*), often colored, to separate sections, and sometimes three dots arranged in a triangle (typically in a different color ink than the text) were used to mark the end of a cited couplet of poetry. Some of these conventions developed out of the Qur'an manuscript tradition wherein divisions were not made from sentence to sentence or paragraph to paragraph, but rather verse (*ayah*) to verse and chapter (*surah*) to chapter. A single Qur'anic verse may, therefore, contain what become multiple sentences when translated into English, broken up by conjunction words. The premodern Qur'an manuscript tradition has its own, quite well-developed, system of punctuation (namely *tajwid*) which

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[220] For additional punctuation strategies deployed in premodern Persian manuscripts see Estaji and Firooziyan Pooresfahani, "The Investigation of Punctuation in Photographic Copies of Persian Writing."

includes signs that indicate when a pause in reading/recitation is optional, recommended, recommended against, forbidden, and so on. This allows for a good deal of both flexibility and precision. Interestingly, the *tajwid* system has carried on into the print era but remains limited in use only to the text of the Qur'an itself; other modern Arabic texts—including commentaries on the Qur'an—use European-style punctuation.[221]

The end of a section of writing in Persian or Urdu had traditionally been marked not by a period but by a conventional phrase (or sometimes a religious supplication), often Arabic. [222] Some examples marking the very end of a work include *tammat bi'l-khayr* "it [the writing] ended well" (reserved for), *faqat* "just [this]," or simply the Persian phrase *tamam shud* "it is finished," sometimes with a combination of phrases as in *tammat tamam shud*. The Iranian litterateur, educator, and politician Muhammad 'Ali Furughi 'Zuka' al-Mulk' (1877-1942) wrote one of the earliest literary histories of Persian, *Tarikh-i adabiyat-i farsi* ("History of Persian Literature"). His 1917 manuscript contains no commas or periods, but spacing is used to demarcate sections. Traditionally, *tazkirah*s (and other genres, for example *bayaz* poetry collections) separated poetic quotations with a line containing the Arabic phrase *wa lahu* "and to him [is ascribed the following]" or *wa lahu aydan* "and to him also [is ascribed the following]." Zuka' al-Mulk uses these phrases to separate quotations, and his work ends with an Arabic colophon: *tamm al-kitab bi-'awn al-malik al-wahhab* "the book was finished with the aid of [God] the King, the Bestower." Strikingly, what appears to be an inverted comma appears in

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[221] "Qur'an" literally means "recitation," and despite the well-developed Qur'anic manuscript tradition, it was and remains primarily an oral text to be recited aloud. Timothy Mitchell discusses the ways in which the 19th century Qur'anic scholarly tradition at al-Azhar in Cairo resisted print and saw "the only way to read a text … was to hear it read aloud, phrase by phrase, by one who had already mastered it, and to repeat and discuss it with such a master" (*Colonising Egypt* 133). On the "new privileging of formal coherency in language" in 19th century Arabic (Sacks, *Iterations of Loss*, 11) see ibid., 77-145.

[222] This is comparable to the use of the Latin *finis* at the end of an English-language work.

some Safavid-era *majmu'ah*s ("collections") of courtly correspondence (*tarassul*), used in place of the aforementioned Arabic formulae to separate poetic quotations.[223] The scribes (and authors) of these works are unknown, but given Safavid exchange with Europe, it may be possible that the scribes had come across European-style punctuation. Another possibility is that they independently invented a symbol that coincidentally resembles the inverted comma in both form and usage. This early comma (or comma-like symbol) deserves further investigation in *majmu'ah*s from the period. In any case, it is the exception that proves the rule, as it otherwise does not appear again in Persian until centuries later.

Aside from the unknown Safavid-era scribes mentioned above, British Orientalists may have been the first to insert European-style punctuation in Persian and Urdu.[224] They did this for their own purposes, in order to make native texts more accessible to British students of the languages. For example, the *Gulistan* ("Rose garden") of Shaykh Sa'di (1210-92) had long been a central text of Persianate education. This 13th century work of didactic literature was used to teach Islamic ethics as well as Persian language and literature throughout the Persianate world for centuries, making it one of the most influential and widely-read works in the Persian literary canon.[225] The *Gulistan* retained its pride of place in new educational curricula, including the *dars-i nizami* syllabus for Indian Muslims and British language training for their own officers.

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[223] See Malik, 3850, *Tarassul*, page 57/folio 28-29. This manuscript is undated, but as it pertains to various individuals in the court of Shah Safi (r. 1629-42), it can be assumed to date from that time. Another example can be found in Malik, 2551, *Munsha'at va ghayrah majmu'ah*, page 42. Marginalia from this manuscript dates it variously to the lunar Hijri years 1100 (1688-9 CE) or 1130 (1717-8 CE). I wish to thank Shahla Farghadani for bringing these MSS to my attention and to Kathryn Babayan for sharing the images with me.

[224] On the historical development of punctuation in Europe, see Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West*.

[225] Kia, "Adab as Ethics of Literary Form and Social Conduct." The Encyclopædia Iranica calls it "probably the single most influential work of prose in the Persian tradition" (Lewis, "GOLESTĀN-E SAʿDI").

Materials prepared for language training ultimately impacted language use outside of the classroom as well.

The *Gulistan* in particular was used for British officers' Persian language exams, and they produced punctuated editions of the text, making it easier to read.[226] Other Persian and Urdu works, like the Urdu *Bagh o bahar*, were similarly prepared. Today one can hardly find printed copies of unpunctuated prose works, even those like the *Gulistan* which were originally composed in premodern contexts long before the introduction of punctuation. However, in Persian as in Urdu punctuation remains inconsistent, having not been codified to the same degree as English or other European languages. Punctuation is thus still used more sparingly and haphazardly in Persian and Urdu than in English.

Iranian nationalism, as discussed in chapter one, had a strong preference for emphasizing what it saw as indigenous, such as celebrating its pre-Islamic cultural elements and history over that which had been influenced by the 'foreign' Arabs. Given this preference, why did Persian not develop an indigenous system of punctuation, perhaps codifying the conventions to be found in the premodern tradition described above? Other languages ranging from Armenian to Chinese formalized their preexisting punctuation conventions, often complementing them by selective borrowing of punctuation marks from European languages in addition to their native marks.[227] Instead, Persian borrowed its modern system of punctuation wholesale from European languages, as detailed above by Jamalzadah.

One reason may be that the premodern Persian and Arabic systems of punctuation to be found in the manuscript tradition lacked direct equivalents for many of these marks. European

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[226] For one example see Sprenger, *Gulistan of Sa'dy: Edited in Persian, with Punctuation and the Necessary Vowel-Marks, for the Use of the College of Fort William.*
[227] On the history of punctuation in Chinese see Yu, "A History of Reading in Late Imperial China, 1000-1800," 68–75.

punctuation began to haphazardly find its way into Persian in the writings of the first generation

of Iranian students who went to Europe to acquire modern knowledge and learn European

languages, in addition to the punctuated Persian texts prepared by the British previously

discussed. This was an unsystematic process that continues even today, as the use of punctuation

in Persian continues to vary greatly from writer to writer or publication to publication, with some

using it sparingly and many unclear as to what standards or rules should guide their use.

Why did Iranians not simply mix the two systems, retaining (or repurposing) premodern

punctuation symbols and adopting European-style symbols to meet their needs?  The answer

may lie in the genre conventions of modernization: one system belonged to the premodern

traditions, whereas modernizers saw the genre of modern writing, in which they believed

themselves to be participating, as having its own conventions for punctuation.

*Simplified prose*

Wali Ahmadi claims, citing Ghulam Husayn Yusufi, that "rarely has there been a

discussion of note on style in Persian prose which has not been informed or inspired, directly or

indirectly" by Bahar's *Sabkshinasi*.[228] Even many contemporary critics like Ehsan Yarshater

have largely upheld Bahar's framework for Persian literature. Therefore, Bahar's views on

modernizing and simplifying Persian prose, which are examined closely here, are representative

not only of one Iranian intellectual, but of the entire "institution of Persian literature" as Ahmadi

suggests. A translation of Bahar's introduction to *Sabkshinasi* is included as an appendix to this

dissertation.

Bahar notes the role of the Dar al-Funun, Iran's first modern institution of higher

learning, in "modernizing prose style and simple writing" (*tajdid-i sabk-i nasr va sadah-navisi*)

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[228] Ahmadi, "The Institution of Persian Literature," 143.

through the study of foreign languages, translation, and reading European books.[229] His

definition of modern prose is full of internal contradictions: he reiterates the importance of

simplicity and avoiding excessive Arabic words, though his own writing is often convoluted and

full of Arabic turns of phrase, and his exemplars for modern prose are not contemporary writers

but ancient predecessors like Sa'di; in his praise of the prose style of the Iranian politician and

litterateur Qa'im Maqam Farahani (1779-1835), he notes that Qa'im Maqam followed the

*Gulistan* in style. The *Gulistan*'s preface, however, is famously among the most convoluted and

difficult pieces of writing in Persian literature, full of obscure Arabic words.[230] The rest of the

text as well "assumes a good knowledge of Arabic,"[231] but is tempered by, in Bahar's estimation,

an avoidance of obscure or "strange" (*gharib*) Arabic and Mongolian words.[232] Bahar praises

Sa'di for his brevity (*ikhtisar va ijaz*), calling this quality the "foundation of Persian speech"

(*bunyad-i kalam-i parsi*). He laments the historical emergence of baroque Persian prose, wherein

sentences grew long and became crammed with synonymous words and repetitive sentences.

This style of prose "is afflicted with verbosity and falls into the vortex of arbitrariness and

tedium."[233] Overall, despite the complexity of the text's preface, the prose style of the rest of the

*Gulistan* is indeed relatively simple and unembellished.

Like the transformation in the reception of Firdawsi's *Shahnamah* described in the

previous chapter—where a text once valued for its eloquence and morality becomes in the

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[229] Bahar, *Sabkshinasi*, III: 337-8. Note that the word Bahar uses for "modernizing," *tajdid*, can also mean "renewal." This is indeed telling of his view, shared with other Iranian modernizers, that the qualities of modernity could be found in the ancient Iranian past and that the modernizer's task was not to create anew but to renew and revivify the ancient.

[230] An 1852 British report on Persian education in India calls the preface "difficult and abounding in Arabic passages" and noting that, for this reason, Indian pupils are spared from reading it. See Reid, *Report on Indigenous Education and Vernacular Schools*, 53.

[231] Lewis, "GOLESTĀN-E SAʿDI."

[232] Bahar, *Sabkshinasi*, III: 134-5.

[233] Ibid.

modern period appreciated for its supposed historicity—the *Gulistan* of Sa'di has always been considered a text of prime importance in Persian literature, but not always for the same reason. While its elegantly rhymed prose and quotable aphorisms made the *Gulistan* popular and imitable in earlier periods, these qualities fell out of favor with the emergence of modern Persian prose.[234] Despite this, the *Gulistan* retained its importance even in conventions, but now as a model of clear prose style. Note the connection to printing as well, as *Gulistan* was one of the earliest texts printed in Persian.

Bahar's views are especially inconsistent when it comes to Arabic. Several Iranian nationalists of his era who favored 'purifying' Persian of Arabic influence, like Ahmad Kasravi, were themselves highly proficient and well-read in Arabic.[235] Bahar was no exception, having mastered Arabic at a young age. His contradictory views were reflective of his intellectual milieu and a time when various approaches to nationalism and modernity were being contested, with none among them yet hegemonic.[236] For example, he praises the conciseness and economy of style of Persian literature from the ninth-tenth century Samanid dynasty, and—perhaps spuriously—connects this to the characteristics of Middle Persian prose, but he also mentions that the ancient Arabic writers possessed these qualities as well and contends that the early Persian writers imitated both Middle Persian and Arabic sources.[237] In Bahar's view, the ancient Arabs possessed the same qualities imitable and recoverable for modern prose as did the ancient Iranians.

One explanation for Bahar's ambivalence about Arabic and his dubious claim that the Arabic poetic forms that have dominated Persian poetry since the advent of Islam were

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[234] Lewis, "GOLESTĀN-E SAʿDI."
[235] See Banani, "Ahmad Kasravi and the 'Purification' of Persian."
[236] For more of Bahar's own internal contradictions, see Smith, "Literary Courage" 55.
[237] Bahar, *Sabkshinasi*, II: 71.

ultimately derived from Iranian, not Semitic, sources[238] may be an attempt to anchor the greatness of another civilization in an Iranian foundation. As a young boy, Bahar was first exposed to European ideas through reading Arabic publications.[239] (Iranica Loraine). His conflicted attitude and various claims about Arabic can be seen as the same discursive strategy that led many other Iranian nationalists and intellectuals to make similar claims about locating the origins of progressive, modern Europe in ancient, Aryan Iran, in order to negotiate their sense of falling behind as Europe colonized Iran's neighbors.

Another explanation, one that gets to the heart of the conflicted place of Arabic in Bahar's thinking, is related to the notion of linguistic purity, with the two classical languages (Middle Persian and Arabic) supposedly untainted by contact with others. Bahar argues that the greatness of both Persian and Arabic is best realized if they are kept separate from one another in the following satirical *qit'ah* (fragmentary, topical poem) from his *Divān*.[240]

| | |
|---|---|
| روشن نموده شهر به نور جمال خویش | دیدم به بصره دخترکی اعجمی نسب |
| وز شیخ دل ربوده به غنج و دلال خویش | می خواند درس قرآن در پیش شیخ شهر |
| و آهنگ «ضاد» رفته به اوج کمال خویش | می داد شیخ درس «ضلال مبین» بدو |
| با آن دهان کوچک غنچه مثال خویش | دختر نداشت طاقت گفتار حرف «ضاد» |
| وان شیخ می نمود مکرر مقال خویش | می‌داد شیخ را به «دلال مبین» جواب |
| کاین شوخ منصرف نشود از خیال خویش | گفتم به شیخ: راه ضلال اینقدر مپوی |
| او در «دلال» خویش و تو اندر «ضلال» خویش | بهتر همان بود که بمانند هر دوان |

In Basra I saw a Persian girl / who lit up the city with her beauty

She was studying the Qur'an with the local shaykh / and had stolen his heart with her

[238] Smith, "Literary Courage," 53–55.
[239] Loraine and Matīnī, "BAHĀR, MOḤAMMAD-TAQĪ."
[240] The poem appears in Bahar's *Divan*, 315, and the translation is my own. This poem has been excised—presumably due to censorship—from the edition of his *Divan* (Tehran, Intisharat-i nigah: 1390 AH [2011-12 CE]) currently to be found in bookstores in Iran.

coquetry [*dalal*] and rosebud lips

The shaykh was teaching her the lesson of 'manifest error [*ḍalal*]'[241] / and the sound of

the *ḍad* was at the peak of perfection

She lacked the power to pronounce the letter *ḍad* / with those little rosebud lips of hers[242]

In response, she would say 'manifest coquetry [*dalal*]' / and the shaykh would make her

repeat after him

I said to the shaykh, 'don't search so hard for the way of *ḍalal*'[243] / so that my joke would

not dissuade him of his opinion

It would be better that each remain in their place / her in her own coquetry [*dalal*] and

you in your own error [*ḍalal*]

This idea of linguistic purity in separation can be connected to the notions of racial purity and the

aversion to racial miscegenation prevalent among Europeans and their imitators at the turn of the

century.[244] As Smith concludes, the problem for Bahar is when the separate greatnesses of

Persian and Arabic are muddied through excessive linguistic miscegenation.[245] It is the *excessive*

nature of the mixing that is the issue for Bahar, not the fact of mixing itself, for Arabic words

have been used in Persian poetry since the emergence of the New Persian language. Bahar is

concerned with balance and taste (categories that, of course, function as categories of imagined

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[241] The phrase 'manifest error' [*ḍalalin mubin*] appears nearly 20 times throughout the Qur'an; see for example 3:164, 6:74, and many other verses.

[242] This poem revolves around a pun on the similarity of the words *dalāl* (coquetry) and *ḍalāl* (error), the latter beginning with the Arabic letter *ḍād* which represents an Arabic sound famously difficult for Iranians and other non-Arabs to pronounce, to such an extent that Arabic was often called *lughat al-ḍād* "the language of *ḍād*."

[243] Bahar's statement to the shaykh is another pun which can be read either as 'don't search so hard for *ḍalāl*' (ie. achieving the correct pronunciation) or 'don't search so hard for an erroneous path.'

[244] Zia-Ebrahimi, "Self-Orientalization and Dislocation," 451.

[245] Again, this mirrors the European Orientalist discourse about India, which was described by colonial Orientalists as a once-great Aryan civilization corrupted by mixing with dark-skinned Dravidian invaders.

national boundaries and power relations); as he says in the introduction to *Sabkshinasi*, Islamic

mysticism (associated with Arabic) is useful when "a taste [*namaki*, 'charm,' lit. 'a bit of salt']

… is sprinkled on" Persian poetry.[246]

In his appraisal of the style of Qa'im Maqam, Bahar praises Qa'im Maqam as a follower

of the school (*maktab*) of Sa'di's *Gulistan* but adds that "he has his own taste" (*namaki az khvud*

*darad*).[247] Here, Bahar uses the same word (*namaki*) to describe Qa'im Maqam's taste or charm

as when describing the proportion of Islamic mysticism to be "sprinkled" on Persian poetry.

Bahar then essentially lays out a nine-point program for modern prose in his numbered points

praising Qa'im Maqam's "poetic license taken in writing" (*tasarrufi kih an janab dar*

*navisandagi bakar avardah ast*).[248] Some are seemingly timeless qualities such as the first point,

"sweetness of expression and sweetness of words and beauty of expression that is from God"

(*shirini-yi bayan va uzubat-i alfaz va husn-i ada kih min 'ind allah ast*). More relevant for our

interests is Bahar's praise of Qa'im Maqam's short sentences that are not overburdened with

repetition (*muzdavajat*, *qarinah-sazi*) but that do use repetition when eloquence (*balaghat*)

allows. Premodern Persian literature made abundant use of paired words, whether synonyms (cf.

English 'weeping and wailing') or antonyms (cf. English 'at home and abroad'), and other forms

of repetition. Appropriate use of repetition was a hallmark of premodern eloquence, but for

Bahar, excessive repetition is "tiring" (*khastah-kunandah*). Note that Bahar does not call for

traditional repetition to be abandoned, merely used in moderation.

Bahar's fifth point on Qa'im Maqam's prose style also hails his moderation, this time in

the use of quotes from poetry, the Qur'an, and other texts. His sixth point praises Qa'im

Maqam's frankness and avoidance of prolix similes, metaphors, and allusions, while the seventh

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[246] Bahar, *Sabkshinasi*, I: 14.
[247] Ibid., III: 340.
[248] Ibid., III: 340-342.

point praises his apt and succinct use of allusive, indirect speech to avoid subjects about which he cannot speak openly, while maintaining an attractive writing style. Bahar's last two points again compare Qa'im Maqam's style to the *Gulistan* and celebrate Qa'im Maqam's delightful elegance in choosing simple, plainly understandable Persian vocabulary instead of recondite Arabic synonyms. In previous eras, difficulty could be a virtue in prose and use of obscure vocabulary a sign of erudition, and the preface to the *Gulistan* displayed both these characteristics. For a modernizer like Bahar, however, simple, accessible prose was preferable, exemplified by the body of the *Gulistan*. Such simple prose remained something of an unattained ideal, at least for Bahar's generation of modernizers; his own prose in *Sabkshinasi* is hardly simple and accessible.

In addition to the formal conventions discussed above – standardized type and orthography, punctuation, and simplified prose – Persianate modernizers followed thematic conventions as well. Two such conventions were particularly germane to literary histories: a Victorian-flavored approach to sexuality, and a rise and fall model of history.

## II. Thematic conventions

*New approaches to sexuality*

The first modern historians of Persian and Urdu literature had to reconcile themselves with the values they held as European-oriented modernizers, who disparaged homoerotic practices, and the homoeroticism and ribald, frank sexuality of the literature they discussed. Homoeroticism – or, more specifically, the love and desire of older men for beardless male youths and depictions of the latter's beauty – was a common theme in classical Persian and Urdu poetry, as well as in the Arabic and Turkic literary traditions with which they interacted. Modernizing intellectuals saw Victorian-flavored mores that emphasized bashfulness and silence

about sexuality (particularly homoeroticism) as part of the conventions of modernity, distancing themselves from the frankness with which sexuality was discussed in premodern literature.[249] As homoeroticism had once been the dominant convention for discussing love in literature (somewhat abstracted from actual social relations, which were likely more variegated), puritanism around sexuality became a thematic convention of modernization.

The previous chapter discussed Riza-Quli Khan Hidayat's *Majma' al-fusaha'*, often identified as the last Iranian *tazkirah*.[250] Despite some of its modern features, such as its proto-nationalism and its introduction which addresses 'Iranian' literature in Avestan and other pre-Islamic languages,[251] the text's structure is consistent with the biographical anthology format and its unabashed mention of homoerotic practices exemplifies the premodern *tazkirah* tradition's frankness about sexual matters. Hidayat mentions various poets' homoerotic love affairs (*'ishq-bazi*), such as that between Muhtasham Kashani and the male minstrel Shatir Jalal,[252] Ahi Turshizi and Sultan Husayn Mirza,[253] and Suzani Samarqandi and the son of a tailor.[254] Hidayat even states that in the poet Shams al-Din Tabrizi's youth, his father forbade him from leaving the house until puberty out of fear of accusations and "because of [the boy's] excessive beauty" [*az fart-i husn*].[255] Expressing neither prudishness nor reproach about the subject, Hidayat differed

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[249] I use the term "Victorian-flavored" because actually-existing Victorianism was much more complex than mere puritanism. See Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians*. This complexity was largely lost on Iranians and Indians, who encountered an idealized form of puritanical Victorianism through their personal encounters with the English, as well as a sanitized English canon approved for export.

[250] For one example of where it is identified as such, see Amanat, "Legend, Legitimacy," 318.

[251] Ibid., 318-20; Sharma, "Redrawing the Boundaries," 56; and Schwartz, "Bâzgasht-i Adabî," 1-2.

[252] Hidayat, *Majma' al-fusaha'*, IV: 113. On this relationship between Kashani and Jalal, see Shamisa, *Shahidbazi*, 199-200.

[253] Hidayat, *Majma' al-fusaha'*, IV: 5.

[254] Ibid., II: 920.

[255] Ibid., II: 1043. The 16th century Syrian mystic Muhammad ibn 'Iraq kept his pre-pubescent son veiled for the same reason; see El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, 31.

significantly from the Victorian-influenced modernizers whose works appeared soon after *Majma' al-fusaha'*.

Muhammad Husayn Azad (1830-1910) was one such "South Asian Victorian,"[256] who sought to modernize Urdu literature by calling for the abandonment of some of its classical heritage, to be replaced with a new set of conventions rooted in Indic and English traditions rather than in Persian. He saw Braj as possessing a natural simplicity compatible with the romanticism he favored, as opposed to the baroque and decadent Persian tradition.[257] Reading these views against the grain of Azad's comments on sexuality reveals that his Victorian-like discomfort with homoeroticism is at the heart of the matter. He claims that the "love of boys instead of women" (*baja-e 'aurat ke larkon ka 'ishq*) is "specific to the land of Persia" in its origin.[258] This is to be contrasted with the convention, found in numerous Indic literary traditions, of females addressing a male beloved, which Azad says is "a peculiar feature of the poetry of India."[259] Thus, while Azad frames the issue as one of Indic simplicity versus Persian complexity, it can also be read as Indic heteroeroticism versus Persian homoeroticism, tying together the modernizing affinities for simplicity and heteroeroticism.

Azad's other remarks on Urdu conventions can be understood with this reading in mind, for example, in his call for novelty in poetic language. "The wretched themes of beauty and love, the beloved's downy cheek [*khatt*] and beauty spot, and the words about the springtime in the garden—these have soaked deep into [our] mouths and tongues. If we want to say something, first we have to banish these things from our minds, then after that we can bring forth, in their proper places, similar novel metaphors, new similes, innovative constructions, and sophisticated

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[256] Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, xvii.
[257] Ibid., 34. Braj, or Braj Bhasha, is a Hindi dialect that takes vocabulary, poetics, and literary models from Sanskrit rather than Persian and Arabic.
[258] Azad, *Ab-e Hayat*, 53.
[259] Ibid., 73.

verbal forms."[260] On its face, this statement appears to be concerned merely with eliminating

tired clichés to make room for fresh modes of expression, yet it is worth focusing our attention

on one word in the above passage: *khatt*. *Khatt* refers to the faint traces of facial hair that appear

on a pubescent youth's upper lip and cheeks, an indicator of specifically male beauty and a

common subject of praise in premodern Persian and Urdu poetry. Praise of a young man's *khatt*

does not appear in the corpus of Urdu and Indo-Persian poetry in which a female addresses a

male beloved; it belongs exclusively to the homoerotic tradition.[261] The subtext of Azad's call

for a new poetics free of the old clichés, therefore, is a call for a poetics that is also free of the

conventions of homoeroticism.

Azad returns to the subject of facial hair later in *Ab-i hayat*. He notes with a puritan

squeamishness that "because of their extreme obscenity [*fuhsh*], I have refrained from recording"

some of Sayyid Insha's satiric verses [*hajv*],[262] and he mentions disapprovingly that Insha shaved

his beard completely, making similarly moralistic observations about other male poets who

shaved their beards.[263] Prior to the popularization of European beauty standards, for an adult

Muslim man to shave his beard was to imitate the *amrad*, or beardless youth, and seek to be the

object of an adult man's sexual desire. This practice was stigmatized as deviant behavior; for

men to gaze at pubescent male youths with desire was celebrated, but for a grown man to seek to

be gazed at was condemned.[264] Azad's distaste for adult male beardlessness indicates how,

despite his enthusiastic embrace of Western culture and Victorian-influenced sexual mores, his

views on masculinity and sexuality still retained elements of propriety that predate British

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[260] Ibid., 79.

[261] Shamisa, *Shahidbazi*, 51-53, 84.

[262] Azad, *Ab-e Hayat*, 260.

[263] Ibid., 242.

[264] For a mid-19th century example of Indian Muslims' distaste for beard trimming, see Sen, "Contested Sites"; for contemporaneous Iranian views on the subject see Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 15-25.

colonialism. Rather than replacing one set of views with another, he may have found it easier to combine the two, resulting in the idea of an ideal man who does not shave (according to Indo-Muslim values) and does not engage in homoeroticism (according to European values, which were becoming Indian values as well).[265]

Following *Ab-i hayat*, and, as discussed above, most likely under its influence, came Shibli Nu'mani's *Shi'r al-'ajam*. Shibli discusses issues of sexuality several times in this work. After describing how, in his view, human nature dictates that men desire women, and that Hindustani literature is *unusual* though not *unnatural* in depicting women desiring men, he states that Persian literature, which is the "highest and most subtle in the world," is "laid to waste" through the "absurdity" of the depiction of male-male desire, in particular *amrad-parasti* or "worshipping handsome male youths."[266] Shibli expresses bashfulness and reluctance to even mention the subject, but continues, after stating that it is the author's religious duty (*farz*) to explain the causes of this practice. He then goes on to cite the premodern scholar Abu Hilal al-'Askari (d. 1005) as saying that the Bedouins were originally unfamiliar with *amrad-parasti*, but after spending so much time away from their wives, alone with beautiful young Turkish male slaves, Arab soldiers developed a taste for male youths, and by the third or fourth Islamic century, Arab poets extolled the virtues of *amrad-parasti*, and similar conditions led to its prevalence among Iranians as well.

What is worth noting here is Shibli's concern, or as he puts it, "duty," for locating the origins of homoerotic practices. This is something he shares not only with Azad, but also with

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[265] For another contemporary example of this combination of values see Kia, "Indian Friends."
[266] Nu'mani, *Shi'r al-'ajam*, IV: 190. Note that a number of homoerotic themes are common in Persian and Urdu poetry, whether through contemplating the beauty of male youths (*shahid-bazi*) or describing physical acts like sodomy; these are called by a variety of names depending on the particular act described. At the risk of collapsing what were understood as separate practices into a single collective, I use *amrad-parasti* (which is the term Shibli employs in the above quotation) to refer to homoerotic practices in general.

early modern Arab literary critics, as described in detail by Joseph Massad in *Desiring Arabs*. Massad cites various Arab literary critics under European influence as claiming that Bedouin men had no sexual interest in male youths and locating the origins of *amrad-parasti* among the Arabs either with the Persians or with the mixture of Arab soldiers with Turkish male slaves as Shibli claims.[267] Bahar, too, deploys a strikingly similar argument, claiming that Arab commanders were "forced" (*majbur*) to indulge in *amrad-parasti* because of the lack of opportunity to socialize with women.[268]

The concern with origins is part of the pathologization of divergent sexual practices; locating the cause of a disease is the first step toward finding a cure, and it is precisely this kind of medical language Shibli deploys when discussing *amrad-parasti*, referring to it as a disease (*bimari* or *maraz*). Shibli addresses *amrad-parasti* elsewhere when talking about the great classical Persian poets Hafiz (1326-90) and Shaykh Sa'di. He explains away Hafiz's *amrad-parasti* as simply following the thematic conventions of Sufi poetry; when it comes to Sa'di, he excuses this "blemish" (*dagh*) by pointing to Sa'di's piety and showing how Sa'di's indulgence in *amrad-parasti* allows him to condemn it convincingly: "The Shaykh, having become sick and then recovered, was better able than others to be aware of the reality, nature, signs, and cure for those moral diseases."[269] One might think similarly of a recovering alcoholic who can make a far more compelling case against alcoholism than a lifelong teetotaler. In these discussions, Shibli reiterates his discomfort with discussing the topic, saying that the details of Sa'di's *amrad-parasti* "cannot even be mentioned." Such reticence is noteworthy. Sa'di himself notes that some would consider it a weakness (*'ajz*) were he to avoid the subject.[270]

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[267] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 54-63, 72-76, 83-86.
[268] Bahar, *Bahar va adab*, I: 146.
[269] Nu'mani, *Shi'r al-'ajam*, II: 51-52.
[270] Sa'di, *Gulistan-i sa'di*, 113.

Shibli's primary concerns were the preservation and modernization of Islam and Arabic

education and, more broadly, the welfare of the Muslim communities of the Indian subcontinent.

Shibli's mindset was similar to that of other reformers across the Muslim world whose religious

identities and outlooks became flavored by European scientific rationalism as well as a kind of

Victorianism, whether consciously or unconsciously. Thus, while he gives a particularly Islamic

framework to *Shi'r al-'ajam*, his uneasiness in discussing homoerotic practices seems more

Victorian than strictly Islamic. While injunctions against same-sex sexual activity can be found

in Islamic religious texts, no such injunctions against open discussion of sexual matters existed

in the Islamic tradition. Again, a parallel can be seen here to the Arabic context; the precolonial

Arabs, including Muslim religious scholars, tended to be frank and rather unhesitant in

discussing sexual practices, including homoerotic ones, whereas the modernizing intellectuals

under Western influence inherited not only the European distaste for homoerotic practices, but

the prudishness about sexuality altogether as well.[271] C. M. Naim similarly argues that

premodern Indo-Muslim society was "mostly indifferent … in matters related to sexual tastes

and habits,"[272] including the matter of *amrad-parasti*.[273]

A far more extreme example of the later prudishness about sexuality can be found in

Edward Browne's massive *Literary History of Persia*. His work spans four volumes and over

2,200 pages, covering an even more expansive time period than Shibli's *Shi'r al-'ajam*—from

the Sasanian period, beginning in the year 226, to the contemporary poets at his time of writing

in 1924—and yet is totally silent on the subject of sexuality. None of the words relevant to this

topic—*sexuality*, *homoerotic*, *homosexual*, *pederasty*, or *sodomy*—appear at all in any of his four

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[271] For the views of pre-colonial Arab Muslim religious scholars, see El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, 111-51; on Arab modernizing intellectuals see Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 51-98.
[272] Naim, *Urdu Texts*, 31.
[273] Ibid., 33, 39-40.

volumes; nor do any of their derived forms (for example, *homosexuality* instead of *homosexual*), nor any of the relevant Persian terms (*amrad, ghulam, bi-rish, shahid, nazar-bazi, bachchah-bazi*, and so on). Perhaps the most explicit reference to this practice comes from Browne's biography of the poet Fakhr al-Din 'Iraqi, where he says that "a party of qalandars, amongst whom was a very beautiful youth, came to Hamadan, and, when they left, 'Iraqi, attracted by the beauty of the young dervish, followed them to India."[274] Even when discussing Abu Nuwas, Browne does not ever directly mention the poet's famed predilection for male youths, which is the topic of much of Nuwas's poetry.

The Iranian literary historian Badi' al-Zaman Furuzanfar, introduced in the previous chapter, is just as reticent on the subject as Browne. The fact that he makes absolutely no mention of anything related to homoeroticism in his *Sukhan va sukhanvaran* (1933) is understandable given that the book (which retains the traditional biographical anthology format of the *tazkirah*) was ordered by the Education Commission, which laid out his task in no uncertain terms. In addition to specifying the structure and content of the book, including the need for footnotes to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, they instructed him to "avoid citing poems which have unpleasant [*napasand*] words or meanings and everything which is opposed to morality [*akhlaq*] and that which refers to unnatural love [*'ishq-i ghayr-i tabi'i*] and that which is incompatible with civilization [*munafi-yi tamaddun*]."[275] Furuzanfar is similarly silent in *Tarikh-i adabiyat-i iran*; the only time he comes close to mentioning anything homoerotic is a brief mention of the "friendship" (*dusti*) between Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni and his male slave Ayaz, an oblique reference to their storied sexual relationship.[276]

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[274] Browne, *Literary History*, III: 125.
[275] Furuzanfar, *Sukhan va sukhanvaran*, 9. On the Education Commission in Iran see Vejdani, *Making History*, 61-62.
[276] Furuzanfar, *Tarikh-i adabiyat-i iran*, 185.

While Furuzanfar's silence is understandable given his institutional restraints, Browne's silence may be more complex. Following Anjali Arondekar's approach to reading lacunae about sexuality in an archive, it can be seen that his silence on sexuality and homoeroticism, which are certainly relevant topics to the history of Persian literature and something Browne was no doubt well aware of, reveals much about both his anxieties regarding the subject and his relationship to his object of study.[277] While Hidayat evidently felt no discomfort with the subject, for Shibli and Bahar, discussing homoerotic acts is an uncomfortable but nevertheless unavoidable responsibility, which they deal with by apologizing to their readers, pathologizing *amrad-parasti* as a practice that owes its origin to a particular context of sexual scarcity, and making excuses for some of its most esteemed practitioners. Browne often engages with Hidayat's *Majma' al-fusaha'* and cites Shibli's *Shi'r al-'ajam* numerous times in his *Literary History of Persia*, expressing his admiration and respect for Shibli's work. Yet in contrast with Shibli and Bahar, Browne deals with this uncomfortable topic in what may be an even more properly puritan manner: he ignores it altogether, perhaps deeming it too unsavory a subject to even discuss.[278] He was not alone in doing so; many other European Orientalists contemporary to Browne also censored homoeroticism from their scholarship, and, as seen above, Furuzanfar was constrained into silence on the matter by his institutional patron.[279] Browne is able to avoid addressing *amrad-parasti* while writing for an anglophone audience likely unfamiliar with the subject, whereas Shibli and Azad, writing in Urdu, and Bahar, writing in Persian, had to anticipate a readership already acquainted with the homoerotic conventions of Persian literature and could

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[277] Arondekar, *For the Record*.

[278] Another angle to Browne's silence is that Browne's notes in his diaries—written cryptically in order to be unintelligible to outsiders, such as writing English in Ottoman Turkish orthography, or in the Devanagari script—indicate homoerotic love affairs with other males. Perhaps his silence about homoeroticism indicated something more intimate and complicated than simply puritan disdain?

[279] DeSouza, "The Love That Dare Not Be Translated," 67.

therefore not afford to remain silent on the matter, unless forced to do so like Furuzanfar.[280] For the modernizing Indians and Iranians discussed above – and for the modernizing Arabs discussed by Massad – when the origins of *amrad-parasti* are discussed, they are always claimed to be foreign; for the modernizers, the practice is imported from another nation or results from socializing with another ethnic group.

The varied strategies and approaches to homoeroticism used by these reformist litterateurs, from pathologizing homoerotic practices and drawing national or ethnic borders around them, to total silence on the matter, share a set of modern sexual conventions that deem sexuality in general, and homoeroticism in particular, distasteful, which constitutes a sharp break with the homoerotic conventions and frank sexuality of the classical literary past. Ironically, it is the shared discourse of literary modernization, with its inherent nationalism and Victorian-flavored puritanism, that leads modernizers to dissociate from the abovementioned aspects of their common past. Taken together, the modernizing historians in Iran and India resemble nothing so much as their contemporaries in the Arab world, something that speaks to broader continuities not only in the conventions of sexuality in Islamicate literatures, but in the intellectual responses to the Islamicate literary heritage, whether from Persianate litterateurs or European Orientalists.

*Rise and fall model*

Another thematic convention that structured the writing of Persianate literary histories was a rise and fall model of history, locating an imagined golden age in the ancient past, followed by a long period of gradual decline and, for some writers, an eventual renaissance. This model was bounded to an imagined community, whether the nation (in Persian) or the Indo-Muslim community (in Urdu). Modernizers in both languages used this convention to narrate the

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[280] I thank Mana Kia for suggesting this point.

history of Persian literature. The rise and fall model was predicated upon modern notions of time and nation.

The concept of the nation, an independent entity with particular geographical borders and national characteristics existing across time, was made conceivable by an understanding of time quite different from premodern periods. Some scholars view the conditions of modernity, more broadly, as producing (or enabling the production of) the modern nation-state itself: "According to [one] tradition of scholarship, *the nation-state* – and its accompanying forms of nationalist politics – is one of the principal historical by-products of this large-scale transition to modernity."[281] In premodern Iran, time was understood as cyclical.[282] Unlike modern progressive time, cyclical time was marked by the beginning and end of cycles without development linking them together or a sense of moving towards something. In premodern Persian histories, these cycles were typically linked to the rise and fall of political dynasties, or the repeated coming of prophetic messengers sent by God. The movement of the cycles was explained in theological terms: kings rose to power when they obeyed God and fell from grace when smote by Him due to their wickedness or unbelief. Time as understood under capitalist modernity, however, was radically different. It was understood to be a linear progression in which all events in history were linked via secular explanations (cause and effect). This linearity typically manifested itself in history either as gradual progress from lowly origins towards eventual perfection, or the reverse: gradual decline down from an initial golden age.[283] The latter

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[281] Marashi, "Paradigms of Iranian Nationalism," 5 (emphasis in original).
[282] Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 97; Kia, "Imagining Iran before Nationalism," 93.
[283] In contrast to those who proclaim our current age to be a postmodern one, it is clear that this particularly modern, linear progressive understanding of time remains hegemonic today, as evidenced by the number of students who instinctively start their papers with "Since the dawn of time, mankind has always…."

model became nearly hegemonic for Persianate modernizers when writing the history of Persian literature.

The rise and fall model is succinctly summed up by Farzin Vejdani: "Iranian historians, particularly from the nineteenth century onwards, articulated a tripartite periodization of history: a golden age starting in pre-Islamic Iran, a period of decline brought about by the Arab invasions and the spread of Islam, and a modern age of renewal witnessing the revival of the 'authentic' ancient nation."[284] There was disagreement over whether to identify the golden age in pre-Islamic times or in the ninth and tenth centuries (after the rise of Islam in the seventh) tied to the 'Abbasid court, as well as whether to identify the beginning of decline as the Arab-Islamic invasion of Iran (seventh century) or the Mongol invasion of Iran in the 13th century. Nevertheless, this model of golden age followed by long decline was not generally challenged by modernizers.

The rise and fall model became an overwhelmingly pervasive convention of modern literary (and national) histories, illustrated in a wide array of 19th and 20th century works, from the political treatises of Mirza Fath'ali Akhundzadah and Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani[285] to the historical works of Sadiq Rizazadah Shafaq and 'Abd al-Husayn Zarrinkub, to the literary criticism and literary history of Muhammad-Taqi Bahar. Reza Zia-Ebrahimi describes an important thematic dimension woven into the Iranian narrative of decline: Aryanism and the glorification of pre-Islamic Iran.[286] Aryanism manifested itself in Iran through a myth-laden

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[284] Vejdani, "The Place of Islam in Interwar Iranian Nationalist Historiography," 205. See also DeSouza, "The Love That Dare Not Be Translated," 71–74, Zia-Ebrahimi "Arab Invasion," 1044, and Zia-Ebrahimi, "Self-Orientalization," 465-466. It should be noted that Vejdani's point is that interwar Iranian nationalist historians did not necessarily consider the advent of Islam to be the point of decline, though they did still uphold the 'golden age—decline' model.
[285] Zia-Ebrahimi "Arab Invasion," 1045.
[286] Zia-Ebrahimi, "Self-Orientalization," 464-468.

Aryan imagery (focused on the visual culture of Iran's pre-Islamic artifacts, architecture, and Zoroastrian religion, as well as the privileging of pre-Islamic Persian names and vocabulary in the language), juxtaposed against a backwards Semitic imagery (the visual culture of Islam in Iran, Arabic loanwords in Persian, Arabic-origin names, and so on). While Aryanism was not necessarily a feature shared by all historians, as Vejdani points out—in fact, they did not all locate the imagined golden age, decline, or renaissance in exactly the same periods—the basic structure of this story arc is a convention they all made use of, whatever their national origin or political orientation.

*Conclusion*

Persianate modernizers saw formal conventions (including aspects of typography, orthography, punctuation, and prose style) as well as thematic conventions (Victorian-flavored sexuality, and a rise and fall model as a type of emplotment to be used as a modern literary device) as a kind of technology of modernization. These were major transformations in Persian and Urdu writing, with one set of conventions belonging to the earlier *tazkirah* tradition and a strikingly different set of conventions belonging to modern literary histories and, for the most part, to modern writing in general.

However, not all genres of writing were subject in the same way to these conventions. Poetry—historically the most prestigious and esteemed genre of writing in both Persian and Urdu—managed to creatively engage with (or flout altogether) many of these conventions in the modern period. The emergence of free verse poetry allowed poets to make creative use of punctuation in Persianate poetry for the first time. On the other hand, the strictures of the Victorian-influenced sexual conventions described above, which became nearly hegemonic in modern literary histories, were not so sclerotic in poetry. For example, the Iranian poet Iraj Mirza

(1873-1926), himself a modernizer and reformist, wrote and publicly performed bawdy, even vulgar poetry with explicit sexual and homoerotic themes.[287] It was not until later that the once homoerotic conventions of Persianate literature disappeared from poetry. Literary histories, produced as they most often were for modernizing educational institutions, likely not only reflected these changing conventions but played a pedagogical role in spreading them. The generations who began to receive a modern education may have grown up writing poetry differently under their influence. In this way, we can see how the modernizing conventions that may have been first developed or deployed by literary historians came to impact other genres of Persianate literature.

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[287] See Sprachman, *Suppressed Persian*, 76-96.

# CONCLUSION

This dissertation has argued that the modernization of Persian literature and the development of the modern genre of literary history was a connected process between Iran and India. Modernizers writing in Urdu played a significant role in that process, and they must not be left out of the story. The first part of the dissertation's title, "Late Persianate Literary Culture" (also the title of the first chapter), should not imply the end of an era, like 'late antiquity.' Instead, as I have demonstrated, connected modernization has introduced significant changes to the Persianate world, but those changes belie the degree to which there is still some cohesion within the Persianate. We still have a region where a Persian literary heritage—now primarily encountered via Urdu in South Asia—endures. We should therefore think of 'late Persianate' along the lines of 'late capital': a term that describes the present era, which has both continuities and ruptures with the earlier part of this period. Literary history may be the genre par excellence of Persianate modernization. It draws from the premodern *tazkirah* genre and refashions it into something that both continues the tradition and is radically new in many ways. Both Iranians and Indians have contributed to the development of the very genre which establishes a national canon that presupposes division between them. Nevertheless, litterateurs throughout the Persianate world shared a set of conventions through which they experienced, made sense of, and participated in modernization.

The similarity of the changes in the Persianate world described in this dissertation to other languages and traditions across the globe which pursued similar strategies of negotiating tradition and modernity, and developed strikingly similar conventions, suggests that the experience of modernity through its conventions or technologies is not strictly limited to Persianate contexts, but may apply to much of the world. There must be caveats and exceptions,

of course, but very broadly speaking, the largest claim of this dissertation is as follows: most of the world's peoples experienced drastic changes brought on by capitalism and modernization, forcing them to find compromises between traditional and newer ways of being, living, thinking, and writing. For Iranians and South Asians—and for many other people across the globe—'modern' Europeans heralded (and often imposed) these changes. They did so with militaries that had steamships, uniformed soldiers, and printing presses issuing military communiques in modern, standardized language. Those who had change foisted upon them, as in colonial British India, or changed out of fear of the same, as in Iran under the Qajars and Pahlavis, understood the steamship, military organization, the printing press, and standard language all as technologies of modernity. There was a material basis for the changes explored across this dissertation: the modern state created demands for efficient communication, print technology and mass education helped create new reading publics and markets for vernacular literature, and so on. Some aspects of the conventions discussed in the final chapter, such as simple prose, may have initially developed in response to the modernizing state's needs for efficiency and expediency, but ultimately they became categories of aesthetic judgment, valued not necessarily because they were efficient and needed, but because they were *perceived* to be so. Modernization was not only a mechanical, technological process, but a question of conventions as well; to be modern, one had to dress—and write—the part.

تمت بالخير

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# APPENDIX A
## Translation of the Introduction to Bahar's *Sabkshinasi*

**Stylistics [*sabkshinasi*], or, History of the Development of Persian Prose**
for instruction in the Faculty and Doctoral Studies of Literature
by
the late Muhammad-Taqi Bahar, "Malik al-Shu'ara"

### Author's Introduction

**1** – The more a place becomes cultivated and developed, books and readers increase, and the more readers increase, writers and authors increase. All these advancements cause the domain of science to progress and expand, and every science grows according to its own capacity. Through the innovations and inspirations of the scholars and researchers the scope of the sciences and the arts expands. Day by day, the fruits of human knowledge increase, so enormously that once every few years the science books must be updated.

It is well known that with regard to the progress and advancement of civilization, humanity is in that stage of youth when every day it grows taller and its current clothes are too short and ill-fitted for future years, and every year it needs a new tunic suitable for its body.

In our country too this movement and advancement is natural, for today the world is interconnected in such a way that the movement of one side necessarily causes the other side to move, too – therefore we see that in Iran as well scientific and literary advancement is not intangible.

One of the main movements that has appeared in the world of Persian letters is the establishment of the faculty and doctoral studies of Persian literature, and truly the establishment of the faculty, which was one of the masterpieces of the last quarter-century in Iran, shook all the sciences and the arts, especially literature which also received a larger share of that movement.

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**2** – Until 30 or 40 years ago, Persian literature had no more than two pillars: one, the preliminary sciences of the Arabic language; the other, research and studies of Persian-language texts and studying the imperfect grammar of the language and its etymology. When these two pillars of knowledge were combined with fresh talent, verve, and natural intelligence, a unique poet would emerge after years of experience, especially when some ornament from the theological sciences or a taste of Sufism and mysticism has also been sprinkled on.

**3** – From a century ago, the history of the East was transformed through reading inscriptions; publishing the Greek and Roman histories; printing and publishing the ancient Arab histories such as the histories of **Tabari, Mas'udi, Ya'qubi, Dinawari**, and others; and the help provided by excavations and the science of archaeology.

The Europeans became interested in the study of the sciences and literature of the East, and the Easterners came into association with the Orientalists, especially from the day that the French **Anquetil-Duperron** published his Avesta. Study of the **Avesta** and **Zend** in the Western world became its own subject, and ultimately they cracked the code of the **Pahlavi** language and also translated the **Avesta**.

These studies also added to the extensive historical studies that we have described above, and during a period of 50 to 60 years all of these studies and struggles turned into a science of its own, which they named "**Iranian Studies**."

Iranian Studies also developed two pillars: 1- Acquaintance with literature, history, and the arts of Iran itself according to the old norm. 2- Acquaintance with Persian literature and arts and the precise pre-Islamic history of the **Medes**, **Achaemenids**, **Ashkanids**, and **Sasanians** according to Arabic and Western sources; becoming acquainted with the **Avesta**, **Zend**, and **Pazend** and learning the ancient language and scripts; becoming acquainted with the **Mazdaic** ceremonies; acquaintance with **Zoroaster** and the **Manichaeans**; acquaintance with the roots of Dari and Southern and Northern Pahlavi, and the style of Sa'di, and the rest of the branches of the Iranian languages; understanding the ceremonies and customs of the art of the ancient Iranians and the three or four classes of religion; understanding the archaic words and comparing them with the words of the **Dari** language; and the rest of the necessities of Iranian Studies, the principles of which we have described in the first volume of this book.

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Until 50 years ago, the Iranian literati were only familiar with the first part of Iranian Studies and the historians too (other than a few of the learned)[288] were only aware of the old kind and uninformed of the second kind. On the contrary, the **Orientalists** were aware of the new kind and uninformed of the old, and actually uninformed of our literati, writers, and men of science and letters. Thus the Orientalists did not know Iran in one regard and this deficiency still remains on both sides despite the countless efforts that the Iranian and European scholars and literati have sustained in the last century.

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**4 –** In sum, Iranian literature has expanded and grown greatly. Today, with the technical tools of ancient culture and letters, no longer can anyone be called a "**litterateur**" [*adib*] – except those who are aware of all the new and old research and know Iran with respect to history, language, customs, arts, verse, prose, distinguished men, and books; and, to be fair, learning all this knowledge—some of which has not been compiled or translated into Persian—is a difficult task.

This section has been examined for the first time in the last 20 years. Books were translated from European languages into Persian, and also a school for the teaching of ancient Iranian languages, letters, and history appeared in Tehran under the supervision of the German **Professor Herzfeld**. In the end these issues were taught by way of lectures and speeches, and the sum of these efforts yielded the result that a number of young students of literature recognized that there is even more necessary knowledge to be obtained in Persian.

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**5 – Stylistics:** one of the Persian literary sciences, of which unfortunately the Orientalists and Iranians were unaware until yesterday, was also examined by the literati in the past century.

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[288] Such as I'timad al-Saltanah and a few of the learned men like Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and the like who had a little information about modern history.

Until lately this science had not emerged as a properly academic subject and was only discussed verbally by individuals, or sometimes in the introductions of some *tazkirah*s or else in literary circles, and that science is "**Stylistics**."

  *Sabk* in the Arabic language refers to the melting and moulding of gold and silver, and they call the melted piece of silver an 'ingot,'[289] but the literati of the current century have used *sabk* figuratively to mean "a particular manner of [composing] poetry or prose" and have made it approximately equivalent to the Europeans' "**style**" [quoted in French].

  **Style** in the European languages is derived from the Greek *stylos*, meaning "**pillar**," and in literary usage and terminology it is generally applied to a manner of writing which should be studied according to its various properties and aspects as distinguished from those resembling the fine arts. *Stylos*[290] in Greek is generally used to refer to a metallic, wooden, or ivory instrument with which people have carved on wax tablets since ancient times[291] – and which today Iranians call "*qalam*" [pen or brush] with which one paints on paper, the wall, cloth, or tablets. Like "**style**" they mean something similar to "*sabk*" and it is said: "So-and-so has a good *qalam*" meaning their style of writing is good. However this meaning is only used regarding prose, not verse, as "*qalam*" cannot be applied to verse, for which one must say: "He has a good *sabk*" or "He has a good manner."

  *Sabk* in literary terminology is the specific manner of conception and expression of thoughts through the composition of words and the choice and manner of expression. *Sabk* infuses a literary work with its own particular mood in terms of form and meaning. And that too in turn stems from the speaker or writer's manner of thinking about 'the Truth.'

  Thus, in the general meaning *sabk* is in itself an expression of the literary realization of a kind of perception in the world[292] which distinguishes the main characteristics of its own product (a versified or prosified work).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

  **6 – Style** [*sabk*] and **Genre**: in literary usage **genre** must not be mistaken for **style**, for **genre**[293] is an expression referring to the literary form the speaker or writer gives his own work. For example in European literature it is said: dramatic genres[294] – comedic genres[295] – thus the external form of a literary work is considered part of **genre** – but in **style** the general character[296] of the poet or writer's work, with respect to the subject and the impact of the environment upon it, is discussed; therefore **style** considers thought as well as its distinctive aspect and also the manner of explanation, whereas **genre** merely describes the manner of composition.

  By mentioning this introduction, it should be known that **style** and **genre** cannot do without one another; instead, the two are inseparable, for each literary work is considered a part of the **genres** of literature and at the same time also has a **style**. For example, in Persian literature

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[289] *Da'irat al-Ma'arif* by Butrus al-Bustani [the first Arabic encyclopedia] – *Muntaha al-Arab* [an Arabic-Persian dictionary] – *Surah al-Lughah* [another Arabic-Persian dictionary]

[290] *Stilus*, which is erroneously written as Stylus.

[291] Encyclopædia Britannica

[292] *Conception* [written in French]

[293] *Genré* [written, incorrectly, in French]

[294] *Les Genres Dramatiques*

[295] *Les Genres Comiques*

[296] *Caractere* [sic]

the *Gulistan* of **Sa'di** is held in common in the genre of "**treatise-writing**" with the *Maqamat-i Hamidi* but it differs in style, just as the genre of poetry shares the *qasidah*s of **'Urfi** Shirazi with the *qasidah*s of 'Unsuri, but they differ with regards to **style**.

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**7 – Meaning and Form or Form and Manner –** We said that **style** is the manner of understanding truths and expressing them, now let us say that both expression and description depend upon the way of thinking of the individual which places them under study and observation. For example, imagine that a painter, a villager, an engineer, and an automobile driver are passing through a road that has been built in the middle of a farm. The painter is only captivated by the beauty of nature, and interesting sights capture his attention; the villager pays no attention but to the corn and the type of dirt they plant the wheat in; the engineer concentrates on sketching a map of the land, the roads, bridges, and surrounding buildings; and the automobile driver looks from side to side and is not attentive to anything but the ascent and descent of the road.

Now, if each of these four people wanted to compose their observations in writing it is evident that they would only write from their own mental perceptions, thus the relationship between the manner of observation and the manner of description has become quite obvious.

Now, let us say that **style** is composed of two subjects: **thought or the meaning of form or manner**. Thought originates in us from attention to the outside world. That is an example of the influence of the environment on the individual – and we make that thought conform and agree with our own previous mental convictions and express that very aspect of our thought with listeners – and this is an example of the influence of the individual on the environment.

Every subject and thought needs a **shape** and **form** for expression. The readers of a literary work understand its meaning, which reveals the intention through study and familiarity with the **shape of the work**. Thought is completely veiled by form and cannot be described separately – thus in literature the subject itself is considered part of **shape** and cannot ever be separate from it. In other words the **subject** or **essential idea** of a literary work designates its **shape**, and it is this very unity of **thought** and **shape** or **meaning** and **form**, which forms the foundation of **style**.

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**8 – The extent and coverage of stylistics –** The knowledge that discusses the course of all the different **styles** of a language is called "**stylistics**."

**Stylistics** cannot be conceived of as an independent, distinct knowledge; on the contrary, it should be considered a science composed of different arts and sciences which, surrounding all of them along with the enclosure of a line of careful research, create the above-named science and the most important of that knowledge is as follows:

**1 – Wisdom and the Sciences –** From that which passed it became apparent that the **style** of each writer or speaker indicates their manner of seeing and perception of the outside world[297] and since "everyone sees the world through the window of their own eyes," we too in considering the writer's **style** should recreate for ourselves their very intellectual environment – to that end, we should obtain information from the following sciences:

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[297] La Conception du Monde

**A – Theology –** Because undoubtedly the writer and speaker comes, consciously or unconsciously, under the influence of their own religious ideas. For example, for the study of the poetry of **Nasir Khusraw** and **Nizari** Quhistani we certainly must obtain information about the principles of the Ismaili sect.

**B – Philosophy and Mysticism** – The philosophical environment of the poet or the writer is influential on his mentality. For example in considering **Sa'di**'s *Gulistan* or the Divan of **Hafiz** we inevitably must obtain information about the philosophical and mystical environment of the seventh and eighth centuries AH [the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries CE].

**C – The Sciences –** Every author in writing comes under the influence of their own knowledge – it is evident that in order to uncover the allusions of a literary work of poetry or prose, one must first seek out information about the sciences with which the poet was familiar. For example, for information about the style of **Anvari**, one must become acquainted with the sciences of medicine, astronomy, and arithmetic that were prevalent in the sixth century AH [twelfth century CE].

**D – General History –** To understand the intellectual environment of a poet or prose-writer one should become familiar with the political, social, and scientific history of the writer's period.

**2 – Literary Arts –** The ancients and the moderns disagree over counting the literary arts, and that which is due of us in considering the styles is as follows:

**A –** Persian grammar – It is evident that part of the distinction between styles becomes apparent with the particular use of grammatical rules.

**B –** Rhetoric – Part of the stylistic specifics of a poet or writer can be seen in the use of verbal or intellectual arts.

**C –** Poetry criticism and prose criticism – In order to distinguish between correct and incorrect courses of prose and poetry styles across the centuries, one should be acquainted with the rules of criticism.

**D –** The science of rhyme (particular to verse) – For understanding the correct and incorrect manner of use of rhymes and their changes in literary history.

**E –** Prosody (particular to verse) – For understanding the rhythms of poetry, distinguishing between correct and incorrect, and the correction of poems.

**F –** The history of literature – Because there is a close relationship between the history of literature and stylistics and each one complements the other.

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**9 – The history of stylistics –** Stylistics in its true sense has not had any precedent in Iran. The first works of this science can be seen extremely faintly in *tazkirah*s – in describing the circumstances of a poet, and occasionally a writer, the biographers use language replete with tropes and figures of speech about the method of distinguishing the subject's style, and bring their indulgent speech to an end in exaggerated praise of the patron of the book. For example: 'Awfi in his *Lubab al-Albab*[298] translated by **Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Ma'rufi al-Balkhi** writes[299]: "Ma'rufi has been famous for his magical skill in poetry, and for leadership in eloquence. His poetry is like seeing friends in the courtyard of a garden, or the

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[298] Which is the first *tazkirah* that we have.
[299] Leiden press, corrected by Mr. Qazvini, second volume, p. 16.

revelation of angelic beloveds with their plighted lovers"[300] and regarding **Shahriyari** he writes[301]:

"Shahriyari, who the scholars of town sought help from his literary style, and the learned men of Khurasan could easily nourish from his feast of knowledge." In the event that the author also wants to make a comment about the style of a poet or writer, he would content himself with recalling generalities like "many people believe that Khaqani's style of writing was the apogee and after him no one could craft such verses" or "however his quatrains which have a taste of his subtle nature have spread across the world." Dawlatshah Samarqandi in his book *Tazkirat al-Shu'ara* has imitated 'Awfi, and the writers of later *tazkirah*s have imitated both of them and essentially added nothing. At most what they have done is to present the poetic genre of a limited group, and rarely it can be seen that the authors of the *tazkirah*s have a specific manner when discussing a poet, as **'Awfi** has occasionally done, such as what he says about **'Unsuri**: "And the poetry of 'Unsuri has the standard of eloquence and prowess, the subtlety of meaning is combined with the tenderness of tenor."[302] Regarding **Farrukhi** he says: "His poetry is sweet and meaningful; firstly he endeavored in the art of speech and the subtlety of meaning and therein emerged from among his former peers, and ultimately he delivered speech appeared simple but was impossible to imitate."[303] **Rashid Vatvat** has also occasionally spoken of the style of such-and-such poet but to such a brief extent that one cannot arrange more use from it.

The ancient poets themselves have not discussed poetic style much with the kind of interpretation that we want either. Sometimes they have spoken of the "**art**" of such-and-such poet or the "**manner**" of such-and-such poem – as **Abu Hanifah**[304] says about 'Unsuri:
*andarin yak fann kih dari u an tariq-i parsi / dast dast-i tust u kas ra nist ba tu hamsari*
[In this one art that you have and in that manner of Persian / it is you alone and no one is your equal]

By 'this one art' he certainly means the art of *qasidah*-writing which perhaps also considers the poet's style and manner of imitation. And also **Khaqani** regarding **'Unsuri** says:
*zih dah shivah k'an shivah-yi sha'irist / bah yak shivah shud dastan-i 'Unsuri*
*mara shivah-yi khass u taza'st u dasht / haman shivah-yi bastan-i 'Unsuri*
*nah tahqiq guft u nah va'z u nah zuhd / kih harfi nadasht az an-i 'Unsuri*
[From the ten poetic styles / 'Unsuri singled out just one
Mine is a fresh and special style / that very same old style of 'Unsuri
He neither studied nor preached nor claimed to be pious / for incapable of all of those was 'Unsuri]

From this poem too it is apparent that by "*shivah*" Khaqani did not mean "**style**" as we use it and his intention is the poet's "genre," for we saw that he has counted "piousness," "study," and "preaching" as "*shivah*" and with this he again points to a new style.

And from the last part is this poem by **Khaqani**:
*khaqani an kasan ast kih tariq-i tu miravand / zagh and u zagh ra ravish-i kabk arizu'st*
*giram kih marchubah kunad tan bah shikl-i mar / ku zahr bah har dushman u ku muhrah bah har dust*

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[300] He then cites some of his [Ma'rufi's] couplets.

[301] *Lubab al-Albab*, Leiden press, second volume, p. 336.

[302] *Lubab al-Albab*, vol. 2, p. 320.

[303] *Lubab al-Albab*, vol. 1, p. 45.

[304] Apparently it is Abu Hanifah Iskafi and this poem has been narrated from Abu Hanifah by Sana'i (refer to the *Divan-i Tab'-i Qadim*, p. 116, *sin* 15).

[Khaqani, those who want to go your way / are crows, and crows can only hope to strut like partridges
Suppose asparagus should coil itself like a snake / but where's the venom for enemies and the charm for friends?]

In this piece **Khaqani** without a doubt refers to those poets who have written poetry in his style and manner, not those who have written ascetic *qasidah*s or historiographical poems or another style. We also see the recent contents in one of the couplets of **Nizami** Ganjavi:

*bah qiyas-i shivah-yi man kih natijah-yi naw amad / hamah tarzha-yi kuhnah kuhni'st bastani*

[In comparison with my style which made a drastic change / all the old styles are ancient relics]

And this poem by Nizami also undoubtedly points to style and manner.

Also, from **Rawandi** we know that in the sixth century AH [twelfth century CE] Sayyid Ashraf entered Hamadan, toured the primary schools, and prohibited the young poets from following the style of rhyme of the ancient poets[305].

The main reason for our little contact with the meaning and content of "**style**" conforming with today's taste in ancient poetry is that the styles of the **Samanid**, **Ghaznavid**, and **Seljuq** eras have gradually developed, and in the meantime an innovator whose influences in modifying style are completely obvious, has not been found. Therefore no one has been aware of "**style**" and its importance, but from the time of **Khaqani** and **Nizami** onward, many innovations on the part of those two and afterwards on the part of others in poetry were proved, so it is not surprising if the new manner and style of poetry has become an object of interest from the time of **Khaqani** and **Nizami**.

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From the age of the **Safavids** on, in the contents of the *tazkirah* books we encounter the meaning of "**style**," like in the *tazkirah* by **Nasrabadi** in the sense of: "such-and-such poet studies the poetry of the ancients," or: "so-and-so is more inclined towards **Sa'ib**'s style." We encounter repeated expressions like these and we become cognizant of the fact that in that age, poetologists had become attentive to the meaning of "**style**."

Especially in the *tazkirah* "*Atashkadah-yi Azar*" it is more clearly stated in this meaning and he repeatedly mentions the "**Way of the Pioneers**," as he says about **Shu'lah**: "of the aforementioned Sayyid [Ashraf], no modern person was more familiar with the way of the greatest of the eloquent pioneers." In his memoir of **Safa** he writes thus: "If he [Safa] was familiar with the way of the pioneers he would have been counted among the eloquent ones." And sometimes too they had explained "**style**" with the words "*tarz*" or "*ada*," and these two words have been used more among the poets of Hindustan.

In the 12th century AH **Mushtaq**, one of the poets of Isfahan, dedicated himself to opposing the manner of the poets of Hindustan. According to **Azar**[306] and **Maftun**[307] he was the first person who wrote poetry in the manner and way of the ancient eloquent ones and granted that way currency, and appeared to protest the insipid way of **Vahid** and **Sa'ib**.

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[305] *Rahat al-Sudur* p. 57-58.

[306] *Atashkadah-yi Azar*, the most contemporary source during the time of Mushtaq.

[307] *Hadayiq al-Jinan* compiled by Maftun, manuscript copy.

The late **Hidayat** too in the introduction to *Majma' al-Fusaha*[308] repeated the terms: "*tarz – tariqah – siyaq – sabk – shivah*" with the same meaning as in the subject at hand and especially the first place where we encounter the word "*sabk*" is in that book.

From the result of this research it becomes apparent that after the transformation of poetic style from the **Iraqi** style to the **Indian** style which took place in the time of the **Safavids**, the critics and poetologists determined that the way of poetry has become distinct from the old way. From the tenor of speech of **Nasrabadi** and others too the sense arises that in that age, meaning the age of the **Safavids** and the time of the reign of [Shah] **Abbas** II and [Shah] **Sulayman** – there had been poets who had not become familiar with the Indian style and were more inclined towards the style of the old masters. This method gained strength in the time of [Shah] **Sultan Husayn** and **Nadir Shah** and the **Zand dynasty**, the Indian style came to be taunted and abandoned, and the way of the pioneers desired and esteemed. In the age of the **Qajars** this manner, meaning the "**Literary Return**," gained strength and the old style and the manner of the poets in the age of the Khwarezmians, Seljuqs, and Ghaznavids became current, as **Hidayat** made clear in the introduction to *Majma' al-Fusaha*. The works of the poets of that period themselves are also undeniable evidence.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

With all of that knowledge, in that period the study of "**style**" [*sabk*] or in our terminology "**stylistics**" [*sabkshinasi*] had not been resolved as the subject of general attention, and this science, whose seed was planted from a century ago in the womb of the Safavid epoch, passed through the beginning of its infancy and nursing stage. Indeed the action and exercise of stylistics was in use but, like all the sciences and arts that were merely practical at the outset, later became regulated and codified and ended up subject to rules. This science also prepared its preliminary steps of self-creation in the area of the nature and taste of the masters.

Research in ancient poetry done by **Surush**, [Manuchihr] **Shaybani**, **Mahmud Khan**, and the **Saba** family reached perfection. [Mirza Muhammad] **Nadim Bashi**, the brother of Mahmud Khan Malik al-Shu'ara, who used the pseudonym 'Khujastah' [Auspicious] settled in Khurasan near the holy shrine, and in the middle of the reign of **Nasir al-Din Shah** and the beginnings of the 14th lunar Hijri century, a literary circle of the adherents of the "**Turkistani style**"[309] in the city of Mashhad came into existence.

Before that too in practice a style in the middle [between the Iraqi and Khurasani styles] had come into existence through the publication of the **Divan of Qa'ani** in Iraq and Khurasan, and all the poets of Khurasan wrote poetry in the manner of Qa'ani. However the later masters had criticized that style and gave currency to the true Khurasani style with its delicacy and elegance – and this debate and criticism was taught in Mashhad by **Nadim Bashi**.

Some poets renounced the result of this debate and criticism about the style of Qa'ani, which was a half-Turkistani and half-Iraqi style, and moved toward a new style. From among those poets were the late [Muhammad-Kazim] **Saburi**, **Safa Isfahani**, **Adib Nayshaburi**, **Sayyid Ahmad Adib Pishavari**, and another group. **Saburi**, in addition to the blood relation he had with the **Saba** family, also gained the closeness of being Khujastah's pupil and acquired

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[308] Introduction, vol. 1, p. 6-7

[309] In that time they had called the Khurasani style this name [Turkistani style]. This term also endured until our time, and afterwards the real abandoned term itself, which would be the Khurasani style, came about.

education in "stylistics," of which school the Saba family in Tehran were masters. In this way it spread in the Saburi family too – and the author [Bahar] who is the child of Saburi learned this subject by the side of his father and after that was employed as a disciple for a long time by **Adib Pishavari** and **Sayd 'Alikhan** Dargazi. After coming to the capital he published this subject of discussion in the capital's press, especially in "*Majallah-yi Danishkadah*" [the Faculty Review] and in the literary society of the same name.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

**10 -** The above history only concerns poetry; but in prose the discussion and criticism herein has never been heard or read because in the history of the literature of Iran a section in the chapter on prose has not been opened until now, and all that has been written and said is in connection to poetry and *a fortiori* discussion and criticism of the style of Persian prose has never been produced.

This was the state of the practical trend of discussion that was transferred orally without any proper order or system among the literati of Iran. The literary society and those enamored by the sweet language of Persian were still deprived of the quality of that science [stylistics]. Nothing to do with it was ever taught in schools, whether old or new, and when the issue was occasionally mentioned by a teacher or professor it was just a little disorderly and unarranged notion regarding the style of poetry and nothing more - until in the solar years 1309-1310 [1930-1931 CE] the author unveiled this historic discovery for the first time in the course of a lecture that extended for several months in "*Anjuman-i Adabi*" [Literary Society].[310]

Discussion around "stylistics" came about since that time. In the circles of interested people and among the novices who had not understood the contributions of the old masters, they began to speak of the Khurasani, Iraqi, and Indian styles and the Literary Return, but still this debate and criticism had not entered the sphere of poetry.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

Until the year 1312 [1933 CE] during the time when the author had been sentenced to exile and detention in Esfahan, a compendium concerning the long history of the transformation of the Persian language from ancient times until the present and the various states of Pahlavi and Dari prose were published by the magazine "*Bakhtar*" [The West]. In the year 1313 [1934 CE] the author settled in Tehran and the aforementioned predicament was over. The next year the Ministry of Culture invited the author to give lectures for a few hours at the teacher training college, and this continued for several of the following years. During one of those hours, the science of "stylistics" was suggested for the first time by means of a series of lectures under the title of "**History of the Development and Transformation of Persian Poetry and Prose**."

In the year 1316 [1937 CE] the Ministry of Culture decided to design a two-year doctoral program in Persian Literature in which the History of the Development and Transformation of Persian Poetry and Prose, which had given good results when briefly taught at the college level, would be taught in greater detail. The author was also granted the honor of teaching two courses by means of lecture.

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[310] A portion of this lecture in the thirteenth volume of the magazine *Armaghan* has been published, and Dr. Shafaq has quoted a small part of it in his own literary history under the title "*Bazgasht-i Adabi*" [Literary Return].

In the solar year 1318 [1939 CE], the Ministry of Culture concluded that it would be beneficial to have Stylistics composed and compiled into a special book, taking into consideration newer order and arrangement and an easier method for teaching these lessons, and having a book that could be useful for the literary community and especially for college as well as doctoral students. This humble servant who was unequipped for this grand service was nominated, and they ordained that prose and poetry each be discussed and researched separately and that prose be given priority over poetry.

This humble servant, who always wished for the opportunity and favor to accomplish such a grand service, dedicated himself from the bottom of his soul to this service. By the grace of the almighty God, in the course of two years the three volumes of the book "**Stylistics**" that was the sum and choicest part of thirty years of pupilage, research, study, reading, and teaching accomplished this order and arrangement with much enthusiasm and increased toil and effort, and became gift for the Persian-speaking community.

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**11 – The Rules of Stylistics:** Stylistics is a science that came into existence in these last few years through the progress of the Persian language and the care of the state and the people for the publication and propagation of this language, and some small samples of that can occasionally be seen in the margins and introductions of printed books which have been corrected in a new manner with scientific research by the erudite literati.

This science – in addition to familiarizing literature students with the old and new books, and introducing the writers and masters of Persian prose, the history of books, and the memoirs of the authors of each book, which is itself a separate science – also has other uses. These include becoming acquainted with ancient Iranian history and the ancient civilization and customs, as well as inventorying old languages, scripts, and dialects; obtaining the line of connection between today and yesterday; and inventorying the series of events and development of the way of life of the people of this region, which is itself a service to the history of this country. Most importantly its advantage is familiarizing the students with the etymology and syntax of Persian languages such as Pahlavi and Dari, enabling people to understand and grasp the ancient words and expressions and learn the manner of writing of each period. It also establishes the difference between the writings of each period and the previous and later periods and introduces the ability to read different texts and various kinds of prose from the ancient times and middle ages, as well as identifying beauty and ugliness in prose and understanding the causes of progress and decline of prose in each period. The total result of these studies is the completion of Persian literacy and the ability of students to identify print styles and avoid the abundant errors and awkwardness that have deprived Persian prose of its beautiful appearance and natural elegance.

Considering that which has been discussed about the development of words in this science – knowing and learning this science makes students powerful in a way, through familiarizing them with the origin and root of many words, so that whenever one is endowed with intelligence and verve, a new chapter in Persian philology opens for them and in the event that one day they enter that science, they can easily approach it from a shorter path.

And since in this science the lexicographic terminology, usage, phraseology, and proverbs of each period and century are discussed, by learning this science students will become able to avoid making mistakes when rectifying and annotating the ancient books, develop the ability to make sound comparisons, and avoid incorrect changes which have become the cause of

much deterioration and corruption of the ancient books. Now we just cite two examples for this meaning, one from **Bayhaqi** and the other from the *Gulistan*:

In the *Tarikh-i Bayhaqi* [Bayhaqi's *History*] on page 136 in the Tehran edition there is a passage that says: "Emir [Commander] Mahmud attempted to conquer Rey and between the emirs Mas'ud and Muhammad a suitable agreement was reached – that day Emir Muhammad was named the 'Emir of Khurasan' and they requested a horse for the Emir of Khurasan and he [the new emir] went back to Khurasan and Nayshapur."

In the edition of [*Tarikh-i*] Bayhaqi printed in Calcutta on page 147 the same passage has been recorded thusly: "… Emir Mahmud attempted to conquer Rey and between his emirs and children Mas'ud and Mahmud a suitable agreement was reached – that day Emir Muhammad did not have a horse in the court, they requested a horse for the Emir of Khurasan and he went back to Nayshapur."

If a person reads the two different editions of these two passages and reaches the passage "that day Emir Muhammad... etc." which is one way in one edition and in the other the phrase "was named the 'Emir of Khurasan'" is removed and "did not have a horse in the court" is added, what should they do and how should this problem be resolved?

But if the person is informed of the science of stylistics they will know that the edition printed in Tehran is correct and the Calcutta edition is corrupted and aberrant, and that the removal and addition is due to the  book's ignorant copier or proofreader. They know that in that era "**requesting a horse in court**" had been a mark of distinction, rank, honor, and dignity when it is granted by a king to someone, and the order to declare that is a great honor, and Emir Muhammad was assigned by his father to rule over Khurasan and in the court of Mahmud [of Ghazni] his post was formalized and announced through requesting a horse for the Emir of Khurasan. In this case the record of the Calcutta edition is erroneous and the addition of "**did not have a horse in the court!**" and the omission of "named the 'Emir of Khurasan'" are proof of the ignorance of the book's copier, printer, and proofreader[311].

Another example: we see this poem in the printed copies of the *Gulistan*:

**Poem**

*gu'i rag-i jan migusilad naghmah-yi sazash / nakhvush tar az avazah-yi marg avazash*
[Indeed the melody of his instrument ruptures veins / His voice is more unpleasant than rumored death]

A critic who is familiar with the science of prosody will be certain after reading this couplet that it is incorrectly written and aberrant – for the first hemistich is in the meter of *hajaz musamman akhrab makfuf mahzuf* and the other hemistich is in the meter of *hajaz musamman akhrab makfuf abtar*, and these two meters do not conform with each other to produce quatrains – but the critic will remain uncertain as to which hemistich is authentic and which is false and aberrant.

But if they are familiar with **stylistics** they will know without hesitation that the first hemistich is, without a doubt, a mistake, because the word "*saz*" with the meaning that we use today, that is, "a musical instrument," was not usual in Sa'di's time and the phrase "*naghmah-yi sazash*" [the melody of his instrument] is not correct for this reason. In the old idiom '*saz*' means "**arranged**" and here cannot be an attribute of '*naghmah*' [melody], because Sa'di wants to reproach the minstrel's melody, not praise it. Thus by reasoning it is understood that it should originally be "*naghmah-yi nasazash*" [his discordant melody] – and after the first hemistich is

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[311] For further explanation refer to the first volume [of this book], page 434 and the second volume, pages 82-3.

found to be in error the other will not be in doubt with regard to prosody. And again if one has studied appropriately they will find that "*avazah-yi marg*" [the rumor of death] is also a new expression and they will see that there is no such expression in Persian and that death itself does not have a rumor. Thus with simple talent one can find the origin of the expression which is "*avazah-yi marg-i pidar*" [the rumor of father's death] and solve the prosodic problem – and in case one is cautious, they should say: this poem is aberrant, and with careful examination and reference to the numerous copies of the *Gulistan* they should seek out the original version of the poem and correct the book and the poem should be recorded thusly:

**Poem**

*gu'i rag-i jan migusilad naghmah-yi nasazash / nakhvush tar az avazah-yi marg-i pidar avazash*
[Indeed his discordant melody ruptures veins / His voice is more unpleasant than the rumored death of one's father]

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**12 – This volume:** the first volume of the book is indeed a passage for entering into the other two volumes and it has been compiled just for doctoral studies in Persian. Third-year college students have no need for it, since it is only in doctoral studies that the language of the **Zend** and **Avesta** is taught, and the goal is reached when the study of the aforementioned script and language is combined with the research of this volume and compared with the ancient language of Dari according to the last words – and the student, who is acquainted with the second and third volumes from learning them in college, is perfected through the development of the language.

However, although the second and third volumes are completely related to the first volume and in fact both complement the first volume, a brief introduction has been given on the history of the language that is befitting of the knowledge and presence of mind of the students. In the first chapter the oldest works of prose in the Dari language that have been discussed and critiqued guide the student from the Sasanian era until our time. In the three years of the college curriculum the students will have the opportunity to go over ancient, middle, and modern texts and to solve their issues with a professor, and will not need to read the first volume except for the last chapter. That too can be perused with a professor's instruction, or a professor from outside can discuss the second volume while reading it with students.

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It is hoped that this service, which was accomplished in the worst of times – meaning after twenty years of successive reckonings, exiles, costly losses, undue troubles, and incessant fear – just by the love of service for the nation's language, without hope of any profit or fortune – and for a period of several years has been patiently waiting and is still doing so without hope of material reward, will be appreciated by the great people who will read this book, and that they will remember the author in their prayers. And it is hoped that Persian-speakers and the students of this expansive language which is the sweetest of the languages of the East will be able to benefit from this initiative and compilation and codification of a "new science" which in the literature of the East had never been known before and is an incomparable service and a newly apparent gift. If they find in it a mistake or error which without a doubt is natural for humans and is inevitably in everyone, it is due to the necessity of criticism which is the origin of all reforms

through newspapers and magazines, they should alert the writer so that those errors could be corrected; and gradually this way the imperfect existence can become complete.

**Tehran, Shahrivar 1331 [August/September 1942 CE] – Muhammad-Taqi Bahar, may he rest in peace**