

A Desire for Meaning: Ḳhān-i Ārzū's Philology and the Place of India
in the Eighteenth-Century Persianate World

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ABSTRACT

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During the early-modern period, Persian was the language of the imperial court and a prestigious literary medium in South Asia. Not only did Persian connect the Subcontinent with intellectual and cultural trends across western and central Asia, but during the early-modern period, India—even compared with Iran—was arguably the world's main center for the patronage of Persian literature and scholarship. However, our understanding of the societal role of Indo-Persian (that is, Persian used in South Asia) is still hazy in part because the end of Persian as a language of power in India has been so historiographically over-determined. Colonial intellectuals and nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalists in Iran and India have claimed that by the eighteenth century Indo-Persian had become an artificial, ossified tradition in decline, symptomatic of a political system in decline, whose ineluctable destiny was to be replaced by supposedly more democratic and properly Indian languages like Hindi and Urdu. The present study seeks to nuance and in some cases to revise completely this

declinist narrative through an examination of eighteenth-century primary sources.

This dissertation traces the development of philology (the study of literary language, known in Persian under several names including *‘ilm-i luġhat*) within the Indo-Persian tradition, concentrating on its social and political ramifications, and the modes by which Indo-Persian writers smoothed the way for the adoption of the vernacular in contexts formerly reserved for Persian. The eighteenth century is a hinge between the pre-modern and the colonial modern, and yet our understanding of the intellectual history of that century is much poorer than for the colonial period. The most prolific and arguably most influential Indo-Persian philologist of the early-modern period was Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Ḳhān (1687/8–1756), whose *nom de plume* was Ārzū. Besides being a much-admired poet in Persian and Urdu, Ārzū was a rigorous theoretician of language. Ārzū’s conception of language accounted for literary innovation and historical change, a project whose newness he acknowledges and which was necessary in the face of the *tāzah-go’ī* [literally, “fresh speaking”] movement in Persian literature. Although later scholarship has tended to frame this debate in anachronistically nationalist terms (Iranians versus Indians), the primary sources complicate the picture. The present study draws an analogy to the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns in Europe to show that the contemporary concern had far less to do with geography than with the question of how to interpret innovative “fresh speaking” poetry (just as in Europe the concern had been

over assessing the value of texts not modeled on the Classics). Ārzū used historical reasoning to argue that as a cosmopolitan language Persian could not be the property of one nation and be subject to one narrow kind of interpretation. In doing so he carefully defined the differences in usage within the Persian cosmopolis, and concluded that Indo-Persian usage was within the norms of Persian usage generally, meaning that properly educated Indians had as much right as Iranian native speakers to innovate in Persian.

An intervention offered by the present research is the recognition that Ārzū's theories, which superficially seem to concern only Persian, apply to language more generally. A study of his work can therefore elucidate the mechanisms that allowed Urdu to gain acceptance in elite literary circles in northern India during his lifetime. An often-overlooked aspect of intellectual history, both in India and in the West, is that advances in vernacular literary culture have usually come about not through a repudiation of the classics and their language but rather through a sustained engagement with them by bilingual writers. By changing attitudes about *rekhtah*, a Persianized form of vernacular composition that would later be renamed and reconceptualized as Urdu, Ārzū defined and systematized vernacular literary production. Furthermore, this study presents a challenge to the persistent misconception that Indians started writing Urdu because they were ashamed of their poor Persian.

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*Cui dono lepidum novum libellum
arida modo pumice expolitum?
Corneli tibi namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas.**

The choice is obvious: Nicholas Sturch, my Latin and Greek teacher, who taught me how to read the passage above and often "thought my trifles were something." More than the mechanics of a dead language or two, what I learned from him became the foundation of the textual skills (close-reading, interpretation, and critical writing) upon which my later scholarly work inevitably rests. This dedication also brings back fond memories of York School and Monterey, the port where this journey began.

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* "To whom do I dedicate my new amusing little book / freshly polished with pumice? / To you, Cornelius, for you were accustomed / to think my trifles were something" (I.1-4).

Prefatory Notes

Abbreviations of Ārzū's Major Works

‘AK	‘Aṭīyah-i kubrā
CH	Chirāgh-i hidāyat
DS	Dād-i suḵhan
ḲhG	Ḳhiyābān-i gulistān
M	Muṣmir
MN	Majma‘ al-naḡā‘is
M‘U	Mauhibat-i ‘uẓmā
NA	Nawādir al-ālfāẓ
TĠh	Tanbīh al-ġhāfilīn

Notes on Conventions Used

Instead of “Hindi,” this study uses the term “*hindī*” in pre-colonial contexts to remind us that the language(s) generally called “*hindī*” in the Persian sources should not be confused with today’s Modern Standard Hindi or uncritically contrasted with Urdu. As late as 1832, the poet Mirzā Ġhālīb’s preface to a volume of what we would call his Urdu poems refers to them as “*hindī*.” Even later, Munshī Bhagwant Rā‘ī Kākorwī’s *Nal daman hindī* (1859, reprinted 1869) uses the word in that sense in its title (see Alam and Subrahmanyam 2012 n 3).

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

Years are generally cited in both the sources’ Islamic lunar date (AH) as well as Common Era (CE). Converting years with a formula leaves a range of error ± 1 year unless the exact date is known because Islamic lunar calendar cycles over the solar calendar. Context is generally obvious (namely tenth to twelfth-century dates are Islamic while seventeenth to nineteenth-century dates are Western), and ambiguous dates are marked.

Translations from Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Urdu, and European languages are the present author’s own unless noted. The principal exceptions are passages from Āzād’s *Āb-e ḡayāt*,

which are cited by page number from the 1907 Urdu edition but with English text provided from Frances Pritchett and Shamsur Rahman Faruqi's translation. Qur'ānic passages are drawn from the Ahmed Ali translation.

The crucial term *taẓkirah* has no good English equivalent so it appears in the original throughout. The name is derived from the Arabic root ḏ-k-r which has to do with remembering, including remembering someone for the purpose of praising him, as Lane's Arabic dictionary notes. In Persian and Urdu, *taẓkirah* in the context of literary communities refers to a book containing a number of entries on individual poets, including in most cases anecdotes about them and selections of their poetry. It has typically been rendered into English as "biographical dictionary" but both parts of that translation are misleading: "Biographical" obscures the implied purpose of the work, namely preserving the memory of the poets of the tradition and their works, while "dictionary" suggests that it is about words rather than people and organized alphabetically (which is not necessarily the case). Lane glosses *taẓkirah* as a "biographical memoir" which refers to a different sort of work. It has this sense in the title of Shaiḫ Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥazīn's autobiography *Taẓkirat al-aḥwāl* [*Taẓkirah* of (my) Circumstances]. One proposal has been to translate "*taẓkirah*" as "memorative communication" (as in Hermansen and Lawrence 2000), but while undoubtedly more correct, it is too unwieldy for our purposes.

Transliteration

Marked or Ambiguous Consonants

ṭ	ٹ	ट	kḥ	خ		sh	ش	श
ṭh	ٹھ	ठ	ḍ	ڈ	ड	ṣ*	ص	
ṣ	ث		ḍh	ڈھ	ढ	ẓ	ض	
j	ج	ज	ẓ	ذ		ṭ	ط	
jḥ	جھ	झ	ṛ	ر	ड़	ẓ	ظ	
ch	چ	च	ṛh	رھ	ढ़	ʿ	ع	
chh	چھ	छ	z̄	ژ		gh	غ	
ḥ	ح		s	س	स	q	ق	

* NB that in Devanāgarī sources this transliterates the letter 'ष' (as in "*bhāṣā*"), which is in no way related to the Perso-Arabic letter 'ص'.

Vowels and special marks

ء	ء	(hamza)
y/ī/e-ai	ی	‘ye’ as semi-vowel and vowel (<i>ma‘ruf</i> and <i>maj‘hūl</i> —see below)
w/ū/o-au	و	‘wāw’ as semi-vowel and vowel (<i>ma‘ruf</i> and <i>maj‘hūl</i>)
ṛ	ṛ	the vocalic ‘r’ which cannot be specifically represented in Perso-Arabic script but appears here in the transliteration of some Sanskrit words
ā	آ	<i>alif maqṣūrah</i> (a word-final ‘ye’ pronounced as /ā/ that appears in some Arabic words)
w̄	و̄	quiescent (unpronounced) wāw as in <i>ḵhwāndan</i>
m̄	و̄	<i>nūn-ghunnah</i> (nasalization of the preceding vowel)
an	أ	<i>tanwīn</i>
‘		a sign marking the rare cases in which ‘h’ follows a consonant that could be aspirated but in which the two are actually separate sounds (e.g. <i>maj‘hūl</i>)

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

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

The unpronounced ‘he’ at the end of some words is marked as [ah] in both Urdu and Persian (the pronunciation is different but this is not a significant distinction). Thus, for example, the word زنده (living) will appear as “*zindah*.” The *izāfat* construction will be written [–e] in Urdu and [–i] in Persian, as in the famous diamond “*koh-e nūr*” / “*koh-i nūr*”

The Arabic prefix “*al-*,” which assimilates to the following consonant when it is one of the so-called “sun letters,” has been represented here as it is written rather than as it is pronounced.

Thus, for example, the name “Sirāj al-Dīn” is pronounced [sirāj ud-dīn]. Furthermore, the Arabic case inflections will not be noted.

Devanāgarī sources follow the transliteration scheme of the *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*, except that ‘w’ has been preferred to ‘v’.

Introduction

“nonnulla enim pars inventionis est nosse quid quaeras”

[Indeed, a considerable part of discovery is to know what you are looking for.]

—Augustine, Introduction to “Quaestiones in Heptateuchum”

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the political order of the Mughal Empire was faltering but the lamp of intellectual achievement in literature and scholarship burned brightly. The state’s authority had started to wane towards the end of the reign of the Emperor Aurangzeb, who had died in 1707. There were ten emperors during that half-century, some of them little more than puppets whose rule lasted but a few weeks. The invasion of India by the upstart Persian ruler Nādir Shāh in 1738–9, an act of brigandage under the very nose of the Emperor, depleted the coffers of the Mughal state and resulted in the humiliating loss of vast wealth and the trappings of power like the Peacock Throne. Meanwhile it caused ripples of material suffering and political unrest. And who could have predicted at that time that the British East India Company—a mere trading company from the back of beyond proffering cheap documents (Ogborn 2007), not even a sovereign state!—represented an entirely new and immediate threat to the established order? Since the 1980s scholars have reexamined the narrative of political decline in the early eighteenth century,

and have nuanced our understanding of the implications of the loss of centralized control.¹

But this dissertation is not concerned with political history, and we leave the purely political questions for others, instead focusing on the intersection of literature (including the scholarly apparatus behind it) and the political.

What concerns us here is the literary and cultural milieu of eighteenth-century Delhi, which we are not yet in a position to understand particularly well. Why was there an efflorescence of Persian scholarship at that time? Why was Persianized *hindī* (that is, what would come to be known as Urdu) emerging as a literary language (for poetry if not yet for prose) without becoming an administrative language until a century later? How was India [*Hind*, or more narrowly *Hindūstān*] constructed as a cultural space, and how was it linked to the wider Persian-using cosmopolis that stretched across South and Central Asia from Turkey in the west to the frontiers of China in the east? These are enormous questions, each deserving a detailed historical study, and our scope here is significantly more modest. The approach to these three fields pursued here is a particular inflection point in each of them, the career of the poet-philologist Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Ḳhān (1688/9–1756), commonly known by his pen-name [*taḳhalluṣ*], Ārzū.² Ārzū is at the center of each of these transformations because he was a great

¹ See, for example, Marshall 2003; Alam and Subrahmanyam 1999; Bayly 1988 and 1993: 35ff; Alam 1986; Wink 1986.

² “Sirāj al-Dīn” means “Lamp of the Faith” and is probably an homage to Ārzū’s famous ancestor, the Sufi master Chirāgh-i Dihli [“Lamp of Delhi”] (d. 791 AH/1389 CE). (*Sirāj* is the Arabic cognate of the Persian *chirāgh*.) Likewise,

Indian Persianist, an important early teacher of Urdu composition, and a keen cultural observer whose ability to compare India with the rest of the Persianate world was probably unparalleled. By circumscribing this research so that it focuses on the thought of one remarkable individual, the present writer hopes to give others an anchor for larger questions about the early-modern South Asian world.

Ārzū's work is an important entry point into many historical questions. We should be surprised that there is no monograph in English about him, when someone like Sir William Jones (an eighteenth-century British philologist to whom he has been compared) has been the subject of dozens of recent books and articles.³ Furthermore, why, given that Ārzū's works set a standard for meticulously detailed scholarship, were all but a couple of them ignored by the colonial state? This colonial connection is worth noting, if only in passing, as part of what Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi has called the "genesis amnesia" of Oriental Studies, namely that

Ārzū's student Lālah ẖek Chand, known by his penname Bahār, refers to his teacher as "*Sirāj al-muḥaqqiqīn*" [Lamp of the Scholars] and "*Sirāj al-shu'arā*" [Lamp of the Poets] (*Bahār-i 'ajam* 2001: preface). Kḥān is a title.

³ Jones is the subject of the present author's MA thesis, "Colonial Knowledge and the Greco-Roman Classics: Resituating the Legacy of Sir William Jones in a Humanist Context" (Dudney 2008). It argue that in assessing Jones, later scholars have been interested in interpreting the aspects of his thought that in retrospect can be called "modern" while neglecting his engagement with the Classical tradition. The thesis recovers the centrality of pre-modern, Classical ways of thinking in his scholarship and suggests that post-colonial scholars like Edward Said have been unwilling to trace how changes in intellectual life in the West affected Western knowledge production about the non-West, preferring to see the colonial encounter as a static discourse of domination and knowledge extraction. Ārzū's thought likewise deserves to be studied comprehensively rather than by identifying the "modern" parts and praising him for them. This dissertation briefly explores in Chapter Two the question of whether or not Arzu's concept of *tawāfuq al-lisānain* inspired Sir William Jones's *Third Anniversary Discourse* (1786), which is seen as the first draft of the theory of the genetic relationship of the Indo-European languages. Such a blatant intellectual theft is a historically suggestive possibility but there is no firm evidence for it.

not enough attention has been paid to why certain non-Western texts and not others became part of the West's scholarly canon (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001). The narrative of the eighteenth century as understood by Europeans, as John Dowson admits in *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, is based overwhelmingly on the most "English" of the Persian histories, Ġhulām Husain's *Siyar al-muta'akhkhirin* [Manners of the Moderns, 1783], to the neglect of the other materials available. Dowson writes: "In fact, the native side of the history of Ghulām Husain's days, as it appears in the works of English writers, rests almost entirely upon his authority," that is, as told in *Siyar al-muta'akhkhirin* (Eliot and Dowson 1877: 194ff). Both James Mill and Lord Macaulay approved of the historiography of this work, and its adoption was no doubt helped by being translated into English in 1789 before other relevant texts. Why does the development of the colonial canon matter? The master narratives that still shape our understanding—since, after all, many of the translations gathered in *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians* have not been superseded despite the collection's obvious flaws—are based on a colonial engagement with the pre-colonial past. In many cases, this colonial discourse has silently displaced the tradition's own discourse, so that "culturally authentic" ideas about Indic language and literature in fact have a much newer origin than is generally believed.⁴ Our goal here is to strip away the accretions of interpretation and historical happenstance (that one

⁴ Allison Busch has made a similar case about recent Hindi literary criticism: She observes that "the voice of the postcolonial speaks in English, whereas the Orientalist voice is still alive, and speaking in Hindi" (Busch 2011: 14).

text was translated into English before another, for example), and face the eighteenth century Indo-Persian milieu on terms that would be familiar to its participants. This involves reconstructing the circumstances under which philological knowledge was created and put into practice.⁵

Ārzū was without a doubt one of the world's great intellectuals in the eighteenth century. He settled in Delhi early in Muḥammad Shāh's reign (probably in early 1720), and had a successful career for just over thirty years in the capital before taking up a post in Lucknow and dying there soon after. He was survived by two generations of students and his works, which included poetic manuals, commentaries, a body of Persian poetry, three dictionaries, a *tazkirah*, and most importantly for this dissertation, a treatise on language called *Muṣmir* [lit. "fruitful"], the subject of Chapter Two. It is notable that besides the sheer volume and range of his scholarly and creative works, his colleagues and students were among the most important Persian scholars and Urdu poets of their generations. He is regarded as one of the first intellectuals to take Urdu literature seriously (although it should be noted that not a single line of Urdu survives that is unquestionably his work) but was also arguably the greatest Indian Persianist of his day. He was referred to as a "*marja*" [a refuge or point of reference] and as

⁵ As Roger Chartier has written: "The historian's task is thus to reconstruct the variations that differentiate the *espaces lisibles*—that is, the texts in their discursive and material forms—and those that govern the circumstances of their effectuation—that is, the readings, understood as concrete practices and as procedures" (Chartier 1994: 2).

“Lamp of the Researchers” [*sirāj al-muḥaqqiqīn*], and was at the center of most of the famous literary debates of his time. As a scholar, he drew upon an unusually broad range of research materials and correspondingly employed an encyclopedic critical approach that compared numerous sources. He drew deeply from the resources of the Arabic tradition, for example basing his *Muṣmir* on *al-Muzhir fī ‘ulūm al-luġhah wa anwā‘ihā* [The Luminous Work Concerning the Sciences of Language and its Subfields] by the fifteenth-century Egyptian polymath Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, while also having easy access to indigenous Indic traditions. Ārzū was a keen, detail-obsessed observer of society and tradition who sought to correct cultural misconceptions, whether those held by Indians or non-Indians, and to record regional usages faithfully, even if he found them ineloquent or inappropriate for poetry. However, his ethnography, if we can call it that, was based in his interest in language, which was in turn focused on the practice of poetry. Since he thus does not fit easily into any of our contemporary disciplines, we will refer to him as a “philologist.”

The term “philology” has seen its stock both rise and fall since it was coined in late Antiquity. (It is arguably now at a record low.⁶) Philology literally means, of course, “the love

⁶ Through a process of sloppy synecdoche, philology has been called to account by postmodern philosophers like Paul de Man for the sins of all the modern human sciences and even blamed for the rise of Fascism (see Pollock 2009). The translator of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff’s *Geschichte der Philologie* laments having to have titled his translation *History of Classical Scholarship* for the sake of clarity because as far as the name philology is concerned “it is deplorable that we in England have ceased to use this valuable term correctly” (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1982: vii). For an influential (and famously broad) early eighteenth-century definition of the term as proposed by Giambattista Vico (1688–1744), see Burke 1985: 84 and Manson 1969: 46.

of words,” but throughout history it has referred specifically to ways of studying language and literature. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it has meant variously a devotion to books, the careful study of literature (especially Classical texts), and the systematic study of language in order to discover its structures.⁷ In the last sense, it came to be synonymous with “historical linguistics,” although this usage is now rare. So why choose as the key term in this study one which has little resonance for people today? Precisely because it is so capacious and ambiguous: It is a word that forces us to think historically. For example, we might be tempted to call Ārzū a linguist, but he certainly would not get hired in a modern university’s Department of Linguistics, whose members have entirely different presuppositions about the nature of language and its relationship to literature. Avoiding the term “linguistics” prevents the false assumption that for someone like Ārzū to be worth our attention, he must have been a linguist *avant la lettre* who thought about the development of language in terms that are familiar to us. (In fact, he does have a sophisticated sense of the historicity of language, but we

⁷ It has also, from early on, had a pejorative sense in English as the *OED* attests, e.g. Henry Cockeram’s *The English Dictionarie, or an Interpreter of Hard English Words* of 1623 gives “loue of much babbling” as the definition for “phylologie.” Two other entries for this sense contrasted philology unfavorably with philosophy since philology (by this definition) is the study of mere words while philosophy gets at truth directly. This is worth mentioning because to the present author’s knowledge, it has no counterpart in Persian and Urdu literature. While mocking bad poets is a staple of Persianate literature, there is no sense (before the colonial period) that reflecting on language or composing verse is itself indolence. The Islamicate tradition never gave up on Aristotle’s famous formulation that poetry “is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular” (*Poetics* 1451b, trans. Butcher). Indeed, the greats, like the *taẓkirah* compiler Muḥammad Auḡī (died c. 1232–3 CE) and the poet Amīr Ḳhusrau, compared poetry to *‘ilm*, [learning, often associated with religious studies], and Ḳhusrau even went so far as to compare it to divine revelation (Keshavmurthy 2011; Gabbay 2010: 27ff).

shall see that it is quite unlike ours.) Furthermore, linguistics is narrowly focused on language as its object, but philology acts upon a body of *texts* (rather than a set of linguistic data), and indeed Ārzū and his peers made their living as practicing poets. Linguists today are not expected to be poets, at least not professionally. The idea that a language can be abstracted from a literary tradition is therefore totally alien to Ārzū's scholarship. Thus the term "philologist" encompasses "literary scholar," "linguist," and "litterateur"—all of which describe Ārzū.⁸

The Classic and the Cosmopolitan

This study will return often to the concept of the cosmopolitan, taking as given that for centuries there existed a Persian cosmopolis stretching from Turkey in the west across Central and South Asia to the Chinese frontier territory of Xinjiang in the east. This vast region was the zone where Persian language and literature, and its corresponding ethical and political culture, was common currency, just as Latin and Latinity was a "European sign" that maintained a similar cosmopolis in the West (Waquet 2001: 121). Sanskrit, of course, linked South and Southeast Asia in the same way for centuries (Pollock 2006). Part of the appeal of the cosmopolitan as an object of analysis is precisely that it has no long scholarly genealogy in

⁸ However, it should be made clear from the outset that there is no single pre-modern Persian term that captures an equivalent meaning "philologist" because someone like Ārzū could be slotted into perhaps a dozen or more common categories such as *ahl-i qalam* [men of the pen] or *suḵhan-dānān* [knowers of speech/poetry].

contrast to its obvious importance throughout world history (Pollock et al. 2000: 577). It is a real but nonetheless difficult-to-locate phenomenon that can serve as a historiographical bulwark against the nationalist thinking that is often the default mode for scholars today, and that distorts our understanding of the past. A cosmopolis is not merely a linguistic zone—for example, where most elites are educated in Persian—but a textually-constituted entity. It is, we can say, an anti-nation in that its textual canon is not that of a national language but that of a classical heritage that cannot be mapped onto an extant political unit. All of the disparate regions in the Persian cosmopolis shared an appreciation for Firdawsī’s epic *Shāhnāmāh* [Book of Kings, c. 1000 CE]—today considered an Iranian nationalist text but in fact composed in present-day Afghanistan on the Indian frontier—just as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* were touchstones across the Sanskrit cosmopolis. In the case of the Persian cosmopolis, Francis Robinson has shown that the early-modern Mughals, Ottomans and Safavids—the three great empires of the cosmopolis—all used similar curricula largely derived from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Central Asia and Iran (Robinson 1997: 154). The lyric poetry of Ḥāfīz and ‘Attār (to pick two influential examples) was quoted from Istanbul to Khotan, from Tashkent to Hyderabad, as was the political philosophy of Niẓāmī ‘Arūzī.

Clearly we are gesturing towards something that can be called “the classical,” which like “philology” requires quite a bit of explanation in today’s world. We are perhaps more familiar

with the concept of the “classical” as the textual “canon,” a substituted term that is deliberately not as explicitly honorific as “classical” (Guillory 1993: 6). However, before our time there was necessarily a sense that a body of texts was to be elevated above others, and more importantly that these were the texts that provided an identity for a literate elite. This identity on the basis of mastery of classical texts, an identity that could certainly have local inflections but was by definition cosmopolitan rather than local, was on par with or more important than what we consider standard identity markers today (nation, language, class, and so on). Not only did the classics build pre-modern communities, but for us they flag important historical moments: When an attempt is made to redefine which texts are classical and how critics should approach them, it can be an illuminating historical discontinuity, such as the time when Renaissance Latinists became confident enough to question ancient editors of classical texts (D’Amico 1988: 9). While the classical canon is inevitably represented as static, even in many cases divinely ordained, the reality is that it is contested and constructed. The South African novelist J. M. Coetzee observes that,

The classic defines itself by surviving. Therefore the interrogation of the classic, no matter how hostile, is part of the history of the classic, inevitable and even to be welcomed. For as long as the classic needs to be protected from attack, it can never prove itself classic. (Coetzee 2001: 14).

In making this provocative claim, he is drawing upon a contrast between the classic as an object of veneration versus that of the classic as something to be questioned, even derided as force that retards progress. Such tension appears as early as the first century CE in the works of

the Roman grammarian Quintilian, who is ambivalent about Quintus Ennius, an early Latin poet who was by then already outmoded: “Ennius we must venerate as we do groves whose age makes them holy, full of great oaks that nowadays have less beauty than sanctity” (10.1.85-90, qtd./trans. Steele 1990: 121). In the present study, we will consider Ārzū’s own interventions in the canon. He attempted to maintain the unity of the Persian cosmopolis through careful attention to the classics while at the same time broadening the range of permitted interpretations of Persian texts.

Writing History and Writing about History: *Āb-e ḥayāt* as a Case Study

Let us set our starting point roughly mid-way between our time and Ārzū’s: In 1880, Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād published *Āb-e ḥayāt* [The Water of Life], the first comprehensive history of Urdu poetry. It is a Janus-faced work that looks back nostalgically and reverently towards the Urdu poetic tradition while also striving to be a “modern” (in other words, British-emulating) literary history that could help Urdu poetry transcend its supposedly decadent and immoral past. It is stuffed with well-worn anecdotes about each of the poets like a traditional Persian *tazkirah* but systematically demonstrates civilizational development over time like a contemporary Western historical text.⁹ Āzād was at the first person to have been able to write such a book—no one before would have felt the need—while at the same time being one of the

⁹ The work is divided into five historical ages [*daur*, pl. *adwār*], each of which is meant to show a discrete development (or decline) compared to the last.

last to be able to access the living tradition that had been swept away by the wholesale cultural reorientation in the wake of the 1857 uprising.¹⁰ *Āb-e ḥayāt*'s influence cannot be overstated; its fluid style and wealth of stories have been so beguiling that people have frequently overlooked the fancifulness of many of Āzād's historical claims. For example, he prefaces an absurd declaration about the historical origin of Urdu with the phrase "everyone knows this much."¹¹ His fashioning of the Urdu poetic canon, of which Ārzū is a part, is a powerful reminder that when we read a text our understanding of it is shaped by a tradition. The living do not communicate with the dead directly, but only through echoes that reverberate through memory and texts.

This is not a metaphysical point but a practical one. Before we start reading texts historically, we should understand that historical study is necessarily a conversation with a text, in which the ways that we the interpreters pose the questions condition our understanding of the replies we receive. Our approach in the present study is guided by Hans-Georg Gadamer's dictum that "at the beginning of all historical hermeneutics, then, *the abstract antithesis between tradition and historical research, between history and the knowledge of it,*

¹⁰ It is a textbook case of what Pierre Nora calls "historicized memory" (Nora 1996).

¹¹ "*itnī bāt har shakhs jāntā hai...*" He argues that Urdu was derived from Braj Bhāṣā, an Indic literary dialect which he claims entirely lacks artifice. Unfortunately, since Braj Bhāṣā is actually full of complex rhetorical devices, he has to make up his own supporting examples. An explanation for this awkward formulation is provided in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

must be discarded” (Gadamer 2006: 283-4). At first glance, this seems a willfully obfuscatory position—why can’t we just read a historical text and extract information from it?

Furthermore, doesn’t this view presuppose that only emic analyses (that is, ones based on the tradition’s own assumptions) are legitimate? It is obvious that the purpose of the study of history is gathering some kind of knowledge about the past, but intellectual history, the goal of this project, is not just a matter of collecting names and dates but of sustained interpretation.¹² For historically-conscious interpretation, we must situate ourselves vis-à-vis the text and the “variety of voices in which the echo of the past is heard” that constitute the tradition we are studying (Gadamer 2006: 285). What we call a tradition is actually a web of relationships between texts, the strands of thought and rhetoric that interpreters follow from one text to another. A tradition is not simply a Great Books curriculum and in no way stands outside of history—traditions are made and re-made; traditions die or, in some cases, are deliberately killed. Thanks to tradition we cannot approach any text, even one entirely foreign to us, with a blank slate. Thus we must be conscious of our predisposition to reach certain conclusions (what Gadamer and the hermeneutical tradition call “prejudices”) that shapes—and sometimes deforms—our understanding of history. On reflection it is obvious that a scholar must be able to research a tradition without necessarily using its categories

¹² “History as a science has, as it is known, no epistemological object proper to itself; rather, it shares this object with all social and human sciences” (Koselleck 2004: 94).

because a purely emic interpretative project would have no resonance outside the society to which the particular tradition in question belongs and thus we would only be able to study ourselves and our recent forebears. However, we must recognize that when our study crosses not only boundaries of time but of culture, our ability to think historically is constrained not by the traditional boundaries of traditions but by our individual horizons as scholars.¹³ When one has access to the tradition in question by means of a university education rather than by growing up with it, this attention to one's own position in history is especially important. Indeed, cultural distance can be a benefit because it allows us to listen closely to voices in a text that the mainstream of a tradition tends to drown out (Gadamer 2006: 297; cf. Foucault 1972: 9 on "discontinuity"). Perhaps such an assertion seems hopelessly naïve after Edward Said's *Orientalism*, but Said himself never argued that outsiders are unable to assess a tradition fairly—though many uncritical readers have assumed exactly that—but rather that their predispositions, both institutional and individual, must be taken into account.¹⁴ No one,

¹³ For Gadamer, "horizon" [*Horizont*] is a technical term: "The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. ... A person who has an horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small" (Gadamer 2006: 301). The Perso-Arabic term "*ḥadd*" [boundary] is sometimes used in a similar sense. One way in which Gadamer understood historical interpretation was as a "fusion of horizons" [*Horizontverschmelzung*], in which meaning is found in the overlap between the historical subject's horizon and the interpreter's.

¹⁴ Said approvingly quotes Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*: "The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory" (Said 1979: 25). This footnote is not an appropriate vehicle for a wide-ranging critique of Said's theories and their potential for misinterpretation and

internal or external to a tradition, can claim a neutral vantage point because history itself conditions the questions that motivate our inquiry into the past.

We can nuance Gadamer's historical philosophy by considering Quentin Skinner's method: For Skinner, "the understanding of texts ... presupposes the grasp of what they were intended to mean and of how that meaning was intended to be taken" (2002: 86). He cautions us against applying external standards of rationality on historical texts because such an approach makes us dependent on the degree of "cognitive discomfort" we feel to guide us whether to read something figuratively or literally (ibid 41). Attempting to read texts in relation to other contemporary texts and the constellation of meanings they contain is entirely compatible with Gadamer's thought. However, in the Indo-Persian and Urdu tradition, there is a deep structural problem in our current prospects for approaching the past. For reasons having to do with the epistemic trauma of colonialism and the nationalist response to it, scholars have been generally unwilling or perhaps unable to attempt anything like a Skinnerian reconstruction of the intellectual framework of the Delhi literary scene in the period immediately before colonialism. In other words, the questions are not posed to consider what the authors of the texts might have intended and what that tells us, but rather to ask how the texts themselves demonstrate momentum towards enabling either colonial rule or

misuse, but Brennan 2006: 115 is a good summary of the present writer's misgivings. Westerners are not the only people in history to produce essentializing ethnographies (e.g. as cited in Subrahmanyam 1997: 761).

national consciousness. The historiographical argument that the present study will advance is that many of the historical questions that have been framed about eighteenth-century Indo-Persian (and by extension Urdu) literary culture by later scholars would have had little or no relevance for those living in the period under discussion. Now, the eighteenth century has been thoroughly studied and obviously many answers have been provided to historical questions, but there has been to some degree been a failure to engage with eighteenth century writers on their own terms, hence many of the answers we have are well-formed but are nonetheless responses to badly framed questions. A well-formed answer to a badly constructed question is obviously a problem, as we have seen in our discussion of *Āb-e ḥayāt*. It is also dismaying that recent edited volumes focusing on the eighteenth century in South Asia (for example, Alavi 2002; Marshall 2003) focus on economic and political history while excluding questions of cultural and intellectual history.

Dwelling on historiography, the philosophy of how we conceptualize and write history, is crucial when the historical subject in question is commonly remembered as a founder, as “the First Person to have done X,” a claim often made about Ārzū (e.g. first important teacher of Urdu, first critical lexicographer in Urdu, first to see the historical affinity between Persian and Sanskrit). Consider, though, that Adam Smith, generally acknowledged as the first person to set out modern capitalist thought, believed strongly that the corporation, the unit of

production that we know to have later become the cornerstone of modern capitalism, would not outlast his own time.¹⁵ We are obliged to remember that historical subjects have a limited horizon and are not necessarily particularly invested in having the world turn out the way that we know it did after their deaths. Thus, we should renounce any goal of showing what Ārzū got “right” and “wrong” by measuring his insights against modern linguistics (which in any case would require the implicit assumption that *our* approach to analyzing language is right and any other approach is primitive or wrong). Our thinking about how to understand language in the abstract is nonetheless informed by modern linguistics, as well as by the history of the relationship between Latin and the vernacular languages in Europe. This dissertation will not pursue a full comparative analysis of either, but they ineluctably inform our study and will be invoked when appropriate. This is a more fruitful (and intellectually honest) approach than forcing history to hew to a trajectory determined in advance by the historian, which is unfortunately how much of the social history of Urdu and Indo-Persian literature has been written. The only real *idée fixe* of the present writer when he first undertook this project was the recognition of Ārzū as an inflection point in Indian intellectual history.

¹⁵ “No one defends Adam Smith in his conviction that corporations—joint stock companies—had no future. But the Marxists require that Marx, with some adjustment, be right not only for his own time but for all time” (Galbraith 1978: 84). Similarly, Skinner offers a good analysis of the implications of our ability to recognize things with hindsight that others in history could not (2002: 60ff).

Āb-e ḥayāt makes much the same case as the present study in that it argues that Ārzū's career is a critical historical juncture. However, Āzād's conclusions are far from the last word on the subject because his subject is the development of Urdu literary culture—so he ignores Ārzū's Persianate intellectual life.¹⁶ He offers the striking formulation that Ārzū is to Urdu poetry as Aristotle is to logic (*Āb-e ḥayāt* 1907: 115). Earlier *tazkirahs* had similar hyperbole, for example referring to Ārzū as the “Abū Ḥanīfah” of Urdu poetry (Abū Ḥanīfah being the founder of the Hanafite school, which is the dominant school of interpretation in Islamic jurisprudence in South and Central Asia).¹⁷ Literary histories of Urdu like Āzād's frame Ārzū's career in terms of his foundational role in Urdu literature; but except in passing they do not connect it with his Persian scholarship, which forms the vast bulk of what he wrote and significantly is what earned him the respect of his peers. This omission is not surprising given the precipitous decline in Persian's prestige in South Asia, but it does mean that Urdu literary historians' assessments of Ārzū are incomplete. This is not to say that they get their facts wrong, as judged from a philosophically-suspect “neutral” vantage point, but rather that they

¹⁶ Āzād's *Suḫhandān-i fārs* [The Persian Poet, 1872] deals primarily with the early history of Persian and the most recent poet discussed in detail is 'Urfī (1555–91). Ārzū makes a cameo appearance as an example of an Indian patriot who cared about the philosophy of language [*falsafah-yi lisān*] and had not yet ceded the field to Europeans (2005: 10). An analysis of this passage appears below in Chapter Two.

¹⁷ For example, “On the basis that the Islamic Scholars are called [descendants of] Abū Ḥanīfah Kūfī thus it is fitting that they call poets of the *hindī* language [i.e. Urdu] descendants of Ḳhān-i Ārzū” [*ba-māṣābah-yi kih 'ulamā'-i ahl-i ḥaqq rā ... imām hamām qiblah-yi anām abū ḥanīfa kūfī ... mī gūyand agar shu'arā-yi hindī zabān rā 'ayāl-i ḳhān-i ārzū gūyand sazā-st*] from *Majmū'ah-yi naḡhz* [A Delightful Collection, 1806] by Quḍratallāh “Qāsim” (qtd in NA editor's preface 12; Das 1991: 426)

cannot fully answer the questions we wish to pose. However, their own interpretations shape our understanding of the tradition and indeed their interpretations comprise much of the tradition. Ārzū has not received his due in the annals of South Asian intellectual history, we can conclude, because he was a Persian scholar first and a *hindī* poet a distant second. Furthermore, as we consider in detail in Chapter Four, any attempt to prove Ārzū to be an Indian patriot who shaped an indigenous language (Urdu) so that it could replace a foreign language (Persian) is anachronistic in its conception of national and linguistic identity, and—more importantly—finds no solid textual support.

If we look more closely at Āzād's analysis of Ārzū then we see that it suffers from a problem common to much of his scholarship, namely the need to slot writers into a narrative of the development of Urdu literature that the evidence cannot really sustain. According to *Āb-e ḥayāt*, Ārzū was one of the poets who “took poetry that was founded on wordplay [*jugat*] and double meanings [*zū-ma'nī*] and pulled it into the Persian style and manner of expression.”¹⁸ This statement falsely implies that there was no wordplay in Persian poetry. When Persian influenced Urdu poetry, it supposedly stripped away the indigenous tendency to engage in wordplay. This is, simply put, nonsense.¹⁹ Throughout his work, Āzād focuses on—indeed, it is

¹⁸ “*aur jis shā'iri kī bunyād jugat aur zū-ma'nī lafẓon par usse khīnchkar fārsī kī tarz aur adā-yi maṭālib par le ā'e*” (*Āb-e ḥayāt* 1907: 115-6).

¹⁹ It is especially nonsensical in the context of eighteenth-century Persian composition, which was much maligned under the disparaging label “*Sabk-i hindī*” [the Indian style] by later Iranian and colonial literary critics

fair to say that he is obsessed with—a literary device called “*ihām*,” or punning. *Īhām* has a long history in Persian poetics and a critical analysis of it first appeared seven centuries before Āzād in the work of Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwātī (d. 578 AH/1182–3 CE) (Chalisova 2004). Furthermore, Amīr Khusrau, the master poet of thirteenth and fourteenth-century Delhi, boasted of having invented a new style of *ihām*.²⁰ Great classical poets, including Ḥāfiẓ, mastered *ihām* and it was an important tool in courtly discourse since it often provided an opportunity for a clever turn of phrase at the right moment (for some examples, see Hasan 1998: 20-1). The device clearly has an impeccable pedigree in Persian and yet Āzād flatly claims that *ihām* (or in its Indic variant “*jugat*”) is a fault Urdu that inherited from Hindi and, even more improbably, that the process of Persianization of Urdu poetry was mostly about scrubbing the *ihām* out of it.²¹ There was an eighteenth-century conversation about *ihām*, but it came later and was far less central than Āzād has made it.²²

for being baroque and elevating wordplay above sense. The problem of the so-called “Indian style” of Persian will be revisited in Chapter Three.

²⁰ Amir Khusrau 2007: vol 1, 41; see also Gabbay 2010: 36ff.

²¹ “This master of invention [the Urdu poet Mirzā Muḥammad Rafī‘ Saudā (1706?–81)], ... compiled verbal devices, Persian constructions, and original themes, and made such excellence that people forgot punning [*ihām*], alliteration, and the other verbal devices that were the foundation for Hindi *dohrās*” (Āb-e Ḥayāt 1907: 54).

²² On how different *taẓkirahs* treat *ihām*, see Gorekar 1970: 122. Ġhulām Hamadānī Muṣḥafī’s late eighteenth-century *taẓkirah Riyāẓ al-fuṣṣaḥā* [Gardens of the Eloquent] notes that the meanings of Ārzū’s verse were predicated upon *ihām* because it was the “age [*daur*] of *ihām*” (*Taẓkirah riyāẓ al-fuṣṣaḥā* 1985: 38). Mīr, as we discuss in Chapter Four, contrasts *ihām*-style *reḡhtah* with “*andāz*”-style in the afterword of his *Nikāt al-shu‘arā*. He does not define “*andāz*” (which means “measure” or “mode”), but presumably for him it means poetry without *ihām*—needless to say, Mīr himself uses *ihām* in his supposedly “*andāz*”-style poetry.

The reason Āzād should frame all of Urdu literary history as a campaign against wordplay is obvious when we consider that he spent much of his life working for the colonial state: Nineteenth-century Britons had imbibed Romanticism so deeply that in general the only kind of contemporary poetry they valued was that of poets such as Wordsworth with their descriptions of apparently spontaneous emotional reactions to natural scenery. Thus there was no room for the perceived artificiality of *ihām* and similar devices.²³ Especially after Āzād's full-throated denunciation of it, this humble rhetorical device has been considered a pernicious evil that stifles genuine emotion. With a few exceptions, twentieth-century critics of Urdu literature have not historicized Āzād's thought.²⁴ For example, Muhammad Sadiq, who wrote in the 1960s, views the apparently disastrous consequences of *ihām* on a poet's creativity in exactly the same way as Āzād.²⁵ However, the modern critical obsession with perceived artificiality as epitomized by *ihām* means that Sadiq has a warped frame of reference for what, for example, the oeuvre of the early eighteenth-century *rekhtah* poet Shāh Ḥātim (b. 1699)

²³ It is worth pointing out that the equivalent work for the Indo-Persian tradition, Shiblī Nu'mānī's *Sh'ir al-'ajam* [Persian Poetry, 1907–25], is likewise driven by the same unspoken preoccupation with British poetics (Faruqi 2004b: 11ff). Some telling examples of how damaging this assumption has been for Urdu criticism, see Faruqi 2005.

²⁴ For a trenchant complaint about Urdu critics' tendency to reproduce mythology as fact, see Faruqi 2008.

²⁵ Sadiq 1964: 75ff. On the same page he provides a couple of useful definitions of *ihām*, which the interested reader can consult. Another recent history of Urdu literature similarly calls *ihām* part of an awkward, artificial phase in Urdu poetry (Hasan 1995: 102).

represents.²⁶ Sadiq tries to argue that the preface [*dibāchah*] to Ḥātim's second collected works, entitled *Dīwānzādah*,²⁷ takes a position against *ihām*. Indeed, the critic tries to have it both ways, by admitting that Ḥātim frequently used punning in his poetry while implying that the very existence of the *Dīwānzādah* (Ḥātim's re-issued collected works, in whose preface the poet explains the aesthetic considerations that compelled him to release a thoroughly-changed new edition) is in fact a direct attack on *ihām*. But since *ihām* was commonly discussed at the time, and there certainly was a contemporaneous turn against it—Ārzū's own thoughts on the subject will be introduced below—why does Ḥātim not mention it even once in the preface? There are far more interesting aesthetic judgments that Ḥātim *does* mention, but Sadiq does not consider them because they are irrelevant to the *ihām*-centric narrative he wishes to present. Similarly, Āzād provides no analysis of the significant scholarly interventions that Ārzū made in Urdu literature except in the most general terms, and it is worth enumerating them, as we will do in Chapter Four.

If, as Āzād himself has written, Ārzū was primarily a Persian writer, then why discuss the vernacular in this dissertation at all? *Hindī* has to be included in this project precisely to keep us from the temptation of treating Ārzū as two separate people, namely a great Indo-Persian

²⁶ He frames the poet's career in terms of *ihām*: "Ḥātim's life spanned nearly the entire eighteenth century, and therefore represents the rise and fall of the *ihām* ideal" (Sadiq 1964: 78).

²⁷ A *dīwān* is the term for a poet's selected works in Persian or Urdu, so *Dīwānzādah* is a cheeky title meaning "son of the *dīwān*."

philologist and an important figure in Urdu literature. The tendency to address his achievements in the two languages separately means that we have not appreciated the fact that his theories on language and aesthetics, ostensibly about Persian only, are actually more general than that and encompass *hindī* as well. Without his engagement with the vernacular, his philosophy of language in Persian would not have been as rich and without his standing in Persian he would not have been in a position to influence vernacular poetry. There is also a practical problem: It is difficult for us to know how to split up Ārzū's lifeworld between the vernacular and Persian—Āzād states with a brazen certainty that “Ḳhān-e Ārzū was not an Urdu poet; nor did people of that time consider Urdu poetry to be an accomplishment” (*Āb-e ḥayāt* 1907: 116). But did Ārzū himself feel that way about vernacular composition? We cannot know because the written historical record is silent and we have no contemporary analogy for it. In this regard, the predicament in which present day-scholars find themselves is reminiscent of Jorge Luis Borges's story “The Quest of Averroes” [*La Busca de Averroes*] in which a fictionalized version of Ibn Rushd, the Córdoba-born, twelfth-century polymath known in the West as Averroes, becomes interested in the difference between Aristotle's definitions of comedy and tragedy. Despite his critical acumen, he is at a disadvantage because he has never been inside a theatre and he has never seen a play.²⁸ We have so little information about social

²⁸ See Umberto Eco's discussion, Eco 1990: 101. In fact, the historical Ibn Rushd did significantly influence later interpretations of his subject matter since throughout his so-called “middle” [i.e. medium-length] commentary

aspects of the intellectual lives of eighteenth-century Indians that we are groping for answers like Borges's Averroes. For example, we can be certain that *reḵhtah* and Indo-Persian literary culture in the eighteenth century valued orality, and can assume that its focus was the poetic gathering, or *mushā'irah*, but the fact is that the most authoritative scholarly account of *mushā'irahs* (Naim 1989) cannot help but be completely speculative when discussing pre-twentieth-century gatherings.²⁹

Structure of the Present Study

In Chapter One, we explore Ārzū's life and social milieu. Who were his patrons and what was his network of colleagues in Delhi and beyond? The source material is primarily *tazkirahs*, but miscellaneous biographical statements in other works (such as in prefaces) and the few extant personal letters are also considered. In Chapter Two, "Ārzū's Theory of Language: *Muṣmir* and Beyond," we address Ārzū's engagement with the long tradition of literary criticism in Persian and Arabic primarily through a reading of his *Muṣmir*. He combines ideas by diverse thinkers in order to create a new criticism which is based on research [*taḥqīq*] and

on Aristotle (which was widely read in medieval Europe in its Latin translation by Hermannus, *De Arte Poetica*) he referred to "tragedy" as "*madiḥ*" [praise] and "comedy" as "*hijā*" [vituperation] (Mallette 2009: 584).

²⁹ The *Muraqqa'-i dihlī* [Delhi Album, c. 1741] written by the visiting Deccani nobleman Dargāh Qulī Ḳhān mentions a great deal of *mushā'irahs* (and their important participants) but provides almost no details that would help us to reconstruct one. The celebrated account of a literary evening in *Dillī kī āḳhrī shama'* [1926, translated as *The Last Mushai'rah of Delhi*] was written decades after the events it purports to describe and so is fantastical, even though it has sometimes been read as a work of history (Baig 1979).

a sophisticated theoretical understanding of language, including its historical changes. It was arguably the most advanced theoretical study of language in the pre-modern Persian tradition, but was superseded by the Western discipline of linguistics and largely forgotten. In Chapter Three, “Ancients and Moderns, and Poetic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Indo-Persian,” we reconsider the well-known but simplistic paradigm that Iranians reacted negatively to a distinctly Indian, decadent style of Persian literature, which was later called “*Sabk-i hindī*” [Indian Style]. Instead of this over-determined and anachronistically nationalist paradigm, eighteenth-century poets were far more concerned with old versus new styles in Persian poetry. Ārzū was the first to develop a rigorous criticism to address poetic innovation associated with the “fresh speech” [*tāzah-goʿī*] movement. In the final chapter, “*Hindī, Reḡhtah*, and Urdu: Persian Departs from India?” we advance the claim that Ārzū’s theory of language is intentionally capacious so that it can apply to Indian vernacular language as well as Persian. Ārzū’s crucial intervention in vernacular poetics was to suggest that the Indic poetic practice of *reḡhtah* (which later became a synonym for Urdu) could be standardized along the lines of Persian, and thus that an Indic language could be a cosmopolitan literary medium in its own right. Indeed, Ārzū’s defense of “fresh speech” in Persian carries over into the vernacular sphere through intermediaries and is most likely the basis for Urdu literature as it came to be. We consider the importance of Ārzū’s dictionary of

Indic terms, *Nawādir al-alfāz*. This chapter frames the larger question of how language is defined today versus in the pre-colonial period. We advance the argument that language was classified according to people's concept of its function (that is, what linguists would call a "domain") rather than as a linguistic identity or through the phylogeny developed in the wake of colonial-era linguistic surveys. The conclusion proposes a general theory of language use and ideology in pre-colonial India.

A planned additional chapter on lexicography has been removed and will be expanded into a post-doctoral project. Ārzū's two Persian dictionaries, *Sirāj al-luġhāt* [The Lamp of Words] and *Chirāgh-i hidāyat* [The Lamp of Guidance], will form an important component of that research, which is intended to produce a conceptual history of Mughal social thought as reflected in dictionaries from Mīr Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusain Injū's *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* [Dictionary for Jahāngīr, 1608] to Ṭek Chand Bahār's *Bahār-i 'ajam* [The Spring of Persian, c. 1740 with later revisions].

Chapter I

Ārzū's Life and Social Context

In Ānand Rām Muḵhliṣ's dictionary *Mir'āt al-iṣṭilāḥ* [The Mirror of Expressions, 1158/1745–6],

brief biographical notices appear alongside definitions of certain words and expressions. Thus,

under “*ārzū*” we find:

“*Ārzū*” has the meaning “hope” and “desire,” and also is the pen-name of Ḳhānṣāhib Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Ḳhān (God bless him), whom the author knew intimately [lit. “whom this wretch served without any blame of the hypocrisy of false friendship”] for thirty years, more than the limits of present discourse which his illustrious name advances from the pen’s tongue; the boldness of the manners of affection demands that I be satisfied with a few lines in the settlement of writing and in the plan of the example of his excellent qualities I sift [them] as decoration for these pages: “His conditions completely like a rose in color and smell / Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Ḳhān Ārzū” The specifics of his praised rank are a decoration to the folios of night and day and the ornament of the page of time. ... He is a master in the science [*ilm*] of Arabic, lexicography, and prosody, and the art [*fann*] of history, music and *hindī*. ...¹

¹ The flowery rhetoric does not lend itself to easy translation so only a sample has been provided here. The full Persian text reads: “*ārzū ba-ma’ni ummīd wa tamannā ast wa nīz taḵhalluṣ-i ḳhānṣāhib sirāj al-dīn ‘alī ḳhān (sallamahu al-rahman) ast kih faqīr rā az sī sāl ba-ḳhidmat-i īshān munazzah az riyyā iḳhlāṣī ast fuzūn-tar az ḥadd-i bayān-i aknūn kih nām-i nāmī īshān ba-zabān-i qalam guzashtah bā-īn ādāb-i muḥabbat-i iqtizā-yi ān mī-kunad kih saṭṭrī cand dar īn-maqām taḥrīr sāzam wa taswīd-i anmūzajī az kamālāt-ash b-ārāyish-i īn ṣafḥah parwīz-am: aḥwāl chūn gul hamaḡī rang-o bū / sirāj al-dīn ‘alī ḳhān ārzū. zāt-i sitūdah ṣifāt-ash ārāyish-i aurāq-i lail-o nihār wa zeb-i ṣafḥah-yi rozgār ast. chūn qalam ba-dast mī-gīrad chaman mī-nigardah wa har gāh ba-ḳhwāndan ash‘ār siḥr āṣār tawajjuh mī farmāyad ba-rang-i ḡhuncāh-hā-yi nasīm wa [?] mī āradah chih saṭṭr-i ḳhaṭṭ-i shikastah-ash bā-‘ishq pichan chaman bar zulf ḥarf mī-zanad wa miṣra‘-i ḡhazal rangīn-ash shaḳḥ-i gul rā sabq-i rangīnī ba-yād mī-dahad. agar ba-awarand arī rujū‘ ba-dīwān-i siḥr bayān-ash kun tā az ma‘ānī-yi rangīn dar har bait chamanī tamāshā-numā‘ī wa dar har kūchah-yi bāḡḥ miṣra‘ az mazāmīn-i nāzūk az ma‘shūqān-i anjumanī sair farmānī az ānjā kih ṣāhib fiṭrat ḳhudādād ast. dar ‘ilm-i ‘arabī wa luḡhat wa ‘arūz wa fann-i tārikḥ wa mūsīqī wa hindī nīz ustād ast. maṣrūf bā-īn āshnā bahā ast wa ‘āshiq-i suḥbat az īn-hā. ‘aib-ash īn ast kih yak shahr āshnā ast. wa ba-rang-i bahār ba’d sālī jalwah ārā. ya‘nī kamtar mī pardāzad bā-aḥwāl-i mushtāqān mahjūrah magar gāh gāh ba-gūshah abrū-yi labān hilāl-i ‘īd ānham azū w-az ḥaqq-i ta‘ālā salāmat-ash dārad binābar iṣbāt wa da‘wā kih dārad ḡhazalī az fikr-hā-yi ḳhānṣāhib ḳhwud ba-qalam mī ārad ḡhazal: [seven couplets omitted]” (transcribed from the British Library’s manuscript, *Mir’āt* 1850: ff. 20a-21a). On the text, see Rieu 1879-83: 997. An often faulty but nonetheless useful English translation of the whole work is Mukhlis 1993.*

Obviously a great deal of this metaphorical language is lost on us, both as a matter of interpretation and aesthetic taste, but nonetheless Muḵhliṣ's deep respect for Ārzū comes through clearly. He notes that he has been Ārzū's close friend for thirty years, and lists a number of Ārzū's special qualities, namely knowledge of Arabic, lexicography, prosody, history, music and *hindī*. The range is impressive, and suggests that the set of skills that are brought to bear on poetic composition and criticism is larger than we might expect. History and *hindī* may seem like outliers, but, as we see in the following chapters, they were valued by Ārzū and his circle as philological tools. Muḵhliṣ's account is filled with complex imagery of a lush garden, an extended tribute to Ārzū's talent as a poet and claim that his talent has received divine sanction. (Although Muḵhliṣ was a Hindu, the rhetoric here is entirely Islamic as is typical for Indo-Persian texts written by Hindus.) Muḵhliṣ's remarks are a good place to start in assessing Ārzū.

Since no work in English—and to the present researcher's knowledge none in Persian—gives a complete account of Ārzū's life and social context, this chapter aims to fill in some of those basic biographical and prosopographic details.² Ārzū's career has been widely recognized as important, but he has often been invoked as a symbol rather than as an object of actual

² In Urdu, however, Professor Rehana Khatoon's *Aḥwāl-o aṣār-e ḵhān-e ārzū* [The Life and Works of Ḵhān-e Ārzū] provides a useful overview of the available source materials (Khatoon 1987). An account of Ārzū's teachers, contemporaries and students is Khatoon 2004b. The editor's introduction to Khatoon's *Muṣmīr* is the fullest account in English (Khatoon 1991). A recent substantive entry on Ārzū in *Encyclopædia Iranica* was kindly provided by its author as this chapter was in preparation (Keshavmurthy 2012). An Iranian scholar who has worked extensively on Ārzū, Mahdi Rahimpour, has observed that no comprehensive account of Ārzū's life exists in Persian (Rahimpour 2008b).

study. He has, for example, been taken as the father of Urdu literature without clearly defining what his engagement with the vernacular was (as we see in Chapter Four). Even in present-day scholarship, the very existence of his philological project is deployed somewhat uncritically as evidence of Indian scholarly achievement which was supposedly erased by Europeans as they stole Indians' ideas (it is a considerably more nuanced story than that, as we see in Chapter Two). While nineteenth-century scholars of Persian still engaged with Ārzū and he was highly respected by some—Henry Blochmann, for example, calls him “best commentator whom India has produced” (1868: 25)—there is a sense in which his achievements have always been bracketed off as particularly Indian rather than relevant to Persian as a whole. He was after all an Indo-Persian scholar, not an Iranian, and by this time national identity had begun to matter a great deal. By the twentieth century, the scholars in Iran who tried to modernize the study of Persian literature had completely ignored Ārzū.³ Take the example of ‘Alī-Akbar Dihkḥudā (1879–1956), the lexicographer and literary critic whose *Luḡhāt-nāmah* is the Persian equivalent of a comprehensive lexicographical project like the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Without explicitly acknowledging it, the work relies heavily on dictionaries compiled in India—because lexicography was far more developed there than in pre-modern Iran—and yet in a biographical notice on Ārzū, Dihkḥudā makes four mistakes in succession: He misspells Ārzū's name, falsely

³ The key exception is Muhammad Reza Shafī'i Kadkani (b. 1939), who read Ārzū carefully and often sympathetically (Rahimpoor 2008a: 335).

claims Ārzū was an Iranian resident in India, incorrectly cites the title of one of his works, and misattributes a famous work written by another Indian to Ārzū.⁴ Thus, arguably the greatest Persian scholar of the twentieth century could not be bothered to correctly report the basic facts about one of the most influential Persian scholars of the eighteenth century. Although it does not excuse Dihḡhodā's sloppiness, part of the difficulty for modern historiography is Ārzū's historical placement: For an important and well-connected figure, there is surprisingly little source material available. Although there was an explosion of *taẓkirah*-writing towards the end of Ārzū's life, continuing in the decades after his death, besides these *taẓkirahs* (which often repeat the same general information or by contrast disagree even on basic facts) there are virtually no other sources available for a biographical study. The critical works by Ārzū and his contemporaries that form the bulk of the texts dealt with in the present research project provide little in the way of biography. Still, while we may be envious of Europeanist colleagues

⁴ Qtd Shamisa 2002: 21. The misattributed work is Wārastah's *Muṣṭalaḡāt al-shu'arā* [Idioms of the Poets], which is described in detail in our discussion of Wārastah on p. 65. Dihḡhodā's four mistakes described above appear under the headword "ārzū." There is, however, a separate entry for "ḡhān-i ārzū" where Dihḡhodā notes simply that Ārzū is an Indian poet whose poems are often cited in the dictionary of "Ānand Rāj." He of course means *Mir'āt al-iṣṭilāḡ* by Ānand Rām Muḡhliṣ. The level of neglect is dismaying on its own, but the formulation implies a sinister conclusion: Ārzū's work has no value except to provide examples for a dictionary written by a Hindu (and is therefore suspect as a work of Persian scholarship).

who have the extant archival sources to produce a thick history of an individual,⁵ it is not as though Ārzū is a historical cypher.

Here we first consider his life in its three phases, namely his early years, the long and productive middle period spent at Delhi, and his brief stay in Lucknow before dying there. Secondly, we reconstruct his circle of friends and his enemies. Lastly, in order to trace the range of his scholarly and literary interests we consider the categories of works he produced.

Life Sketch

Early Life and Family

The basic facts about Ārzū's early life are somewhat unclear, because even reputable sources have conflicting accounts. He was born either in Gwalior (in modern-day Madhya Pradesh) or in Akbarābād (today's Agra), a hundred and twenty kilometers to the north in Uttar Pradesh. In any case, he had family ties to both places. The date of his birth was almost certainly 1099/1687–8 but 1101/1689–90 has also been widely accepted. Ārzū's account of himself, his own entry in his *tazkirah Majma' al-nafā'is* [Collection of Subtleties, 1164/1750-1], does not mention either the date or place of his birth (MN 2005: 21ff). In *Safinah-yi kḥwushgo* [Kḥwushgo's Notebook], Ārzū's close friend and disciple Bindrāban Dās Kḥwushgo refers to

⁵ In the Indian context, Quentin Skinner's method of trying to understand how a text would be received by contemporaries would be useful. The difficulty is that such an approach requires specific knowledge about individuals' circumstances that will almost always be lacking for pre-colonial India (Ganeri 2011: 64-5).

1099 AH, and provides Ārzū's father's chronogram for the occasion of his son's birth, namely "nuzul-i ḡhaib" [a gift from the unseen world], whose letters add up to 1099. Indeed, Ārzū's entry in *Safinah-yi kḥwushgo* includes a long quotation from Ārzū himself describing his life so it is the most reliable source available.⁶ Kḥwushgo does not specify Ārzū's place of birth but mentions that Ārzū's father came with Aurangzeb's army to Gwalior, so Ārzū was either born there or spent his early childhood there. When his full name is cited including the traditional toponymic surname, he is called "Gwāliyārī" [from Gwalior] or "Akbarābādī" [from Agra] as well as more rarely "Dihlawī" and "Shāhjahanābādī" [from Delhi].

Ārzū had an impeccable mystical and poetic lineage through both of his parents.⁷ On his mother's side, he claimed descent from the twelfth-century Iranian mystic poet Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār through Muḥammad Ḡhauṣ of Gwalior (d. 1653). Muḥammad Ḡhauṣ was a politically-connected, musically-inclined Shaṭṭārī Sufi. He is known to history as a translator of Yogic texts, the teacher of Tānsen (the most famous musician of Akbar's court), and as an ally of the first Mughal emperor, Bābur, when Bābur conquered Gwalior.⁸ Ārzū's father was descended

⁶ See *Safinah-yi kḥwushgo* 1959: 312ff. Kḥwushgo's text was first completed in 1147/1734–5, was corrected by Ārzū after 1155/1742–3, but was revised up to 1162/1748–9 (ibid: editor's preface). The modern scholar Mahdi Rahimpour argues conclusively for 1099 as Ārzū's birthyear (2008a: 241).

⁷ Compare, for example, *ʿIqd-i šurayya* (1978: 28) and *Tazkirah-i riyāz al-ʿarīfīn* (1977: 8). *Muntaḡhāb al-ashʿār* [A Selection of Verses], compiled in 1748 and available as Bodleian ms. Elliott 247, has very short entries but still mentions his native place as Gwalior and his descent from Muḥammad Ḡhauṣ, suggesting that these facts were important to the compiler (f. 28; Sachau and Ethé 1889: 239ff).

⁸ Ernst 1996; Nizami 2002

from the Chishtī Sufi saint Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd (d. 757/1356), known as “Chirāgh-i Dihlī” [The Lamp of Delhi]. One *taẓkirah* writer begins his entry on Ārzū with the words “*nasab-i sharīf*” [of noble lineage] and nearly all of them mention something to that effect.⁹ Given how frequently such lineages are referenced, they clearly mattered a great deal in literary high society. Ārzū’s father, Shaikh Ḥusām al-Dīn with the *taḳhalluṣ* Ḥusāmī, was a soldier-poet in the Mughal mold, and much of what we know about him comes from Ārzū’s own *taẓkirah* (MN 2005: 73). He was elevated as a *manṣabdār* under Aurangzeb for his service, and was well-acquainted with the nobles [*umarā’-i ‘umda*]. He did not frequently read his poetry in front of people, Ārzū says, because such is “contrary to the path of soldiering” [*khilāf-i tariqah-yi sipāhigari*]. Although he was not formally educated in political philosophy, he was a confidant of two important officials, Fāzil Ḳhān the Mīr Munshī and Mīr Muḥammad Amīn. The best known of his works is *Ḥusn-o ‘ishq* [Beauty and Love], a translation of the Awadhi romance *Madhumālātī*.¹⁰

Ārzū’s early education was undertaken by his father. Ḳhwushgo reports that before the age of five or six Ārzū had read Sa’dī’s *Bostān* [The Garden, 1257 CE], *Gulistān* [The Rose

⁹ *Ḳhulāṣat al-afkār* [Essence of Thoughts], a *taẓkirah* begun in 1206/1791–2, Bodleian ms. Elliott 181 (f. 31a; Sachau and Ethé 1889: 302ff).

¹⁰ Behl 2012: 335. Behl corrects the misunderstanding that this text was a translation of *Padmāwat* and notes that there is an illustrated manuscript in the private collection of the late Simon Digby. A manuscript in Berlin (described as “*Padmāwat*”) was composed in 1071/1660–1 and dedicated to Aurangzeb (Pertsch 1888: 929–30). Ārzū writes that his father composed a *qīṣṣah* on the well-known—and frequently retold—story of Kāmrūp and Kāmlatā, but “did not find leisure” (presumably to complete it). Strangely, Ḳhwushgo claims that Ārzū wrote a *maṣnawī* called *Ḥusn-o ‘ishq* so perhaps these were conflated even though they are supposedly on different subjects (see fn. 81 below).

Garden, 1258 CE], and *Pandnāmah* [Book of Counsel], and that he studied Arabic until age fourteen (*Safīnah* 313). His father helped him memorize “a hundred or two hundred couplets” by modern [*mutaʿaḥḥirīn*] poets, and at fourteen Ārzū developed an interest in writing Persian poetry. Ḳhwushgo provides the detail, within the quotation from Ārzū’s statement, that Ārzū first wrote poetry while visiting Mathura. The historical significance of this fact is not obvious, so perhaps it is mentioned by way of glorifying Ḳhwushgo’s own home-town, which he compliments hyperbolically as “ground that awakens Judgment Day and a tumult-exciting place” [*ḳhāk-i qiyāmat-ḳhez wa sar-zamīn-i shor-angez*] (ibid). Indeed, it could be a way for Ārzū to demonstrate his connection to vernacular poetics, since Mathura is a center of Krishna-worship and *hindī* poetry. In any case, the mention of Mathura shows that Ārzū’s childhood was peripatetic, since he would have spent time in three places: Agra, Gwalior, and Mathura. One of Ārzū’s childhood teachers was Mīr Ġhulām ʿAlī Aḥsanī, about whom we know nothing except that he was active in Gwalior and corrected Ārzū’s verses.¹¹ Another was Mīr ʿAbd al-Ṣamad Suḳhan, who in his early days was in Gwalior before working for nobles in Agra and Lahore (MN 2005: 94). Ārzū knew him briefly in Gwalior (*Safīnah* 1959: 213). When Ārzū was a budding poet of fifteen or sixteen, Suḳhan corrected his work, and even fifty years later Ārzū had kept scraps of paper with Suḳhan’s corrections on them (MN

¹¹ MN 2005: 49. Not even Ārzū had access to his *dīwān*, so he was quite a marginal figure.

2005: 94). Suḵhan was eventually posted to Gujarat, where he died in Ahmedabad, but at some point his calligraphy had become famous in Delhi.

Upon his father's death in 1115/1703, Ārzū joined the entourage of Prince Aʿẓam Shāh, who happened to be an important literary patron in Persian and *hindī*. When the imperial army marched to the Deccan, with a contingent including the prince's forces, Ārzū was part of the campaign for nine months. The aged emperor Aurangzeb died shortly thereafter on 3 March 1707, and the inevitable succession struggle commenced. Aʿẓam Shāh declared himself emperor immediately after his father's death in Ahmadnagar (present-day Maharashtra). Though his claim was made in the imperial encampment, it lasted a mere four months. His brother Prince Muʿazzam (who took the regnal name Bahādur Shāh, r. 19 June 1707 – 27 February 1712) killed him on the battlefield that June.¹² Ārzū himself had already returned to Gwalior because his mother had asked him to come home. After the bloody resolution of the princes' competing claims to the throne, Ārzū had relocated to Agra and then back to Gwalior. He resettled in Agra during the brief reign of Jahāndār Shāh (r. February 1712–February 1713). He spent some five years there as a religious student and participant in the poetic scene.¹³

¹² See Richards 1996: 253, cf. Chandra 2002: 55

¹³ He studied religious science under Maulānā ʿImād al-Dīn, known as Darwīsh Muḥammad, and had his verses corrected by Shāh Gulshan (d. 1140/1727), Mirzā Ḥātim Beg Ḥātim (note that this is not Shāh Ḥātim of Delhi),

Delhi

Ārzū visited Delhi before settling there. He tells us that he first came in the beginning of the reign of Farruḡhsīyar (1712–9) in search of work. He then went to Agra and entered the service of Mirzā Jahān in Gwalior. He returned to Delhi shortly after Muḥammad Shāh became emperor (that is, after September 1719),¹⁴ and remained there, he tells us, for thirty years (at the time of writing *Majmaʿ al-naḡāʾ* is in 1751–2). Around this time he must have met Ānand Rām Muḡhliṣ, who introduced him to his future patron Ishāq Ḳhān and facilitated his entrée into the circles in which he participated for more than three decades. He also came to know the great poet Mirzā ʿAbd al-Qādir Bedil and his circle before Bedil’s death in 1720. While he lived in Delhi, he witnessed the invasion of Nādir Shāh and the general massacre of the city’s inhabitants by his troops in March 1739, two events that are often thought of as heralding the end of Mughal power. Surprisingly, given how pivotal and traumatic later historians have considered this event, his references to this period are matter-of-fact as are those of Muḡhliṣ,

ʿAzmatallah Kāmil, Muḥammad Muqīm Āzād, the great Naqshbandī Sufi Nāṣir ʿAlī of Sirhind (d. 1108/1696), and others. Interestingly while both Ḳhwushgo and Ārzū’s accounts mention Darwīsh Muḥammad, only Ḳhwushgo lists the poets with whom Ārzū was associated in Agra. If Nāṣir ʿAlī’s death date is correct then he obviously could not have corrected Ārzū’s verses in the 1710s.

¹⁴ Āzād of Bilgram concurs, giving 1132/1719–20 as the date (*Sarw-i āzād* 1913: 228). The year 1719 was a tumultuous one for imperial politics. Farruḡhsīyar was just in his sixth regnal year, but the Sayyid brothers, who had helped him take his throne in the first place in 1712, decided to betray him. He was blinded in January and strangled towards the end of April. They put his young nephew Rafīʿ al-Darajāt on the throne but he promptly died and was succeeded by his brother Rafīʿ al-Daulah (who reigned for about four months as Shāh Jahān II). Muḥammad Shāh took the throne and built a coalition to break the power of the Sayyid brothers. (The classic account of these events is Irvine 1922.)

who seems at various points in *Mirʿāt al-iṣṭilāh* to be delighted by the ethnographic possibilities offered by the presence of so many Iranians and Central Asians in the city.¹⁵

Final Years in Lucknow

The best contemporary sources on Ārzū's life are *Safīnah-yi khwushgo* and Ārzū's own *Majma' al-nafā'is*, both of which were completed in Delhi before Ārzū settled in Lucknow. The lack of good sources combined with the brief period of just over a year means that there is little we can say about this final period of his life.¹⁶ *Khulāṣat al-afkār* [The Pith of Thoughts] suggests that he left Delhi because of the “desolation” [*kharābī*] of the city, but if this is in reference to the plunder of the city by the Afghan ruler Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī then those battles would not be fought until after Ārzū's death.¹⁷ Even if the author is referring to some general desolation of the city then it is surprising that the first mention of this as a motivation for Ārzū comes several decades later. Whatever the situation at Delhi, Ārzū no doubt moved to be closer to his new patron,

¹⁵ The present researcher has not been able to read Muḥliṣ's *tazkirah* (the title is used not in the literary sense but as a “remembrance”) of the invasion, but later historical accounts (Irvine 1922, Lockhart 1938, and Islam 1970: 149ff) do not deal with the societal aftermath with any rigor. It is odd, for example, that the four districts ceded to Nādir Shāh (Gujarat, Siyalkot, Pasrur [near Siyalkot], and Aurangabad) were a decade later again ceded to Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī when he invaded (Islam 1970: 152). Modern notions of sovereignty would not allow provinces to be fungible in this way. Perhaps because of such (for us unexpected) flexibility, the trauma of these invasions was not expressed in society to the degree that we might expect it to have been.

¹⁶ The main source is Āzād of Bilgram's *tazkirah Khazānah-yi ʿāmīrah* [Royal Treasurehouse, 1164/1762–3] Bodleian ms. Ouseley Add. 6 p. 206

¹⁷ *Khulāṣat al-afkār* by Abū Ṭālib (Bodleian ms. Elliott 181 f. 31a). The work was begun in 1206/1791–2 and completed sometime before 1210/1795–6 (Sachau and Ethé 1889: 302ff).

Nawab Shuja‘ al-Daulah.¹⁸ His nephew Mīr cruelly refers to this as “chas[ing] in the desert of greed” (trans Naim 1999: 76). All the sources that mention it agree on the date of Ārzū’s death, 23 Rabī‘ II 1169/26 January 1756, and most state that his body was taken to Delhi for burial (for example, *Ḳhazānah-yi ‘āmīrah*), but we are not told by whom or why such trouble was taken.

Friends, Patrons and Rivals

Given the arc of Ārzū’s career sketched above, it is unsurprising that he was tied into multiple literary and political networks. He was personally linked with the literary communities of Delhi, Agra, and Gwalior, both in Persian and in vernacular circles,¹⁹ and his friends and disciples represented a remarkable cross-section of the elite. Like the political class itself, his interlocutors included people from all over India, Central Asia and Iran. Two of Ārzū’s closest friends and fellow intellectuals were Hindus.²⁰ Many of Ārzū’s eventual colleagues and students were first brought together as disciples of the Sufi poet Mirzā ‘Abd al-Qādir Bedil, whose death shortly after Ārzū’s arrival in Delhi led to a new arrangement in which Ārzū (perhaps in part because of his own Sufi credentials) became teacher to many of them. Tracing the diverse

¹⁸ Some recent scholars have speculated that instead of going to Lucknow, Ārzū settled in Faizabad (130 km to the east). Faizabad and not Lucknow was the first capital of Awadh, but there is no evidence to suggest that the *tazkirah*-writers are wrong to refer to Ārzū’s stay in Lucknow (Khatoon 1987: 36).

¹⁹ People whose connection to Ārzū is only relevant for our purposes because of Urdu (whatever Persian they wrote) will be dealt with in Chapter Four. The list includes Ābrū, Mazhar, Mazmūn, Mīr, Mīr Dard, Saudā, and Yakrang.

²⁰ Many Hindus were written out of the history of Indo-Persian. For example, Mīr Ḥusain Dost of Sambhal’s *Tazkirah-yi ḥusainī* (1875) does not contain any of the Hindus mentioned in this chapter (except Chandar Bhān Brahman).

group of people with whom he interacted is important as background for our discussions of contemporary literary debates in the following chapters because disputes are often both personal and philosophical.

The source material available to us for reconstructing literary life is almost exclusively in the form of *tazkirahs*, a category of evidence that has both advantages and disadvantages for the historian. The chief drawback is that literary *tazkirahs* are not historically-minded documents and so have little interest in hard facts like dates and places.²¹ Indeed, they are concerned with transmitting good poetry to posterity, often citing the number of couplets mentioned rather than number of people included. Soft historical facts often fare no better: The language is frequently stereotypical, with flowery variations on “he was a great poet” rather than real critical content. But if *tazkirahs* are not historical documents, then what are they? They are literary representations of social networks and the memory thereof.²² Here we encounter their chief advantage. When used correctly, namely by tuning our interpretation to the rhetoric of representing a community of poets, they can tell us a great deal. Ārzū’s *Majma‘ al-nafā’is* is a guide to the people whom Ārzū respected as his teachers and students or as poets

²¹ However, they gradually become more historical. The watershed moment, the compilation of Āzād’s *Āb-e ḥayāt* (1880), is discussed in the Introduction.

²² An idea developed in Hermansen and Lawrence 2000 (and applied in, for example, Kia 2011). It should be noted, however, that especially in Urdu *tazkirahs* compilers are sometimes concerned more with particular conceits, such as (in one extreme example) including only verses that mention parts of the body, than with representing an actually existing network of poets (Pritchett 1994: 66).

in general, and those whom he would rather have held at arm's length. Muḫliṣ and Bahār, both intellectuals in Ārzū's mold and both Hindus, were Ārzū closest friends and we consider them first. Then we can address the influence of Bedil, who was teacher to all of them, and then look at the more peripheral figures that Ārzū mentions. We consider his patrons separately. Finally we consider his enemies, and through them the complexity and stakes of eighteenth-century Indo-Persian literary debate.

Ānand Rām Muḫliṣ (d. 1164/1750–1)

We began the present chapter with Muḫliṣ's lexicographical affirmation of his friendship with Ārzū. Muḫliṣ had been Bedil's student, but after Bedil's death and Ārzū's settling in Delhi, he became Ārzū's student and arranged for Ārzū to receive the trappings of nobility—namely an estate [*jāgīr*], a rank [*manṣab*], and a title [*khīṭāb*] of “*khān*”—required to move in the empire's highest circles.²³ Muḫliṣ could accomplish this because was one of the most important political functionaries in Delhi: He was *wakīl*, which is to say the personal representative at court, both of the imperial *wazīr*, Qamar al-Dīn Ḳhān (known as I‘timād al-Daulah), and of ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Ḳhān (known as Saif al-Daulah), governor of Lahore and Multan.²⁴ He had received the title “Rajah of Rajahs” [*rā‘ī-yi rāyān*] for his service. Despite the fact that Muḫliṣ's skills clearly commanded the

²³ Ḳhṡushgo reports that Ārzū's title was “Isti‘dād Ḳhān” (*Safinah* 1959: 312), but none of the other texts under discussion here mentions it.

²⁴ A good account of Ḳhṡushgo's life (in Urdu) is ‘Abdullah 1967: 122ff. On Qamar al-Dīn Ḳhān and ‘Abdul Ṣamad Ḳhān, see Beveridge and Prashad 1979: II, 488–90 and I, 71–3.

respect of those around him, later scholars have been wary of accepting their verdict. Sayyid Abdullah, a twentieth-century Pakistani scholar, feels the need to say that Muḫliṣ could not have had pure [*theṭh*] Persian because he was Indian [*hindūstānī*] and worse than that a Hindu. It is hardly surprising that Abdullah relies both on the idea of the ultimate authority of the native speaker and of course on the narrative of Indian culture decline, but as this dissertation argues at length, these are later projections onto the historical record.²⁵ Contemporary accounts configure Muḫliṣ's relationship with Persian differently: He was entrusted with composing a letter to the Safavid king to commemorate the ascension of Muḥammad Shāh—hardly a task for someone with imperfect Persian.²⁶ Furthermore, 'Alī Qulī Ḳhān Wālih Dāghistānī, writing in 1169/1748, calls him the most highly fluent in Persian of any Hindu of his time (*Riyāz al-shu'arā* 2005: vol 4, 2209).

Muḫliṣ was at the center of literary life in the capital. He was a favorite disciple [*shāgird*] of Bedil, and hosted literary soirées for Bedil and his students at home.²⁷ He owned a remarkable library because his wealth allowed him to have any book which he came across

²⁵ 'Abdullah 1967: 125. A recently published monograph on Muḫliṣ (James 2011) is somewhat of a disappointment because it likewise cannot conceive of its subject except as a brilliant imitator, a Hindu aping the Persians very well but nonetheless still an epigone.

²⁶ Though as with much of the ceremonial correspondence at this level, whether it was sent or not is an open question. It is contained in *Manṣūrāt-i ānand rām* [Ānand Rām's Prose], an unpublished miscellany of Muḫliṣ's writings (ff. 56b-67a, Khuda Bakhsh ms. HL 882; see Khuda Bakhsh Library 1970: vol 9, 109).

²⁷ Ārzū mentions that disciples of Bedil met at Payām's house (MN 2005: 64). Muḫliṣ corresponded with him, as demonstrated by the two letters addressed to him preserved in *Manṣūrāt-i ānand rām*.

copied (Jalibi 1984: vol 2, pt 1, 164). He borrowed books from Ārzū.²⁸ His social circle was broad, as we learn from the circumstances of the composition of *Hangāmah-yi ‘ishq* [The Tumult of Love, 1739].²⁹ According to the preface, Ārzū, Muḥammad Qulī Ḳhān (whose identity is unclear), Ma‘nīyāb Ḳhān Shā‘ir (d. 1157/1744), Rāo Kirpā Rām, Rā‘ī Faṭḥ Singh, and “other friends” accompany the author to the fair of a Sufi saint (f. 137a). Afterwards, he cannot sleep and so a servant narrates part of *Padmāwat*, which he decides to turn into Persian prose for “people interested in this art [of Persian composition]” [*ahl-i ẓauq-i īn fann*] (f. 137b). We pick up the argument in Chapter Four that it is no accident that stories moved back and forth between *hindī* and Persian in the company of such elites.

Six letters sent by Muḥliṣ to Ārzū are the only specimens of anyone’s correspondence with Ārzū that have been preserved, as far as the present author has been able to ascertain.³⁰ They appear in *Manṣūrāt-i ānand rām* [Ānand Rām’s Prose], an unpublished miscellany of Muḥliṣ’s writings, which includes a set of letters gathered in 1149/1736. Unfortunately for historians, the criteria for inclusion in such a collection have little to do with possible historical value but rather with rhetorical force: Such letters were meant to serve as models of

²⁸ Such as the *dīwān* of the seventeenth-century poet Sālik of Qazwin (*Mir’āt* 169, headword “*rāstihā wa rāstī īnkih wa rāstī ān ast*”).

²⁹ Collected in *Manṣūrāt-i ānand rām* (see note 26 above). A second translation from *hindī* into Persian in the same collection is *Kārnāmah-yi ‘ishq* [Book of Love, 1731]. The latest work included in the ms. is dated 1746.

³⁰ A few letters ascribed to Ārzū are to be found in a *majmū‘ah* [miscellany] in the Collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, but the present researcher was not able to access the ms. (no. 420, Ivanow 1985: 184).

elegant writing (and indeed as a delivery vehicle for poetry), and not necessarily as a historical record. The letters pertain to the period when Muḫhliṣ was in the Deccan on campaign with Iʿtimād al-Daulah in 1147/1736–7 fighting the Maratha Bājī Rāo.³¹ Muḫhliṣ expresses his longing for Ārzū’s company, sends some poetry, and explains the itinerary. A decade later, when Muḫhliṣ is again traveling, he records in his *Safarnāmah* [Travelogue], which covers events in 1745, that he met Ārzū on the road (Alam and Subrahmanyam 1996: 145).

Muḫhliṣ’s *Mirʾāt al-iṣṭilāḥ* differs from most other pre-colonial Persian lexicons in that it focuses on general vocabulary—often bureaucratic terminology and flora and fauna—rather than poetic usage, and its entries are frequently more encyclopedic than straightforward definitions.³² For example, he might praise someone in an entry (such as Ārzū, Āṣaf Jāh, or Qizilbāsh Ḳhān Ummīd) or include a tangentially-related anecdote, joke or saying. The text is crowded with everyday details unavailable in other works: The entry on coffee [*qahwah*] complains of high prices in the two Chandi Chowk coffeehouses, and we know what sorts of flowers grow in Shahjahanabad from the entry on “*gul-i jaʿfarī*” [a kind of yellow flower] (457). There is a strong sense of the author’s desire to know about objects and social

³¹ The letters are ff. 3a-5a, 5a-6a, 6a-9a, 14a-15a, 19b-20b, and 25a-27a. The third letter is dated 25 Shawwāl of Muḥammad Shāh’s seventeenth regnal year (=9 March 1736) and the fifth is headed with a notice that it dates from the campaign against Bājī Rao.

³² The text has just been published in an edition prepared by Chander Shekhar, Hamidreza Ghelichkani, Houman Yousefdehi (New Delhi, 2013), but references here are to the British Library’s manuscript since the new edition was unavailable at the time of writing.

practices that exceeds the proto-anthropological tendencies of other lexicographers.

Unconstrained by the need to provide evidence on the basis of poetic quotations, Muḫhliṣ is himself often the authority on the meaning of a word or phrase. Interestingly, he also calls upon various informants who had traveled outside of India and even takes the opportunity of Nādir Shāh's invasion to learn about Iranian chancellery practices firsthand.³³ He frequently draws comparisons between Iranian and Indian usages in Persian but does not give Iran primacy and instead merely provides a sketch of how terms are used in other parts of the Persian cosmopolis. *Mir'āt* is undoubtedly a text intended for an Indian readership since it frequently quotes *hindī* equivalents of Persian terms and expressions, including *hindī* adages [*amṣāl*]. Arguably the most delightful is that “laddus [sweets] are not distributed during war” (the equivalent Persian saying has “halva” as the sweet in question).³⁴ Though Muḫhliṣ was Ārzū's close friend, he sometimes cites Ārzū's rival Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥazīn, for example, on the fact that “*mahtāb*” appears in works of ancients in the meaning “moon”

³³ Some examples from the text: “*Dūd-i mash'alī*” means lamp-black (but here is described as a deep blue color like the *nāfarmān* flower) and the information was provided by Ṣāfīdar Muḥammad Ḳhān, who had acted as an envoy to the Safavid court during Muḥammad Shāh's reign (260). “*Ṣa'lab farush*” refers to a seller of a kind of hot sugar-syrup beverage. Hājī Naẓīr, who recently returned from Iran, explained the drink and noted that he had had it himself in Mashhad but only in the winter months (171). “*Farmān bi'l-mushāqqah*” refers to an oral order of the king that does not require the chancellery's seal and the evidence for this usage is provided by documents from Nādir Shāh's chancery (409). Likewise “*mīrzā-yi daftar*” (a clerk in the imperial establishment) was a term that Muḫhliṣ heard repeatedly from people around Nādir Shāh (490-1). The invasion also brought new material things to Muḫhliṣ's attention, such as “*chūb-dast*” (a kind of stick) seen in Delhi when Nādir Shāh's soldiers came (198-9).

³⁴ The Persian expression “*dar jang ḥalwā baḫsh nimikunand*” is rendered into *hindī* (in sumptuous calligraphy in the British Library's copy) as “*laṭā'ī mem ko'ī laḍḍū nahīm baṭte*” (265). It appears among several hundred sayings.

(477). Clearly there were limits to personal animosity. Significantly, Ārzū received the text after Muḫliṣ's death and added marginal notes and a preface. The work is of particular interest for us because of its possible relationship with one of Ārzū's works, namely *Nawādir al-alfāz* [Wonders among Words, c.1752], discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Ārzū's *Nawādir* is a dictionary of Indic terms whose use of anecdotes and personal knowledge to establish authority in definitions is far more like *Mir'āt*'s than that of Ārzū's previous Persian dictionaries, which use literary quotations to establish authority in the traditional way. It is possible that Muḫliṣ's project influenced Ārzū's.

Ṭek Chand Bahār

The closeness of Ārzū's friendship with Bahār is clear from the repeated references in Ārzū's commentary on Sa'dī's *Gulistān* to Bahār's being "among humble Ārzū's friends" [*az yārān-i faqīr-i ārzū ast*].³⁵ No else gets this sort of treatment in that text. Bahār himself says in the preface to his dictionary *Bahār-i 'ajam* that Ārzū had been his close friend for twenty years. He was likely Ārzū's exact contemporary, but it is odd how little we know about his life (ʿAbdullah 1967: 162ff). There is no reference for him in Ārzū's *Majma' al-nafā'is* and other slightly later *tazkirahs* have sketchy entries.³⁶ For example, Mīr Ḥasan tells us only that he knew Persian idioms well [*az iṣṭilāḥāt-i fārsī*

³⁵ *KhG* 1996: 22, 33, 89, 111

³⁶ His name does not appear in the published editions of *MN* or (as far as the present researcher was able to ascertain) in the table of contents of the Bodleian ms. (Elliott 399).

*bisyār khabar dāsh*t], was Ārzū's friend and was a prolific writer (qtd ibid). The idea that he was a prolific writer is difficult to substantiate because the only work of his with staying power was his dictionary, titled *Bahār-i 'ajam* [The Spring of Persian], which is admittedly itself enormous.³⁷

Later scholars, following Blochmann, have been confused about the date of that text. The preface has a clear chronogram for 1152 (=1739–40), but Blochmann claims that the first edition was not completed until 1752 and the final (seventh) revision was completed by Bahār in 1782.³⁸ The preface also clearly states that Bahār was fifty-three years old at the time of completion of the work, meaning (if our dating of the work is correct) that he was born in the late 1780s and thus exactly the same age as Ārzū. (By extension if they had been friends for twenty years in 1740 then that means they met around the time when Ārzū settled in Delhi.) But that throws Blochmann's assertion that Bahār revised the text himself in 1782 into question because he would have been approximately ninety-five years old then.

³⁷ Blochmann describes the four of his works that were lithographed in the nineteenth century (including two that Bahār mentions in his own preface, namely *Jawāhir al-ḥurūf* and *Nawādir al-maṣādir*, and another called *Ibtāl-i zurūrat*) and notes that only *Bahār-i 'ajam*, which he rightly calls "one of the grandest dictionaries ever written by one man," was readily available (Blochmann 1868: 28–30). It has most recently been published in an edition prepared by Kazim Dizfuliyan (*Bahār-i 'ajam* 2001). Bahār was also a *reḡhtah* poet according to Mīr (*Nikāt* 1979: 164) and Shafīq (*Chamanistān-i shu'arā* 1928: 44–8).

³⁸ The Bodleian catalogue (Sachau and Ethé 1889: 1018) incorrectly calculates the chronogram as 1162 by reading "*bā dah sāl*" [with ten years (more), i.e. 1152 + 10] for "*māddah-yi sāl*" [derivation of the year] following the Bodleian Catalogue (Rieu 1879–83: 502), which repeats the mistakes of Sprenger's *Oudh Catalogue*. Sprenger, for example, refers to Bahār's use of a treatise by Ānand Rām Muḡhliṣ but in fact it is by Muḡhliṣ Kāshī (that is, Mirzā Muḡammad Muḡhliṣ of Kashan) and not by Ānand Rām. The argument for the date of the final edition (1782), furthermore, comes from assuming an incorrectly late date of composition for Wārastah's *Muṣṭalahāt al-shu'arā* (see note 78 below).

Bahār-i ‘ajam’s sources are worth discussing. They demonstrate an encyclopedic grasp of the tradition, as in Ārzū’s own lexicographical projects, but also a surprising willingness to use texts written by people who did not get along with one another philosophically or personally. The Bodleian manuscript provides a list of works from which the dictionary is derived: It mentions well over two hundred poetic collections, dictionaries, and commentaries. Ārzū’s own works in the list include a *dīwān* of *ghazals*, his *Sikandarnāmah* and *Gulistān* commentaries, the dictionary *Sirāj al-lughāt*, and “several treatises” [*ba‘ḏ rasā’il*] besides.³⁹ Indeed, Bahār highlights in the preface that Ārzū receives the special honor of being referred to as “*Sirāj al-Muḥaqqiqīn*” [Lamp of the Researchers] throughout the book. Bahār expresses his deep devotion to Ārzū and uses works by Ārzū’s friend Sābit, and yet also acknowledges his great debt to Wārastah’s *Muṣṭalahāt al-shu‘arā* [Idioms of the Poets], and refers to Ārzū’s archnemeses Shaiḫ Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥazīn in highly complimentary terms, namely as “*ḥazrat-i shaiḫ al-‘ārifīn*” [the exalted *shaiḫ* of the wise] (*Bahār-i ‘ajam* 2001: vol 1, xxix-xxxi). Bahār is clearly a partisan of Ārzū, and yet as we saw with Muḫliṣ, has no qualms about relying upon the works of Ārzū’s enemies like Wārastah and Ḥazīn (whose particular enmity towards Ārzū is described below).

³⁹ Ms. Caps. Or. B 15, f. 2b (on this ms. see Sachau and Ethé 1889: 1018) .

Mirzā ‘Abd al-Qādir Bedil

Bedil (1054–1133/1644–1720) was arguably the most important Persian poet of his time. His remarkable career brought him from Patna, where he grew up in a family with Central Asian roots, to other parts of India, and eventually to Delhi in 1096/1685.⁴⁰ He produced dozens of students and set a standard for Persian literature: Friend or foe, every Indo-Persian writer who came after felt the need to engage with his style. He counted among his students great religious figures and some of the most powerful nobles of the empire.⁴¹ For example, Shaiḫ Sa‘dallah Gulshan (d. 1141/1728–9) was an important Naqshbandī Sufi, whom Bedil taught and respected as being especially divinely inspired in his poetry (MN 2005: 112). Another student of his was Niẓām al-Mulk Āṣaf Jāh, whose power eventually became so great that he was able to carve out Hyderabad for himself and his descendants as an autonomous province of the Empire.⁴² Like Ārzū, Bedil had been part of the establishment of Prince A‘ẓam Shāh, although

⁴⁰ Ārzū notes that Naṣirābādī’s *tazkirah* is incorrect in connecting him with Lahore and that he lived in Delhi for “about thirty years” (MN 2005: 55). Abdul Ghani cites a chronogram for 1075/1664 as the year Bedil left Patna but it is unclear how long he stayed in other places (including Mathura) before settling in Delhi for the first time (Abdul Ghani 1960: 30–1). He settled there permanently in 1096/1685 (ibid 61). Modern biographical literature on Bedil is surprisingly sparse: There does not appear to have been any scholarly monograph in English on Bedil since Abdul Ghani’s. The standard intellectual biography in Urdu is Hadi 1982. Hajnalka Kovacs’s forthcoming dissertation from the University of Chicago might be of some help.

⁴¹ A comprehensive list appears in Abdul Ghani 1960: 82ff.

⁴² *Safinah* 1959: 114. However, as Munis Faruqi has argued, Niẓām al-Mulk’s power came from weakness: His main motivation for gaining political independence in the Deccan was because he had been so marginalized at the imperial court (Faruqi 2009).

much earlier than Ārzū (Siddiqi 1989). Furthermore, *tazkirah* writers imply that he was a major proponent of bringing Hindus into Sufi poetic circles (Pellò forthcoming).

Ārzū became closely linked to Bedil. He was Bedil's student twice, first during the time he stayed briefly in Delhi at the beginning of Farrukhsiyar's reign and again when he settled there permanently.⁴³ Not long after his arrival the second time, Bedil died; his death cast a very long shadow. Ārzū took up the training of many of Bedil's students, as is clear from *Majma' al-nafā'is*. He also had a special role in Bedil's 'urs [death anniversary], a major annual event in the Persianate Sufi circles of Delhi.⁴⁴ Bedil's poetic establishment was part courtly aesthetics—indeed Kḥwushgo rhetorically frames it as a royal court—and part Sufi *khānaqāh*. Kḥwushgo gives the most intimate account of Bedil, including his dining habits. He would apparently eat two and a half or three *ser* [approx. 3 kg] of food at a sitting (*Safīnah* 1959: 109).

Obviously we must pause to consider Bedil's controversial stylistic influence. He is the *bête noire* of Iranian critics of the twentieth century, and is held up as the exemplar of the excesses of the so-called “Indian Style” (e.g. Morrison et al. 1981: 152). Recent critical literature

⁴³ The phrase in *MN* is ambiguous, lit. “Humble Ārzū [was] in the service of this great man twice” [*faqīr-i ārzū do bār bah kḥidmat-i īn buzurgwar*], which could in fact be interpreted to mean that he met Bedil in person on only two occasions. That meaning is unlikely but still the time-frame in question is undefined.

⁴⁴ *Muraqqa'* 1993: 81. It took place each year on the fourth of the month of Ṣafar. Kḥwushgo is perhaps implying that Ārzū took up Bedil's mantle by using virtually the same honorific formula in his entries for each of them, namely “*qiblah* and *ka'bah* of significations” [*qiblah-o ka'bah-yi ma'ānī*] and “*qiblah* of the word and *ka'bah* of significations” [*qiblah-yi lafẓ wa ka'bah-yi ma'ānī*] respectively (*Safīnah* 1959: 312, 104).

often implies that he started out as a good poet in the classical mold and then something went terribly wrong.⁴⁵ Without a doubt, Bedil's poetry is complicated and not to everyone's taste, but we cannot assume that his difficulty was the result of a failure of understanding of proper Persian and not an aesthetic choice.⁴⁶ Gardezī, writing in the nineteenth century, calls him "master of his own style" [*ṣāhib-i tarz-i khwud*], which was generally thought to be the highest form of poetic achievement. (Ārzū uses a similar phrase.) Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has argued that "it can be said that most of the criticism of the Indian Style poets' use of Persian emanates from Bēdil's (dis)reputation as an undisciplined writer."⁴⁷ While he was undoubtedly influential, he is not the tradition-destroying monster that later Iranians made him out to be. Plenty of other poets before and after him used complicated metaphorical language. Indeed,

⁴⁵ E.g. Siddiqi 1989. Even Abdul Ghani, who admires Bedil's style, could not resist putting decline at the center of his analysis: In his telling, Bedil's poetic genius was not properly recognized because of the cultural rot that supposedly set in after Aurangzeb's death (Abdul Ghani 1960: vii-viii).

⁴⁶ Indeed, the most biting comment on Bedil is probably a later fabrication: Ḥazīn supposedly said, "The prose of Bedil is unintelligible. If I manage to go back to Iran, there is no better way to make my friends laugh" [*naṣr-i bedil ba-fahm namī āyad, agar murāja'at bah īrān dast dahad barā'ī rīshkhand-i bazm-i aḥbāb rah āwardī bahtar azīn nīst*] (qtd Abdul Ghani 1960: 259). The difficulty is that Abdul Ghani provides Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād's *Nagāristān-i fārs* [Persian Picturebook] as the source for Ḥazīn's now quite famous insult, and in this work Āzād—who expresses his contempt for Bedil's style—has a tendency to make up or at least misattribute quotations. The present author has not been able to trace it to an earlier work.

⁴⁷ Faruqi 2004b: 59, cf. 24. It was a contemporary objection as well: Faruqi points to Āzād of Bilgram's stylistic objections in his *taẓkirah Khazanah-yi 'amīrah* (about which see note 16 above) but notes that Āzād concedes that Bedil did have the right to experiment, citing Ārzū. A full discussion of that passage appears in Chapter Three. In order for us to understand the waning fortunes of Bedil's oeuvre, we must consider the nineteenth-century Indo-Persian poet Mirzā Ghālib's supposed turn away from what one scholar has called Bedil's "baleful influence" (Kirmani 1972: 26-9). A lack of space precludes us from considering it in detail here, but needless to say that although critics latched onto the idea that Ghālib's rhetorical condemnation of Bedil put him on the right side of history (moving towards simple, "natural" verse), his poetry actually remained as complex and Bedilian as it had always been.

after the Islamic Revolution he gained some popularity in Iran because his mystical incomprehensibility made his work seem apolitical.⁴⁸

We can compare Bedil to other roughly contemporary poets, who were nodes in their own networks of teachers and students: Another poet with such influence, albeit in the generation before Bedil, was Mirzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Ṣā’ib (d. 1080/1669), who had come to India in Shāh Jahān’s reign but returned to his native Isfahan, where he died. His students Riẓwān and Sābiq, and acquaintance Fiṭrat are mentioned in *Majma‘ al-nafā’is*. Likewise ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḳhān Tanhā, who was controversial in his time (which was the latter part of Aurangzeb’s reign), had students (e.g., Ma‘jiz and Nišar) and continued the tradition of his own teacher Mirzā Jalāl Asīr of Isfahan (d. 1049/1639). *Majma‘ al-nafā’is* is emphatic in saying that Mirzā Afẓal Sarḵhwush (d. 1127/1715) was not a student of Bedil’s. Sarḵhwush had his own establishment of students and was in that sense a rival to Bedil (Pellò forthcoming).

Other Poets

Majma‘ al-nafā’is is an index of other people Ārzū respected, including many who do not appear frequently in other *tazkirahs*, but with whom Ārzū claims a personal relationship. It includes

⁴⁸ In a special issue on Bedil of *Qand-i pārsī*, the journal published by Office of the Cultural Counsellor of the Iranian embassy in Delhi, there is an interview with a modern Iranian poet who argues (in a post-modern way) that Bedil means whatever you get out of him (Isfandagheh 2007-8). The exchange is titled “Bedil has not yet been brought into the *madrasah*.” The foreword to the 1951 edition of Sarḵhwush’s *Kalimāt al-shu‘arā* does not even consider Bedil one of the three “great poets” of his time (it lists Sarḵhwush, Nāṣir ‘Alī, and Ġhanī), which would have been suspect in his own time.

people from diverse parts of India and a number of Hindus, especially Punjabis in high positions in Delhi. If the point of *tazkirahs* is not history but often community building then Ārzū has assembled the most geographically and confessionally diverse group possible and strove to keep ties with nobles who moved around India. *Majmaʿ al-nafāʿ* aims to be a comprehensive account of the Persian tradition, with some 1,800 poets represented in the most complete manuscripts, but clearly the stakes are different in the entries on Ārzū's contemporaries and near contemporaries.

In these entries, Ārzū situates himself relative to other poets, constructing for the reader a map of his close friends, friends with an epistolary relationship, students, teachers, and (carefully keeping the conventions of politesse intact) his rivals and enemies. Ārzū had an epistolary relationship with Mīr Ġhulām ʿAlī Āzād Bilgrāmī (d. 1200/1785). Āzād was educated by his uncle, the noted Islamic scholar Sayyid ʿAbd al-Jalīl Bilgrāmī, and Ārzū was keen to know him in part because of his family's Islamic credentials. Āzād settled in Aurangabad, and Ārzū refers to his relationship with Āzād as “friendship in absentia” [*ikhhlāṣ-i ḡhāyibānah*]. Ārzū sent him a message to get to know him (later for his own *tazkirah*, Āzād likewise asks Ārzū for an account of himself).⁴⁹ He replied with two *ghazals* in Persian and

⁴⁹ The text is oddly repetitious here and almost certainly corrupted because it reads “I sent [him] a Hindu boy” [*hindūʾi jawānī firistādah*] (MN 2005: 42). The Islamabad edition gives “*jawābī*” for “*jawānī*,” allowing us to read “a reply in *hindawī*,” which makes a great deal more sense (MN 2004: 164).

(highly unusually for an Indian poet) with a *qaṣīdah* in Arabic. Their relationship is important for our purposes because it gives some sense of Ārzū's readership: Āzād is familiar with *Majma' al-nafā'is* and *Dād-i suḵhan*.⁵⁰ Likewise he had an epistolary relationship with Shāh Faqīrallah Āfarīn and similarly with Sharaf al-Dīn Payām.⁵¹ (Muḵhlīṣ also corresponded with both of them, as we know from letters preserved in *Manṣūrāt-i ānand rām*.) Another of Ārzū's acquaintances was Mīr Ḥaydar Tajrīd, a soldier who came from Surat to Delhi, spent time with Ārzū, and eventually left for a posting in Bengal (MN 2005: 68). Ġhulām Nabī Nasīm has a similar biography: He was originally from Amroha (modern Uttar Pradesh), lived in Delhi before settling in Khudabad (then the capital of Sindh). Although Nasīm missed his friends in Hindustan (presumably Delhi), Ārzū reports, he was content in Sindh.⁵² He knew Ārzū for a little over thirty years. Mirzā Afzal Sarḵhwush (d. 1127/1715) made an impression on Ārzū although they knew each other only briefly when Ārzū lived in Delhi the first time during the reign of Farruḵsiyar (ibid. 91). He mentions being a young poet and reciting for Sarḵhwush, who recognized his talent (according to Ārzū), by declaring "I have never seen the thought of any youth reach this level" [*tā ḥāl fikr-i hīch naujawān bah īn pāyah na-dīdah-am*]. Ārzū corroborates the story by twice invoking Sarḵhwush's sense of "justice" (that is,

⁵⁰ They are mentioned in the entry on Bedil in *Khazānah-yi 'amīrah*.

⁵¹ See Kia 2011: 229-30.

⁵² "*az āshnāyān wa ḵhwīshān-i hindūstān dil-ash giriftah walī hīch na-ranjīdah*" (MN 2005: 122).

his good poetic judgment) and noting that his poetry goes to Iran. Ārzū follows his anecdote by mentioning Sarḵhwush's teachers (Muḥammad 'Alī Māhir and later Mīr Mu'izz al-Dīn Fiṭrat) as well as the fact that he was "contemporary and stylistically similar" [*mu'aṣir wa hamṭarah*] to Bedil. Ārzū praises Sarḵhwush's *taẓkirah Kalimāt al-shu'arā* [Words of the Poets], which was itself a project of establishing Sarḵhwush's own poetic lineage. Clearly Ārzū is trying to establish himself as being tied into two major poetic networks in Delhi, that of Bedil and of Sarḵhwush.⁵³ There are many other poets with whom Ārzū claims a relationship. Those actively involved in the literary debates in Delhi will be discussed further in the context of Ḥazīn below: They include Qizilbāsh Ḳhān Ummīd, who defended Ārzū, Ṣābit and his son Ṣabāt, and Rāsakh (who were defended by Ārzū), and Girāmī (whose interaction with Ḥazīn Ārzū recounts). Now we turn to the non-Muslims whom Ārzū knew.

Ārzū's circle included a large number of Hindus, including some who converted to Islam. Besides Bahār and Muḵhlīṣ, the most important was Bindrāban Dās Ḳhwushgo. He was a student of Ārzū's (for 25 years) and also connected to Bedil, Sarḵhwush, and Gulshan. There does not appear to be any extant collection of his poetry, but his *Safīnah-yi Ḳhwushgo*, discussed above, provides important information about Delhi's poetic scene.⁵⁴ Ārzū wrote a preface for it and

⁵³ He also notes having met Muḥammad Ḥusain Nājī of Shiraz in the company of Sarḵhwush (ibid. 120-1, cf. *Safīnah* 1959: 317).

⁵⁴ The work provides little information about its author, who probably died not long after Ārzū. He probably finished it in 1147/1734-5, gave it to Ārzū in 1155/1742-3, and made some changes up until 1162/1748-9 (Rahman

edited it, which then as now implies some degree of endorsement. By the time Ārzū was compiling *Majmaʿ al-nafāʾis* (which highly praises the *Safīnah*), Ḳhwushgo had retired from imperial service and had become an ascetic wandering about Allahabad, Patna, and Banaras. Another Hindu interlocutor of Ārzū's was Gurbakḥsh Ḥuẓūrī. He was a Kanbo from Multan who had known Ārzū continuously for perhaps the longest of anyone mentioned in *Majmaʿ al-nafāʾis*, namely forty years (*MN* 2005: 76-7). His work was prolific and in the style of Ġhanī of Kashmir (d. 1069/1668). Jay Kishan ʿIshrat was a young Kashmiri Brahmin who had been Ārzū's friend for fifteen years. Like Ārzū, he was in Mūʾtaman al-Daulah's service before joining the service of his son Najm al-Daulah after the father's demise (*ibid* 106). Ārzū reckons his *maṣnawī Rām-o sītā* [Rām and Sītā], a telling of part of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story, superior to the well-known mid-sixteenth century *maṣnawī* of the same title by Shaiḫ Saʿdallah Masīḥā of Panipat. The apex of his bureaucratic career was his appointment as *dīwān* [chief revenue officer] of all of Kashmir, a plum posting in his native land. Another Kashmiri Hindu connection is with Sālīm, who was a protégé of Ġhanī and was thought to be a Kashmiri Brahmin who converted to Islam (*Safīnah* 1959: 38). Ārzū mentions that as a child he had studied Sālīm's *dīwān* (*MN* 2005: 89-90). Iḳhlāṣ Ḳhān Wāmiq was a Khattri from Kalanaur (Punjab) who converted to Islam—Ārzū's account of

1959). It has three parts: The first discusses 362 ancient poets, the second 545 (or 811 in the Khuda Bakhsh ms.) middle-period poets from Jāmī (1414–1492), and the third—published as *Safīnah* 1959—deals with 245 modern poets (Sprenger 1854: 131). It is obviously the third section that is of most interest to us. In a separate work, Ḳhwushgo apparently recorded the sayings [*maḳfūẓāt*] of Bedil, but this text is no longer extant.

his conversion is extremely complimentary.⁵⁵ Ārzū had met him as a child in the company of his father. While he was a good prose writer, with a personal style [*tarz*] in prose, he was never properly a poet. One young friend of Ārzū's was Bāl Mukund Shuhūd, a Kayasth whose ancestors worked as administrators in Bengal and Bihar (Ārzū notes here that Kayasths were frequently Lords of the Pen [*arbāb-i qalam*] or administrator-secretaries). He wrote Ārzū a cordial letter two years before moving to Delhi, which is evidence that Ārzū was in demand as a mentor in the capital. Indeed, Ārzū gave him his *taḫhalluṣ*, which is the usual prerogative of a teacher (ibid 96).

A few of Ārzū's family members appear in his *taẓkirah*, besides his father Ḥusāmī. The Persian and *reḳhtah* poet Mīr, whose life we properly consider in Chapter Four, was famously Ārzū's estranged nephew. Shaikh Ḥafīẓallah Āšim (d. circa 1742) was Ārzū's maternal cousin who had also been in the service of Prince A'ẓam Shāh and later became a member of the Emperor's household troops [*wālāshāhi*] because of his connections (MN 2005: 47). Ārzū tells us nothing specific about him except that he was a good poet and died in Agra.⁵⁶ Another poet, 'Āqil Ḳhān Rāzī, was a distant relation of Ārzū's through his mother's connection to Muḥammad Ġhauṣ, which Rāzī also claimed (ibid 84).

⁵⁵ MN 2005: 127. He began his career in Aurangzeb's reign, and in Farruḳhsīyar's received the rank of 7000 and wrote a history of that emperor's reign. He is mentioned in the *Ruq'āt-i 'ālamgīrī* [Epistles of Aurangzeb] in a letter instructing the paymaster to make a record of his having been promoted (*Ruq'āt-i 'ālamgīrī* 1908: 159). My thanks to Prof. Muzaffar Alam for this reference.

⁵⁶ The poetic quotation included in MN is described as being about what Āšim witnessed during battle, but it does not appear in the printed editions.

Patrons

After Ārzū settled in Delhi, he received patronage from two of the most important noble families in the Mughal Empire. The first was that of Ishāq Ḳhān and his descendants. They were Mughal administrators of recent Persian origin, and were connected by marriage to Shujāʿ al-Daulah, the Nawab of Awadh, who was Ārzū's patron towards the end of his life.

Ishāq Ḳhān, known as Mū'taman al-Daulah, was Ārzū's first noble patron in Delhi. His father Ġhulām ʿAlī Ḳhān had come from Shustar⁵⁷ and risen to the position of imperial *bakāwal* [superintendent of the kitchen]. Ishāq Ḳhān was born in Delhi and himself rose to a position of trust in the imperial establishment, namely as Muḥammad Shāh's *Ḳhān-sāmān* [house steward or chief of staff]. This was the position he held for twenty-two years until his death in 1152/1740–1. In an account of his having interrupted a meeting between Muḥammad Shāh and Nādir Shāh—the latter upholding the pretense that Muḥammad Shāh was his “guest” even though he had just routed the Mughal army at Karnal—Ishāq Ḳhān is described as Muḥammad Shāh's *aṭāliq* or childhood protector/tutor. Nādir Shāh was pleased with Ishāq Ḳhān's answers to his questions, and pronounced him worthy of being Wazir of India. According to Ārzū, he had a poetic temperament, writing under the pen-name Ishāq.⁵⁸ He receives considerable

⁵⁷ In Khuzestan Province of southwestern Iran, adjacent to the Persian Gulf and Arabic-speaking lands.

⁵⁸ The brief account of him in *Ma'aṣir al-umarā* unusually cites a couplet of his (trans. Beveridge and Prashad 1979: vol 1, 690).

(albeit expected) adulation in Ārzū's *Majmā' al-nafā'is*, including that he is "as worthy of praise" [*māyah-yi iftiḵhār*] as the poets Ṣā'ib and Jalāl Asīr. Ārzū writes that he was in his service for "just over twenty years," which means that he must have entered Ishāq Ḳhān's employ around the same time as he relocated to Delhi the second time.⁵⁹

After Ishāq Ḳhān's demise, Ārzū received patronage from the late nobleman's sons and maintained his associations with the most important people in the empire. The eldest son, Mirzā Muḥammad (later called Najm al-Daulah), was Ārzū's patron for a decade until he died on the battlefield in 1162/1750. His brother Mirzā Muḥammad 'Alī Sālār Jang took Ārzū to Lucknow and introduced him to the Nawab, Shujā' al-Daulah, who was also his brother-in-law.⁶⁰ Shujā' al-Daulah was the son of Ṣafdar Jang, who had emigrated from Khurasan to India. Soon afterwards Sālār Jang became imperial *baḳhshī* [paymaster] under the new emperor Shāh 'Ālam.⁶¹ In Lucknow, Ārzū began receiving a Rs 300 per month stipend from Shujā' al-Daulah. The arrangement was cut short, however, because Ārzū died just over a year later.

⁵⁹ These biographical details are from *Ma'āṣir al-umarā* 1891: iii, 774-6, trans. as Beveridge and Prashad 1979: 690-1. On the meeting with Nādir Shāh, see Irvine 1922: ii, 354. On his poetry, see MN 2005: 47-8. Ṣā'ib of Tabriz (d. 1086/1676) and Jalāl Asīr (d. 1049/1639) were both influential poets of the recent past. They both made reference to the "freshness" [*shīwah-yi tāzah*, etc] in their style (see Chapter Three).

⁶⁰ *Ḳhulāṣat al-afḳār* f. 31a.

⁶¹ On the importance of the position of *baḳhshī* see Richards 1996: 63-4.

Rivals and Enemies

Considering Ārzū's conflicts with other litterateurs is an important way both to demonstrate the vibrancy of the intellectual scene, and also to trace the influence of conflict on Ārzū's own development as a scholar. The literary battles waged in Delhi were a tremendous inspiration for Ārzū, and he turned from relatively neutral critical projects dealing with the classics (such as his commentary on Sa'dī's *Gulistān*) to more polemical works. He was compelled to face the question of poetic authority, framed as differences between Ancient and Modern poets. We consider the substance of these debates in Chapter Three, but here we can give account of the *dramatis personae*.

To set the scene, let us observe that major poets were constantly generating corrections of other poets' work, and this practice often developed from informal critiques into well-defined factions or lineages. There were those like Zāhid 'Alī Ḳhān Saḵhā, whom Ārzū first praises in *Majma' al-nafā'is* but then cites verses for the purpose of suggesting corrections.⁶² This is obviously a play for poetic power and not the friendly advice it would have been had Saḵhā been Ārzū's own student. Then there are rival networks: For example, 'Abd al-Laṭīf Ḳhān Tanhā was a linchpin of one such poetic lineage. Ārzū implies that he did not know Tanhā personally, but many of his close friends met Ārzū [*baẓī az yārān-i maḵḥūṣ-i ū bā faqīr mulāqāt*

⁶² He was an Iranian who came to India during the unrest in Afghanistan. Ārzū had met him twice (MN 2005: 92). Ḥazīn's *taẓkirah* mentions him and notes that his father had stayed with Ḥazīn (*Taẓkirah-yi ḥazīn* 1955: 95).

nimūdah], and they reported that he was melancholy and a heavy drinker. Some accused him of being abstruse in his poetry—a characteristic of the work of his own teacher Mirzā Jalāl Asīr of Isfahan (d. 1049/1639)—and Ārzū does not mount a defense, damning him with silence. He merely mentions that he has two important students in India. They are so devoted to his style [*tarz*] that they think of it, according to Ārzū, as “the primary tradition” [*silsilat al-awwalīn*] (MN 2005: 56). One of them was the Afghan Muḥammad Niẓām Muʿjiz (d. 1162/1748–9) and the other was Mirzā Luṭfallah Niṣār, who was of Iranian ancestry. Ārzū knew Muʿjiz personally and found his style problematic, but is more positively disposed towards Niṣār. A more serious network of rivals was centered around Muḥammad ʿAlī Ḥazīn, who had arrived in India in 1734. Ḥazīn’s sometime traveling companion, ʿAlī Qulī Ḳhān Wālih (d. 1169/1756), known as Wālih Dāghistānī (that is, of Dagestan in the Caucasus) although he was born in Isfahan, was deeply shaped by Ḥazīn although he had disclaimed his friendship with him by the time he had finished the *taẓkirah Riyāz al-shuʿarā* [The Garden of Poets, 1161/1748].⁶³ While by then not associated with Ḥazīn, he was no friend to Ārzū (although his *taẓkirah* entry on Ārzū is complimentary). He was associated with Faqīr and Wafā (who was probably by extension also an enemy). Another among Ḥazīn’s students was Mullā Bāqir Shahīd.⁶⁴

⁶³ This is a significant work because it was the first transregional *taẓkirah* in over a century (Kia 2011: 218). With over two thousand entries, it is on the scale of Ārzū’s own MN which would follow in a few years’ time.

⁶⁴ On Faqīr see Kia 2011: 228; on Shahīd see *Taẓkirah-yi mardum-i dīdah* 1961: 167.

The most famous rivalry was between Ārzū and Ḥazīn personally. Ḥazīn's circumstances are important for understanding both his social position as a poet and his demeanor. He had seen the Safavid establishment of which he was a member (and from whence he drew his wealth and prestige) utterly destroyed by Nādir Shāh.⁶⁵ He arrived in Delhi a deeply frustrated man, having been chased around Iran, an exile in his own native land. He writes in his memoirs that he was urged by an English official to go to Europe instead of India, but chose to continue on to India.⁶⁶ When he arrived in Sindh he hoped he would not be recognized. He traveled through Sindh and Punjab before arriving in Delhi, where he stayed a little over a year before returning to Lahore. In 1738, with Nadir Shāh's troops massing in Peshawar, Ḥazīn fled with a troop of hired bodyguards via Sirhind to Delhi where, unfortunately for him, Nādir Shāh's troops headed next. In Delhi, he witnessed the fall of the city and the general massacre of its inhabitants. He wrote his memoirs there in 1742, feeling unwell and generally melancholy over the destruction of the Safavid dynasty and the life he had known. He presided over lavish poetic gatherings in Delhi, according to Dargāh Qulī Ḳhān, but eventually retired to Benares where, according to Ḥākim, who met him twice there, he lived simply and wore a Sufi

⁶⁵ See Kia 2009.

⁶⁶ Ḥazīn's own account of the journey (*Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* 1830: 251ff; analysis at Kia 2011: 186ff). It is fascinating that Āftāb Rāy's *Riyāz al-ʿarifīn* [Garden of the Wise, 1883], whose bias is explained below, makes Ḥazīn's arrival in India sound accidental since it does not mention that he was basically driven out from his home (*Taẓkirah-i riyāz al-ʿarifīn* 1977: vol 1, 188-9).

robe.⁶⁷ Why was Ḥazīn accorded the respect he received from so many people in India? Ārzū, who is obviously not a neutral party, gives us little notion in *Majma' al-nafā'is*. Three possibilities are Ḥazīn's spiritual authority (he is related to Shaiḫ 'Alī Waḥdat of Lahijan, for example) albeit in a Shia way that would not have appealed to Ārzū, his connections with the erstwhile Safavid court, and his poetic lineage. The idea that he was popular in Delhi because he was an Iranian, and Indo-Persianists were desperate for an Iranian to sort out their Persian, falls well short of a satisfactory explanation.

How were the literary debates in Delhi of this period remembered? Āftāb Rāy, who wrote in the late nineteenth century and thus believed that Indo-Persian is by definition inferior to Iranian Persian, declares that: "Although he [Ārzū] knocked at Ḥazīn's door, he was completely beyond the pale. Terrible envy is a calamity that makes a man blind."⁶⁸ This is a statement of opinion more than fact from well over a century after the events, but it is nonetheless historically instructive. For Āftāb Rāy, no Indian Persianist could stand up to a well-regarded Iranian. Mana Kia has argued, reasonably, that Ḥazīn diluted Ārzū's prestige and that this was the reason behind his hostility (2011: 208ff). However, Ārzū's own case against Ḥazīn rested on real stylistic disagreements: Preferring the style of the Ancients, Ḥazīn denigrated recent

⁶⁷ *Muraqqa'-i dihlī* 1993: 80; *Tazkirah-yi mardum-i dīdah* 1961: 66

⁶⁸ "har chand dar bāb-i shaiḫ laḥijī kih nuwā-hā bar āwardah ammā yaksar khārij az āhang ast. ḥasad-i bad balā'ī ast kih ādam rā kūr mī kunad" (*Tazkirah-i riyāz al-'ārifīn* 1977: 8).

developments in poetry, and positioned himself as able to adjudicate the difference in quality, while Ārzū supported contemporary poetic innovation as an extension of rather than a departure from the tradition, and basically accused Ḥazīn of inconsistency and capriciousness in his aesthetic judgments. The effects of this disagreement rippled out in Delhi's literary community. Qizilbāsh Ḳhān Ummīd defended Ārzū when, according to Ārzū's telling, he received a barrage of criticism after releasing *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* (MN 2005: 45). Ḥākīm, who had himself been on the receiving end of Ārzū's sharp criticisms, merely writes that some of Ārzū's criticisms in *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* are unfair.⁶⁹ (Still he quotes *Majma' al-nafā'is*'s rather back-biting entry on Ḥazīn nearly in full.) Here we will simply consider the personal enmity between Ārzū and Ḥazīn so that we can reconstruct their substantive disagreements in Chapter Three. In *Majma' al-nafā'is*, Ārzū offers no assessment of Ḥazīn's poetry, which is one of the most vicious things that the genteel standards of *taẓkirah*-writing allow one to do.⁷⁰ Instead he concentrates on summarizing Ḥazīn's flight from Nadir Shāh. He practically rants that Ḥazīn is an ungrateful guest in India after being welcomed (and provided for from the imperial treasury) and that his purpose in writing a particular treatise was to denigrate everyone there, "from the beggar to the king" [*goyā 'illat-i ghā'ī-yi niwishtan-i risālah-yi maẓkūr maẓammat-i ahl-i hind wa hindū ast az gadā tā pādishāh*]. Ārzū notes that while Ḥazīn was free with his criticism of India before, with the

⁶⁹ *Taẓkirah-yi mardum-i dīdah* 1961: 66.

⁷⁰ MN 2005: 73-5. Further analysis of the numerous ways in which Ārzū slights Ḥazīn in MN is Kia 2011: 196ff.

passing of time, he has accepted that there are consequences to insulting his hosts. Ārzū is wonderfully sarcastic on this point: “Thank God that now all the crimes of India have turned into elegances!” [*ammā al-ḥamdu li’llah kih alḥāl hamah-yi qabā’ih-i hind bah ḥasanāt badal shud*]. Ārzū continues by bringing up questions of whether Ḥazīn actually wrote three *dīwāns* before the currently available one which he claims as his fourth (the others having been lost in the bloodshed). He brings up the rivalry between Mīr Muḥammad Afzal Sābit and Ḥazīn. Ḥazīn’s apparent plagiarism was called to the attention of Delhi’s poetic community by Sābit’s son Muḥammad ‘Azīm Šabāt after his death in 1151/1738–9.⁷¹ Ārzū defended both of them.⁷² The strange incident when the Kashmiri poet Girāmī came to Ḥazīn with twenty friends and left the Shaikh confused is also related by Ārzū in the entry on Girāmī (MN 2005: 110). These personal spats and how they are reported are our main source for knowledge about what Ḥazīn stood for: He apparently did not write critical works (with the exception of a brief *taẓkirah*), which makes it difficult to reconstruct his aesthetic program.⁷³ Indeed, Ārzū reproaches him with the seemingly

⁷¹ Wālih enters the fray—and demonstrates his complex relationship with his former friend—by quoting about half of the couplets to which Šabāt objected, as well as a large proportion of Ārzū’s tract against Ḥazīn, *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* (*Taẓkirah-yi riyāz al-shu‘arā* 2005: vol 1, 632ff). After devoting pages to these attacks on Ḥazīn, he nonetheless avers that Ḥazīn is among the greatest poets of his time [*dar īn juzw-i zamān sar-āmad-i suḥanwarān*]. In his entry on Ārzū (vol 1, 347) he notes that Ārzū objected to five hundred of Ḥazīn’s couplets as “disjointed” [*nā-marbūṭ*], a fundamental violation of poetic norms.

⁷² He also defends a poet called Rāsikh, although against “Indian Persianists” who objected to a technical point in one of his couplets (MN 2005: 82).

⁷³ His *taẓkirah*, *Taẓkirat al-mu‘āṣirīn* [*Taẓkirah of (my) Contemporaries*, 1165/1751], has been published as *Taẓkirat al-mu‘āṣirīn* 1996 and *Taẓkirah-yi ḥazīn* 1955. It contains just a hundred entries and provides little in the way of

irrelevant objection that no work of his about philosophy or theology [*‘ilm-i ḥikmat wa kalām*] has come to Ārzū’s notice. (The implication appears to be that Ārzū objects to taking Ḥazīn’s reputation for scholarship on trust and wants to judge for himself by reading Ḥazīn’s works whether Ḥazīn is actually up to the mark.) The aesthetic conversation between the two major figures in Delhi is therefore one-sided, which is perhaps a reason for later scholars to have seen these debates more as personality clashes rather than substantive disagreements. There is no treatise in which Ḥazīn lays out a case against Ārzū, and so we must reconstruct his objections. In contrast, Ārzū develops the case against Ḥazīn across several works, which we consider in Chapter Three along with the replies of Ḥazīn’s proxies.

Someone who can be seen as such a proxy is Siyālkoṭī Mal Wārastah (d. 1180/1762). He lived in Lahore and Delhi, but the circumstances of his life are somewhat of a mystery because he does not appear in many *taẓkirahs*.⁷⁴ Wārastah wrote at least one work critical of Ārzū. It is titled *Jawāb-i shāfi* [The Categorical Answer], and is unusually specific about the circumstances of its composition: Wārastah wrote it after a visit in 1163/1750 from Ḥakīm

literary criticism. The poets included are all Iranians and mostly from Isfahan, in stark contrast to the inclusive project of Ārzū’s *MN* released the same year, which contains over 1,500 entries on poets from around the Persian cosmopolis.

⁷⁴ The fullest account of his life is ‘Abdullah 1967: 139-62, which draws on *Gul-i ra‘nā* and other sources. Pellò notes that in his *Taẓkirah-yi bīnāzīr* [The Unique *Taẓkirah*] ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Iftikḥār (d. 1190/1776) defends his own *ustād* Āzād of Bilgram against Wārastah’s criticism by arguing that Hindus should not “imitate Muslims and get involved in the Islamic sciences” (Pellò forthcoming). This line of criticism is surprisingly rare, as far as the present researcher can tell.

Beg Ḳhān, known poetically as Ḥākim, who now lived in Delhi but was originally a fellow Lahori. Ḥākim brought a copy of his *dīwān*, whose margins were filled with Ārzū's criticisms. In defense of his friend, Wārastah tried to answer Ārzū's objections by writing *Jawāb-i shāfi*.⁷⁵ Wārastah perhaps wrote a second work called *Rajm al-shayāṭīn* [Stoning of the Devils], which is frequently cited as a response to Ārzū's *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*. There was a work known by that name extant in the early nineteenth century, but it is nowhere to be found in manuscript catalogues and has never been published.⁷⁶ Sayyid 'Abdullah has concluded that *Rajm al-shayāṭīn* is the same text as *Jawāb-i shāfi* (1967: 145), and Cyrus Shamisa concurs but is concerned by the fact that the phrase "stoning the devils" does not appear in any manuscript of *Jawāb-i shāfi* (Shamisa 2001: 30). The identification of *Rajm al-shayāṭīn* as a text written against Ārzū's *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* is the strongest evidence that Wārastah was a partisan of Shaiḵ Ḥazīn—'Abdullah makes precisely that claim with *Rajm al-shayāṭīn* adduced as evidence but then four pages later observes that the text does not in fact exist!

⁷⁵ Browne 1896: 234. Based on the incipit, this is the same text consulted by the present researcher at the Amiruddaulah Public Library in Lucknow. There it was catalogued as *Jawābāt-i i'tirāzāt-i ārzū* [Replies to the Criticisms of Ārzū] and is incorrectly attributed to Ḥākim himself (Muradabadi 2000: 8). The date for copying given by the catalogue, 1107 AH, appears to be a misprint for 1207 AH (=1792 CE).

⁷⁶ It is mentioned, for example, in an obscure *tazkirah* by Qāzī Muḥammad Sādiq Aḳhtar called *Āftāb-i 'ālamtāb* [The World-Inflaming Sun, 1269/1853]. The *tazkirah* is massive, describing some four thousand poets, but the only copy is to be found in a single private collection. Although Aḳhtar appears to endorse an idea that is crucial in Ārzū's work, namely that Indians can be as talented in literary Persian as Iranians, he sides with Wārastah in the particular context of Ḥazīn versus Ārzū. He calls *Rajm al-shayāṭīn* "extremely good" [*bisyār ḳhūb*] and states explicitly that it is a response to Ārzū's *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* (Qasmi 2008: 355-8).

Since *Jawāb-i shāfi* is a defense of Ḥākim (and not Ḥazīn) against Ārzū, the case that Wārastah was a vocal defender of Ḥazīn against Ārzū becomes more circumstantial.⁷⁷

It is beyond doubt, however, that Wārastah had a pro-Iranian orientation since Iranian informants are the key to his lexicographical project, *Muṣṭalaḥāt al-shu‘arā* [Idioms of the Poets].⁷⁸ In the preface, Wārastah describes his research technique: Whenever he could not understand a word or expression in his study of Persian poetry and could not find a satisfactory dictionary definition, he would “appeal to the idiom-knowers of the land of Iran” [*rujū‘ bah muḥāwarah-dān-i īrān diyār*] (*Muṣṭalaḥāt* 2001: 37). In other words, he would ask a native speaker. This is certainly different from Ārzū’s textually-based approach, but it is not a matter of natural language—Wārastah’s object is literary language, specifically, he says, that of the “*tāzah-go’iyān*” (*ibid.*). Blochmann argues that the preface proves he lived in Iran for the fifteen years he says he was engaged in research, but this conclusion ignores the fact that there were many Iranians in India whom he could have asked (1868: 30). His project is considerably different from Muḥliṣ’s research since when it came to gathering data, Muḥliṣ

⁷⁷ Three other works by him, though not relevant to the present discussion, are worth mentioning: They are an anthology of couplets arranged by keyword (Sprenger 1854: 146), a selection of ornate prose compiled by him (Rieu 1879-83: 1006-7), and a treatise on rhetoric, which has been published (*Maṭla‘ al-sa‘dain* 1880).

⁷⁸ The work states it was begun in 1149/1736 but it is unclear when it was completed. The preface refers to fifteen years of research, which is vague. Blochmann (along with a number of other sources that follow him) gives 1180/1762 as the start date on the basis of the numerical value of the title and 1782 as the date of completion (Blochmann 1868: 30). His calculations are, however, wrong since Wārastah died the year Blochmann has him starting to write the book (Shamisa 2001: 10).

interested in documentary and social practices, while Wārastah was narrowly concerned with the poetic practices of certain people. In fact, he cites the authority of Iranian speakers [*muḥāwarah-dān-i īrān*] only when a word or phrase does not appear in one of the dictionaries he had at hand—he still feels the need to provide poetic quotations for virtually every entry. This becomes problematic if we assume an unbridgeable gap between Iranian Persian and Indo-Persian. For example, he cites Ṭuḡhrā several hundred times and although Ṭuḡhrā was originally from Mashhad in Iran, his poetry is famously studded with Indic words. Indeed, Ārzū often cites him as evidence for how Indic words are used in Persian. Wārastah’s attention to Indian-born Indo-Persian poets is slight, but he does quote from Ārzū, Ḡhanī of Kashmir and Mīr Afzal Sābit. His extremely sparing use of Ārzū’s works as a source was almost certainly intentional. The text refers to Ārzū only perhaps a dozen times (in nearly 800 pages in the published edition), always as “author of *Sirāj al-luḡhāt*” [*ṣāhib-i sirāj al-luḡhāt*], and demonstrates that Wārastah was familiar with several of Ārzū’s works.⁷⁹ There are a meager five references to *Chirāgh-i hidāyat*, Ārzū’s lexicon of recent words and expressions, the most relevant of his works for Wārastah’s project, and all but one of these are in the margins of the Lucknow

⁷⁹ He cites *Sirāj-i munīr* once (*Muṣṭalahāt* 2001: 139, headword “*bā kasī dast-o baḡhal raftan*”). There is an elliptical reference apparently to *Nawādir al-alfāz* (discussed in the present study in Chapter Four), or rather a text he calls Ārzū’s “essay of research of the *hindī* language” [*risālah-yi taḥqīq-i luḡhāt-i hindī*] (ibid. 171, headword “*paṣīrah*”). It is possible that he means another work, perhaps one now lost, since the relevant headword does not appear in *NA*. There are two references to Ārzū’s commentary on Sa’dī’s *Gulistān*, *KhG* (ibid 203 and 453, headwords “*pas kār nishāndan*” and “*rozgār ast*”).

manuscript used for the critical edition (*Muṣṭalaḥāt* 2001: 42, 47, 69 [a longish quotation in the text], 132, 308). While he is definitely not Ārzū's friend, it is difficult to conclude more about his program from what we know, which is that he only used Iranian informants.

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

Works

Before considering the arguments developed over the course of Ārzū's career, we should provide a sketch of his major works, focusing particularly on his critical rather than his literary works. Along the way we can highlight the publishing history and responses to works when known. The list of critical works given in Ārzū's entry on himself in *Majma' al-nafāis* (2005: 24) in 1750–1 corresponds to nearly all of the extant works (*Muṣṣir* is missing because it had not yet been written), but all of his poetry is listed unhelpfully as a “*kulliyāt*” [complete works].⁸⁰ The list given in the preface to *‘Aṭīyah-yi kubrā* [The Great Gift] provides a fuller account of his poetic output, but contains some ambiguities and entirely leaves out Ārzū's lexicographical works. The most obvious explanation for this omission, namely that Ārzū had

⁸⁰ See also Storey 1953: 834–40.

not completed his dictionaries before writing that text, is confounded by the fact that ‘*Aṭīyah-yi kubrā* references Wārastah’s *Muṣṭalaḥāt al-shu‘arā*, which is a comparatively late text and in fact itself references Ārzū’s dictionary *Sirāj al-luḡhāt*. Textual interpolation was common, but it is a less than satisfying explanation in this case.

Ārzū’s surviving literary works are in a fragmentary state because there is no surviving *kulliyāt* in which they are all collected. Tracing his literary output is outside the scope of this study, but we know that he wrote *ghazals*, *rubā’īs* [quatrains] and *maṣnawīs* in Persian. The preface to ‘*Aṭīyah-yi kubrā* lists five *maṣnawīs*.⁸¹ Of these the only one which has been traced and published is *Shor-i ‘ishq* [The Clamor of Love] (Ansari 1940). A *maṣnawī* entitled *Mihr-o māh* [The Moon and the Sun] is not mentioned elsewhere but Ārzū is noted as the author in the colophon.⁸² The Persian *dīwāns*, which are thought to be a total of seven, some of which were later combined, are rather rare.⁸³ Whatever *rekhtah* poetry Ārzū may have written is in even

⁸¹ Kḥwushgo mentions a *maṣnawī* on the theme of Maḥmūd and Ayāz responding to Zulālī called “*Ḥusn-o ‘ishq*” [Love and Beauty], a *Sāqīnāmāh* called “*‘Ālam-i āb*” [The Drinking Bout], an untitled *maṣnawī*, another called “*Josh-o kharosh*” [Fervent and Tumult], a then-unfinished *maṣnawī* in response to Šanā’ī, 25,000 couplets, a collection of *rubā’iyat* [quatrains], *muḥhammasāt* [cinquains], *tarjī ‘-bands* [poetry based on refrains], chronograms, and correspondence called *Payām-i shauq* [Message of Desire], and other *maṣnawīs* (Safīnah 1959: 314-5). The prose works mentioned are miscellaneous prose, two essays on “*ma‘ānī-o bayān*” (obviously ‘AK and M‘U), SL, KḥG, the *Sikandarnāmāh* commentary and commentary on ‘Urfī’s *qasīdahs*. Kḥwushgo mentions that Ārzū has accomplished all of this by age 47, which means that all of these works can be safely dated before 1735.

⁸² Raza Library Rampur mss. 4327f and 4328f. Oddly the cataloguer refers to the text as *Muhr-o wafā* [Seal and Trust] even though the title is clearly written in the colophon (along with Ārzū as the author).

⁸³ Some manuscripts include Aligarh Habib Ganj 47/77 (Razvi and Qaisar 1981: 207). Two in the Asiatic Society’s Curzon collection are identical to each other and apparently with the one noted by Sprenger, which was in

greater doubt. Earlier sources, for example Shafiq (d. 1808) in his *Chamanistān-i shu‘arā* [Garden of the Poets] (1928: 6), believe there was a *reḡhtah dīwān*. By the late nineteenth century, the idea had taken hold that Ārzū never collected his vernacular work (e.g. *Āb-e ḥayāt*). However, because no vernacular *dīwān* is available we only have *taẓkirah* quotations, which in the present writer’s estimation are not at all unusual or particularly interesting.

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

Commentaries: These can be broadly divided into commentaries on the Ancients and on the Moderns. Three in the first category are a commentary on Sa‘dī’s *Gulistān* called *Ḳhiyābān-i gulistān* [Road to the *Gulistān*, 1708–9 revised 1738–9], another on Niẓāmī’s *Sikandarnāmah*, and lastly *Sirāj-i wahhaj* [The Blazing Lamp], a commentary on Ḥāfiẓ.⁸⁴ Works dealing with the

imitation of Mirzā Shafī‘ā of Shiraz (d. 1702) (no. 295 and 296; Ivanow 1926-8: 212-3, cf. Sprenger 1854: 337-8, Khuda Bakhsh Library 1970: vol 9, 220). The only serious investigation of the *dīwāns* appears to have been carried out by S.M. Asghar of Aligarh Muslim University. The present researcher has not been able to review his work but some of his conclusions appear in Keshavmurthy 2012. Ārzū’s poetry appeared in various collections [*majmū‘āt*], such one in a Berlin (Pertsch 1888: 118) and another in Salar Jung, ms. 2359 which belonged to Tīpū Sulṭān (Ashraf 1966-88: vol 6, 131-4).

⁸⁴ The *Sikandarnāmah* commentary published in the margins of the Bombay lithograph edition of the poem (1277/1860–1) but the most accessible copies seem to be in manuscript (at the Raza Library, Rampur: mss. 3965f and 3985f, National Archives of India (Fort William College no. 145) where it is given the alternative title *Shigūfah-yi rāz* [Flowering of the Secret], Hardayal Public Library, Delhi, no. 98, and Berlin, see Pertsch 1888: 752, 764-5). *Ḳhiyābān-i Gulistān* appears in a recent critical edition (ḲhG 1996) and is quite common in ms. Its start date is fixed by chronogram (1119 AH). *Sirāj-i wahhaj* appears only in Rampur ms. 2452B ff. 199b-207b, which was copied in 1236/1820–1 and contains a number of Ārzū’s works, and at Aligarh as ms. University 3 Farsi 119.

moderns are a direct contribution to the literary debates in Delhi after Ḥazīn's arrival, while those on the ancients are probably from earlier in Ārzū's life and are somewhat more abstract. Commentaries on modern writers include one on 'Urfī's *qaṣīdahs*,⁸⁵ *Sirāj-i munīr* [A Lamp for Munīr], *Dād-i suḵhan* [Justice in Poetry or A Gift of Poetry], and *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* [An Admonition to the Heedless]. These last three works are discussed at length in Chapter Three.

Lexicography: Ārzū's Persian lexicographical project was originally in a sense itself a commentary. His *Sirāj al-luġhāt* [Lamp of Words, 1147/1734–5] was largely concerned with correcting the earlier dictionaries *Burhān-i qāṭi'* [The Decisive Proof, 1654] and *Farhang-i rashīdī* (1652). *Chirāgh-i hidāyat* [Lamp of Guidance] is often referred to as the second volume of *Sirāj al-luġhāt* (of which it is approximately only one-fifth the length),⁸⁶ but it has the different goal of elucidating the usage not of the Ancients but of the Moderns, namely words and phrases that do not appear in older dictionaries. As we argue in the following chapters, this attention to new usages and how they fit into a longer tradition is characteristic of Ārzū's thought. A third work is *Nawādir al-alfāz* [Wonders among Words, c.1752], which is a dictionary of Indic words. Although it

⁸⁵ The commentary on 'Urfī was not consulted by the present researcher but he has seen a few scanned folios of the Salar Jung Library (Hyderabad, India) manuscript (ms. 1765; Ashraf 1966-88: vol. 5, 70-1). That manuscript, copied in 1803, bears the seals of the ruling family of Awadh.

⁸⁶ The date of *SL* is fixed by chronogram [*yād būd sirāj al-dīn alī khān*] and presumably since *CH* is often referred to as its second volume, *CH* was written sometime later. *SL* has never been printed but appears in a very readable ms. copy at the British Library as India Office Islamic ms. 1783 (=Éthé 2513). *CH* has been published since the nineteenth century in editions of *Ġhiyās al-luġhāt* (a "student's dictionary" completed in 1242/1826 by Muḥammad Ġhiyās al-Dīn of Rampur). A modern edition is *CH* 1989.

does not exactly call itself an Indic dictionary—as we will consider in the discussion in Chapter Four—it might in fact be the oldest critical dictionary of *khaṛī bolī hindī*.⁸⁷ Taken together, Ārzū's lexicons represent an innovative and deliberate project of codifying an expansive Persian literary culture: In *Sirāj al-luġhāt*, he reconsiders the oldest part of the New Persian poetic tradition with novel research techniques like the application of *tawāfuq al-lisānain* (the recognition that some Indic and Persian words are the same) and thus, in a sense, makes it new. In *Chirāgh-i hidāyat*, he formalizes recent developments in the tradition and gives them a certain stature, making the new old. In *Nawādir al-alfāz* he brings Indic languages into the discussion.

General critical works: Ārzū makes grandiose claims of newness in his philological works. *ʿAtīyah-i kubrā* [The Great Gift], his work on *bayān* [clear discourse], an aspect of rhetoric, claims to be the first treatise in Persian to deal specifically with that subject.⁸⁸ *Mauhibat-i ʿuzmā* [The Great Gift], his work on *ʿilm-i maʿānī*, which we can imperfectly translate as “semiotics,” does not make such a sweeping claim but seeks merely to “elevate” [*afrākhtan*] the subject (M^{CU} 2002: 95). As the titles suggest, the two works are companion pieces (but were likely written a few years apart).⁸⁹ Ārzū's critical magnum opus, *Muṣmir* [Fruitful], deals with “the science of

⁸⁷ NA is undated but internal evidence implies that it was written just before 1752. It has been published in a critical edition as NA 1951.

⁸⁸ ʿAK 2002: 50. Āzād of Bilgram agrees on its originality (*Sarw-i āzād* 1913: 228).

⁸⁹ Lithographed together as early as 1832 (Storey 1953: vol 1, pt 2, 836). The modern critical edition, edited by Cyrus Shamisa, is ʿAK/M^{CU} 2002. As far as the dates, ʿAK was written before M^{CU} (and probably before TĠh and DS

the elements of language” [*‘ilm-i uṣūl-i luġhat*] and is the subject of the following chapter in the present study. Although based on an Arabic model, it is, as it claims to be, the first text to apply those techniques to Persian and Indic languages. *Muṣmir* was almost certainly Ārzū’s final work since it refers to every other of his extant critical texts, and is obviously the product of a career of thinking about the nature of language and literature. (It was possibly completed after he had left Delhi for Awadh, but there is no firm evidence either way.) Ārzū’s *taẓkirah*, *Majma‘ al-nafā’is*, is preserved in many collections in various fragmentary states, but a critical edition (MN 2004) has recently been published. The last work mentioned in the catalogue of Ārzū’s oeuvre in *Majma‘ al-nafā’is* is the text itself, namely a *taẓkirah* of Ancient and Modern poets together which if completed “by the grace of God” would contain some forty thousand couplets. That translates to several thousand entries (though many of them have little in the way of biographical information since the work was intended as a *safīnah*—a selection of representative verses from different poets⁹⁰—and only later repurposed as a *taẓkirah* with biographies). The most complete manuscript, that in the Khuda Bakhsh Library, has 1,835

since those would have certainly been mentioned in preface had they been written). The early 1740s is the likeliest date of composition. *M‘U* refers to *Sirāj-i wahhaj* (pp. 107, 128), *‘AK* (p. 172), *ḲhG* (p. 181), and *TĠh* (p. 128). Mention of the last implies that *M‘U* was written in the late 1740s.

⁹⁰ A *safīnah* appears to be more curated than a *bayāz* (a notebook used for recording interesting poetry at *musha‘irahs*), but it does not, we can infer from Ārzū’s preface to MN, include a complete set of biographical data on the poets as a *taẓkirah* might be. However, the fact that *Safīnah-yi khwushgo*, a very biographically complete *taẓkirah*, has the title it does undercuts this definition.

poets represented, but it is apparently the only one with so many, suggesting a process of revision (by Ārzū or one of his followers) that we cannot trace.⁹¹ Its influence in the eighteenth century is shown by the fact that ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm Ḥākīm (who had fallen out with Ārzū) quoted it extensively when he prepared his own [Biographical Dictionary of People (I Have) Seen, or Biographical Dictionary of the Pupil of the Eye, 1761–2].⁹² The list of works in ‘*Aṭīyah-yi kubrā* mentions “other prefaces” among Ārzū’s works—we know of his prefaces to *Safīnah-yi Kḥwushgo* and Muḥliṣ’s *Mir’āt al-iṣṭilāḥ* (as discussed above) but he no doubt contributed introductions to a number of his students’ *dīwāns*.

Non-extant works and works of uncertain attribution: ‘*Aṭīyah-yi kubrā* mentions five works which cannot be traced beyond the simple descriptions given. These are *Risālah-yi adab-i ‘ishq* [Essay on the Art of Love] described as “on research in the manners [*ādāb*] of love,” *Mi’yār*

⁹¹ Mahdi Rahimpour argues that *MN* was started in 1129/1717, completed in 1164/1750–1 and expanded until 1167/1753–4 (Rahimpour 2008a: 343). Sprenger’s catalogue mentions an edition with 1419 entries and that a certain Mr. Hall had a good copy of the “second half” and another in album shape and abridged (1854: 132–4). The two latter mss. made their way to the India Office Library (Ethé 1903: 351–2). The ms. in the Salar Jung Library also purports to be complete (Ashraf 1966–88: vol 2, 157–8). The Bodleian ms. (Elliott 399) is written illegibly, but its table of contents suggests that it contains around 1,400 poets (the catalogue gives precisely 1,419 but apparently on Sprenger’s authority rather than an actual count, Sachau and Ethé 1889: 255). A complete or nearly complete three-volume critical edition (on the basis of three Pakistani mss. and the Khuda Bakhsh ms.) has recently been published in Islamabad (*MN* 2004), but the present researcher has only been able to obtain part of it. The recent Tehran edition (*MN* 2005) is just a re-compilation of Abid Reza Bidar’s 1970 edition, which is a selection of 109 poets out of 1,835 in the Khuda Bakhsh ms. Bidar’s selection criteria were that the poets were Ārzū’s contemporaries (that is, belonging to the twelfth-century AH) and that some particulars of their lives was given. That he made the selections is obviously not optimal but good enough for our present purposes.

⁹² Ḥākīm’s text has eighteen entries with quotations directly from *MN* (with a further 48 in which no quotation from *MN* is present) and of the eighteen all are accounted for in the selection in the printed edition of *MN* except Fāzil Khān Muṣannif (whom Ārzū calls of Central Asian origin, *Tazkirah-yi mardum-i didah* 1961: 92).

al-afkār [The Touchstone of Thoughts] “on the rules of conjugation and syntax of Persian,” *Payām-i shauq* [Message of Desire] “in answer to the letters of the dear/excellent” (in other words, a collection of correspondence), *Gulzar-i k̄hiyāl* [Rose-Garden of Thought] describing the Indian festival of Holi, and *Ābrū-yi suḵhan* [Chief of Speech, or Honored in Speech] “in description of tanks, fountains, fruits, and vines.” There are a few manuscript texts which cataloguers have attributed to Ārzū for which there is no confirmation of his authorship: For example, *Zawāʿid al-fawāʿid* [Increases in Useful Things], a dictionary of Persian infinitives [*maṣādir*] and abstract nouns [*mushtaqqāt*] derived from them, appears in the same manuscript at Raza Library (Rampur) as *Muṣmir*—however, nothing in the text actually ties it to Ārzū.⁹³

There is also a dictionary of Sufi terms at Princeton University’s Rare Books and Manuscripts Library purporting to be by Ārzū.⁹⁴ Likewise, a versified Persian grammar at the Asiatic Society

⁹³ The ms., which is written in thick illegible *shikastah*, is 2520f. Since ‘Abd al-Wasīʿ of Hansi wrote a book under the same title, it is possible that the two have been conflated. However, they might in fact be in the same relationship as another pair of works by ‘Abd al-Wasīʿ and Ārzū: Since Ārzū’s *NA* is often catalogued as *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt*, the title of ‘Abd al-Wasīʿ’ work that he revised and expanded into *NA*, it is possible that Ārzū actually wrote a *Zawāʿid al-fawāʿid*. Further circumstantial evidence is provided by the fact that another copy appears in the Asiatic Society’s Curzon Collection in a *majmūʿah* [miscellany] containing three works by Ārzū, *Zawāʿid al-fawāʿid* possibly by Ārzū, and works by 11 other authors (no 969, see Ivanow 1926-8: suppl. II, 27-30). The incipits [opening lines] of the texts match but the only evidence for Ārzū’s authorship in both cases is that the text appears in the same ms. as other works of his.

⁹⁴ Islamic Manuscripts, Third Series no. 771. It is the second work bound in the codex (of four total) and the title is given as “*Intik̄hāb-i baʿzī iṣṭilāḥāt-i ṣūfiyah*” [A Selection of Several Sufi Expressions]. The text gives the attribution “*Sirāj al-Dīn ʿAlī K̄hān*” and someone (in this case Dr Rieu of the British Library) has assumed this to be Ārzū. There is no incontrovertible evidence for or against attributing this work to Ārzū. The inside cover reads “Presented to Samuel Bochart, the celebrated traveller and linguist 22nd July MDCXLVIII (1648) by Ch Tarravins,” but this perhaps only applies to the first text contained in the codex, which is described as “Fragment of a treatise on Hindi dramas or ballets.” It is more interesting than the dictionary of Sufi expressions since what is being described is not theater as

is attributed to him.⁹⁵ However, Sirāj al-Dīn was hardly an uncommon name, and there are several people with whom Ārzū is easily confused.⁹⁶ Lastly, *lḥqāq al-ḥaqq* [Administering Justice, or Establishing the Truth], another text criticizing Ḥazīn, is not mentioned in either of Ārzū's lists of his own works, but the mid-nineteenth-century scholar Imām Baḵsh Sahbā'ī wrote a reply to a text of Ārzū's which he cited by that name.⁹⁷

Ārzū is now well-published since the major texts in his philological oeuvre (with the exception of *Sirāj al-luḡhāt*) have been made available, but a number of texts whose titles we know do not apparently exist even in manuscript (some of these may eventually turn up in the archives, but we are unlikely to find anything truly surprising). There does not appear to be a particular reason for the number of editions of Ārzū's works to have been prepared recently, but it is noteworthy that more of his works were not published earlier given the respect that

such but apparently *Rāsa-lilā* [Krishna's dance with the cowherdesses]. It uses Indic terms; for example, *gopī* [cowherdess] is glossed as "the beloveds of Krishna" [*maḥbūb-hā-yi kānhah*]. Assuming that the seventeenth-century date applies to this text, it is probably among the earliest evidence of a European's engagement with Hinduism. (Borchart, who lived from 1599–1657, was a French Protestant philologist and Bible scholar.)

⁹⁵ Ivanow 1926-8: 387-8. The colophon calls the work Ārzū's but the ms. is incomplete so it is difficult to judge the correctness of this statement.

⁹⁶ For example, Sirāj al-Dīn Ḥusainī of Aurangabad (fl. 1169/1755) used the *taḥhalluṣ* Sirāj. He lived around the same time as Ārzū, and like Ārzū was a literary scholar—for example, compiling selections from some 680 poets—and a poet in *reḵhtah* (Sprenger 1854: 148-51). Another poet with whom Ārzū is accidentally conflated is Sirāj al-Dīn Sirājī of Khurasan (d. 1254). This is somewhat surprising since he lived five centuries before Ārzū and indeed his *dīwān* appears to be the oldest extant *dīwān* of any Indo-Persian poet (Ahmad 1972). Another Sirāj al-Dīn 'Alī Ḳhān was from Lucknow and used the *taḥhalluṣ* Mūjid. He was appointed *munshī* to the Supreme Court in Calcutta and was a poet there (Sprenger 1854: 171).

⁹⁷ Rahimpoor 2008a: 345. Some scholars do not believe that Ārzū was the author of *lḥqāq al-ḥaqq* (Khatoon 2004a: 96).

he commanded during his lifetime. The most influential of his works in manuscript was probably *Chirāgh-i hidāyat*, which appears in every major Persian manuscript collection. In terms of published works, the ones that were lithographed in the nineteenth century are *Chirāgh-i hidāyat*, *Ḳhiyābān-i gulistān*, the *Sikandarnāmah* commentary, and *‘Aṭīyah-i kubrá* and *Mauhibat-i ‘uzmá*. It was only in the late twentieth century that the most important philological works, including *Muṣmir*, were published. We now have the opportunity to re-evaluate Ārzū with access to a much wider range of his works.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to situate Ārzū in his overlapping networks of friends, students and teachers (as well as his relationship to rival poetic networks). The complexity of interpersonal relations is a given for the sort of elite community under discussion, but understanding how people related to one another is important as a basis for an analysis of the substance of the debates (as we see in the following chapters). Ārzū began his life well-positioned for a central role in the literary society of his time because of his Sufi inheritance, his education in Agra, and his youthful service under A‘zam Shāh. Once he reached Delhi and became part of Bedil’s circle and Ḳhṡushgo’s friend, it was almost inevitable that he should have had the resources to become a popular and influential teacher. Thus he consolidated the networks of both Bedil and Sarḳhṡush around himself. Arguably it was the particularly acrimonious debate over aesthetics

after the arrival of Shaiḫ Ḥazīn that pushed him from the safety of commentaries on the classics to the reappraisal of the role of poetic authority—and of the nature of poetic language—that characterized his later works. While later critics have concentrated on the personality politics of Persianate aesthetic bickering, with Ḥazīn playing the role of arrogant but ultimately justified Iranian exile and Ārzū that of the jealous Indian epigone, it is important to see the substantive disagreements between them (to which we return in Chapter Three) as well as the way in which they represented alternative networks of poetic authority. Ārzū's circle, as represented in his *Majma' al-nafā'is*, was broad, and while many Indians flocked to Ḥazīn, his own *tazkirah* represents his community as exclusively Iranian.

Chapter II

Ārzū's Theory of Language: *Muṣmir* and Beyond

“Rhetoric was the common ground of poetry, history and oratory; it could mediate both between the past and present and between the imagination and the realm of public affairs. Encouraging men to think of all forms of human discourse as argument it conceived of poetry as a performing art, literature as a storehouse of models.” (Greenblatt 1980: 162)

How precisely does Ārzū frame the subject of *Muṣmir*, the text we discuss at length in this chapter?¹ He refers to it as an account of “*ilm-i uṣūl-i luḡhat*” or “the science of the elements of language,” which we can translate more simply as “philology” (M 1991: 1). The goal here is to contextualize Ārzū's use of the Arabic and Persian philological tradition and his interventions in it. To that end we must read the text closely in order to assess its purpose and scope while carefully contrasting its philology with our expectations drawn from modern linguistics. We do this not to show that Ārzū's work failed to live up to some ex post facto standard but to understand our own place in history. The analysis here advances the claim that a hallmark of

¹ The editor of *Muṣmir* has taken great pains to trace many of the references in the text, including passages taken directly from other sources, notably *al-Muzhir* and *Farhang-i jahāngīrī*. However, the text is written out in her own handwriting and poorly photocopied, which introduces considerable ambiguity. (Its publication in 1991 came before computer typesetting was available in Pakistan, and the publisher did not hire a professional scribe [*kātib*] to prepare a fair-copy for lithographing.) Furthermore, manuscript material that came to light towards the end of preparing the edition was simply appended (again in poor quality photocopy). While the preface refers to the work's contents as 41 chapters [*uṣūl*, sg. *aṣl*], the published edition in fact contains just 38 in the main body of the text.

the intellectual practices of the global early-modern period was reverence for tradition, particularly for traditional categories in knowledge systems, combined with sometimes radical repurposing of such categories. One definition for modernity is, therefore, the breakdown of these categories. *Muṣmir* is heavily invested in a philological tradition that stretches back a millennium, but vastly extends the possibilities of that tradition: It is thus a paradigmatic early modern text. Furthermore, it represents the zenith of Ārzū's own development as a scholar.

The goal here is to trace the main arguments in *Muṣmir* and to bring these into dialogue with Ārzū's other works. Our discussion begins where the text begins, namely by addressing some fundamental questions about Persian literary culture. We continue with Ārzū's account of phonetics, which is actually concerned with various sound changes within words: Which of these changes are meaningful and which are incidental? Can people who speak local varieties of Persian be considered experts of the language? The next part of our discussion considers the connections between languages, of which the concept *tawāfuq al-lisānain* [correspondence of languages] is a crucial part. We continue with a brief account of the subject of a number of chapters, namely semiotics and in particular figurative language—this too demonstrates Ārzū's great interest in how meanings have changed over time or not. We conclude our discussion by contextualizing Ārzū's philosophy in the eighteenth century by considering its radical reconfiguration of an existing systematization of an age-old

intellectual problem (the nature of language). For Ārzū, changes in language and aesthetics over time are a key question, but as a historian he has very different aims from ours because so many historical questions are irrelevant to his particular interest in the past. Unlike modern linguists he is concerned primarily with literary language and only secondarily with non-literary language (and only then really because of its potential to influence literary language). The logic of his philology also contains within it an aesthetic program—the creation of good poetry—foreign to modern linguistics, which attempts not to correct usages but merely to record them as they are. Reconstructing Ārzū's thought through *Muṣmir* provides insights into Mughal-period conceptualization of language, which is both familiar to and radically different from our own approaches.

Little can be ascertained about the history of the work itself. It is undated, but since it makes reference to every one of Ārzū's other extant works, we can surmise that it was compiled at the very end of his life, perhaps during the brief period when he lived in Lucknow before his death at the beginning of 1756.² In contrast to Ārzū's practice in other

² The seven available manuscripts of *Muṣmir* are not helpful for dating the work. The published edition is based on two manuscripts at Aligarh Muslim University and one at Raza Library (Rampur). At Aligarh: Munīr ʿĀlam Collection 3/21 is 336ff long at 15 lines per page and was copied in 1271/1854. It is clearest and most complete manuscript available in India. University Collection Persian *luḡhāt* 22 is 126 ff. long with an average of 26 lines per page and is undated. It is written in a poor *shikastah* in thick, illegible pen. At Rampur: Raza Library ms. 2520f contains *Muṣmir* together with Ārzū's *Zawāʿid al-Fawāʿid* [Increases in Useful Things], a lexicon of Persian verbs and nouns derived from them. The manuscript consists of 94 ff. of which approximately 2/3 are *Muṣmir*. It is written in *shikastah* and undated. A second *Muṣmir* manuscript at Rampur has come to light, namely 2620f. The text is very brief (corresponding to the first forty or fifty pages of the printed version, with some omissions and

critical works, he cites no contemporary scholars in *Muṣmir* (although he quotes couplets by many recent poets, including Shaiḫ Ḥazīn, as evidence). The text appears to be unique in the Persian tradition in that it is structured on an Arabic philological treatise that was never—as far as the present researcher can tell—used as a model by anyone else in Persian. The work in question is Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī’s *al-Muzhir fī ‘ulūm al-luġhah wa anwā’ihā* [The Luminous Work Concerning the Sciences of Language and its Subfields].³ Ārzū’s title *Muṣmir*, meaning “fruitful” in Arabic, is obviously meant to echo “*muzhir*” [luminous], and Ārzū acknowledges his debt to al-Suyūṭī in the preface. *Muṣmir* departs extensively from al-Suyūṭī’s model but the fundamental questions concerning (what we would call) semiotics, phonetics, and morphology are mostly engagements with *al-Muzhir*. Ārzū’s key contribution in these sections is to bring Indic language into the discussion and presumably to make the

interpolations) and is written in an elegant *nasta‘liq*. Some 150 blank pages follow the text so we can assume that a calligrapher was engaged to transform the other copy into something more pleasant to read but the task was never finished. The present researcher was unable to consult the manuscript at the Zakir Husayn Library of Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi), which is no. 1339 [C125/1] (Iran Culture House 1999: 329-30). There is a ms. in the Curzon Collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (no. 550) but no scholar in living memory has been able to consult it (Ivanow 1926-8: 387). In Pakistan, there is a manuscript in Lahore at Punjab University Library (AP1-2-15)—some of which has been appended to the published edition. There does not appear to be a copy of the text in any collection outside of South Asia.

³ *Al-Muzhir* 1998. A Polish scholar has translated the first chapter (Czapkiewicz 1989) but his poor English presents an obstacle. That *al-Muzhir* remained important and even came to the notice of Europeans is proved by the preface to E. W. Lane’s *Arabic-English Lexicon* (1863), which notes that *al-Muzhir* is “a compilation of the utmost value to students in general, and more especially to lexicographers.” The present researcher has only a basic knowledge of Arabic and so is not qualified to pursue a rigorous comparison of *Muṣmir* with its Arabic model (he has, however, compared the contents of *Muṣmir* with the chapter headings of *al-Muzhir* under the guidance of Prof. Muzaffar Alam). Ārzū cites his sources carefully and leads one through the argument in Persian so establishing the relationship between the two works probably does not require exhaustive study of the Arabic text.

Arabic tradition better known to Indians without a strong grounding in Arabic. A particularly important achievement for Ārzū, as he himself notes, was to be the first scholar writing in Persian to invoke al-Suyūṭī's concept of *tawāfuq al-lisānain* [correspondence of languages], which is a rigorous way of thinking about how the same words can appear in two or more languages. We can surmise that Ārzū chose *al-Muzhir* as his model precisely because its broad scope allowed him to make so many interventions.

Al-Muzhir's author, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (849–911 AH/1445–1505 CE), was a Cairene polymath thought by modern scholars to be “the most prolific author in the whole of Islamic literature”; his corpus has been estimated to include nearly a thousand works (Geoffroy 2002). Like many intellectuals in the Arab world in this period, he was of Persian descent.⁴ His father's family had settled in Baghdad and later the Upper Egyptian town of Asyūṭ (the origin of his name). Like his father, he became a well-known jurist in the Shāfiʿī school of the law and his works were read across the Islamic world, including in South Asia (Sartain 1975: 40, 48). His juridical training and reputation matter a great deal because the study of the philosophy of language in an Islamicate context was intimately connected with the

⁴ On his father's side. His mother was supposedly a Circassian slave who gave birth to him in a library, which led to his receiving the odd nickname Ibn al-Kutub [son of the books] (Geoffroy 2002). Ibn Ḳhaldūn (732–808/1332–1406), a Maghrebian scholar who lived a couple of generations before al-Suyūṭī, noted that most great Muslim intellectuals, both religious scholars and otherwise, were not Arabs (*Muqaddimah* 2005: 428).

techniques for research in Islamic law [*fiqh*] (about which, more below).⁵ *Al-Muzhir*, like *Muṣmir*, is most likely the author's swan-song—the evidence being that it is not mentioned in his autobiography—and so is the product of a lifetime of study.⁶ Al-Suyūṭī's career is a high-water mark for Arabic scholarship, but his polymath endeavors are a reflection of how interdisciplinary philology itself was (Loucel 1963-4: 58; cf. Cantarino 1975: 1). *Al-Muzhir* is actually structured as a compilation of other people's opinions, which al-Suyūṭī adjudicates (or in some cases, such as in the divine or conventional nature of language—see fn. 45 below—he takes no personal position). An explication of previous scholars' views followed by his own interpretation is precisely the structure that Ārzū adopts in the sections of *Muṣmir* derived from al-Suyūṭī. While the subject of *al-Muzhir* is a specifically Arabic philology, al-Suyūṭī nonetheless uses Persian examples when appropriate. For example, in order to establish that multiple words exist for the same concept, he points out that “*mard*” [man] and “*sar*” [head] in Persian have the same meaning as Arabic “*insān*” and “*rā's*” (Czapkiewicz 1989: 48). Ārzū builds on al-Suyūṭī's awareness of Persian to generalize his theories into a framework that addresses primarily Persian but also has Indic language as an integral

⁵ The grammarian al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) was the first to apply the word “*qānūn*” [law] to grammar, probably under some Hellenistic influence since the Arabic word is derived from Greek *kanōn* (Versteegh 1980: 21-2).

⁶ Sartain 1975: 107. His other important works on language are *al-Iqtirāḥ fi 'ilm uṣūl al-naḥw* [Impromptu Account of the Science of the Rules of Grammar] and *al-Ashbāh wa'l-naẓā'ir fi'l-naḥw* [Resemblances and Similarities in Grammar] (Balhan 2001: 12).

component. Ārzū's ambition to create a general theory of language is striking and ripples throughout his works (as we shall see in the following chapters).

In the same way that the explication of law in Islam was viewed as a rigorous science, philology followed precise rules often derived from methods of legal enquiry. The formulae “*taḥqīq ān ast*” and “*dar taḥqīq paiwast*” appear scores of times in *Muṣmir* to introduce a definitive argument and both mean more or less “the truth as established through research.” This is not literary interpretation as we typically think of it because the set of rules and norms is unfamiliar to us and rigorous.⁷ It considers discourse primarily on two levels, that of the utterance [*lafẓ*], which covers what we would call phonetics and morphology, and of its meanings [*maʿānī*], either in the abstract or as part of a syntactic unit (a literary trope or a sentence).⁸ Discourse in its broadest sense (utterances intended to produce a meaning) is known as *kalām*.⁹ A similar term, *bayān*, means something more specific, which we can think of as “clear speech,” although it too is often translated as “discourse.” The philological sub-

⁷ Recent work that has considered representation in Rajput and Mughal painting as a formal system—without the previously all-too-common subtext that formalization presupposes a lack of creativity—has been illuminating (Aitken 2010; Minissale 2006). From the disciplinary perspective of comparative literature, a now slightly dated but evocative discussion of “literature as system” is Guillén 1971.

⁸ For the Arabic grammarians, “*lafẓ*” or “*qaul*” is seen as merely a string of sounds in contrast to “*kalām*” [meaningful utterance] (Cantarino 1975: 46; Versteegh 1993: 100). The present chapter skips over the crucial distinction in Islamicate poetics between *‘ilm-i lafẓī* [the science of wording] and *‘ilm-i maʿnawī* [the science of (making) meaning], which are typically considered subsets of *‘ilm al-badīʿ* (see fn 105 below and Windfuhr 1974: 335-6).

⁹ Poetry and prose are considered not separate kinds of expression but as two different aspects of “*kalām*,” which is to say that poetry = prose + metre (Grunebaum 1981: II, 336).

discipline known as the science of discourse [*‘ilm-i bayān*] has generally been viewed as the study of speech acts, that is, whether the implication of an utterance in fact corresponds to the situation it is attempting to describe.¹⁰ The application of this philological framework to secular literature and by extension to natural language is a departure from its original function, which was qur’ānic interpretation. Indeed, traditional Arabic philology had two acceptable sources for data, pre-Islamic poetry and the Qur’ān itself—*ḥadīṣ* (the sayings and recorded practice of the Prophet of Islam and those around him) was almost unanimously considered to be unusable as linguistic data by classical Arabic philologists (Suleiman 1999: 16-7). The contrast of this narrowly focused study of language with modern linguistics and even with later philology grounded in it, like Ārzū’s, is stark. However, *ḥadīṣ* scholarship contributed greatly to philology because the use of poetic quotations as examples of permitted usage, known as *asnād* (sg. *sanad*), is derived from the concept of a chain of transmission in *ḥadīṣ* scholarship.¹¹ Within the philological tradition (no less than for *ḥadīṣ* scholars), it is crucial to be able to show that a competent person was the originator of a particular usage (or practice). A second important philological technique derived from religious scholarship is that of *qiyās*

¹⁰ Versteegh 1997: 124. Of course in this context “speech acts” refers not to spoken communication but to literature. In that sense *‘ilm-i bayān* is the study of metaphorical language, as we see below.

¹¹ Al-Suyūṭī says as much (Loucel 1963-4: 69).

(usually translated as “analogy”).¹² In legal reasoning, the simplest way to think of *qiyās* is as a judgment as to whether a rule which applies in Situation A also applies in Situation B (such as the famous question as to whether the Qur’ān’s prohibition on wine [*khamr*] applies to other intoxicants, such as date-wine [*nabīz*], or not). In philology, *qiyās* is the means by which the rules of language are established. Al-Suyūṭī defines grammar as “nothing but analogy which is to be followed.”¹³ This concept of language is also the basis for Ārzū’s.

Ārzū’s *Muṣmir* is self-evidently an important work, but its place in the intellectual tradition of Indo-Persian has not been settled. Scholars have recently become interested in the text but almost exclusively in relation to its explication of *tawāfuq al-lisānain*, which is often invoked as a totem of Indo-Persian scholarly achievement that can call into question Orientalist assumptions that the tradition was moribund by the time Europeans encountered it. However, *tawāfuq* is addressed in only a small part of the text—albeit one that Ārzū flags as important—and there is considerably more to *Muṣmir* than this single idea. Even the more abstruse debates that we address in this chapter are relevant to other literary and social

¹² See Versteegh 1997: 47; Versteegh 1980. Its complexity as a legal term is clear from Kholeif 1966: 150ff. Sībawayh’s (fl. late eighth c. CE) use of it implies that for him it was a term without a settled meaning. In philology, *qiyās* is “based on drawing inferences about similar accidental grammatical effects exhibited by divergent structures” (Marogy 2010: 27). Sībawayh is probably responsible for transforming *qiyās*: In the early days it was a productive tool of grammar (that is, a way of creating forms of words that are not attested in the sources) and indeed even a basis for correcting the forms of words of the Qur’ān, but after Sībawayh it became purely descriptive (Versteegh 1993: 37-9).

¹³ “*innamā al-naḥw qiyās yuttaba*” (qtd./trans. Suleiman 1999: 25ff).

questions, and are worth considering if we are to have a complete picture of early-modern Indo-Persian philology. *Muṣmir* has never received a comprehensive treatment in any European language except in the published edition's English introduction and a one-off article in Italian. Scholars have written about it in Urdu and Persian, though not comprehensively as far as the present author has been able to ascertain.¹⁴ There is a tendency to cite another scholar's opinion that *Muṣmir* is historically significant rather than engaging with the ideas in the text.

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

The text begins with a historical analysis derived from *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* [Dictionary for Jahāngīr, 1608] and *Dabistān-i mazāhib* [School of Religions, mid-seventeenth c.], along with some significant interventions by Ārzū. It seeks to establish where the name “Persian” [*fārsī/pārsī*] comes from, what the dialects of Persian are (both in the past and at present), whether it is theologically permissible to use Persian as opposed to Arabic, and what the genesis of poetry was. Taken together, Ārzū's engagement with these questions goes to the heart of the Mughal understanding of the history of Persian because he has ratified the views

¹⁴ The editor's introduction in M 1991 (in English) helpfully—if sometimes misleadingly—summarizes the contents of each chapter. The Italian article (Pellò 2004) is, as its author has told the present researcher, “a youthful endeavour” that should not be taken as the last word on the subject. It is narrowly focused on the question of *tawāfuq* and related topics in chapters 28, 29 and 32. On *Muṣmir* generally, see *passim* Alam 2003: 175 and Kinra 2011: 374. *Muṣmir*'s editor's biography of Ārzū (in Urdu) contains a lengthy analysis of the text (Khatoon 1987: 129-39, 157ff). See also Husain 1940.

expressed in one of the important intellectual projects of the end of Akbar's reign, namely *Farhang-i jahāngīrī*, and in some cases refined them. Although many of the conclusions are based upon textual presuppositions that are no longer tenable, it is nonetheless useful to analyze them in detail because they shaped the Mughal worldview. First, we should consider the source material.

When discussing the history of Persian, Ārzū primarily relies upon *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* but frequently compares it with other dictionaries to establish alternative pronunciations and meanings. *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* was a remarkable effort in which the Emperor Akbar himself took an interest. It was compiled by the courtier Mīr Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusain Injū, whom Akbar had commanded during a halt in Srinagar to compile “a book containing all the authentic Persian words, archaic usages, and idiomatic expressions.”¹⁵ (The dictionary is named for Jahāngīr because death claimed Akbar three years before its completion.) Injū came from a noble family in Shiraz—his cousins were high officials in the court of the Safavid Shāh Tahmāsp I—and spent time in the Deccan before entering Akbar's service. He rose in the imperial hierarchy and became a confidant to Jahāngīr. He even acted as Jahāngīr's envoy to his rebellious son, Prince Ḳhusrau, and was appointed Governor of the *ṣūbah* of Bihar towards the end of his career.¹⁶ His

¹⁵ The relevant passage is carefully translated and interpreted in Kinra 2011: 369-70.

¹⁶ Beveridge and Prashad 1979: I, 742. Injū's son apparently married the daughter of ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Ḳhān-i Ḳhānān, the greatest literary patron of Akbar's reign besides the emperor himself.

experience shows that for the Mughals, dictionary-making was not an activity to be undertaken by low-paid secretaries but could bring prestige to a member of the highest echelons of society. It was, in fact, a hugely resource-intensive project because Injū used 44 sources, which he lists in his preface. Thus to a large degree, he consolidated the lexicographical tradition in his one massive book of some 9,000 entries. Furthermore, *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* is not just a lexicon but also contains an elaborate introduction [*muqaddamah*] and appendix [*khātimah*].¹⁷ The introduction is a substantial work in twelve chapters, including a history of the Persian language. A detailed description of the methodology of the compilation of the lexicon is provided in a separate preface. The appendix consists of five sub-lexicons, one of which is a list of Middle Persian (“Zend and Pazend”) words, which was clearly useful for Ārzū.¹⁸ Injū tells us that he relied on a Zoroastrian informant for the Middle Persian material. The other main sources for Ārzū’s history of Persian are four of the major dictionaries of the language then available: *Majma‘ al-furs* (1600, compiled in Isfahan) also known as *Farhang-i*

¹⁷ *Farhang-i jahāngīrī*’s odd feature is that it is arranged by second letter of each headword then by the initial letter. Indeed, the first page of the modern printed edition contains a notice that an index, in proper alphabetical order, has been provided at the end of the book for the reader’s convenience.

¹⁸ The five sections of the appendix are (1) Metonyms and Expressions [*kināyāt wa iṣṭilāḥāt*], (2) Compound Words from Persian and Arabic [*luḡhāt-i murakkabah az pārsī wa ‘arabī*], (3) Words in Which Appear One of the “Eight Sounds” [*luḡhāt-i kih yakī az ḥurūf-i hashtagānah dar ān yāftah shudah*], (4) Zend and Pazend Words [*luḡhāt-i zind wa pāzind*], (5) Strange Words [*luḡhāt-i ḡharībah*]. In number (3), “eight sounds” must refer to the sounds native to Arabic but not found in Persian before the Arab conquest. In number (5), “ḡharīb” is being used in the technical sense discussed below, namely as a loan-word or calque. This section includes Indic words such as “*agrah*” [the city of Agra] and “*pānī*” [water].

surūrī after its compiler, *Farhang-i rashīdī* (1654), *Burhān-i qāṭī*¹⁹ (1652, compiled in the Deccan), and Ārzū's own *Sirāj al-luġhāt* [Lamp of Words, 1147/1734–5].¹⁹ Ārzū discusses these various dictionaries and declares *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* to be the best (M 39ff.) even though *Farhang-i rashīdī* and *Burhān-i qāṭī*¹⁹ are later and each represents somewhat of a repudiation of *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* (see Kinra 2011: 373). The only two non-lexicographical works drawn into the conversation are *Dabistān-i mazāhib*²⁰ and Muḥammad ‘Aufī’s *Lūbāb al-albāb* [The Piths of Intellects, 1221 CE]. ‘Aufī’s text is regarded as the first Persian *taẓkirah*, although its author does not use that term (instead he calls it *ṭabaqat*). The *Dabistān*’s author was probably a Zoroastrian who went by the pseudonym Mūbad Shāh but also used a Muslim name when it suited him.²¹

¹⁹ *Majma‘ al-furs* was revised in 1621 after a copy of *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* reached the author in Isfahan two years before (Storey 1983: 25). These works will be considered at length in the present writer’s next academic project, a study of Indo-Persian lexicography (especially its role in constituting what is often termed “Mughal tolerance”). The best work in Persian on Indo-Persian lexicography is Naqvi 1962, and Blochmann 1868 remains the most comprehensive account in English. Baevskii 2007, which does not directly address the Mughal period, nonetheless provides some useful background. Blochmann (cf. Perry 1998) is absolutely right that India was the locus of pre-twentieth-century Persian lexicography: Of the five dictionaries mentioned here, only *Majma‘ al-furs* was not compiled in India and even so Blochmann considers it “half-Indian” because its author Surūrī not only spent time in India but revised his dictionary after receiving a copy of *Farhang-i jahāngīrī*.

²⁰ A complete but poor English translation by Anthony Shea and David Troyer under the title *The Dabistān, or School of Manners* was published in 1843. A chapter had earlier been translated by Francis Gladwin (1744 or 5–1812) so it was of interest to British orientalists, and indeed it was first published in Calcutta in 1809 in moveable type (Ali 1999). The first European to study the book was Sir William Jones in 1787. He was pleased to learn of an “authentic” source of knowledge about Zoroastrianism since he had famously dismissed as an obvious forgery the other important potential source, the Zend-Avesta. The Zend-Avesta was brought to the attention of European scholars by Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805), who published it in 1771. Although Jones destroyed Anquetil-Duperron’s reputation over the matter, it became clear soon after his death that Anquetil-Duperron had been right and Jones wrong (Browne 1929: 45ff).

²¹ Shea and Troyer’s translators’ preface repeats the mistaken conclusion of Jones (which had been repeated by Gladwin) that the *Dābistān*’s author was Muḥsin Fānī (d. 1081/1670), a Kashmiri Sufi poet and friend of Dārā

With its methods that strike us as proto-anthropological (the author observes, and in some cases infiltrates, various religious groups), this text is not a rigorous history, although it was taken as such by later writers such as Ārzū. Instead, the historical descriptions in it represent how a certain sect of Zoroastrians memorialized their tradition. While Ārzū approaches the material critically, emending it as necessary, his richly imagined history of Persian literary culture diverges from our present understanding because of the constraints of his sources, but it is nonetheless a remarkable intellectual achievement. Let us explore that here.

The origin of the name for Persian (*pārsī* or *fārsī*) is tied up with ancient history, as described by Injū and mostly taken word for word by Ārzū. Pārs son of Pahlaw son of Sām son of Noah [*nūh*] was king of a territory that was named after him.²² All of Iran was contained in this ancient territory, which supposedly stretched from the Amu Darya [*rūd-i jaiḥūn*] in the east to the Euphrates [*āb-i furāt*] in the west and from the Gates of Alexander [*bāb al-abwāb*] (in Derbent, in present-day Russia near the border with Azerbaijan) in the north to the Persian Gulf [*daryā-yi ‘umān*] in the south. This is a generally accurate sketch of where Persian is

Shukoh. In fact, a quatrain of Fānī’s is quoted in the preface but that of course is not evidence that he wrote the whole work. The identity of the author and his role as “ethnographer in disguise” has been addressed by the late Aditya Behl (Behl 2011, cf. Ali 1999).

²² M 2-4; *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* 1975: 14-5. A similar discussion of Pārs appears in Ārzū’s *Gulistān* commentary (ḲhG 1996: 11). An alternative lineage for Pārs through Japhet [*yāfiṣ*] son of Noah is also given.

spoken natively, although it stretches too far to the west²³ and somewhat truncates the Persian cosmopolis in the east—having the Amu Darya (or River Bactrus as it has also been called) as the border would not include the Persian-speaking population of present-day Tajikistan. Within this great swathe of territory, the eastern region was known as Khurasan because, Ārzū and Injū argue, “*khurāsān*” means “East” in “ancient Persian” [*pārsī-yi qadīm*]²⁴—of course, he does not make the distinction between Old Persian and Middle Persian, referring to all historical Persian as “ancient”—and this was the region to the east of Persepolis [*istakhr*].²⁴ After the coming of Islam, the capital was moved to Isfahan (400 km to the north) and the towns to the west became known as “*‘irāq al-‘arab*” [Arab Iraq] and the nearer ones as “*‘irāq al-‘ajam*” [Persian Iraq]. The language of Pārs’s kingdom was “*pārsī*” and Arabs, unable to pronounce ‘p’, turned it into “*fārsī*.” The Zoroastrian period in Persian history was apparently a golden age of beauty, rhetoric, “cleanliness” [*pākizagī*], good horsemanship, and so on. Before the Persians were Zoroastrians, they were supposedly Sabians [*ṣābīʿah*], the exact meaning of which is hard to reconstruct.²⁵ What comes out of all of this is that the distribution of ancient

²³ Since Baghdad had been ruled by Persians at various time (including by the Safavids in the 1620s and 30s), it makes sense as a political if not a rigorously researched linguistic boundary.

²⁴ M 218-9 also discusses “*khurāsān*” as “east.”

²⁵ Sabians are mentioned in the Qurʾān (e.g. 22.17) alongside Jews, Christians and Magians, but the term seems to be used in various conflicting ways such as serving as a general term for non-Muslims who nonetheless believe in God (Pedersen 1922). Ārzū’s rival Shaiḫ Ḥazīn claims to have encountered them around Shustar in south-central Iran, where supposedly the last remaining population lived (*Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* 1830: 160). Perhaps here it refers to the proto-Islamic religion of Abraham.

Persian was thought to track closely with that of contemporary Persian. However, Ārzū adds a very important caveat which does not appear in Injū: He notes that although Persian is “the medium of (careful) speech and writing” [*madār-i takallum-o tarassul*] across Iran and Turan (i.e. Central Asia), and to some extent India, the language of the masses [*‘awāmm*] across that region is often different. This insight allows Ārzū to move beyond the idea that language distribution is historically static as is implied by Injū’s conclusion that Persian is spoken where Pārs’s ancient kingdom was. As we see in the following chapters, theorizing the considerable linguistic variation across the territories even where Persian is spoken natively is key to Ārzū’s conception of the Persian cosmopolis. Because the poetic language of even native speakers may be imperfect—affected as it is by non-standard local usages—non-native speakers have as much (or in some cases more) ability to write Persian poetry as native speakers have.

After the discussion of how the language got its name is concluded, Ārzū and Injū address the dialects of Persian. It has, they argue, seven dialects [*gūnah*], of which three are current and four are historical curiosities. The four extinct dialects are “*hirawī*,” “*sakzī*” or “*sagzī*,” “*zāwalī*,” and “*sughdī*.” They are extinct in the sense that one cannot eloquently write complete sentences in them but if “one brings a word [from one of them] into a couplet or a poem then this is permissible.”²⁶ Besides this brief reference, these four dialects are not mentioned again in the

²⁶ “*dar baitī balkih dar ghazalī agar yak kalimah biyāwarand rawā bāshad*” (M 4; *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* 1975: 15). The transliteration of “*zāwalī*” is conjecture.

text. Of the four, only “*suḡhdī*” or Soghdian, finds a place in today’s standard dialectology of Persian.²⁷ The three current dialects have the familiar names Farsi/Parsi, Pahlavi and Dari, but these have different meanings from the ones we know today. As defined by Injū, they are:

Parsi (or Farsi) is simply defined as the poetic language of the territories of Pārs whose capital was at Persepolis, the original city founded by Kiyomarš (the mythical first king in the *Shāhnāmah* and first human in Zoroastrian belief).²⁸ He includes a quote from *Tafsīr-i dīlamī* [Dīlamī’s Commentary, fourth/tenth c.] supposedly spoken by God to the Prophet Muḥammad in this language.

Dari is now the official name of the standard Persian dialect of Afghanistan, but it has had several related meanings in history, including being defined from as early as the tenth century as New Persian literary language generally (especially in contrast with Pahlavi or Middle Persian).²⁹ Some people, writes Injū, attribute special eloquence to Dari because it is

²⁷ “*Hirawī*,” according to Steingass, refers to an archaic dialect of Herat (in modern western Afghanistan). On Soghdian, see Windfuhr 2009: 279. It is puzzling that Choresmian [*khwārazmī*], the native language of al-Bīrūnī (d. post 442/1050), is not among these dialects since al-Bīrūnī cites Choresmian words in his famous *Chronology of Ancient Nations* (Cereti and Maggi 2005: 149). Perhaps Soghdian was thought to include all of what we now call the North-Eastern group of Middle Iranian languages, of which Choresmian is a part. As is the case for a great deal of Middle Iranian material, manuscripts in Soghdian were unknown for centuries until they were re-discovered in the early twentieth century (ibid 101).

²⁸ *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* 15-6; M 4. Ārzū discusses Kiyomarš in his dictionary *Chirāgh-i hidāyat* (1989: 1204).

²⁹ On historical meanings of “*darī*” (which encompass all the meanings proposed by Injū) see Lazard 1993 and 1995, and Paul 2005.

apparently the dialect of Persian in which full forms of words are always used.³⁰ Another possibility is that it is the dialect of Balkh, “*bāmī*” [Bamyan?], Merv, and Bukhara (the cities are located in a region today split between northeastern Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan). Injū’s preferred explanation, which he supports with *ḥadīs*, is that it was the language of the imperial court [*dargāh-i kayān*]. Improbably, following the logic of his quotation, it is also the Language of Paradise.³¹

Pahlavi now refers to the written Middle Persian of Zoroastrian texts, specifically to a script derived from Aramaic. In imprecise usage, the term “Pahlavi” can also refer to Middle Persian in general (Browne 1929: 79ff). Neither of these definitions is relevant for the term as it is used by Injū. He notes that it might be named for Pārs’s father Pahlaw who was connected with the region known as Pahlah (which consists of Isfahan, Ray, and Dinawar in western Iran). Another possibility, which Injū prefers, was that since “*pahlaw*” can mean “city” (he cites a couplet by Firdawsī as evidence), Pahlavi was thus urban speech.

After laying out the various definitions provided by Injū, Ārzū reveals his position: The division of the three modern dialects as presented above is irrelevant; there is only one,

³⁰ Persian has a number of words with a longer and a shorter form, generally maintained for metrical purposes. Thus Dari prefers “*ishkam*” [belly] to “*shikam*,” “*ba-raw*” [go!] to “*raw*,” “*bu-go*” [speak!] to “*go*.” Instead of the second, Ārzū uses the example of “*abar*” [upon] instead of “*bar*.”

³¹ Ārzū adds an additional possibility (M 8) derived from Majd al-Dīn ‘Alī Qūsi’s dictionary. Ārzū consulted that lexicon when compiling *Sirāj al-luḡhāt* and praised it highly in the preface, but it is apparently no longer extant.

unitary literary dialect of Persian. If Dari is the language of the court and Pahlavi is the language of the city [*pahlaw*] then, he argues, obviously the two are different names for the same thing.³² The only distinction is that perhaps that each of the two names was used at different times (he does not elaborate here but suggests in the following pages that Pahlavi came first and then Dari). Since the usage of the court [*urdū*] is the most eloquent and since the Farsi of the court is the accepted variety then in fact all three, Dari, Pahlavi, and Farsi, are the same.³³ Thus, he concludes,

A poet, whichever place he may be from, for example Ḳhāqānī from Shirvan, Niẓāmī from Ganjah, Sanāʾī from Ghazni and Ḳhusrau from Delhi, composed in the established language and that is none other than the language of the court.³⁴

We consider the implications of this sweeping statement of poetic unity in the next section. It is no exaggeration to call this stylistic flattening of the whole geography of the Persian cosmopolis the key to Ārzū's thought. At the historical cusp of the nationalisms that would start to divide up the cosmopolis into the nation-states we know today, Ārzū anchored his criticism in the well-known but apparently never before so carefully formulated cosmopolitan ideal that every poet

³² Although the cross-over between Middle Persian dialects and New Persian ones is contested, scholars have now come to a conclusion parallel with Ārzū's, namely that Dari is not an "eastern Persian" but rather a universal literary dialect integrated into New Persian wherever it was used (Khanlari 1994; Clinton 1998; Smyth 1994: 292 n 6).

³³ It is important to note here that the colonial-period identification of Urdu as the "camp jargon" of India on the basis that "*urdū*" can mean military camp fails the historical test. The word is cognate with "horde" (as in the Mongol unit of polity), and so refers to the seat of power rather than to a common bivouac.

³⁴ *shāʿir az har mulk kih bāshad mašlʿan ḳhāqānī az shirwān wa niẓāmī az ganjah wa sanāʾī az ḡhaznīn wa ḳhusrau az dihlī bah hamān zabān-i muqarrar ḥarf zadand wa ān nīst magar zabān-i urdū* (M 13).

and literary scholar across the cosmopolis was judged by the same not only translocal but transnational standard.

Having defined Persian, Injū and Ārzū face a crucial theological question: If the language of religion is Arabic, then are people even allowed to use Persian?³⁵ They cite a relevant qurʾānic passage to demonstrate that although Arabic is significant as the medium of the final revelation (i.e. the Qurʾān), it has not been the sole language of divine revelation: “And we did not send any messenger except [one speaking] in the language of his people” (14.4). The discussion of the commentarial tradition is somewhat difficult to follow, but essentially many commentators have agreed that Arabic is not the sole language with divine sanction. According to one commentator, it is even permissible to use a Persian translation of qurʾānic passages during prayer [*namāz*]. Furthermore, the sons [*abnāʾ*] of Pārs were referenced in the Qurʾān and Persians mentioned in *ḥadīṣ*.

The discussion in *Muṣmir* now shifts to the question of the origin of poetry, using *Lūbāb al-albāb* and *Dabistān-i mazāhib* as the key sources. The first poem ever composed was a *marṣīyah* [dirge] sung by Adam for his slain son Abel (it was presumably in Arabic, but this is left open).³⁶

³⁵ Discussed in *M* 14-7; *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* 17-22. See also Browne 1929: 12ff.

³⁶ This is an extension of the story as told in Genesis 4:8 and Qurʾān 5:30. For a good discussion of this section in *Lūbāb al-albāb* and its larger context, see Keshavmurthy 2011: esp 109ff. A fascinating Sanskrit cultural parallel on the theme “poetry is born in grief” is recorded at the beginning of the *Rāmāyaṇa*: Vālmīki witnessed a hunter kill one of a pair of mating birds, and he spontaneously uttered the first *śloka* as he lamented the death and cursed the hunter.

According to *Lūbāb al-albāb*, the first Persian poem was composed by the king Bahram Gūr (the historical Sassanian ruler Bahrām V, r. 420-38). *Dabistān-i mazāhib* offers another possibility: The first Persian poetry was composed in the age of the Ābādiyān, the followers of the first prophet sent to Persia (Ābād).³⁷ One of the kings in that mythical period, Farhūsh, had seven incomparable [*bī-qiyās*] poets who each produced a poem for every day of the week. Ārzū does not adjudicate between these various possibilities,³⁸ but instead changes the subject to one that is more familiar to us from the perspective of the history of language and yet is far too easily dismissed as nonsense: Ārzū argues that the language of Zoroaster's time was "obviously" Pahlavi, and the commentary upon it (Zend) and upon that (Pazend) were also in the Pahlavi language. From our perspective, this claim is incorrect but it is incorrect in a telling way: Ārzū cannot distinguish between what we call Old Persian and Middle Persian, but this should not be allowed to obscure the rigor of his historical thinking. From our perspective, Pahlavi is Middle Persian while the language of Zoroastrian scripture, Avestan, is a variety of Old Persian (there is a gap between the two of approximately a thousand years). Ārzū is correct that the Zend is a commentary on the ancient Zoroastrian scripture, the Avesta, but Pazend is not a

³⁷ M 18. Ārzū reports this as fact but of course we are discussing an event which would have occurred in mythical time. Ābād was believed to be author of the *Dasātīr*, which scholars later have concluded is a forgery written during Akbar's reign.

³⁸ Yet another possibility, which Ārzū hints at in just a few words, is that (as the anonymous author of the *Tārīkh-i sīstān* reports) the secretary of the Saffarid king Ya'qūb bin Lai's (r. 867-79) composed the first Persian poetry because his king could not understand an Arabic poem that was read out (Hanaway 2012: 105).

second-order commentary but rather a script in which the Zend is written.³⁹ Ārzū also incorrectly attributes authorship of the “Zend” and “Pazend” to Zoroaster, but of course—assuming he was an actual person and not a historical composite in the same way that some think the poet Homer might have been—the commentaries were written many centuries after Zoroaster’s life. This line of thinking does not appear to be derived either from *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* or *Dabistān-i mazāhib*, and represents an attempt by Ārzū to tie up various historical loose ends: He refers to Zoroaster as “*ibrāhīm zardusht*” or “Abraham-Zoroaster,” and so melds the Islamic and Zoroastrian historical traditions.⁴⁰ Furthermore, he brings India into the picture by referring to “the letter Zoroaster wrote to the Emperor of India and which was repeatedly read.” One is at a loss to discover where this anecdote might have come from, but the conclusion which Ārzū draws from it is crucial: He argues that “the basis of these languages is Pahlavi, and after that Dari, afterwards the common usage [i.e. present-day languages], as the research concludes, and it [i.e., Pahlavi] has indeed fallen out of use.”⁴¹ The phrase “these languages” is ambiguous but since Ārzū has been discussing both India and an

³⁹ The prologue to Nizāmī’s *Haft paīkar* [The Seven Beauties, 1197 CE] makes a claim that the poet’s project is exegetical by invoking Zend, which was widely known among Islamicate writers to be an exegesis [*ta’wīl*] on Zoroastrian scripture: “This poem’s design I have adorned / with seven brides, like Magian Zend” (4:33; qtd./trans. Meisami 1987: 299).

⁴⁰ The same conflation of Zoroaster and Abraham appears in *M* 82. According to *M*’s editor, it was not uncommon.

⁴¹ “*maktūbī kih zardusht ba-pādishāh-i hind niwishtah wa mukarrar ba-muṭāl’ah dar āmadah chinān dar yāft mīshawad kih aṣl-i in zabān-hā pahlawī ast ba’d az ān darī sipas muta’ārif hāzā ākhar al-tahqīq wa ān bi’l-fi’l matrūk al-isti’māl ast*” (*M* 20).

Iranian prophet, it is reasonable to assume that he means that both Indic languages and modern Persian are derived from “Pahlavi” (or as we would call it, Proto-Indo-Iranian). While for us it is evident that over time one language can change into another or branch off into multiple languages, before the advent of modern historical linguistics this was far from obvious (cf. Foucault 1994: 291-4), as we consider below.

Once these preliminary, Persian-specific matters are dealt with, the text continues by engaging with *al-Muzhir*. There are various discussions of how Arabic concepts entered Persian—for example, a section on words in Persian for which the native Persian word was “forgotten” and replaced by an Arabic equivalent (55ff)⁴² and one on “foreign” words (80ff). This discussion is clearly based upon historical reasoning, but it is not particularly sophisticated or interesting from our perspective. The difficulty for a Persian writer attempting to engage with the Arabic tradition on this level is that throughout the Arabic philological tradition there was resistance to considering the Arabic language anything but a closed system. (While philologists were aware of the various dialects in contemporary Arabic, this fragmented Arabic was not the object of their study since they were interested in the Qurʾān and its particular language.) Traditionally, the most eloquent spoken Arabic had been regarded as that of the Bedouin tribes who had little contact with people outside their

⁴² This is based on Imām Šaʿalibī, and Ārzū takes him to task for being wrong about his examples.

communities. At the annual oratorical contest at Mecca, these Bedouins almost invariably bested other Arabs, such as the Levantines, whose Arabic had been “corrupted” by contact with Syriac speakers, or the Yemenis, whose speech changed through contact with Indic and other languages.⁴³ While al-Suyūṭī was aware of the influence of other languages on Arabic and vice versa—after all he wrote a lexicon of words in the Qurʾān with analogues in other languages⁴⁴—others were unwilling to accept Arabic as anything less than an originary language.⁴⁵ Indeed, al-Suyūṭī’s section on *tawāfuq* begins with a quotation from the grammarian Ibn Jumhūr (fl. third/ninth c.) claiming that “there is nothing in God’s book [the Qurʾān]—praise be upon it!—except [in] the Arabic language.”⁴⁶ In *Muṣmir* such views on “pure” Arabic are not well connected to any discussion of Persian, but because Ārzū posits Persian as a courtly language, there is an inherent contradiction: The best Arabic is unmixed and yet Ārzū

⁴³ M 9, cf. Suleiman 1999: 22. “Syriac speakers” is a conjecture on the basis of the word “*niṣārī*,” meaning Nazerene (a term for Christian and Judeo-Christian sects). That Yemen is singled out is noteworthy because it was, of course, on the maritime crossroads of India, the Middle East and Africa, and so would have been teeming with languages.

⁴⁴ Bell 1924. In his *Lubb al-lubāb*, Suyūṭī lists seven sound combinations that suggest an Arabic word was originally Persian (Asbaghi 1987: 7-8). The extremely influential *Tafsīr* of Ṭabarī (b. 224–5 AH/839 CE) also deals with the question of the relationship of Persian and Arabic and more generally addresses loanwords from other languages in its introduction (Tabari 1987: vol 1, pp 12-5).

⁴⁵ The problem of a divine origin of language versus language as an agreed upon convention was one of the major threads of debate in Arabic philology (Loucel 1963-4). Those inclined to the view that God handed language to man often pointed to Qurʾān 2.31 “And He taught Adam the names—all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, ‘Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.’” The first chapter of *al-Muzhir*, in which al-Suyūṭī deals with this question, does not record his personal opinion (Loucel 1963-4: 68). The early Arabic grammarians noted the foreign origin of various Arabic words, which is somewhat surprising given how vehemently the possibility was opposed by later exegetes (Versteegh 1993: 88-91).

⁴⁶ “*laysa fī kitāb allahī—subḥānāhī—shayʾ baḡhair luḡhat al-ʿarab*” (*al-Muzhir* 1998: 209).

acknowledges that courts are places where languages mix. For example, the word *barsāt* [rainy season], whose invention Ārzū connects to the “people of the court” [*ahl-i urdū*], is derived from the Indic word “*bārish*” [rain] plus the Arabic feminine plural ending “-āt” (212). Thus Arab views on linguistic purity cannot apply directly to Persian, but Ārzū hedges against this inconsistency by making proper Persian equivalent to courtly usage and therefore unmixed, because whatever expressions come into the Persian of the court and are accepted there are, by definition, Persian. While his discussion appears to relate to both formal and informal language, his focus is on written literary language. Indeed, in his discussion of the Meccan oratorical contest, he asserts that all Arabs *wrote* in an identical style even if they *spoke* different dialects. This emphasis on the production of literature over casual speech requires Ārzū to offer a nuanced account of the phonetics of regional speech as well as to some degree regional vocabulary, in order to determine which words are universal (and therefore literary) and which are local (and therefore unliterary).

Phonetics, Vocabulary, and Regional Variation

Ārzū’s contention that there is a single literary Persian used across the vast territory of the Persian cosmopolis is not based on the linguistically suspect claim that there is no variation

across that region.⁴⁷ He is clear—as we should be—that what is under consideration is literary language and not everyday communication. For one thing, his project is not pure description (as in a modern linguistic survey) but also an aesthetic endeavor: The goal is not only to describe usage but to set a standard at the same time.⁴⁸ Ārzū recognized that regionalism is inevitable, even in a formalized dialect like literary Persian, and so understood the need to deal with variation in a theoretically sophisticated way. The cosmopolitan tradition always feels the pull of the local as it simultaneously exerts its own force on the local language and culture.⁴⁹

He posits a structure of authority that flows from the imperial court, arguing that:

The truth as established by research is that the respected [i.e. standard] Persian is that of the royal court, which has been established after the mixture of crowds and troops; thus, in the poetry of the eloquent and the prose of the articulate there is no other language, and if ever, because of the demise of its authority, [the royal court] ceases to exist, then the eloquent and articulate of every city and province use in conversation that [language] which has been established and do not mix [it] with the language of their country.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ A parallel from European thought might be useful here: For Lorenzo Valla, contemporary Europe was the shadow of the Roman Empire and this shared cultural history explained what was common to the continent despite many outward differences (Ginzburg 1999: 66).

⁴⁸ The underlying philosophy of grammar, namely the system of Hellenistic and traditional Arabic grammar, likewise followed rational principles (that is, it strove for an ideal) rather than empirical (that is, observation-based) ones (Versteegh 1980: 21-2).

⁴⁹ These interactions are not inherently good or bad in Ārzū's eyes, but they are inevitable and so must be dealt with. Ārzū's understanding of them is considered below and again in Chapter Four.

⁵⁰ “*wa ḥaqq-i taḥqīq ān ast kih zabān-i mu‘atabar-i fārsī zabān-i urdū-yi pādīshāhī ast kih ba‘d iḵhtilāt-i firaq wa jumā‘āt qarār yāftah liḥazā dar sh‘ir-i fuṣṣḥā wa naṣr-i bulaḡhā zabān-i dīgarān nīst wa agar aḥyān^{am} sabab-i qalat-i ḥukm ‘adam dārad wa ānchih muqarrar shudah faṣīḥ-o balīḡ az har shahr wa ulkahī kih bāshad badān takallum namāyad wa ba-zabān-i mulk-i ḫwūd maḵhlūt na-sāzad*” (M 9).

Thus, according to Ārzū, primary responsibility for controlling good taste lies with people of the imperial court and then with sub-imperial elites.⁵¹ In Persian, in contrast to the Arabic tradition's veneration of Bedouins, the guardians of language are urbanites.⁵²

The existence of regional vocabulary in Persian literature is an issue because regional vocabulary is by definition unaesthetic—however, it can later become universal and accepted in Persian. Indeed, it is likely that the origin of Persian lexicography stemmed from a need to explain unfamiliar dialect words that appeared in poetry, and the process of being codified in dictionaries made many such originally local words universal across Persian.⁵³ Ārzū engages with *al-Muzhir* in a number of chapters dealing with vocabulary: on the eloquent [*faṣīḥ*], on the “despised and base” [*raddī-o maẓmūm*], on the “universal and rare” [*mutṭarad-o*

⁵¹ Contemporary Europe had a similar system of linguistic authority: Standard French in the seventeenth century was thought of as that of “the court and the city” [*la cour et la ville*], reflecting a courtly/urban bias just as in Ārzū's formulation (Burke 2004: 99-100). Claude de Vaugolas (1585–1650), a founding member of the Académie Française, argued that more specifically the standard was to be set by “the soundest part of the court” [*la plus saine partie de la cour*], which included women, the administrative establishment, and townspeople who had dealings with the court. This was the accepted linguistic standard of that period in France as well as in Poland (where it was called “*dworski mowy*” or “courtly speech”), Denmark, Russia, England, and elsewhere.

⁵² In our discussion of NA, Ārzū's lexicon of Indic words, in Chapter Four, we will argue that this view extends to the vernacular as well. On early Arabic grammarians' use of Bedouin data (before the tradition generally came to acknowledge only the Qur'ān as admissible evidence), see Versteegh 1983: 146-9

⁵³ Baevskii 2007: 29. The creation of dictionaries was a catalyst for maintaining the surprising homogeneity of literary Persian over nearly a millennium. Regionalism was a concern even in the early years of the Persian cosmopolis: For example, the eleventh-century CE writer Nāṣir Ḳhusrau met a poet called Qaṭrān in Tabriz (north-western Iran) who “wrote good poetry but did not know Persian well” [*sh'irī nekū mī guft ammā zabān-i fārsī nekū nimī dānist*] (qtd Hanaway 2012: 124). It is not clear whether Qaṭrān “did not know Persian well” because he was an Azeri Turkish speaker or whether he was not familiar with the literary language, but context implies the latter: He read the *dīwāns* of Manīk and Daqīqī with the help of Nāṣir Ḳhusrau, all three of whom were from Khurasan in the east. Thus, Nāṣir Ḳhusrau had an easy access to their particular usage, which Qaṭrān did not.

shāz], and finally on the “unfamiliar and strange” [*waḥshī-o ḡharīb*]. Eloquent words, according to Arabic rhetoricians, are ones that have “purity” [*ḡhulūṣ*] and common currency (61-75, esp. 71). This is in part a historical argument because, as Ārzū notes, every period has a different set of acceptable vocabulary since words pass out of common usage.⁵⁴ The “despised and base” words are glossed as “the worst words” [*bad-tarīn luḡhāt*], and yet the entire discussion has nothing to do with vocabulary as such but with mistakes in pronunciation (75-7). In a not altogether unexpected but still amusing twist of history, two standard features of modern Iranian Persian fall into this category, namely the interchangeable pronunciation of the letters ‘*q*’ and ‘*ḡh*’ and the tendency to turn ‘*ā*’ into ‘*ū*’ (e.g., *dukān* [shop] > *dukūn*).⁵⁵ The discussion of the “universal and the rare” is derived from Ibn Jinnī’s analysis of the matter.⁵⁶ Ārzū simply endorses his views as applicable to Persian as well as Arabic, and it need not concern us here. The “untamed and strange” words are those

⁵⁴ M 62. The Roman poet Horace (65–8 BCE) makes a similar observation in his *Ars Poetica*: “As leaves in the forest are changed in the fleeting years / the oldest fall first: thus words die of old age / and the newly coined flourish and thrive, as in the prime of youth” [*ut silvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos, / prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit aetas, / et iuvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque*] (vv. 60-62)

⁵⁵ Modern Iranian Persian is, of course, a relatively recent standard based on the local speech of Tehran, which was not a place of much importance until it became the Qajar capital in 1795. It was not, apparently, a prestige dialect before the spread of mass media in Iran.

⁵⁶ M 78-9. For him there are four kinds of words: (1) Universal in Analogy and Use [*mutt̤tarad dar qiyās-o ist‘imāl*], (2) Universal in Analogy and Rare [*shāz*] in Use, (3) Universal in Use and Rare in Analogy, (4) Rare in Analogy and Use. The distinctions are not entirely clear to the present researcher.

which are rarely used [*dar musta‘malāt kamtar āmadah bāshad*].⁵⁷ In the Arabic tradition, there is some disagreement as to whether using such words is permitted at all. According to Ārzū, words which are known but whose meanings are unclear are avoided by the eloquent. However, since Persian is a mixed language, this rule can never be absolute.

More important for our purposes than the above is the two-part discussion on whether borrowings [*taṣarrufāt*] from Indian (and other) languages are permitted in Persian.⁵⁸ It begins in a short chapter (36-9) which frames the question through *al-Muzhir*⁵⁹ and returns, without particular reference to *al-Muzhir* this time, in several later chapters (160-75). When the discussion is not framed by Arabic, Ārzū is philosophically uncompromising: If Arabic, Turkish and “*arāminah*” [?, perhaps Aramaic] words could be borrowed into Persian over the years, what possible logic could prohibit Indian words?⁶⁰ Great masters have used *hindī* words in

⁵⁷ M 80-3. The term “*waḥshī*” might have been used in the technical sense of unintelligible language as early as the sixth century CE (Bonebakker 1970: 81).

⁵⁸ Blochmann defines *taṣarruf* as follows: “The change in spelling, form, meaning and construction, which an Arabic word, apparently without any reason, undergoes in Persian, or which an Arabic or a Persian word undergoes in Hindustani, is called *taṣarruf*” (1868: 32). For him it is necessarily a kind of corruption, but Ārzū appears to have viewed it as a normal process that a language undergoes. A good reconstruction of the aesthetic consequences of *taṣarruf* for Ārzū is Keshavmurthy 2013: 37-8.

⁵⁹ In this passage, which Ārzū summarizes, al-Suyūṭī considers whether Arabic had in fact borrowed Persian words, a possibility that many Arabic grammarians denied.

⁶⁰ M 160. He takes up this argument again in *Mauhibat-i ‘uẓmā* and the second preface to *Dād-i suḵhan*, discussed in Chapter Four of this study. Early Persian dictionaries were not concerned with where words came from. As Solomon Baevskii notes, “They make no explicit distinction between assimilated loanwords in Persian and *Fremdwörter* or outright foreign lexis; but in general it is clear that fully assimilated Arabic and (in lesser volume) Turkic vocabulary in Persian is not labeled for etymology” (2007: 142).

Persian and their usage of them is “unquestionably correct” [*bī-takalluf durust*]. Thus, the question is not whether Indic words are allowed in Persian in the first place (“in the doctrine of the present author they are not forbidden in the present time” [*ba-maḏhab-i mu'allif darīn zamān mamnū' nīst*]) but rather in what frequency and to what degree they can be changed.⁶¹

He notes that Arabic and Turkish words have even replaced some common indigenous Persian words over the centuries. However, there is a sense that care must be taken in deploying Indic words. Ārzū's friend Muḫliṣ is explicit in reserving the right of bringing *hindī* words into Persian for “people of [aesthetic] might and exceptional talent” [*ahl-i qudrat wa isti'dād-i muḫhtar*] (qtd. Shamisa 2002: 32).

The considerable variation in pronunciation across the Persian cosmopolis does not concern Ārzū except to the degree that it is able to corrupt the written, literary form. For example, by the seventeenth century Iranians had begun to stop distinguishing *maj'hūl* vowels (the sounds 'e' and 'o') from *ma'rūf* vowels ('ī' and 'ū'), but to Ārzū, this change is worth mentioning but is not in itself significant.⁶² Such a shift is not in the same category as the

⁶¹ This translation is based on Cyrus Shamisa's emendation of M 1991's “*darīn zabān*” [in this language] to “*darīn zamān*” (Shamisa 2002: 31). The latter is the *lectio difficilior* (the preferred reading because of its greater complexity) since it addresses an argument about chronology which Ārzū introduces just above: He points out that the influence of Arabic on Persian began during the Arab conquests of Iran (a millennium before) but that Turkish and Arabic words continued to be taken into Persian subsequently. The on-going process of borrowing is the analogy for borrowing Indic words into Persian, and therefore borrowing them “at the present” [*darīn zamān*] is not prohibited.

⁶² M 84. See Khan 2004, and cf. *Tġh* : 142-3.

“despised and base” discussed above. *Muṣmir* has several chapters devoted to various phonetic transformations. The discussions are largely derived from *al-Muzhir*. The topics include *ikhtilāf* [variance in gemination], *qalb* [transposition], *ḥaẓf* [elision], *ibdāl* [exchanging, i.e. sounds], and *imālah* [changing ‘ā’ into ‘ī’].⁶³ The most relevant for our purposes is *ibdāl*, which refers to when a sound is exchanged for one with a similar articulation point [*qurb-i maḥraǧ*] in the mouth (135ff). It explains a number of historical sound changes, including changes to *hindī* words in Persian, such as “*rānā*” [*hindī* for king] being pronounced as “*ra’nā*” [Arabic for beautiful or tender] and “*garbhsūt*” [cloth with cotton warp and silk weft] turned into “*garmsūt*” (171, 174).

On the edges of Persian are other languages, and the phonetics of these languages require a descriptive apparatus in order to consider the integration of foreign words into Persian. Expressing non-Arabic sounds in written Arabic had a long tradition and this was expanded by Persianate intellectuals.⁶⁴ The descriptive system adopted by Ārzū and by some earlier writers, like the author of *Farhang-i jahāngīrī*, is simple yet capable of expressing

⁶³ *Ikhtilāf*, which Ārzū claims is very common in Persian, involves either reducing a geminated consonant (that is, one pronounced twice in succession, as in, for example, ‘n’ in “cannot”) to a single consonant or geminating a single consonant (90ff). A chapter heading refers to *qalb* as a subset of *ikhtilāf*, but in fact it seems to be entirely different, namely when two contiguous sounds in a word are switched (117ff). *Ḥaẓf* is, of course, the loss of a sound (99ff). *Imālah* is described at 158-60, cf. Owens 2006: 197-229.

⁶⁴ Ibn Ḳhaldūn proposed a kind of phonetic triangulation: He rejects the usual scribal practice of replacing a foreign letter with the single closest Arabic equivalent, instead deciding “to represent such non-Arabic (sounds) in such a way as to indicate the two (sounds) closest to it, so that the reader may be able to pronounce it somewhere in the middle between the sounds represented by the two letters and thus reproduce it correctly” (*Muqaddimah* 2005: 31). He is primarily concerned with the representation of Berber.

virtually all of the sounds in Arabic, Persian and Indic languages. The four Persian letters that Arabic does not have (‘p’, ‘ch’, ‘z’, and ‘g’) are analogized to their Arabic letter with the equivalent form (*passim* M 135). Thus, for example, ‘p’ [پ] is referred to as “the Persian ‘b’ [ب].” In a manuscript culture where the marks that distinguish letters from similarly shaped letters are often not written in or simply get lost as ink fades and paper crumbles, such long-form orthography [*taqaiyud*] prevents ambiguity.⁶⁵ Indic language presents a greater challenge because it has aspirated and retroflex sounds, which are not phonemes found in either Arabic or Persian.⁶⁶ The aspirated consonants, which are consonants spoken with more breath than their unaspirated counterparts, are described aptly as a letter “mixed with ‘h’.” Thus ‘ph’ is called “the Persian ‘b’ mixed with ‘h’” [*bā-yi fārsī maḡhlūt bā hā*]. Retroflexes, formed by curling the tongue back towards the roof of the mouth, are unique to Indic languages (and Pashto) within the Persian cosmopolis, and are simply analogized to Arabic as the uniquely Persian letters had been. Thus, the retroflex ‘ṭ’ is called “the Indian ‘t’” [*tā-yi hindī*]. For a sound like ‘ṭh’, which is both retroflexed and aspirated, the two operations are combined to yield “the Indian

⁶⁵ A letter described by this system is *muqaiyad* [lit. “fettered”] because it is no longer subject to misinterpretation (Blochmann 1868: 13). *Taqaiyud* (which Blochmann calls *qaid*) was common well into the twentieth century, even when it had become easy to typeset vowel marks in Persian. Surprisingly, though, transliteration into roman script was generally preferred to vowel marks in published dictionaries until recently (Baevskii 2007: 163).

⁶⁶ In *hindī*/Urdu the aspirated letters are ‘bh’, ‘ph’, ‘th’, ‘dh’, ‘ṭh’, ‘ḍh’, ‘ṛh’, ‘jh’, ‘chh’. The digraphs ‘lh’ [ल्ह], ‘mh’ [म्ह], and ‘nh’ [न्ह] are each considered a single phoneme in some dialects, e.g. Braj, and of course are not consonants. The retroflex consonants are ‘ṭ’, ‘ṭh’, ‘ḍ’, ‘ḍh’, ‘ṛ’, ‘ṛh’. The retroflex nasal (‘ṇ’) and sibilant (‘ṣ’) are ignored. An alternative but far clumsier system to distinguish the Indic letters is used in *Tuḥfat al-hind* (see Chapter Four).

‘t’ mixed with ‘h’” [tā-yi hindī maḡhlūt bā hā].⁶⁷ This sort of precision is important when words pass between languages because sounds change in the process, and the nature of the phonetic transformation can help us determine the words’ relationship. Ārzū repeatedly refers to the difficulty faced by non-Indians in pronouncing Indic sounds, which leads to mistakes when the word becomes a Persian word. Although some of his conclusions are tentative, he uses the logic of phonetics to probe how Arabic, Persian and Indic languages are linked.

Connections between Languages

Ishtirāk or “sharing” describes the existence of the same word in two or more languages. This is of obvious interest for modern scholars because it could be interpreted as historical linguistics *avant la lettre*. It is, however, important to point out that Ārzū’s project was limited: He was interested not in drawing up a family tree of languages but merely in explaining how a word can be shared between languages. The approach he takes, as with so much of his scholarship, is an innovative extension of the tradition as it stood. In *Muṣmir*, he describes three processes

⁶⁷ To the present researcher’s knowledge, there has been no study of the development of modern Urdu orthography from Persian orthography. While the aspirates had apparently been written in throughout the Mughal period (although not with *do-chashmī* ‘he’ [ه] as in modern Urdu), differentiating the retroflexes from their nearest Persian equivalents does not appear to have been common before the nineteenth century. The modern method for making retroflexes, the letter ‘ṭ’ [ط] written above the letter as in ‘ṭ’ [ٹ], was one of at least three competing possibilities. Another common method was using four dots in a block above the letter as in [ٹ] for ‘ṭ’. An undated autograph manuscript of the poet Rāsiḡh of Azimabad (d. 1824) from approximately 1810 now in the collection of Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has the unusual feature of a vertical line ['] placed above letters to mark them as retroflex. In general, there was a great deal of inconsistency in orthography in Urdu manuscripts produced for personal consumption before around 1810 so it is not surprising that retroflexes, which would have been obvious from context, were not often marked (conversation with Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Allahabad, 5 June 2011).

that can explain instances of *ishtirāk*.⁶⁸ None of these is entirely satisfactory from the perspective of modern historical linguistics, but the logic is fascinating and self-consistent.

Three Kinds of Connections

The simplest of the three is **Persianization** [*tafrīs*], which is the process by which a foreign word is borrowed into Persian and experiences phonetic changes that mold it into a Persian word. Persianization is thus defined as when the root [*jauhar*] of a word is taken from another language into Persian and generally undergoes a phonetic transformation.⁶⁹ Ārzū argues that this is a long-standing phenomenon, and indeed that most of the words had been borrowed into Persian “before the mixing of Persian and *hindī*.” This is a surprising statement but its meaning becomes clear after some examples⁷⁰ and the remark that

the words mentioned [as examples] are in the book *hindī* [*hindī-yi kitābī*] of the people of India, which is completely different from the Indian language current in this country and Persian is not mixed with it, as the aforementioned language is present in [i.e., throughout] time.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Elsewhere he proposes a five-part scheme: In his lexicon *Chirāgh-i hidāyat*’s entry for “ang” (1989: 1017-8) he notes that words can be shared as a result of (1) *tawāfuq*, (2) *ittifāq*, (3) *tafrīs*, (4) *iltizām*, or (5) *muhannad*. The first three are addressed in *Muṣmir. Iltizām*, which has been defined by one modern scholar as “signification on the basis of an association” (De Bruijn 1988), is an odd category because Ārzū does not describe it except to say that it is as in the work of the poet Ṭuḡhrā (whose penchant for using Indic vocabulary is clear from the number of times Ārzū cites him, cf. Abidi 1982: 51-2). Perhaps therefore it means something like “arbitrarily using a non-Persian synonym.” *Muhannad* is considered below in the context of *tafrīs*.

⁶⁹ “ān taṣarruf ast dar jauhar-i kalimah az jihat-i taḡhayyur-i talaffuẓ yā ḡhair-i ān” (M 211, cf. 61ff).

⁷⁰ Namely “*uṣṭur*”/“*uṣhtur*” [camel], “*angushṭ*”/“*angusht*” [finger], and “*nābh*”/“*nāf*” [navel]. The first of each of the pairs is the *hindī* pronunciation and the second Persian.

⁷¹ “*alfāẓ-i maẓkūrah ba-zabān-i kitābī-yi ahl-i hind ast kih muḡhāyarat tamām ba-zabān-i hindī musta‘mal-yi in mulk dārad wa fārsī rā badān muṭṭlaq iḡhtilāt nist chunānkih bar ‘ālam zabān-i maẓkūr zāhir ast*” (M 211-2).

Context makes it clear that the “book language” is Sanskrit since it differs from presently spoken languages and is primordial. It is, as Ārzū notes, unaffected by the large-scale borrowing of Persian vocabulary that the spoken Indic languages had experienced from the Delhi Sultanate period into Ārzū’s time. Thus, in another work, he introduces the concept of *muhannad* [making Indic], which is the opposite of *tafrīs* since it refers to a Persian word which has been borrowed into an Indic language.⁷² He notes that it is his own term, and observes that such borrowings of Perso-Arabic terms, like the word “necessity” [*zarūrat*], are especially prevalent in Indic (official) documents [*dafātir-i hindī*].

Persianization is an on-going process as Indic words, especially names, continue to be brought into Persian, but there is an important distinction to be drawn between recently Persianized words and words that entered Persian centuries before. The poet Ṭuḡhrā, for example, refers to “*barwach*” (for “*bharūch*,” a town in Gujarat near Ahmedabad) and Ārzū disapproves of the transformation of “*ū*” to “*wa*,” calling it “unnecessary” [*bi-zarūrat*] (217). When words have been recently Persianized, phonetic changes have often occurred because of “a lack of research and inattention to the literature of Indians” [*‘adam-i taḥqīq wa i‘tnā ba-kalām-i hindiyān*] (216). (This probably explains why, as we saw above, using *hindī* words in Persian for the first time is reserved for expert poets.) For example, “*arhant*” [an enlightened person or

⁷² CH 1989: 1018; see note 68 above.

Jain saint] has been incorrectly written in the dictionary *Burhān-i qāṭi*⁷³ and elsewhere as “*arhaft*” because in Perso-Arabic script ‘*f*’ and ‘*n*’ look somewhat similar.⁷³ A common pattern of mistakes is discernible in the name of the *Mahābhārata* character Bhīm, which has been infelicitously rendered into Persian as “*bahīm*” because Iranians assumed that “*bh*” (a single sound) represented two separate sounds ‘*b*’ and ‘*h*’ (215).⁷⁴ Since there are no aspirates in Arabic or Persian, Ārzū says that Iranians are generally unable to avoid such a “hideous mistake” [*khaṭā-yi fāḥish*]. However, there is an important case in which an allowance is made for usages that are wrong by Indic standards, namely when an incorrect spelling has been sanctified by usage. For example, in Aurangzeb’s chancery, an order was given that Indian place names written with a vocalic ‘*he*’ at the end, such as Bengal (“*bangāl^{ah}*”) or Malwa (“*malw^{ah}*”), would henceforth be written according to the Indic manner with an ‘*alif*’ at the end, that is “*bangāl^ā*” and “*malw^ā*.”⁷⁵ This change was wrong, argues Ārzū, because Persian has a history of spelling such names the former way, as in the famous verse of Ḥāfiẓ, in which the poet boasts about the extent of his readership:

⁷³ M 214. This section corrects the spelling of a number of Hindu concepts such as Maheshwar and Brahma, also providing fascinating definitions.

⁷⁴ M 215. Likewise, “*gur*,” glossed as “rock candy” [*qand-i siyah*], is incorrectly rendered as “*gor*”—both spellings are current in Persian, but the chief [*sar-guroh*] of Modern poets, Šā’ib of Tabriz, uses the former and only it is correct.

⁷⁵ M 213. In Hindi-Urdu today, words ending in “-*ah*” and “-*ā*” are pronounced identically but for Ārzū there is a distinction as there is in modern Iranian Persian.

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

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

Because a master-poet [ustād] like Ḥāfiẓ has written it this way, this usage is beyond reproach (even though it is wrong from the perspective of Indic language). This is a mechanism of authority that operates like the Sanskrit “*ārṣa prayoga*” or the usage of a ṛṣi [sage] that is invoked as justification for grammatical exceptions in a language whose very name [*saṃskṛtam*, lit. refined] represents it as perfect. In the next chapter, we consider how the usage of the Ancients [*mutaqaddimīn*] structures authority in Persian discourse. Ārzū implies that there is a limit to what precisely should be taken from one language to another, but does not elaborate. Elsewhere, however, he writes that

an expert knows that the grammatical logic [*qiyās*] of one language does not apply to another and that the requirements [*aḥkām*] of each language are distinct—this is a basic principle.⁷⁶

In this case, the ‘-ah’ ending is proper Persian but it would be wrong to use it in the “idioms of India” [*muḥāwarāt-i hind*], by which Ārzū presumably means vernacular languages, or write it that way in “Indic script” [*ba-ḵatt-i hindī*], just as it is wrong to write such names with ‘-ā’ in

⁷⁶ “*ammā muḥāwarah-dān mī danad kih qiyās-i zabānī ba-zabān-i digar nabāyad kard chih aḥkām-i har zabān ‘alāhidah ast wa īn aṣlī ast*” (M 221). For example, Arabic words are combined in Persian to form compounds which do not exist in Arabic and this is unproblematic (38). Ārzū objects to the mistake (committed even by good lexicographers) of uncritically correcting Persian text based on Arabic (43).

Persian.⁷⁷ Using Indic words in Persian properly takes finesse and so Ārzū concludes that one should not use an Indic word unnecessarily if there is a good Persian equivalent (222). The sorts of words that are unquestionably allowed are “the idioms of the court and chanceries of the Emperors of India which are accepted by the nobles of the court,” and he provides a number of examples, such as “*sarbāzī*” in the meaning of “*sardār*” [ranking officer].⁷⁸ There is no judgment passed on poets who use Indic words (as long as they are used properly), and Ārzū cites his own verse to show that he himself does so (221). He is keen to know where words come from so that their proper usage can be established.

The concept of Persianization is based on the model of Arabicization [*taʿrīb*], the equivalent process by which a word enters Arabic and changes. Ārzū catalogues at length the shared words in Arabic and Persian in a section that engages with *al-Muzhir* called “A Description of Several Problems and Examples Connected with the Arabicization of Persian Words.”⁷⁹ In fact, the chapter begins with a lengthy list of Arabic words from *al-Muzhir*. Ārzū’s contribution here is to demonstrate convincingly that many of the “Arabicized” words that scholars like al-Suyūṭī, and before him al-Šaʿalabī, had assumed were natively Persian were in

⁷⁷ However, in practice many pre-modern *hindī* mss. written in Perso-Arabic script did not carefully distinguish between ‘-ah’ and ‘-ā’, just as they often failed to distinguish between homonymic Arabic letters (for example, confusing ‘ḡ’ and ‘z’).

⁷⁸ “*muṣṭalahāt-i urdū wa dafātir-i padishāhān-i hind wa qarār dādah-yi buzurgān-i darbār*” (M 222).

⁷⁹ “*aṣl: dar bayān-i baʿzī az masāʾil wa amśalah kih mutaʿalliq ast ba-taʿrīb-i alfāz-i fārsiyah*” (M 179-209). The section in *al-Muzhir* specifically addresses Persian words which have become Arabic (1998: 211-35).

fact of Indic origin. These include “*filfil*” [pepper], the Arabic equivalent of Persian “*pīl*” which in fact was originally Indic “*pīpal*” (186), and likewise “*fil*” [elephant] which is Indic “*pīl*” (182). The latter example is noteworthy because Ārzū states that “*pīl*” is the word in “*hindī-yi kitābī*” (that is, in Sanskrit). Per the usual practice when Indo-Persian works cite Sanskrit lexemes, the ending has been left off—we would think of the word as “*pīlu*.” Ārzū notes that this is the meaning that “has been heard from several people of knowledge of India” [*az ba‘zī ahl-i ‘ilm-i hind shinīdah shudah*]. This and similar statements are solid evidence that, contrary to the claims of some patriotic modern Indian scholars, Ārzū did not himself know Sanskrit but depended on informants.⁸⁰ There are dozens of examples in the lengthy section, but as they pertain to Arabic, we can move on.

Another way of explaining the existence of the same word in two languages is **coincidence** [*ittifāq*]. This phenomenon is the result of the *independent* phonetic transformation of two words in different languages such that their form becomes identical in each language.⁸¹ For example, the word “*jārū*” [broom] is found in both Persian and *hindī*. In *hindī*, according to

⁸⁰ Elsewhere, however, he cites “grammar books of the Indians” [*kutub-i naḥw-o ṣarf-i hindiyān*] (M 173). He does not give any descriptions or titles so it is unclear what exactly he means, but presumably this is a reference to the kind of literary manuals available in Braj Bhāṣā or Sanskrit.

⁸¹ We can think of this as equivalent to “convergent evolution” in which organisms develop similar traits independently, such as bats and birds both developing wings through separate evolutionary chains. Obviously Ārzū was not thinking in such Darwinian terms, but for us the parallel is almost unavoidable.

Ārzū, it is a compound formed from “*jhārnā*” [to sweep] and “*rūb*” [sweeping].⁸² In Persian, it is the shortened form [*mukḥaffaf*] of “*jārob*” [broom]. For Ārzū, coincidence appears to be the least productive of the three kinds of linguistic connections because he only gives this single example and does not discuss coincidence again. However, in the Arabic philological tradition it was an important concept since it is the term used by Ṭabarī to explain non-Arabic words in the Qur’ān. However, Ṭabarī means something slightly different by “*ittifāq*” because for him the key is that it is impossible to say which of the two (or more) languages in which a particular word appears it originally came from, not necessarily that the word developed independently in different languages (Gilliot 1990: 95).

The most significant of the three processes of word-sharing is *tawāfuq*, a term perhaps best translated as **correspondence**. Ārzū defines it as the kind of shared word that is “fixed in its root and neither [word] has been taken from the other.”⁸³ This technical phrasing is somewhat confusing but the sense is that the root of the word is identical in both languages—in contrast to Persianization, in which it has been phonetically transformed in the target language—and that one language has not borrowed the word from the other. In fact, the word need not be identical in both languages, but the difference cannot be in its root (however that

⁸² The word in *hindī* is actually “*jhārū*” (with an aspirate and a retroflex unlike in Persian), but Ārzū ignores the distinction as irrelevant.

⁸³ “*wa ān ishtirāk ast dar aṣl waṣṭ kiḥ hīch yakī az dīgarī akhṣ na-kardah bāshand bi-‘ainihi*” (M 209-10).

is to be defined). Thus, for example, “*das*”/“*dah*” [ten] and “*mās*”/“*māh*” [moon] are the result of *tawāfuq* since the sound change is trivial.⁸⁴ This is suggestive because if a word did not develop independently in two languages as in coincidence and if it was not borrowed from one language to another as in Persianization then only one possibility is left for us: The languages in which it appears must have developed from a common ancestor. Unfortunately for future researchers, Ārzū never explicitly draws such a conclusion with regards to *tawāfuq*. Indeed, an alternative possibility, which apparently no scholar has considered, is that it depends on some kind of theory of similitude that we, trapped in the mental habits of modernity, cannot access, along the lines of what Michel Foucault describes in *The Order of Things* (1994: esp. 17-30). In that case, some kind of fundamental sameness can exist in two languages without necessitating the conclusion that they are sister languages.

For the sake of argument let us grant that *tawāfuq* employs history in a way familiar to us. As we have seen, Ārzū does think historically about language, namely in noting the aftermath of the Arab conquest of Persia as a time when Arabic words came into Persian in large numbers, in identifying the transformation of Pahlavi to Dari to Farsi, and in recognizing that “Book *hindī*” (Sanskrit) is “unmixed” with Persian in contrast to modern Indic languages. Unlike Persianization, which continues into the present, correspondence is limited to the past

⁸⁴ M 210. However, he also gives “*nīst*”/“*nāst*” [“is not”] as an example of *tawāfuq*, so certain sound changes are permitted that are strange for us (213). A fuller discussion of this particular example appears in Chapter Four.

as in the example of “*ānk*” [notation, number], which Ārzū argues cannot be the result of *tawāfuq* as it does not appear in the works of the Ancients [*qudamā*] or the “Middles” (*mutawassiṭān*, that is poets who fall between the Ancients and the Moderns), or indeed any modern work except that of the (now-obscure) poet Tāsīr, but rather is spread by present-day merchants [*saudāgarān-i ḥāl*].⁸⁵

The use of the term *tawāfuq* itself is not new as it has a history in Arabic, but the purpose to which Ārzū puts it is both innovative and crucial to his intellectual project. Al-Suyūṭī’s section on *tawāfuq* in *al-Muzhir* (1998: 209-11) is perfunctory, and upon comparison it is clear that Ārzū has taken a relatively minor concept and transformed it into a central tenet of his philosophy.⁸⁶ He writes

Until now, no one had discovered the correspondence [*tawāfuq*] between *hindī* and Persian; even in the lexicographers’ every effort, researchers in this art [i.e. lexicography] were not aware of what is *hindī* and what is Persian and otherwise. But humble Ārzū—a person who is derivative [in thought], an old man, and incapable—established this for the first time, while correcting some Persian words, as in the books written by him, such as *Sirāj al-luġhāt*, *Chirāġh-i hidāyat*, and so on. It is strange that Rashīdī [author of the dictionary *Farhang-i rashīdī*] and others were in India, and yet never noticed the degree to which there is correspondence in the two languages.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ M 217. The entry for “*ang*” in Ārzū’s lexicon *Chirāġh-i hidāyat* has a similar definition as given in *Muṣmir* and exactly the same Tāsīr quote (but with the spelling “*ang*” instead of “*ānk*.” He notes in the definition that in *hindī* it is known as “*ānk*” and “*ang*” is Persianized. See fn.68 above.

⁸⁶ Shams-i Qāis (fl. seventh c. AH/thirteenth c. CE) earlier used the term in a different sense, namely as “harmony” of lines and half-lines in a couplet (Windfuhr 1974: 337). This appears to be the same concept that the Persian/Urdu tradition later called *rabṭ*. Ārzū himself appears to use the word in this sense at M 68.

⁸⁷ “*tā al-yaum hīchkas ba-daryāft-i tawāfuq-i zabān-i hindī wa fārsī bā-ān hamah kaṣrat-i ahl-i luġhat chih fārsī wa chih hindī wa dīgar muḥaqqiqān-i īn fann mutawajjih na-shudah-and illā faqīr-i ārzū kasīkih muttabi‘ wa pīr wa īn ‘ājiz bāshad wa īn rā aṣlī muqarrar kardah wa binā’i taṣhīḥ-i ba‘zī alfāz-i fārsiyah ba-dīn guzashtah chunānkih az kutub-i muṣannaḥafah-yi*

Correspondence is mentioned in *Muṣmir* in no fewer than six chapters.⁸⁸ Since the concept appears in *Sirāj al-luġhāt*, Ārzū must have been thinking about it by at least the early 1730s. Besides *Sirāj al-luġhāt* and *Chirāġh-i hidāyat*, it also appears repeatedly in *Nawādir al-alfāz* (his dictionary of Indic words), and is mentioned once briefly in *Mauhibat-i ‘uzmā* (2002: 100) and once at length in *Ḳhiyābān-i gulistān* (1996: 113-4). This common thread in Ārzū’s work also provides an opportunity for Ārzū to research Indian culture and to bring it to a Persian readership. These discussions lead to fascinating—if occasionally perplexing—observations, such as a wonderful learned discussion of the etymology of Kandahar (a city in Afghanistan), which floats the possibility that the name is derived from the name of Queen Gāndhārī in the *Mahābhārata*. Furthermore, he argues that the city is technically located just within Indian territory on the basis that India is defined as the place where the black antelope [*ahū-yi siyāh*] is found.⁸⁹ The black antelope, or blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*), is identified with India because of its ritual significance to Brahmins, since its skin is made into a seat (*kusha* grass is used similarly).⁹⁰ Despite this fascinating proto-anthropology, *tawāfuq* also leads to what are

ḵhwud mišl-i sirāj al-luġhāt wa chirāġh-i hidāyat wa ġhairah niwishtah-am [sic] wa ‘ajab ast az rashīdī wa ġhairah kih dar hindostān būdah-and wa hīch liḥāz na-kardah-and kih dar īn do zabān chih qadr tawāfuq ast” (M 221).

⁸⁸ M 59, 65, 115, 171, 175-9, 195, 209, 213, 217, 218, 221, 251, 269.

⁸⁹ M 218. While some of his information comes from “old Persian histories of India” (ibid 172), often it is uncited and presumably derives from Ārzū’s personal knowledge.

⁹⁰ Muḵhlīš defines “*post-takht*” as a leather cloth made from the skin of deer [*ahū*], which mendicants sit upon and is called “*mrig [mṛga] chālā*” in *hindī* (Mir’āt 123). He notes that sometimes tiger-skin is used instead.

now historically unpalatable conclusions, such as Ārzū's reference to the correspondence of Pahlavi and Arabic, a linguistic impossibility if *tawāfuq* means that the languages have a common origin.⁹¹ We must be careful, in recognizing the value of Ārzū's scholarship, not to impute to him motivations or ideas that he could not possibly have thought, simply to sooth our discomfort over what (from our perspective) he got wrong. The circumstantial case that Sir William Jones took his insights on linguistic genealogies without attribution, which we will consider now, is an example of where such caution is warranted.

The Influence (or Non-Influence) of Kḥān-i Ārzū's Philology on Mr Jones

Let us pause our discussion of the contents of *Muṣmir* for an extended historical footnote on its reception, and in particular what it has been made to represent. Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād, previously mentioned here as the author of *Āb-e ḥayāt*, wrote a book on Persian philology and literary history called *Suḵhandān-i fārs* [The Persian Poet, 1872].⁹² It is unquestionably a nationalist work—many sections begin with the invocation “My Dear Compatriots!” [‘*azizān-i waṭan!*’]—and seeks to prove that Europeans do not have a monopoly on the scientific study of

⁹¹ *ibid* 59, 195. Arabic and Persian (whether Pahlavi or any other form) are not genetically related since the former is a Semitic language and the latter Indo-European. Al-Suyūṭī appears to suggest (in a quote from Ibn Jinnī) that the words shared between Arabic and other languages had a common origin. If al-Suyūṭī provides a fuller description of *tawāfuq* that could clarify the issue, the present researcher has not found it. Europeans made precisely the same mistake: The Anglo-Irish Orientalist and diplomat Gore Ouseley (1770–1844) wrote to his brother William in 1792 that “Arabic is doubtless the mother of Persian; but, by the same rule, we should begin with Sanscrit, which is mother and grandmother of them both” (*Biographical Notices* 1846: xviii).

⁹² On this work see Sharma 2012b: 55–6.

language. He calls philology “*falsafah-yi lisān*” [lit. philosophy of language] and by the English word transliterated as “*filālājī*.” The center-piece of the argument is a comparison of Sanskrit and Persian words to show the historical tie between the two languages, and his reasoning appears to be an extension of Ārzū’s method. However, Āzād does not cite his sources and we are not in a position to say how much of his data was derived from the indigenous philological tradition and how much from European historical linguistics, which had matured by this time and would have been known to the Europeans with whom Āzād interacted. Āzād’s study is framed by a radical assertion: Sir William Jones, regarded as the founding genius of European philology, probably did not come up with his famous observation on the historical ties between languages on his own but rather derived it from the works of Ārzū and Ārzū’s friend Ṭek Chand Bahār.⁹³ Evocative as the idea that a colonial-period European unfairly took credit for an Indian idea was in Āzād’s time—and for that matter still is in ours—the evidence suggests no particular connection between Ārzū’s theory and Jones’s except that Jones was a Persian scholar. Indeed, given the early-modern intellectual climate in both India and Europe there is an air of inevitability that a similar discovery would be made in both places at roughly

⁹³ Note that the exact statement is tentative in its wording, employing a formula that Āzād often employs when he has no solid evidence to support his contention: “God knows whether [Jones] came to this conclusion on through his own efforts or with the help of the works of these two [i.e., Ārzū and Bahār]” [*khudā jāne ṣāhib ne apnī ṭabī‘at ke laqā’om se yā un donom kī taṣnīfāt se yih nuktah pāyā*] (*Suḵhandān-i fārs* 2005: 10). Āzād mistakenly writes that Jones went back to Europe and spread his theory, but of course he died in India, and his Indian scholarship became popular in Europe once *Asiatick Researches*, the proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, began to be published in Britain in the 1790s.

the same time. We return in the final section of this chapter to the question of what characterizes philology in both traditions during this period.

Although Jones certainly knew of Ārzū both through at least one of his works and undoubtedly also through Indian informants, there is no solid evidence that he would not have come to his conclusions if he had never encountered Ārzū's work: Not only were there European antecedents for Jones's theory but there is a potential problem of chronology since Jones likely encountered Ārzū's work only after developing his theory. Jones's copy of the dictionary *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* is inscribed as "The gift of Charles Roddam Esq 17 Febr. 1788 to W. Jones."⁹⁴ It continues in a different hand—presumably Jones's own—noting that "many corrections of this valuable work & many additions to it, may be found in the *Sirāju'lloghah* [i.e. *Sirāj al-lughāt*] by Sirājud'dīn Ārzū, and in the *Majmaū'llogah*." Although there is no evidence that any eighteenth-century European read or even knew of *Muṣmir*, *Sirāj al-lughāt* itself contains references to *tawāfuq al-lisānain* [correspondence of two languages]. We can assume, for the sake of argument, that reading *Sirāj al-lughāt* allowed Jones to appreciate the implications of *tawāfuq*. But even so, the famous lecture in which Jones proclaimed the historical links between Sanskrit, Latin and Greek, as well as with "the Gothic and the Celtic, ... and the old Persian," the Third Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatick Society of Bengal, was

⁹⁴ Ms RSPA 20 in the Oriental and African Reading Room at the British Library.

delivered on 2 February 1786, exactly two years before he received his copy of *Farhang-i jahāgīrī*. Thus, we have no evidence that Jones knew of Ārzū before he made his famous claim, and in all of Jones's works read by the present researcher, there is no reference to Ārzū besides that single marginal note. Nor do we have any copy of *Sirāj al-lughāt* that Jones may have owned (his *Farhang-i jahāgīrī* is heavily marked up in the margins so for us not to have his *Sirāj al-lughāt* potentially represents quite a loss for intellectual history). There are, however, two manuscripts to which he might have had access: The National Archives of India hold a damaged but readable copy (Fort William College collection 109). A stamp connects it to Fort William College and therefore to early nineteenth-century Calcutta, if not exactly to Jones's time there in the late eighteenth century. It is not dated and has no interesting marginalia. Similarly the British Library's copy has no meaningful marginalia but is inscribed "Mr. Richard Johnson" who is surely the administrator and man about town Richard Johnson (1753–1807).⁹⁵ He was a friend both of Jones and the Governor-General Warren Hastings, and it is possible that Jones borrowed his copy, which the colophon states was completed in 1160 AH (=1747 CE).

If we assume, again for the sake of argument, that Jones had in fact been familiar with Ārzū's work before early 1786 (perhaps through the mediation of one of the native Persian scholars with whom he worked), then it is still unlikely that he took his ideas from Ārzū's

⁹⁵ Éthé 2513 = IO Islamic 1783. On Johnson, see Marshall 2004. Jones's letters to Johnson are cited at Cannon 1990: 366 and 1970: letters 373, 509 (in which we learn that Jones borrowed Johnson's manuscript of the *Shāhnāmah*).

thought directly. Jones was by no means the first European to consider etymologies as evidence of possible ties between languages. In his lecture, he mentions several phonetically obscure etymologies (for example that French “*jour*” comes from Latin “*dies*”) as obvious fact. The Renaissance origin of this sort of thinking is what strikes us today as the most credulous sort of pseudoscience, but even wild speculation about the development of languages contained a kernel of the late eighteenth-century insights that would eventually become historical linguistics. Take, for example, the learned discussion by Jan van Gorp (1518–72, also called Johannes Goropius Becanus) of how “Cimbrian,” the supposed ancestor of Dutch, was also the ancestor of Hebrew (Olender 1994: 13). While van Gorp was clearly trying above all to irritate French and Spanish speakers in his adopted city of Antwerp (who no doubt thought their language was superior to Dutch/Flemish), this kind of magical thinking about the evolution of language did in fact lead to sophisticated reflection on how it is possible for different languages to contain words that are the same or nearly the same.

Āzād would almost certainly have been unaware of this particular European tradition—which was by his time an embarrassment to serious historical linguists—when he wrote *Suḵhandān-i fārs*, so from his perspective Jones must have either invented or plagiarized the foundation for historical linguistics *ex novo*. In fact, at least a half dozen people had written works in the seventeenth century alone opining that various European languages formed some kind of a

common linguistic area (Olender 1994: 17). In some cases, this reasoning even extended to India and Persia. The English Jesuit Thomas Stephens, writing from Goa in 1583, probably noticed the connection between the Indo-Aryan languages and Latin and Greek two centuries before Jones, and the French Jesuit Gaston Coeurdoux certainly did in 1767.⁹⁶

George Hadley's *Introductory Grammatical Remarks on the Persian Language* (1776) concludes with "a small list of words shewing the analogy between the Persian and European Languages" (Hadley 1972: 215-6). Such ideas were available in Europe, and nothing in Jones's construction of the theory suggests any particular debt to Ārzū rather than to these European precursors.⁹⁷ Ārzū, as we have considered in our discussion of *tawāfuq* above, does

⁹⁶ Fr. Stephens (d. 1619) wrote to his brother on 24 October 1583: "The languages of these regions are very many. They have a not unpleasant pronunciation and a construction similar to Latin and Greek" [*Linguae harum regionum sunt permultae. Pronuntiationem habent non invenustam, et compositionem latinae graecaeque simile*] (qtd. Olender 1994: 20). Today he is remembered for compiling the first printed Konkani grammar (as well as writing Konkani in Roman letters) and for his literary experiments in Marathi, including the *Kristapurāṇa*, an epic poem on the life of Christ. Fr. Coeurdoux was more explicit about the connection between European languages and Sanskrit in his 1767 memoir that was known in French intellectual circles but not actually published until 1808 (ibid.; cf. Arlotto 1969). Another possible European precursor was a word-list compiled by the Leiden classicist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), in which the author observes that "they [i.e. Persians] have many of our words and scarcely different inflexions" [*et uoces plures nostras habent et flexus coniugationum haud nimis diuersos*] (Emmerick 1974). See also Tavoni 1994: esp. 45, 54–6.

⁹⁷ Abdul Azim also concludes that Jones was most likely not influenced by Ārzū (1970: 267–9). It is important to remember that Jones did not sketch a linguistic family tree or explicate an evolutionary framework for languages. (His statement that the languages he mentions had a common origin does not imply the multiple evolutionary steps as we know them, e.g. that Proto-Indo-European became Proto-Indo-Iranian which split into Indo-Aryan and Iranian languages which subdivided further.) Although the first linguistic tree was drawn in the early nineteenth century, it was not a well-known image before the work of August Schleicher (1828–68), whose understanding of language was explicitly Darwinian (Auroux 1990: 228; Timpanaro 2005: 121 fn. 4). One of Schleicher's books is in fact called *Die Darwinische Theorie und die Sprachwissenschaft* [Darwin's Theory and Linguistics, 1863]. The limitations of Jones's project are contextualized in Robins 1996.

not explicitly posit a common origin for Sanskrit and Persian but rather leaves it to the reader to infer the cause of the linguistic similarity. Jones on the other hand was unequivocal about there being a “family” of languages with a “common source which perhaps no longer exists.” While Jones may have found independent confirmation of his own thinking in Ārzū’s work, having encountered Indo-Persian was not a necessary precondition for the development of the theory, which after all was a more nuanced version of arguments that Europeans had long made. The Third Anniversary discourse itself opens by invoking Jacob Bryant “with reverence and affection.” In fact, Bryant’s *A New System, or, An Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (published in 1774 and subsequently revised) had recently been the subject of a dispute with Bryant on one side and the Persian scholar Richard Johnson and Jones on the other. Jones notes in the discourse that “the least satisfactory part of [Bryant’s book] seems to be that, which relates to the derivation of words from Asiatic languages.” He locates his own thinking about language as an extension to and correction of Bryant’s work. Bryant’s project was demonstrating the development of various cultures (including that of the “Indii” and “Indo-Scythae”) from an antecedent, and it is therefore the equivalent in cultural studies of what Jones proposes with regard to languages.

The project of theorizing and addressing Orientalism’s “genesis amnesia”—as Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi has provocatively framed the lack of recognition for non-European scholars’

contributions to the development of Western knowledge about the non-West—is unquestionably worthwhile.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, however much sympathy we might have with the goal of highlighting the contributions of Indians to the creation of colonial knowledge and the modern world itself, the marquee claim that Ārzū via Jones sparked the development of Western historical linguistics is unsupported by any particular evidence as outlined above, although the available evidence does not preclude the possibility either.⁹⁹ In this evidentiary muddle the present researcher can only propose that we tread carefully lest we overcompensate for past injustices by reducing the complexity of colonial interactions (and the intellectual formations of the people involved) to a stereotyped domination in which we can ignore any nuance of the European half of the equation.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Tavakoli-Targhi argues that “the breakthroughs in comparative religion and linguistics, which were the high marks of ‘the Oriental Renaissance’ in Europe, were in reality built upon the intellectual achievements of Mughal India” (2001: 21). He cites *tawāfuq* as an example (ibid 26, cf. Tavakoli-Targhi 2011: 270-1). Jones, it should be said, frequently credited his Sanskrit teachers with introducing him to particular texts and ideas, but was not so charitable when it came to his Arabic or Persian studies.

⁹⁹ Kinra refers to the “strong circumstantial case ... that some form of Jones’s revolutionary thesis has its provenance with the likes of Ārzū” (2011: 360). However, this ignores the stronger circumstantial case that Jones, as a trained classicist, was aware of European etymological research and applied it to the impressive set of languages of which he had some knowledge. None of the three scholars whom Kinra cites (Muzaffar Alam, Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, and Kapil Raj) as proponents of the influence of Ārzū on Jones analyzes possible European genealogies for the theory.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Marchand 2010. There is an alarming tendency, for which Said is largely, if accidentally, responsible, to simply ignore the larger context of Western scholarship when drawing inferences about Orientalist prejudice. An irony in the goal of Said’s reclamation of the non-West as culturally dynamic space is that his study is premised on the West’s being an essentially static engine of domination from Aeschylus’s *The Persians* (472 BCE) to the present-day. Much of what he concludes in *Orientalism* about Western scholarly attitudes over a vast sweep of history is an extrapolation from the nineteenth century, as the present author has argued at length elsewhere

We can close this section by briefly reflecting on *Muṣmir*'s influence on Ārzū's contemporaries and later generations. According to the twentieth-century scholar Sayyid ʿAbdullah, Wārastah—whom we met in the previous chapter among Ārzū's "rivals and enemies"—mentions *Muṣmir* in his *Maṭlaʿ al-saʿdain* [The Setting of Venus and Jupiter].¹⁰¹ That quotation appears to be the only substantive reference to *Muṣmir* before ʿAbdullah's rediscovery of the text at Punjab University in the mid-twentieth century. However, the influence of *Muṣmir* itself cannot be accurately gauged because Ārzū's major ideas, such as *tawāfuq* as applied to Persian and *hindī*, are not restricted to this one work. *Muṣmir* is a particularly useful text for scholars today because it distills virtually all of his important ideas into one text written at the end of his life, but it does not represent a significant departure from ideas presented in the rest of his works. This is therefore not a case in which the re-discovery of a text that was not well-known at the time of its composition allows present-day scholars to know the historical subjects of our investigation better than they knew themselves.

Figurative Language and Where Meaning Comes From

Now let us turn to the last major theme addressed in *Muṣmir*, meaning and figurative [*majāzī*] language. The importance of *Muṣmir*'s discussion of these topics lies not in the account itself.

(Dudney 2008). For example, when Said invokes the idea that Westerners thought of the East as unchanging because they described it in terms of classical antiquity, he fails to allow for the fact that until the nineteenth century the Classics were still frequently invoked as a template to describe society in the West!

¹⁰¹ ʿAbdullah 1967: 142. *Maṭlaʿ al-saʿdain* was published by Naval Kishore in 1880.

Rather its value for us is in its application: The proper or improper use of metaphorical language is the substance of the analysis in the critical works to be dealt with in the following chapter, such as *Tanbīh al-ġhāfilīn* and *Sirāj-i munīr*. For the sake of completeness and because the supposed demerits of particular kind of figurative language, namely *ihām* (loosely translated as “punning”), loom so large in the history of Urdu criticism, we should sketch the terminology of metaphor and simile operative in Ārzū’s thought. Western and Islamicate conceptualizations of figurative language share an Aristotelian heritage, but the Islamicate tradition developed a more nuanced—and, in Ārzū’s case, historically-minded—approach to metaphor.¹⁰² Ārzū refers to *tashbīh* [simile], *isti‘ārah* [metaphor/trope], *kināyah* [metonymy], *tamāsīl* [allegory], *majāz-i mursal* [“free trope”], and *ihām*, all of which are different basic approaches to rhetorical comparison. However, in the Arabic tradition of rhetoric, which the Persian tradition inherited, the terms relating to metaphorical language had considerable overlap, creating difficulty for later scholars.¹⁰³ For example, *isti‘ārah* and *badī‘* [literary ornament] were considered synonyms in early works, but eventually the former came to be

¹⁰² On Aristotle and Arabic poetics, see Bonebakker 1970: 92-5 and Cantarino 1975: 64ff. Good overviews of metaphor in Persian literature are Garcin de Tassy 1873, Meisami 2003: 319ff, and Seyed-Gohrab 2012. Faruqi translates “*kināyah*” as “implication,” but the present author has preferred “metonymy” here.

¹⁰³ Even were this not the case, the translations of these concepts will necessarily be imprecise. Noting Earl Miner’s concern that various common critical terms in the West (for example, “representation,” “fiction,” and “originality”) presuppose that the goal of literature is mimesis—which is not necessarily the case for non-Western literatures—Julie Meisami has argued that we can still use such terms as long as we reflect on the systemic differences (Meisami 2003: 4).

considered a particular subset of the latter (Meisami 2003: 320). Furthermore, the basic concepts can be joined up, as in *isti‘ārah bi’l-kināyah* [metonymic simile].

In four chapters near the beginning of *Muṣmir*, Ārzū engages with the debates on meaning presented in *al-Muzhir*: He agrees with al-Rāzī and his followers on the question of whether every meaning has a separate word for it and vice versa—it does not, they conclude.¹⁰⁴ The discussion is what we would call anthropological, in that Ārzū observes that *hindī* does not have an indigenous word for *ḥammām* [bath-house] because Indians bathe in rivers, while there is a Persian word, *garmābah*. Both the Arabic-derived *ḥammām* and the indigenous Persian *garmābah* coexist in Persian and mean the same thing (likewise the religious terms *namāz* [prayer] and *rozah* [fasting] which are available in Persian alongside their Arabic equivalents *ṣalwat* and *ṣaum*). He picks up a discussion from Qāzī ‘Azud al-Dīn on the philosophical problem of determining whether a word describes the quality of a particular person or of a general category to which a particular person might belong (M 23-5). A discussion with a surprising relevance for modern semantics follows, namely whether words share the same natures as their referents [*madlūlāt*] (M 25-7). In Structuralist terms, this is asking whether the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary or not. Here Ārzū

¹⁰⁴ M 21-3. Faḫr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606 AH/1210 CE) was, depending on the source, either the greatest legal scholar of his time or a dangerous enemy of orthodoxy. He was born in Ray (now a suburb of Tehran) but traveled throughout Central Asia. He was prolific in Arabic and Persian, writing more than a hundred books primarily on jurisprudence and philosophy (Kholeif 1966).

disagrees with his Arabic source (ʿIbād bin Sulaimān al-Ẓamīrī as quoted in *al-Muzhir*) and notes that while there are onomatopoetic words in which the connection is clear, for most words the relationship is arbitrary. The Arabs did not properly consider other languages in this regard, he argues, and such a comparative method would have demonstrated that onomatopoetic words in one language are not so in another. The next discussion is again derived from al-Rāzī, specifically from *Kitāb-i maḥṣūl*, a text also known as *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh* [Collection of the Knowledge of Jurisprudence], and deals with how to establish the meanings of words (M 27-34, 49-55). Ārzū summarizes the conclusions relating to Arabic and writes “because religion is Arabic, one is powerless to question this” [*chūn dīn ʿarabī ast nāchār ast iḥtiyāṭ dar ān*] (M 28). He provides some possibilities to explain how meaning can be established in Persian, which is obviously not constrained by sacredness as is Arabic. These discussions are taken up in greater detail in *Mauhibat-i ʿuẓmā* [The Supreme Gift], Ārzū’s treatise on *ʿilm-i maʿānī* [roughly: semiotics].¹⁰⁵

Considerably later in the text, Ārzū discusses the distinction between “the real” [*ḥaqīqat*] and “the figurative” [*majāz*] (M 222-30, cf. AK 69ff). This question is considered part of *ʿilm al-bayān*, the subject of his *Aṭīyah-i kubrā* [The Greatest Gift]. In *Muṣmir*, the description is in

¹⁰⁵ The discipline *ʿilm al-balāghat*, usually translated as “rhetoric,” is divided into three parts: “(1) *ʿilm al-maʿānī*, the semantics of Arabic syntax; (2) *ʿilm al-bayān*, the theory of figurative speech proper; and (3) *ʿilm al-badīʿ*, the remaining forms of rhetorical embellishment” (De Bruijn 1988). An important difference between Western and Arabo-Persian terminology is that the word “*khīṭābat*” [oratory] is “applied strictly to the spoken word in public addresses, and is not used in any wider sense” (Bonebakker 1970: 76; *badīʿ* discussed at 85)

keeping with the tradition: *Ḥaqīqat* involves using a word in its proper, dictionary-defined meaning, while *majāz* refers to its use in any extended sense. A key distinction between the two is that *qiyās* is operative in *ḥaqīqat* while in *majāz* it is not [*dar ḥaqīqat qiyās jāri ast wa dar majāz nah*] (224). This is a technical discussion in part derived from Ibn Jinnī as quoted in *al-Muzhir*, and concludes with another endorsement of al-Rāzī's views. *ʿAtīyah-i kubrā* is another matter: It begins with the claim that no one has written a Persian book on *ʿilm-i bayān* specifically and suggests—in perhaps the most arrogant sentence in all of Ārzū's oeuvre—that “this essay is the first book which has been revealed from the sky of lofty thought onto the terrain of Persian verse” [*pas īn risālah awwal kitābī ast kih az āsmān-i fikr-i buland bar zamīn-i shʿir-i pārsī nāzil shudah*] (ʿAK 2002: 51). It defines the terminology of metaphorical language (*tashbīh*, *istʿārah*, etc), and while not in fact the only Persian text to describe such categories, it is rather rare since most of the theorizing of metaphor in the Islamicate context, though written by Persian-speakers, took place in Arabic works. The most interesting intervention is a claim, which is not quite explicit, that metaphor is culturally bound: He points out that in Persian poetry that lover's face is compared to the color red [*rang-i tīlā*] unlike in Indic poetry, and in Indic poetry the eyes are compared to fish unlike in Persian poetry (ibid 65). He closes this discussion somewhat defensively by arguing that the examples given may be found in the works of the masters [*asātīzah*]. The significance of this careful analysis of categories of

metaphorical language is that it is the primary mode of criticism in Ārzū's debates with particular poets. The texts in question, which we will consider in the next chapter, are *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*, *Sirāj-i munīr* and *Dād-i suḵhan*. In many cases, the arguments take on a temporal aspect because the traditionalist poets against whom he is contending claim that a certain use of metaphor is new, but Ārzū is able to show that in fact it has a long history.

One category that deserves special mention is *ihām*. Ārzū defines *ihām* as follows:

“Sometimes a word contains two meanings, one literal and the second extended. Thus, the poets on the amplitude of common meaning construct the extended one and equally allow both.”¹⁰⁶ Interestingly he observes that not just poets, but people employing everyday speech [*ahl-i rozmarrah*] also use it.¹⁰⁷ In Mīr's discussion of types of *rekhtah* in the conclusion [*khātimah*] of *Nikāt al-shu'arā*, he defines *ihām* as involving a near [*qarīb*] and a far [*ba'id*] meaning in which the poet actually means the far one and the reader must know to dispense with the near one (1979: 161). Oddly, the modern critic Shafī'i Kadkani claims that *ihām* is frequently employed in Indo-Persian poetry because Indians are non-native speakers of

¹⁰⁶ “*gāhī lafz mushtamil do ma'nī bāshad yaki ḥaqīqī wa duwwum majāzī. goyā shu'arā banā bar tausi'ah-yi ma'nī-yi 'umūm majāz wa mustarak har do jā'iz dāshtah-and ...*” (DS 1974: 26, cf.). On its history, see Chalisova 2004. Prashant Keshavmurthy has argued, in a personal communication, that devices like *ihām* recapitulate Ārzū's distinction between the interpretation of poetry by laymen and experts since they invite a simple interpretation and a nuanced interpretation. See the following chapter for an analysis of this distinction.

¹⁰⁷ The linguist George Lakoff observes that “the locus of metaphor is thought not language” and that the traditional distinction between metaphorical and literal language cannot hold because most discourse involves some kind of metaphor (Lakoff 1993).

Persian—his explanation that they would therefore focus on an individual word (and not its larger context) is unconvincing (Morrison et al. 1981: 160).

We can conclude this compressed account of an important aspect of poetics here. The way in which Ārzū classifies figurative language is, as we consider in the next section, characteristically early-modern since he has reverence for existing categories and the tradition that produced them while at the same time filling those categories with new ideas.

Conclusion: *Muṣmir*'s Philology and Early-Modern Thought

Scholarship that theorizes early modernity has often excluded cultural questions, instead considering economic and political structures that might characterize the period. This section will consider the parallels in early-modern European and South Asian philological knowledge systems. The intellectual environment in both Europe and South Asia during the early-modern period is distinct from other historical periods because of the prevalence of a particular approach to knowledge: Intellectuals sought to extend old categories of knowledge through radical new approaches without trying to replace the old categories themselves. Furthermore, rhetoric had not been dethroned in either place and so bound together a variety of disciplines that modernity has split apart. The difficulty at the outset of such an analysis is that modernity

in South Asia is typically connected with the colonial epistemic break.¹⁰⁸ However, it is obviously important to take stock of what pre-dated colonialism. We find that a great deal of what Europeans took credit for bringing to India as part of “modernization” was there already in forms that Europeans either did not understand or did not want to understand. “Early modern” is inherently a teleological term—this is of course problematic from the perspective of historiography because no one in the early-modern period, whether in Europe or elsewhere, could peer into the future and see modernity for him- or herself—but it should not be taken to imply that anything that did not directly contribute to (European) modernity should be excluded from consideration. South Asian early modernity is not a failure but a road not taken for various historically contingent reasons, the most important of which was colonialism itself. The project of finding Europe’s fundamental uniqueness that allowed “the Great Divergence,” in which a handful of European states became rich, unified, and technologically advanced enough to rule much of the world, only makes sense (and breaks free of its imperialist roots) if we are prepared to investigate how Europe was *not* unique. With that in mind, we can say that European approaches to literary knowledge in the eighteenth century and before generally

¹⁰⁸ The problem is nicely posed in Kaviraj 2005. For Partha Chatterjee, early modernity in South Asian history is the precursor to the “colonial modern” that begins in the 1830s (Chatterjee 2012: 75-6). This somewhat confuses the issue of comparative early modernities because it is at once teleological and anti-teleological.

had more in common with Indo-Persian approaches of the same period than with our current understanding of language and text.

Whether the term “early modernity” is useful in the first place has sparked an academic debate that is worth outlining. The idea of modernity popular in 1950s and 1960s, namely that it is based on global “convergence,” has lost its luster. As Eisenstadt and Schluchter have argued in an influential special issue of *Daedalus*, a new strategy is to think about “multiple modernities” and how the underlying pre-modern society has made them (Eisenstadt and Schluchter 1998; cf. Eisenstadt 2000). They argue that every society will develop some kind of public sphere (an idea that we take up below). This is a proper inquiry for the sort of intellectual history that concerns us here, but often historians with a stake in the term “early modern” do not meaningfully consider cultural production.¹⁰⁹ An intellectual history of early modernity is perhaps the fuzziest definition for it and recapitulates the problem of how to define a period which is both not modern and not quite not-modern. We cannot easily dismiss Randolph Starn’s assessment that the term “early modern” is obfuscatory because it “seems to

¹⁰⁹ Richards (1997) uses the term neutrally but his account is all technology, economy and large states. Compare Subrahmanyam (2001), for whom “early modern” is perfectly reasonable applied to India with minor caveats. Jack Goldstone dislikes the term early modern (whether for Europe or anywhere) and uses a paradigm of “advanced organic societies” instead, but he does not consider the cultural life of such societies (Goldstone 1998). He makes the striking argument that nineteenth-century industrialization in Western Europe was made possible by the dumb luck of easily accessible coal in the right places. For Frederic Jameson, the history of modernity is the history of capitalism (Jameson 2002), but if we accept that formulation then most of the questions posed here would be irrelevant.

diminish the liabilities of periodization while maximizing the benefits” (Starn 2002: 302).

Depending on how we define modernity, we can find it everywhere in history—or nowhere.¹¹⁰

Moreover, because our template is inevitably Europe we should be wary of seeking particular analogues to European early modernity in South Asia. Ārzū might have some claim to be the

Indo-Persian Giambattista Vico, but that is certainly not a move we want to make. A more

sensible analysis will track large patterns and try to avoid rather than encourage teleological

thinking. The sociologist Jack Goody, for example, has argued that the European Renaissance was

not the key to modernity or capitalism but rather represents a particular instance of a stage in a

cultural cycle (a “renascence” as he terms it) that is practically universal in literate societies.¹¹¹

The things that constitute European early modernity need to be generalized so that they make

sense outside of Europe, if they were indeed present. We should not, for example, be looking for

a seventeenth or eighteenth century Enlightenment in India because we will not find it (Pollock

2004: 79; cf. 2007). We can, however, consider if some of the individual features thought to be

¹¹⁰ Indeed, the word “modern” itself with its overtones of a break with the past was used that way by Cassiodorus in the fifth c. CE to mark the difference between the Pagan past and the Christian present (Habermas 1997).

¹¹¹ Goody 2010: 7ff., 241ff. For Goody, the Renaissance has three main characteristics: revival of classics, secularization, and economic change. But he is vague, especially when talking about the non-West that it becomes a cautionary tale about generalizations. For example, he argues that the European Renaissance was unique in that it drew on a completely different tradition from the current one, i.e. that it brought Pagan works into a Christian domain, but then draws no conclusions from this insight (ibid: 255-7).

characteristic of early-modernity are present in India and whether they are new in the Indian context. If they are indeed new then we can speculate as to why they appeared when they did.

To take an obvious example, how does the idea of a public sphere apply in the South Asian context? It has expanded beyond Habermas's original, rather specific conception into virtually any sort of European public activity.¹¹² Critics have rightly pointed out that despite Habermas's argument that the public sphere depended on universal access, it actually excluded vast numbers of people (women, ethnic and religious minorities, and so on) in any given place.¹¹³ Under a broad definition of public sphere, the circulation of Indo-Persian intellectuals must count—the public sphere is the literary language itself and the community of language users.¹¹⁴ An indigenous term for this intellectual common is *suḥbat*, which can narrowly mean conversation but also applies to a range of public interactions.¹¹⁵ The venue

¹¹² And this despite Habermas's clear warning that the concept of a bourgeois public sphere is tied to its specific time and place (Habermas 1991: vii).

¹¹³ Or, more precisely, as Sudipta Kaviraj has argued, the public sphere “sloped” against certain categories of people, who were not expressly forbidden from participating but faced obstacles to access that effectively made their participation impossible. Thus, while women were not overtly forbidden from participating in Indo-Persian letters, very few did and these were extremely high-born women such as Gulbadan Begum, the sister of Humāyūn and author of the *Humāyūnnāmah*.

¹¹⁴ Sanjay Subrahmanyam has preliminarily sketched the mindset of such early-modern South Asian intellectuals (Subrahmanyam 1998: 93-6). In the European Renaissance context, Grafton uses the philologist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) as a model for how reading worked as a community-builder: “Confronting ancient authorities was for him an intense and complex act, at once individual and collaborative, private and public” (1997: 132, cf. Matheson 1998: 28ff. on the sixteenth c.)

¹¹⁵ As it does in the Ottoman context (Andrews and Kalpakli 2004: 106ff).

and medium of a public sphere cannot help but be different in different societies so perhaps we are better off creating a localized genealogy of the “common” rather than generalizing the term “public sphere.”¹¹⁶ There happen to have been coffeeshops and newsletters in eighteenth-century Delhi as there were in Europe, but that is not the point.¹¹⁷ If we posit that a feature of early modernity is that high culture becomes more diffused during that period (Higman 1997), then we can see the increasing availability of Persian education in South Asia as a marker of this trend. *Muṣmir* itself deals with the question of where the controlling authority for Persian might come from given that the language is used across such a vast and varied terrain. It is also important to consider whether the medium of a public sphere needs to be vernacular language. If not, as the Indo-Persian case suggests, then this throws up a major conceptual problem for Europeanists: Europe has mythologized its own march towards the vernacular. (The linguistic nature of the modern nation-state, which some would argue requires a national language, is a question to which we return below. Whether vernacularization in some form is required for modernity is considered in Chapter Four.) The transnational public sphere in both Europe (where its medium was Latin) and the Persian

¹¹⁶ The printing press is an irrelevance because of its late adoption in South Asia. There is clear evidence that even in the nineteenth century previously printed texts were copied by hand when lithographic plates wore down (Baevskii 2007: 176).

¹¹⁷ For Habermas, the coffeeshop and the newsletter arise together in a kind of symbiotic relationship (Habermas 1991: 42, 59), but we do not have enough information about the Indian case to know whether that principle applies.

Cosmopolis were both fragmenting by the end of the eighteenth century. The classical language—seen in the context of European modernization theory as retrograde—was universal enough to serve as the medium for a social common and arguably a public sphere. If we grant in the South Asian case (as we do in the European) that the public sphere took centuries to develop then what meaningful transitions do we see? We observe the domain of Persian expanding through education rather than contracting at the same time as vernacular literary production was becoming systematized.

The concept of humanism—the Persian equivalent being *ādāb*—similarly needs to be dealt with comparatively.¹¹⁸ *Muṣmir* is a work that sets the stage for a kind of humanism because it establishes a cultural baseline for Indo-Persian in that it fixes the relationship of the three relevant literary cultures, Arabic, Persian and Indic. Humanism, argues Stephen Greenblatt, has an “enzymatic function” in that it absorbs culture and integrates it into a coherent discourse (1980: 230). Rhetoric was crucial because it was the structure of that coherence. History and other humanistic disciplines were generally thought of as sub-disciplines within rhetoric. At the same time, the canon of classical texts was proof that knowledge and eloquence were inexorably linked (Gray 1963: 502). Indeed, early-modern works often strike modern readers as having been more concerned with style rather than

¹¹⁸ It should be noted that although “humanities” and “humanist” have a long history, the term “humanism” itself did not emerge until the nineteenth century (Burke 1997: 12).

content, that is, with the literariness of describing a given historical event rather than conveying to the reader what happened in a positivist sense.¹¹⁹ This was, of course, a complaint leveled by British colonial scholars against Persian historical sources because—in the familiar pattern—they held such sources up to a contemporary European standard, forgetting that European scholarship of a century or two before would have failed the same test. Attempting to extract the content while ignoring the subtleties of the form is a well-attested, if obviously problematic, historical method. Arguably the loss of formal rhetoric is the greatest intellectual barrier between modern readers and those of several centuries ago (Gray 1963: 497, 514). This holds for South Asia just as it does for the West. Even our sense of poetry and its social function is the result of the early nineteenth-century Romantic determination that poetry should be excluded from rhetoric (Ong 1971: 6). Because the objective of lexicography in the Persianate tradition was with few exceptions literary interpretation, Persian humanism at the analytical level is incomprehensible if rhetoric and poetry are separated. The systematization of knowledge in literary form was also an important idea in the Arabic tradition. For example, a ninth-century Baghdadi writer argues that “Poetry is the mine of knowledge of the Arabs and the book of their wisdom, the archive

¹¹⁹ A fascinating example is that of painting of the biblical Flight out of Egypt by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665). Although the Bible specifically mentions camels as having participated in the event, Poussin omits them in the painting as they were beneath the dignity of the scene (Burke 1970: 105-6). On rhetoric and the study of history, see LaCapra 1985: 36ff.

of their histories” (qtd Cantarino 1975: 24). Giovanni Pico della Mirandola’s (1463–94) argument that philosophers need not be eloquent would have been virtually unthinkable in Persian (Gray 508ff).

The foundation of pre-modern humanism is a set of texts whose assumptions, specifically their categories, are taken as given.¹²⁰ Modernity represents an attempt to dismantle that foundation while largely keeping whatever had been built on top of it.¹²¹ Early modernity can therefore be seen as a transition in the construction of pre-modern knowledge systems, while only in rare cases seeking to abandon their structure. We can say that it is distinguished from previous conflicts of *Moderni* and *Antiqui* (that is, people defending old and relatively newer forms of knowledge, respectively) by degree since the amount of new knowledge generated and its relative centrality were much greater. Sheldon Pollock has observed this tension in the context of Sanskrit new intellectuals in the seventeenth century, namely that there were “remarkable new subtleties of argument and exposition but directed toward the analysis of ancient categories and the establishment of archaic principles.”¹²² The old philosophical

¹²⁰ As Grafton argues, “Renaissance intellectuals shared a commitment to continuous, intensive conversation with ancient texts. This provided the foundation of their efforts to understand other cultures and religions, devise natural and political philosophies, create a personal code of conduct, and cultivate a literary style” (Grafton 1997: 6).

¹²¹ Which in some cases led to an awkward admixture such as the emphasis of memorization in modern Indian education (Kaviraj 2005: 518)

¹²² Pollock 2001: 19. Jonardon Ganeri disagrees with Pollock’s assessment (arguing that even what appears to be respect for tradition in the new intellectuals’ work is actually itself radically new), but the present writer is unqualified to adjudicate this claim (Ganeri 2011: 100).

categories were no longer entirely fit for new purposes, but no one could mount an effective critique of them (Pollock 2004: 32). *Muṣmir* operates within entirely similar constraints since it radically expands the scope of its inquiry into language beyond what the tradition had previously countenanced (integrating, notably, Indic language), but never grapples with any question of the foundation of its categories. The transition described by Foucault in *The Order of Things*, in which signifier and signified split, only appears to have taken place in India after the advent of colonialism. It is probably useless to speculate as to whether such a development would have taken place had Western knowledge practices not supplanted indigenous ones, but the parallel crisis in traditional categories in South Asia and the West suggests that it was at least a possibility. Whatever the case, now more than ever there is a need to “provincialize Europe,” which means that we should be wary of claims that the European experience was universal. There must be a double operation in which we also are careful to define European modernity against European pre-modernity. Marx memorably wrote that “the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living” but this cannot be taken as axiomatic for all time.¹²³ The wonderful imagery short-circuits the necessary historical reflection: Before modernity, the “dead generations” were practically alive in the

¹²³ From *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Napoleon Bonaparte* (qtd. Grafton 1992: 253).

texts they left for posterity, and far from being the stuff of nightmare, their guidance was actively sought.

Chapter III

Ancients and Moderns, and Poetic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Indo-Persian

In seventeenth and eighteenth-century India, Persianate literary culture was experiencing a transformation that we can call a crisis of authority. Let us define authority (in the context of literature) as broadly and cross-culturally as possible: It is the tool to judge whether some aspect of a composition is a success or a failure.¹ The Persian tradition does not approach the question of assessing literary merit with such a catch-all term, but it is useful to combine the concept of *sanad*, or literary precedent, with the idea of the consensus [*ijmāʿ*] of contemporary poets. The crisis of authority in this period sprang from a poetics that explicitly valued newness, the “*tāzah-goʿī*” or “Fresh Speech” movement. This became an insurgent threat to the smooth operation of literary precedent because in many cases poets and readers approved of compositions that contained phrases and literary images for which there was no obvious precedent. Thus critics had to struggle with the relative value of precedent and consensus. Specifically, we can consider how Ārzū simultaneously reiterated the importance of tradition

¹ We should note Gadamer’s discomfort with this term: “The concept of tradition, however, has become no less ambiguous than that of authority, and for the same reason—namely that what determines the romantic understanding of tradition is its abstract opposition to the principle of enlightenment. ... It seems to me, however, that there is no such unconditional antithesis between tradition and reason” (Gadamer 2006: 282). Gadamer’s implication that the very idea of tradition must be historicized is crucial since the post-Romantic view of tradition as a constraint to be overthrown by enlightenment (or perhaps “development”) has little relevance for an emic analysis of a non-Modern, non-Western intellectual tradition.

as a unifying factor across Persian letters while systematizing the expertise of living poets.

This chapter will use his influential disagreements with the late Abū al-Barakāt Munīr Lahorī (1019–54/1610–44) and with his contemporary Shaiḫ Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥazīn Lāhijī (1103–80/1692–1766) to offer a necessarily revisionist account of how this crisis of authority played out. Munīr and Ḥazīn both stood for a literary purism that valorized the works of the pre-*tāzah-go’ī* poets and claimed themselves to be the present-day guardians of this earlier poetic style. Ārzū by contrast defended the new poetics on the basis that its aesthetics were not a departure from the Persian tradition taken as a whole. He documents this through careful scholarship, in the process demonstrating that Munīr and Ḥazīn’s judgments are often capricious rather than anchored in research.

The historiographical difficulty, as we shall see, is that the rupture caused by *tāzah-go’ī* has almost without exception been unhelpfully framed by later scholars as a centuries-long contest between Iranian and Indian aesthetics. From the early nineteenth century until recently, the interpretation that there was a degraded “Indian style” [*sabk-i hindī*] in Persian poetry had been almost universally held (even by Indians themselves), despite this being anachronistic and refutable by engaging with seventeenth and eighteenth-century Indo-Persian primary sources.² We will return to these relevant critical texts, and trace the later

² Alam 2003: 182 nicely frames the issue. Just as Allison Busch has taken modern Hindi critics to task for their arbitrary assessments of the quality of early-modern courtly Hindi literature (the *rīti* tradition), we need to revisit

scholarly interpretation that has accreted to them. On the one hand, we will historicize the anti-Indian sentiments of nationalist Iranian critics and Indians' later lack of confidence in their own Persian. On the other, we will use the analogue of the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, a roughly contemporary debate in Europe over a roughly similar crisis of authority, in order to reconsider the narrative of decline and cultural failure that is generally used to explain the fortunes of Indo-Persian. But first we have a party to attend.

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

Because I brought only a book of poetry besides myself, although it was my collected poetry, I chose silence; I was a spectator on the margins of this assembly and I heard the conversation of the people who see fine points, and the bright light—the burning of the lamp of cleverness—entered my intellect through the sight of my eyes and through my ears. And in the beauty of the conversation I beheld the poetry of the bright-faced ones.³

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

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

the standards used to determine what good Persian style is (Busch 2011: preface and 14). Sheldon Pollock has called attention to the failure of modern critics to engage with traditional commentaries—we can take that as inspiration for this chapter to discuss critical works rather than the poems they analyze (2009: 254-5).

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

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

“This master versifier is the lord of fresh style [*tarz-i tāzah*] and the manifestation of unguessable grandeur, writing such fine poetry and bestowing delicateness on his verse, adorning each hair with the ringlet [*turrah*] of poems and adorning the face of meanings in a most pleasing way. The color of his words is the blush on the face of meaning and the ink of his verse is the best example of the fine-points [*mawādd*, pl. of *māddat*] of poetry.” (ibid 4)

Similar hyperbolic praise is lavished upon Ṭālib of Amul (d. 1036/1627), Zulālī of Herat (d. 1031/1622 or 1034/1625), and Zuhūrī of Turshiz (d. 1035/1626). Then the assembly turns to denigrating two classical-style poets, Razī⁴ and Kamāl of Isfahan (d. 635 AH/1237 CE), before putting two of the tradition’s other revered poets in their place:

“If [Amīr] Ḳhusrau [d. 725 AH/1325 CE] had managed to converse with [these modern poets], he would have acquired the delicacy of their sweet poems, and if Salmān [Sāwjī, d. 778 AH/1376 CE] had lived in their time he would have learned Persian from the masters [*ahl-i bait*].” (ibid 6)

These comments are hyperbolic, and it becomes clear to the reader that Munīr is not describing a real event but has invented the occasion to serve his rhetorical purposes. The idea that Ḳhusrau and Salmān had something to learn would have struck Munīr’s readers as being as preposterous as saying in our time that if only Shakespeare had attended a couple of Arthur Miller’s plays on Broadway then maybe *Hamlet* could have been a bit better. In the face of such

⁴ Identified by the editor as Mīr Razī Dānish of Mashhad (d. 1072/1661-2), a poet of Shāh Jahān’s reign who ended up in the Deccan. Confusingly, Ārzū does not mention him in *MN* but rather an exact contemporary, Qāzī Razī al-Dīn Muḥsin of Isfahan, who died in 1071 (2004: 474).

absurdity, Munīr must spoil the mood of the gathering by jumping to the defense of the older poets. He declares,

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

As this passage and its reference to "fresh receptacles" implies, Munīr saw a stark divide between the Ancients [*mutaqaddimīn*], who wrote well in his estimation, and the Moderns [*muta'akhkhirīn*], whose "fresh speaking" had driven them to disrespect the aesthetic achievements of the Ancients. By the seventeenth century, the tradition had generally begun to consider as Ancients the poets from Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz in the late fourteenth century back to the earliest New Persian poet, Rūdakī, in the tenth.⁵ Given that *Kārnāmāh* has been cited as the first salvo against "Indian style" excesses in poetry, it is surprising that Munīr's framing of the debate in the preface has nothing to do with Iran versus India. Indeed, the only mention of either place at the beginning of *Kārnāmāh* is an expression of hope that Indians and Iranians

⁵ Still, Ārzū refers to the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ as "*namak-i tāzah*" [fresh-flavored, lit. fresh salt], which we can probably read as an echo of *tāzah-go'ī* even though Ḥāfiẓ came well before that movement (M 1991: 11). Some sources consider the classical period to have ended with Jāmī (d. 1492), referring to him as "the final poet" [*shā'ir-i khātām*] (see Browne 1959: 26, Losensky 1998: 193). Akbar's poet laureate Faiẓī (d. 1595) writes of Jāmī that: "In his society no one appeared after him / And he is the seal of prose and poetry" (trans. Sharma 2012a: 239).

both will be convinced by his claims.⁶ Furthermore, one of the Ancients slighted at the imaginary gathering, Amīr Ḳhusrau, was an Indian, while all four of the Moderns whom Munīr believes to have received unearned praise were Iranian by birth. Munīr was therefore concerned with stylistic chronology and not geography.

If Munīr's attacks on his contemporaries in the passage cited above seem intemperate, they are not at all out of place. The early-modern Indo-Persian literary scene was contentious, and research [*taḥqīq*] was a weapon.⁷ Some two generations separated Munīr from Ārzū, but nonetheless Ārzū felt the need to criticize him at length in two works, which will be introduced below. This debate between the living and the dead was hardly the unfair contest it would seem to be because Munīr had many defenders among Ārzū's contemporaries.⁸

However, the feud that would become much better known was Ārzū's disagreement with Shaikh Ḥazīn, his exact contemporary. Ārzū's broadside against Ḥazīn, *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*

⁶ "I hope that the poetry-knowers of India and the meaning-makers of Iran will not revile my correct speaking and will be apologetic" [*ummīdwāram kih suḵhan-shināsān-i hind wa ma'nī-rasān-i irān bar rāst guftārī-yi man kajmaj zabān girift nakunand wa pozish dar pazīrand*] (Munir 1977: 7).

⁷ For example, Munīr refers to "*ṣulḥ-i kull*," the concept of tolerance famously put into practice by Akbar, but which refers etymologically to an armistice (Munir 1977: 7). Similarly Ārzū writes of Muḥammad Afzāl Sābit that "sometimes he is at peace and sometimes he is at war with me at a poetic recitation..." [*bā faqīr bar sar-i shī'r-i bait al-ḥāl gāhī ṣulḥ wa gāhī jang dāsht...*] (MN 2005: 69)] Thanks to Rajeev Kinra for bringing the present researcher's attention to the possibilities of "*ṣulḥ*." Another set of rhetorical key terms having to do with justice [*inṣāf* or *dād*] will be explained below.

⁸ Notably Wārastah but also lesser-known poets like Ḥākim of Lahore (Akram 1977: 39). The staying power of the debate between Munīr and Ārzū was such that it would be rekindled in the mid-nineteenth century by Imām Baḵsh Sahbā'ī in a work called *Qaul-i faīṣal* [The Last Word] (published by Naval Kishore as *Risālah-yi qaul-i faīṣal* n.d., see also Naim 2006).

[Admonition to the Heedless, c. 1157/1744], is a critical tour de force which has been framed as the most coherent Indian response to the charge that the Persian used in India was inferior to Iranians' Persian (although, as we consider below, that was not its stated intention).⁹ Driven from Isfahan by political unrest, Ḥazīn came to India in 1147/1734 and was treated as a celebrity, as Ārzū himself notes in the preface to *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* (TĠh 1981: 1). In Indian cultural memory, including in folk tales, Ḥazīn is the archetypal haughty Iranian émigré, irascible and judgmental.¹⁰ This narrative is not the whole story because Ḥazīn had numerous Indian supporters, and in any case says little about India, good or bad, in his autobiography.¹¹ Likewise, Ārzū does not object to any Iranian chauvinism on Ḥazīn's part but rather to his literary conservatism by demonstrating that in many of Ḥazīn's verses, Ḥazīn violates his own precepts and uses expressions for which there is no precedent. The far more explosive

⁹ Ḥākim is best known for his *Tazkīrah-i mardum-i dīdah* [Biographical Dictionary of People (I Have) Seen, or Biographical Dictionary of the Pupil of the Eye] composed in 1761–2 and which frames many entries around long quotes from Ārzū's *MN* (*Tazkīrah-i mardum-i dīdah* 1961; Storey 1953: vol 1, pt 2, 829). Ārzū claims Ḥākim as a friend, citing a difficult to translate verse by him on their friendship: “z dunyā wa z māfi-hā, z dunyā wa z māfi-hā / hamīn yār ārzū dāram, hamīn yār ārzū dāram” (*MN* 2005: 76). Ḥākim, despite his apparent friendship with Ārzū and respect for him, writes in his *tazkīrah* that *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* is mostly unfair, namely that Ārzū has committed “*sitam-sharīki*” or “partaking in oppression” (1961: 66). Ārzū's criticism of Ḥākim's *dīwān*, discussed in the context of Wārastah in Chapter One, might have strained their relationship.

¹⁰ Perry 2003; Khatak 1944; Kirmani 1986: 30. Mana Kia has argued convincingly that Ḥazīn's apparent dislike of India needs to be seen through the lens of his personal experience, and should be understood not as indicting Indian culture so much as lamenting his inability to return to his devastated native land (Kia 2009). Faruqi on the other hand points to Ḥazīn's “pure malice” (Faruqi 2004b: 17).

¹¹ The chapter in which he purports to describe India (*Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* 1830: 275–83) is devoted to Iranian rulers' relations with India and says practically about the place itself. However, as discussed in Chapter One of this study, in *Majma' al-nafā'is* Ārzū accuses him of having been an ungrateful and insulting guest in India.

accusation was laid by Mīr Muḥammad ‘Aẓīm, known by his pen-name Šabāt (1122–61/1710–48): He accused Ḥazīn of plagiarizing some 500 verses.¹²

The “Indian Style” and India

From Munīr’s preface in *Kārnāmah*, it is abundantly clear that his concern in the work was defending the honor of the Ancients against the free-wheeling Moderns. (We will continue analyzing his reasoning—and one situation where he explicitly mentions Iran in opposition to India—when we address Ārzū’s intervention below.) But this was not the frame adopted when later critics and historians reflected upon the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rather,

¹² Crucially the objection is not that words of others were copied but rather themes: “Šabāt pointed out 500 couplets from the *dīwān* of the Shaiḫ [i.e. Ḥazīn] whose themes were of the sort of others” [*šabāt pānšad bait az dīwān-i shaiḫ rā bar-āwardah kih muẓāmīn-i ānhā ba-jinsah az dīgarān ast*]. This is cited by Ḥazīn’s friend and erstwhile traveling companion Wālih in his *taẓkirah Riyāz al-shu‘arā’* [Garden of the Poets, 1161/1748] (*Taẓkirah-yi riyāz al-shu‘arā’* 2005: 647ff; also qtd. Akram 1981: 30; partial trans. Faruqi 2004b: 37). According to Wālih, what raised Šabāt’s ire was a comment by Ḥazīn on a verse of his father’s. (He was the son of the well-known poet Muḥammad Afẓāl Šābit.) Ḥazīn wrote that the verse’s theme [*maẓmūn*] was not very good and was, in any case, “stolen” [*duẓdidah ast*] from some other poet. In a fit of pique at this negative comment on a single verse, Šabāt copied out five hundred verses by Ḥazīn along with the verse he had supposedly plagiarized in each case. Wālih’s entry on Ḥazīn is the longest in the *taẓkirah*, taking up nearly forty pages in the printed edition and leaving Ḥāfiẓ in second place at just over thirty pages (Ārzū by contrast gets about a page). Remarkably he includes a lengthy selection of *Tamībīh al-ghāfilīn* (shortened either intentionally or because it was copied from a manuscript recension we no longer have) as well as the couplets Šabāt accused Ḥazīn of plagiarizing (Wālih 2005: 635–47 and 647–57). Before introducing the selection of Ḥazīn’s work, he argues that the previous two dozen pages of criticism notwithstanding, Ḥazīn is a world-renowned poet [*sarāmad-i suḫhanwarān-i ‘ālam*] as his quoted verses prove. We can speculate as to why so much of Ḥazīn’s entry in a *taẓkirah* by his friend and traveling companion is taken up by criticism of Ḥazīn. Mana Kia has argued that it was in order to shame Ārzū and Šābit rather than to lend support to their position (Kia 2011: 219). Clearly, however, the Ārzū-Ḥazīn debate was important enough to merit inclusion at length.

Another instance of plagiarism was the wholesale inclusion by ‘Aṭā’allah Nudrat of entries from *SL* and *CH* (as well as from *Bahār-i ‘ajam*) in his own dictionary (*MN* 2005: 121). (NB that this is not the same Nudrat who was a Hindu disciple of Bedil’s and friend of Muḫliṣ.)

those who are aware of Munīr’s work have preferred to view his criticism as the first salvo in an attack on the “Indian style” [*sabk-i hindī*].¹³ The label “Indian style” purports to describe the poetic modes popular across the Persianate world from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth century. However, because the name refers to a specific place, India, many critics have claimed explicitly that the supposed degeneracy of the literature of the period springs from the Indian environment.¹⁴ There has been an undeniable South Asian influence on Persian literature for centuries, mostly in the form of word borrowings, as was briefly explored in the previous chapter. It remains an open question whether Indian philosophy and Sanskrit literary culture (whether mediated through vernacular poetics or directly) had a more subtle influence.¹⁵ However, there is no evidence that such mixing was marked as foreign to the

¹³ The editor of *Kārnāmah* and SM himself writes that “Munir is the first critic who objected and raised his voice against the Sabk-i-Hindi in Lahore, in the first half of the eleventh century A.H., whereas this style of poetry was criticised in Isfahān at the end of the twelfth century A.H.” (Akram 1977: English introduction)

¹⁴ For example, M. J. Borah connects the historian Firishtah’s claim that Hindus began to take up the study of Persian seriously during Sikandar Lodi’s reign to the *Sabk-i hindī* debate by arguing that “with the growing influence of the Hindu scholars who began to study Persian to qualify themselves for the service of the State, the difference in the style of India and Persia proper became more marked” (Borah 1934: 36; cf Mohiuddin 1960: 24-5). This “Hinduization” of Persian has often been assumed but never satisfactorily demonstrated. One recent history of Iranian emigration makes precisely the same claim that *Sabk-i hindī* came about because of contact with “Hindu philosophy and thought” [*‘aqā’id wa andeshah-yi hindū-ān*] (Rafī‘ 2004: 334ff).

¹⁵ For example, Faruqi suggests that Bedil’s definition of *sukhan* [speech, poetry] echoes the thought of the fifth-century Sanskrit grammarian Bhartṛhari (Faruqi 2004b: 19). He also speculates that there might be a connection between Sanskrit poetics and the “meaning-creation” [*ma‘nī-āfirīnī*] typical of early-modern Persian poetry but admits “direct evidence is lacking as yet” (ibid. 31ff). If the evidence is not yet available, we can at least consider the possibility that polyglot litterateurs of the Mughal period like ‘Abd al-Raḥīm (Naik 1966; Sharma 2009; Lefèvre forthcoming) might have been a locus for such interactions.

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

Mughal and Safavid-period literature has often been dismissed as the product of overwrought formalism obsessed with wordplay at the expense of emotion and truth. One twentieth-century Indian scholar writes, “Poetry produced under the Moghuls in the twelfth century AH [roughly, the eighteenth century CE], in India, is degenerate, stereotyped, and imitative. There is nothing new, creative or original about it” (Khatak 1944: 57). Professor Ehsan Yarshater writes of such poetry that “Within its span the Indian style developed organically, followed a normal curve within certain limits and constraints, and finally exhausted itself into a lifeless and forced poetry” (1986: 965).¹⁶ However, we would be wise to remember the adage “*de gustibus non est disputandum*” [you should not argue about tastes]. Discussions of the “Indian Style” have consistently been framed in terms of taste, obscuring its

¹⁶ We can add to this list Shafi'i Kadkani, who tries to rescue Iran from the worst excesses of the Indian Style by positing that however bad things were in Iran, they were far worse in India (Morrison et al. 1981: 150ff). Yarshater 1988 offers some choice quotes from the nineteenth and early twentieth-century critics.

rickety conceptual framework.¹⁷ Both fair-minded scholars and ideologues have time and again conflated these literary characteristics with cultural decline. But where does the formulation that “complexity = decline” come from?¹⁸ And why “Indian”? The style was neither invented in India nor particularly associated with India, except to the extent that Persian poets, both Indian and Iranian, could at that time find patronage in India but generally not in Safavid-ruled Iran.¹⁹ Ārzū himself notes the importance of Bābā Fīghānī of Shiraz (d. 1591) in forming

¹⁷ Cf. Hasan 1998: 6. The great Cambridge Persianist Edward Granville Browne, for example, justifies his exclusion of Indian poets on the grounds that his book would have become too long and because much had already been written about them in British India itself. However, after this milquetoast protest, he declares that “so far as a foreign student may be permitted to express an opinion on matters of literary taste, this Persian literature produced in India, has not, as a rule, the real Persian flavour, the *blar* as the Irish call it, which belongs to the indigenous product” (1956: 106-7). He continues in a vein that proves beyond a doubt that we in the twenty-first century need to reconsider his judgments. He concludes, “therefore the omission of Amīr Khusraw from this chapter is as justifiable as the omission of Walt Whitman from a modern English literary history, especially as a very long notice of the former is given in Elliot’s *History of India*.” The only Indian literary production he includes in this work, which was crucial in shaping the later Western understanding of the Persian canon, is that of Mughal-period Iranian émigrés. An important recent corrective to Browne’s project is Alam 2003.

¹⁸ The rhetoric of scholarship on Persian as it was used in South Asia involves some fascinating logical contortions. For example, in his history of thirteenth-century literature, Mumtaz Ali Khan (who is himself Indian) writes of a particular work that “It is free from those artificialities, affectations, intricacies and wordplays [*sic*] which detract from the value of some of the contemporary works, like the *Lubāb al-Albāb* and the *Tāj al-Māthir*” (Khan 1970: 58). By his own admission, the texts he has mentioned as flawed were *greatly admired* in their time so on what basis is he calling the style tedious? He is simply giving voice to his own unexamined prejudices. (Here we use “prejudice” in Gadamer’s technical sense of a presupposition “that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition,” Gadamer 2006: 271ff). Another such example is Khatak 1944: 57-8.

¹⁹ Browne 1959: 26ff. See also Ghani 1929-30: 278ff, Dale 2003: 199ff, and *passim* Yarshater 1988: 251 and Lewisohn 1999. There is the fact, which troubled Iranian nationalists, that most of the dictionaries of the Persianate world during that period, arguably the golden age for Persian lexicography, were produced in India (Perry 1998: 329 and 338-9; Tavakoli-Targhi 2001: 106-7). For a balanced recent account, see the editor’s preface to the 2001 edition of Tek Chand Bahār’s dictionary *Bahār-i ‘ajam* (Bahār the eighteenth-century lexicographer should not be confused with Muhammad Taqī Bahār mentioned below).

the literary style that would later become dominant, and Fiḡhānī had no ties to India.²⁰ Nor did practitioners of the “Indian Style” ever refer to themselves as such. In fact, the term itself is no older than the early twentieth century. It was popularized by Muḡammad Taqī Bahār (1886–1951) in the introduction to his history of Persian literature, *Sabkshināsī*.²¹ He ties temporal divisions in Persian literature to place, so the oldest style is “Khurasani,” the middle style is “Iraqi,” and the late style is “Indian.”²² It is a deeply misleading frame of reference, and the present author would not be the first to argue that the term “Indian Style” (as in Bahār’s teleological formulation) is so freighted as to be irredeemable, and that we should just stop

²⁰ M 1991, 11; cf. Losensky 1998. The closest he ever got to the Subcontinent was a stint in Herat in western Afghanistan where he was in the service of the sultan Ya‘qūb Turkmān.

²¹ Bahar 1942. The pattern for Bahār is primeval cultural greatness followed by decline and lastly the return to greatness exemplified by his contemporaries. It is a kind of self-Orientalization that can also be observed in the Urdu tradition. The logic is exactly the same as Muḡammad Ḥusain Āzād’s *Āb-e ḡayāt*. What is relevant here is that Āzād strains credulity trying to support his historically impossible argument that the tradition of Urdu poetry began “naturally,” became decadent, collapsed and then recaptured its earlier simplicity under the benevolence of India’s British colonial masters (Azad 1907). A dispassionate analysis shows Āzād’s framework to be deeply lacking. It is certainly a product of its time (1880, the zenith of British colonialism in India) just as Bahār’s work reflects the nationalism of late-Qajar and post-Qajar Iran (Smith 2009: 196ff). Bahār “draws a border around literature of strictly Iranian origin, distinguishing it from—and elevating it above—Persian poetry written outside those lines” (ibid, 199). This project of ethnic purification in Persian literature has been so successful that it is only recently that Iranian scholars have begun to take Indo-Persian seriously. Oddly, Bahār wrote a cheerful poem about how he pines for India (qtd. Barzegar 2001: x-xi). Bracketing off the question of whether this was a formal exercise or heartfelt, it nonetheless suggests that he did not develop his tripartite literary model out of antipathy for India, the namesake of the nadir of literary excellence in his system.

²² This same scheme is taken up by later scholars, e.g. Heinz 1973. In his earlier work, Ehsan Yarshater used the term “Safavid style” instead of “Indian style” (Subtelny 1986: 58). This however further confuses the issue because it implies that India played no role in Persian letters (at a time when it obviously did). The best compromise, if we accept the periodization, seems to be the ungainly term “Safavid-Mughal” (as in Losensky 1998).

using it.²³ However, it represents an attempt to explain an underlying phenomenon which is both real and worth understanding, namely the transformation wrought by *tāzah-goʾī*. Unlike “*sabk-i hindī*,” “*tāzah goʾī*,” also known as “*ṭarz-i tāzah*” (“fresh style”) or “*ibārat-i tāzah*” (“fresh expression”), was a contemporary label used by both its adherents and detractors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁴ It is important to understand that in Bahār’s formulation *sabk-i hindī* is a stylistic category referring to a specific historical period, and not an analysis of linguistic and stylistic variations particular to Indo-Persian throughout history.²⁵ It is therefore not the same as observations throughout history of an “Indian accent” [*lahjah-yi hindūstāniyān*] or a particular “mode” [*rawish*] of Persian in India (see Alam 2003: 149).

While some aspects of this multifaceted debate can and should be interpreted as an Iranian identity defining itself against an Indian identity and vice versa, considering the crisis of authority in simple ethnic terms stops well short of a satisfactory explanation. To that end, let us dispense with the “Indian Style” as a frame of reference and consider instead the

²³ Kinra 2007: 142 n. 20. The interested reader can consult Kinra 2007 and Faruqi 2004b on this question. Good context is also provided in Hanaway 1989 and Smith 2009: 196. Faruqi memorably writes that Bahār has “a blind arrogance that better suits a provincial administrator than a literary historian and critic” (2004b: 21).

²⁴ Shafiʿi Kadkani introduces another term, “incidental style,” as an alternative (Morrison et al. 1981: 147). On *tāzah goʾī* in the Ottoman context, see (the useful but occasionally uncritical) Andrews and Kalpakli 2004: esp. 352 and Darling 2012: 179.

²⁵ The Iranian literary scholar Zabih Allah Saha argues that “*Sabk-i hindī*” is the correct term on the basis that South Asia was at the center of Persian letters at the time, but admits that scholars debate whether the style has an Indian origin (Safa 1984: 523-4).

cultural politics of literary innovation: Early-modern literary debates in Persian were framed primarily in terms of temporality, that is, old styles versus new styles. Cultural geography, which is to say India versus Iran, is a distant secondary concern in the critical literature until the end of the eighteenth century.²⁶ As early as the mid-eighteenth century, writers in Isfahan began to rebel against *tāzah-goʿī*, and their criticisms were increasingly inflected by the idea that the place in which Persian literature is composed matters. They advocated a return to the literary style that existed before *tāzah-goʿī*, and because literary trends diffuse unevenly, India remained a stronghold of *tāzah-goʿī*.²⁷ By the nineteenth century, Indians had fully assimilated these critiques and themselves privileged Iranian Persian over their own.²⁸ Hints of nationalistic sentiments in literature, an entirely secondary concern in the eighteenth century, take on a special salience for us because we, and several generations of scholars before us, have been accustomed to thinking of literature as constitutive of a nation rather

²⁶ It was a distant concern but not a non-existent one. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi notes that “the earliest opponents of Indian Persian, like ‘Alī Ḥazīn and Wālih Dāghestānī, were themselves distinguished poets of the Indian Style and they were disdainful of the Indian register of Persian, and not of the Indian Style of Persian poetry” (Faruqi 2004b: 17). While he is correct in the narrow sense that Ḥazīn and Wālih would today be considered “Indian Style” poets, his account must be nuanced by noting that both frequently stated their opposition to contemporary poets while only rarely mentioning India (such as in the example he cites, which is the exception rather than the rule). To ignore this introduces anachronism. Furthermore, Faruqi does not consider Munīr.

²⁷ Yarshater 1986: 965. And indeed it can be argued that the then-emerging Urdu literary tradition, whose relationship to Persian we address in the next chapter, retained some of the stylistic complexity which was the hallmark of *tāzah-goʿī*.

²⁸ Of course there are some exceptions among Indian scholars, who themselves stereotype the other way: Wahid Mirza declares, for example, that Amīr Ḳhusrau has a “peculiar finesse” lacking in all Iranian poets except Jāmī and Naẓīrī (Mirza 1935: 206).

than of some other cultural unit, either smaller or larger than a nation. This is why Benedict Anderson warns us to contrast the modern nation-state, which we take for granted, with “large cultural systems that preceded it” (1983: 19). Despite sharing a name, eighteenth-century India is not the post-1947 Republic of India, just as Safavid Iran is not today’s Islamic Republic of Iran. The understanding that we are dealing with unfamiliar political formations with relatively familiar names is crucial.²⁹ This also requires reflecting on where such “fore-meanings” (to use Gadamer’s terminology) come from, namely at least in part from critical texts that provide a compelling if problematic framework for the tradition in question.

It is no surprise that Luṭf ‘Alī Beg Āzar’s *Ātashkadah* [Fire Temple, 1174/1760], the *taẓkirah* associated with the genesis of the *bāzgasht-i adabī* [literary Renaissance] movement, was precisely such a category-establishing work.³⁰ It divides up poets by region of their birth and effectively ghettoizes India as a place where poetry was produced because so many of the important writers were immigrants.³¹ Although he does not explicitly state his

²⁹ As Hans-Georg Gadamer argues, “Just as we cannot continually misunderstand the use of a word without its affecting the meaning of the whole, so we cannot stick blindly to our own fore-meaning about the thing if we want to understand the meaning of another” (Gadamer 2006: 271).

³⁰ *Bāzgasht-i adabī* was not a label used by poets of its time, but instead, like *sabk-i hindī*, was popularized by Bahār in the early twentieth century (Smith 2009: 197). The structure of *Ātashkadah* is explained in Matini 2011. The 1861 Bombay lithograph has been reprinted as *Taẓkirah-yi ātashkadah* 1998.

³¹ On Āzar and his like-minded fellow *taẓkirah* writer Muḥammad Ṭāhir Naṣrābādī, see Alam 2003: 176. Āzar’s description of India notes simply that it is hot and large, that “its customs and laws are often contrary to those of the people of Iran and indeed Turan” [*rusūm wa qawā’id-i ānjā akṣar kḥilāf-i ahl-i īrān ast balkih tūrān*], has bizarre fruits that are not found in Iran, and lastly that complete information about it is not available in Iran but can

disapproval of Indian poets, either collectively or as individuals, his intentions are clear based on the content: Hundreds of pages are devoted to Iranian poets, while Indians are represented in a section containing a meager seventeen entries.³² Most of these are just a few lines, with the accounts of just three poets, Faizī, Ḥasan Dihlawī, and Amīr Ḳhusrau, spanning more than a page. He mentions just seven poets from Delhi, and the only one whom he quotes at length is Amīr Ḳhusrau.³³ Furthermore, many poets deeply associated with India whom Āzar included were given a non-Indian provenance—after all, they had not been born in India—and poets who had long stints in India and were respected in their time, such as Abū Ṭālib Kalīm Kāshānī (Shāh Jahān’s poet laureate who was actually from Hamadan), were condemned. Kalīm was prolific but Āzar’s assessment is that he “has not a single verse worth remembering” [*sh‘irī kih qabūl-i tazakkur bāshad nadārad*] except in a few *ghazals* (Azar 1999:

constructed on the basis of books and manuscripts (*Ātashkadah* 1999: 417). No mention is made of India’s centuries-long role supporting Persian literature or indeed welcoming Iranian intellectuals. On the contrary, Āzar exoticizes it and interprets it at a distance, perhaps akin to James Mill (who famously wrote in the preface to his history of India “As soon as a everything of importance is expressed in writing, a man who is duly qualified may obtain more knowledge of India in one year in his closet in England, than he could obtain during the course of longest life, by the use of his eyes and ears in India,” qtd Majeed 1992: 139).

³² Azar 1999: 423–38. The list of poets in the Bodleian Library catalogue’s entry on *Ātashkadah* demonstrates just how stark the difference in numbers is (Sachau and Ethé 1889: 261ff., especially 288). Dividing Indian and Iranian poets was not new, as this structure had been used in *tazkirahs* such as Naṣrābādī’s (1083/1672, enlarged 1092/1681), but it takes on a new significance under Āzar (since the *Tazkirah-yi Nāṣirābādī* at least includes Iranian-born Mughal nobles in the India section). Ārzū uses Naṣrābādī as a source in his own *MN*.

³³ The work’s twentieth-century publication history appears to recapitulate the problem: Tehran-based Amir Kabir Publishers released the first three volumes of the work, edited by Hasan Saadat Nasiri, in 1957. The fourth and final volume edited by Mir Hashem Muhaddis, which contains all of the entries for the poets from India and Turan, was not released until 1999.

48). He goes on to damn Kalīm with faint praise by noting that his poetry was “accepted” [*musallam*] because of special favor from the Mughal Emperor and Indian nobles. (This implies that while people read his work, it was not necessarily any good, objectively speaking.) As a further example, let us consider the four poets to whom Munīr objects: In the short entry on Ṭālib, Āzar observes that Ṭālib “was for a time in India among the most respected in the service of Shāh Salīm [i.e. Jahāngīr]” and “in poetry [he] has a particular style which is not sought by eloquent poets.”³⁴ Zuhūrī merits a one-line notice (Azar 1957: vol 1, 130). ‘Urfī he acknowledges as a well-known poet whose *dīwān* he has come across many times but dismisses him as having “a few verses which are not empty of eloquence” [*chand sh‘irī kih khālī az faṣāḥat na-būd*] (Azar 1999: 191)]. In contrast, he heartily approves of Zulālī as a poet whose poetry is “lucid” [*roshan-ẓamīr*], and tellingly the most obvious difference between Zulālī and these other poets is that he never spent time in India.³⁵

Āzar’s generation of Isfahan-based poets were the precursors to the *Bāzgasht-i adabī* movement and have no connection to the Subcontinent.³⁶ By the time he was writing, a major

³⁴ “*wa muddatī dar hindūstān dar khidmat-i shāh salīm az mu‘tabarīn būdah... wa dar shā‘irī ẓarz-i khāṣṣī kih maṭlūb-i shu‘arā-yi faṣīh nīst dārad*” (Azar 1957: vol 2, pp. 870-1).

³⁵ Azar 1957: vol 2, p. 767, cf. Ghani 1929-30: 193, 298-9 on the observation that Āzar harshly judges poets who made a living in India.

³⁶ They were the students of Sayyid Mīr-‘Alī Mushtāq (d. 1757), a group including Āzar himself, Hātīf, Sabāhī, Bidgolī, and Ṣahbā (Smith 2009: 200). Indeed, Sunil Sharma has argued that *Ātashkadah* was concerned above all with preserving a Safavid legacy in the wake of the collapse of the Safavid state (Sharma 2012b: 52).

change in the career paths of Iranian litterateurs had set in, namely that India was no longer an important rung in the advancement ladder for them. It had become a strange place onto which critical judgments could be projected at a distance (see fn 31 above). No one from their time into ours, notes the Urdu critic Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, has ever written a study of “the theory and practice of the language” used by Indo-Persian poets specifically.³⁷ The Indian Persianist Muḥammad ‘Abdul Ġhanī, writing at roughly the same time as Muḥammad Taqī Bahār was popularizing his chronology for Persian literature and the label “Indian style,” argues that there would be no need for such a study because “the Indian style was essentially Persian, and was founded on the same model as obtained in or what was brought from Persia” (1929-30: 278). He notes that the idea that Indian usage was stylistically inferior—or even markedly different from—that of the rest of the Persian cosmopolis “now seems, perhaps more than it was a few years before, to be making impression [*sic*] on European minds, for the persons responsible for expressing such views have a far-reaching and authoritative voice.”³⁸

³⁷ Faruqi 2004b: 61; cf Alam 2003: 139 n. 9. The difficulty is the slippage between the categories Indo-Persian and so-called “Indian Style” by any name: For example, Muḥammad Taqī Bahār includes a list of characteristics of “*sabk-i tāzah*” in his posthumously published article “*Ṣā’ib wa shīwah-yi ū*” [Ṣā’ib and his Style] (Bahar 1970). These are the usual generalities about an obsession with newness in expression that made eloquence all but impossible for the poets of this period (as well as decrying the *ghazal*, the iconic literary form of the period, as promoting facile thinking). He says of “*sabk-i tāzah*” that Ṣā’ib “imported it from Iran to India and perfected it in India” [*az īrān bah hindūstān nīz raḡhtah kard wa dar hindūstān takmīl gardīd*]. Thus he implies that the faults in Ṣā’ib’s poetry are somehow related to India without engaging at all with how Indo-Persian poetics might be different than Iranian Persian poetics.

³⁸ Ibid. This is particularly in reference to his teacher, E. G. Browne, with whom he had a somewhat tense relationship. The preface to ‘Abdul Ġhanī’s later book, *Pre-Mughal Persian in Hindustan* [1941], remarkably

Yet despite the lack of any rigorous analysis, the assumption remains on the part of many scholars in the West, in Iran, and in India that Indo-Persian went irreparably wrong when measured against an Iranian standard of eloquence. That transhistorical Iranian standard was reified after Ārzū's lifetime by a group of poets seeking a break with the past by bracketing off Iranian literary culture from the traditions of the Persian cosmopolis as a whole. For Āzar, Ṣā'ib Tabrīzī (1592–1676), who stayed in India during the reign of Shāh Jahān, was one of the people who had utterly spoiled Persian literature. Āzar writes that

From when he first tossed off verses, the ways of thinking established by the eloquent among the ancients were closed off, the accepted principles of bygone masters were lost as well as the niceties of poetry after Ṣā'ib, who was the inventor of a unpleasant new style [*ṭarīqah*]"³⁹

But even Āzar, with his heightened concern for region, here frames the issue primarily as that of a degraded new style that should be replaced by a universally accepted old style.⁴⁰ By

includes a facsimile of a 1923 hand-written letter from Browne in which he writes "Professor 'Abdu'l Ghani appears to cling to what I regard as the delusion that Indian Persian is better than Persian Persian—a matter of constant conflict between us..." (Ghani 1994: xxvii-xxix). 'Abdul Ghani clarifies that he simply disagrees with Browne's assessment that Indo-Persian is automatically inferior to Persian produced in Iran. Browne's four-volume history of Persian literary culture was extraordinarily influential in Europe and in the former Persian cosmopolis. See fn. 17 above on Browne's unwillingness to engage with Indian literary production. It is telling that the Pakistani scholar Sayyid 'Abdullah cites as his authority the colonial researcher Henry Blochmann in his discussion of "*isti'māl-i hind*" [Indian usage of Persian] (Abdullah 1967: 267ff; Blochmann 1868: 32ff). Blochmann's analysis, although largely unobjectionable, is still problematic because it rests mainly upon nineteenth-century sources (and for that matter nineteenth-century attitudes about standard Persian) while claiming to provide a general history of Indo-Persian usage.

³⁹ "*az āghāz-i suḵhan-gustari-yi īshān ṭuruq-i ḵhayālāt-i matīnah-yi fuṣṣahā-yi mutaqaḍdimīn masdūd wa qawā'id-i musallim-i ustādān-i sābq mafqūd wa marātib-i suḵhanwarī ba'd az janāb-i mirzā-yi mashārīlayhi kih mubda'-i ṭarīqah-yi jadīdah-yi nāpasandīdah būd*" (Azar 1957: 122-3).

⁴⁰ Even in the nineteenth century, the Iranian nationalist scholar Riṣā Qulī Ḵhān Hidāyat (1800–72) condemns this period in the strongest terms ("the poets, following their sick natures and distorted tastes, began to write

contrast, Ārzū's own assessment of Ṣā'ib is extremely positive, since Ārzū sees him as the "leader" [*sar-guroh*] of the Moderns (M 215). Views like Āzar's became dominant across both India and Iran in the nineteenth century and were recapitulated throughout the twentieth: Iranian scholars (along with most Indian Persian scholars) could find little commendable in the *tāzah-go'ī* poets. However, after the Iranian Revolution various poets previously dismissed as decadent and unpleasantly difficult to interpret have started getting their due in the Iranian academy.⁴¹

Ancients and Moderns in India and Europe

The distinction between Ancients and Moderns, a workable translation of *mutaqaddimīn* and *muta'akhkhirīn*, is one that seems to hold across many traditions, and can also be thought of as classical writers versus recent and contemporary ones. It is crucial for the question of poetic authority because recent and contemporary writers are inevitably held to different standards than centuries-old ones, a distinction which informs both theoretical and practical concerns in

confused, vain, and nonsensical poems") in the preface to his *taẓkirah Majma' al-fuṣahā'* without specific reference to India (trans. Parsinejad 2003: 22; *Majma' al-fuṣahā'* 1957).

⁴¹ For example a recent special issue (no. 39-40, Winter 2007/Spring 2008) of *Qand-i pārsī*, the journal of Iran Culture House, New Delhi, devoted to Bedil contains a number of articles by important Iranian scholars. Bedil's complexity has been recast as philosophical depth rather than cultural degeneracy. The preface to the volume grandly declares "the present decade has been the decade of Maulānā [the poet also called Rūmī] and the coming decade will without a doubt be that of Bedil" [*qarn-i ḥāẓir qarn-i maulānā būd wa qarn-i āyandah bi ḥiḥ gumān az ān bedil ast*] (Qazwah 2008: 8). It is worth observing that Bedil's popularity, while it waned in Iran and India, never eroded in Afghanistan, where Persian-speakers are said to hold him in as much esteem as Ḥāfiẓ.

literature. The works of the Ancients have survived and by surviving the ravages of time and neglect have become classics that can provide guidance to contemporary poets.⁴² A discussion of the relationship between Ancients and Moderns in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Indo-Persian lends itself to a comparison with the roughly contemporary crisis of authority in Europe. The most celebrated account of this situation in English is Jonathan Swift's satire "The Battle of the Books" published in 1704. It imagines the library of St. James's Palace in London as a battlefield where books by old authors face off against books by recent authors. (A spider and a bee also enter the fray.) It is a witty allegory of the contemporary debates over authority in Western Europe. A simplified account of the intellectual history of that period would go like this: People began to question the worth of classical texts, which no longer seemed timeless, because, for example, if Aristotle has been proven wrong through experimental science then why should Homer be held in higher regard than modern poets?⁴³ After Edward Said, it is

⁴² See Lianeri and Zajko 2008. They observe that "the idea of the classic is invested in a particular model of history, one which allows for a perpetual tension between the enduring and the transient and for the survival of the past in ways that are comprehensible even to a radically different present" (ibid 4). This is undoubtedly true, but it is worth pointing out that most societies have seen history in this way, and it is only with modernity that the exceptionalism of the present (as in Tocqueville's image that the lamp of history no longer illuminates the future) becomes a common way of thinking. An early-modern and modern use of the word "classic," which can be more precisely called "relative classic," is a work that attains perfection by the standards of its age but is not venerable enough in age to be on par with the classics of Antiquity (ibid 11). In the Persianate context, discussions of *tāzah-goʾī* can be read as hinging on a similar tension between the absolute and the relative classic.

⁴³ For example, Sir Richard Blackmore in 1716 wrote in his *Essay upon Epick Poetry* (along similar lines to what Abbé Pons had written two years before) that "Unless the Admirers of Homer will assert and prove their Infallibility why may they not be deceiv'd as well as the Disciples and Adorers of Aristotle?" (qtd. in Aldridge 1973: 76-7). See also DeJean 1997.

impossible not to notice the tendency to offer broad socio-political explanations (namely “decline”) for early-modern literary trends in the non-West while European literature supposedly comes into being because of deliberately taken, positive steps towards modernity. Each case is over-determined and can shed light on the other.⁴⁴ We should be clear that when we use the label “Modern” in these pages to describe an intellectual faction in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this refers to people whose orientation was towards new configurations of knowledge and a move away from the Ancients—we should resist the temptation to think of them as “the makers of the Modern world” because then we are locked into a teleological and Eurocentric reasoning that undermines the effort of comparison. The turn of the contemporary against the established is an intellectual attitude that reappears from the coining of the term “*modernus*” in Latin in the fifth century through the present-day usage to refer to the particularities of our own time.⁴⁵ Of course, the constituents of each category change in every instance, and it is in studying the transformation of the categories that we find instructive discontinuities.

⁴⁴ We can of course find evidence of so-called cultural decline if we root around in the European tradition. For example, in 1771 the philologist Sir William Jones writes (in Latin) to his friend to dissuade him from publishing a book of Latin translations but rather to publish in French: “One can hardly believe how few noble/important men there are in England who know Latin” he declares [*nam credible vix est quam pauci sint in Anglia viri nobiles qui Latine sciant*] (Cannon 1970: vol 1, 86).

⁴⁵ “*Modernus*,” according to the *OED*, is derived from “*modo*” [just now] + *-iernus* [Classical Latin *hodiernus*, the adjective derived from *hodie* “today”]. In European intellectual history, the *moderni/antiqui* distinction is important in the twelfth century, again in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and again in the period under discussion here (see Coleman 1992: 293, 541 ff).

In the Persian cosmopolis, the distinction between *mutaqaddimīn* and *mutaʾakḥḥirīn* was likewise long-held and likewise took on a special salience in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Five centuries before Ārzū, it appears in Amīr Ḳhusrau’s programmatic introduction to *Ġhurrat al-kamāl* [The Perfect New Moon, 1294], his third *dīwān* [collected poems].⁴⁶ This categorical division remains into the eighteenth century, albeit with the textual canon having been profoundly expanded. As we have seen, Ārzū’s Persian lexicon is structured around this division: The first volume deals with words and expressions used by the Ancients while the second, much slimmer volume deals with the Moderns’ usages.⁴⁷ The Moderns may be further subdivided into “*muʿāṣirīn*” [(living) contemporaries] and “*mutaʾakḥḥirīn*” [Moderns, living or dead], but there is no significant distinction between contemporaries and Moderns as there is between Ancients and Moderns.⁴⁸ Ḥazīn wrote a *taẓkirah* of roughly one hundred contemporary poets—completing it in just nine days apparently—entitled *Taẓkirat al-muʿāṣirīn*

⁴⁶ In this case the distinction is drawn between “*mutaqaddamān*” and “*muʿāṣirān*” (*Ġhurrat al-kamāl* 1975: 38; Kinra 2008: 347). Also Niẓāmī ‘Arūẓī writing in the twelfth century CE advises all would-be poets to memorize 20,000 lines of the Ancients and 10,000 of the Moderns (Zipoli 1993). In Arabic the division of Ancients from Moderns is practically primordial. For example, Ibn Qutaybah (d. late ninth c. CE) writes “I have not regarded an ancient with veneration on account of his antiquity nor any modern with contempt on account of his being modern ...” (trans. Nicholson 1907: 287).

⁴⁷ Naqvi 1962: 109-18. The second volume generally goes by the title *Chirāgh-i hidāyat*. It consists of words and expression used by the Moderns which do not appear in the major dictionaries (Ārzū mentions *Farhang-i jāhāngiri*, *Farhang-i surūrī* and *Burhān-i qāṭiʿ* as examples in the preface).

⁴⁸ A similar division of convenience has the “Middles” [*mutawassitīn*], e.g. in *Safīnah-yi khwushgo*; see Husain 1937: 224 on Amīr Ḳhusrau as the first of the “Middles”). The application of such a tripartite division in Urdu, as in Mīr Ḥasan’s *Taẓkirah-yi shuʿarā-yi urdū* [*Taẓkirah* of Urdu Poets], will be addressed in the following chapter.

[*Taẓkirah* of [Our] Contemporaries, 1752].⁴⁹ Crucially, views on imitation were very different from those in our society and so the Ancients had an important role to play in contemporary poetic practice.⁵⁰ While outright plagiarism [*saraqat*] was generally condemned, thematic and formal imitation was institutionalized in the practice of writing poems in imitation of earlier masters [*istiqbāl*, lit. “welcoming”] and quoting them in order to reply [*tazmīn*].⁵¹ To choose two examples at random, Ṭālib (sixteenth and seventeenth-century) acknowledges himself a follower of Amīr Ḳhusrau (thirteenth-century), while Abū’l Faẓl (sixteenth-century) acknowledges his debt to Abū’l Faraj Runī (eleventh-century).⁵² Thus, when Ārzū takes the side of the Moderns in the debates of his time, he is not in any way rejecting the Ancients but

⁴⁹ Storey 1953: vol 1, pt 2, 848. The claim of the improbably short writing time is Ḥazīn’s own, but he does not explain why (*Taẓkirat al-mu’āṣirīn* 1996: 228). Perhaps it is meant in self-aggrandizement or to make the production of the work seem miraculous.

⁵⁰ This is also true of pre-modern and early-modern Europe, where it was a virtue to write in the style of other people, for example Cicero in prose and Virgil in poetry (Bailey 1930: 205). “The sixteenth-century theorists of poetry,” argue Nagel and Wood, “had another name for pastiche: *imitatio*, or the transformation of text into text. The literary text of the Renaissance was understood to be the altered double of a predecessor text. Acceptable doubling was literary creation itself; unacceptable doubling—duplicitous doubling—was plagiarism” (Nagel and Wood 2010: 297).

⁵¹ For a detailed analysis of the tradition’s distinction between permitted borrowings and plagiarism, see Losensky 1994 and Zipoli 1993. Also on Shams-i Qais, see Clinton 1989: 117-25. The Orientalist Francis Gladwin glosses *tazmīn* as “when the Poet applies to his purpose some lines from another author; but in case the author so quoted be not well known, it is incumbent on him to mention the name, in order to obviate the imputation of plagiarism” (Gladwin 1801: 33). The classic account of plagiarism in Arabic theory is Grunebaum 1944 (although his assumption that imitation was equivalent to the classical Greek concept of mimesis was later criticized).

⁵² Hadi 1962: 113; Ghani 1929-30: 63. To this list we could add the nineteenth-century poet Ġhālīb, who acknowledges himself a follower of ‘Urfī, Ṣā’ib, and Zuhūrī. Ġhālīb writes, for example, “*ġhālīb az aurāq-i mā naqsh-i zuhūrī damīd / surmah-yi ḥairat kashīm dīdah ba-dīdan dahīm*” [Ghalib! The color of Zuhūrī shines from our pages / Let us apply to collyrium of wonder in our eyes and engage them in the act of looking] (qtd. Rahman 1970: 48 with misprint of “*taqsh*” for “*naqsh*”).

rather proposing a poetics that could cope with newness. He is so respectful of the Ancients that, as we saw in the previous chapter, he is willing to allow their mistakes in “Persianized” [tafrīs] words borrowed from Indic languages to stand because these have become standard Persian. Moderns, however, must use recently borrowed Indic words in Persian correctly.

For us, Persian poetry, especially in the early-modern period, is striking because of its rich and sometimes bewildering intertextuality—poets frequently reference other poets and depend on them for *sanad*, which we can formally translate as “warrant.” A *sanad* is an example of usage, that a particular poet used a particular word, phrase or metaphor in a particular meaning, and like a royal warrant, it implies a transaction of asking for and receiving approval from one’s betters.⁵³ This is central to the enterprise of Persian poetry and yet modern critics have often failed to “allow intertextuality as a legitimate literary device.”⁵⁴ Intertextuality—when a literary text cites or otherwise responds to a previous literary text, as described in note 51 above—is one way in which *sanad* is embedded in the tradition. It has often been

⁵³ It is worth noting that the term’s semantic range spans the secular and the religious. The Arabic root S-N-D literally refers to “making something rest upon something else.” It refers to the chain of transmission (usually in the synonym *isnad*) in scholarship used to establish the authenticity of *ḥadīṣ*, but in Ottoman and Indo-Persian usage also refers to an officially sealed (and therefore authenticated) document or proclamation (Bosworth 2011: 703).

⁵⁴ Faruqi 2004b: 22. Likewise, critics have generally failed to see the importance of humor and mixed registers in Persian literature (Perry 2012: 90). It is axiomatic that whenever a literature is elevated to the status of a classic, critics attempt to save the tradition from its unsavory parts either by omitting them or trying to explain them away. In the Urdu tradition, a good example is the poet Mīr, who is generally described as a serious and somewhat dour man, but students of his (Persian prose) *Ẓikr-i mīr* know that that text ends with several pages of ribald jokes, many about the sexual deviance of Pathans. For many modern readers, it would be inconceivable that the Mīr who wrote the serious poetry could be the same Mīr who collected dirty jokes, but of course he was.

misinterpreted by later critics as “mere imitation” rather than a crucial component of the system of aesthetic control in Persian poetry. If we consider the painstakingly researched critical works that Ārzū and other poet-scholars have written then it becomes clear that the search for *sanad* was the ordering principle for literary scholarship in Persian.⁵⁵ In Ārzū’s case, it raised questions about the history of language that we would recognize as his society’s equivalent of our modern discipline of linguistics. These questions are explored at length in his magnum opus, *Muṣmir* [The Fruitful], which we encountered in the previous chapter, but also appear in brief recapitulations throughout his other critical works. For us, linguistics is an entirely separate realm of enquiry from literary criticism: It is the study of “*les langues en elles-mêmes et pour elles-mêmes*” [languages themselves for their own sake] (Auroux 1989: 30). In the pre-modern Persian tradition, there was no such distinction between the study of language and the appraisal of literature. We must therefore be receptive to critical concerns that seem

⁵⁵ It is useful to consider John Searle’s concept of the “constitutive rule,” namely a principle without which a system ceases to be itself. For example, imagine a game of chess without the Queen’s move—it would still be a game of strategy involving pieces moved around a board in turns but it could not meaningfully be called “chess” (Taylor 1985: 34). Failing to recognize the function of *sanad* (or rather dismissing it as the mark of degeneracy) similarly deforms modern criticism of the Persian poetic tradition. A text by Ārzū’s friend Ṭek Chand Bahār called *Ibtāl-i ẓarūrat* [Refutation of Poetic License], which was lithographed in 1268/1851–2 but is likely no longer extant, argues (according to Blochmann) that good poetry should not allow changes made out of poetic necessity [*ẓarūrat-i sh‘ir*] (Blochmann 1868: 29–30). In other words, he appears to argue (contrary to Ārzū, who is trying to account for poetic innovation), that everything in poetry must rest on proper *sanad*. Blochmann’s summary of the text might be misleading so we should not speculate further than this without access to the original.

very different from our own and avoid imposing anachronistic judgments on the material.⁵⁶

Thus we should focus on what appears to have truly concerned Ārzū, namely that new poetic styles presented novel issues of interpretation. The old system of *sanad* was threatened by people's enjoyment and approval of verse that did not have an obvious precursor.

In Europe, imitation [*imitatio*] was also a guiding principle in literature until the modern period.⁵⁷ The Ancients and Moderns debate emerged from Renaissance questions about which literary and bureaucratic models were to be imitated, the more recent scholastic tradition or the rediscovered literature of Antiquity. In the words of Ingrid Rowland,

The drive to purge Latin of its medieval vocabulary also marked a rebellion against its development into a bureaucratic and technical language. Medieval Latin was the Latin of laws,

⁵⁶ Foucault's eloquent summation of the state of knowledge in pre-modern Europe can be a guide for the Persian tradition as well: "To us, it seems that sixteenth-century learning was made up of an unstable mixture of rational knowledge, motions derived from magical practices, and a whole cultural heritage whose power and authority had been vastly increased by the rediscovery of Greek and Roman authors. Perceived thus, the learning of that period appears structurally weak: a common ground where fidelity to the Ancients, a taste for the supernatural, and an already awakened awareness of that sovereign rationality in which we recognize ourselves, confronted one another in equal freedom" (1994: 32). Foucault also reminds us of the value of seeing each Persian critical work as "a node within a network... caught up in a system of reference to other books, other texts, other sentences" (Foucault 1972: 23).

⁵⁷ The Aristotelian formulation of mimesis (the imitation of nature) gave way to the imitation of other authors. An interesting parallel is that the eighteenth-century Orientalist Sir William Jones disagreed with Aristotle's formulation and so apparently coincidentally held a view on imitation of nature that was compatible with Perso-Arabic literary theory (Mukherjee 1968: 43). (On the pitfalls of applying Western notions of mimesis to Perso-Arabic literature, see Meisami 2003: 4.) A good eighteenth-century expression from the Western perspective of the tension between imitation as necessity and as a sign of cultural degradation is Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* [History of the Art of Antiquity, 1764] on the Greeks (Stern 2003: 69).

contracts and of traditional university education. Medieval theology and philosophy had acquired pinpoint precision, but precision could also sound excruciatingly dull.⁵⁸

Humanists, particularly those associated with the Roman Academy, sought to recover what they saw as the natural grace of classical Latin and from the fifteenth century onward took deliberate steps to bend literary usage back towards the Classics. Many of them were bureaucrats in the Papal establishment and could change the Latin of the Church from within. Famously “nuns” became “Vestal Virgins,” “churches” became “temples,” and so on (Rowland 1998: 199). This was not a simple substitution of vocabulary but rather the smallest unit of an enormous cultural reorientation that found its expression in literature, architecture, the arts and political philosophy. From the beginning, the Renaissance humanists had had a sense that they were separated from the Ancients not just in time but by different modes of living, but this had not necessarily called into question the desire to order society and culture on the basis of Antiquity (Auerbach 2003: 321). By the seventeenth century, this devotion to the Ancients was itself critiqued. People began to rebel against what Quentin Skinner has usefully called “the mythology of doctrines,” namely that for any given subject an ancient writer “will be found to enunciate some doctrine on each of the topics regarded as constitutive of the subject” (Skinner 2002: 59).

⁵⁸ Rowland 1998: 14; cf. Auerbach 1993: 121. Likewise Janet Coleman argues that the transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is best understood as a “genre shift” (Coleman 1992: 573ff).

Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Migration of Persian Native Speakers into India

The migration of Iranians and Persian Central Asians into India has been noted frequently, from the Indo-Persian tradition's own *taẓkirahs* and chronicles to a number of scholarly works based in part on them.⁵⁹ Ārzū's own *Majma' al-nafā'is* is like many *taẓkirahs* in that it tries to provide an origin for as many poets as possible and roughly half of the 110 of his contemporaries that he mentions are Iranians. Many of them arrived in India during the reign of Aurangzeb or were born in India to fathers who had come at that time. There are two key questions that require an answer in order for us to understand how the influx of Persians into Indian public life affected the world of letters: Firstly, how do the numerical analyses demonstrating that Iranians made up an increasingly large proportion of the nobility in Aurangzeb's reign (notably Ali 1997) square with more impressionistic sources describing the experience of Iranian litterateurs in South Asia (e.g. Dale 2003; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2006; Sharma 2003)? This is a central question because not only did such nobles (who were also the administrator class of the Mughal system) provide patronage for literature but many were themselves poets.⁶⁰ Secondly, is there

⁵⁹ E.g. Rahman 1970, Gulchīn Ma'ānī 1990, Subrahmanyam 1992, and Haneda 1997, on the sixteenth century see Gladwin 1801 and on the seventeenth Dadvar 1999: 203-37. (Dadvar's interpretations are rather suspect but his raw data are useful.) A recent doctoral dissertation from Pakistan tries to summarize Persian immigration but provides little analysis except a recapitulation of the idea that there was an "Indo-Persian School" distinct from Iranian Persian—even though he is specifically discussing Iranian writers resident in India (Ziauddin 2005: 154-206, esp. 167).

⁶⁰ The literary cross-fertilization between poets and administrators had been the case throughout history and had a hand in creating standard New Persian in the first place (Hanaway 2012).

evidence that Iranian patrons in India exclusively supported other Iranians while Indians supported fellow Indian Persianists?⁶¹ There is a historiographical difficulty for us in that recent books which have dealt with the economic and political history of eighteenth-century South Asia (such as Marshall 2003) have resolutely excluded cultural history. Such analyses are concerned with socio-economic explanations for the so-called failure of Mughal polity in the eighteenth-century. The most relevant idea for our purposes is the claim that courtly factions, fragmented along ethnic lines, made imperial administration unsustainable.⁶² Perhaps this could be cross-referenced with the supposed increase in ethnic chauvinism on the part of Iranians that scholars of literature have implicated in the development of Persian literature (or rather its decline) in this period. However, these parties at court (*Īrānī*, *Tūrānī*, etc.) were not modern national identities, and even colonial historians understood that the labels were necessarily vague and possibly fluid.⁶³ The role of ethnic factions in Mughal politics is a complex one, but many scholars have concluded that the coalitions in the succession struggles and other major political

⁶¹ This is Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's assumption but he does not provide convincing evidence (2001:27, cf 104-5).

⁶² Irvine's *Later Mughals*, for example, explains the cause of difficulties after the invasion of Nādir Shāh not in societal terms but as a consequence of a moral failure among the nobility: "Indeed, there was no reason why there should be a restoration of the imperial power and prestige, while the character of the Emperor and his nobles continued to be as bad as before" (1922: I, 379).

⁶³ Irvine 1922: 272-5. Ḳhāfī Ḳhān, the early eighteenth-century author of the chronicle *Muntaḵhāb al-lubāb*, claims that from Akbar's reign "the term Mughal came into common use for the Turks and Tajik of 'Ajam, indeed even for the Sayyids of Iran and Turan" (trans Kia 2011: 180). That definition encompasses virtually the whole of the Mughal nobility.

conflicts were multi-ethnic (e.g. Chandra 2002: 294; Ali 1997: 19; cf. Malik 2006). The contemporary accusations that Shī‘ah nobles betrayed the empire because of their religious affiliation (for example, not pressing the siege of Golconda or inviting Nādir Shāh to invade India) tell us little about the actual social conditions of Iranians in South Asia, especially of those who were not high-ranking administrators (Chandra 2002: 285).

By any measure native Indian Persian poets get short shrift in *Ā’in-i akbarī* but what conclusions should we draw from this and how do they apply to the eighteenth century? Only nine of 59 poets mentioned in *Ā’in-i akbarī* as having been “presented at court” were not Iranians, and Faizī—whose brother Abū’l Faḥr wrote the book—was the only Indian poet to receive a lengthy entry (indeed Faizī was the only Indian-born poet laureate [*malik al-shu‘arā*]).⁶⁴ It is difficult to generalize from the case of Faizī, but his career proves that an Indian could reach an exalted position in Persian letters. More qualitative assessments than lists of poets are few and far between. For example, Aurangzeb makes a general statement that “no nation is better than” Iranians for serving as clerks [sg. *mutāṣaddī*]. He goes on to mention their bravery in combat and the fact that their egos must be massaged, sometimes

⁶⁴ Alam 1998: 324, *Ā’in-i akbarī* 1873: 548–610. Among the fifty-nine entries, the one for Sherī is particularly interesting “He belongs to a Panjābī family of Shaiḫs. Under the patronage of his Majesty he has become a good poet.” This implies that Akbar took a personal interest in the training of poets.

even by subterfuge.⁶⁵ Strangely though, there is no suggestion that they have a natural advantage because their native language is the language in which accounts are kept.⁶⁶

There is no discernible pattern of discriminatory patronage among Iranians in the eighteenth century recorded in *Majmaʿ al-naḥāʾis*. Ārzū's own network of friends, addressed in Chapter One, is a good illustration. His patrons were the Indian-born members of an Īrānī family. The advantage of Iranians, whatever form it might have taken, is something more subtle along the lines of hegemony. Pollock's reading of Gramsci is illuminating here:

For Gramsci language, above all as manifested in literature, was the very paradigm of hegemonic power (the term he used to characterize the process by which a dominant community exerts prestige over contiguous subordinate communities to secure active consent, instead of establishing relations of domination wherein consent is secured passively and by coercion) (1995: 16).

We might assume that the “dominant community” in question here would be the Iranians, but since the terminology of Persian literature itself is so inclusive, Ārzū implies (as we shall see below) that the key group is that of the masters of the language (described in various different

⁶⁵ *Aḥkām-i ʿālamgīrī* (trans. Sarkar 1949: 47; original 1926: 14). However, he also declares that “Without [being charged with] prejudice and enmity, we may say that as the Sun is the guardian planet of the Persians, the intellectual keenness of those men in quickness of perception and foresight is four times as great as that of the Indians, whose tutelary planet is Saturn” (trans. 105; original 64-5). As above, he does not mean this as a compliment to Iranians since he spells out that one should always be on one's “guard against the great cunning of the Persians” because to be kind to them is simply to fall prey to their schemes. He is also clear that Indians whose horoscopes are influenced by planets other than Saturn are not actually stupid.

⁶⁶ Other references are ambiguous about linguistic advantage as opposed to general moral judgment of the qualities of a community. For example, the *Tārīkh-i ʿabbāsī*, a text written at the Safavid court, reports that Shāh ʿAbbās I asked two Persian-origin envoys from Jahāngīr why the Emperor never sends native Indians as diplomats and one said: “*dar hind agar ādamī mī būd mā rā kasī nān namī dād—ādam dar hind nīst*” [If there were anyone (able) in India, who would give us a living there? In India there is no one (able).] (qtd Islam 1970: 227). Islam also notes that most ambassadors from the Deccan were also Persians.

ways, such as “*arbāb-i suḵhan*” or “lords of speech”) rather than “*ahl-i zabān*” [lit. People of the Language], which is the closest equivalent to “native speaker.” This translation is, however, misleading: We are not looking for some kind of “native speaker advantage” but rather something more akin to the view held by Renaissance Italians that they were the proper heirs of Latin rather than Germans.⁶⁷ In other words, the operative distinction is not whether one has spoken a language from childhood or not (a “native speaker” as we would think of it), but rather whether one belongs (either from birth or later association) to a community associated with a language. Participants in the Persian literary sphere were—here we might think of Bruno Latour—aware of the fact that they fit not only into a network of people but of texts and social practices. The textual canon was cosmopolitan, a development which Ārzū historicizes, as we have seen in the previous chapter.⁶⁸ It was thus possible to dispute the felicity of Iranians in using their own language since training is required to master the canon. J. F. Richards has argued that Iranian nobles were integrated into the Mughal system by accepting what he calls

⁶⁷ Italians believed that as the modern day descendants of the Ancient Romans they had special access to *Latinitas* [the culture of Latin] opposed to other Europeans, like Germans, whom they tended to call “barbarians” as if reenacting in words the early Roman Empire’s wars against the Germanic tribes on its northern frontier. Ingrid Rowland observes that “From the Italian standpoint, of course, there was not, had never been, and could never be any contest [with German Latinists]: as they never tired of asserting, *Romanitas* ran in their veins and tripped naturally off their Latinate tongues” (Rowland 1994: 310). When the same argument was made about Iranians’ access to Persian, as we have seen, Ārzū drew the distinction between merely knowing a language and being trained in literary production.

⁶⁸ Iranians had a role in establishing the standard Indian *madrasah* curriculum. Mīr Faṭḥ-Allah of Shiraz, for example, was the major contributor to Akbar’s curricular reform (Alam and Subrahmanyam 2004: 62).

its “norms of comportment” (1984: 263). They became part of the highly cosmopolitan Mughal system, and it is unclear to what degree they could think of themselves as owners of a key bureaucratic tool of the state (that is, its Persian language) and of its associated literary culture. Would their views have changed when the ratio of native-born Iranians to Indian-born nobles of Iranian descent slipped? On the basis of *Majma‘ al-naḥā’is* and Ḥākim’s slightly later *Tazkirah-yi mardum-i dīdah* we can conclude that fewer Iranian litterateurs were coming to India after Aurangzeb’s reign.⁶⁹ Aurangzeb specifically refers to Iranians “whether born in *wilāyat* [i.e. abroad] or in Hindustan” (Sarkar 1949: 39). The concept of immigration itself, which is today regulated by nation-states, needs to be properly historicized. Consider, for example, Muḥammad Ḥusain Shāh, a poet with the pen-name Rizwān, who “came from *wilāyat* [i.e. Iran] and was a traveler and wanderer; and some say that he chose to settle [*tawāṭṭun ... iḥtiyār namūd*] in Lahore.”⁷⁰ Thus “*waṭan*,” which we are used to translating as “homeland,” can actually mean permanent residence.⁷¹ Ārzū notes several cases in which an Iranian-born poet went back to Iran, but by this time Iranians stayed in India.

⁶⁹ Some scholars have argued that there was an influx of Iranians to India during the upheavals of Nādir Shāh’s time (Robinson 1997: 159). This is not reflected in *Majma‘ al-naḥā’is* but it is possible that the poets who arrived then had not yet come to Ārzū’s notice when he composed it.

⁷⁰ MN 2005: 86

⁷¹ One’s native place is “*waṭan-i aṣlī*” (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001: 14). The usage of “*millat*” as “nation” and “*waṭan*” as “fatherland” is a nineteenth-century development (Parsinejad 2003: 129). Cf. the poet Aḥsanī, whose “ancestors chose to settle [*tawāṭṭun ... namūdah*] in Gwalior” [*ajdād-ash tawāṭṭun gwāliyār iḥtiyār namūdah*] (MN 2005: 49). *Waṭan* also has a technical sense in pre-modern Indian polity (namely as heritable rights which generally not even

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

Returning to the primary sources, let us consider Munīr's *Kārnāmah*. Throughout the text, his mode of attack is expressing his strong opinions about which metaphors are meaningful and which are nonsense. He rejects metaphors not used by the Ancients, although Ārzū shows that in some cases he has made the mistake of thinking there was no precedent for a certain usage when there actually had been. When Ārzū comes to the defense of the Moderns two generations after Munīr's attack on them, he does not reject the primacy of the Ancients but rather makes space for the Moderns by developing a poetics that could assess their works rather than dismissing them out of hand. Munīr's haphazard approach stands in contrast to Ārzū's careful theorization of literary criticism, and their personalities differed considerably. Munīr was recognized as brilliant at an early age, had a brief and controversial career, and then died young, aged just thirty-four.⁷² Ārzū on the other hand invokes his old age in the preface to his *Dād-i suḵhan* [Justice in Poetry, or A Poetic Gift, c. 1746], noting that he had been a student of poetry from the "whiteness" of childhood through the "blackness" of

the king could remove), which need not concern us here except as further evidence that the term has various meanings (Perlin 1985: 452ff).

⁷² By his own estimate, Munīr wrote 100,000 couplets. He adds, proving that he was not a particularly humble man, that "each and every couplet is lit by the sparkle of meaning" [*har yak bait al-sharf-i kaukabah-yi ma'ni ast*] (*Kārnāmah* 1977: 27). Munīr took his penname at fourteen, entered the service of Saif Ḳhān, the governor of Agra and brother-in-law of queen Mumtāz Maḥal, at age 25 in 1045/1635. He was apparently well-received in Agra. On his patron's death in 1049/1639, he went to Jaunpur before returning to Agra and dying there in Rajab 1054/September 1644 (Memon 2011).

youth into the “yellow sun” of old age (DS 1974: 1). Temperament perhaps goes some way to explain why Munīr, the literary *enfant terrible* of his time, vaguely states a program to defend the Ancients vigorously against the Moderns, while Ārzū, the *eminence grise* of his time, speaks from a lifetime of poetic experience when he lays out his interest in both the theory and practice of literature. Ārzū nonetheless has only compliments for Munīr in his *taẓkirah Majmaʿ al-nafāʾis*. He writes that Munīr’s “like in the art of poetry has not been seen in India since Faiẓī. In the art of *belles lettres* he is a follower in the style of Amīr Ḳhusrau ... By any measure he is accepted by the proven authorities of the perfect people of India and Iran.”⁷³ Such politeness is de rigeur for the *taẓkirah* genre, but critical works like *Kārnāmah* and *Dād-i suḵhan* had more scope to be vicious.

The two works that Ārzū wrote in reply to Munīr are *Sirāj-i munīr* [The Shining Lamp, or The Lamp for Munīr] and the above-mentioned *Dād-i suḵhan*. The dating is uncertain but *Dād-i suḵhan* was probably written in 1746 and *Sirāj-i munīr* was written at some point before that

⁷³ “mišl-i ūī bah fann-i shiʿr baʿd-i faiẓī bah hindūstān bah ham narasīdah. dar fann-i inshā muttabiʿ-i ṭarz-i amīr ḳhusrau ast ... bah har ḥāl az musallam al-ṣubūtān-i ahl-i kamāl-i hind wa īrān” (MN 2005: 116-7).

Ārzū also notes the existence of the following works of Munīr: His *Sāz-o barg* is a *maṣnawī* “in praise of the betel-leaf and specifically Indian items” [dar sitāyish-i barg-i tanbul wa ḡhairah wa ashyā-yi maḳḥṣūṣah-yi hind] and he has also written a *maṣnawī* “describing the flowers of Bengal” [dar taʾrīf-i gulhā-yi bangālah] which must be *Maẓhar-i gul* [A Show of Flowers], also called *Maṣnawī dar ṣifat-i bangālah* [A *maṣnawī* on the character of Bengal]. *Sāz-o barg* was published in Lucknow 1889 and since reprinted (Memon 2011).

with *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* falling between them, most likely in 1744.⁷⁴ It is worth summarizing the contents of each because this will help demonstrate how interconnected the Indo-Persian critical tradition is:

Sirāj-i munīr is a direct response to Munīr's *Kārnāmah* with which we began this chapter.⁷⁵

In *Kārnāmah*, Munīr critiques four poets, 'Urfī, Ṭālib, Zulālī, and Ṣuhūrī, who are his elder contemporaries and some of the most respected poets of the day. Ārzū notes that what unites Munīr's four targets is that they are "Modern" [*muta'aḥḥḥir*], clearly setting up a conflict between old and new styles (*SM* 33). Munīr's criticism is sharp throughout but he claims in his preface that he is not an enemy [*ḵaṣm*] of any of the poets (*Kārnāmah* 1977: 7). In other words, his remarks are not intended as a personal attack but as a reasoned critique. He analyzes some fifteen verses by each poet. In *Sirāj-i munīr*, Ārzū takes each of those verses, quotes at least part of Munīr's commentary, and comments on the commentary.

⁷⁴ *Dād-i suḵhan* must be the latest of the critical works, since it mentions both *Sirāj-i munīr* and *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* (DS 1974: 6) while *Sirāj-i munīr* mentions neither of the other texts. A manuscript at Punjab University (Lahore) has a colophon stating that *Dād-i suḵhan* was written in Muḥammad Shāh's 38th regnal year—however, we cannot accept this since Muḥammad Shāh's rule only lasted thirty years (Akram 1974: xx). Ārzū mentions in *Dād-i suḵhan*'s preface that he is now an old man, which puts the composition date not earlier than the 1740s. The editor has concluded that *Dād-i suḵhan* was written in 1746/1159 on the basis that the regnal year "38" above was probably a scribal error for "28" (ibid xxi). The preface to *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* mentions that it was written approximately ten years after Ḥazīn arrived in India (Ḥazīn writes in his autobiography that he arrived in Sindh at the beginning of Shawwal 1146 = March 1734). It was perhaps composed at the same time as *Dād-i suḵhan* because it does, in fact, contain a single reference to *Dād-i suḵhan* (*TĠh* 31). Otherwise this must be an interpolation.

⁷⁵ The context is explained in Alam 2003: 182ff.

Dād-i suḵhan is based on a similar principle but with an added layer: First, Muḥammad Jān Qudsī (d. 1056/1646–7), a poet laureate under Shāh Jahān, wrote a *qaṣīdah*. Then his contemporary Mullā Shaydā (d. 1042/1632) commented on some lines of which he disapproved. This commentary was counter-commented by Munīr, and finally Ārzū has added his contribution to the debate in *Dād-i suḵhan* while citing the positions of his predecessors. Additionally, *Dād-i suḵhan* begins with three fascinating prefaces on critical theory that Ārzū himself claims are unique in the tradition (DS 2-14).

Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn, or in its full and gloriously Arabicized title *Risālah-yi tanbīh al-ghāfilīn fī i‘tirāzāt ‘alā ash‘ār al-ḥazīn* [lit. The Essay of Admonition to the Heedless, in Objections to the Verses of Ḥazīn], is altogether simpler since it consists only of Ārzū’s objections to some three hundred verses of Ḥazīn’s. It follows the same pattern as the two works against Munīr in that it criticizes specific lines of Ḥazīn’s. Ārzū also apparently wrote a shorter second tract called *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq* [Administering Justice, or Establishing the Truth] against Ḥazīn, but no manuscript of it exists and we only know about it because Imām Baḥsh Sahbā’ī wrote a text in the nineteenth century purporting to be in response to it.⁷⁶ It was Ārzū’s spat with Ḥazīn (rather than with Munīr) that captured the imagination of Indo-Persian scholars in the nineteenth century because it fit so well into the narrative of Indians versus Iranians that we

⁷⁶ See fn. 97 in Chapter One above.

will explore in the following chapter with reference to the relationship between Persian and Urdu literary practice.

Dād-i Suḵhan's Prefaces

Ārzū's prefaces to *Dād-i suḵhan* attempt to establish the limits of literary interpretation in a way that the tradition never had before: *Where does poetic authority come from?* is the implicit question. Ārzū writes that the prefaces are based on his own ideas [*gumān-i khwud*] and deploys a standard formula for when an idea is untested: (literally) "May God make it true!" [*khudā kunad kih wāqī'ī bāshad*] (DS 2).

The first preface deals with mistakes in poetry and suggests a method for deciding whether a strange usage by an otherwise qualified Persian poet is in fact a mistake. Ārzū himself admits that this is a "very difficult" [*khaylī mushkil*] task). He accepts that usage shifts over time, but also that native speakers inevitably make mistakes because making mistakes is an integral part of language use.⁷⁷ Ārzū invokes vernacular poetic practice ("*reḵhtah*") in order

⁷⁷ This has, of course, become a crucial principle in modern linguistics, which recognizes that speech errors occur even when the underlying linguistic concept is sound in a person's mind. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that in this preface Ārzū invokes *reḵhtah*, a vernacular literary practice that would come to be called Urdu, and such a reference to something outside the Persian tradition implies that this is a universal formulation about poetry. A thorough discussion of Ārzū's ambition to make his literary theory universal and therefore applicable to Urdu/"*hindī*"/"*reḵhtah*" will be taken up in the next chapter.

to make his case, which appears to be a new development in Indo-Persian intellectual history.⁷⁸

He proposes that the solution for determining whether a mistake has been committed is an assessment based on both on the record of previous poets' acceptance of a usage and consensus among respected poets. Specifically if a usage is picked up by poets "whose standing is beyond reproach and accepted by others" [*kih pāyah-ash māfauq-i radd wa qabūl-i dīgarān ast*] then it becomes an accepted usage [*dākhil-i taṣarruf*] (DS 1974: 7). Crucially, the Ancients are by definition beyond reproach—being cited for centuries has proved their worth—but the Moderns are not. It may seem obvious that an expression becomes accepted if people accept it, but Ārzū is making a more subtle claim: Just as the Ancients' works became *sanad*, contemporary poets are also producing works that will potentially become *sanad*. For example, a formula that appears in *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* is that "the Shaiḫ [i.e. Ḥazīn] is the only *sanad* for X" where 'X' is a particular usage (e.g. TĠh 1981: 124). Indeed, Ārzū implies with his careful

⁷⁸ Cf. TĠh, in which Ārzū mentions some *reḳhtah* poets and notes that "a Mughal [i.e. an Indian-born Muslim and therefore a native speaker of *hindī*] and a non-Mughal is equivalent in the mistake in his own language" [*muḡhal wa ḡhair-muḡhal dar ḡhalaṭ bah zaban-i ḳhṡud musāwī ast*] (1981: 76).

There are some earlier claims of the vernacular on Persian such as the 13th/14th-c. poet Amīr Ḳhusrau's boast in the *maṣnawī Nuh sipīhr* [The Nine Heavens] and the preface to his third *dīwān*, *Ġhurraṭ al-kamāl* [The Full Moon], that India is great because its inhabitants can learn other languages, including Arabic and Persian, but outsiders can never master Indian languages (see the discussion in Gabbay 2010). The nature of *reḳhtah* as a mixed form invites some comparison between the vernacular and Persian such as the Deccani poet Nuṣṣṛatī Bījāpūrī's (1600–74?) statement that "Some beauties of Hindi poetry cannot / Be transported to Persian properly" (qtd./trans. Faruqi 2004b: 33). The present researcher has not, however, come across any *rigorous* comparison between the two languages before Ārzū.

refutations of various usages that he is fearful that an ugly expression will become *sanad*.⁷⁹ He points out a metrical fault in a modern poet and points out that research [*taḥqīq*] shows that similar mistakes exist in the work of some of the Ancients but “to name them would be a slight against propriety” [*burdan-i nām-i īshān sūʿ-i adab ast*].⁸⁰ Likewise, he cautions that “to take up a mistake of one of the greats [*buzurgān*] is a great mistake [*khaṭā-yi buzurgī*]” (ibid). Poets therefore need to be vigilant lest future writers treat their slips of the pen as *sanad*, as has happened in a few, thankfully rare, cases. After all, even Homer nods.⁸¹

The second preface deals explicitly with the question of whether Indian (non-native) speakers of Persian are competent to make changes in Persian usage to vocabulary and

⁷⁹ The critical literature on Arabic, from which Persian criticism took important inspiration, is quite different because Arabic is the language of divine revelation in Islam and therefore requires special considerations. For theological reasons, Arabic grammarians have throughout history been concerned with the corruption of language [*fāsād al-luġha*] (Auroux 1989: 247). For example, the Arabic literary theorist ‘Abd al-Qāhir Jurjānī (d. 471 AH/1078 CE), who is arguably the most important theorist on *balāghat* in the tradition, frequently refers to the idea that if someone changes the rules of a language then he can no longer be called a speaker of it—clearly Ārzū has moved far from this view (Baalbaki 1983: 11-12).

⁸⁰ DS 1974: 3. Similarly in *MN*, he points out a metrical fault in a couplet by a contemporary poet called Girāmī (d. 1156/1743), calling it “apparently a mistake” [*ġhālib^{an} sahw*] and also sighing “but this particular mistake indeed appears in the meter of several of the masters” [*lekin sahw-i maẓkūr dar baḥr-i baʿẓi az asātizah nīz wāqīʿ ast*] (*MN* 2005: 111). Shams-i Qays, apparently dealing with the same issue that not all *sanad* is good *sanad*, counsels would-be poets to take care to only imitate good poets and not bad ones (Clinton 1989: 116).

⁸¹ The Roman poet Horace in his *Ars Poetica* notes his irritation at what we might call the “continuity errors” in the Homeric epics with the line “I become annoyed whenever good Homer nods” [*indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*] (359). As Indians became increasingly self-conscious of their supposedly defective Persian, the scope of *sanad* accepted from Indian poets was seen to narrow to the impossible standard of poets whose verse was absolute perfection: The poet Ġhālib famously argues that besides Amīr Khusrau, he himself is the only good Indian poet of Persian, because even “even master Faiẓī [a poet laureate under the Emperor Akbar] fumbles once in a while” (qtd/trans Faruqi 2004b: 5).

expressions. Indeed, he refers to the usage of the poets who might be making such changes as “the idiom [*taṣarruf*] of the mighty lords of India who have brought poetry and *belles lettres* [*inshā*] to the seat of perfection.”⁸² He appeals to history to observe that Iranians had accepted Turkish and Arabic words and constructions [*tarākīb*], and as these were pulled into Persian, their meanings changed considerably from Turkish as it was spoken in Central Asia [lit. Turan and Turkistan].⁸³ He most directly addresses tensions between Iranians and Indian Persianists when he writes that the objection of Iranians against Indians’ idiomatic usage [*rozmarrah*] are unfounded.⁸⁴ Mastery, however, is crucial: He notes that a certain expression has become standard in Indo-Persian “through strength and not because of weakness and error” [*az rū-yi qudrat ast nah az rāh-i ‘ajz wa dalīl*].⁸⁵ Ārzū notes that Amīr Ḳhusrau is such a master [*ustād*] whose usage was innovative rather than mistaken. He is recognized by all the great poets of Iran and Turan, and indeed, Ārzū tells us to preclude any possibility that Ḳhusrau is only appreciated by

⁸² “*taṣarruf-i ṣāhib-i qudratān-i hind kih fann-i shi‘r wa inshā rā bah ‘arsh al-kamāl rasānīdah-and*” (DS 1974: 7).

⁸³ He makes an identical case in *Muṣmir* (1991: 38-9).

⁸⁴ For example, he writes of a particular expression that differs by a single word in India and Iran that the Indian form is acceptable: “The criticism of the Persians is unfounded against our idiom ‘what leaves from his purse [*kīṣah*]’ as opposed to ‘[what leaves] from his purse [*gīriḥ*]’” [*i’tirāz-i fārsiyān bī-jā-st kih rozmarrah-yi mā az kīṣah-yi ū chih mī rawad ast nah az gīriḥ-i ū*] (DS 1974: 8). Amīr Ḳhusrau is cited as *sanad* for this expression in M 38, although the context of the quotation does not allow us to determine what the expression actually means. On the use of “*rozmarrah*” as a technical term, see the following chapter.

⁸⁵ This is parallel to a crucial distinction in Persian poetics between two kinds of error, *ghalaṭ-i ‘ām* and *ghalaṭ-i ‘awāmm*, where the former is a mistake sanctified by usage (“which all eloquent people use” [*tamām fuṣṣḥā badān takallum kunand*], according to Ārzū) while the latter is a mistake born of simple ignorance (M‘U 2002: 98; cf. Blochmann 1868: 33).

Indians, his works are cited in important dictionaries by non-Indians (namely *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* “by one of the nobles of Shiraz” and Surūrī’s *Majma‘ al-furs* “by a poet established in Kashan”).⁸⁶

Abū’l Faḡl’s *Akbarnāmah* is likewise acclaimed by Iranian litterateurs.

In the third preface, Ārzū divides his contemporaries into groups according to their different methods of poetic interpretation. The fundamental distinction is between common readers [*‘awāmm*] and connoisseurs [*khawāṣṣ*], although a poem should ideally appeal to both even if common readers will miss the subtleties of its meaning.⁸⁷ However, the usage of expert poets should not be subject to the whims of common readers who lack the training to understand literary subtleties. Crucially, simply being a native speaker of a language does not qualify one as an expert because literary judgment requires particular training. Ārzū mentions a famous quotation from “one of the greats of India [addressed] to one of the contemporary poets of Iran” (which is elsewhere attributed to Abū’l Faḡl with ‘Urfī of Shiraz as his interlocutor) that “We have learned your language from your most eloquent [i.e. written

⁸⁶ It is worth pointing out that both men in fact had Indian connections: Injū, the author of *Farhang-i jahāngīrī*, although originally from Shiraz, was resident in India when he compiled his dictionary at the behest of the Mughal Emperor. Surūrī, although he wrote and revised his dictionary in Kashan, compiled the second edition after receiving a copy of *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* from India. Furthermore, there is some evidence, which is perhaps spurious, that he came to India in Shāh Jahān’s reign and died there (Blochmann 1868: 16-7).

⁸⁷ This is similar to the post-modern idea of “doublecoding” introduced by the architectural theorist Charles Jencks. Buildings and by extension other cultural products, he argues, are designed so that (intentionally or not) they appeal to both connoisseurs and the masses (Eco 2004: 214).

works by classic authors], and you’ve learned it from your old men [*pīrzāl-hā*].”⁸⁸ He contrasts “*ahl-i zabān*,” literally “people of the language” but here most likely meaning native speakers, with “*ahl-i taḥqīq*,” or “people of research,” namely those who mine previous poets’ works for precedent (ibid). Even more explicitly, he declares that native speakers [*ahl-i muḥāwārah*] and non-native speakers [*ghair-i īshān*] are equivalent [*musāwī*] because what matters is the ability to assess precedent (ibid 30). Furthermore, Ārzū argues that the best kind of interpretation is a holistic one that does not fall into the trap of following a single narrowly-focused interpretative style. He lists six or seven (depending on how one counts) different sorts of people whose interpretations or compositions are restrictive.⁸⁹ For example, one category is that of the “*arbāb-i ma‘ānī*” (lit. “Lords of Meanings”) who focus on questions of semiotics to the exclusion of other concerns. Another, the *arbāb-i bayān* (lit. Lords of Discourse) focus only on simile [*tashbīh*] to the exclusion of all else while the *badi‘yān* (“inventors”) concentrate on ornamentation through a different category of metaphors, including the device called *ihām*. Ārzū has a particular distaste for the interpretative practices of schoolmasters known as

⁸⁸ DS 1974: 9, cf. M 1991: 33. For the nineteenth-century poet Ġhālib, whose views on Persian we consider in the next chapter, there is an addendum, namely a withering response from ‘Urfī, to the effect that of course the great poets of Iran, whose work Indians study, learned from these very same old people (Faruqi 1998: 27). Faruqi notes that he has not been able to trace this incident back before Ġhālib but in fact this must be the same—a version nearly identical with Ġhālib’s is quoted by DS’s editor from a manuscript of Ārzū’s contemporary Mirzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Tamannā apparently quoting the Shāh Jahān-period critic Jalālā-yi Ṭabāṭabā‘ī (DS 1974: lxi).

⁸⁹ A thorough analysis (in Urdu) of the third preface is ‘Abdullah 1977: 142-7. See also Keshavmurthy 2013: 35.

nāzims in India [*mullayān-i maktabī ... kih dar hind nāzim khwānand*] whom he considers charlatans (the example he cites is devastating).⁹⁰ On the other hand he considers interpretation “according to the taste of the poets” [*muwafiq-i mazāq-i shu‘arā*] to be a useful catch-all for other considerations such as whether an expression from everyday language [*rozmarrah*] is appropriate for poetry.

The crucial role of expertness in determining whether an expression is eloquent Persian is echoed by Ārzū’s close friend Ānand Rām Muḫliṣ, who writes in *Mir’āt al-iṣṭilāḥ* [The Mirror of Expressions, 1158/1745] that

Yahyā Kāshī has used the word “squirrel” [*gilahrī*] in his *maṣnawī* satirizing gluttony even though it is a *hindī* word. As I have written above, for masterful poets [*khudāwandān-i isti’dād*] whatever they say goes and it is a warrant [*sanad*] for beginners.⁹¹

⁹⁰ This particular teacher says that in a couplet in which both lines end “*ya’nī chih?*” [so what?], a verb must be expressed rather than implied. The pedantry is obvious in English as well: No right-thinking person would suggest that the phrase “so what?” is wrong and must instead be “so what is it?” In this context, Ārzū scornfully brings up the question that began the debate he is trying to settle in *Dād-i suḫhan*: the objection by Shaydā to Qudṣī’s use in a couplet of the word “*tang*” [tight, narrow] to refer to grief rather than to a space. (In the former case, he says, it is a matter of quality [*kaifiyat*] of the grief while in the latter it is a matter of quantity [*kammīyat*] of the space. He implies that only truly stupid people would not see the obvious difference.)

⁹¹ “*yaḥyā kāshī lafz-i gilahrī rā dar maṣnawī kih ba-hajw-i akūlī āwardah ast wa ḥāl ānkih ḥurūf-i hindī ast hamān ḥarf-i faqīr ast kih dar aurāq-i guzashtah niwishtah-am kih ba-ḫudāwandān-i isti’dād harchih ba-gūyand mīrasad wa īn barā’i mutabaddiyān sanad ast*” (f. 252b in British Library ms. Or 1813 (=Mir’āt 1850); see Rieu 1879-83: vol 3, 997). The passage to which he refers is apparently an observation [*naql*] appearing immediately after the entry for *mundafah* [turban] but the British Library ms. has a mark showing an elision instead. The translation by Tasneem Ahmad, which is often unreliable, provides the missing section on the basis of the Khuda Bakhsh ms.: “It ought to be known that some venerable persons believe that a Hindi word should not be used in a Persian verse because it makes the verse downgraded. In one of the couplet, [sic] written by the above-mentioned learned, he used the word ‘*churi*’ (bangle). Likewise, Mulla Tughra has used a large number of Hindi words in his verses. It means that these restrictions are for beginners and new-ones. It is quite lawful for the master-poets who possess the ability to use them.” (Mukhlis 1993: 197)

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

He writes, touchingly,

Ask not of my dejection:
Now there is no enthusiasm in poetry for me.
My heart was Ānand Rām Muḫliṣ;
After his death, I find no enjoyment⁹²

A remarkable parallel is the entry for Bedil in Āzād Bilgrāmī's *taẓkirah ẖhizānah-yi ʿāmirah* [The Royal Treasury], which declares that as a master, Bedil has the right to innovate (*ẖhizānah-yi ʿāmirah* 252-3). The passage cites Ārzū's discussion of Bedil in *Majmaʿ al-nafāis*, in which he makes the same claim, and *Dād-i suḫhan* as evidence.

Later critics have had some difficulty accepting the formulation that the masters have free rein. For example, the last lines of *Dād-i suḫhan* are paraphrased in the English introduction by the work's editor Sayyid Muhammad Akram as follows:

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

A more literal translation would go like this:

Thus it is clear that if someone neither Iranian nor Turanian [that is, someone who is a non-native speaker of Persian] has followed excellence and has conversed with the Masters of Idiom

⁹² “*afsurdagī-yi marā ma-pursid / aknūn na-buwad ba-shiʿr shauq-am / dil būd ānand rām muḫliṣ / az murdan-i ū na-mānd ẓauq-am*” (f. 10a).

then his utterance is *sanad*, but to the degree that he takes all the [necessary] pains, only as God has willed [i.e., only under exceptional circumstances].⁹³

The phrase “poetic emergency” is an overstatement because it makes the poet’s use of a non-Persian word seem like something that simply occurs once and has no consequences, but in fact Ārzū observes that the usage becomes *sanad* and is thus available for other poets to use. Akram’s translation also shifts focus away from the question of poetic mastery, which is a recurring theme in Ārzū’s works. Additionally, leaving out “Turaniāns” is significant because Ārzū is not looking towards Iran for guidance but rather across the Persian cosmopolis. Indeed, Akram makes Ārzū sound more conflicted and cautious than he is: Ārzū asserts that any expert, native-speaker or not, can change cosmopolitan Persian by introducing non-Persian words under exceptional circumstances. The default position for us, with our concepts of mother tongue and national language, is to grant native speakers primacy. We cannot assume this holds for the eighteenth century, and Ārzū’s project is a case in point. The term “*ahl-i zabān*” [lit. people of the language] commonly translated into English as “native speakers” has not, as far as the present writer can tell, been interrogated by scholars. It exists within a constellation of other related, albeit somewhat less common, terms like “*ahl-i muḥāwarah*” [lit. people of the idiom]. How do we distinguish between these? Or should we not in some cases? It is risky to assert that, for example, the idea “that proper poetic usage was authoritatively

⁹³ “*pas bah wuzūʿ [sic] paiwast kih ḡhair irānī wa tūrānī agar tatabbuʿ bah kamāl dāshṭah wa suḥbat-i šāḥibān-i muḥāwarah namūdah bāshad qaul-i ū sanad ast, ammā bah īn martabah rasīdan mashaqqat tamān mī kḥwāhad illā māshāʾallah*” (DS 64).

guided by the poetic idiom of Iranian masters was a largely dominant view” (Kia 2011: 191). At least from Ārzū’s perspective, we should not refer to “Iranian masters” but “masters of the Persian language.”⁹⁴

The Body of Dād-i Suḵhan and Sirāj-i Munīr

While Ārzū’s critical prefaces in *Dād-i suḵhan* are self-evidently interesting, it takes a bit of patience for the modern reader to get through the bulk of the texts, which are a series of often recondite discussions of individual couplets. These analyses usually turn on whether a metaphor is properly used or not. Most of the entries in both *Dād-i suḵhan* and *Sirāj-i munīr* are prosaic, basically taking the form “*Munīr’s criticism*: The metaphor in this line has no meaning. *Ārzū’s response*: In fact, it does have meaning for the following reason...” (On a few occasions, Ārzū admits that he agrees with Munīr’s critique of a line.) Munīr’s comments are often wickedly pointed barbs. For example, one of ‘Urḫī’s couplets that he really dislikes has, according to him, “not a whiff of meaning and is in need of perfume” [*bū’ī az ma‘nī na-dārad wa shāyistah-yi ṭīb ast*], while elsewhere he sneeringly proposes that two bad couplets should be Zulālī’s epitaph (Kārnāmah 1977: 10, 19). Although the Ancients are in dialogue with Moderns

⁹⁴ In Islamicate culture there is certainly scope for recognizing the achievements of non-native speakers, namely that the greatest philologists in Arabic were mainly from Persian-speaking backgrounds. The first major grammar of Arabic was written in the eighth century CE by Sībawayh from Fars (Marogy 2010: xi). As shown in the discussion of *Muṣmīr* in the previous chapter, Ārzū was well aware of such trans-cultural connections that enabled both Arabic and Persian literary culture to develop in the early centuries after the Islamic conquest of Iran.

through an unbroken tradition of *sanad*, there can be disagreement over the different standards to which they are held.⁹⁵ For example, in a case where Munīr claims that ‘Urfī has misused a metaphor [*isti‘arah*], Ārzū retorts that actually that kind of metaphor is only used by the Moderns so judging it according to the style of the Ancients [*tarz-i qadīm*] is impossible. This formulation crops up several times.⁹⁶ If one accepts, as Ārzū necessarily does, that consensus of contemporary poets is part of the production of *sanad* then a survey of poetic interpretation as practiced by them would be helpful, which is precisely what Ārzū has provided in the third preface of *Dād-i suḵhan*.

Ḥazīn’s Critique and Ārzū’s Response

The exact occasion that gave rise to *Tanbīh al-ġhāfilīn* is not recorded. The preface only provides the context that everyone, young and old, was reciting Ḥazīn’s poetry and Ārzū noticed that some of it was incorrect. So he put pen to paper to try to make sense of Ḥazīn’s poetic missteps. Ārzū does not lay out a program but instead praises Ḥazīn (including as “Seal of the Moderns” [*khātām-i muta‘aḵḵhirīn*])—perhaps ironically given Ḥazīn’s preference for the Ancients), while slyly introducing the idea that he is a bigot. When Ārzū notes that Ḥazīn fled

⁹⁵ In *Muṣmīr*, Ārzū implies that Indic words which had been borrowed into Persian but used incorrectly by the Ancients were allowed to stand, but new borrowings had to follow the Indic spelling. For example, Bengal is written in Persian as “*bangālah*” (i.e. ending with the letter *he*) while people in Indic languages write and say “*bangālā*” (i.e. ending with *alif*). On this example, see p. 112 above. Other more recent interventions, where a Persian poet has mispronounced a borrowed Indic word, are rejected as unsound (M 1991: 213).

⁹⁶ SM 1977: 47, cf. 43, 53, 66. Alam 2003: 183 analyzes the passage from SM 53.

from Iran to India, he quotes a relevant qurʿānic verse: “anyone who enters it will find refuge” [*man daḵhala-hu kāna āmin^{an}*], referring to the Kaʿbah (3: 97). By changing the reference from the Holy of Holies of Islam to India, Ārzū highlights Ḥazīn’s apparent ungratefulness in coming to India and then disrespecting the poetic achievements of its inhabitants. In the body of the text Ārzū refers to the idea that a Shīʿah like Ḥazīn would be horrified by the ritual pollution if a Hindu washerman cleaned his *pīrāhan* [loose shirt] (*TĠh* 133). Elsewhere Ḥazīn is cited as claiming that no Indian ever says his prayers five times a day (the implication being that Indian Muslims were bad Muslims).⁹⁷ As Mana Kia has argued, the idea that Ārzū did not like Ḥazīn simply because he was not Indian is contradicted by *Majmaʿ al-nafāʾis*, in which some entries for Iranian émigrés are highly positive and some negative (Kia 2011: 196). Wālih, however, does accuse Ārzū of targeting Ḥazīn because of personal enmity and a desire for revenge.⁹⁸ Having addressed their strained personal relationship in Chapter One, here we should take the literary criticisms at face value.

Ārzū himself selected the verses of Shāikh Ḥazīn’s that he wished to critique, unlike in *Dād-i suḵhan* and *Sirāj-i munīr*, in which his choices were constrained by the verses that Munīr

⁹⁷ Qasmi 2004: 76. The most frequently cited evidence that Ḥazīn was not a bigot is a chapter in his autobiography, in which he declares that he learned about other traditions (*The Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* 1830: 62-4). Additionally there are some verses (possibly spurious) in which he praises the inhabitants of Benares, the place he finally settled in India.

⁹⁸ Kia 2011: 220. See note 12 above and Chapter One on their personal disputes.

had already picked. Ārzū does not summarize which kinds of poems to which he objects in *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* but his contemporary Mīr Muḥammad Moḥsin of Agra does. Moḥsin's *Muḥākamāt al-shu'arā* [Judgments of the Poets] completed in 1180/1766, the year of Ḥazīn's death, lists three categories of objections raised by Ārzū:

The first [applies] to an expression outside of usage, which is not found in the verse of the teachers, each of whom is a mighty lord of the art of speech, namely 'Aṭṭār, Rūmī, Sanā'ī, Khwājah-yi Kirmānī, Sa'dī, Amīr Khusrau, Ḥasan of Delhi, Khaqānī, Anwarī, Kamāl Isma'īl, Ḥāfiz, 'Urfī, Naẓīrī, Zuhūrī, Ḥakīm Shafā'ī, Ṣā'ib, Qudṣī, Kalīm, and Salīm. The second [applies] to an unconnected expression that renders the couplet meaningless and often comes into 'Alī Ḥazīn's verse. The third concerns idioms that appear in several of Ḥazīn's unsuccessful couplets and that Ārzū considering the appropriateness of the word (the edifice of the workshop of speech) has rectified with another [i.e. a new] hemistich and the verse shows a complete improvement through these subtleties. Thus as God Almighty has commanded in the Holy Qur'ān: "Over every man of knowledge there is one more knowing."⁹⁹

Moḥsin's analysis correctly identifies the sorts of objections that appear throughout Ārzū's text, but his list of poets (other than being an index of important figures in the tradition) is apparently arbitrary, mixing Ancients and Moderns. A fourth objection, which Moḥsin has not mentioned, although it appears several times in *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*, is that of plagiarism [*saraqat*] (Akram 1981: xlvi). One couplet of Ḥazīn's, for example, is so obviously the result of plagiarism

⁹⁹ "awwal bar 'ibārat-i ghair musta'mal kih dar shi'r-i ustādān-i ṣāhib-i qudrat-i fann-i suḵhan mānand farīd al-dīn 'aṭṭār, maulwī jalāl al-dīn rūmī, ḥakīm sanā'ī, khwājah-yi kirmānī, shaiḵh sa'dī, amīr khusrau, ḥasan dihlawī, maulānā khaqānī, anwarī, kamāl isma'īl, khwājah ḥāfiz, maulānā 'urfī, maulānā naẓīrī, maulānā zuhūrī, ḥakīm shafā'ī, mīrzā ṣā'ib, quḍṣī, kalīm wa salīm yāftah ni-mī shawad. duwwum bar 'ibārat-i bī-rabṭ kih shi'r rā bī ma'nī mī kunad wa akṣar dar shi'r-i 'alī ḥazīn āmadah. siwwum az rāh-i taṣarrufāt kih ba'zī miṣrā'-i shaiḵh-i nārasā wāqī' shudah wa ḥazrat ārzū bah sabab-i munāsibat-i lafẓī kih binā'ī kārkḥānah-i suḵhan [ast] ba-rāh-i rāst miṣra'-i dīgar rasānīdah wa shi'r az īn daqā'iq taraqqī-yi kull mī nimāyad. lihāzā ḥaqq ta'ālā dar qur'ān-i sharīf irshād farmūdah: fauq kull zī 'ilm 'alīm (12:76)" (qtd Akram 1981: xlv-xlvi). Moḥsin's text remains unpublished and the editor has taken this from the Punjab University Library ms.

that Ārzū declares it must be a copying mistake (*TĠh* 87; cf 73, 125). (The not-so-subtle implication being that only a fool would make such error.)

Ārzū's overall strategy is to demonstrate Ḥazīn's failure to live up to Ḥazīn's own apparently conservative standards. He writes "obviously because Ḥazīn is so devoted to the discourse of the ancients, he takes nothing at all from the moderns" [*zāhir^{an} chūn janāb-i shaiḵh ḵhaylī mu'taqid-i kalām-i qudamā-st, muta'aḵḵhirīn rā muṭlaq^{an} wujūd ni-mī guzārad*] (*TĠh* 101). Interestingly, despite Ḥazīn's allegiance to the Ancients, he too uses the rhetoric of freshness in his poetry. One of the couplets cited by Ārzū includes a reference to Ḥazīn's "fresh speech" [*sukḵhan-am-i tāzah*] (*ibid* 119). Ārzū refers to freshness many times and it becomes a sort of slur, the implication being that the expression [*ibārat*] may be fresh but also incorrect for one reason or another. Thus, as argued above, the idea—which animates Muḥammad Taqī Bahār's dim view of the "Indian style"—that the search for "freshness" in poetry necessarily represents a rebellion against tradition and the rules of composition cannot hold.

We know something of the reception history of the text from accounts Ārzū gives of his friends. Qizilbāsh Ḵhān, known by his pen-name Ummīd, was originally from Hamadan in Iran but had lived in the Deccan for forty years (*MN* 2005: 44ff). Ārzū describes him as a good friend who had died three years before the composition of *Majma' al-nafā'is*, which would put the year around 1747. Ummīd was confronted by an Indian who was "a follower of the poets of Iran"

[*mu‘taqid-i kalām-i shu‘arā-yi īrān*] who said that someone (namely Ārzū) had criticized Ḥazīn. Ummīd replied “There is no doubt of the Shaiḫ’s literary acumen but at the same time it is clear that what this person [Ārzū] has said is not to be dismissed.”¹⁰⁰ “*Subḥānallah!*” Ārzū declares parenthetically. He goes on to describe how when *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* became widely copied, “no Mughal or Indian [*hindū*]” made any sort of counterattack. Wālih (an Iranian associated with Ḥazīn, see fn. 12 above) included a large citation of *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* in his *taẓkirah* and sent it to Isfahan. Ārzū admits that the inclusion of so much of his text was not a ringing endorsement of his views, “especially criticism by an Indian of an Iranian” [*khuṣūṣ^{an} i‘tirāz-i hindī bar īrānī*], and yet he is bemused that Wālih went through the trouble. Another intermediary between Ārzū and Ḥazīn was Girāmī, the son of a Kashmiri nobleman. He gains Ārzū’s approval because he “has a broad scope; he is greatly [concerned] with making of new words and fresh meanings which are from a foreign language like *hindī* and a European one [*fīrangī*]” and was open-minded, the proverbial “Sunni with a Sunni and a Shia with a Shia” (and, extending the saying, he is even “a Yogi with a Yogi, a Christian with a Christian, a Jew with a Jew, and a Hindu with a Hindu”).¹⁰¹ When Ḥazīn first arrived in Delhi, Girāmī went to see him with a group of some twenty students and friends, and started to recite. Or rather—here

¹⁰⁰ “*dar zabān-dānī shaiḫ shubhah nīst amma īn qadr ham yaqīn ast kih ānchih falānī—ya‘ni faqīr-i ārzū—guftah bāshad bī-chīzī na-khwāhad būd*”

¹⁰¹ MN 110.

Ārzū appears to be telling the story from Ḥazīn's perspective—Girāmī “raised a clamor up to the dome of heaven in an uncouth accent” [*bah lahjah-yi kih marsūm-i fariqah-yi qabūliyah ast ġharīw dar gunbad-i aflāk nawāḡht*]. Ḥazīn, we are told, could only sit in stunned silence.

Conclusion: Ārzū and the Persian Cosmopolis

Although he never lays it out in exactly these terms, Ārzū's project in the critical works considered in this chapter is maintaining the unity of Persianate literary culture. In the second preface to *Dād-i suḡhan*, he appears to deal narrowly with the Iranian versus Indian question, but actually is making a larger point about the abiding interconnectedness of the Persian-using world. This was not an oversight but a deliberate choice. As a keen researcher he was aware, perhaps more acutely than any of his predecessors, of regional differences within the Persian cosmopolis. For example, in *Muṣmir*, he quotes a learned joke: An Indian emperor asked an Iranian on a lark [*az rāh-i shoḡhī*] if it is true that Iranians mix up the pronunciation of the letters ‘qāf’ /q/ and ‘ġhain’ /ġh/. The Iranian's supposed reply is the punchline: “No, that's a mistake [*qalaṭ*]!” (The humor is that in the indignant answer he mispronounced “*ġhalaṭ*,” proving that Iranians confuse the two sounds—indeed, in standard Iranian Persian today the two sounds are pronounced identically.) Ārzū observes a number of other phonetic variations peculiar to Iran such as the loss of the *maj'hūl* vowels (that is, the distinction between the sounds ‘ī’ and ‘e’, and ‘ū’ and ‘au’) and the shift in pronunciation of the suffix ‘-ān’ into ‘-ūn’ (M

1991: 76; *TĠh* 142-3). In other places he notes local lexical differences, such as objecting to one of Ḥazīn's usages, namely "*bīrūn raftan*" [to go out] versus simply "*raftan*" [to go], and noting that it is not used that way in India (*TĠh* 123). He concedes that perhaps it is an idiomatic usage [*shāyad muḥāwarah-yi ahl-i zabān bāshad*]. However, he believes that literary Persian is tied to a courtly standard rather than to a locale (samples of ineloquent local speech from Shiraz, Qazwin, Gilan, and Khurasan, for example, appear in *Muṣmir*).¹⁰² He observes that

it is a fact that [*bah-taḥqīq paiwast kih*] the most eloquent of languages is the language [*zabān*] of the court [*urdū*] and the Persian of that place is respected, but a dialect [*zabān-i khāṣṣah*] of other places is not accepted in poetry or *belles lettres* [*inshā*]. The poets of every place (for example, Ḳhāqānī was from Shirvan, Nizāmī from Ganjah, Sanā'ī from Qazwin, and Ḳhusrau from Delhi), all composed [literally "spoke"] in the established [*muqarrar*] language and that was none other than the language of the court (1991: 13)

Ārzū's predecessors were not particularly concerned with defining regionalism in such terms. Instead, Indians occasionally complained that Iranian parvenus were taking jobs (for example, as we consider below, Munīr hints that being Iranian makes it easier to be accepted as a Persian poet).¹⁰³ Munīr was clearly concerned with style and not geography. But this does not mean that there was no recognition of differences between Iranians and Indians, in particular of their role in elite society. In the conclusion [*khātimah*] to *Kārnāmah*, Munīr carps about the

¹⁰² *M* 1991: 5

¹⁰³ Muzaffar Alam argues that "Mughal India thus virtually emerged as a kind of Iranian colony" as compared to the considerably fewer numbers of Iranians resident in South Asia during the Delhi Sultanate period (Alam 2004: 147). However, recognizing both the strong influence of Persian and the vast number of Iranian migrants to India in this period should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that even then the vast majority of Persian writers in India were Indian-born because even local officials were using Persian (Alam and Subrahmanyam 2004; Alam 1998: 328).

difficulties he faces in becoming a respected poet. He mentions that the four social advantages for a poet (none of which he possesses) are being old, rich, loud-voiced and having a “connection to Iran” [*nisbat-i īrān*] (Kārṇāmah 1977: 25-6). Being Iranian is an automatic advantage—he claims that an Iranian can make a hundred mistakes in Persian and no one will say anything, but an Indian’s brilliant work will be met with stony silence rather than praise. Munīr declares himself an Indian, but then somewhat disparages India, saying that it produced only five excellent poets (Mas‘ūd Sa‘ad-i Salmān, Abū’l Faraj Rūnī, Amīr Ḳhusrau, Ḥasan of Delhi, and Faiḏī) (1977: 27). Munīr’s observations on the status of Indian poets, like Ārzū’s need to settle the question of whether Indians can change Persian usage, must have been based on some actual social pressure, such as favoritism shown towards Iranians. The idea that talentless Iranians were being rewarded was stated even more openly by Shaydā, who was born in Fatehpur (in today’s Uttar Pradesh between Kanpur and Allahabad). He is quoted by Ḳhwushgo as saying:

Because of my being Indian, Iranians do not respect me ... The fact is that being Iranian or Indian is not a reason to boast. A man’s standing is connected to his personal standing and if Iranians declare “the Persian language is ours” then their language/tongue does not bring them success, and if the tongue does find success, it is not in knowing taste because they do not have poetic talent even though they flail for it. (*Safīnah* qtd. Akram 1974: xxxiv)

No doubt a long list of other such complaints could be compiled, but the remarkable circulation of scholars and *littérateurs* in the triangle formed by India, Central Asia and Iran

must have had a diluting effect on regionalism over the centuries.¹⁰⁴ Movement—rather than a static institutional core—ensured that people kept abreast of developments in other parts of the Persian cosmopolis. Ārzū has no qualms about passing judgments on Iranians, such as calling a poet called Tanhā “well-spoken” [*khūb-go*], which is admittedly a term of art (meaning “he composes poetry well”) but still maintains its literal force, in which case Ārzū, an Indian, is implicitly claiming the prerogative to determine whether or not Tanhā, an Iranian, speaks Persian well (*MN* 2005: 66). After all, the right to appraise native speakers is one he arrogates to himself—and all well-versed poets—in the prefaces to *Dād-i suḵhan*. In his opinion, the loss of the *maj' hūl* vowels in Iran is a unique handicap to following metrical rules (*TĠh* 142-3). Ārzū also apologizes for the fact that Indians have not fully learned the new kind of Iranian Persian but then turns the apology on its head. He writes that “We Indian people have not taken up this really new Persian; we bear the load of the insufficiency of our understanding, but

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Ghani 1929-30 for a side-by-side comparison of Indo-Persian and Iranian correspondence that show a remarkable similarity. As far as the mobility of people and texts during the early-modern period, the family of the *taẓkirah* writer Muḥammad Ṭāhir Naṣrābādī (born c. 1025/1616) is an excellent example. His grandfather and uncle had settled in India, but he himself had been born near Isfahan (Sprenger 1854: 88). A recent volume on circulation in South Asia has the following excellent formulation: “‘Circulation’ therefore, in this volume, is also meant as a kind of shorthand for the capacity of Indian society over the centuries to generate change” (Markovits et al. 2003: 11). It should be noted that among Indians, Ottomans, and Safavids, the Ottomans are the outlier in that they traveled less than people from the other two empires and received fewer outside visitors (Robinson 1997: 164).

according to the idiom-knowers, this kind of discourse [i.e. Ḥazīn's expression] does not spring from eloquence.”¹⁰⁵

Despite Ārzū's confidence in such trans-national judgments, the Persian cosmopolis fractured irrevocably soon after his death.¹⁰⁶ Stefano Pellò has argued, rightly in the present researcher's view, that Persian ceased to be viable as a cosmopolitan language when it became the national language of an emerging Iranian state.¹⁰⁷ In the literary sphere the groundwork was laid by the regionalism inaugurated in Āzar's generation, and it necessarily led to the preference of a national usage that excluded cosmopolitan possibilities.¹⁰⁸ It remains to be studied whether, as some have claimed retrospectively, an unbridgeable divide had opened up between Indian and Iranian usages. One scholar who has

¹⁰⁵ “*mā mardum-i hindūstān fārsī rā khūb naw bar na-kardah-īm, bar quṣūr-i fahm-i khwīsh ḥaml mī kunīm pīsh-i muḥāwarah-dān īn qism-i kalām az balaghā ṣādar na-shawad*” (TĠh 122)

¹⁰⁶ Though prior to this moment, even in the seventeenth century, the Persian Cosmopolis was somewhat fragmentary, no doubt because of its sheer size. For example, the geographer and economist *avant la lettre* Muḥammad Mufīd Mustaufī writes in 1680 in his geography of Iran prepared in India that he does not really know anything about the rulers of Iran, the Safavids (Fragner 1999: 100-1). He has no excuse since they had been in power for nearly two centuries! Āzar himself admits that people in Iran know the poetry of the Delhiites he has deigned to include in *Ātashkadah* (1999: 523). This can serve as an index of how aware Iranians were of Indian-born poets at this time.

¹⁰⁷ The politics of the Persian language in early-modern Iran were more complicated than most people realize: The Safavid state was shot through with Turkish. The origins of the dynasty were in (Azeri Turkish-speaking) Azerbaijan, and Turkish remained an important language even after Shāh ‘Abbas I moved the capital to Isfahan. Recent research (Floor and Javadi 2013) has demonstrated that it was widely spoken at court, and that literary translations were made not only from Turkish to Persian but from Persian to Turkish.

¹⁰⁸ On language planning in nineteenth-century Iran and the debate over whether it was desirable to cleanse Persian of Arabic, Turkish and Mongolian accretions, see Parsinejad 2003.

made a case for this, Momin Mohiuddin, tries to lay the blame on “*taṣarrufāt*,” which he glosses as “changes in spelling, form, meaning, and construction” that inevitably come about because (he claims) Indians were bad Persianists and thus the “purity of the idiom” was lost.¹⁰⁹ For example, he contends that there were no proper Persian grammars available, that Indians were bad Arabists and therefore bad Persianists, and that while introducing “Hindawi words into pure Persian was considered unpleasant” they did it anyway. While for Mohiuddin *taṣarrufāt* represent a cultural failure, for Ārzū they are inevitable because languages change over time, even at the hands of educated native speakers. The end of the Persian cosmopolis was not a matter of mutual incomprehensibility—at least this has never been satisfactorily demonstrated as a cause—but of the assertion of national identities whose claims of cultural self-sufficiency over-powered the claims of the cosmopolis.

The key to Ārzū’s claim for a universal Persian literary culture is that it does not depend on pretending that India is not different (culturally or politically) from Iran or elsewhere. Rather it assumes that for poetry, the difference does not matter: The Persian cosmopolis is capacious enough to contain the differences. Everyone who uses Persian has access to the same literary tradition, regardless of variation in local dialects and so on. Ārzū certainly admits that there is an Indian accent in Persian [*lahjah-yi hindi*], which, he notes, certain Iranians pick

¹⁰⁹ Mohiuddin 1960, cf Fragner 1999: 100-1. A more critical definition of “*taṣarruf*” appears in the discussion of *Muṣmir* in the previous chapter.

up after residing in India (*TĠh* 44). As we have seen in the discussion of *Muṣmir*'s account of the historical development of Persian in the previous chapter, Ārzū believes in a standard Persian that is immanent across the whole of the cosmopolis. He notes that Persians used Arabic and Turkish for centuries, and changed both languages in the process, which is unobjectionable. Ārzū argues explicitly—for perhaps the first time in a work of literary criticism—that Indians are allowed to modify Persian usage, provided they are properly trained. His lexicon *Chirāgh-i hidāyat* is designed in part to serve as an extended justification of Indians' correct usage. He states that he has included two kinds of lexemes:

The first part consists of words which have a difficult meaning and which Indian people often do not know; the second are vocabules whose meaning is often famous and known but there is debate as to the correctness of having them in the speech [*rozmarrah*] of the eloquent of the people of the language.¹¹⁰

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

because some of the Persian-speakers of India use loanwords/calques [*taṣarruf*] in Persian on the basis of influence from *hindī*, it is necessary to research a number of words. Thus this text is useful for the Persian-speakers of India who use old words differently from the language-knowers of Iran and Turan that are usually equivalent for experts in the language and other people, but in this text there are many words that have been researched and these people will be unable to answer because they [the meanings of the words] are connected at length with external research.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ “*qism-i awwal alfāzī-ast kih ma‘ānī ān mushkil būd wa akṣar ahl-i hind bar ān iṭla‘ na-dāshtand qism-i duwwum luġhātī kih ma‘ānī-ān agarchah ma‘rūf wa ma‘lūm būd lekin dar ṣaḥīḥ būdan-i ān az rozmarrah-yi fuṣaḥā-yi ahl-i zabān ba‘zī rā taraddud ba-ham-rasīdah*” (from British Library ms. Or 2013, checked with Or 264, and I.O. Islamic 71)

¹¹¹ “*chūn barkhī az fārsī gūyān-i hind rā taṣarruf gūnah dar zabān-i fārsī ba-sabab iḵhtilāf ba-ān hindī dast dādah āwardan ba‘zī az alfāz k-az īn bar ṣāḥib taḥqīq zurūrī-st pas īn nusḥah mufid ast bar fārsī gūyān-i hind kih bah zabāndānān-i īrān wa tūrān rā ba-khilāf luġhāt-i qadīmah kih dar akṣar an ba-zabān-dān wa ġhair zabān-dān musāwī-ast balkih dar īn nusḥah ba‘zī az alfāzī-st kah az chand kas zabān-dān taḥqīq kardah shud wa ānhā dar jawāb ‘ājiz shudand aḵhir kār az jā‘ī dīgar ba-taḥqīq paiwast*” (ibid)

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

Ārzū's compromise to keep India an integral but unique part of the Persian cosmopolis is probably best expressed by the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah. He writes, of our own time, that "the position worth defending might be called (in both senses) a partial cosmopolitanism" (Appiah 2006: xvii). Contrary to the assertions of some modern South Asian scholars that Ārzū was a great patriot,¹¹² he gives little indication of defending India per se but rather concerns himself with the entirety of the Persian cosmopolis by defining the relationship of the part to the whole. The domain of poetry itself requires justice to be done, as evidenced by the very title of *Dād-i suḵhan* (Justice in Poetry) or by Munīr's earlier claim that he was a "mirror-bearer of justice" [*ā'īnah-dār-i inṣāf-am*].¹¹³ Poetry can fit into a system of universal values, perhaps closer to Vico's understanding of Ancient Roman law as a kind of poetry than to our present detached sense of poetry as mere discourse (Stern 2003: 79).

The Persian cosmopolis as a geographical concept does not map easily onto our concrete sense of geography. It is best understood not as a place so much as a set of practices. The formula "Iran, Turan, and Hindustan" is the most common designation (though Turan,

¹¹² E.g. Zaidi 2004, which argues that Ārzū could not bear to have people speak ill of India and so wrote out of love for his country.

¹¹³ *Kārnāmah* 6. Indeed Ārzū expresses the hope that the book will be justly received (DS 2).

corresponding roughly to our “Central Asia,” is usually not well-defined, and Hindustan typically did not include southern India), but this should not be read like a list of modern nation-states. Of course people were conscious of being from a place, but this must be carefully distinguished from identities available to people in our time (including, for example, different ways to be “of” a place). A cosmopolis should not be understood as homogenous, since everyone has a sense of a belonging to a smaller locality (whether that be nation, region, city or something else) with particular local customs. Even though the set of cosmopolitan texts may be the same, the interpretation of them may be different in different places because of localized commentarial traditions, which Sheldon Pollock has called “vernacular mediations” (Pollock 2009: 954).

Furthermore, the intellectual and economic topography of a cosmopolis allows culture to flow more strongly in certain directions (cf. Brennan 2006: 3). It is made up of many horizons, to use Gadamer’s term for what a historical subject is able to comprehend around him or her, and there is no expectation that anyone’s horizon take in the whole cosmopolis or indeed that anyone even know its full extent.¹¹⁴ There is also certainly scope for local cosmopolitanism, which appears paradoxical on its face but is actually quite reasonable, namely that the cosmopolitan idiom can be employed in a text meant for a local audience.¹¹⁵ More study is warranted in the

¹¹⁴ “A person who has an horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small” (Gadamer 2006: 301-2).

case of Indo-Persian texts, but Ārzū's critical works probably had a broad audience in mind since he is typically careful to gloss Indic words and explain Indic cultural practices that Indians would have known about.

This brings us back to an interpretative problem. Can we distinguish between tropes and actual analysis of the local? Scholars have often drawn conclusions about various poets' opinions of India on the basis of poetic tropes. For example, India and its inhabitants are often described as black. This is precisely the imagery Munīr uses (the five Indian poets he singles out as great are blazing suns against the black night of India). Obviously this is a literary commonplace rather than a rigorous observation—elsewhere India is frequently described as paradise [e.g. as "*hindūstān jannat nishān*"].¹¹⁶ In an oft quoted couplet, Salīm of Tehran (d. 1674) declares that

The means of acquiring perfection do not exist in Iran:
Henna has no color until it arrives in India.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Yigal Bronner and David Shulman take issue with Pollock's willingness to flatten regional differences in the Sanskrit cosmopolis since some texts were written in the cosmopolitan language but not meant to circulate. They write that "Every Sanskrit poem is, of course, local or regional in that it was composed in a particular place by a poet speaking some vernacular as his or her mother tongue (and writing in some local script). This is not, however, sufficient to qualify a text as regional in our terms. ... First and foremost, a regional Sanskrit work aims at a local audience. It is not meant to travel the length and breadth of the cosmopolis, nor did it do so" (Bronner and Shulman 2006: 6).

¹¹⁶ Such rhymed epithets, reflective of the *sajā'* tradition of rhymed prose composition, have little meaning. Ārzū for example refers to Qazwin as "*jannat-ā'īm*" [the heaven-like] (MN 2005: 70).

¹¹⁷ "*nīst dar īrān zamīn samān-i taḥṣīl-i kamāl / tā nayāyad sū-yi hindūstān ḥinā rangīn na-shud*" (qtd. Khatoon 2004a: 86 and elsewhere; discussed in Alam 2003: 160 fn 99). More examples at Dadvar 1999: 210.

In a similar vein but apparently with the opposite sentiment, Ṭālīb of Amul writes “The parrots of India are in fact mortified to see such a nightingale coming forth from the garden of Iran” (trans Hadi 1962: 103). While such quotations have often been interpreted as definitive historical evidence, this is an error stemming from our modern incapacity to engage with a literary tradition that depends on tropes and a different conception of history from our own.¹¹⁸

In the absence of other data, historians have often tried to read poetry in a straightforwardly biographical or sociological way, while failing to engage with the complexities of the rhetorical system of symbolism and form that the poets were actually drawing upon. A more complex case is the drawn out argument for India’s greatness in the works of Amīr Ḳhusrau (whose patriotism is even more over-determined in the historiography than Ārzū’s). Ḳhusrau casts India in the mold of a heaven-blessed, legitimately Islamic land, and makes an early argument

¹¹⁸ To take another example: The poet Mīr ‘Alī Sher Nawā’ī (1441–1501) of Herat, who later joined Bābur’s entourage, was an important poet in both Chagatay Turkish and Persian. Bābur acknowledges that “no one composed so much or so well in the Turkish language as he did” but as far as his Persian, Bābur observes “some of his lines are not bad, but most are flat and of low quality” (trans. Thackston, *Bāburnāmah* 1993: II, 354-5). Nawā’ī’s *Muḥākamat al-luġhatain* [Judgment of the Two Languages] is a famous work defending Turkish against Persian. It also mentions Arabic and *hindī* as two possible contenders to Persian but dismisses Arabic as too lofty and *hindī* as too base. He uses the story of Noah’s curse on his son Ham to explain Indians’ dark skin and ineloquence. (This was, of course, also a common explanation among early-modern European for differences among human populations.) Nawā’ī writes that “There is none among them whose skin is not black as the black of ink and whose speech does not resemble the scratching of a broken pen.” He goes on to describe Indian writing—presumably he means one of Brahmi-derived scripts like Devanagari—as like “the footprint of a raven” and incomprehensible except to Indians (trans. Devereux, 1966: 24-5). The connection drawn here between dark skin and ineloquence is interesting but tells us little more than that Nawā’ī was somewhat aware of Indian culture (as we would expect of a Central Asian at this time) but considered it barbaric. It would be a stretch to connect his moralizing about dark skin with the common trope of the “blackness of the Hindu” in Persian poetry.

for Indo-Persian cosmopolitanism. He claims in the preface to his *dīwān Ġhurrat al-kamāl* [The Prime of Perfection, 1293/4] that while inhabitants of other countries can only master their native tongues, Indians can pick up any language.¹¹⁹ They are therefore unquestionably good at Persian (as well as Arabic and *hindī*). In another work, *Iʿjāz-i ḵhusrawī*, he writes that just as desert Arabs used to drinking brackish water cannot appreciate rose-water, the writers of Khurasan and Transoxania cannot appreciate good writing such as that produced in India where the “old mode” [*qarār-i qadīm*] of writing persists as well as a delightful new style.¹²⁰ This appears to be a serious argument about literary stylistics imposed upon geography, and yet it is rendered suspect by the political context in which it was written: The King’s realm must be shown to be the most civilized on earth.

There is a marked difference between these pre-modern constructions of Indianness in Persian literature and nineteenth-century ones. Munīr’s strategy of self-aggrandizement by suggesting that few Indians are good Persian poets is of an entirely different order from that pursued by Mirzā Ġhālib, who wrote in both Persian and Urdu two centuries later. For Ġhālib, the only good Indian-born Persian poet—besides himself of course—is Amīr Ḵhusrau (Faruqi 2004b: 5). Indeed, Ġhālib went so far as to apparently invent a native Iranian tutor, ‘Abd al-

¹¹⁹ Analyzed at Gabbay 2010: 31. A similar claim appears in *Nuh sipihr* [The Nine Heavens], whose classification of Indian languages has been addressed in the previous chapter (1950: 172ff).

¹²⁰ *Iʿjāz-i Ḵhusrawī* 1876: 66; trans Amir Khusrāu 2007: 35

Şamad, for himself (there is no independent confirmation of the man's existence—he was supposedly a Zoroastrian convert to Islam who stayed with Ġhālib's family in Agra). Thus Ġhālib is entirely dismissive of Indians' achievements in Persian literature whereas Munīr offers praise for his homeland, albeit in a rather backhanded way. Ġhālib was not alone in the nineteenth century in his disdain for all things Indo-Persian.¹²¹ Imām Baḡhsh Sahbā'ī's *Qaul-i faiṣal* [The Definitive Word], the last major text to engage with Ārzū's *Tanbih al-ghāfilīn*, states that Indians simply took good Persian style from Iran and contributed nothing in return. His argument, fascinatingly, in part rests on the idea that Iranian immigrants to India cannot learn Urdu properly and thus Indians are similarly unable to master Persian.¹²² (In fact, in *Majma' al-nafā'is* Ārzū praises a number of Iranians, notably Ummīd and Zāmīr, for their facility in the Indian vernacular—Ummīd apparently understood subtleties in *hindī* that even a native Indian [*muḡhal-bachchah*] might not have.) The later *taẓkirah* tradition likewise comes to judge harshly any perceived deviations from Iranian usage. Āftāb Rāy of Lucknow's *Riyāz al-'arīfīn* [Garden of the Wise, 1883] is such an example of linguistic purism. It was simply unthinkable by then that Indian-born writers—in particular Hindus—could make any claim on Persian even though this

¹²¹ The classic analysis is Faruqi 1998.

¹²² *Qaul-i faiṣal* 18??: 4ff. Sahbā'ī's comments on each couplet have been printed as footnotes in the published edition of *Tanbih al-ghāfilīn*.

had been commonplace a century before.¹²³ Of Mirzā ‘Abd al-Qādir Bedil’s numerous Hindu disciples, Āftāb Rāy mentions only Muḥliṣ, and seems uninterested in Persian-writing Hindus despite the fact that he was himself a Persian-writing Hindu.

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

¹²³ “Although there is still someone, among ignorant Indians, who consider him to be among the most sublime writers, he is absolutely worthless in the opinion of those who really know the Persian language. His Persian, like that of Nāṣir ‘Alī [of Sirhind (d. 1694)], is worse than Hindī” (trans Pellò forthcoming; original 1977: I, 123).

what Ārzū and his contemporaries were concerned with, we must peel away the interpretations of the last two centuries that have anachronistically reframed the debates on authority as discussions of nationalism, socio-political decline, and, of course, poor taste.

Chapter IV

Hindī, Reḳhtah, and Urdu: Persian Departs from India?

Hidāyat, from the time that I began to compose in *reḳhtah*,
The custom of Persian has departed from India.¹

–Hidāyat of Delhi (d. 1805)

One of the enduring visual symbols of Mughal grandeur is a miniature painting of the Emperor Jahāngīr embracing his Safavid counterpart Shāh ‘Abbās I. Painted circa 1618, it shows an imposing and healthy Jahāngīr bestriding his kingdom, which is personified as a lion. Shāh ‘Abbās is far smaller and darker. He meekly holds Jahāngīr at the waist as though his brittle, enfeebled body were in danger of tumbling off the lamb that represents his Safavid kingdom.² The image of the lion and the lamb lying down together represents peace and harmony, but the subtext could not be any clearer: There is peace between the Mughals and Safavids, but only because peace was the will of the mighty Mughal Emperor. Likewise, when the Ottoman Emperor sent a letter objecting to Shāh Jahān’s calling himself “King of the World” (a claim his father’s regnal name, “Jahāngīr,” had also implied with its literal meaning “World Grasper”), Shāh Jahān’s Poet Laureate Kalīm composed a retort:

¹ “*hidāyat kahā reḳhtah jab se ham ne / rawāj uṭh gayā hind se fārsī kā*” (qtd. Azad 1907: 111 fn. 35).

² Ramaswamy 2007. Analyzed in Moin 2012: 204-6.

Since “India” and “World” are the same numerically,
[The right of] the king to be called a “King of the World” is proved.³

The reference is to the system of *abjad*, in which numbers are encoded in letters (thus the words “India” and “World” both add up to 59).⁴ Of course this logic puzzle also implies that India is the world in the sense that it is the only part of the world that matters. By the eighteenth century, when we pick up the story here, the Mughals lacked the political confidence of their forebears that allowed for such calculated flippancy when addressing the rulers of neighboring empires. After all, Nādir Shāh’s invasion in 1739—and the memory of corpses piled high in the streets of Delhi—left little question that the power of the Mughal throne was no longer as lofty as it had been. The Peacock Throne had, in fact, been dismantled and carted off towards Iran. But can we actually trace any connection between the decline of Mughal confidence and the rise of Urdu? Scholars have frequently assumed that Indians started using Urdu because their politics were in a shambles and the feckless nobles could no longer fund poetry in the language of cosmopolitan prestige, namely Persian.⁵ In this

³ “*hind-o jahān z rūṭi ‘adad har-do chūn yakī-st / shah rā khiṭāb shāhjahānī mubarhan ast*” (qtd. Rahman 1970: 64).

⁴ India is “*hind*” so H (5) + N (50) + D (4) = 59, and world is “*jahān*” so J (3) + H (5) + Ā (1) + N (50) = 59.

⁵ For example, Jalibi 1984: II, 149 and Sarkar 1920: 147, 1949: 16; cf. Syed 2012: 298. A similar assumption exists for the Ottoman context: Steps towards modernity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have generally been seen as synonymous with Westernization rather than as internal developments (because the Ottomans supposedly would only have turned towards the West if their politics were in decline). Scholars have begun to question this tautological reasoning (e.g. Hamadeh 2004: 34ff and İslamoğlu 2012). On the funding of cultural activities during times of turmoil, it appears little useful scholarship has appeared since Lopez 1959 on that issue during the Renaissance.

interpretation, taking vernacular literature seriously was an act of desperation, namely an attempt to fill a political and cultural lacuna with a kind of “poor man’s Persian” namely a Persianized form of the vernacular. For example, S. K. Chatterji has written

The first Urdu poets, deeply moved by the manifest decay of Muslim political power in the eighteenth century, sought to escape from a world they did not like by taking refuge in the garden seclusion of Persian poetry, the atmosphere of which they imported into Urdu (Rai 1984: 242).

As we see below, such sentiments are not actually reflected in the eighteenth-century sources written by Ārzū’s circle. Another common explanation for Urdu’s rise to prominence is, of course, nationalist sentiment, namely that proud Indians took the initiative to write in an indigenous Indian language rather than in foreign Persian. But this too is a misleading framework because it generally reflects assumptions about citizens’ relationships with modern nation-states onto pre-modern political formations. Contemporary statements that imply that vernacular language was part of an Indian identity have been given undue weight, while the actual process required to develop a literary idiom and an accompanying language ideology have not widely been considered in the context of the eighteenth century. (In the conclusion to this dissertation, we consider in theoretical terms such questions of language in pre-colonial society.)

The Urdu literary historical tradition credits Ārzū with having developed such a language ideology, but the relationship between the ideas addressed in Ārzū surviving works, which are nominally about Persian alone, and the Urdu tradition have not been developed in detail. Here

we consider how Ārzū's ideas on language and the members of his circle influenced the vernacular literary tradition of Delhi.

This chapter addresses the development of what came to be called Urdu with neither nationalist nor declinist preconceptions. Instead, the proposition that will be developed here is that the standardization of vernacular poetic practice in the mid-eighteenth century was a catalyst in building the consciousness of a pre-existing, dispersed community of language users across India. It is self-evident that a language grammatically similar to that of Delhi and its hinterlands (the so-called *khari bolī* or “upright speech”) had made it across the length and breadth of South Asia well before the eighteenth century.⁶ It was known by a number of different names and exhibited considerable variation in vocabulary and grammar. When poetry was composed in this dialect following Persian poetic rules, it was known as *reḡhtah*. By the end of the eighteenth century, *reḡhtah*, which had originally referred to a poetic practice, had become synonymous with Urdu, a new term denoting a language which was derived from the phrase *zabān-i urdū-yi mu‘allā* [language of the royal court]. As noted in Chapter Two above, Ārzū uses this phrase in reference to standardized Persian, and this strongly implies a parallel

⁶ Though it should be noted that no satisfactory study has shown the exact mechanism by which this spread of a particular dialect happened. Trade and the movement of administrators (and their retainers) from the center to the periphery are two obvious possibilities. In any case, sources are patchy until it is a *fait accompli*: For example, Simon Digby's research into a set of early seventeenth-century texts show “heavily Persianized vocabulary” and “uncompromising Urdu grammatical structures” even though the texts were produced far from Delhi in Gujarat or Rajasthan (Digby 1995).

between his idea of how the literary standard functions in Persian (namely, as an urban literary language that displaces local variations as the eloquent idiom for poetry) and a vision for the development of vernacular poetics. This transformation is both overdetermined and undertheorized: The key intervention in this chapter will be to argue that conflating the terms *reḵhtah* and *zabān-i urdū* and in this way, as most scholars have since, elides crucial differences between literary style in the vernacular and vernacular language itself. A prerequisite to such an analysis is contrasting the ways of defining of linguistic usage in early modernity to later definitions. In the South Asian context, today's divisions into languages, dialects and other formally bounded categories were promulgated (or at least formalized) mostly in the colonial period.⁷ Our sociolinguistic terms were obviously unavailable to people in the eighteenth century and we must tread carefully in ascribing current perceptions of linguistic usage to early-modern conditions. Let us take the most obvious example, the concept of *zabān*, a term shared between Persian and *hindī-Urdu*. It is generally translated as “language” but does not necessarily designate what we mean by that word today.⁸ Instead, it has an inherent ambiguity

⁷ Which have been further reified by the reorganization of Indian states on basis of language in the late 1950s.

⁸ Formal linguistics defines a language according to “mutual intelligibility” (Campbell and Mixco 2007: 91-2). Sociolinguistics modifies this definition to require a standardized dialect which has been defined by a speech community. An example of why historical contextualization of seemingly obvious terminology is Ronit Ricci's observation from the perspective of literary studies rather than linguistics that the definition of translation, seemingly a simple act of (as the Latin literally means) “bringing over” a text from one language into another, is itself culturally bound (2011: 31ff).

akin to that of its literal English translation, “tongue.” Rather than attempting to show whether definitions of language use in the eighteenth century were precursors to modern definitions, a better way to understand the rise of Urdu is as a series of rhetorical acts, both overt and subtle. By recovering the rhetoric of early Urdu through critical texts that address vernacular composition in eighteenth-century northern India, we come closer to accepting the polysemy of the tradition and that the intentions of people then do not necessarily map onto what we, with historical hindsight, know of the tradition’s later development.

In the early eighteenth century and before, composition in what was later known as Urdu was a kind of novelty act in Delhi and did not attract much attention from scholars and critics. Serious poetry in north-central India had been written either in Persian or in another literary dialect of *hindī*, such as Braj Bhāṣā or Awadhī.⁹ Between 1720, when the collected works of the poet Muḥammad Walī arrived in Delhi from the South, and 1752, when Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Mīr’s *Nikāt al-shu‘arā* [Subtleties of the Poets], the first northern Indian *taẓkirah* to deal primarily with vernacular poets, was written, this had changed.¹⁰ To the present-day observer,

⁹ Āzād says as much in *Āb-e ḥayāt* (cf. Jalibi 1984: II, 148). A full account of these dialects is beyond the scope of the current project, but as with the broader question of what is Hindi and what is Urdu, defining them is beset with issues of arbitrary determinations and anachronism.

¹⁰ The hedge “north Indian” is required because Ḳhwājah Ḳhān Ḥamīd of Aurangabad’s *Gulshan-i guftār* [Flower-garden of Speech], a brief account of thirty poets, is dated 1165/1751–2, and might be earlier (Gorekar 1970: 107). It also claims to be first account of *reḳhtah* poets and interestingly many of the poets are from southern India (*Gulshan-i guftār* 1929: 3). *Nikāt al-shu‘arā* is undated but a reference to Ānand Rām Muḳhlīṣ, who had died in 1164/1751, suggests it was finished soon afterwards. It was definitely finished before Ārzū’s death in 1756.

it can seem as though an Urdu literary culture (with its corresponding social network) appeared fully formed in those three decades since there is virtually no analytical writing on Urdu before the 1750s. Ārzū is an important exception: His critical writings deploy a conceptual framework designed to account for the vernacular although they are nominally about Persian literature.¹¹ Of course, complex literary systems do not appear ex nihilo but rather reconfigure and amplify what exists in their environment. In the short preface to *Nikāt al-shu‘arā*, Mīr deals with the question of origins:

Let it not be hidden that in this art [*fann*] of *reḡhtah*, which is poetry in the style of Persian poetry in the language of the exalted court of Shahjahanabad Delhi, there has been until now no book written that has placed the lives of the poets of this art upon the page of history.¹²

This is both a claim about the definition of the practice of *reḡhtah*—and it is obvious that we must call it a practice or art [*fann*] rather than a language given how Mīr has explained it—as well as about the history of criticism concerning *reḡhtah*. It is not the natural language of Delhi but rather the result of what we could see through the sociolinguistic lens of “language

¹¹ Sadiq 1964: 79. Lest we be concerned by this lacuna, it is worth noting that the great programmatic statement in favor of the vernacular in medieval Europe, Dante’s *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, is also a rather limited project: “Dante elevates the vernacular poets to the dignity of a standard. Promoting the vernacular languages to the status of authority is one of his unique achievements... Yet Dante never mentions more than the first line of any poem or discusses its content in detail, nor does he articulate a theoretical framework for their evaluation” (Shapiro 1990: 42).

¹² “*pūshīdah na-mānad kih dar fann-i reḡhtah kih sha‘irī-st ba-ṭaur-i sha‘ir-i fārsī ba-zabān-i urdū-yi mu‘allā shāhjahānābād dihli kitābī tāḥāl tasnīf na-shudah kih aḥwāl-i shā‘irān-i ba-safḥah-yi rozgār bamānad.*” (*Nikāt al-shu‘arā* 1979: 9)

planning,” namely an attempt to make a language hew to a particular set of principles.¹³ Mīr

continues by minimizing the contribution of the Deccan:

Although there is *rekhtah* in the Deccan, since a poet of connected [verse] has not appeared from there, I have not begun with their names, and the condition of being imperfectly connected [in sense to the previous line in poetry] is not but that often their condition is wearisome, but some of them shall be written.¹⁴

Delhi poets and Deccani poets were obviously aware that they were engaged in similar projects

of making vernacular poetry follow Persian rules.¹⁵ Mīr sidelines their contributions, a trend

that continued in later Urdu criticism (interestingly, though, Ārzū’s views are considerably

more nuanced on this point). If *rekhtah*/Urdu is defined as a poetic language of Delhi then

influence from further afield is problematic and is to be ignored or dismissed. One common

technique, which Mīr has used, is to declare the poetry of the Deccan stylistically inferior and

therefore irrelevant¹⁶ while another is to show that it is an epigone of Delhi poetry and

¹³ A standard definition, which is deliberately left broad: “Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes” (Cooper 1989: 45). Obviously this usually refers to governmental efforts, but there is no reason not to extend the idea to hegemony rather than direct administration.

¹⁴ “*agarchih rekhtah dar dakkan ast, chūn az ānjā yak shā‘ir-i marbūṭ bar-na-khwāstah lihaẓā shurū‘ ba-nām-i ānhā na-kardah wa ṭaba‘-i nāqış-i maṣrūf-i in-ham nīst kih aḥwāl akṣar malāl andoz gardad, magar ba‘ẓi az anhā niwishtah khwāhad shud.*” *Rabṭ* (of which “*marbūṭ*” is the adjective) refers to the logical and aesthetic connection between the two lines of a couplet. As the couplet is the unit of meaning in much Persian poetry, especially in the *ghazal*, properly constructing this internal connection is one of the key measures of mastery in the Persian poetic context. Wālih in his entry on Ārzū notes that Ārzū objected to five hundred of Ḥazīn’s couplets as “disjointed” [*nā-marbūṭ*] (*Riyāz al-shu‘arā* 2005: vol 1, 347).

¹⁵ Jalibi 1984: I, 335.

¹⁶ Qāṣim, about whom see note 28 below, does the same (Faruqi 2004a: 840).

therefore irrelevant. In the latter case, the ur-poet Walī is famously reputed to have come to Delhi (probably from Gujarat) and learned from Shāh Sa‘dullah Gulshan, a contemporary of the great Persian poet Bedil (Āzād is certain that Gulshan proposed to Walī that he should compile the *dīwān* that would turn out to be so influential). In this scenario, the “Deccani” literature is really just poetry transplanted from Delhi and eventually returned to its rightful home with the posthumous arrival there of Walī’s *dīwān*. There are holes in this story, but true or not it serves to remind us that the purity of a Delhi poetic style is an untenable construct—just as the distinction between Delhi Urdu stylistics and Lucknow Urdu stylistics, despite being a mainstay of Urdu literary criticism, crumbles with the slightest bit of historical probing.¹⁷ The language of Delhi was always influenced by that of other regions and vice versa.¹⁸ This chapter, however, is not specifically concerned with tracing the pre-history of Urdu in the Deccan, although we will briefly consider the importance of Ārzū’s personal experience there as well as his family ties to Gwalior. Here our goal is to follow the primary sources to complicate the relationship between eighteenth century conceptions of linguistic geography and our present understanding of language in northern India. Indeed, critics like Ārzū, even as they were

¹⁷ An Urdu literary historian writing in the early 1990s claims to be the first to question this dogma, which demonstrates how entrenched it is (Zaidi 1993: x).

¹⁸ Compare Francesca Orsini’s recent call for literary history of India that considers how the traces of different languages/literary traditions appear obliquely in the texts of any given tradition: “Multilingual history, as we have seen, requires a perspective open to elements and agents not immediately present in the texts, an awareness that each text and author exists in a context that is more complex and varied than the one he gives us to believe” (Orsini 2012: 243).

claiming to develop a Delhi-based literary standard, considered how Delhi's language fit into a pan-Indian vernacular literary tradition.

Nikāt al-shu'arā, though it positions itself as originary, is not the first critical engagement with the literary practice called *reḵhtah* and the language that would eventually be called Urdu. Scattered references in Ārzū's works and the fact that he composed a lexicon of vernacular words, *Nawādir al-alfāz* [Wonders of Words], demonstrate a sustained engagement with the vernacular. These will be contextualized by another important Persian text describing vernacular language, namely *Tuḥfat al-hind* [A Present from India, late seventeenth century], which is actually about the *hindī* dialect Braj Bhāshā rather than the *khārī bolī* that is the basis of Delhi speech. It is worthwhile to contrast the way in which that text describes the vernacular to the formulation in Inshā'allah Ḳhān Inshā and Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Qatīl's *Daryā-yi laṭāfat* [The Sea of Refinements, 1807] approximately a century later.¹⁹ We begin with prosopography, that is, tracing the contours of the community of the *reḵhtah-goyān* [*reḵhtah* poets] of Delhi in the mid-eighteenth century. We continue with definitions of *reḵhtāh*/Urdu/*hindī* and its many other names in the context of the richness of available linguistic forms in northern India, and close with a reexamination of attitudes towards Persian

¹⁹ Concerning Ārzū's possible influence on that work, see NA 1951: xxxviii *passim*.

and Urdu that follow from the debates in the mid-eighteenth century over what we can call the language ideology of Urdu.

A Who's Who of the People of *Rekhtah*

Here we consider the social networks of the Delhi *rekhtah* community, largely on the basis of *tazkirahs*. These sources, which are among the few relevant ones that we have, compel us to dispense with the idea that vernacular poetry represents the language of commoners winning out over that of elites, for these texts record elites in dialogue with other elites.²⁰ Here, as in many cases in Europe and India, the sources do not offer us portraits of representatives of the masses undermining the elite through their language choice. Nor, in that case, do elites appear to be speaking on behalf of the masses as might be expected. Rather, the people developing the vernacular for their own purposes are the very same elite who are expert in Persian, that is, in the language that their descendants eventually would give up. A perfect illustration is the *rekhtah* poet with the penname Āftāb, who happened to be the emperor Shāh ʿĀlam II (r. 1759–1806), and who fit into these very same literary networks (his teacher was Mirzā Faḫr

²⁰ Indeed, all criticism on *rekhtah* was written in the elite language, Persian, until Mirzā ʿAlī Luṭf's 1801 *Gulshan-i hind* [Garden of India], which was the first Urdu *tazkirah* actually in Urdu (Gorekar 1970: 105). The first *dīwān* of Urdu poetry to have a prose preface in Urdu was that of ʿAbd al-Walī ʿUzlat of Surat (1692/3–1775) according to Jalibi (II: 327). This did not become common until decades later.

Makīn).²¹ This has not stopped later scholars from making flowery pronouncements on the proletarian nature of vernacular poetry. N. S. Gorekar, for example, argues that “in its infancy, Urdu was quite simple and homely and could cope with the requirements of the people whose needs were few and whose outlook on life was limited” (1970: 101). Likewise, Jadunath Sarkar says of the Mughal period that “the Muhammadans of that age (except the Hindi-speaking portion) had no vernacular religious poetry for the masses” (2008: 322). He presumes that Urdu was invented to fill that role.²² Obviously many eighteenth-century vernacular poets, such as Mīr Dard and Maẓhar were well known Sufis, but it cannot be taken for granted that their language choice was motivated by the desire to spread religious messages.²³ Bedil, arguably the most influential Indo-Persian poet of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century but also credited as a *reḳhtah* master poet by Mīr and others, was also an acclaimed Sufi. If

²¹ He was also a Braj poet as attested by a few surviving snippets (Marshall 1967: 436). Shafīq identifies Āftāb as the Emperor Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1719–48), which is obviously wrong since earlier *taẓkirahs* do not mention him (*Chamanistān-i shu‘arā* 1928: 245).

²² His division of Hindi-speaking Muslims from Muslims generally (who, presumably, would be speaking Urdu or some kind of proto-Urdu) is anachronistic because it presumes a split between Hindi-speakers and Urdu-speakers with Urdu, in this view, being an exclusively Muslim language. Sarkar unhelpfully conflates spoken language with literary language.

²³ Similar questions are explored in Pollock 1995, 2000. Richard Eaton has argued that in the Deccan it was in fact the case that Deccani Urdu was adopted for spreading a religious message, though he offers some caveats (Eaton 1978, cf. Guha 2004). As Pollock reminds us, the European case is complicated by the fact that so many people had a basic knowledge of Latin that it could hardly be said to be restricted to the cloister and the court (2006: 460–1, cf. Briggs 2003). Given what we know of how Sufis used Persian in India, it seems likely that they too expected to be understood even if they were delivering much of the content of their message to their followers in the prestige language.

language choice is the crucial criterion then why should Dard and Mazhar, be remembered as religious popularizers and Bedil not? Another important point is that being a Sufi, even a self-proclaimed mendicant, does not make someone a representative of demotic religion. The records we have of this early Urdu literary culture are kept by and represent an elite community. However much we should like to know about how other strata of society used language, there is little data for the pre-colonial period that could help.²⁴

Ārzū came from this same charmed circle, being a part of both the Mughal aristocracy and a Sufi lineage. He is recognized in most *taẓkirahs* of Urdu poets as the first important teacher of Urdu composition in Delhi. Indeed, a generation after his death he was being called the Abū Ḥanīfah of Urdu poetry (Abū Ḥanīfah being the eighth-century jurist whose interpretations of Islamic law, the so-called Hanafite School, are dominant in India).²⁵ Mīr's *Nikāt al-shu'arā* uses the slightly less hyperbolic formulation that all teachers of Urdu were taught by Ārzū: "All teachers connected with the art of *reḡhtah* are classmates [studying under] this great man."²⁶ Besides the Persian poets mentioned in Chapter One who also composed in

²⁴ It should not be forgotten that so much of the Subaltern Studies project, though engaged in a worthy effort to give voice to the voiceless in history, actually depends on colonial-era record-keeping for its source material.

²⁵ See *Majmū'ah-yi naḡhz* [A Collection of Delights] by Qudratallah "Qāsim" (1750–1830) dated 1806 (ʿAbdullah 1965: 42). Nabi Hadi reports that the phrase appears in an earlier *taẓkirah* by Ārzū's student Ḥakīm Ḥusayn Shuhrat of Shiraz (who, was according to Ārzū, probably originally an Arab from Bahrain) but the present researcher has been unable to trace the reference, Hasan 2001: 850.

²⁶ "*hamah ūstādān mazbūt-i fann-i reḡhtah hamshāgirdān-i ān buzurgwār-and*," (qtd in ʿAbdullah 1965: 43). Likewise Mīr Ḥasan in 1191/1777 calls Ārzū "teacher of the teachers of Hindustan" (1985: 13).

the vernacular, his name is linked to Mīr, Mirzā Jān-i Jānān Maẓhar, Mirzā Muḥammad Rafīʿ Saudā, and ẖhwājah Mīr Dard, all of whom attended *reḳhtah mushāʿirahs* held at his house.²⁷

These younger contemporaries of Ārzū ended up being the most important Urdu poets of the mid- to late eighteenth century. He was a personal mentor to Shāh Mubārak Ābrū (1685–1733), Sharaf al-Dīn Maẓmūn (1689?–1735?) and Ġhulām Muṣṭafā Yakrang (d. 1737). In *Tanbīh al-ḡhāfilīn*, Ārzū says of them that “each of the three is a master and established in the art of *reḳhtah*” and notes that they have all sought correction [*iṣlāḥ*] from him.²⁸ Despite his obvious importance in the social fabric of the Delhi poetic community, the only Urdu composition of Ārzū’s that we can trace is a core of a dozen or so couplets quoted in eighteenth-century *taẓkirahs*, none of which is particularly inspired or historically interesting. In *Āb-e ḥayāt*, Āzād pithily concludes from this meager harvest that “ẖhān-e Ārzū was not an Urdu poet; nor did people of that time consider Urdu poetry to be an accomplishment” (1907: 116). While in Ārzū’s case—and that of most of his contemporaries, Ḥātim being an important exception—there was no interest in collecting one’s Urdu poetry and distributing manuscripts of it, there

²⁷ *Āb-e ḥayāt* 1907: 164

²⁸ “*har siḥ ustād wa mustanad-and dar fann-i reḳhtah*” (TĠH 1981: 76). Sayid Faṭḥ ‘Alī ẖhān Huṣaynī Gardezī, in his *Taẓkirah-yi reḳhtah-goyān* [*Taẓkirah of Reḳhtah Poets*, 1752] also mentions that Maẓmūn was Ārzū’s student (1995: 155). Gardezī’s *taẓkirah* was one of the two important *taẓkirahs* probably written in response to Mīr’s *Nikāt al-shu‘arā*. The other, Qayām al-Dīn Muḥammad Qā’im’s *Maḳhzan-i nikāt* [*Treasury of Fine-Points*] composed two years later, claims in the preface that its author had not seen any other *taẓkirah* of *reḳhtah* poets, which must be disingenuous since Qā’im was in Delhi when Mīr and Gardezī wrote theirs (Gorekar 1970: 108-9).

was a thriving community of *reḵhtah* poets who were becoming ever more serious about it. The systematization of *reḵhtah* poetry is what concerns us here, and we can trace it through the careers of several poets tied to Ārzū either directly or indirectly. The first of these is Shāh Ḥātim, whose career is unusual in that he actually wrote some prose explaining some of his aesthetic choices.

Shāh Ḥātim (1699–1783) and his “Contemporaries”

Ẓuhūr al-Dīn Ḥātim was a native of Delhi. He began composing *reḵhtah* poetry in his late teenage years and the first volume of his works [*dīwān*] was compiled in 1144/1732, which makes it unusually early. Some of the *ghazals* are dated 1131 or one year before Walī’s *dīwān* is said to have arrived in Delhi, and they are not appreciably different from later ones (Zulfiqar 1975: 10). The influence of Walī on *reḵhtah* stylistics might therefore be over-stated—or perhaps we simply have the dates slightly wrong. Ḥātim was well-connected politically, and wrote two *maṣnawīs* for the emperor Muḥammad Shāh (one of which is a delightful account of coffee) in 1749.²⁹ The preface to his *Dīwānāzādah* (1169/1756) is an important early intervention in Urdu stylistics. He writes in it that the need had arisen to replace his first *dīwān*, which was by then hard to find and—more importantly—stylistically out of date. He had pared down the

²⁹ Additionally, his Persian *dīwān*, mentioned by Āzād in *Āb-e ḥayāt* (1907: 113) but subsequently thought lost, has been published as *Dīwān-i fārsī-yi ḥātim dihlawī* 2010. The coffee *maṣnawī* and its context in eighteenth-century connoisseurship has been recently explicated by Walter Hakala (2011).

number of poems and so gave the new edition the cheeky name *Dīwānzādah* (literally “born of the *dīwān*” or “*dīwān*’s son”).³⁰ He asserts that since certain words have an inherent ugliness/inappropriateness [*qabāḥat*], he has tried to give them up. The words he lists are all Sanskrit-derived, like “*jag*” meaning “world.” This has usually been seen as the first salvo in the *Kulturkampf* whose armistice terms in the early twentieth century were that Hindi was to be “the language of Hindus” (and hence the national language of India) and Urdu was to be “the language of Muslims” (and of Pakistan).³¹ The fact that he also argued for the correct spelling of Persian and Arabic-derived words has been interpreted as an “Islamicization” of Urdu. As we consider below, there is no compelling reason to read Ḥātim’s interventions (namely rejecting certain words and respelling others) as communalist. Instead he appears to follow Ārzū in the concern for setting a literary standard. He certainly knew Ārzū’s work because although he does not mention Ārzū by name, the contemporary poets he does mention are connected with Ārzū.

³⁰ Besides *Dīwānzādah* itself, see Muṣḥafī’s *Taẓkirah-yi hindī* (1985: 88-9). For Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Ḥātim was the person who brought “elitism” into *reḡhtah* by insisting that it follow rules that require a knowledge of Persian and Arabic (Faruqi 2004a: 850). Thinking about his intervention as setting a literary standard is perhaps more useful than the implied criticism of “elitism.”

³¹ The classic study is King 1994 and for Hindi specifically Dalmia 1997. A notable text from the debates around the proper national language for independent India is R. S. Shukla’s *Lingua Franca for India (Hind)*, which attempts to prove that Sanskritized *khafī bolī* Hindi is natural while Urdu is artificial (Shukla 1947).

In *Dīwānẓādah*'s preface, Ḥātim invokes Ābrū (1685–1733), Maẓmūn (1689? –1735?), Mirzā Jān-i Jānān Maẓhar (1689–1791), Shaiḵh Aḥsanallah (d. 1737–8), Mīr Shākir Nājī (1690?–1744/47?) and Yakrang (d. 1737) as his “contemporaries” [*mu‘āṣirān*].³² This can be taken as an index of the important Delhi-based *reḵhtah* writers of the first third of the eighteenth century. As noted above, Ārzū claims to have mentored three of the six of them in the vernacular. He also knew Maẓhar and Nājī personally, as he reports in *Majma‘ al-Nafā‘is* (2005: 118, 120–1). The leading light of the next generation was Ārzū’s nephew Mīr.

Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Mīr (1722–1810)

As Ārzū’s nephew, Mīr had an impeccable introduction into Delhi literary society.³³ He arrived from Agra most likely in 1739 and stayed with Ārzū. C. M. Naim is almost certainly right to infer that Ārzū transformed Mīr from somewhat of a bumpkin to a confident metropolitan poet (1999: 15). Mīr praises Ārzū to the sky in his entry in *Nikāt al-shu‘āra*, which is hardly unexpected in a *taẓkirah*, and acknowledges him as his teacher.³⁴ Despite this public expression of admiration while Ārzū was alive, Mīr’s narrative, *Ẓikr-i mīr* [The Recollection of Mīr], which

³² In his own 1168/1754 *taẓkirah*, Qā‘im of Chandpur mentions Ḥātim as an associate of Ābrū and Maẓmūn, (qtd. Zulfiqar 1975: 6).

³³ Ārzū was his *khālū*. In current usage, this means “mother’s sister’s husband” but previously it also meant “maternal uncle.” It is in this latter sense that Ārzū and Mīr are related since Ārzū was his step-mother’s brother (Naim 1999: 66; *Āb-e ḥayāt* 1907: 194).

³⁴ *Nikāt al-shu‘āra* 1979: 10–1. Mīr also respected Ārzū as a critic in Urdu, at least in one important case (Faruqi 1996: 99). Thanks to Owen Cornwall for the reference.

was written perhaps two decades later, tells a different story. Mīr says nothing of what he learned in Delhi from Ārzū except noting that he had read “a few insignificant books” at Ārzū’s house (Naim 1999: 66-9). While Mīr was staying at Ārzū’s house, Sa‘ādat ‘Alī, “a Sayyid from Amroha,” advised him that he should write in the vernacular, whereupon his work became extremely popular.³⁵ At some point during Mīr’s stay, as Mīr himself explains it, Ārzū received a letter from Mīr’s stepbrother and his entire demeanor towards his nephew changed. Mīr admits that this situation drove him mad and they eventually had a falling out over supper, which led him to stumble down the road towards Jama Masjid in a daze. He made it as far as Hauz Qazi, where he was recognized by someone who helped him secure a patron and move out of Ārzū’s house. The exact cause of this family split is not recorded.³⁶ *Ẓikr-i mīr* was almost certainly not meant for public consumption so it is no surprise that its final assessment of Ārzū

³⁵ One source, *Nishtar-i ‘ishq* [Love’s Lancet, 1233/1817] by Ḥusain Qulī Ḳhān ‘Ashiqī of Azimabad (i.e. Patna), reports that Ārzū had a similar conversation with Saudā (1968: 84-5; trans. Alam 2004: 180-1). There is a crucial difference in the two conversations as reported, namely that Mīr’s conversation with the Sayyid had no sense of pitting Indians against Persians in their mastery of Persian whereas the putative conversation between Saudā and Ārzū explicitly states that Indians cannot rise to the level of Iranians in Persian (Indians are a mere lamp to the sun of the Persian of Iranians) and furthermore that Persian itself is worn out as a literary medium. The conversation reported in *Nishtar-i ‘ishq* is problematic for the present author: Firstly, it appears unsourced in a *taẓkirah* written more than fifty years after Ārzū’s death. Secondly, while the statement as reported does not directly contradict the arguments about the universality of literary language that Ārzū presents throughout his works (as described in the previous chapter), it is less nuanced than his other invocations of Iranian literary competence and concedes more than he concedes elsewhere. It is possible that this iconic conversation never happened, but it has nonetheless been adduced as evidence without mentioning these concerns (e.g. Syed 2012: 298).

³⁶ We can speculate with Naim that Ārzū might have disliked Mīr’s Shī‘ah tendencies or that perhaps Mīr had an affair with a member of Ārzū’s household. (The former possibility is also suggested by Āzād, *Āb-e ḥayāt* 1907: 194.)

is vicious: Towards the end of his life, Ārzū “went chasing in the desert of greed, that is to say he journeyed to Shuja-ud-Daulah’s camp [Lucknow] ... But he received nothing but a fistful of air and, buffeted by Time, died.”³⁷

Mīr expressed some ambivalence about the relative value of the vernacular and Persian. While writing a *tazkirah* of *reḵhtah* poets represents a significant commitment to *reḵhtah* poetry, he spent two years trying to be a Persian poet exclusively.³⁸ The lack of statements in prose expressing his opinion of *reḵhtah* justifies a brief diversion into discussing the references to *reḵhtah* in his poetry. He writes,

Why was *reḵhtah* in this lofty rank, Mīr?
Whatever ‘ground’ [*zamīn*] emerged, I bore it away to the sky.

And also,

What respect does *reḵhtah* receive—although I
in this art was equal to Naẓīrī?³⁹

³⁷ Trans Naim 1999: 76. The evidence that it was not meant for a wide readership comes first in its rarity since it was lost for nearly a century and a half and only published in 1928 (Faruqi 2005: 173). There is also an unflattering reference to the current king Shāh ‘Ālam II (r. 1759–1806), who “slanders the title [of Emperor] and is a prisoner of the Firangis” (i.e. the British are the real power behind the throne) (1999: 80). Lastly, as Naim has shown, throughout the text Mīr uses expressions from Ārzū’s lexicon *Chirāgh-i hidāyat* with such frequency—sometimes a dozen appear on the same page—that it appears the text was meant to be pedagogical (Naim 1999: 13–4, 19). It could have been a lesson in Persian composition intended for a member of the family enlivened by being cast in the form of an “autobiography.” In fact, it tells us surprisingly little about Mīr and his life.

³⁸ As reported by Ġhulām Hamadānī Muṣḥafī (1747/50?–1824) in his *tazkirah* *‘Iqd-i šurayya* [The Necklace of the Pleiades] (1978: 95).

³⁹ “*reḵhtah kāhe ko thā is rutbah-ye a’lā mem mīr / jo zamīn niklī use tā āsmān maim le gayā*” (1056, 7) and “*kyā qadr hai reḵhte kī go maim / is fann mem naẓīrī kā badal thā*” (1057, 4), as printed in *Kulliyāt-e mīr* 2003.

Such rhetorical anxieties over *reḵhtah* continue into the nineteenth century, as encapsulated in Ġhālīb’s famous line: “If anyone would say, ‘How could *reḵhtah* be the envy of Persian?’ / Just once, recite to him the

Trying to discern the poet's personal feelings on the basis of poetic utterances is a minefield because of how poetry works rhetorically, namely as formal speech, but let us try.⁴⁰ In both couplets, the speaker (for simplicity, we can just call him "Mīr") is expressing his prowess in composing *reḵhtah*, which is a continuation of the venerable Persian tradition of poetic braggadocio [*tafaḵḵhur*]. In the first couplet, *reḵhtah* is in an exalted state because Mīr has raised it from its earth-bound position to the sky. (As a technical poetic term, *zamīn* refers to the combination of meter and rhyme.) In the second, Mīr questions whether *reḵhtah* has any value because even someone like himself, who writes it as well as Naẓīrī (d. 1612) wrote Persian, supposedly gets no recognition.⁴¹ We can surmise that the value of *reḵhtah* was being negotiated at the time Mīr was writing. In another poem he says,

I had fallen in love with a Turkish lad—what *reḵhtahs* I composed
Gradually going from Hindustan, my poetry went to Iran.⁴²

speech of Ghalib—"Like this!" [*jo yih kahe kih reḵhtah kyomīkih ho rashk-e fārsī / guftah-e ḡhālīb ek bār paḥ ke use sunā kih yūm*] (116, 10), as printed in *Dīwān-e ḡhālīb* 1982.

⁴⁰ We should remember when discussing poetry that "formal speech requires a positional rather than a personal identity" (Kennedy 1998: 67).

⁴¹ In the context of European vernaculars defining themselves against Latin, Peter Burke has referred to this as the "humility topos" (2004: 18). Allison Busch has noted a similar rhetoric in the work of the Braj poet Keshavdās (1555–1617): "In a family where even the servants did not know how to speak / the vernacular, Keshavdas became a slow-witted Hindi poet" (*Kavipriyā* 2.17, trans Busch 2011: 23). He framed his linguistic defection—he was a pandit with full knowledge of Sanskrit—apologetically as a desire to educate vernacular poets (ibid 44, 54).

⁴² "turk bachche se 'ishq kiyā thā reḵhte kyā kyā main ne kahe / raftah raftah hindusitām se shi'r mirā īrān gayā" (1554, 6).

This verse unusually has “*reḵhtah*” used in the plural, presumably to mean “poems written in *reḵhtah*.” Such a usage again cautions us against thinking of *reḵhtah* as an exact synonym for what later became known as Urdu.⁴³ Unexpectedly, we find the trope of the poem’s making its way to a distant place, namely Iran—it is safe to assume that there was no actual readership for *reḵhtah* poetry in Iran. We can perhaps read it as a joke (“I was so desperate that my poetry went everywhere, even to Iran where people couldn’t understand it”) or it is a fossilized trope whose logic we are not meant to question. Now let us turn to how Ārzū references *reḵhtah*.

Reḵhtah in Majma‘ al-nafā’is

A key goal for this chapter is to elucidate references to vernacular composition in works that are nominally about Persian. Ārzū’s *Majma‘ al-nafā’is*, a *taẓkirah* of writers in Persian composed at roughly the same time as Mīr’s *Nikāt al-shu‘arā*, mentions several poets who also composed in the vernacular. These are Qizilbāsh Ḳhān known as Ummīd (1678–1746), Ḳhwājah Mīr Dard (1722–85), Mīrzā Roshan Ṣamīr (seventeenth c.), Jān-i Jānān Maẓḥar (1689–1791), and Nusbatī (fl. mid-eighteenth c). Although Mīr refers to Ummīd as a “Mughal” (which means either Central Asian-born or of Central Asian descent), Ārzū states that he is

⁴³ Imre Bangha has traced the term to a seventeenth century musicological treatise in which it means a bilingual text set to both a *rāga* and a *tāla* (2010: 24).

from Hamadan in western Iran.⁴⁴ He spent nearly forty years in the Deccan but knew Ārzū from Delhi (rather than when Ārzū was on campaign in the Deccan as a young man). Fascinatingly, Ārzū reports that not only could he speak Persian well with an Indian accent [*zabān-ash dar lahjah-yi hindī khūb mī gardad*]⁴⁵—it is worth noticing that not only does Ārzū betray no embarrassment about Indian-accented Persian but suggests that an Iranian would be correct in speaking that way. Furthermore, Ummīd was so good in *hindī* that he noticed subtleties that even a “Mughal” (meaning an Indian-born Muslim) might not. Mīr Dard’s father was an important spiritual leader in the Naqshbandī order. Ārzū reports that Dard was a talented poet “especially in the *reḡhtah* which is now in fashion in India” [*siyamā reḡhtah kih al-ḥāl dar hindūstān rawāj dārad*], adding that “he writes good Persian as well” [*fārsī ham khūb mī gūyad*] (MN 2005: 81). Zāmīr was thought to have been an Iranian soldier in Surat, but Ārzū writes that in fact not he but his ancestors were Iranian and that he was a newsletter-writer [*waqā’i‘-nigār*] in Surat not a soldier. Of his *hindī*, Ārzū says that despite his official duties he was “nonetheless very assiduous in every linguistic exercise [*zabān-bandī*] such that

⁴⁴ *Nikāt al-Shu‘arā* 1979: 13, MN 2005: 44. Ummīd appeared in the previous chapter as a defender of Ārzū’s *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*. In *Āb-e hayāt*, Āzād notes that Ummīd and Mīr Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad Fiṭrat were Iranians who composed in Urdu (*Āb-e hayāt* 1907: 75). Fiṭrat appears in MN and other *tazkirahs* but his composition in *hindī* is not mentioned—in any case, Āzād only mentions them to make the case that before Walī, *reḡhtah* poetry was an aesthetic failure. He backhandedly (and anachronistically) suggests that there was no good poetry because native Indians did not care enough about their own language to write in it.

he mostly composed *hindī* poetry under the pen-name ‘Nehī’ which means ‘lover’.”⁴⁵ Ārzū concludes the entry with (what strikes the present writer as) a rather awful couplet of his own composition:

Let those two black curls on desire’s [or “Ārzū’s”] glowing face
be the *hindī* poem of Mīrzā Roshan Ṣamīr.⁴⁶

Another poet whose *reḵhtah* Ārzū mentions is Maḏḥar, a Naqshbandī like Dard who interestingly wrote in the vernacular but later abandoned it. Ārzū writes that “previously he sometimes composed *reḵhtah*—which is poetry of *hindawī* and Persian mixed—in a particular style; now having understood it to be against his nature, he has given it up.”⁴⁷ Another poet, Nusbatī, was from Thanesar—Ārzū begins the entry by explaining where Thanesar is, namely between Delhi and Lahore—and his father was from Iran. Along with Ābrū (mentioned above), he was a student of Ārzū’s but has now become “a peerless master in the art of *reḵhtah* poetry” [*dar fann-i reḵhtah-go’ī ustād bī-mīš ast*] (ibid. 124). Another friend of Ārzū’s hailing from what is today Haryana is Ḳhwājah Muḥammad ‘Āqil (d. 1143/1730) of Sonapat, who (we know from other sources) composed in *reḵhtah* but also in Braj using the name Budhwant (which means

⁴⁵ MN 2005: 97. Nehī is derived from Sanskrit “*snehī*” [lover] which in turn is derived from “*sneha*” [oiliness, love]. It goes without saying that Ārzū’s interest in a poet with a Sanskrit-derived pen-name this puts us well outside the Hindi/Urdu paradigm of today.

⁴⁶ “*ān do gesū-yi siyah bar rū-yi raḵshān-i ārzū / sh‘ir-i hindī buwad az mīrzā roshan ṣamīr*” (MN 2004: II, 956). (In MN 2005: 97, the second hemistich is reported as “*sh‘ir-i hindī būdah az mīrzā’i roshan ṣamīr*”). Presumably the two curls are being compared to the two hemistiches of a couplet.

⁴⁷ Gardezī says Maḏḥar is from Bukhara (*Tazkirah-yi reḵhtah-goyān* 1995: 152).

“clever” like his *taḫhalluṣ* ‘Āqil).⁴⁸ The range of ‘Āqil’s vernacular literary activities dramatizes what we consider in the next section, namely how the ideology of the vernacular differs for us and for the eighteenth century.

Defining the (Literary) Vernacular

“Vernacular literature” is a term necessarily defined in opposition to a high-prestige, cosmopolitan literature.⁴⁹ While this seems to lock any analysis of it into a potentially unhelpful and ahistorical binary, there are two points to keep in mind: Firstly, the elite of eighteenth-century South Asia (as well as, for that matter, Latinate Europe) conceived of such

⁴⁸ MN 2005: 102-3. His grandfather came from Khurasan. He was a friend of Ārzū and a disciple of Shuhrat. His *dīwān* is available at Aligarh’s Habib Ganj collection as ms. H.G. 47/66.⁴⁹ We can say of “vernacular” that “the term describes, not a language as such, but a relation between one language situation and another, with the vernacular at least notionally in the more embattled, or at least the less clear-cut, position” (Somerset and Watson 2003: x). Etymologically, it can be traced back to the Latin grammarian Marcus Terentius Varro’s (116–23 BCE) invocation of “*vernacula vocabula*” in *De lingua latina* [On the Latin Language], an influential text of which just two books survive. “*Vernacula*” is derived from “*verna*” meaning “a slave born in one’s own house” and so vernacular language is literally the non-standard Latin vocabulary of the lower class of a particular place. The definition of vernacular used in the context of this dissertation and in most people’s understanding of the term today has only the most tenuous link with Varro’s definition.

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a distinction between different categories of language use.⁵⁰ Secondly, “vernacular” is a markedly broad and open category. If the cosmopolitan is defined as being transregional then a number of vernacular traditions—vernacular in that they were “not Persian” and “not Sanskrit”—such as Braj exhibited a similar capacity for movement, albeit on a smaller scale.⁵¹ This section will merely catalogue the complexity of vernacular-cosmopolitan literary cross-influence, while the conclusion to this dissertation will offer a theoretical framework for language ideology in pre-colonial India. Here we challenge the idea that Urdu is exceptional, namely that its Persian influence somehow put it in a category apart and made it incommensurate with other vernacular language use in northern India.⁵² Instead, in the period under discussion, it was a kind of literary idiom that was seen in the context of other vernacular literary idioms.

⁵⁰ The tri-partite scheme of the late seventeenth-century *Tuhfat al-hind*, which is introduced properly below, has Sanskrit [*sahāskrit*] as the divine language used for technical writing, the vernacular [*bhākhā*] as the language of “the world in which we live,” and Prakrit [*parākrit*] as a mixture of Sanskrit with the vernacular primarily employed for praise-poetry. Of course, this definition of Prakrit is problematic from our perspective, but in the context of an intellectual system in which the evolution of one language into another was not obvious, this is a logical conclusion. On the category “*deshī*,” another term for vernacular, see Pollock 2006: esp. 397ff.

⁵¹ This is the guiding principle for R. S. McGregor in his recent summary of the history of Hindi (McGregor 2003), and has also been painstakingly developed by Allison Busch, for example in Busch 2003, 2010, 2011.

⁵² George Grierson, the linguist and literature scholar responsible for the Linguistic Survey of India, implies as much when he claims that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a flourishing vernacular literary culture while the eighteenth century was rather barren (Grierson 1889). In order to make such a claim about the exact time when Urdu literature came into its own, one would have to assume that Urdu was excluded from the category “vernacular.”

Later definitions of Urdu can be distilled down to their colonial and post-colonial political motivations, which have little relevance for the pre-colonial period. One influential early twentieth-century guide to Urdu poetics, *Baḥr al-faṣāhat* [Sea of Eloquence], for example, argues that Urdu is a creole, that is, a mixture of various languages created in the course of everyday contact.⁵³ It also paraphrases the claim made famous in Āzād's declaration that "Everybody knows this much—that our Urdu language has emerged from Braj Bhasha. And Braj Bhasha is a purely Indian language" (*Āb-e ḥayāt* 1907: 6; *Baḥr al-faṣāhat* 2006: I, 37). Frances Pritchett is right to ridicule this linguistically dubious assertion, but we should analyze its rhetorical force.⁵⁴ Positing a creole and a Braj Bhāṣā origin for Urdu are both political claims, namely implying that Urdu is an authentically Indian language. This is a rhetorical position that was necessary after the late nineteenth century when Hindi, written in the unimpeachably indigenous Devanāgarī script, was contrasted with Urdu, written in the imported Perso-Arabic script. In the eighteenth century, however, all evidence points to the

⁵³ "Because the Urdu language is made up of several languages together, they call it '*reḡhtah*'" [*chūn-kih zabān-i urdū ka'ī zabānōn se mil kar banī hai is liye is ko reḡhtah kahte hai*] (2006: I, 36; cf. Syed 2012: 295). This falsely implies some sort of a creole language situation, when in fact the term *reḡhtah* referred specifically to verse that mixed Persian and the vernacular until it was conflated with "*zabān-i urdū*." The historically improbable idea that Urdu was a creolized military language (in some tellings conceived by the Emperor Akbar as part of a syncretic project) is very common among educated South Asians today.

⁵⁴ Pritchett 2002. The claim is "linguistically dubious" because *kharī bolī* and Braj have different grammars, and clearly evolved (even the sparse records of their early history show) along parallel paths with mutual influence rather than having one branch off from the other. Nonetheless, Āzād's position is that Amīr Ḳhusrau wrote some *dohrās* in a mixture of Braj and Persian, and this is the ultimate origin of Urdu (1907: 67).

conclusion that *reḵhtah* and other *hindī* vernacular literary idioms like Braj were seen as part of the same genus in a literary eco-system before they were redefined into Urdu and Hindi. The other important intervention here is to abandon the idea that the influence of Persian on Urdu made Urdu “foreign,” a thesis which T. Grahame Bailey’s *History of Urdu Literature* (1932) clearly illustrates:

What was called “polishing” the language was “Persianising” it; poetry became more and more artificial and un-Indian. ... In Urdu everything now became foreign, artificial and exotic. Urdu critics have themselves often admitted that the old Hindi poets were far truer to nature. (1932: 40).

Leaving aside the dated idea that good poetry is necessarily true to nature, what remains is an over-wrought argument that Persian deracinated whatever it touched in India. This is rooted in the colonial discourse of the de-legitimation of the “foreign invader” Mughals rather than in any indigenous view of language. In the context of the eighteenth century, before Hindi and Urdu were defined against each other, the logic would have been incomprehensible.⁵⁵

Here we will consider *reḵhtah*’s literary culture along two axes. First, we investigate how the vernacular and Persian were seen as compatible. It is self-evident that they were, since *reḵhtah* was developed as verse that mixed the two,⁵⁶ but it is worth tracing the argument in

⁵⁵ In the modern period, though, “linguistic nationalism renders the geographical distribution of the language coterminous with that of the nation itself, so that any attack on the national language becomes, by substitution, a violation of the national borders, an illicit incursion. It is a logic that has a great deal in common with the notion of ‘homeopathic magic’ that Frazer discerned among tribal peoples: if you can suppress its impurities, you can maintain the essentialist purity of the nation itself” (Herzfeld 1992: 113).

⁵⁶ Ārzū’s friend Ṭek Chand Bahār defines *reḵhtah* as follows in *Bahār-i ‘ajam*: “It is a thing which is mixed in its form and that is very felicitously joined together, and discourse mixed with two or more languages, and this is

the context of the eighteenth century and specifically recovering the ways in which Persian actually influenced the vernacular. That the community of *reḵhtah* writers was largely coterminous with that of the most influential Persian litterateurs in Delhi has been established above. Second, we will take seriously the fact that many of what today we consider separate dialects and even languages were referred to simply as “*zabān-i hindī*” [Indian language] in the eighteenth century. Since *reḵhtah* (and later Urdu) as well as the literature of dialects folded into what is today called “Hindi” are all premised on “*zabān-i hindī*,” we should take this as an invitation to view all the vernacular literary dialects in the same frame. There had been no census or linguistic survey, so judgments about language existed in a “fuzzy” rather than an “enumerated” lifeworld, as Sudipta Kaviraj has argued.⁵⁷ Language use must therefore have been defined more by function—whether it was suitable for poetry on particular subjects or for use in communicating with a particular group, for example—than by any other pre-determined criterion.⁵⁸ At some point the language of Delhi began to be seen as a fit medium

metaphorical; and ‘*reḵhtah* hemistich’ and ‘*reḵhtah* meaning’ [refer to when] the hemistich and meaning [in question] are found without deliberation and without effort” [*chīzī ast kih dar qālab rīzanad wa ān khaylī khwush qimārah mī bāshad wa kalām maḵhlūt bah do zabān yā zyādah, wa in majāz ast, wa miṣra‘-i reḵhtah wa ma‘nī-yi reḵhtah, miṣra‘ wa ma‘nī kih bī-takalluf wa bī-ta‘ammul yāftah shawad*] (2001: II, 1135). Bahār here references the earlier definition of *reḵhtah* internal to Persian literature, namely an effortlessly constructed line of verse. Bailey is thus wrong in claiming that the term “*reḵhtah*” had no “literary significance” before being applied to Urdu (1932: 3).

⁵⁷ See Kaviraj 1992. Cf. Fumaroli 1984: 144 on functional definitions of language in early-modern France.

⁵⁸ “A bi- or multilingual world of interacting language communities is the historical norm (and the contemporary one in many parts of the globe). The greatest challenge for a historian’s history of language, in our own largely

for the *ghazal* and other Persianate genres of poetry rather than just a means for having informal conversations, especially with people like women and children who generally had no access to Persian.

Though every one of Ārzū's extant works is written in Persian and is nominally about Persian literature, he mentions Indian vernacular language in all of his major critical works, and refers to *rekhtah* by name in at least two, *Dād-i suḵhan* and *Tanbīh al-ġhāfilīn*.⁵⁹ *Dād-i suḵhan* puts forth a theory of poetic mastery, as we explored in the previous chapter, that takes into account the fact that mistakes in language use are inevitable. The end of the first preface, quoted at length below, shows clearly how this insight is connected to vernacular poetic practice:

Thus in this regard, whatever we have come to call a mistake if it is [committed] by some person whose standing [in matters of literary judgment] is above repudiation and acceptance by others, it shall be a new idiom [*dāḵhil-i taṣarruf*],⁶⁰ not a mistake. [Arabic:] *Consider this, for it is a stumbling-block for understanding minds*, and furthermore when considering that this occurs in the practice of the poets of *rekhtah* of India (this is poetry in the *hindī* language of the people of the Court [*urdū*] of India, especially in the style of Persian poetry, and it is presently popular in Hindūstān [i.e. northern India] and formerly it was current in the Deccan in the language of that country), and I have seen many leaders [*muqṭadā*] in this art [i.e. of composing in *rekhtah*] who have made mistakes in their own idiom, and this made me aware that as the people who know *hindī* and Persian are equivalent in their circumstances so an error of the Indians can be considered analogous to that of the Persians.⁶¹

monoglot environment, is to recreate that world and explain its workings." (Evans 1998: 18). Such a reconstruction is the project in Orsini 2012 (see note 18 above).

⁵⁹ We analyzed both works in the previous chapter. Interestingly, they are both from the same late period in Ārzū's career since they date to the mid-1740s.

⁶⁰ Literally, "[something which has] entered into [accepted] usage"; an accurate paraphrase would be "included among authoritative poetic innovations."

⁶¹ "*pas dar īn šūrat ān chih mā ān rā ġhalaṭ guftah āmadīm agar az chunān kasī ast kah pāyah-ash māfūq rad wa qabūl-i dīgarān ast, dāḵhil-i taṣarruf khwāhad būd nah ġhalaṭ. fa-ta'ammal li-ānna-hu min mazālli aqdām al-āfhām wa nīz ba-dān*

This argument on the basis of vernacular poetic praxis shows clearly that the vernacular is not an incidental inclusion in Ārzū's work but rather integral to his critical enterprise in his later years. *Nawādir al-alfāz*, Ārzū's vernacular lexicon (examined in detail below), demonstrates the porousness of language by recording the Indic origins of vocabulary. *Nawādir* is not actually a dictionary of a vernacular language as such but rather a tabulation of words of vernacular origin used in Persian. The formal philosophy of language that underpins this possibility of sameness between Persian and vernacular has been considered in detail in Chapter Two. Thus, Ārzū can consider the concept of simile [*tashbīh*] as common to *hindī*, Persian, and Arabic but note that poets in each tradition use different similes (for example, only in *hindī* do poets refer to eyes as being like fish).⁶²

Besides the tendency to consider Persian and *reḵhtah* poetic practices to a large degree interchangeable, the tradition frequently compares Urdu poets stylistically to Persian poets. Such comparisons are prevalent in Urdu verse itself but are also deeply embedded in the critical tradition. For example, Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Qatīl writes in his work on Persian composition

kah nazar-i in majrā aḥwāl-i shu'arā-yi reḵhtah hind ast wa ān shi'rī ast bah zabān-i hindī-yi ahl-i urdū-yi hind, ghālibān bah tariq-i shi'r-i fārsī wa ān alḥāl bisyār rāyaj hindūstān ast wa sābq dar dakkān rawāj dāsht bah zabān-i hamān mulk, wa mā bisyār kas rā didīm kah maqtadā-yi in fann būdand wa ḡhalaṭ dar muḥāwarah-yi khwud kardah-and wa mā rā bar-ān iṭlā' ḥāṣil shudah, wa chūn zabāndān-i hindī wa fārsī az 'ālam-i khwud musāwī ast ḡhalaṭ-i hindiyān maqaiyas 'alihi fārsiyān tawānad būd" (DS 1974: 7). Thanks to Rajeev Kinra for sharing his thoughts on *taṣarruf*, and for Pasha M. Khan for his help with the Arabic phrase.

⁶² 'AK 2002: 65

Chār sharbat [Four Cold Drinks, 1217/1802] that Saudā has the same stature and style in *rekhtah* that Zuhūrī, the great seventeenth-century poet active in the Deccan, has in Persian.⁶³ In *Āb-e ḥayāt*, Āzād dutifully invokes a Persian stylistic predecessor for many of the Urdu poets he discusses, so this was still an accepted mode of criticism into the 1880s. Perhaps the most remarkable comparison of a Persian and a *hindī* poet comes from Ḳhwushgo quoting Ārzū: In the entry in *Safīnah-yi Ḳhwushgo* for Rūdakī, Ārzū's marginal note says the equivalent of Rūdakī in *hindī* is Sūr Dās (Keshavmurthy 2013: 34-5). He invokes the famous blind Braj poet in order to make the historical claim that just as there are many spurious compositions attributed to Rūdakī so there are to Sūr Dās (which in the case of the latter is borne out in Hawley 2009).

Why would Ārzū, an important early proponent of literary style that became Urdu, refer to the language of Gwalior, his native place (at the northern tip of modern-day Madhya Pradesh), as “the most eloquent” [*afṣaḥ*] language of India? After all, *zabān-i gwāliyār* [lit. the tongue of Gwalior], which for our purposes we can treat as synonymous with Braj Bhāshā, was quite different from the language of Delhi that he was promoting as a literary standard.⁶⁴

⁶³ As cited by Āzād (1907: 155). The tendency to conflate a poet's Urdu style with a Persian model is a hallmark of early *tazkirahs*, although *Nikāt al-shu'arā* does comparatively less of this (Gorekar 1970: 121). To take a very different example, we can see the same trend in English letters: Richard Carew's *The Excellencie of the English Tongue* (1595) claimed that Virgil's style could be found in the Earl of Surrey's work and that Shakespeare and Marlowe wrote like Catullus (Vance 1997: 7).

⁶⁴ NA 1951: 26. He conflates the language “of Braj and of Gwalior” as “most eloquent” or “very elegant” at *ibid.* 48. For further discussion of the term “*zabān-i gwāliyār*” see Busch 2011: 8 n. 13, 121 and McGregor 2001: 21. Amrit Rai mentions but fails to deal with this conundrum (Rai 1984: 248).

Was it the pride of a native son or is there more to this? In fact, Ārzū's statement only makes sense if we assume a cosmopolitan view of literary language, in which the boundaries of dialects as we understand them have little role to play.⁶⁵ Recent research has called into question the idea that a pure "Hindi" literature was untainted by Persian (and by extension by Muslim culture) while Urdu soaked up Persian. At the edges of the current Hindi canon of pre-colonial texts cluster works that contain so much Persian vocabulary and imagery that they made later critics uncomfortable with their defiance of easy explanation through the prism of Hindi as a Hindu language and of Braj as a literary medium for poems about Krishna.⁶⁶ Take Sāwant Singh (1699–1764), the ruler of Kishangarh and a Krishna-devotee, who wrote poetry under the name Nāgarīdās. While later Hindi critics have tried to present him as a Braj poet in the traditional (Hindu) mode, he in fact wrote a great deal of Persianized *hindī* verse, clearly in dialogue with developments in Delhi and the Deccan, and

⁶⁵ We can speculate that *hindī* regionalism functioned somewhat along the lines of the *rītis* in Sanskrit. The formal constraints of these styles, such as Vaidarbhī and Gauḍī, are carefully defined, but they apparently developed from stereotyped regional forms (Chari 1993: 137). They never lost their nominal attachment to places even though most uses of them had nothing rhetorically to do with the places with which they were associated. It is entirely possible that the spoken *hindī* of elites in Gwalior had taken on characteristics of *khaṛī bolī*, while still being imagined as more like Braj Bhāshā.

⁶⁶ It is telling that the last monograph written in either English or Hindi on the question of Persian's influence on Hindi appears to be from 1936 (Vajpeyi 1936). Fascinatingly that text refers to *Rāni ketakī kī kahānī* [The Story of Queen Ketaki], an odd literary experiment by Inshā'allah Ḳhān Inshā', as "Hindi" that is "yet unsurpassed" (Vajpeyi 1936: 101; Inshā' explains his project at the beginning of the work qtd in Shackle and Snell 1990: 89-90). The special circumstances, namely the fact that most of Inshā's literary output now falls into the category of Urdu and that he invented the style of *Rāni ketakī kī kahānī* as a literary exercise akin to writing an English work with no Latin-derived words, appear not to matter to critics grasping for another work to include in the Hindi canon. See note 68 below on a similar issue in interpretation.

these literary experiments have been side-lined.⁶⁷ It is the same for the noted patron of the arts ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Ḳhān-i Ḳhānān (1556–1627), whose vernacular poetry written under the *chāp* [pen-name] Raḥīm breaks later categories.⁶⁸ The *Satasāi* [700 Verses] of Bihārīlāl (1595–1663), a court poet at Amber, is full of Arabic and Persian loanwords.⁶⁹ A work generally taken by modern critics to be early Urdu, Mirzā Afzal’s *Bikaṭ kahānī* [A Tremendous Story, 1636], is in fact difficult to characterize or indeed to trace as an influence on later Urdu. It contains long phrases that are pure Persian but also contains earthy *hindī* expressions and is in the Indic *bārahmāsa* [lit. twelve-months] genre, which describes the different characteristics of the lover’s pining for her beloved over the twelve months of the year. (The lover here is marked as feminine in the Indian manner rather than being of ambiguous gender as is typical in Persian literature.) Shantanu Phukan has argued that the text is “a highly self-conscious literary undertaking” in contrast to the view of the influential early twentieth-century critic Mahmud Sherani, who anachronistically declares the mixed style distracting and therefore

⁶⁷ Pauwels 2012. Indeed, Pauwels has recently found ms. evidence of the direct transcreation of a Persian poem into *hindī*.

⁶⁸ On Raḥīm, see Lefèvre forthcoming. The Naval Kishore press published a large number of books under the heading “*bhākhā*” that we would consider Urdu today (Phukan 2000b: 18 n. 28).

⁶⁹ Dewhurst 1915. A good illustration of how later interventions in the Hindi tradition attempted to cleanse it of Persianate influence is to be found in Thomas Duer Broughton’s *Selections from the Popular Poetry of the Hindoos* (1814), the first printed collection of Hindi verse. Broughton’s informants were mostly Brahmin soldiers who recited poems that strike us as a mix of *khaṛī bolī* and Braj forms. Many of the poems they provided contained Persian words and Broughton tells us that he suppressed these as inauthentic, even though his upper-caste informants were unperturbed by this supposed “inauthenticity.” He apologizes for including two poems in the collection that do in fact contain Persian words that escaped his notice (Bangha 2000: 49–50).

an aesthetic failure.⁷⁰ Persian even finds a place in Braj literary criticism. Bhikhārīdās (fl. 1740) notes that some Braj moves towards Persian in an “easy Persian” [*sahaj pārsī*] style but he condemns “foreigners’ language” [*jaman bhākhā*], which is apparently over-Persianized.⁷¹ As we shall see in our discussion of *rozmarrah* below, the very same debate took place at roughly the same time in the context of what is now seen as Urdu.

Nor were poets who are today associated with Persian and Urdu uninterested in *hindī* dialects other than Persianized *khaṛī bolī*. Ārzū’s friend Muḥliṣ translated Muḥammad Jaysī’s *Padmāwat* into Persian prose under the title *Hangāmah-yi ‘ishq* [The Clamor of Love, 1739]. Fascinatingly, Muḥliṣ records that it was his Deccani servant who narrated the story to him even though its *hindī* was “an eastern dialect” (a fact to which Muḥliṣ calls attention), and Muḥliṣ himself was a Punjabi.⁷² Covering south, east and west, this simple interaction

⁷⁰ Phukan 2000a: 42. Francesca Orsini’s recent study on *bārahmāsa* observes that the people who wrote them were typically not connected with the Delhi court (Orsini 2010). Orsini’s attempt to put all *bārahmāsas*, regardless of whether they were later called “Hindi” or “Urdu” into the same frame is commendable, but even so she refers to Afzal’s work as “Urdu *bārahmāsa*.” Using that frame of reference introduces a risk of anachronism because though the grammar is largely *khaṛī bolī*, the literary conventions are far from later Urdu practice. For example, it begins with the invocation “Listen, my [female] friends!” [*suno sakhiyom*] which is common in Braj poetry but only finds a place in Urdu in the much later *rekhtī* genre, in which the poet speaks mockingly in a female voice (*Bikaṭ kahānī* 1979: 24). On the fact that the first recorded *bārahmāsa* is actually in Persian (Mas‘ūd Sa‘d Salmān’s *Māh-hā-yi fārsī* [Persian Months, 11th c.]), see Alam 2003: 145ff.

⁷¹ McGregor 2001: 28-9. McGregor argues that a trend towards Sanskritizing Braj (that is, preferring *tatsama*, or unmodified Sanskrit vocabulary, to *tadbhava*, or Sanskrit-origin words that have undergone phonetic changes) at this time foreshadows the nineteenth-century split between Hindi and Urdu.

⁷² See Phukan 2000b: esp. 67-8. Muḥammad Shakīr in the seventeenth century copied the *hindī* poem, taking care to mark all of the vowels properly, and made an interlinear Persian translation (Phukan 2000a: 36). McGregor has studied poets who wrote in both Persian and Awadhī, that is, in “eastern” *hindī* (1984: 150-4). *Tazkirah-i ḥuṣainī*

encompasses the whole of what we now call the “Hindī Belt.” The career of Mīr Ġhulām ‘Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī (d. 1785) provides the modern researcher with other surprises. Unusually for a South Asian litterateur he was a serious poet and scholar in Arabic, but for our purposes what is relevant is his *Sarw-i āzād* [Āzād’s Cypress], a Persian account of 143 Indian-born Persian poets along with a further eight who wrote in “*hindī bhāshā*” (*Sarw-i āzād* 1913: 352ff). All eight of the poets are Muslims yet the voluminous quotations show that the literary medium is closer to Braj (as the label “*hindī bhāshā*” implies) than to later Urdu.⁷³ The inclusion of the Braj tradition in a book devoted to Persian poets is significant because it implies a parallel between the literary activities of poets writing in Persian and those writing in *hindī*, even if that *hindī* is not the intentionally Persianate *reḡhtah*.

Several broad trends emerge in this complex vernacular environment. The first is the matter of the circulation of literary people and with them languages, styles, perceived functions of such styles, and literary tropes. It is suggestive that Ābrū, like Ārzū, is from Gwalior.⁷⁴ Indeed,

(1875) refers to the poet Mīr Ġhulām Nabī (who wrote under the pen-name Ġhulām and served in Šafdar Jang’s army in Awadh) as a prolific writer of *dohrās* (*hindī* couplets) and of a “*nāyikā bhed* in *reḡhtah*” (2008: 332-3). *Nāyikā bhed* is a genre of poetry usually associated with Braj and is a description of types of beloveds. For such a poem to be “in *reḡhtah*” suggests the possibility that “*reḡhtah*” was used in this late nineteenth-century text to refer to *hindī* besides *kharī bolī* or that *Nāyikā bheds* were actually written in *kharī bolī*.

⁷³ Āzād of Bilgram appears to be the only early-modern writer to consider Indian vernacular poetics in Arabic, as in his *Subḡat al-marjān* [The Coral Rosary, 1764]. His *Ġhizlān al-hind* [Gazelles of India, 1178/1764-5] is fascinating because it is a Persian-language *nāyikābheda* text, that is, a catalogue of different archetypes of beloveds that is quite common in *hindī*. (It was published in Tehran in 2003 under the erroneous title *Ġhazālān al-Hind*.)

⁷⁴ According to Gardezī (*Tazkirah-yi reḡhtah-goyān* 1995: 39).

Prince Aḥḥam Shāh, in whose army Ārzū served, was a Braj patron (Ziauddin 1935: 3). No doubt many other prominent figures in Delhi's world of letters also came to the cultural metropole from peripheral locales where a strong vernacular literary tradition existed. The Braj country itself was brought firmly into the Mughal orbit with road connections built to Agra and Delhi during the Sher Shāh Sūrī interregnum (Pauwels 2009). With current evidence it is probably impossible to show direct influence of the textual traditions of, for example, Gwalior on those of Delhi, but certainly poets of the sub-imperial courts (such as Kishangarh and Amber mentioned above) were well aware of what was happening in the capital. As we saw in Chapter One, Ārzū and other Delhi-based poets of his time spent time in the Deccan on military campaigns. Direct evidence is lacking, but the presence of so many literary elites from Delhi in the Deccan seems an obvious conduit of influence for Deccani *reḡhtah* on Delhi *reḡhtah*. Secondly, poets who had thought of themselves as composing in *hindawī* (a generic term for Indian vernacular poetry in use since before Amīr Ḳhusrau's time) began to represent themselves as *reḡhtah* poets specifically.⁷⁵ Later scholars, especially linguists, have read this teleologically as a natural evolution since the *khari bolī* upon which *reḡhtah* was based would give rise to modern Hindi and Urdu.⁷⁶ In fact, this view confuses spoken language with literary language. Since, as Allison Busch

⁷⁵ As in the entry on Nuṣratī in *Gulshan-i guftār* (1929: 6-7).

⁷⁶ For example, S. K. Chatterji, who writes: "Braj-bhakha as the direct descendent of the Śaurasēnī Prakrit, the most elegant Prakrit of the centuries immediately following Christ, became the dominant literary dialect in the Upper Ganges Valley, and the most cultivated; and the Muhammadan aristocracy of Northern India also felt its

has convincingly argued, Braj spread outside the region in which it resembles the local spoken language largely because of Mughal patronage—a counterintuitive notion to most modern-day Hindi scholars though well-supported by evidence—then when tastes changed and a new literary vehicle became available in the form of *reḡhtah* based on Deccani or Delhi *hindī*, this too could similarly have spread beyond where *kharī bolī* was commonly spoken (2011: 186-8). Thirdly, we should resist the temptation to see the distribution of vernacular literary practice as static. Over the course of as little as three years, Ārzū’s definition of *reḡhtah* shifts. While in *Tanbih al-ghāfilīn* (c. 1744) he defines it as “as poetry in the *hindī* or Deccani language agreeable to [the rules of] Persian poetry” in the slightly later *Dād-i suḡhan* (c. 1746) notes specifically that it was *formerly* written in the Deccan.⁷⁷ While it is of course entirely unlikely that the Deccan’s vernacular literary tradition died in that short period of time, the need for Ārzū to express that it was moribund is a notable shift. These movements of taste and literary influence from metropole to periphery and vice versa need to be theorized. One framework is that of “lateral” versus “vertical” standardization (Lieberman 1997: 482). In the former, metropolitan elites are influenced by provincial elites and vice versa in matters of taste and patronage, while in the

charm and came under its sway. Delhi Hindusthani had at first very little chance against Braj-bhakha... We have seen how the Hindusthani stands at the end of a chain—how it represents the latest phase in the history of a Common Language for Aryan India” (1969: 191-3).

⁷⁷ “*wa reḡhtah sh‘irī ast bah zabān-i hindī yā dakkani muwāfiq-i sh‘ir-i fārsī*” (TĠh 1981: 76).

latter influence moves from elites to the populace and vice versa. In the case of *rekhtah*, the lateral model is far better at explaining its rise than the vertical model.⁷⁸

We can proceed with a brief summary of what vernacular textuality meant in the European context, continue with a discussion of *rozmarrah* (or “everyday [language]”) in the development of both Indo-Persian and Urdu, and conclude this section with an account of Ārzū’s vernacular lexicography, which crystallizes some of these issues.

Europe and Vernacular Politics: The Vernacular as Modernity?

The triumph of a national vernacular language over a classical idiom is widely agreed to be a constituent of modernity.⁷⁹ In the West, we generally speak the same language that we use for administrative and literary writing. South Asia, however, is deeply problematic if we adopt this paradigm as universal. The interest in vernacular poetry in Delhi was not matched by a prose tradition until considerably later, and only then largely because of the demands of the colonial state rather than Indians’ preference for the vernacular over Persian.⁸⁰ In fact,

⁷⁸ Thomas Nairn writes of modernity that “The new middle-class intelligentsia had to invite the masses into history; and the invitation card had to be written in a language they understood” (qtd Anderson 1983: 77). Leaving aside the question of whether there was a “middle class” in late pre-modern India, there does not appear to be any evidence that the political engagement of the masses was a goal of developing vernacular literary practices.

⁷⁹ For example, Benedict Anderson contrasts “classical communities linked by sacred languages” with modern linguistic formations (Anderson 1983: 20). Elsewhere he argues that “the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities” (ibid 122).

⁸⁰ Indo-Persian prose writing continued late into the nineteenth century even as Indo-Persian poetry waned (Qasmi 2008: 212).

the princely state of Hyderabad, which was considered pioneering in modern Urdu-medium education in the early twentieth century, did not replace Persian with Urdu in its administration until 1884 because it was not compelled to do so earlier unlike the territories directly administered by the British (Moazzam 2012). It appears that while early-modern Europe had Babel as a model for multilingualism, in which the multiplicity of languages was divine punishment for human sin, in South Asia a complex linguistic landscape was simply taken as a given.⁸¹ This returns us to the question of whether a singular language is required for a modern nation-state to come into being.

The path to linguistically constituted nation-states in Europe is less clear-cut than we have often been led to believe. Languages were in constant contact as Latin's influence waned in the seventeenth century and various creolizations caution us against exclusively nationalist readings of language in the period (*passim* Burke 2006). (As does the existence of Belgium, whose civil society is effectively trilingual, depending on French, standard Dutch and local Flemish dialects.) The process by which a vernacular went from a private, unofficial kind of

⁸¹ Even in the West, monolingualness has only been taken for granted since around 1800 (Evans 1998: 27). Dante's distinction between innate languages [*prima locutio*, lit. primary speech] and languages whose grammatical rules had to be learned in school [*locutio secundaria*, lit. secondary speech] had stood for centuries, but was only operative from this surprisingly late date (cf Farrell 2001: 16). Schleimacher's view is typical of the period. He writes that "To one language alone does the individual belong entirely." Also Herder, who argues that, "thus every nation is a nation: it has its national culture like its language" [*Denn jedes Volk ist Volk; es hat seine nationale Bildung wie seine Sprache*] (qtd Anderson 1983: 66). Centuries before, Augustine considered the profusion of languages in the world as an unfortunate separation of people (and reminder of their rightful punishment by God), and considered the Roman empire's consolidation of (as he saw it) the civilized world under a single language, Latin, as a remedy (see O'Daly 1999: 201).

language use to a component of a literary common is not necessarily connected with the state. Rather it has to do more with control over the technology of writing, which from our vantage point appears to be crucial.⁸² The acceptance of the vernacular comes in two phases, the first being the insight that the language is writeable. According to Armando Petrucci, the second phase “is the conquest by vernacular languages of the right to ‘canonization in books,’ by which complex texts in vernacular come to be conclusively and organically written in book form by themselves (that is, without being mixed or juxtaposed with other texts in ‘noble’ written languages).”⁸³ This second phase does not appear to happen in South Asia because Persian remained a language of technical discussions into the colonial period. It tracks with the reluctance of Sanskrit-knowing intellectuals in northern India to write technical works in languages other than Sanskrit.⁸⁴ Likewise, the “age of translation” that begins in Europe in the seventeenth century and allows for more and more classical literature to be consulted in vernacular translations rather than in Latin or Greek has no counterpart in pre-colonial South Asia (Waquet 2001: 2). Until well into the colonial period, Urdu was not a language of public

⁸² This invites the thought experiment of what we might find if we could send a digital voice recorder into the past. Our pre-twentieth century archive is textual, so from our perspective a language only steps onto the stage of history when it is written down. The method of finding odd spelling and syntax in texts in order to reconstruct speech is hardly an exact science, and even then gives us only the faintest expression of the lifeworld of the past.

⁸³ Petrucci 1995: 175. Early vernacular texts were written in the guard pages at the front and back of Latin books, which is true of *hindī* written in Indo-Persian mss. as well.

⁸⁴ Pollock 2011: 24

monuments; apparently nothing like the debate in Paris over whether the text on the Arc de Triomphe should be in French or Latin occurred in Persianate South Asia.⁸⁵

The concept of a “mother tongue” is seen as universal and exclusively positive today, as read through the discourse of rights, such as the right to education in one’s mother tongue (enshrined, for example, in article 350A of the Indian Constitution). At other times in history, however, it had an emotionally neutral or even pejorative sense.⁸⁶ Lisa Mitchell’s work in the context of South India on language as an “object of emotion” shows that present-day views on the connection of language and identity are historically contingent.⁸⁷ A particular language has to be transformed from a speech pattern associated with a place—or as we have seen above, with a particular function—into an identity marker. It is problematic to assume that vernacular languages were emancipated from the dead hand of a classical language simply because they later became part of a national identity.⁸⁸ Indeed, classical languages can also themselves be identity markers, as Walter Ong argues in his classic essay describing Latin as a

⁸⁵ Fumaroli 1984: 152-3

⁸⁶ It was in French since the twelfth century “language of children women, knights and people in their secular and non-religious activities” [*langue des enfants, des femmes, des chevaliers et du peuple, sont celles des activités laïques et profanes*] (Fumaroli 1984: 139).

⁸⁷ Mitchell 2009: 15, 19ff

⁸⁸ “By 1750, the European linguistic system was very different from the medieval system, which had been divided between a living but non-classical Latin and regional dialects which were spoken rather than written” (Burke 2004: 61). Peter Burke prefers the idea that vernaculars were “discovered”—which has somewhat Nehruvian overtones (as in the *Discovery of India*)—rather than that there was a “crisis” in the classical language because the timescales in question are centuries (ibid 16).

“puberty rite” for young men (and a few young women) in Renaissance Europe (Ong 1959).

Mastery over Persian functioned in exactly the same way in South Asia as a symbol that someone was ready to take his or her place in society (although for women that social role was restricted to extremely elite women wielding power from within the *zenana*).⁸⁹ The fact that Persian or Latin were cosmopolitan, and therefore by definition not local, did not invalidate this role because these languages were marked as an integral part of a local cultural formation. Latin is “a language without a speech community” [*eine Sprache ohne Sprachgemeinschaft*] and has therefore been protean in its ability to fill local contexts, even being seen as advantageous in diplomacy because no nation has a particular claim upon it (Burke 2004: 44-6). Persian, obviously, was a language with native speakers, but it too could function locally in a place where it was not anyone’s mother tongue.⁹⁰ But surely, one could argue, *hindī*, a kind of language use whose very name implies Indianness, is more Indian than Persian. To us it may seem that way, but the evidence that Indians might have used vernacular composition to express an Indian identity is lacking for the late pre-colonial period. Of course,

⁸⁹ In 1748, the Earl of Chesterfield wrote to his son, “Classical knowledge, that is, Greek and Latin, is absolutely necessary for everybody... the word *illiterate*, in its common acceptance, means a man who is ignorant of these two languages” (Hall 2008: 318). In this formulation, the ability to read the Classics is equivalent to the act of reading itself as though there were no worthwhile books in English!

⁹⁰ Waris Kirmani overstates the case when he argues that Indians must “submit to the aesthetic judgment of Iranians” on the basis that “however rich the Persian literature of India may be as a store-house of thought and learning, Persian nevertheless remained an alien language” (1972: vii). While this certainly was the prevailing view by the nineteenth century, it was open for debate in the eighteenth.

centuries before Amīr Ḳhusrau had gleefully declared his ability to speak “*hindawī*” a part of his Indianness (though in Persian, the language of power, rather than poems written in *hindī* itself). However, such sentiments appear to be uncommon in eighteenth-century *reḳhtah* such as in Mīr’s oeuvre, where references to composing in *reḳhtah* are not connected with any identity except that of being a *reḳhtah* poet.⁹¹ This mode of vernacular composition was itself cosmopolitan, and poets made reference to their linguistic medium to showcase their universal competence as poets and not to highlight their Indianness.

The technical challenges of switching to vernacular literary composition in part recapitulate the Ancients versus Moderns debate described in the previous chapter. The cosmopolitan languages were tied to a long literary past while the vernacular languages were by comparison upstarts. Just as *tatabbuʿ* [establishing a chain of transmission] was difficult for new imagery in Persian poetry, a new literary language such as *reḳhtah*-style *hindī* did not have a stock of available *asnād* [sg. *sanad*], or what we have translated as “warrants.” The solution to this aesthetic quandary was to argue that the vernacular and the cosmopolitan follow similar rules.

⁹¹ An exception to this observation might be Mīr’s couplet “*kyā jānūm log kahte haiṁ kis ko surūr-e qalb / āyā nahīm yih lafz to hindī zabān ke bīch*” [How should I know what people mean by “joy of the heart”? / This word has not yet come into the *hindī* language] (1370, 5). In this instance the poet’s persona is claiming to not understand a Perso-Arabic phrase, which does not appear in *hindī*. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi observes that he composed a Persian verse with exactly the same conceit. In the Persian verse, the word “does not appear in my dictionary” [*nah mī-bāyand dar farhang-i mā*] (http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00garden/13c/1370/1370_05.html).

*Urdu and the Everyday*⁹²

In Ārzū's work, there is an assumption that literary practice is universal even though individual features in literary traditions may be different.⁹³ The practice of *reḵhtah*, with its mixture of Indic language and Persian poetics, recognizes this by its very existence. Ārzū's philological method formally recognizes the dividing line between the two traditions as porous, and brings the centuries-old discourse of Persian literary theory to bear on the nascent Urdu tradition.⁹⁴ Saudā, one of Ārzū's acquaintances (though not officially his student), paraphrases the advice of an unnamed friend and litterateur, whom we are probably to understand as Ārzū, in a poem:

No matter what the language, excellence lies in the quality of the theme [*khūbī-ye maẓmūn*].
Poetry does not depend on Persian alone.
To the degree that you can speak their language correctly,
You should express colorful ideas in your own language.⁹⁵

⁹² This section is adapted from a paper given at the Association of Asian Studies conference (Dudney 2012).

⁹³ See the discussion of metaphorical language in Chapter Two above. This is also the case with the theory of *tawāfuq*, which allows for Persian and Indian literature to be considered in the same frame. While *tawāfuq* between Persian and *hindī* applies only to *hindī-yi kitābī* [Sanskrit], there is a conceptual slippage between Sanskrit and the modern Indic languages. Although Ārzū states that Sanskrit is different from these modern languages, he cites words from both in explaining *tawāfuq*, and therefore we can speculate that he understood that Sanskrit was an earlier iteration of the present languages. Furthermore, the concepts of *tafrīs* and *muḥannad* (the borrowing of words into Persian and Indic languages, respectively) formalized the way in which words cross over the linguistic boundaries.

⁹⁴ Shāh Ḥātim recognizes the newness of the practice of *reḵhtah*, pointing out that Walī's *dīwān* was the first "in this art" (i.e. composing in *reḵhtah*) (Hatim 1975: 39). He ignores other literary experiments, including the far earlier *dīwān* of Muḥammad Qulī Quṭb Shāh (b.1566; r.1580-1611), the Sultan of Golconda in the Deccan.

⁹⁵ "ko'ī zabān ho, lāzim hai ḵhūbī-ye maẓmūn / zabān-e fars pah kuchh munḥaṣir saḵht to nahīm / kahām tak un kī zabān tū durust bolegā / zabān-e apnī meṃ tū bāndh ma'nī-yi rangīm" (qtd. Jalibi 1984: II, 654-5) Above translation modified

The emphasis in later scholarship has been on the supposedly nationalistic aspects of this and other similar conversations recorded for posterity: In this reading, it is a matter of starting to use “our” language (*hindī*/Urdu) rather than “theirs” (Persian) because using Persian is artificial and forced.⁹⁶ The view that Indians as non-native speakers of Persian cannot compose in it at the same level as native speakers is contradicted by the quote above and its larger context (Saudā tells us a few lines above that the teacher correcting his Persian poetry could find no mistake in it). It is also contradicted by Ārzū’s own writings, as we have seen in the previous chapter,⁹⁷ but a “crisis of confidence” in Indo-Persian has been taken as self-evident (perhaps in dialogue with linguistic nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe). Bracketing off the question of whether there was such a crisis in the early and mid-eighteenth century, let us consider the parameters for a dialogue between Persian and Urdu poetry. The expression “*khūbī-ye mazmūn*” in Saudā’s poem is in fact a term of art. *Mazmūn* corresponds to “*topos*” in Western rhetoric and so Saudā’s unnamed interlocutor is implicitly arguing that the construction of *topoi* is fundamental in poetry and that such *topoi* transcend individual

from Naim 1999: 177: “No matter what the language, excellence lies in what is said [*khūbī-i mazmūn*]. Poetry does not depend on Persian alone. You cannot always use their language correctly; you should express colorful ideas in your own language.

⁹⁶ A parallel account cited in *Āb-e ḥayāt* leaves out the crucial idea that well-deployed *mazmūn* is what matters (Azad 1907: 142).

⁹⁷ In particular we can point to *Dād-i suḵhan*’s second preface (DS: 7-9) and *Muṣmir*’s chapter “*dar bayān ānkih ḡhalaṭ az ahl-i zabān ṣādir shawad yā na-shawad*” [In the matter of whether a mistake can arise from the (usage of the) *ahl-i zabān* or not] (M 1991: 34ff).

languages.⁹⁸ Saudā's use of the expression “*khūbī-ye maẓmūn*” in an Urdu poem illustrates the point since it is a completely Persian phrase. Nor is this literary influence uni-directional (moving only from the some would say over-determined Persian tradition to the less developed Urdu tradition). Ārzū argues at length that the use of Indic words must be allowed in Persian poetry by analogy with Persian's own historical borrowing of Arabic and Turkish words and phrases.⁹⁹

Rozmarrah, which we will define more precisely below, served as a conceptual tool for mediating between Persian and *hindī*. It appears in critical writing on poetry and yet is also anchored to the world of daily experience, therefore forming a junction between the largely formal realm of Persian and the largely vernacular world of *hindī* in the eighteenth century. In modern Urdu usage, the meaning of *rozmarrah* is almost always “colloquial” or “everyday” language as opposed to formal language.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, in modern Iranian Persian, it usually refers to a daily allowance or occurrence.¹⁰¹ In Persian in the eighteenth-century and

⁹⁸ On the history of the term *maẓmūn*, see Faruqi 2004a: 852ff.

⁹⁹ See chapter 2, fn. 61 above.

¹⁰⁰ The title of Shamsur Rahman Faruqi's dictionary, *Luġhāt-i rozmarrah*, is a case in point.

¹⁰¹ Cf Hayyim's dictionary.

before, it meant both, as illustrated by *Bahār-i ‘ajam* [The Spring of Persian, 1162/1748–9], the enormous dictionary compiled by Ārzū’s friend Ṭek Chand Bahār.¹⁰² Bahār writes:

rozmarrah: This word is used in two situations: the first in the meaning of idioms and words that are well-known among the people and the other in the meaning of ration and obligation of victuals, derived from “day” [roz] and “marrah” which is an Arabic word in the meaning of a time/turn, that is, what one receives daily and that which one says [*bar zabān bu-gūzarad*] daily. Thus the word is shown to be not originally Persian.¹⁰³

The difference between Urdu and the traditional northern Indian literary dialects like Braj is that Urdu grammar is based on what later came to be known as *khaṛī bolī*, the actual spoken dialect of Delhi.¹⁰⁴ Poetry, which is what concerns us here, is obviously a linguistic domain bound by precise rules and is by definition not the prose of normal, everyday communication. And yet it has the notion of conversation built into it: *Suḵhan*, literally “speech,” is used throughout the Persian tradition as a metonym for poetry.¹⁰⁵ One does not typically “write” poetry in classical Persian but rather one “speaks” it [*sh‘ir guftan*]. Similarly, the locus of poetic appreciation (at least in South Asia) was the literary gathering, or *mushā‘irah*, an oral performance involving a

¹⁰² Rieu 1879–83: II, 502

¹⁰³ “*rozmarrah*: *in lafẓ rā dar do mauẓa‘ isti‘māl kunand: yekī bah ma‘nī-yi muḥāwarāt wa alfāẓ-i mashhūrah bain-i al-nās wa dīgar bah ma‘nī-yi rātbah wa wajh-i ma‘āsh, murakkab az ‘roz’ wa ‘marrah’ kih lafẓ-i ‘arabī ast bah ma‘nī bār, ya‘nī ānchah har roz bah yak bār barasad wa ānchah har roz bah yak bār bar zabān bu-gūzarad. pas lafẓ mustahdaṣ bāshad nah fārsī aṣl.*” (*Bahār-i ‘ajam* 2001: vol. 2, 1114). It is a concept that is far older than the eighteenth century, cf. *Madār al-afāẓil* (1592–3/1001): “*rozmarrah (f[ārsī]): ānchah bā-ū rozgār guzārānand wa nīz ‘urf ḥāl chunānkih gūyand zabān-i rozmarrah ...*” [*rozmarrah* (Persian): that which one uses daily and furthermore is known presently therefore they say ‘everyday language’ [*zabān-i rozmarrah*], ...] (1959–70: vol 2, 336).

¹⁰⁴ *Khaṛī bolī* also happens to be the basis for Modern Standard Hindi. The later history of the differentiation of Hindi and Urdu (as described, for example, in King 1994) is outside the scope of this project.

¹⁰⁵ Faruqi has helpfully quoted Bedil’s philosophical definitions of “*suḵhan*” (Faruqi 2004b: 19).

great deal of audience interaction.¹⁰⁶ Many poets had a *bayāz* [notebook] in which they recorded interesting poems from *mushāʿirahs* and selections from these oral records often circulated in parallel to or in lieu of the “publication” of poems in a poet’s own curated *dīwān* [selected works]. However, we do not know the sociolinguistic specifics of the pre-colonial *mushāʿirah*: For example, how much *hindī* was spoken at a Persian *mushāʿirah* and in what context?

The later critical consensus, as we have seen in the previous chapter, has been that Indo-Persian writers sought complexity to the exclusion of comprehensibility. Although creating complex imagery was a often-stated goal of the *tāzah-goʿī* poets, comprehensibility as measured against the *rozmarrah* was in fact also a contemporary concern. Let us first return to the three prefaces of Ārzū’s *Dād-i suḵhan*. In the third preface, Ārzū distinguishes between two kinds of poetic interpretation:¹⁰⁷ The first is the “path of the common people [who know] the language” [*ṭarīq-i ʿāmmah-yi ahl-i zabān*]. In some contexts “*ahl-i zabān*” (literally “people of the tongue”) refers to native speakers but much of the time it simply means people who use the language competently—we could think of them as the “community of language users.”¹⁰⁸ These “*ahl-i zabān*,” according to Ārzū, understand the meaning of words and the common

¹⁰⁶ See Naim 1989 and Zaidi 1989.

¹⁰⁷ DS 1974: 9ff.

¹⁰⁸ When writers wish to refer unambiguously to Iranian native speakers, as does Wārastah, they use a phrase like “*muḥāwarah-dān-i īrān*” [lit. “idiom-knowers of Iran”].

interpretations that they have heard from their elders. Ārzū writes that “both common people and experts share in this interpretation” [“*dar īn ʔarīq ‘awāmm wa ʔhawāṣṣ sharīk-and*”] but he cautions that this shallow reading is not the last word. The second kind of interpretation is that to which only true experts have access. He goes on to mock a number of so-called experts like schoolmasters or people obsessed with metaphor to the exclusion of other kinds of interpretation. Ārzū’s argument is simple: Knowing a language is a prerequisite for interpreting and composing poetry, but the real work cannot begin until someone masters poetic interpretation. Ārzū’s complaint against the *mullās* [religious educators] is telling. He writes that their comprehension of poetry is “other than that of the people of the *rozmarrah*.”¹⁰⁹ In other words, their reading of poetry is casuistry rather than a commonsense understanding of how the language is actually used. Indeed, Ārzū’s first preface begins with a slightly tautological invocation of the *rozmarrah*. He writes, “Of that which is current [*wāqī*] or not for the people of the *rozmarrah*, it is mostly that which is current” (DS 1974: 2). What does this mysterious pronouncement mean? Simply that most poetic rules follow natural speech (with the exception of metrical requirements for certain words, which Ārzū admits trip people up). In the third preface, he describes interpretation “according to the taste of the poets”

¹⁰⁹ “*ān ǧhair-i fahmīd-i ahl-i rozmarrah bāshad*” (DS 1974: 10).

[*muwāfiq-i mazāq-i shu‘arā*] and argues that it depends on comparing one’s own *rozmarrah* with that of the poet in order to find the particularities in the poet’s language (ibid 12).

A similar concern for poetry’s necessary relationship with the *rozmarrah* presents itself in Shāh Ḥātim’s preface to *Dīwānzādah*. Examining what Shāh Ḥātim says, before jumping to conclusions about his intentions, is important: He rejects “the *hindawī* which they call ‘*bhākhā*’”¹¹⁰ (in other words dialects like Braj) in favor of “the *rozmarrah* of Delhi.” More specifically, he states that he “has chosen purely the *rozmarrah* which is understood by common people and acceptable to experts” (we can note the parallel to Ārzū’s invocation of common people and experts). Thus, he is arguing not against some kind of “Hindu language” but rather in favor of the Delhi *rozmarrah*, which Braj is patently not.¹¹¹ On the other end of the cultural spectrum, he condemns poets who use Persian clumsily in their *reḡhtah*. He lists “*dar*,” “*bar*,” “*az*,” and “*ū*” as examples of Persian words that should not be used in the vernacular. The first three are prepositions and the last is the third person singular pronoun (in Persian grammar they are all known as “*ḥarf*” or what we would call an indeclinable particle). He approvingly cites an Urdu poem by his contemporary Shāh Mubārak Ābrū mocking people who use the wrong sort of Persian in their Urdu:

¹¹⁰ “*hindawī kih ān rā bhākhā goyand mauqūf kardah.*”

¹¹¹ As discussed *passim* in Chapter Two, the Braj poetic tradition represents its language as the everyday speech of the rustic Braj country, but this is undermined by its use in a transregional, cosmopolitan literary tradition.

The one whose time is spent in *reḵhtah* poetry,
 To him I say: Consider my words deep.
 If he would bring Persian verbs or particles into *reḵhtah*
 His deeds will be trifling; his *reḵhtah* verses will be questionable.

[*waqt jin kā reḵhte kī shā'irī mem ṣarf hai*
un satī kahtā hūm būjho ḥarf merā zārḥ hai
*jo kih lāwe reḵhte mem fārsī ke fa'l-o ḥarf*¹¹²
laḡhw haim-ge fa'l us ke reḵhte mem ḥarf hai.]¹¹³

Thus not only are the conventions of Braj poetry to be eschewed, but so is using Persian in a forced, artificial way. This is crucial in the self-definition of Urdu literary culture.

The importance of the invocation of the colloquial in the development of Urdu poetry has been noted before, for example by Shamur Rahman Faruqi regarding Mīr.¹¹⁴ It was a problem that concerned Mīr himself. In *Nikāt al-shu'arā*, he notes in the conclusion [*khātimah*] that:

¹¹² When Mīr enumerates the kinds of *reḵhtah* in the conclusion [*khātimah*] of *Nikāt al-shu'arā*, he notes that what he defines as the third kind of *reḵhtah*, in which Persian verbs and particles appear, is “hideous” [*sīwum ānkih ḥarf wa fa'l-i pārsī ba-kār mī-burdand wa īn qabīḥ ast*] (1979: 161). The Arabic technical use of the word “*qabīḥ*” and other terms for proper and improper expressions is explored in Marogy 2010: 53-4. In Mīr’s classification, the first two kinds of *reḵhtah* are linguistically mixed in a formal way, the first being in the style typical of works attributed to Amīr Ḳhusrau, namely with one line of the couplet in Persian and one in “*hindī*,” while the second has each language alternate at the middle of each line. The fourth we consider below. The fifth and sixth are “*ihām*” and “*andāz*.” Mīr declares himself as a poet of “*andāz*.”

¹¹³ The word-play on “*ḥarf*” is notable: In the second line, it seems to be used along the lines of the Persian idiom “*ḥarf zadan*” [lit. “to strike a word”] meaning “to speak.” In the third, context tells us that it is being used in the technical grammatical sense of an indeclinable particle. The fourth line uses an idiom defined by Platts as follows: “*ḥarf honā (-par)*, To be a stigma, stain, spot, or disgrace (upon); to be derogatory (to).” Likewise, “*fa'l*” is used in its grammatical sense as “verb” in line three but is made concrete in line four as “action.” Thanks to Frances Pritchett for her advice on translating this passage.

¹¹⁴ In *Sh'ir-e Shor Angez* (Faruqi 1990a: 57ff, with condensed translation by Frances Pritchett at http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00garden/about/txt_srf_mir_ghalib.html). Āzād admires Mīr because his poetry is supposedly similar to actual speech which makes him close to nature [*nechar*] (*Āb-e ḥayāt*

The fourth [style of *reḵhtah*] is that which they adorn with Persian constructions [*tarkībāt*]; often a construction which is conformable to the *reḵhtah* dialect appears and that is allowed, and those other than poets cannot judge it; a construction which is not familiar in *reḵhtah* [i.e. does not seem to fit] is faulty and judging [lit. “knowing”] it is likewise based on the good taste of a poet. The preference of this wretch [i.e. the author] is the same: If a Persian form is acceptable to conversation [*guftagū*] in *reḵhtah* then there is no harm.¹¹⁵

In other words, if a Persian expression is already naturalized in *reḵhtah*—that is, if it is part of the *rozmarrah* (although in this case Mīr uses the similar term *guftagū*)—then it is automatically acceptable. If not, then a poet’s judgment determines whether it is good *reḵhtah* or an unwanted intrusion of Persian. The debate over the precise amount of Persian allowed in Urdu continues into the mid-nineteenth century. Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Ḳhān (1817–1898) notes that it is for the *ahl-i zabān* to decide (Lelyveld 2011).

Theorizing the colloquial is not a peculiarity of Urdu literary culture, but was adopted from the Persian criticism of the eighteenth century. Critics of this period, including Ārzū, frequently comment on whether a Persian verse follows *rozmarrah* or not. For example, in *Dād-i suḵhan* associating “*ḥukm*” [command] with “*tuḡhrā*” [a seal] is called into question as a problem of *rozmarrah* since “*tuḡhrā*” is connected with “*farmān*” [another kind of command] and not with “*ḥukm*” (1974: 42). It is mentioned frequently in ‘Aṭīyah-i *kubrā*, his treatise on

1907: 202). This obviously fits into Āzād’s aesthetic program nicely but he must also explain Mīr’s borrowings from “artificial” Persian (ibid 203ff).

¹¹⁵ “*chaharum ānkih tarkībāt-i fārsī mī ārand, akṣar tarkībī kih munāsib-i zabān-i reḵhtah mī uftad ān jā’iz wa īn rā ḡhair shā’ir na-mī dānand wa tarkībī kih nāmānūs-i reḵhtah mī bāshad ān ma’yūb ast wa dānistan-i īn nīz mauqūf-i salīqah-yi shā’ir ast wa muḵhtar-i faqīr ham hamīn ast. agar tarkīb-i fārsī muwāfiq-i guftagū-yi reḵhtah būd muḡāyaqah na-dārad*” (1979: 161, cf. Naim 1999: 179).

“‘ilm-i bayān” [Rhetoric], and *Mauhibat-i ‘uzmā*, his treatise on “‘ilm-i ma‘ānī” [Semiotics].¹¹⁶ He invokes “*rozmarrah-dānān*” [*rozmarrah*-knowers] as judges of whether a metaphor has been properly used.¹¹⁷ Mocking the *rozmarrah* of others is fair game for satirists, such as Mīr Yaḥyā Kāshī (d. 1653), who apparently identified with Shiraz despite his name (“Kāshī” means “from Kashan,” a city near Isfahan) and wrote some vicious lines, quoted by Ārzū, about the speech of Kashan (*M* 1991: 5-6).

We should consider the apposition of “*rozmarrah*” and “*muḥāwarah*,” two terms which occupy nearly the same semantic range in this period. “*Muḥāwarah*” is usually translated “idiom” and is used more frequently than “*rozmarrah*.” Shāh Ḥātim uses the two in a telling contrast since he mentions the *rozmarrah* of Delhi that people have in their *muḥāwarah*, so for him the latter is clearly a broader category than the former. Since they are so similar in meaning, drawing sharp distinctions between the two words is difficult; but perhaps the difference between them is akin to what we would call diachronic and synchronic analysis. That is to say that *rozmarrah* is conceptually the usage that is current at one time, namely the present, and so a diachronic phenomenon, while *muḥāwarah* can refer to a set of usages over time and therefore be a synchronic phenomenon. Thus, while *muḥāwarah* is sometimes used

¹¹⁶ The glosses of the two terms should be understood as approximate. The texts were published together in 2002, edited by Cyrus Shamisa. Further context in Rahimpour 2008a.

¹¹⁷ ‘AK 2002: 53, 67, 91; M‘U 2002: 99, 125, 135, 136, 181

with a historical reference, *rozmarrah* is not used in that way in the texts examined here.¹¹⁸

Ārzū, for example, refers to the “*rozmarrah* of the Persians” [*rozmarrah-yi fārsi-yān*] in order to address the differences between current usages in Indo-Persian and Iranian Persian.¹¹⁹ This is obviously a diachronic rather than a synchronic comparison, because it is concerned with variations over space and not over time. Crucially, *rozmarrah* is not an observed speech pattern as we would expect in a modern linguistic survey—it is always useful to register the differences between the philology of this period and our present-day linguistics, lest we allow ahistorical expectations creep into our analysis. For eighteenth-century literati like Ārzū, Ḥātim and Mīr, *rozmarrah* is subject to criticism.¹²⁰ (Today we separate gathering linguistic data from judgments about proper usage, but this was not the case in eighteenth-century Persian.)

There is an intriguing possibility that *rozmarrah* became established as a concept in Persian criticism because of contact with vernacular literature, in the same way that Latin literary culture was retooled during the Renaissance partially in response to vernacular

¹¹⁸ For example in *ḲhG*, where he contrasts the *muḥāwarah* of different periods (1996: 15, 16). He does refer to “current *rozmarrah*” [*rozmarrah-yi ḥāl*] in *MʿU*, which could imply the possibility of a “non-current *rozmarrah*,” but since such a historical formulation never appears it is safe to assume that “current” is redundant in this context.

¹¹⁹ *M* 1991: 38. He also notes that the “People of the *Rozmarrah*” [*ahl-i rozmarrah*] criticize Sāʿib (d. 1676) who had by this time just gone out of living memory (ibid 79).

¹²⁰ Besides Ārzū’s thoughts on the matter, explored elsewhere, Shāh Ḥātim mentions “*ghalaṭī rozmarrah*” [erroneous *rozmarrah*]. The preface of Ārzū’s *CH* justifies its composition by noting that “although the meaning [of particular word] was famous and known, in the *rozmarrah* of the eloquent confusion has often arisen as to its correctness” [*maʿānī-yi ān aqarchah maʿrūf wa maʿlūm būd lekin dar šīḥḥat būdan-i ān az rozmarrah-yi fuṣṣḥā-yi ahl-i zabān baʿzī rā taraddud ba-ham-rasīdah*] (copied from the British Library ms. Or 2013, and compared with Or 264 and I.O. Islamic 71).

literary movements for which Latin literature had itself provided the basis. Persian and Urdu literary culture coexisted for decades and it is important for us to understand as thoroughly as possible the contours of each. Not only did Indian vernaculars absorb a great deal of vocabulary from Persian, but Persian itself had pulled in Indic words for centuries, as Ārzū takes pains to elucidate in *Muṣmir*.

*Ārzū's Vernacular Lexicography*¹²¹

Ārzū wrote his Persian lexicon of Indic words, *Nawādir al-alfāz* [Wonders of Words] sometime before 1165/1752 near the end of an illustrious career as a Persian poet and lexicographer but also as a promoter of vernacular literature.¹²² There is seemingly a contradiction in Ārzū's legacy in that he is recognized as a towering figure in *reḡhtah* by his contemporaries and yet his extant work in the vernacular consists of a few couplets that would not fill a page and whose attribution is uncertain anyway. What is the source of Ārzū's reputation in *reḡhtah*/Urdu if not a collection [*dīwān*] of poetry such as the cherished volumes left to posterity by people like Shāh Ḥātim and Mīr? The answer to the riddle is not found in how

¹²¹ Adapted from Dudney 2010b.

¹²² The evidence for the date of composition is in the definition for "*baisākh*" (the second month of the Hindu calendar that falls in April-May). See NA 1951: 96; cf. 'Abdullah 1965: 46 and Faruqi 2001: 25; *pace* Faruqi 1990b: 29, which gives "around 1743" and Faruqi 1998: 15 which gives "around 1747." However, according to the Noor Microfilm Centre's catalogue (vol 1, p 26) based upon the catalogue of the Habib Ganj collection, the manuscript of NA in that collection at Aligarh (HG 53/42) is dated 1157 AH (=1744 CE). Upon examination, it appears to the present researcher that the manuscript is actually undated. Āzād of Bilgram's *Sarw-i āzād*, completed 1166/1752-3, mentions NA (1913: 228).

Ārzū wrote Urdu poetry, but rather must be how he thought *about* Urdu. His ideas about vernacular composition were clearly passed down to other poets, who respected him in the first place because he was a great Persianist.

Nawādir al-alfāz is the first critical dictionary of Urdu/*hindī* in Persian, and thus represents an attempt to bring the tools available for Persian literary criticism to bear upon the vernacular.¹²³ As we have argued above, the definition of language in the eighteenth century in India and elsewhere was based not on structure but rather on what we would call sociolinguistic criteria: A language was defined less by a set of formal characteristics than by its users and the contexts in which they used it.¹²⁴ For that reason, people who had good literary judgment in one language could apply it to another language. Furthermore, Ārzū—like modern sociolinguists—acknowledges that languages are fundamentally porous. He recognizes that from ancient times Indic words had been entering into Persian, and that *hindī* freely borrowed Persian words and grammatical structures, a process which intensified in his own time.¹²⁵ The key difference

¹²³ Here “critical dictionary” is somewhat of a hedge because certainly there were earlier lexicons, such as a Persian dictionary composed in Gujarat that had a chapter on *hindī* words used in poetry (Faruqi 2001: 73) and a *hindī*-Persian dictionary probably composed in Rajasthan in 1764 (Truschke 2012: n. 148).

¹²⁴ The present author has tried to theorize this for Braj Bhāṣā by considering colonial-era misinterpretations of how language was used in India (Dudney 2010a).

¹²⁵ Compilers of much earlier Persian dictionaries were aware of linguistic borrowings. Numerous individual lexemes in these dictionaries make reference to a language of origin, such as one surprising entry in *Majmū‘at al-fars* [A Persian Collection, 14th c.?]: “*land bah zabān-i hindī nām-i kīr ast*” (qtd Baevskii 2007: 64). In homage to our Victorian Orientalist predecessors, let us translate this racy entry into Latin rather than English: “*‘laṇḍ’ in lingua indica nomen membri virilis est.*”

between the cosmopolitan Persian tradition and the localized *hindī* tradition was that the former had been constituted by centuries of both poetic practice and scholarship while the latter was based only on poetic practice. We see a parallel in early-modern Europe, where Latin existed alongside vernacular literatures, which had flourished for centuries but did not develop a critical tradition until they were influenced by Latin.¹²⁶ The techniques for classifying and assessing the literature (or rather the words, phrases and literary tropes) of the cosmopolitan language shaped the vernacular literature and standardized its usage. The twentieth-century critic Sayyid Abdullah refers to this process as “washing out the stain of lack of gravitas [*be-i’tibārī*]” that kept Urdu from being fit for serious writing, but such rhetoric, implying shame over Urdu’s undeveloped early state, clearly represents a modern Urdu speaker’s feelings projected onto the past (‘Abdullah 1965: 45).

Beyond individual entries, some prefaces note patterns of borrowing. For example, the Delhi Sultanate-period *Dastūr al-afāzīl* [Canons of the Learned, 1342 CE] contains, according to the preface, “Arabic, Turkish, Mongolian, Pahlavi, Persian, Afghan [Pashto], Jewish [Judeo-Persian?], Christian [Aramaic?]; the tongues of the Magians, Syrians, philosophers and Tajiks; Hebrew; words from the dialects of Rayy, Hijaz, and Transoxania, poetical idioms from every city, scholarly coinages, and popular sayings” (trans Baevskii 2007: 81). See also the preface of *Burhān-i qāṭi‘* [The Decisive Proof, 1652 CE], which has a similar list. This kind of multilingual consciousness also exists in the Arabic tradition, as in Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī’s (born 849 AH/1445 CE) *Mutawakkilī*, a lexicon of originally non-Arabic words found in the Qur’ān and arranged by presumed language of origin (Bell 1924).

¹²⁶ See, for example, Burke 2006. New Persian literature itself seems in the historical record to appear fully-formed in the tenth century but there was no well-established critical tradition in Persian until the thirteenth (Clinton 1989). Arabic had been a strong influence on Persian literature long before the Arabic-derived critical tradition began in Persian. This is a point that certainly would not have been lost on Ārzū and his contemporaries. Obviously Persian influenced vernacular literature long before people began writing critically about Urdu.

Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has written that “with his vast erudition in comparative philology, considerable wit and elegance of style, Khan-e Arzu left a model in *Nawādir-al-Alfāz* which our later lexicographers unfortunately did not follow closely” when they applied themselves to writing dictionaries of Urdu in Urdu (1990b: 29). In our discussion of the work, we should consider two related arguments. Firstly, Ārzū consistently places *rekhtah*-style *hindī* into the same linguistic and cultural frame as Persian, most explicitly through the concept of *tawāfuq* (the idea laid out in *Muṣmir* and that there is an underlying genetic relationship between Persian and Indian languages). Although he never argues for it specifically— in part, we can assume, because it would have been obvious to his readers—this means that Persian discursive practices could be applied to Urdu poetry just as Arabic practices had been applied to Persian. The rich canon of Persian literary theory could be brought to bear on the vernacular because even if vernacular criticism was underdeveloped at this point, the deep linguistic bonds between the languages mean that the theory of Persian literature was not foreign to *hindī*. Secondly, we build on the argument in Chapter Two in the context of *Muṣmir* that Ārzū was trying to establish a Delhi-centered standard for *hindī* poetry along the lines of how a standard Persian came into existence. While he is content to record non-Delhi usages, he rejects any that would not meet with approval in the capital. His approach is therefore comprehensive in its research but considerably narrower in its conclusions.

Although its methodology is original, *Nawādir al-alfāz* is a correction of an earlier lexicon, Mīr ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ of Hansi’s *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt* [Rarities of Words, late seventeenth/early eighteenth c.] with a considerable number of additional entries. Ārzū often invokes quotations from the previous work with the phrase “*dar risālah...*” [In the treatise...], and sometimes full-throatedly disagrees with ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘’s interpretations, many of which are indeed simplistic. Some manuscripts of *Nawādir al-alfāz* lack the new title and just call it *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt* or “a correction” [*taṣḥīḥ*] of *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt*.¹²⁷ As he states in his preface, Ārzū has kept all of the words that appeared in *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt*, even though he occasionally questions ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘’s reasons for including some of them (for example, “*takiyā*,” mentioned below). Although he praises ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ in the preface as “one of the successful learned men and famous scholars of heaven-resembling India” [*yakī az fuṣalā-yi kāmgār wa ‘ulamā-yi nāmdār-i hindūstān jannat-nishān*], it is clear that he finds the man’s scholarship lacking because he then uses four synonyms for “mistake” to describe the research in *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt*.

Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt is of historical interest as an old dictionary of the vernacular but it is not a particularly sophisticated work. For the editor of the published edition of *Nawādir al-alfāz*, Sayyid ‘Abdullah, the primary explanation for the difference in depth between *Ġharā’ib al-*

¹²⁷ For example, the British Library’s copy, ms. Or. 12,015, is catalogued as *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt*, and indeed even has enclosed a letter from one Zulfishan Noor who wrote on 3 Feb. 1938 that *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt* is by Ārzū (with no mention of ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘) and “is a recognised book among research workers.” He urged Sir Gerard Clauson, who later presented this copy to the British Library, not to bear the expense of publishing the work because it is widely available in manuscript. The mss. of NA at Aligarh Muslim University are catalogued similarly.

luġhāt and *Nawādir al-alfāz* is that ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ was a schoolmaster while Ārzū was a philologist writing for other scholars. Unfortunately, ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ is a historical cypher to us because services to education did not merit inclusion in poetic *tazkirahs* of the time (NA 1951: iv). He composed popular educational texts, including a *niṣāb* [a rhyming, multilingual dictionary for schoolchildren], some Persian grammar books, and at least two poetic commentaries [*sharḥ* pl. *shurūḥ*].¹²⁸ Indeed, he wrote the most popular Persian grammar of its time in India, three copies of which can be found just in the Aligarh Muslim University library alone.¹²⁹ As his name implies, he is connected with the town of Hansi in present-day Haryana (about 130 km NW of Delhi), and Ārzū occasionally hints that his usage is provincial. *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt* itself is undated and the two manuscripts consulted by the present author give dates of copying that are decades too late to give any indication of the date of the original composition.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ On ‘Abd al-Wāsi’s *Niṣāb-i sih zabān* [*Niṣāb* of Three Languages] see Abdullah 1965: 92-3. In the Aligarh Muslim University library, his commentary on the *Bustān* of Sa‘adī is ms. J Per. 301 and two copies of his commentary on *Yūsuf and Zulaikha* are mss. J Per. 240 and J Per. 302. On some important *niṣābs*, see Baevskii 2007: 101, 123-4. The most famous Indian *niṣāb*, *Ḳhālīq bārī*, is attributed to Amīr Ḳhusrau but this has generated controversy. Internal evidence suggests it was written centuries after his death by someone else named Ḳhusrau, possibly in the tenth century AH (≈sixteenth century CE) (NA 1951: ii). However, more recent scholars such as Walt Hakala have argued that there is no compelling evidence against Amīr Ḳhusrau’s being the author (Hakala 2010: 259ff).

¹²⁹ The preface says that it was based on *Farhang-i surūrī* (compiled in Isfahan in 1600 but very popular in India), *Farhang-i jahāngirī* (1608), and *Farhang-i rashidī* (1654). The copies of the grammar at Aligarh Muslim University are Ahsan 891.5521/1, Univ. 234 Per. 3 Prose, and Univ. 234; a further Persian grammar attributed to him is Univ. 296 Per. 3 Prose. It was published by Naval Kishore (*Risālah-yi ‘abdul wasī’* 1872).

¹³⁰ Rampur ms. 2543 gives 1205/1790 and ms. 2544 gives 1281/1864. The oldest ms. in existence appears to be from 1159/1746, which is still far too late (NA 1951: xliii).

Another text, the late seventeenth-century *Tuḥfat al-hind* [“A Gift from India”] by Mirzā Ḳhān, is worth mentioning in the context of *Nawādir al-alfāz*.¹³¹ It is notable because it appears to be the only Persian treatise on *hindī* grammar from the pre-colonial period.¹³² Some manuscripts, such as Bodleian Ms. Elliott 383, include an appendix [*khātimah*], which is a dictionary about the same length as the rest of the work.¹³³ The appendix is one of the oldest lexicons of an Indic language in Persian (other than *niṣābs*, which were after all not dictionaries but rather *hindī*-medium teaching aids for Arabic and Persian).¹³⁴ It is of little

¹³¹ The dating is uncertain, as is the patron and indeed the author, who is otherwise unattested. Rieu’s British Museum catalogue claims that the patron was Jahāndār Shāh and that the text was written before 1676 (1879-83: I, 62). William Irvine argues that Kukaltāsh Ḳhān, Jahāndār Shāh’s foster brother, was the patron and that the work must have been completed between 1695 and 1706 (Irvine 1898). Ziauddin’s editor’s preface and the corrigenda to the Bodleian catalogue agree that it was written for Aurangzeb’s eldest son, Prince Muḥammad A‘ẓam Shāh (Ziauddin 1935: 2-3; Beeston 1954: 102). That seems best supported by the evidence and would put the date *ante* 1707 when A‘ẓam Shāh was defeated on the battlefield and killed. The present author has viewed a ms. in the Aligarh Centre of Advanced Study in History (ms. 67 formerly Univ. Coll. 98), which clearly lists both Kukaltāsh Ḳhān and Jahāndār Shāh as dedicatees. It seems most likely that these were later insertions. Another possibility is that somehow two texts written for different patrons were merged (see Bhatia 1987: 17-21), but this is presently speculation and is rendered unlikely by the fact that the whole work appears to use the same solipsistic system for describing Indic sounds (see fn. 135 below).

¹³² Ziauddin 1935: 8. The author does not identify the part of the work dealing with phonology and grammar (the introduction) or the work as a whole with any of the traditional Arabic linguistic disciplines (Rampur ms. 2543 ff. 2a-3b). We are therefore using “grammar” as a shorthand description of the work rather than defining its genre as “*ṣarf wa naḥw*,” the usual Perso-Arabic term for “grammar.”

¹³³ A very short section of it is published with a translation and some useful context as *Grammar of the Braj Bhakha* 1935. The present researcher has consulted the two Bodleian manuscripts as well as an edition published in Tehran (*Tuḥfat* 1975). The complete appendix (a lexicon of Indic words) has been published as *Tuḥfat* 1983. Although unpublished before the twentieth century, it attracted the attention of Sir William Jones who used it extensively in “On the Musical Modes of the Hindus.” (This fact is curiously not mentioned in Zon 2006.)

¹³⁴ The *Sharḥ-i sundar singār* [Commentary on Sundar] (a lexicon of the work of the Braj poet Sundar) is several decades older. The India Office Library’s copy was compiled in the nineteenth century by Garcin de Tassy from a glossary originally dated 1686 vs/1636 CE (Ethé 1903: vol 1, 1538). It describes the unvoiced retroflex stop [ɭ] as “*tā-*

interest for us as a dictionary because although it has some three thousand entries, most of them are just a spelling followed by a single-word Persian gloss. A comparison of a number of entries suggests that none of the definitions match up with any in *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt* or *Nawādir al-alfāz*. Furthermore, its system of describing Indic sounds is unique.¹³⁵ It therefore appears not to have had any direct influence on either *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt* or *Nawādir al-alfāz*.

Perhaps a cautionary note is warranted here. Although we have been referring to *Nawādir al-alfāz* and *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt* as dictionaries, they are not dictionaries in the modern sense of being comprehensive and general-purpose lexicons. Instead their contents are selective and are meant to serve as a tool for literary composition and interpretation. The preface of *Nawādir al-alfāz* states (in relation to *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt*'s purpose) that the goal is to define “Indic words that people of the provinces say rather than the Persian, Arabic or Turkish [synonyms]”¹³⁶ (oddly Ārzū's description of *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt*'s function is more clearly articulated than ‘Abd al-Wāsi's

yi hindī” [Indian ‘t’] meaning that its transliteration system is identical to or close to Ārzū's and unlike that of *Tuḥfat al-hind*.

¹³⁵ *Tuḥfat al-hind*'s transliteration scheme is an awkward admixture of Arabic terminology for degrees of “heaviness.” It is described at Ziauddin 1935: 11-2. The terminology used in *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt* and *NA*, as well as Ārzū's other works, is both simpler and more accurate. A fuller account of Indo-Persian schemes for representing Indic sounds is given in Chapter Two.

¹³⁶ “*luġhāt-i hindī kih fārsī yā ‘arabī yā turkī-yi ān zabān zad ahl-i diyār kamtar būd*” (*NA* 1951: 3). Neither *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt* nor *NA* appears in the most comprehensive list of Persian dictionaries compiled in South Asia (Naqvi 1962: 333ff).

own vague explanation).¹³⁷ Both *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt* and *Nawādir al-alfāẓ* spell out Arabic and Persian synonyms, implying that their purpose is as much about helping the reader build his Persian and Arabic vocabulary as defining Indic words, and *Nawādir al-alfāẓ* frequently quotes Arabic and Persian dictionaries, including Ārzū's own *Sīraj al-luġhāt*. 'Abd al-Wāsi' only rarely quotes dictionaries.¹³⁸ Indeed, many of Ārzū's corrections have to do with 'Abd al-Wāsi's Perso-Arabic synonyms rather than with any doubt about the Indic word being defined. For example, Ārzū rejects 'Abd al-Wāsi's inclusion of *takiyā* [pillow], arguing correctly that it is itself an Arabic word (and therefore out of place in a dictionary of Indic words), and then gives the *hindī* synonym, *geṇḍwā*.¹³⁹ Although numerous Indic concepts are described in *Nawādir al-alfāẓ* (such as the Hindu months), it is not primarily a dictionary of Indian cultural practices. For example, the word *Diwālī* (the Hindu festival) is carefully defined in *Muṣmir* but does not appear in *Nawādir al-alfāẓ* itself, as it certainly would have if Ārzū had thought of the work as a lexicon of Indian traditions (M 1991: 174).

¹³⁷ *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt*'s preface is excerpted in NA 1951: iv. The present researcher has compared it to Rampur mss. 2543 and 2544. Walter Hakala graciously provided his photographs.

¹³⁸ For example, for "*rāʾitā*" he cites a variant from *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* (NA 1951: 260). As far as the present researcher was able to establish, he has only used that dictionary, which is also frequently cited by Ārzū in *M*.

¹³⁹ NA 1951: 149-50. Platts and the *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary* (McGregor 1993) both give this word with dental 'd' rather than retroflex 'ḍ' as Ārzū has. Another example is the entry for "*tikkā*" which Ārzū notes is just a misspelling of Arabic and Persian "*tikkah*" [small piece, as in a meat dish] (ibid. 150). For "*ṭhag*" [robber], Ārzū corrects 'Abd al-Wāsi's gloss "*mushtag*" to "*mushtang*" [robber] (ibid. 164).

Besides adding entries and correcting ‘Abd al-Wāsi’¹⁴⁰’s Arabic and Persian, Ārzū has made other fundamental improvements. Since *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt*’s entries are grouped into chapters by first letter but are randomly arranged within each chapter, it is difficult to find words. Ārzū himself notes this shortcoming in the preface to *Nawādir al-alfāz*, and has organized *Nawādir al-alfāz* according to the more usable system of chapter by first letter and subchapter by the second letter. Secondly, Ārzū incorporates a great many learned sources and highlights ‘Abd al-Wāsi’¹⁴⁰’s lack of research in matters of practical knowledge, such as zoology or botany—or more precisely, how words for animals and plants had been used in literature.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, with the possibilities opened up by the concept of *tawāfuq*, *Nawādir al-alfāz* is able to make much more sophisticated observations about language than *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt*. By acknowledging that Persian and Sanskrit are related, Ārzū can discuss the origins of words and trace their meanings through history.

The published edition (NA 1951), compiled by Sayyid Abdullah, is unfortunately not satisfactory for the purpose of determining exactly what Ārzū added to the original work. The problem is that it contains a symbol “[=]” indicating, according to an editor’s note, that a

¹⁴⁰ For example, ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ tries to identify the *papīhā* [a kind of cuckoo], which “is a small, sweet-voice bird” [*murġhī ast kūchak wa khwush āwāz*], with the *shukhish* bird even though the *papīhā* itself is not found in Persia [*dar wilāyat maḥl-i naẓar ast*] (NA 1951: 105). The problem, as Ārzū notes, is that there are many species of “small, sweet-voiced” birds that can be analogised to the *papīhā*. Ārzū also throws in a learned reference to the tenth-century CE poet Rūdakī’s use of *shukhish*. He concludes that the *papīhā* is actually a *ṣaʿwa* [finch]. See also the entry on “*totā*” [a kind of parrot], which includes a discourse on which birds are represented in poetry as eating sugar (NA 1951: 156; cf. SL f. 201a on “*totī*” noting that the *hindī* word is “*totaḥ*” [sic]).

particular entry in *Nawādir al-alfāz* incorporates ‘Abd al-Wāsi’s full definition. But when one

consults a manuscript of *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt*, it becomes clear that a number of the entries

marked “[=]” either do not exist in the earlier work or are in fact completely different.

Compare the entry in *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt* and *Nawādir al-alfāz* for “*ajwā’in*,” which is marked with

“[=]” in the printed edition. *Ġharā’ib al-luġhāt* has the following:

It is a seed that is mixed into bread and baked during the cold period and is useful for ending flatulence. In Persian: Aniseed.¹⁴¹

And now Ārzū’s definition:

The name of the well-known seed, aniseed—both *nānḵwāh* and *zinnyān* (spelled “*zi-nn-yā-n*”)—and this word is actually cognate [*mushtarak*] in Persian and *hindī* although in Persian it is “*jiwānī*” and “*jiwā’in*” with the same meaning. On reflection, it is no secret that the source is the *hindī* word because people have written it in the meaning “life-making.”¹⁴²

It is clear from an entry like this that the focus is entirely different in the two works. Ārzū

gives two synonyms—it is a “well-known seed” so there is no reason to define it any more

carefully than that or indeed to mention indigestion—but then he makes a linguistic argument

that the Persian word is originally Indic because it is related to the Indic word for life,

¹⁴¹ “*tuḵhmī bāshad kih ānrā bar rū’ī nān reḵhtah pazand dar dafa’-i burūdat wa nafḵh ba-ġhāyat mufīd ast b.f. [=bah fārsī] nān-ḵwāh*” (Rampur ms. 2543: f. 12). Steingass defines it as follows, “*nān-ḵwāh*, نان خواه, Aniseed (in some places it seems to mean caraway-seed), which frequently is baked in bread on account of its flavour and stomachic qualities; bishop’s weed; one who begs his bread.”

¹⁴² “*nām-i dānah-yi mashhūr nānḵwāh wa zinnyān ba-kasrah zā’ī ma’jmaḥ wa tashdīd nūn wa taḥtānī ba-ālif-i kashīdah wa nūn wa īn lafẓ nīz mushtarak ast dar fārsī wa hindī balkih dar fārsī ‘jiwānī’ wa ‘jiwā’in’ badīn ma’nī āmadah bar muta’ammil poshīdah nīst kih aṣl lafẓ-i hindī ast chirākah bah ma’nī-yi zindah kunandah niwishtah-and*” (10).

“*jīwan*.”¹⁴³ This sort of reclamation of an Arabic or Persian word as Indic appears across scores of entries, such as on *pān* [a kind of leaf chewed in India] both of whose “Persian” synonyms, namely *tanbūl* and *tānbūl*, are originally, in fact Indic [“*har do lafẓ dar aṣl hindī ast*”] (1951: 104). Furthermore, references to *tawāfuq* frequently appear and they are often accompanied by a statement to the effect of “as I have noted in *Sirāj al-luġhāt*.”¹⁴⁴ Ārzū’s project in *Nawādir al-alfāẓ* is therefore fundamentally linked to the project in his Persian lexicographical works. One such example, a lexicographical tour-de-force, is “*tan sukh*” (1951: 153). Ārzū traces phonetic and semantic variations through *hindī*, Arabic and Persian. He makes reference to the fact that “dictionaries note” [*dar kutub-i luġhāt marqūm ast*] that in both *hindī* and Persian “*tan*” means “body” and “*sukh*” means “happy,” but that it can also mean a kind of fine robe from Bengal.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ In fact, it seems more likely (as Platts notes) that it is related to Sanskrit “*yawānī*” which refers to a similar plant. Just as in European studies of etymology at this time, Ārzū mostly depends on his intuition to match the forms of words and is working with only of a small set of sound changes compared to the full panoply now available to historical linguists. That his intuition is frequently right by modern standards is a testament to his intellect and erudition.

¹⁴⁴ See, for example, the entry on “*kes*” [i.e. *kes*, hair] which he connects by *tawāfuq* with the Persian *gesū* [lock of hair] (NA 1951: 358).

¹⁴⁵ This requires us to speculate as to which dictionaries he means in relation to *hindī*. Presumably he is talking about the kind of literary manuals available in Braj Bhāṣā or Sanskrit, such as “the grammar books of the Hindus” [*kutub-i nahw wa ṣarf-i hinduyān*] (*Muṣmir* 1991: 173). It does not appear, however, that he mentions any of these by title. Allison Busch has noted that in Abū’l Faẓl’s chapter on Indian literature [*sāhitya*], he instructs his interested readers to consult “works on this subject” implying that there was a corpus of reference materials in Persian or perhaps in Braj itself (Busch 2010: 284). Nonetheless, Ārzū might simply be referring to Persian dictionaries, since, as mentioned in n. 125 above, these do contain stray references to Indic words.

The best example of Ārzū's attention to language at its most basic level is the entry for “ast,” which does not appear in *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt* and for which there is absolutely no reason to provide a definition except to make a case about language:

“Ast” is connected with “ast” [i.e. “is”] as proven by the Persian “nāst” [i.e. variant of “is not”] with ‘n’ as the first [letter] like “nāstik”¹⁴⁶ meaning “atheist” and “denier of God” in *hindī* because of linguistic concordance [*tawāfuq-i lisānain*], and “hast” [i.e. emphatic “is”] in Persian is a variant of “ast” because the ‘a’ in both languages has changed into ‘h’.¹⁴⁷

While entries like “ast” point to a philosophical project of describing the nature of language, Ārzū is also obsessed with observed details. He has an astonishingly precise entry on *chatrī*, which ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ has defined both as a trellis [*baram*] for growing vegetables and a particular kind of bird perch, a meaning which, according to Ārzū, it never has in *hindī* [*“dar hindī in rā chatrī na-gūyand”*] (1951: 198). He goes on to define its construction precisely as a kind of wooden frame made of small pieces of wood lashed together. It does not matter whether you put pigeons or vegetables on it, but the key is the way in which it is constructed. And, he helpfully adds, if you seat birds of prey on the perch, then it is called “*patwāz*.” Similar erudition is on display in his discussion of *chapātī* [flat-bread], which he turns from a common foodstuff into a historical concept.

¹⁴⁶ This same Sanskrit-derived word is also adduced as evidence in *Muṣmir* (1991: 213). Significantly the dictionary *Burhān-i qāṭi* incorrectly defines it as a particular person, while Ārzū correctly identifies it as a philosophy.

¹⁴⁷ “*ast rābt-i kalām ‘ast’ dar aṣbāt chunānkah dar fārsī ‘nāst’ ba-nūn muqābil ān lihāzā nāstik ba-ma‘nī-yi nāfi wa munkir-i khudā ast dar hindī pas az tawāfuq-i lisānain bāshad wa ‘hast’ dar fārsī mubaddal-i ‘ast’ bāshad chirākih alif ba-har do zabān mubaddal bah hā shawad*” (NA 1951: 23).

[As defined] in the treatise [i.e. *Ġharāʾib al-luġhāt*]: “thin bread cooked on a pan with the hand.” Originally “*chapātī*” was a Persian word; *chapāt* in Persian is a slap and since it is cooked by smacking with the palm, they call thin cakes *chapātī*. However, in credible books “*chapātī*” means unleavened bread that is cooked with “*chapāt*” or spread hands. Some say the ‘*alif*’ [i.e. the long ‘*ā*’] fulfills a metrical requirement in poetry but it is originally *chapātī* [i.e. with the long ‘*ā*’ already in the word instead of added to fill out the meter in a poem]; most likely when they refer to thin cakes in this sense [i.e. cooked with spread hands], these are not *chapātī* in the familiar meaning.¹⁴⁸

Another such example is *lāṭh*, which Ārzū defines in the general meaning of a wooden or stone pestle in *hindī* but further notes that in Delhi it refers specifically to the stone columns on two buildings constructed by the fourteenth-century ruler Firoz Shāh.¹⁴⁹ As in the example of *lāṭh*, careful observation often reveals a stark contrast between a broad, common [*ām*] meaning and a specific [*khāṣ*] meaning. The gap presents an obstacle for either understanding the *hindī* word or providing an accurate Persian gloss for it (cf. editor’s remarks NA 1951: vii). In the entry for “*ḍanḍ*” [fine, penalty], for example, Ārzū constructs a historical argument demonstrating that ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ has chosen an overly specific kind of fine in Persian to translate “*ḍanḍ*,” which is a more general concept of punishment (ibid 253).

Ārzū relies on two different kinds of data, written sources and personal observations.

The works he cites suggest he was very well read both in lexicography and other subjects, and more importantly that he considers these texts able to shed light on Indic concepts. He uses

¹⁴⁸ NA 1951: 194. Thanks to Prashant Keshavmurthy for his exegesis on the humble *chapātī*.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ had incorrectly defined it as a structural beam. The word in fact refers to the two Ashokan pillars brought by Firoz Shāh to Delhi from Meerut and Topra (Haryana). The author thanks Zirwat Chowdhury for clarifying the reference. The text says: “A huge and long stone which had been mounted on two of the buildings of Feroz Shāh in Delhi they call ‘*lāṭh*’” [*saṅg-i kalānī darāzī rā kah bar do ‘imārat az ‘imārāt-i sulṭān feroz shāhī dar dihlī naṣb kardah būdand ān rā lāṭh khwānand*] (ibid 388).

Persian dictionaries (primarily his own *Sirāj al-lughāt*, but with reference to others like *Burhān-i qāṭiʿ*, *Farhang-i jahāngīrī*, and *Farhang-i surūrī*), “credible books” [*kutub-i muʿtabarah*], and some important Arabic lexicons.¹⁵⁰ He also refers to technical works like Imām Damīrī’s *Ḥayāt al-ḥaiwān* [Animal Life, 773/1371-2] (ibid 156).¹⁵¹ Sometimes he quotes Persian poets, like Rūdakī or Saʿdī (e.g. ibid 106, 199). Other entries, especially ones where Ārzū’s objection hinges on ʿAbd al-Wāsi’s usage in *hindī*, depend on personal observation. For example, ʿAbd al-Wāsi gives “*chanīl*” as a headword and Ārzū sputters “no one knows where this word comes from! We who are among the people of India and who are in the Royal Court [i.e., Delhi] have never heard [it]!”¹⁵² Often he cites himself as a source. For example, in the entry on *chatrī*, mentioned above, he writes, “I have not heard” [*na-shinīdah-am*] the word used in a particular meaning.

¹⁵⁰ The phrase “credible books” appears, for example, in the fascinating entry on *chaudharī* (NA 1951: 217). The Arabic dictionaries include *al-Qāmūs* [The Ocean, fourteenth-fifteenth c. CE], *Muntaḥab al-lughāt* [Selection of Words, 1046/1636], and *Kanz al-lughāt* [Treasure of Words, ninth c. CE] (see Rieu 1879-83: vol 2, 503 & 510-1). All three dictionaries are cited together in, of all things, the entry on *panīrwālā* [cheese-monger] (NA 1951: 121-2).

¹⁵¹ This particular text, written in Arabic by Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damīrī (d. 1405), was translated into Persian by Shaiḫ Mubārak (the father of Faiḏī and Abū’l Faḏl). See Hadi 1995: 362, death date corrected from *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

¹⁵² “*malʿūm nīst kih lughat-i kujā ast; mā mardum kih az ahl-i hind-īm wa dar urdū-yi muʿallā mī bāshīm na-shinīdah-īm*” (NA 1951: 214). Likewise, “*rajwārā*” is defined by ʿAbd al-Wāsi as a brothel, which Ārzū notes is a meaning used in Delhi (“*rajwārā badīn maʿnī iṣṭilāh-i shāhjahānābād ast balkih ahl-i urdū-st*”) even though the original meaning is a king’s [*rājah*’s] territory (ibid 261). Ārzū opines that there is probably a connection between prostitution and the personal needs of the soldiers in *rājahs*’ armies.

There are a number of entries in which Ārzū directly criticises ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ for his Haryana dialect.¹⁵³ One withering example appears for “*gupchup*.” Ārzū writes,

But what is known as “*gupchup*” to the eloquent has the meaning of a delicate sweet, eating which one is struck dumb; in the meaning given [by ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘], it is perhaps the usage of the compiler’s locale [*waṭan*].¹⁵⁴

The usages appearing in standard texts, such as Persian dictionaries, and the knowledge of people in the court, including Ārzū himself, necessarily trump the definitions offered by ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘. This superiority of the metropole can be fruitfully connected to the discussion of *faṣāḥat* [linguistic purity] in *Muṣmir*, namely that members of the courtly elite refine a language by pruning local usages. The refined language, although originally the language of a place, becomes a translocal literary standard. Furthermore, given that Ārzū conceives of Persian as being originally anchored to the royal court [*urdū-yi mu‘allā*] but then available in a standard form across the Persianate world (an argument we have developed in Chapter Two), perhaps Urdu, namely the perceived vernacular literary practices of the royal court, would have had the same kind of portability.

Ārzū’s lexicographical method, which should be counted as a breakthrough in Indo-Persian intellectual history, fused a sophisticated historical understanding of language and literature with keen cultural observations. It is important to remember that Ārzū was not a modern

¹⁵³ The editor gives references for several such entries (ibid ix).

¹⁵⁴ “*lekin ānchih gupchup mashhūr-i fuṣḥā-st bah ma‘nī-yi shīrīnī ast nāzuk kih ba-khḥurdan-i ān āwāz-i dahan bar nayāyad, bah ma‘nī kih āwardah shāyad musta‘mal-i waṭan-i muṣannif bāshad*” (ibid 363).

anthropologist content to record usages as they appear in society, but rather was making an intervention in the language—one that intermixed things as they were with things as he thought they should be. The process of language standardization is inevitably about exercising power, because a standard is arbitrarily defined by those with the power to define a standard. Of course, by “power” in the pre-modern context we refer both to the instrumental exercise of it like chancellery directives on proper usage—which is familiar in modern Language Planning theory—and more importantly to the prestige that causes one’s usage to be imitative—as Ārzū argues, poets are constantly creating *sanad* for later generations. It would be anachronistic for us to criticize Ārzū for being an elitist (in the sense of narrowing the criteria for writing good Urdu and limiting it to a small group of litterateurs) because, of course, much intellectual history is the study of the inner lives of the literate elite of a society (cf LaCapra 1985: 79). But it remains to trace his influence up to the present day through dictionaries and other critical works. The usage in *Nawādir al-alfāz* also needs to be compared to modern Urdu, a project whose scope far exceeds our present aims. It is difficult to assess the correctness of Ārzū’s definitions because the language had changed greatly before John T. Platts compiled the now-standard Urdu-English dictionary in 1884. When one of Ārzū’s definitions seems a little too pedantic, what can we do? For example, *dādā* is defined by ‘Abd al-Wāsi’ as “paternal grandfather,” the meaning that it has in modern Hindi/Urdu, but Ārzū corrects that to “maternal and paternal grandfather” [*jadd-i*

mādarī wa pidarī] on the basis of the dictionaries *al-Qāmūs* (Arabic) and *Burhān-i qāti‘* (Persian) (NA 1951: 232). Was Ārzū’s meaning current in contemporary usage or had he fallen prey to a malaise common among lexicographers? The German Classicist Christian Lobeck (1781–1860) pens an apology for this apparently universal shortcoming among dictionary-makers: “Who among us does not have his own Utopia? And where can we rest from the crush of everyday concerns but in the ethereal land where Etymology reigns?”¹⁵⁵

Conclusion: Revisiting the Question of the “Unprivileged Power” of Indo-Persian

We know how the story ends: By the mid-twentieth century, Persian had retreated into the madrasa and a few university departments, while Hindi and Urdu have become national languages in India and Pakistan. But was it a failure on the part of Indo-Persian that led to the rise of Urdu? There is little evidence that could be presented here or in the previous chapter that Ārzū and his circle did not feel the equals of Iranians in matters of Persian style, and this was probably the dominant view well into the mid-eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century, of course, this situation had changed. The Delhi College Persian professor Imām Baḡhsh Ṣaḥbā’ī (1802–57) declares in *Qaul-i faīṣal* [The Definitive Assertion], the last major work to engage with the conflict between Ārzū and Ḥazīn, that since Indians are not native speakers, everything elegant in Persian necessarily comes from Iran (qtd. Shamisa 2002: 41). Faruqi has

¹⁵⁵ “*quisnam nostrum non suam Utopiam habet? aut ubi tandem a turba quotidianarum rerum requiescere possumus nisi in illa aetherea regione ubi Etymologia dominatur?*” (qtd Allen 1948: 60)

identified a pervasive value structure in which certain urbane Indians in the nineteenth century privileged Persian written by Iranians who had never come to India over Persian written by Iranians who had come to India. They barely tolerated Persian written by Indians, but even that was better than vernacular writing (Faruqi 1998). Such a hierarchy was not in place during Urdu's formative period in the latter half of Ārzū's life, and Indo-Persian was not under any threat recognized by Ārzū and his circle, from either Iran or from the vernacular. The nineteenth century then is where we must look for forceful declarations of the utility and moral good of the vernacular as opposed to Persian. By then the question is tied up with colonialism and nationalism in a way that it could never have been in Ārzū's time.

The central issue, to which we have returned again and again in this chapter, is the protean nature of *hindī/hindawī/reḡhtah*/Hindi/Urdu. If we consider the relationship of the vernacular and Persian as that of an innate language versus a learned language (as in Dante's formulation of "*prima locutio*" versus "*locutio secundaria*") then this framework is complicated by the fact that *reḡhtah* was not an "innate" language as such. Rather it was a consciously taught literary style of an innate language, which was not necessarily the native tongue of all of its practitioners. *Khari bolī* had spread well beyond Delhi by the eighteenth century, but it was the spark of recognition that it could be a literary language defined in a particular way that allowed it to become a literary language associated with the prestige of the imperial court.

That this happened in the milieu of the master-poets of the cosmopolitan language is in line with what we know of Europe (where the process took several centuries longer), and is not a cause for alarm over the “artificiality” of the vernacular. Most languages undergo some sort of language planning, which is to say a deliberate intervention in a language’s development. This chapter has narrowly focused on a mid-eighteenth-century moment, insisting that we not make conclusions about linguistic identity for which there is not contemporary evidence. Recognizing Urdu as a language available for all uses was a late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century development in which *reḡhtah* practice was conflated with the Persianized *khaṛī bolī* of everyday life in Delhi. Consolidating poetic norms and raising a literary style to new prestige actuated a network of literate *khaṛī bolī* users across South Asia who now could identify as users of the same language rather than merely practioners of the same literary style. Ārzū’s insight that the vernacular could work like Persian and his influence over the literary community in Delhi were crucial, but he did not set out to banish Persian from India or even necessarily to access this network. It was later generations who mobilized around language identities, simultaneously distancing Persian from Indian experience (by buying into the idea that Persian is the cultural patrimony of Iranians), and raising Urdu and later Hindi to the level of national languages.

Conclusion

Indic Language before Nation, Census, and Print

In the course of examining Ārzū's career, this dissertation has argued for the historical contingency of a number of concepts that often seem universal from our position on the arc of world history. The underpinnings of eighteenth-century Indo-Persian philology—that is, Ārzū's society's assumptions about the nature of language and how best to analyze it—are emphatically not the same as those of modern linguistics or even lay people's experience of language in the twenty-first century. The conception of nation that can be implicated in the fracturing of the Persian cosmopolis had not yet been articulated in the early eighteenth century. Indeed, the now frequently invoked idea that it was national pride that caused Indians to throw off the yoke of “foreign” Persian in the eighteenth century sounds suspiciously like the anti-colonial nationalism of a much later era. The twin distortions of colonialism and modernity have made it exceptionally difficult for us to look into the pre-colonial past except as filtered through their universalizing tendencies. The logical place to end this discussion is to theorize the historical particularities of language itself in northern India on the eve of colonialism.

What was the economy of language in northern India before colonial interventions changed the equation? Firstly, our conceptual vocabulary for defining patterns of language use

(“language” versus “dialect,” “native-speaker” versus “non-native speaker,” “national” versus “regional,” and so on) is not at all up for the task for capturing how language was used and categorized in pre-colonial society. Furthermore, a universal problem in sociolinguistics, the ineluctable gap between how the language user perceives his or her communication and how others judge it, is exacerbated by the colonial source material subsequently used to describe language in South Asia. The Linguistic Survey of India (1894–1928)¹ and previous smaller-scale linguistic survey projects gave the illusion of solving this problem by removing the user’s subjectivity: Thenceforth, the user’s perception would not matter because the grammar and vocabulary of his/her speech would be defined by an outside observer’s matching it to a pre-defined dialect. These speech patterns, defined as they were by formal characteristics external to the lifeworld of the speakers, did not, of course, correspond with how anyone actually understood his or her language. People do not mobilize around others’ perception of their language unless they themselves internalize that perception. Ironically, it is the other great colonial linguistic data-gathering operation, the Census, which proves that the Linguistic Survey was not, in fact, a solution. The identification of people’s mother tongue in the census shifted wildly as different names were put to the language in question. People who were recorded as “Hindustani”-speaking in one census were speaking “Hindi” in the next, and so on.

¹ On its complexity, see Majeed 2011.

The very process of census-taking forced people across the Subcontinent to engage with a modern, European sense of how language works: a single mother tongue that had to be identified with a name. Previously, no one would ever have been asked what he or she called the language used in the home or in the bazaar. Furthermore, the Census did not bother with building a picture of people's other linguistic habits, e.g. knowledge of Persian or Sanskrit, or the ability to have a conversation with the people in the next district in those people's own dialect. Because the colonial sources have these inherent limitations, and there was no wide-scale study of Indian language use before the colonial period (and specifically before the late nineteenth century, when the Linguistic Survey and Census were first carried out across the Subcontinent), we must do our best with circumstantial evidence to construct a model for how language worked in pre-colonial society.

The Language Economy

The paradox of the pre-colonial Indian eco-system of language as viewed from the modern perspective can be described as follows: Most language varieties² were not formally defined (with a grammar, a lexicon, etc.) before the colonial period, but particular varieties were more specifically associated with particular social situations. Today in the West we are used to using

² "Variety" is a neutral term in sociolinguistics that avoids the problem of defining a particular kind of language use as a language or a dialect or something else. One definition is "a linguistic system used by a certain group of speakers or in certain social contexts" (Swann et al. 2004).

a single standard variety, generally the national language, when we, for example, speak to our family, write a document at work, interact with a government service, or compose poetry. In modern India, the situation is somewhat different since the society remains considerably more multilingual. However, a key difference between modern and pre-modern India is that today there are norms for Standard Hindi and English as well as standardized forms of regional languages such as Bengali and Punjabi. These languages have been developed, largely within the previous century, to function in many different registers (just as standardized languages in the West aim to fill all social functions). Previously the only standardized varieties were literary and bureaucratic languages, whose functional range was limited. In general, we can assume, this availability of unstandardized varieties created a situation in which the boundaries of language were more fluid than we understand them to be today. Indeed, the concept of heteroglossia, Mikhail Bakhtin's term for the multiple voices contained within the unitary language of the novel, applies equally well to the actual conditions (as far as we can reconstruct them) of a pre-modern linguistic environment (Bakhtin 2002: 259ff, esp. 273 and 278). While this might appear to suggest that pre-modern language was a cacophony, people in the environment would have understood its protocols through life-long exposure.

We will explore three theoretical claims here. Firstly, multilingualism did not strike individuals as unusual, because different varieties performed different social functions and

one's mother tongue had no special status in society. Secondly, the characteristics that defined the functions of a particular variety are not the ones we expect. Lastly, the mechanisms for defining language in this society focused on particular usage (for example, composing poetry) rather than attempting to produce a universally applicable language akin to the national languages of today. Thus, literary language and the language of the everyday—although they are intertwined in the lifeworld of literary people—need to be considered separately. A related issue that we must consider is how influence moves through a hierarchy of language varieties. We will avoid the well-trodden ground of how Hindi and Urdu came to be standardized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries so as to offer a general theory of what came before that process (described in King 1994 and elsewhere).

Multilingualism and the Individual

Multilingualism has become an oddity in Western European society, and our received ideas about language and identity are based on an assumption of monolingualism. More complex societal situations (for example, diglossia) are understood as degrees of divergence from the monolingual baseline. This is a problematic presupposition because multilingualism is the norm across much of the world today, and indeed was taken for granted in the multi-ethnic

empires of Europe's past.³ The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500–56) is apocryphally reputed to have spoken Spanish to God, Italian to his courtiers, French to his ladies, and German to his horse.⁴ The linguistic scorched-earth politics of England and France—which depended upon extirpating Welsh and Occitan respectively—should almost certainly be seen as historically contingent rather than an inevitable step in building a modern nation-state.⁵ Since English and French were languages of empire, they have become widely used second languages around the world, a fact which is interesting in light of the kind of internal oppression required to make them singular and universal in their home countries, a pattern of violence that would be echoed in external colonialism later.

The imposition of a national language has not historically been the only possible way for linguistic cohesion to exist within a large polity. China, for example, has a single writing system used nearly universally, but several different spoken languages that employ this script but are not, when spoken, mutually intelligible. Indian vernacular languages, although broadly

³ Evans 1998: 18, 29. Obvious exceptions in Western Europe where multilingualism exists on a national scale are Belgium and Switzerland, but both are special cases. As far as sub-national multilingualism, the Catalan movement in Spain and the resources devoted to Welsh in Britain are both, especially in the latter case, attempts to reverse the historical tide. The fate of Irish is similar even though it is constitutionally the national language of the Republic of Ireland.

⁴ Burke 2004: 28. In other versions of the story the distribution of languages is different.

⁵ The 1536 Welsh Act of Union was uncompromising: It declares that “no persone or personnes that use the Welsshe speche or language shall have or enjoy any maner office or fees within the Realme of Englonde, Wales or the other kinges dominions” (qtd Evans 1998: 21).

defined as distinct from one another even in pre-modern times (for example, in a list Amīr Khusrau provides in *Nuh sipihr* [The Nine Heavens], which we consider in detail below), nonetheless share a core predicated on Sanskrit and Sanskritic culture. (This includes the Dravidian languages of South India, which are in their own language family and not genetically related to Sanskrit or the New Indo-Aryan languages of northern India like Hindi and Punjabi.) Linguists refer to South Asian languages as a Sprachbund (lit. “federation of languages”) in recognition of this unity. Far stranger in the context of expectations based on European experience, the New Indo-Aryan languages formed an unbroken cline stretching from Afghanistan to Assam (with the exception of Sinhalese on the island now known as Sri Lanka separated by water from the other languages). This is to say that language changes gradually across that vast swath of territory. If one traveled east to west or west to east from one end of northern India to the other stopping in every village along the way, the speech of each new village might be slightly different from that of the previous village but would almost never differ from it except in the most minute way (Masica 1991: 25). Because one would have to travel far to encounter a difficult-to-understand language, the view from the village level would have assumed not difference but similarity to be the defining feature of people’s language. Indo-Persian scholarship’s tendency to define all Indic language use as “*zabān-i hindī*” or “*hindawī*” is perhaps not the result of imprecision (or rather ignorance of the

complexity of India's linguistic eco-system) but rather a reflection of a contemporary perception of language in India.⁶

Of course, anyone who was literate or traveled came in contact with different language varieties. Without standardized language, people were not concerned with speaking “properly” but being understood, an experience that the language cline (described above) made possible since the view at ground level, except in the case of people who traveled long distances, was that the people over there speak differently from us but we understand them and they us. The discomfort at the core of translation studies, namely that there is an inherent loss of meaning in any translation, was not operative: it had not yet been articulated. One surprising commonality between Indo-Persian and European writers in the eighteenth century is the metaphor of a change of clothes for translation.⁷ A costume change is considerably easier than the soul-searching that accompanies translation today. Furthermore, the idea of diglossia, either as it was originally defined by Charles A. Ferguson or in its extended form as employed by Joshua Fishman and others, cannot apply here

⁶ Pace Talbot 1995: 712. Thus in *Ā'in-i akbarī*, Abū'l Faḡl writes “Throughout the wide extent of Hindustan, many are the dialects that are spoken, and the diversity of those that do not exclude a common interintelligibility are innumerable” (trans. *Ā'in-i akbarī* 1947: 133). This is precisely what we have argued, and it squares with the aphorism that the language in India changes over a short distance. Though common today as “*Kos kos pah badale pānī, chār kos pah wāḡī*” [Every *kos* (≈ 3 km), the water changes, and every four *kos* (≈ 12 km) the speech] and related forms, the present researcher has been unable to determine how old the expression is.

⁷ Both Ārzū and Jones use the image. See, for example, in the preface to Jones's *Persian Grammar* on Persian works in “European dress” and M 1991: 167 on Persian garb [*libās*] for Arabic words.

because it presupposes linguistically measurable boundaries between languages.⁸ In everyday life, people must have accepted considerable variation in usage, essentially being what we would call multilingual without having recourse to such a concept. The vast majority of people would never have dealt directly with a standardized language and so would have had no ideological difficulty adopting terms from languages like Persian.⁹ Of course, even within the lifeworld of the relatively monolingual village, there was sometimes a need to access religious or literary or bureaucratic language, and in these cases someone like a Brahmin or a Persian-literate village official could mediate (no doubt for a payment). The exclusionary capacity of standardized languages should not be underestimated, but by the same token neither should the potential for language-facilitating transactions be ignored. Literacy, which was comparatively rare, had a strong correlation with power, as we see in the following sections. Certain languages were not written, and this would not have struck anyone as odd: Letters were often composed in Persian not because the spoken language of the sending party would not have been understood by the recipient but because

⁸ In Ferguson's original conception, the high-prestige variety (H) in a society was a standardized language and the low-prestige variety (L) an unstandardized dialect of it (Ferguson 1959). That obviously cannot apply here because there was no standard, all-purpose *hindī* to be H. Joshua Fishman's extension to the theory, namely that H and L need not be related varieties, still cannot capture the complexity of early-modern northern India where *kharī bolī*-based *rekhtah* exhibited features of both H and L. The kind of profound multilingualism present in that society has not been adequately theorized in the framework of diglossia (one attempt is Mackey 1986).

⁹ Anecdotally, rural speech in India since Independence has tended to have more Perso-Arabic vocabulary than urban speech because "proper" (which is to say, Sanskritized) Hindi education was not as widely available.

the spoken language was not as a matter of course written down.¹⁰ Thus having someone draw up a document in Persian does not have the same implication as having a translation done today. Likewise, poetry was composed in translocal varieties like Braj not necessarily for any communicative reason but because that was seen as the variety proper to poetry of a certain sort.

Relevant and Irrelevant Linguistic Distinctions for Precolonial South Asia

We will discuss the mechanisms for defining language available to Ārzū's society in the next section, but before that we should consider which distinctions between varieties might be useful from the perspective of historical inquiry. For simplicity's sake, we can take a structuralist approach and posit a set of linguistic binaries, within which there is inevitably considerable overlap: The key distinction must be between local versus trans-local varieties. The latter are what we have been calling cosmopolitan languages, which are empathically not the same as "national" languages (even if national languages are often developed to facilitate trans-local communication within the nation-state). Another crucial distinction is between "literarized" and "non-literarized" varieties, that is between varieties seen as suitable vehicles for literature and not. Then there are commonly written versus non-written varieties, as well as varieties connected with religious practice and those not. We could continue drawing ever

¹⁰ This is in stark contrast this to the attempts today to give every language in the world, no matter how rare and localized, a written form.

more subtle gradations, such as whether a variety is deemed suitable for facilitating commercial transactions or not. We rapidly reach a point at which there is simply no evidence to allow us to judge one way or another.¹¹

The local and the translocal map onto the categories vernacular and classical/cosmopolitan, but the fit is problematic because there are translocal vernaculars (e.g. Braj) and a possibility, albeit one exercised only under exceptional historical circumstances, of identifying a classical language with its place of origin. Of particular interest is what Pollock has called “the dialectic between cosmopolitan and vernacular that creates them both” (Pollock 2000: 616). Cosmopolitan and vernacular are not bounded categories but rather sets of characteristics in our reading. Firstly, whether we think of a literature as cosmopolitan rather than classical or vice versa creates a subtle difference in framing. A cosmopolitan language will inevitably have a classical literature, because in order to become cosmopolitan it needs to exist long enough to spread and needs to have some kind of standard to support that spread without being transmuted out of recognition. On the other hand the medium of classical literature generally must be a cosmopolitan language. “Classical” puts an emphasis on history and tradition while “cosmopolitan” emphasizes the contemporary circulation of people and ideas

¹¹ Sociolinguistic domains, which are what this thought experiment is attempting to construct, are defined on the basis of “painstaking analysis and summarization of patently congruent situations” (Fishman 1971: 51). The pre-modern past gives us extremely little data to work from.

(and, for that matter, written materials), and both of these together create the hegemonic power of a translocal language. As we argued at length in Chapter Four, the boundaries of a language both in an aesthetic or geographical sense were considerably fuzzier before the modern period: Persian, like Sanskrit, appears never to have articulated its political boundaries. (These are in contrast to Latin, which had the term *Latinitas* to conceptualize the boundaries of the territory Rome had Latinized.) Indeed, only from its development as a national language in Iran in the late eighteenth century was Persianate culture really associated with bounded place.¹² Otherwise, there are various regional usages of Persian which for Ārzū are not appropriate as literary language. In other words, the cosmopolitan language can have non-cosmopolitan variants of itself. The mutual constitution of cosmopolitan and vernacular are on display in the fact that one can very nearly write a high-register Bengali sentence in Sanskrit and a high-register Urdu sentence in Persian.¹³ Pollock's observation that literary language is deliberately crafted rather than randomly created is important in this context (2000: 591). The existence of cosmopolitan languages did not in any way prohibit vernacular language from becoming literary but in fact was the catalyst for that

¹² The *Shāhnāmah*'s mytho-poetic invocations of Iran (as “Ājam” or “Iran”) are not territorial, but rather portray civilization struggling against the non-civilized across a topography of both real and imaginary places. The inscription of the real locations mentioned in the poem onto the Iranian nation-state in the nineteenth century has parallels with the Romantic nationalism of early nineteenth-century Europe.

¹³ For the Bengali example, see Kaviraj 2003: 512

transformation. We again return to the observation that non-literary language in this period served certain circumscribed functions (which could be expanded by developing a literature) rather than being an important bearer of identity: The amplification of the vernacular, that is the process of vernacularization, was a question of changing domains in which the vernacular variety was seen as properly used.

Apparently no ethnic feeling was constructed out of non-literarized language in India before the nineteenth century, but literary communities were important even if communities of speakers were not. If a Punjabi went to Awadh then his non-literarized spoken language would not be understood, but if he were (say) a Sufi who composed in Persian (or even *hindi*) then he could find himself a place in a Sufi community and eventually pick up the local spoken variety. The role of “the cosmopolitan vernacular” is important because various vernaculars that became trans-regional built networks of language users. The argument was advanced in the previous chapter that *reḳhtah*-style *hindī* formed a large and important network whose parts assembled themselves into a coherent, self-aware whole in the eighteenth century. A cosmopolitan vernacular that can remain a language of power for long enough eventually becomes capable of the functions of the cosmopolitan classical language. A cosmopolitan vernacular gains prestige by having similar characteristics to an established cosmopolitan variety. For *reḳhtah*-style *hindī*, a milestone was when it began to be frequently written down in

the same script as Persian and Arabic. The explosion of releases of *reḵhtah* poets' collected works came towards the end of Ārzū's life and afterwards, but Persian remained the language of administration and serious (non-poetic) thought until much later: In the eighteenth-century context and specifically in the context of Ārzū, we are discussing vernacularization in poetry and not in other domains.

Two other literarized languages in South Asia, namely Turkish and Arabic, complicate the situation and have, unsurprisingly, not been studied properly. Central Asian Turkish was at times widely spoken among the elite of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, and while a Chinggisid (that is, a Central Asian Mongol) identity was often expressed, it never appears to have extended to language.¹⁴ Famously, the Mughals quickly lost their grasp of their ancestral Turkish: Although Bābur wrote his *Bāburnāmah* in Turkish, by his grandson Akbar's time it had to be translated into Persian (by the remarkable 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ḳhān-i Ḳhānān) so that people could understand it (see *passim* Lefèvre forthcoming). Arabic in South Asia appears to be connected almost exclusively with Islam,¹⁵ but perhaps mastery of Arabic was seen as necessary for mastery of Persian. This has not been systematically studied, but certainly Ārzū's

¹⁴ See, for example, Kumar 2007: 195ff. Indians apparently learned Turkish to work for the Turkish-speaking Central Asian nobles of the Delhi Sultanate.

¹⁵ Qutbuddin 2007. A notable exception was Āzād of Bilgram (discussed in the previous chapter), who used Arabic as a critical language.

Hindu friends Bahār and Muḥliṣ had facility in a style of Persian that was essentially Arabic.¹⁶

They used what might appear as unambiguously Islamic phrases and concepts, but for them these must simply have been part of the conventions of Persian discourse and not necessarily religious statements. The modern distinction between secular and religious is impossible in such cases.

Although various distinctions such as these make little intrinsic sense to us, thinking through these possibilities is crucial so that we can consider the ways in which language actually was defined in the period in question.

The Social Mechanisms for Defining Language

Who decided what constituted good language? In Ārzū's conception, we see that the standard was courtly and he, like apparently every other writer concerned with defining linguistic norms at this time, was discussing literary language rather than the language of everyday life. Another brief mention of linguistic habits, this time in the text *Tuḥfat al-hind*, considers Sanskrit, Prakrit and “*bhāshā*” in their literary functions.¹⁷ The author notes that *bhāshā* “is the language of the world in which we live” (and indeed refers to it as especially pertaining to the language of the

¹⁶ Ārzū refers to his young friend Bāl Mukund Shuhūd, a Kayasth, who “although he has not gained that much knowledge of Arabic sciences” [*bā ān kih chandān kasb-i ‘ulūm-i ‘arabiyah na-kardah*], has made a study of Euclid [*Iqlīdas*]. (MN 2005: 96). What is notable is that Ārzū implies that a Hindu from a long line of administrators should know Arabic.

¹⁷ *Tuḥfat al-hind* is discussed in more detail in the previous chapter. The section under discussion here is *Grammar of the Braj Bhakha* 1935: 34-5.

Braj country), but he is not interested in drawing any further distinctions and states that his reason for compiling the grammar was because poetry is written in the language. Likewise, when non-literary language comes into Ārzū's work, it is almost without exception as a prop for a discussion of literary language. The cosmopolitan and by extension the cosmopolitan vernacular are much better represented in accounts of language than is the vernacular of the masses.

For the mass vernacular (that is low-prestige, non-literary, and non-written language patterns), linguistic standards were maintained orally and members of the speech community would naturally imitate speakers with higher prestige. This is a familiar pattern in non-literate societies, and would have been the same for such varieties. Even though writing was available as a technology, it was not applied to these varieties, which of course constituted the vast majority of language used in India. There is no reason to think that anyone was concerned with setting a standard, but of course, there is a problem with the evidence: Imprints of everyday speech form an infinitesimal fraction of the documents from this time. When people using such language interacted in formal contexts that were recorded in writing, their language would be translated, usually without even marking the act of translation, into the language of written records. For the purposes of intellectual history, we are concerned with vernacular language only as it was used by the elite.

The Indo-Persian tradition names various Indic regional varieties but deals with them in the most general terms. Amīr Ḳhusrau famously did so in the thirteenth century in his *maṣnawī Nuh sipihr* [The Nine Heavens]. His account is not in any sense a linguistic survey and makes no claims as far as the mutual intelligibility of the varieties mentioned. Indeed, the phrasing strongly implies that the list of thirteen regional varieties is not meant to be exhaustive. The argument is straightforward: In a section of the poem which is a panegyric on India, Ḳhusrau presents the case for India's greatness in the context of language: Persian, Turkish, and even Arabic, are simply not as pleasant as the diverse languages of India. He provides a list of these and concludes that:

All these [language varieties] are *hindawī*, which from ancient times
has been commonly used for every kind of speech [*sukhan*].¹⁸

Thus all the varieties mentioned are to be considered “*hindawī*,” which we can translate as “Indic.” According to Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, the term does not in Ḳhusrau's usage carry any analytical force or refer to a specific kind of language use. Faruqi (and our translation above) interprets “*sukhan*” generally, meaning that these languages are used for every kind of speech. *Sukhan* can, of course, mean poetry specifically, and perhaps Ḳhusrau does mean that because he is arguing that the best varieties for “delighting the heart” [*dil ba-ṭarab*

¹⁸ “*in hamah hindawī-st kih az aiyām-i kuhan / āmah ba-kār ast ba-har gūnah sukhan*” The passages under discussion here are at *Nuh sipihr* 1950: 179-80. See Faruqi 2001: 65ff. on the problems of identifying the languages mentioned; cf. Narang 1987: 29, who makes several interpretative mistakes that Faruqi corrects. Further context available in Nath and Gwaliari 1981. Alyssa Gabbay deals with Ḳhusrau's legitimation of Indic language but does not apparently consider the problem of what *hindawī* means—she appears to take it straightforwardly as the name of a defined language (2010: esp. 20ff).

kardan] (i.e., probably through poetry or music) are Indic. He specifies that each of the Indic varieties is proper to a particular place, fitting our definition of local (or non-cosmopolitan vernacular) varieties. Although there is no consideration of writing, the section ends with a mention of Sanskrit:

But there is a different language from these spoken ones
 This is the chosen one for all the Brahmins.
 Sanskrit is its name from ancient times;
 The masses know nothing of its hidden power.
 The Brahmin knows it, but not even every Brahmin
 For that matter knows the [full] extent of the discourse.¹⁹

This is obviously another rhetorical proof of India's greatness (that is, that no other place in the world can boast of having mystical Brahmins with a secret language) rather than a careful analysis of language ideology, but it does illustrate the hegemony of Sanskrit and its transcendence of the languages of place. A list similar to ẖhusrau's is the Emperor Bābur's account of the varieties spoken around Kabul.²⁰ Again, this is an inventory offered without comment on how the languages identified relate to one another, but Bābur concludes that Kabul is probably the most linguistically diverse province then under his control. At the court of his grandson Akbar, a list of languages was prepared by Abū'l Faḡl to be included in *Ā'in-i*

¹⁹ “*lek zabānī-st digar k-az suḡhanān / ān-ast guzīn nazd-i hamah barhamanān / sanskrit nām zi ‘ahd-i kuhan-ash / ‘āmah nadārad ḡhabar az kann-i mikan-ash / barhaman-ash dānad wa har barhamanī / nīz nadānad ḡhadd zānsān suḡhanī*”

²⁰ “Eleven or twelve dialects are spoken in Kabul province: Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Mongolian, Hindi, Afghani, Pashai, Parachi, Gibari, Baraki, and Lamghani. It is not known whether there are so many different peoples and languages in any other province” (trans Thackston 1993: II, 270).

akbarī. While Abū'l Faḡl notes that there are “innumerable” varieties in India that are mutually intelligible (see note 6 above), he provides a list of places whose varieties would not be understood by speakers of the other varieties. We would understand the languages as (*khārī bolī*) Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Telugu, Marathi, Kannada, Sindhi, Pashto, Baloch, and Kashmiri, but he does not provide these varieties' names but rather states the places where each variety is typical.²¹ For his purposes, language varieties are akin to geographical features rather than markers of communities or nations.

This encapsulates the key distinction between our noticing that there is a mutually intelligible language variety spread across most of northern India, and Indo-Persian writers of the eighteenth century's noticing the same thing. In his seminal *A House Divided*, Amrit Rai tries to split the difference but ends up implying a linguistic consciousness that is too much like modern Hindi. To avoid this, the writer has made the slightly grating choice to use the term “*hindī*” throughout the present study. In the Persian context, differences within *hindī* were only recognized to the degree they needed to be in a given context. For example, Bengali would be called “*zabān-i hindī-yi bangālah*” (lit. “the Indian tongue of Bengal”). Literary languages tend to be written languages, and so are more rule-governed. We have alluded to

²¹ That is (in the same order): Delhi, Bengal, Multan, Marwar, Gujarat, Telengana, “Marhatta,” Carnatic, Sindh, “Afghan” of Shāl (the region between Sindh, Kabul and Qandahar), Balochistan, and Kashmir. Notably absent from this list is Tamil, but the far South would not have been included in “Hindustan.”

how Persian has been defined by poet and scholars in each of the previous chapters. There were even grammars of Persian available in Sanskrit such as the late sixteenth-century *Pārasīprakāsha* [Illuminator of Persian] attributed to Kṛṣṇadāsa. We should remember these are not descriptive grammars, but rather present an idealized view of the language.²²

How does influence move in these languages, and does this movement of vocabulary/structure reflect the social hierarchy of language varieties themselves? Power was not exercised through a government's defining language for the populace or the nation (unlike, say, the Académie Française and other comparatively recently established institutions). It was instead a matter of determining particular forms within the language of power.²³ Obviously the practices of the imperial chancellery set standards for Persian documentary conventions, but it would have had absolutely no interest in regulating language use outside that narrow compass. Poetry itself was a science [*ilm*], as Khusrau shows through complex exegetical reasoning (see Faruqi 2001: 91). While poets like Ārzū were deeply concerned with the systematization of Persian poetry, they did not seriously consider other purposes to which the language might be

²² An interesting parallel is the relationship in Sanskrit thought between *shāstra* [theory] and *prayoga* [practical activity], which, as Sheldon Pollock has shown, was viewed in traditional India in precisely the opposite way from the usual Western understanding (Pollock 1985: 511). To summarize a complex argument: In the West, the formulation is that practice is followed by a descriptive theory while in Sanskrit thought practice is an adumbration of the *shāstra* even if the practitioner is unaware of it. While Perso-Arabic philological thought generally follows the Aristotelean (that is, the Western) pattern of description following practice, it also has prescriptive tendencies. More study is warranted of the meeting between the philological traditions of Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic.

²³ For example, the Sanskrit *prashasti* (Pollock 2006: 134ff).

put. It is hard to know whether people outside bureaucratic and poetic circles appreciated these niceties—or if that would even matter. The difficulty is that Indo-Persian was undoubtedly a link language often used for relatively informal communication, but the documentary evidence generally records only its more formal usage. We can surmise that this informal usage was how Persian came to influence so many vernacular languages in India. In a society where certain language varieties were associated with the elite, the language varieties of the non-elite tended to be undifferentiated, while elite language use filtered down into the consciousness of upwardly mobile low-level elites and non-elites. Building a majoritarian politics upon language is difficult, perhaps impossible, without the sort of enumeration that a census provides and the corresponding realization of strength in numbers. The colonial-era consciousness of how many speakers of a language there were brought the conception of northern Indian language full circle: The Persian *zabān-i hindī* was replaced by a similar totalizing construction of Indic language, namely standard Hindi. Unlike the Indo-Persian concept, standard Hindi would be based on drawing sharp distinctions between proper and improper usage, and in particular employing (and in many cases artificially introducing) Sanskritic vocabulary as the glue that would connect the *khari bolī* core of the language with the other languages of India. The older notion of Indic language could not function for nationalist politics, but its subsequent redefinition could. Today the project of Modern Standard Hindi as a national language is

complicated by the vast number of people who nominally speak it as a mother tongue but whose actual usage is at variance with the standard language.²⁴ *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

General Conclusion

This dissertation has excavated the knowledge system of Indo-Persian literary language by tracing Ārzū's contributions to it. We have seen, contrary to the insistence of some later scholars and ideologues who have represented the eighteenth century as the night of cultural stagnation supposedly dispelled by the dawn of European rationality or Indian/Pakistani nationalism, that Indo-Persian philological scholarship of the time was vibrant and indeed reached its pinnacle in this period. In the frame of the study of literature, Ārzū and his circle posed fundamental questions about the nature of language. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising—as it was to Ārzū himself—that given the cultural complexity of Islamicate northern India, it was not until the eighteenth century that a systematic enquiry into the relationship between languages took place. The present study has tried to situate Ārzū in an early-modern context, which is to say that his methodology maintained a tremendous respect for tradition while stretching that tradition's fundamental assumptions to the breaking point and sometimes beyond. We have argued consistently that many of the received ideas about the late pre-

²⁴ This has sparked a number of regional movements in India agitating for what have been thought of as dialects of Hindi, such as Maithili, to be officially declared independent languages. Maithili was added to the Eighth Schedule of the constitution in 2003 and thus is now recognized as a language in its own right.

colonial period would have been simply unthinkable to the people whose milieu we are trying to explain. The study has limited its sources to critical texts—intentionally so—and while unable to provide conclusive answers to concerns outside the scope of those texts, it has demonstrated the inadequacy of a simple identification of political history (e.g. the Mughals' loss of central control) with intellectual history (a supposed precipitous decline in the quality of Indo-Persian which required Urdu to be developed as an alternative). Traumatic events like Nādir Shāh's sack of Delhi are mentioned in passing in the critical discourse, but are not of particular importance in the texts. This does not mean, however, that Indo-Persian literature and its critical apparatus were necessarily an attempt to escape from the sad reality of life, as critics have sometimes argued since.

Let us conclude by recalling the key points raised in this study. We have considered Ārzū's personal circumstances and his network of friends, patrons, and students (as well as rival networks) in Chapter One. We considered his magnum opus, *Muṣmir*, and its comprehensive explication of his theory of language in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three, we considered his critical works and argued at length that the early eighteenth-century literary debates in Delhi were more about perceptions of stylistics than about Indian or Iranian ethnicity. In Chapter Four and the Conclusion, we considered the ecology of languages in late pre-colonial northern India,

and presented the evidence that Ārzū's theory of language influenced Delhi's vernacular literary community, which came to prominence during his lifetime on a template he proposed.

Ārzū was well-positioned to practice Indo-Persian philology. His standing in Delhi's literary circles came from his lineage (which included descent from important literary Sufis on both sides), his family's tradition of imperial military service, and his influential friends. It was Ānand Rām Muḵhliṣ who facilitated his entrée into Delhi high society. His close ties with Muḵhliṣ and Bahār, both Hindus, prove that there was no confessional difficulty in Indo-Persian. It was, to use an anachronistic term, a language with a strong secular tradition (albeit often with an Islamicate idiom). Ārzū did not lack for patrons, and the intellectual networks that had sustained Persianate intellectual culture in India were still in place during his lifetime despite considerable political turmoil and although they would begin to fray soon afterwards. Both Muḵhliṣ and Bahār wrote important dictionaries, and both their projects are connected with Ārzū (in the case of the former because Ārzū posthumously edited the manuscript and in the latter because Bahār used Ārzū's *Sirāj al-luġhāt* in preparing his own dictionary). Ārzū was a mentor to a number of poets including many of the disciples of the late Bedil, who during his lifetime had arguably been the doyen of Persian poets in Delhi. Ārzū successfully established himself as a guardian of Bedil's legacy as well as tapping into the other important literary network in Delhi, that of the late Sarḵhwush. He makes this positioning clear in his *tazkirah*

Majma' al-naḥā'is. The arrival of Shaiḫ Ḥazīn formalized an opposition to Ārzū since Ḥazīn, like Munīr a generation before, was a defender of the classical style against recent poetic developments. It was perhaps this personal conflict that caused Ārzū to stop writing relatively staid commentaries on classical texts and begin theorizing a defense of contemporary poetics, in some instances making his case vehemently.

Ārzū's theory of language recognizes the deep ties between languages, the prerogative of urban elites to set literary standards, the need to balance tradition with the consensus of living poets in order to account for changing tastes, and the principle that even a native speaker makes mistakes and so is not automatically an authority on literary language. Ārzū's expansive treatise on the theory of language (*Muṣmir*) is premised on an Arabic work (al-Suyūṭī's *al-Muzhir*) that he revisited essentially so that he could scrape out whatever was irrelevant to his purposes and build within the hollowed-out categories of the Arabic original a theory appropriate to the complex interaction of languages in his own lifeworld. This, the present author has argued, is a typically early-modern approach to knowledge production. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Persian cosmopolis had begun to fragment; but as we have noted, Ārzū did not see the nascent changes in the way that many later scholars have understood them. Instead, he proposed a flattening of the Persian cosmopolis, in which eloquent literary language is recognized as the same across its vast expanse even though

obviously local language and dialect will be different. His thinking was undeniably historical and he theorized how words have moved from one language to another. Notably, he adapted al-Suyūṭī's notion of *tawāfuq al-lisānain* [correspondence between languages] to explain the primordial connection between Persian and “*hindī-yi kitābī*” [i.e. Sanskrit], which (by his own statement) is the first time this was addressed in the Persianate tradition. From our perspective, it is very much like the fundamental principle of (Western) historical linguistics, but Ārzū does not define it precisely enough to be sure. Although *Muṣmir* was not a widely-known text—a safe assumption we can make based on its copying history—the ideas it presents such as *tawāfuq* and its discussion of metaphorical language are present throughout Ārzū's earlier texts. In an excursus, the argument was presented that recent claims that Jones perhaps appropriated Ārzū's application of *tawāfuq* in the course of developing his own theories on linguistic development do not rest on a particularly sound foundation. Instead of fitting Jones into the tradition of Orientalist appropriation of non-Western ideas, we should instead consider the remarkable parallel between Indo-Persian and Western philology that allowed them to come to similar conclusions about how languages develop over time.

In Chapter Three, the present researcher observed that our terms for explaining what was happening in the world of Persian letters in the late pre-colonial period are premised on an anachronistic periodization of Persian literary history and on similarly anachronistic

nationalist assumptions. Ārzū's main concern was not with Iranian versus Indo-Persian usages, but rather with the controversy over the relatively new (and for him not satisfactorily theorized) literary style of *tāzah-go'ī* that needed to be fit into the tradition. Rather than looking for evidence of cultural decline, we are better served by comparing this state of affairs to the roughly contemporary Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns in Europe, which is remembered fondly in contrast to the supposed cultural dead-end of the "Indian Style" in Persian. In the eighteenth-century Indo-Persian context, the Ancients [*mutaqaddimīn*] are the poets through Jāmī (fifteenth c.) and the Moderns [*muta'akhḫirīn*] are the poets who came after, who are especially identified with the "*tāzah-go'ī*" style. As in Indo-Persian, the difficulty faced in Europe was assessing the relative value of tradition compared with new knowledge that was being produced. Ārzū's insight was that contemporary poets are always making literary precedent [*sanad*], just as earlier poets made the precedent that must be followed by contemporary poets. He observes that even native speakers make mistakes (he presents this by analogy with Indian poets composing in Indic languages), and so proper training in literary production rather than simply knowing a language is crucial in his view. He argues against the criticism of the likes of Ḥazīn and Munīr by out-researching them: He shows in many instances that a perceived fault of the Moderns to which they object was actually a form acceptable to the Ancients as proved by a more careful reading of precedent-establishing works. Being

attuned to the linguistic variation across the Persian cosmopolis allows him to propose a consolidation of the tradition that incorporates contemporary poetics into the longer history of literary Persian.

The development of Urdu vernacular literature in the eighteenth century should not be read primarily as an attempt to replace Persian. Language use is not a zero-sum game, and the great Persianists of the day were the same people promulgating a standard for Urdu. Ārzū's formulation of literary Persian as a dialect that historically emanated from the royal court is exactly parallel to the definition of Urdu as the literarized vernacular of the royal court in Delhi. Poets working in the *reḡhtah* style apparently received advice from Ārzū on aspects of this standardization. The idea that the motivation for developing Urdu was that it was Indians' natural language as opposed to "foreign" Persian rests on poor evidence. *Reḡhtah* was developed as another avenue for poetic expression without necessarily providing any scope for a national identity, as many later literary histories claim. Indeed, people's relationship to language was entirely different in the era before the nation-state became the base unit of polity. Some possible configurations of the pre-modern relationship between people and language were explored in the conclusion.

To better understand Indo-Persian philology, future research can extend the current project in three ways: We should consider lexicography and its social ramifications, pursue

further information about the minor figures in the present account, and lastly engage with the colonial state's absorption of the knowledge systems of Indo-Persian. As we briefly considered in the context of *Farhang-i jahāngīrī* in Chapter Two, lexicography was often an imperial project rather than a minor scholarly enterprise. Thus it is a good reflection of the political imaginary of the time. Furthermore, from the perspective of the modern researcher, dictionaries are an excellent resource for conceptual history [*Begriffsgeschichte*]. We can trace the meaning of a concept precisely over time since we know when, where, and generally under what circumstances the lexicons were composed. It would be especially fruitful to study the socio-political enterprise that has been called "Mughal tolerance" in the context of dictionaries. The second extension of the present project would be to consider the figures at the margins of our account. One such person is 'Abd al-Wāsi' of Hansi, who made an appearance in Chapter Four as the author of *Ġharā'ib al-lughāt*, the lexicon upon which Ārzū's *Nawādir al-alfāz* is based. While Ārzū dismisses 'Abd al-Wāsi's authority in matters of literary taste as provincial—although of course maintaining the requisite formulae of politeness—the fact is that scores of manuscripts of 'Abd al-Wāsi's Persian grammar and other works are extant.²⁵ In spite of Ārzū's disapproval of him and his not appearing in *tazkirahs* of poets, 'Abd al-Wāsi' is worthy of further study because his pedagogy, judging from the sheer number of manuscripts, was

²⁵ His grammar was lithographed as *Risālah-yi 'abd al-wāsi'* ['Abd al-Wāsi's Treatise] by Nawal Kishore (Kanpur 1872 and reprints).

influential. The networks of influence from city to town [*qaṣbah*] to village are poorly understood for Persian, and town elites like ‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ might hold the key to a deeper knowledge of Persian’s place outside the metropole. Lastly, the time has come for a thorough account of the colonial state’s absorption of Persian knowledge systems from the Battle of Plassey (1757) to the end of Company rule (1858). Studies like *Empire and Information* (Bayly 1996) and more recently *Information and the Public Sphere: Persian Newsletters from Mughal Delhi* (Pernau and Jaffery 2009) have shown the dependence of the colonial state on pre-colonial systems of intelligence gathering.²⁶ There has not, however, been a study of how literary and pedagogical knowledge systems (including philology) were pulled into the British ambit. The present author contends that there was, to borrow a phrase from Eugène Ionesco, “*indigestion intellectuelle*” [intellectual indigestion] on the part of colonial officials: They were dependent on Persian but could never be comfortable with the fundamental literariness of Persian discourse. Rather than dismissing this out of hand as an Orientalist failure of understanding, we should trace the colonial engagement with Persian texts over the course of the colonial enterprise.²⁷

The tension between Indo-Persian discourse as it was and as the British would have preferred it to be was only released by replacing Persian with English. Even in the context of that well-

²⁶ Similarly, Carl Ernst and others have begun to study how the fact that the British encountered Indo-Persian accounts of Indic religious practices before they had access to Sanskrit texts affected the colonial understanding of Hinduism.

²⁷ A sliver of the broad engagement that is needed is, for example, Powell 2011.

known transition in 1837, the Persian texts produced or copied around that time have received scant attention (they were on the losing side of the argument, as it were). The question is worth framing broadly: As indigenous Indo-Persian discourses were colonized, what was omitted, transmuted or added?

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For abbreviations of Ārzū's major works used here, see p. viii.

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Appendix

More on Ancients and Moderns in Early-Modern European Thought

A brief account of the contours of the Ancients and Moderns debate in early-modern Europe is in order. It finds a place in this appendix not to facilitate a rigorous comparison with the situation in the Persianate world in the same period, but rather because it has helped the present researcher to understand his own historical preconceptions. Additionally, it provides a sketch of a pervasive historiographical problem, namely that Europe's march towards intellectual Modernity (however exactly that is to be defined) is seen as a series of deliberately taken steps while roughly similar transformations in the non-West are often assumed to be haphazard and accidental. Of course, this is a factor of the West's being the yardstick of Modernity—introducing a historical tautology since the instrument of measurement is the same as the object being measured—rather than an identifiable, operative difference between intellectual conditions in Europe and, say, the Persianate world.¹ We need to take the (inevitably Western) “Makers of the Modern World” off their visionary pedestal.

The idea that the conditions of the present might be better than those of an ancient Golden Age was apparently first explicitly formulated in early-modern Europe by Alessandro

¹ Marshall Hodgson has argued that the key to Western misunderstandings of the Islamic world is not the gap between East and West but rather the yawning gulf between modern and pre-modern intellectual practices that is often ignored (Hodgson 1968: 54; *pace* Said 1979).

Tassoni in his *Dieci Libri di Pensieri Diversi* [Ten Books of Diverse Thoughts, 1620] (Bury 1920: 80).

Some years later, after Tassoni's book had been translated into French, an attack on the Ancients was delivered at the newly founded Académie Française. Charles Perrault (1628–1703), the right-hand man of the finance minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, argued in his 523-line “La Siècle de Louis le Grand” [The Age of Louis the Great, 1687] that literature and indeed life in general were better now than they had been in Antiquity (Barchilon and Flinders 1981: 43ff). In particular, he put Plato in his place, declaring that “Plato, who was divine in the days of our ancestors / Is beginning to sound sometimes boring...” (trans. *ibid.*). This text and his subsequent *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* [Analogy of the Ancients and the Moderns] published in four volumes in his later years were arguably a struggle for personal legitimacy (namely getting out from under Colbert's shadow since Colbert had installed him in the Académie in the first place) even though it had the effect of laying the groundwork for a major shift in the intellectual life of Europe (Zarucchi 1989: 13–4). Perrault was not at the head of a movement but rather a man fighting his own battles with the help of friends against particular enemies. He tangled in particular with the classically-inclined poet Boileau, who replied to volume two of *Parallèle* with an epigram in 1692:

How is it that Cicero, Plato, Virgil, Homer, and all these great authors whom the university reveres,
when translated in your writings appear to us to be so stupid? P . . . , ² it is because in lending to

² The rhyme makes it clear that “P ...” is meant to be read as “Perrault.”

these sublime minds your manner of speaking, your crudenesses, your rhymes, you make them all into P . . . s. (prose trans Zarucchi 1989: 15)

Perrault replied in kind by jabbing at Boileau's well-known misogyny in another poem (Barchilon and Flinders 1981: 54). Boileau perhaps had the last laugh after Perrault's death: He said that Perrault's seat at the Académie would remain vacant because its next occupant would be obliged to give a eulogy on Perrault, and who would volunteer to "praise the enemy of Cicero and Virgil"? (trans Zarucchi 1989: 21). These ad hominem attacks and the fact that Perrault apparently had no programmatic vision are important to note here in order to contrast the historiography of the West and the non-West: Literary debates in Indo-Persian which involve personal rivalries have been dismissed as having no consequence to a larger historical narrative (except, of course, as manifestations of the omnipresent specter of Mughal-Safavid decline), but the evidence is clear that some important Europeans credited with bringing forth Modernity were throwing literary brickbats rather than sketching detailed blueprints for an enlightened future society.

Rather than facing the situation in terms of apparently modern attitudes and practices winning out over pre-modern ones, we should pick up the common thread of the responses to perceived newness.³ In Europe, one key technique was to bracket off the newly reinvigorated

³ A major issue in the scholarly debate over the appropriateness of the term "Early Modernity" to describe a global historical epoch from roughly 1500–1800 is the question of implied teleology: The term suggests that in the period in question people across the world were thinking "How can we become modern?" (which is, of

experimental sciences from the humanities.⁴ Francis Bacon (1561–1626) argued for a remarkable inversion of history: If the Ancients are characterized by having knowledge which was then lost over the ages, then clearly the term “Antiquity” is misplaced because the people of Bacon’s own time had their own sort of knowledge (which is to say, scientific knowledge) and it vastly exceeded what people in Antiquity could have known (Bury 1920: 54). In other words, the Moderns are the true Ancients. Likewise, John Dryden (1631–1700), best known for his extraordinarily eloquent English translation of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, implies that the Ancients studied poetry and the Moderns study science, noting that all modern poetry is inferior to ancient poetry (Steele 1990: 229, 232). Furthermore, Antiquity’s own concerns over hegemonic knowledge derived from literary works, as expressed in Cicero’s famous declaration that “the inconsistencies of Plato are a long story...” [*iam de Platonis inconstantia longum est dicere...*] could be deployed against tradition (*De Natura Deorum*, I.30). Despite its different political formations, the Persianate Early-Modern world addressed similar aesthetic and intellectual issues but often in a different idiom. In architecture and art history, both outside the scope of the present discussion, we can see other ways in which people grappled with newness without reference to

course, absurdly anachronistic). In this debate the present author tends to side with Richards 1997 rather than with Goldstone 1998.

⁴ In the Persianate world, the long tradition of experimental science was not apparently marked as new during this period as it was in the West. It has been argued that the Scientific Revolution could not have taken place in the West without building upon Islamic science (e.g. Saliba 2007). Could this infusion of outside ideas into Europe itself have contributed to the perception of experimentation as a new endeavor?

science.⁵ It would, however, be a stretch to propose exact analogues between Persian and the West, as for example one Italian scholar of Persian has in calling for the recognition of *ṭarz-i tāzah* as “Persian Baroque.”⁶ Rather the purpose of placing the traditions side by side should be to undercut the claims to uniqueness that, particularly in the European context, are the result of not seeking out parallels in other parts of the world.

⁵ For example, development in early-modern Turkish architecture need not be seen as synonymous with Westernization but rather within the framework of old and new outlined here (Hamadeh 2004: 33). In 1691, the French architectural writer Augustin-Charles D’Aviler defined “*capriccio*” as a building that did not follow “the customary rules of architecture, that is of singular and novel taste” (trans. Stern 2003: 82). This catch-all definition is a response to newness. On the deliberate reconfiguration of classical forms to mark new architectural taste in the seventeenth century as specifically French, see Ballon 1989. As Ballon argues, the Ancients could be invoked in specifically nationalist ways. On newness in art in the Ottoman and Safavid contexts, see Artan 2010 and Farhad 2001 respectively.

⁶ Riccardo Zipoli in a Persian article whose title translates as “Why is *Sabk-i Hindī* Called ‘Baroque’ in the Western World?” (1984). A recent book on the Ottomans gingerly brings up “Mannerism” as a possible framework for comparison between early-modern Ottoman and European intellectual history (Andrews and Kalpakli 2004: 338ff). Their analysis is strained, and ultimately (in the present author’s view) unproductive.