You have plucked roses from the garden of the Persians
witnessed the new spring of India and Iran
Now taste a little of the heat of the desert
drink the old wine of the date!

(Muhammad Iqbal, 1877–1938)¹

In April 2019, Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan made his first official visit to neighboring Iran. Speaking at a joint press conference in Tehran, he prefaced his talks with Iranian president Hassan Rouhani by claiming in English that “had the British not come into India in the 1800s, you would not need an interpreter because we all used to speak Farsi [Persian]; the court language for 600 years in India was Farsi [Persian].”² Though an oversimplification, Imran Khan’s statement was not far from the truth. From roughly the ninth to the nineteenth centuries, Persian was a preeminent literary language throughout a broad region consisting not only of Iran, but reaching from the Balkans in the west to China in the east, and from Siberia in the north to India in the south.³ Those societies where Persian was used as a language of learning, whether or not people actually spoke Persian in their daily lives, are collectively referred to as the Persianate world. India became one of the centers of Persian as various ruling dynasties in the subcontinent patronized the language, outpacing even Iran in sheer volume of Persian literary production.

¹ “Az chaman-zar-i ʿajam gul chidah-i / naw-bahar-i hind u iran didah-i / andaki az garmi-yi sahra bikhvur / badah-yi dirinah az khurma bikhvur” [Iqbal, Asrar-i Khvudi]. Adapted from Nicholson.
² Khabarguzari-yi IRNA. ³ Green, “Frontiers.”
Many might assume the influence of Persian in the subcontinent had something to do with India being subsumed into a “Persian empire,” ruled from somewhere in Iran and governed by native Persian speakers. In fact, Persian’s status as a Eurasian lingua franca had little to do with Iran. The language had served to link different peoples and societies together in a Persianate cosmopolis through a shared idiom and texts and common aesthetic, social, and political forms. The term “cosmopolis” need not suggest an idealized zone free of hierarchies, as scholars like Nile Green rightly warn against romanticizing the Persianate past. But the Persianate was cosmopolitan in the sense that Persian learning was not the purview of one religious or ethnic community, but rather the common language of varied groups, allowing for connections across a highly diverse region without a single geographic core or center.

Persian was spread to the subcontinent by Turks and Pashtuns—not groups we would today call “native Persian speakers”—and patronized by everyone from Sikhs to Bengalis. Rather than a “mother tongue” learned without effort in infancy, Persian was the language of literacy, acquired through education. Historically, Persianate lands lacked a concept of a single “native” or “mother tongue,” a neologism (zaban-i madari in Persian, madari zaban in Urdu) introduced to Urdu under the influence of English in the mid-nineteenth century, which also emerged in Iranian nationalist discourse in the early twentieth century. Instead, different languages could fulfill different social functions, and one’s language of education played a much more

5 Eaton, “The Persian Cosmopolis.”
important role than the language spoken at home. Many of the most celebrated Persian poets had learned literary Persian as what we would now call a “second language.” Some lived in parts of the Persianate world where other languages were used in daily life, like Mirza ‘Abd al-Qadir Bidil in northern India, or Fuzuli in what is today Iraq. Iran itself has never been monolingual, and Persian has always coexisted with other vernaculars there. Many Iranian poets, like Sa’ib Tabrizi, spoke Turkic languages before learning Persian. Even poets like Hafiz and Sa’di who lie at the heart of the modern Iranian canon, and are today thought of as “ethnically Persian,” did not write as they spoke. Like most “Persian speakers” living before the standardization efforts of the Pahlavi state (r. 1925–79), the languages of their daily lives were local dialects that were mutually unintelligible and highly divergent from written Persian, attested to in the “dialect poetry” they also left behind.

With the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century, “vernacular” languages outside of Iran officially replaced Persian, and the interconnected Persianate world began to fracture into nation-states. Colonial India was no exception, as the British replaced Persian as a state language with idioms deemed “local,” like Urdu, especially after the anti-colonial revolt of 1857. But Imran Khan may have overstated the effects of that policy. While it is true that he and Hassan Rouhani did not share a language, Persian – and the Persianate tradition – did not simply die out in South Asia after 1857, but instead found new forms and new homes. What became of the vast Persianate literary heritage after Persian was no longer the lingua franca of a far-reaching cosmopolitan milieu? And how did Iranians, who now saw Persian as a national language, and South Asians, who now saw

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Persian as a foreign idiom, make sense of the corpus of Persian literature produced in India?

This book answers these questions by examining how Iranians and Indians alike adapted the premodern Persianate tradition to produce a modern genre, that of literary history. While other modern genres of writing – the novel, free verse poetry, the short story, and others – have received a great deal of scholarly attention, far less attention has been paid to literary history as a genre. Yet literary history is a modern genre par excellence; this book captures how the genre participated in many of modernity’s most salient features in Iran and India. In particular, The Making of Persianate Modernity shows how, from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, modernizing literary scholars brought together transformations in understandings of nation, history, sexuality, and technology in producing the first modern literary histories of Persian. Challenging the nationalist narrative of Persian literary singularity, the book argues that Persian literary history emerged out of collaboration between Indians and Iranians; drawing from Urdu-language sources as well as Persian, it demonstrates the crucial role of Urdu for literary modernizers in both Iran and South Asia.

Rather than a book about the premodern Persianate cosmopolis, this is a book about Persianate modernity. What happens to the Persianate in the age of nationalism and print? The Making of Persianate Modernity uses the emergence of literary history to elucidate the role of Indo-Iranian connections in the process of modernization from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. While scholars have often considered the nineteenth century as the end of the Persianate, I argue that it endures much later than typically thought. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi first articulated “Persianate modernity” in his groundbreaking work. Following Michel Foucault, he treated modernity less as an epoch than an ethos,

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9 On poetry see Karimi-Hakkak, Recasting Persian Poetry. For travelogues see Rastegar, Literary Modernity, 77–100. For other prose genres see Meisami, “Iran.”
10 For examples of such claims see Arjomand, “From the Editor,” 3, Spooner, “Epilogue,” 303.
a way of positioning oneself against the present, which he located in the early modern Persian-language texts of India and Iran. Tavakoli-Targhi left his coinage largely undefined, inviting “other historians of Persianate modernity” to further pursue the project.

Persianate modernity, as I use it here, is a discourse involving shared texts and concepts, in which Iranians, Indians, and European Orientalists participated from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. To be modern was to participate in that discourse, to valorize the present moment as a break with tradition. In order to see the present as discontinuous with the past, one must first consolidate the “tradition” against which the “modern” is defined. Indian Muslims and Iranians alike were often invested in the same literary heritage: the poetry of the premodern Persianate world. This book shows how modernizers made use of (and generated) tradition in the making of a new genre, that of national literary history. Nationalism – here, more a particular logic or way of seeing the world than a political movement – has been central to Persianate modernity. With apologies to Stuart Hall, I would argue that the nation-state is the modality through which modernity is experienced.

Persianate modernity is also an era: the period of time during which this discourse unfolded, as modernizers reworked the raw material of the past into national literary culture. The period which I call “Persianate modernity” that this book covers was bracketed between two texts, one often considered the last Persian tazkirah (a genre of biographical anthology) and the other seen as the hallmark of modern Persian literary history. Riza-Quli Khan Hidayat’s Majma’ al-Fusaha’ (Assembly of the Eloquent, 1871), produced at Iran’s first modern educational institution, the Dar al-Funun, was a comprehensive, universal tazkirah. It served as an important starting point for later modernizers in Iran, India, and Europe, who all cited it, responded to it, and defined their modernizing projects against it.

11 Tavakoli-Targhi, Refashioning Iran, 1–17; Foucault, “What Is Enlightenment?”
12 Tavakoli-Targhi, Refashioning Iran, 143.
The process of reworking the *tazkirah* into literary history culminated in the institutionalization of the latter genre with the 1942 publication of Muhammad-Taqi Bahar’s *Sabkshinasi (Stylistics)*, the first textbook for the nascent doctoral program in Persian literature at the University of Tehran. The works of Hidayat and Bahar serve as meaningful bookends to a process of literary modernization. They also roughly correspond chronologically to the period between revolt and partition (1857–1947) in South Asia, or between the reigns of Nasir al-Din Shah and Riza Shah (1848–1941) in Iran.

This timeline challenges established chronologies of the Persianate. Earlier scholarship averred that the Persianate began to decline in the nineteenth century, and eventually dissipated. The “late Persianate” period following this supposed decline was neglected, as many scholars took for granted that the rise of nationalism and colonialism did away with the shared Persianate sphere. The latest scholarship, however, has extended the “late Persianate” period into the twentieth century. This book responds to the question posed by Mana Kia and Afshin Marashi: “are the nineteenth and twentieth centuries between Iran and India, indeed, after the Persianate?” The Persianate was always a living tradition; its core texts and concepts were not static over time, remaining in motion from the ninth century to the fifteenth and up to the nineteenth. As Marashi argues, “as the early modern Persianate system of thought began to fray during the nineteenth century, its component elements

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13 This idea dates back at least as early as Hodgson, who coined the term “Persianate” [first introduced in *The Venture of Islam*, 1:40, and defined in ibid., 2:293–4]. Hodgson connected the decline of the Persianate to modernization and the rise of nationalism [see ibid., 3:237]. The term “late Persianate” – which still lacks much currency in academia – was applied to earlier centuries, ending before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.


15 Kia and Marashi, “Introduction: After the Persianate.”
did not disappear or melt away, but were in many cases reconfigured, empowered, and enabled to operate as the basis of modernist projects of culture and politics.”16 While Marashi’s focus is on Indo-Iranian neoclassicism, I show how the shared Persianate tradition was reshaped once again by modernizers to develop a shared Persianate modernity with a common set of references and modern conventions. As the cultural logics underpinning the Persianate shifted, modernity and nationalism did not simply bring an end to Persianate affiliations; instead, such historical ties endured – now strengthened by new physical infrastructure like drivable roads linking India and Iran – and even played an essential role in generating national identities and national heritage.17 Modernizers reworked the Persianate textual tradition, producing a Persianate modernity which drew on the connections that the earlier cosmopolis had engendered.18 Yet, simultaneously, this Persianate modernity sought to cover its tracks, erasing the traces of its cosmopolitan connections so as to present an image of national heritage that appeared to be *sui generis*, independent, self-contained.19 In other words, what I term “Persianate modernity” is the form the Persianate takes after the transformations around the turn of the century. It is the connected framework left over from the bygone cosmopolis that enabled intellectuals from Iran and India to learn from each other in their modernizing projects, and to rework the literary texts of the earlier tradition into national heritage.20

17 I draw from Fredric Jameson’s understanding of a “dominant cultural logic” as “the force field in which very different types of cultural impulses … must make their way” (Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 6). On the physical infrastructure see Green, “New Histories” and Koyagi, “Drivers across the Desert.”
18 As Eric Lewis Beverley suggests, cosmopolitan languages like Persian “provided templates whose elements could be disaggregated and recombined into new systems” (Beverley, “Documenting the World,” 1051–2).
19 Tavakoli-Targhi describes a similar dynamic in which the contributions of Persianate native informants were erased from European Orientalism’s self-narrative, producing what he terms a “genesis amnesia” (Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 18–34).
20 Kia also argues for Persianate culture as “the basis for a modern self” produced through Indo-Iranian dialogue (see Kia, “Indian Friends.”)
The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were a time of tremendous social and political change in the Persianate world, including India and Iran. For centuries, Persian had been “the most widely used language for governance across South Asia,”\(^2\) and it continued to be used as such under British East India Company rule. However, British support for Persian learning in India began to erode in Bombay and Madras Presidencies in 1832, and further in 1837 with Act XXIX in the Bengal Presidency, which dispensed with the requirement to use Persian in judicial proceedings.\(^2\) Persian’s status changed even more dramatically after the failed 1857 revolt against Company rule. The British, for their part, violently suppressed the rebellion, and reconsidered their colonial approach in its aftermath. Preoccupied with their failure to comprehend “native Indian religious and social belief” and prevent the bloody uprising, the British shifted focus from rule through the Persian written tradition to vernacular languages like Urdu.\(^2\) The language policy first implemented in particular administrative units two decades earlier became universalized throughout British India.\(^4\) As the British saw it, vernaculars were authentically “native” languages, grounded in the reality of Indian daily life, as opposed to literary languages like Persian, which they understood as belonging to Iran and therefore foreign to India (though Indians literate in Persian had historically had few such qualms). As a result, patronage for the Persian literary tradition in India declined, though as I show in this book, reports of its demise are greatly exaggerated. Persian never fully disappeared from the subcontinent.

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\(^1\) Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age*, 17.

\(^2\) King, *One Language, Two Scripts*, 54–9; Mir, “Imperial Policy.”

\(^3\) Mamdani, *Define and Rule*, 8–10.

\(^4\) Persian maintained official status in the several of the princely states until much later. It was described as the common language of Kashmir, uniting linguistically diverse Kashmiris, as late as 1941, and was still taught in Jammu and Kashmir in the 1950s even as Urdu became the sole official language [Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, 272, 319]. In Chitral [now part of Pakistan], Persian was the only language of writing and government until 1953 [Bashir, “Indo-Iranian Frontier Languages.”]
Colonialism and revolution impacted the place of Persian in Iran as well. European colonial powers had swallowed up neighboring territories like India, and Iran had suffered devastating territorial losses to the Russian empire during the Russo-Persian wars. Iranian intellectuals developed a modernizing, proto-nationalist discourse in response, which culminated in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11. Nationalists, intellectuals, and revolutionaries transformed Persian into a national language and “mother tongue.” Consequently, Persian literature became understood as national heritage. As the modern, nationalist state developed institutions like the university, it remade adab (belles-lettres and proper comportment), into adabiyat, “literature” in the modern, institutional sense.25 Literature as a modern institution was supported by several pillars, including dictionaries, canons, academic departments, and, as I argue here, literary history.

Modern literary history emerged out of engagement with the tazkirah, a Persianate prose genre that flourished from the fifteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century. Tazkirahs were anthologies of poetry, typically consisting of relatively short biographical notices about the poets followed by selections of their poetry. While Persianate modernizers understood literary history to be something different from the structure, internal logic, and genre conventions found in tazkirahs, tazkirahs were nevertheless a crucial source of material that was refashioned according to the modernizers’ expectations. Tazkirah production peaked in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during the politically tumultuous final years of the genre’s lifespan, but rather than simply fading away, literary history ascended to take its place as a genre that performed similar functions under – and in response to – changing epistemic conditions. As

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commemorative texts, *tazkirahs* were particularly important in times of disorder and disruption, as litterateurs strived to memorialize communities in their *tazkirahs* which were disrupted in real life.\textsuperscript{26} If *tazkirahs* preserved the memory of moral communities during times when turmoil threatened morality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Kia contends, literary histories commemorated national communities, both generated and suppressed by colonial modernity, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Literary history offered narratives of the nation’s history through the lens of what the British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne (1862–1926) called the “manifestation of the national genius” – that is, national literature.\textsuperscript{27} Significantly, literary history was nationally defined. Unlike the anthological structure of *tazkirahs*, with their entries on individual poets loosely organized by criteria such as profession or pen name, literary history assumed a progressive chronology, with poets grouped together in poetic movements which developed in relation to national conditions. Literary history was structured by nineteenth-century historiography’s positivist assumptions of a recuperable past. These assumptions made it possible to trace a genealogy of Persian literature, and indeed of the Iranian national spirit.\textsuperscript{28}

The hitherto unexplored archive of Persian literary histories offers a unique way of telling a connected South–South history of modernizing Iran and South Asia. Each chapter of this book is about significant aspects of the new literary histories, which reflect intellectual developments in Persianate notions of historiography, sexuality, nationalism, and print culture. Through the literary histories, we encounter some of the most influential and colorful


\textsuperscript{27} Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, passim.

\textsuperscript{28} On the genre’s origins and development in Europe – relevant for our purposes as European literary histories were influential models for Persian literary history – see Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible*, chapter 1.
intellectuals of the era. Far from the obscure scholars we might imagine, obsessing over esoteric literary minutiae, many literary historians were deeply involved in the political and cultural affairs of their time, from pan-Islamists like Shibli Nu’mani (1857–1914) of India to constitutionalist revolutionaries like Muhammad-Taqi Bahar (1886–1951) from Iran. Shibli was a brilliant scholar whose Urdu-language Shi’r al-‘Ajam (Poetry of the Persians) was a landmark in literary history, while his Sirat al-Nabi (The Life of the Prophet) remains one of the most influential biographies of the prophet Muhammad. He traveled throughout the Ottoman empire, taught at modern institutions all over South Asia, and corresponded with some of the greatest minds of his day, from Englishmen to Egyptians. He also accidentally shot his own leg off, feuded with as many scholars as he befriended, and may have had a homoerotic love affair with Abu’l Kalam Azad (1888–1958), who would go on to lead independence efforts as president of the Indian National Congress. Bahar was no less brilliant a scholar, and his life was no less adventurous. A prolific poet throughout his lifetime, at age eighteen he became the last writer in Iran to ever hold the title of poet laureate (malik al-shu’ara’), which employed him at the shrine of the eighth Shi’ite imam Riza in Mashhad. In the years that followed he joined the Constitutional Revolution, was elected to the parliament (majlis), survived an assassination attempt, endured multiple stints in prison and in exile, and eventually taught at the University of Tehran, where his Sabkshinasi (Stylistics) served as the textbook for the country’s first doctoral program in Persian literature.

Examining these literary histories gives us insight into the modernization of education in several Persianate institutions.

29 For Shibli’s travels, see Shibli, Safarnamah, translated as Turkey, Egypt, and Syria: A Travelogue; for his accident, see Bhajiwalla, Maulana Shibli, 30–2. I discuss his relationship with Azad in Chapter 2, “Erotics.”

Tazkirahs were often produced with court patronage, but literary histories were in most cases associated with a new institution: the university. The rise of literary history is closely tied to the rise of modern university campuses, which sprung up across the Persianate world (and beyond) in the nineteenth century. The Dar al-Funun polytechnic college (est. 1851) and the School of Political Science (madrasah-yi ʿulum-i siyasi, est. 1899 and incorporated into the University of Tehran upon the latter’s inauguration in 1935), were both important institutional patrons of some of the earliest literary histories in Iran, while Aligarh Muslim University (est. 1875 as the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College) and Dar al-ʿUlum Nadwat al-ʿUlama (est. 1894) played similar roles in India.

Literary history responded to the uncertainty wrought by colonialism and political upheaval by attempting to impose order. Early modern tazkirahs were often attempts to organize and order knowledge in the face of disruption, but as epistemic conditions changed, so did what constituted “order.” In other words, order was conventional. Literary history dealt with historiography and sexuality as scientific enterprises, as Chapters 1 and 2 detail, while treating literature as a living organism that underwent evolution over time, explored in Chapter 3. Such order was enabled by the standardization of writing and its mass reproduction through print, the subject of Chapter 4.

Many of the differences between tazkirahs and literary histories were conventional. The two genres had different sets of literary conventions, such as absence or presence of narrative structure, representations of sexuality, or even the way text appeared on the page. These conventions were not simply passive reflections of the changing political and material circumstances of the Persianate world and the emergence of the modern state in Iran and India. Instead, the material conditions and the conventions existed in a dialectical relationship, each affecting the other, albeit unevenly.31 The conventions themselves

31 Following Raymond Williams, I recognize a dialectical relationship between the base [material conditions] and superstructure [here, literature] rather than the more
did work, functioning as a modernizing technology and guiding decisions taken by the state. In other words, modernization did not merely beget new conventions; the new conventions were modernization.

An illustrative example of this can be found in the court of Muhammad Rahim Khan II (1847–1910), the ruler of Khiva, in what is now Uzbekistan. In 1874, a year after the territory was annexed by the Russian Empire, Muhammad Rahim invited an expert from Iran to establish a palace printing press, which was the first lithographic publishing house in Central Asia. Though the Khiva press was actively used, creating lithographed editions of hundreds of works of the Persian, Arabic, and Turkic classical literary tradition, literacy was exceedingly limited in the region, and the produced works did not circulate outside the court. Unlike Benedict Anderson’s classic account of nationalist modernity emerging organically out of a print culture that was connecting people for the first time, here the desire for modernization preceded print, and the printing press was unconnected to mass circulation, at least initially. Muhammad Rahim must have understood the printing press as a technology of modernity, something he needed to have if he wished to be modern, and a tool to be used not simply to break with tradition, but also to protect it. Like Muhammad Rahim, modernizers across the Persianate world feared European domination, and sought to harness new technologies in order to reform, strengthen, and revitalize aspects of tradition, and thus ensure its survival. As Persianate intellectuals encountered modern European genres of writing such as the genre of literary history, they understood these genres in much the same way as Muhammad Rahim understood his printing press. Like the press, literary history was a kind of modern technology, the very use of which marked one as modern.

mechanical materialist view of a “determining base and a determined superstructure” [Williams, Marxism and Literature, 75–82; see also Eagleton, Marxism and Literary Criticism, 9–16].

33 Anderson, Imagined Communities.
One of the major arguments of this book is that Persianate modernity had its own set of genre conventions, and it is vital that we understand and pay attention to them. Premodern Persianate literature was highly conventional, and its literary forms, among them the *tazkirah*, maintained a great deal of formal consistency even as they evolved over time. While modern writing breaks with many of those conventions, it adheres to its own set of rules. This book demonstrates how modernizers reworked their Persianate literary heritage and developed new, modern conventions. Modernizers in both Iran and South Asia shared new understandings of history which animated their appropriations of the *tazkirah* genre. They labored together to replace the homoerotic, frank sexuality of premodern Persianate literature with bashful, Victorian-inspired mores. Influenced by Orientalist philology, they introduced new concerns with origins into their narratives of literary history. As the manuscript tradition gave way to print, formal conventions of type, orthography, and punctuation emerged.

I.1 IRAN, INDIA, AND THE PROBLEM OF AREA STUDIES

In most North American universities today, Iran and India as well as Persian and Urdu are studied in separate departments. Iran and the Persian language are generally covered by Middle East Studies, whereas India, Pakistan, and Urdu are taught in South Asian Studies. The two were not always studied separately, however. Earlier European Orientalism had considered both countries part of the nebulously defined “Orient,” and faculties of Oriental Studies could encompass everything from Anatolia to Japan. The Persianist E. G. Browne’s language studies at Cambridge at the end of the nineteenth century (which included Turkish, Arabic, and Persian alongside Hindustani and Sanskrit) were by no means unusual. The rise of Area Studies after World War II, with its discretely bounded fields of Middle East Studies, East Asian Studies, and so on, inherited this model from what began as a British distinction between its colonial possessions in South Asia on the one hand, and the strategically important lands between London and Delhi; hence the terms “Near East”
(nearer to London than the “Far East”) and its synonymous successor “Middle East” (in the middle of the metropole and India).34

One of the goals of this book is to introduce Middle East Studies to paradigms that already exist in other Area Studies fields and to challenge conventional thinking around the question of influence. Middle East Studies has privileged trajectories of language that are rarely transgressed. It is understood and accepted that Arabic influenced Persian, and therefore learning Arabic is an important part of any Persianist’s training, especially in the field of literary studies. There is a rich scholarly literature on literary transmission from Arabic into Persian, whether classical or modern.35 Studies of Persian influence on Arabic are far rarer and usually limited to linguistics rather than literature or intellectual history.36 Similarly, the influence of Persian on Urdu is widely acknowledged. Just as Arabic literacy is an important component of training in classical Persian literature, Urdu scholars in training typically study some Persian. Yet the reverse is even more scarce, as Iran scholars tend to be trained in departments that teach Persian alongside Arabic and Turkish but not Urdu. As a result, scholars have failed to recognize bilateral exchange between Persian and Urdu rather than unilateral “influence.”37

Yet this hierarchy of languages is not endemic to all Area Studies disciplines. In East Asian Studies, for example, scholars of Japanese history and literature must know classical Chinese, which exerted tremendous influence over the Japanese language and provided literary models much like how we understand the influence of Persian on Urdu. But scholars of China often learn Japanese as well.

34 On the origins of the terms “Near East” and “Middle East” see Yilmaz, “The Eastern Question;” on the emergence of Area Studies, see Lockman, Field Notes.
35 For classical literature, see Elwell-Sutton, “ARABIC LANGUAGE iii,” de Bruijn, “Arabic Influences;” for modern literature, see Rastegar, Literary Modernity.
36 Recent scholarship has only begun to challenge this pattern; see for example Thompson, “Re-Orienting Modernism;” Key, “Translation of Poetry.”
37 This parallels earlier trends in comparative scholarship on India and the Malay archipelago, in which cultural transmission was seen as unidirectionally originating in India; see Ricci, Islam Translated, 11.
Much of the modern and nationalist vocabulary of Chinese was forged in Japanese.\textsuperscript{38} Just as importantly, there is an incredibly rich and vibrant secondary literature on Chinese Studies written in Japanese, which scholars of China would be remiss to not acknowledge and draw from.\textsuperscript{39} The East Asian Studies model is more applicable to Middle East Studies than may be apparent. Similar to the relevance of Japanese for Chinese Studies, India has been a uniquely important site for studies of Iranian nationalism and modernization.

Just like the role of Japan for Chinese modernizers, India was a crucial site of Iranian nationalist and intellectual activity. The first Persian-language printing press was established in Calcutta in the late eighteenth century; at the end of the following century, Iranian nationalist newspapers in Persian cropped up from Bombay to Bengal.\textsuperscript{40} In 1933, \textit{Dukhtar-i Lur} (\textit{The Lor Girl}), the first Persian-language “talkie” (sound film), was produced in India, the result of cooperation between Iranians and Parsis (Indian Zoroastrians), and screened in both India and Iran.\textsuperscript{41} As Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi has argued, for Iranians at the turn of the twentieth century, India was a heterotopia – an alternative space through which other possibilities could be imagined.\textsuperscript{42} Indians had to grapple with colonial modernity earlier, and in some ways more directly, than their peers in Iran, putting them at the forefront of efforts to modernize the Persianate. Consequently, some of the developments I detail in this book – the transition from writing \textit{tazkirahs} to literary history, the emergence of Victorian-inspired sexual aesthetics, and the introduction of Persian

\textsuperscript{38} Chung, “Some Returned Loans.”
\textsuperscript{39} On the other hand, the Korea historian Bruce Cumings laments how “to be in ‘Korean studies’ is to study Korea and not China or Japan” [Cumings, “Seeing Like an Area Specialist,” 93]. As an outsider to East Asian Studies, perhaps I view the field with rose-tinted glasses.
\textsuperscript{40} Floor, “\textit{ČĀ P}.”
\textsuperscript{41} Naficy, \textit{A Social History of Iranian Cinema}, 1:231–45; Fish, “The Bombay Interlude,” Rekabtalaei, \textit{Iranian Cosmopolitanism}, 105–10. The director, Ardeshir Irani (1886–1969), was also responsible for the first Indian sound film, the Urdu-language \textit{ʿAlam Ara} (\textit{The Ornament of the World}, 1931).
\textsuperscript{42} Tavakoli-Targhi, \textit{Refashioning Iran}, 1–4.
movable type – occurred in India before Iran. South Asia features prominently in classical Persian poetry, not only by Indian poets or those who traveled to India, but in poetry from the Iranian heartland as well; everyone knows Hafiz’s widely quoted lines about his beloved’s “Hindu mole” or the “Persian sugar-candy which goes to Bengal.” Less widely recognized are the South Asian characters who dot the literary and cinematic landscape of modern Iran as well, featured in various celebrated novels from Sadiq Hidayat’s Buf-i Kur (The Blind Owl, 1936) to Iraj Pizishkzad’s Da’i Jan Napil’un (Dear Uncle Napoleon, 1973) or Simin Danishvar’s Savushun (1969), and in films from Dukhtar-i Lur to Ganj-i Qarun (Qarun’s Treasure, 1965).

There is also an expansive, and often highly sophisticated, secondary literature on Persian literature and Iran written in Urdu, which Persian Studies scholars outside of South Asia are wholly unaware of. While ancient India captured the interest of Iran scholars from the beginning of the twentieth century, Iranian Studies has largely ignored modern India and Pakistan, and as a result, it has overlooked valuable scholarship in Urdu. By the same token, South Asian Studies has too often considered Iran outside of its bailiwick and has therefore failed to adequately account for the salience of South Asian litterateurs in modern Iran.43

Over the past two decades, a new wave of scholarship has started to break down the divide between Iranian Studies and South Asian Studies, as Iranian Studies has paid increasing attention to modern Indo-Iranian connections. Some have focused on exchange between Iranians and Parsis,44 while others have located the roots of

43 Scholarship on the early modern period, especially studies of the Deccan, has paid close attention to Indo-Iranian connections. However, the field has not yet addressed South Asians in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Iran. Notable exceptions include Pue, I Too Have Some Dreams; Fuchs, In a Pure Muslim Land; and much of Nile Green’s work such as Bombay Islam.

44 Grigor, “Persian Architectural Revivals;” Ringer, Pious Citizens; Marashi, Exile and the Nation; Sheffield, “Iran, the Mark of Paradise.”
Iranian nationalism and modernization projects in India. These scholars laid important ground in critically analyzing Iranian nationalism and uncovering its origins in India, challenging nationalist paradigms that had long defined Iranian Studies. At the same time, however, in their focus on Parsis and Iranian émigrés and exiles in India, they have continued to focus on people who claim Iranian origins, whether historical or recent; the important role of South Asian Muslims in Iranian modernity has generally been overlooked. This is due in no small part to Area Studies training, which results in most Iranian Studies scholars being unable to engage with Urdu-language materials. By not examining Urdu sources, this “Persianate turn” in Iranian Studies has essentially been limited to studying figures who had some ostensible genealogical connection to Iran, whether Iranian migrants and travelers writing in Persian, or Parsis, writing in English or Persian, who considered Iran their ancestral homeland.

Yet considering the Urdu-language contributions to Persian literary history allows us to see that South Asian Muslims did indeed play an important role alongside Parsis and Iranian émigrés. Some, like Muhammad Husayn Azad (1830–1910), claimed Iranian ancestry like their Parsi compatriots, but others had no such ties and did not form their Indo-Iranian ties on the basis of an [imagined] shared genealogy. Shibli Nu’mani saw Persian literature as part of the Islamic heritage that pertained to him as a Muslim with no familial link to Iran, while the poet N. M. Rashid understood Indo-Iranian connections in terms of their shared experience of colonialism, in what A. Sean Pue has termed “position without identity.” South Asian Studies has neglected these connections as well. With the exception of Pue’s I Too Have Some Dreams: N.M. Rashed and

45 Tavakoli-Targhi, Refashioning Iran; Marashi, Nationalizing Iran; Adib-Moghaddam, Psycho-nationalism.
46 On the “Persianate turn” see Khazeni, The City and the Wilderness, 3, Hemmat, “Completing the Persianate Turn.”
47 Pue, I Too Have Some Dreams, chapter 2.
Modernism in Urdu Poetry, Iran has not featured in works on Urdu literary modernity. Islamic religious networks connecting modern Iran and South Asia have received some scholarly attention, but literary and intellectual connections between the two have been all but entirely ignored by South Asianists.

Reassessing the link between modern Urdu and Persian offers a new perspective on Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi’s notion of “homeless texts” of Persianate modernity. "Homeless texts," for Tavakoli-Targhi, are those Persian works produced in India in which can be found an early modern ethos, yet which have “fallen between the cracks of area studies” and similarly not featured into Indian or Iranian accounts of modernity, being understood as not Indian (by virtue of being in Persian) and not Iranian (by virtue of being from India), and therefore “homeless.” As we have seen, Tavakoli-Targhi is right to consider these texts as disciplinarily lost between Middle East Studies and South Asian Studies. It is certainly true that most of these texts did not feature into Iranian accounts of modernity and were, in fact, largely unknown in Iran until the final decades of the twentieth century; it is also true that they were not the texts secular nationalist Indians turned to in making claims of an indigenous modernity. For example, among the “homeless texts” he discusses are the works of Siraj al-Din ʿAli Khan-i Arzu, an early modern Persianate litterateur, philologist, and literary critic of eighteenth-century India. As Tavakoli-Targhi discusses, Arzu explored the relationship between Sanskrit and Persian decades before Europeans like Sir William Jones took up the subject. Tavakoli-Targhi laments that Arzu’s contributions were ignored; indeed, Bahar was scantily aware of Arzu, referring to the Indian litterateur only twice.

48 Green, Bombay Islam; Fuchs, In a Pure Muslim Land, and several essays in Jaffrelot and Louër, Pan-Islamic Connections.
50 Tavakoli-Targhi, Refashioning Iran, x.
throughout his works. In Bahar’s time, Arzu was barely known in Iran; in 1960, the Dihkhuda dictionary still described him as merely “one of the poets of India. His poetry is frequently cited in the Anandraj dictionary,” with no mention of his philological oeuvre; indeed, this deficient definition is still found in contemporary editions of the encyclopedic Dihkhuda dictionary.

This book locates a home for Tavakoli-Targhi’s “homeless texts of Persianate modernity” in Urdu scholarship. Shibli Nu’mani’s Shi’r al-’Ajam, for example, relies on Arzu’s linguistic treatises and his important tazkirah of Persian poetry, Majma’ al-Nafa’is (Assembly of Subtleties). Muhammad Husayn Azad drew even more extensively on Arzu, translating entire chapters of Arzu’s philological work Musmir (Fruitful) into Urdu, celebrating him as the father of all Urdu speakers, and lauding Arzu’s poetry in his Nigaristan-i Fars (Picture-Gallery of Persia). There was never a time when the works of Arzu, among other supposedly “homeless” Persian-language works of the subcontinent, ceased to be read and commented on in India, first in Persian and later in Urdu. Literacy, we must recall, had always been a rarefied phenomenon; even at the height of the Persianate cosmopolis, just a miniscule fraction of society was literate enough

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51 In one article Bahar points dismissively to the many “errors” of the “spurious” (ja’li) books of Arzu and others (Bahar va Adab 2:408). The article, “Ta’lim-i Zaban-i Farsi va Kitab-ha-yi kih Lazim Darim,” originally appeared in Majallah-yi Ta’lim va Tarbiyat in 1938. Bahar’s mentioning [and dismissing] Arzu alongside works like the Farhang-i Jahangiri, Burhan-i Qati’, Dasatir, Namah-yi Khusruvan, and other dasatiri or neo-Zoroastrian texts, and italicizing Arzu’s name as he does the titles of these other works, could indicate that Bahar was referring to Arzu’s dictionary Chiragh-i Hidayat and that he had not actually seen the dictionary himself but had only read about it in other works. Later, in his Sabkshinasi, Bahar briefly mentions “the dictionary Chiragh-i Hidayat written by the great scholar [fazil-i ’alimaqam] Khan-i Arzu” (Sabkshinasi 3:290.) Bahar’s paucity of references to Arzu, and the inconsistency between them, suggest that he was most likely unfamiliar with Arzu’s works, which is unsurprising given their rarity in Iran until much later.


53 On Azad’s engagement with Arzu, see Kovacs, “The Role of Persian Language and Literature” and Dudney, India in the Persian World, 193–8, 245–8; on Arzu as the father of all Urdu speakers, see Azad, Ab-i Hayat, 115–17; on Arzu’s poetry, see Azad, Nigaristan-i Fars, 220–4.
to access such texts directly. Therefore, precolonial Persian texts would have had only a very small number of readers—comparable to the elite of the Urdu literati today who continue to read and engage with Persian literature. In absolute numbers, it is less the case that Persian literacy decreased in South Asia so much as it was overshadowed by the explosion of new literacy in Urdu, Hindi, English, and other languages; classes of people who would have generally been unlettered in the past are now often literate in “vernacular” languages. There was no radical break with the Persianate tradition; it did not disappear but instead shifted—albeit with some transformations—in the written medium of Urdu, in the works of Indian Muslim modernizers like Shibli and Azad.

I.2 CIRCULATION, NETWORKS, EXCHANGE

The history of Persian influence on Urdu is well-documented and widely acknowledged, with Urdu deriving its writing system and much of its vocabulary and literary forms from Persian. For the most part, Iranians had been ignorant of Urdu, with the exception of some Iranian travelers to South Asia in the Mughal era. However, in the time of Persianate modernity, this dynamic was no longer so clear-cut. Indian scholars belonging to the Persianate tradition were attempting to bridge the gap between traditional forms of knowledge and writing and what they saw as modern, European approaches to science and historiography. Urdu writers like Shibli Nu’mani were seeking native models which could be used to reform, revitalize, and preserve the Persianate or Islamicate heritage and make it compatible with colonial modernity. This approach was very much in line with the goals of many literary scholars and intellectual reformers across the border in Iran, and the efforts of these Urdu writers did not go

55 Spooner and Hanaway describe Urdu as a “successor Persianate [language] of literacy” (ibid., 434).
unnoticed. As Iranians and Indians became part of shared social and intellectual networks, their ideas cross-pollinated. Shibli Nu mani’s lengthy Urdu-language work on Persian poetry, Shiʿr al-ʿAjam, which was an important milestone in refashioning the traditional genre of tazkirah writing into modern European-style literary history (taken up in detail in Chapter 1, “Histories”), influenced Iranian literary scholars like Muhammad-Taqi Bahar and Zayn al-ʿAbidin Muʿtaman (1914–2005).57

Bahar was unable to read Urdu himself, but made many favorable references to Shibli’s work. He may have read the Persian translation of Shiʿr al-ʿAjam commissioned by the Afghan Ministry of Education in 1925. However, this translation, published in Afghanistan, had very limited circulation in Iran.58 More likely, Bahar learned about Shibli through his social circle, which was full of Urdu-speaking South Asian and Iranian litterateurs. While textual influence tends more often to be one-sided (more Urdu speakers read Persian texts than the reverse, and more Iranian intellectuals read French texts than vice versa), the conversation between Bahar and his South Asian colleagues provides insight into a different dynamic, one of reciprocal networks and mutual exchange. This same dynamic can be witnessed in the relationship between Orientalist scholars and their Asian friends and tutors; for example, Shibli received his exposure to European thought and writing primarily through his friendship with the British Orientalist T. W. Arnold (1864–1930). Their friendship was based on mutual exchange, as they tutored one another in Arabic and French, respectively. Browne had a similar dynamic with his Iranian friends and Indian students, though he was also capable of reading Persian and Urdu himself.59

57 Muʿtaman discusses this in the unnumbered preface to his Shiʿr va Adab-i Farsi [1953].
58 Shibli [Gilani translation], Shiʿr al-ʿAjam, 3:ha-va. It was later translated again into Persian, this time by an Iranian, Muhammad-Taqi Fakhr-i Daʿi Gilani, and published in Iran in 1948.
59 This is also discussed in Vejdani, “Indo-Iranian,” 442–8.
Shibli’s Shi’r al-ʿAjam is a text whose influence stretched far beyond the borders of Urdu, leaving an impression on Iranian literary scholars as well as European Orientalists like Browne, as well as elsewhere in the Persianate world.60 It is also an illustrative example of the long afterlife of Persian in the subcontinent. Published in multiple volumes between 1908 and 1918, it, like many other such Urdu texts, continues the developments and debates that had previously been taking place in Persian. The shift to Urdu from Persian does not necessarily represent a break with the tradition of Persian learning. Long after the supposed decline of Persian in the subcontinent, tazkirahs and histories of Persian literature, like Shibli’s, continued to be written in Urdu (rather than in Persian) alongside commentaries (sharh) on the core texts of the Persianate tradition like the Gulistan (Rose Garden) of Sa’di or the Masnavi of Mawlana Rumi.61 Even today, Persian language and literature remain fundamental aspects of a traditional religious education in South Asia, and secular newspapers serialize Urdu translations and commentaries on Persian texts like the Gulistan.62 In earlier times Persian was taught to Indian learners using Persian-language texts which had very convoluted, highly specific discussions of Persian grammar and related minutiae. It was incumbent on the teacher to help students understand these principal texts by breaking them down and explaining them orally, typically in a vernacular language like Urdu.63 Later Persian grammars, prosody manuals, and the like, began to be written in Urdu, or sometimes in Persian with interlinear Urdu translation. These grammars of Persian written in Urdu are a continuation of the

60 It also became an important part of the Persian literary curriculum in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, though these countries are beyond the scope of this book. For a Tajik example, see Toirov et al., Adabiyoti Tojik, 81.
61 For a fascinating study of an Urdu commentary on the divan of Hafiz, see Mian, “Surviving Desire.”
63 This dynamic is comparable to that of a contemporary graduate seminar at an anglophone institution, where the class may discuss a foreign-language text in English.
tradition of orally teaching Persian grammar through Urdu. The link to Persian literary traditions and texts has not been lost; it is now mediated through Urdu.\textsuperscript{64}

The context in which Indo-Iranian exchange took place must be considered. It is not only the shared Persianate heritage, but also the shared experience of colonial modernity that made these connections possible, as the Urdu poet N. M. Rashid (1910–75) suggested through his poetry collection \textit{Iran mein Ajnabi (A Stranger in Iran)}.\textsuperscript{65} Simply celebrating exchange risks overlooking the power structure that enabled it in the first place, as the historian Sebastian Conrad cautions.\textsuperscript{66} Iranians and South Asians both faced similar conditions in the time of Persianate modernity, particularly in the colonial encounter with Britain, which came to a head as Britain invaded Iran and occupied Iranian territory with the help of the British Indian Army during both world wars. The Allied occupation of Iran from 1941–6, in which the Indian Army played a cultural role in addition to its military function, was an especially decisive time for Indo-Iranian exchange. Rashid himself was a conduit for such exchange; conscripted into the British Indian Army, he served the army in public relations at Radio Tehran under the British occupation. As a litterateur fluent in both Urdu and Persian, with a social circle that included many of Tehran’s most prominent intellectuals and literati, Rashid was a living link between the two countries. Cultural connections continued after the war, especially between Iran and newly independent Pakistan, both US-aligned modernizing Asian states during the Cold War.

\textsuperscript{64} Urdu has even become a vehicle for the Persian tradition in some regions of South Asia where Urdu is not natively spoken, especially the Punjab, resulting in madrasa settings where Punjabi-speaking pupils learn Urdu to understand instruction about Persian and Arabic texts. See Rahman, \textit{From Hindi to Urdu}, 112–33. For a fascinating parallel in northern Nigeria, where Kanuri-speaking Muslims study Qur’anic Arabic through the medium of a third language, Old Kanembu, see Dmitry Bondarev, “Qur’anic Exegesis in Old Kanembu” and Bondarev and Tijani, “Performance of Multilayered Literacy.”

\textsuperscript{65} Pue, \textit{I Too Have Some Dreams}.

The Making of Persianate Modernity is a comparative history that examines how different nationalist narratives developed in Iran and South Asia, offering comparative readings of Persian and Urdu literary histories. Comparison is useful because it can challenge such narratives, revealing them to be historically contingent. The literary theorist Susan Stanford Friedman reminds us that “comparison across cultures defamiliarizes what one takes as natural in any given culture.”67 As intellectuals in India and Iran reworked their shared Persianate heritage into modern literary histories, they developed radically different national narratives. Juxtaposing the different “origin stories” exposes their historical contingency. As Chapters 3 and 4 further demonstrate, the historical development of Persian and Urdu, and the linguistic relationship of each to other languages like Arabic, were similar in many ways. Yet due to their different relationships to Orientalist philology, Iranian and South Asian modernizers gave completely different accounts of their respective languages’ histories. Iranian nationalists, with their emphasis on nativism, stressed the continuity of the Persian language before and after the advent of Islam, seeing it as a single trajectory not broken by the introduction of Arabic. In contrast, Urdu speakers believed the coming of Islam (and of Arabic and Persian) to the subcontinent to be a fundamental rupture with the past which birthed Urdu. By comparing these two narratives, we understand that neither account is natural or inevitable; each could have followed the path traced by the other.

This book offers not only comparison, but also a connected history.68 The Making of Persianate Modernity traces the exchanges and interaction between Iranians and South Asians in the production of modern literary history. In doing so, it joins an emerging body of scholarship on “South–South” intellectual and literary connections which has begun to focus on the interactions between Asian

68 I draw methodological inspiration from Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s scholarship on the connected Indian Ocean world in the early modern period. See Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories.”
modernizers, unmediated by Europe. Urdu, I argue, is vital to the story of the emergence of Persian literary history. I demonstrate how India’s Persianate tradition continued in Urdu, and how ideas and conventions traveled between Urdu and Persian, moving in both directions.

1.3 OUTLINE

The chapters of this book are organized thematically rather than chronologically, each examining a different aspect of the making of Persianate modernity. The book’s first section, “Connections,” maps the connections between modern Iranian and South Asian litterateurs. This Indo-Iranian exchange had a crucial impact on intellectuals modernizing the Persianate heritage. The intellectual networks they formed facilitated the exchange of ideas and scholarship, making possible the shared project of Persianate modernity described in the following chapters. This preliminary section demonstrates that South Asians were well-integrated into Iranian intellectual and literary circles. Readers more interested in the impact of such connections on the emerging genre of literary history can skip ahead to the first chapter.

Chapter 1, “Histories,” shows how Persian literary histories emerged from modernizing historiographers’ engagement with the tazkirah, a premodern Persianate genre of literary anthology. The contradictions the tazkirahs posed served as an invitation to produce literary history, in opposition to what modernizers saw as deficiencies in the premodern tazkirah tradition. These contradictions and deficiencies included the fact that tazkirah writers did not see history as linear, progressive, and teleological, nor was historical accuracy necessarily a concern of theirs. This chapter examines how

69 Recent works in intellectual and literary history include Amstutz, “Finding a Home for Urdu;” Elhalaby, “The Arab Rediscovery of India;” Fani, “Becoming Literature;” Leese, “Longing for Salmá and Hind;” Thompson, “Re-Orienting Modernism.” These works complement connected histories of the Indian Ocean world such as Marashi, Exile and the Nation; Kia, Persianate Selves; Green, Bombay Islam.
modernizing intellectuals changed conceptions of “history,” turned premodern Persian literature into national heritage, and transformed premodern scholars into national heroes.

Chapter 2, “Erotics” engages questions of homoeroticism and bawdy poetry, two interconnected themes that appear throughout the Persianate literary heritage and the *tazkirah* tradition but pose problems for modern literary historiographers. While pre-nineteenth-century Persianate writing abounds in frank, unabashed depictions of homoerotic sexuality – the dominant literary convention for depicting love – modernizers of Persianate literature adopt a Victorian-influenced approach that emphasized bashful silence about sexuality, particularly homoeroticism. As Persian literary historians were faced with making sense of the ribald erotic poetry at the heart of the tradition they wrote about, homoerotic conventions coalesced as objects of scorn and relics of the premodern world against which modernizing historiographers positioned themselves.

Chapter 3, “Origin Myths,” explores how literary historians narrated the origins of Persian and Urdu languages and literary traditions. I challenge the nationalist narratives around these traditions, of Iranian continuity and Indo-Muslim rupture, which remain dominant today. Tracing the reception of evolutionary theories and Orientalist philology in Iran and India, I analyze fundamental differences in nationalist thought in the two contexts. Iranians articulated a vision of linear language history, emphasizing continuity with pre-Islamic precursors to modern Persian which the addition of an Arabic element did not fundamentally change. On the other hand, Indian Muslims offered a contrary account of Urdu’s origins, emphasizing rupture with the pre-Islamic past and the constitutive role of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish in Urdu’s formation. Through a comparative reading of these “origin myths” I demonstrate how historically contingent the dominant narratives around Persian and Urdu were.

Chapter 4, “Print” analyzes the transition from manuscript to print culture and the formal conventions of modern Persianate writing. I trace the emergence and standardization of standard
typography, orthography, and punctuation. Questioning the assumption that these aspects of print culture arose organically from the material conditions of modernization, I argue that they were fetishized as a kind of modernizing technology in and of themselves, and understood as productive of – rather than products of – modernization. In other words, Iranian and Indian literary scholars sought to modernize their prose by abandoning certain formal conventions of the Persianate manuscript tradition and adopting the conventions of European print: type rather than calligraphy, standardized spelling, and a new set of punctuation marks. The transition from manuscripts to a standardized print culture is typically presented as pragmatic, but it was shaped by various networks of affective attachments.

Far from modernity marking a definitive rupture with the Persianate past, then, this book demonstrates how Persianate connections and literary heritage were vital to nationalist, modernizing projects in Iran and India from the middle of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century. The Persianate modernity produced through Indo-Iranian exchange was not uniform across the two countries, but it shared its repository of literary heritage as well as its structuring logic of nationalism. The Conclusion carries the book’s arguments forward in time, considering what became of Persianate modernity in the second half of the twentieth century. It is an invitation for scholars of regions and time periods beyond the scope of this book to take up Persianate modernity as a useful framework for analyzing the role of the Persianate heritage in the making of modernity, not only in Iran and South Asia, but in Afghanistan, the erstwhile Ottoman territories, Central Asia, and elsewhere.