Arabic in Hindustan:
Comparative Poetics in the Eighteenth Century and Azad Bilgrami's *The Coral Rosary*

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Abstract

This article examines the contributions of Ghulām ʿAlī "Āzād" Bilgrāmī (1704–1786) to our understanding of comparative poetics and Arabic in eighteenth-century Hindustan. It attends to Azad's oeuvre through the lenses of translation, multilingualism, and literary science. Philological analysis reveals how Azad establishes analogues across these three literary languages that attest to the adaptive capacity of poetics. His sections on Hindi poetry in his Arabic work *Subḥat al-marjān fī āthār Hindūstān* (*The Coral Rosary of Hindustan's Traditions*, 1763–64), and its later adaptation into Persian *Ghizlān al-Hind* (*The Gazelles of India*, 1764–65) anchor this study. The essay also establishes a Hindi inspiration for Azad's Arabic poem *Mirʾāt al-Jamāl* (*The Mirror of Beauty*, 1773). By probing the intertextualities within and beyond Azad's corpus, this study demonstrates how Arabic literary production in Hindustan benefits from a comparative method that accounts for a multilingual milieu. It thus considers the contributions of precolonial Hindi and Persian literatures to a reading of Arabic in Hindustan.

Keywords

This essay explores the comparative literary exercises of the remarkable eighteenth-century intellectual Ghulām ʿAlī "Āzād" Bilgrāmī (b. 1704, Bilgram,

d. 1786, Aurangabad). It offers a close reading of Azad's use of Arabic in his handbook on poetics, *Subḥat al-marjān fī āthār Hindūstān* (*The Coral Rosary of Hindustan's Traditions*, 1763–64).[1] *The Coral Rosary* consists of four parts on Islamic exegesis, Arabic litterateurs in Hindustan, Hindi and Arabic poetics, and the aesthetics of Hindi beloveds. While scholars hail Azad for the range of his corpus, the significance of his polymathy to literary practices has yet to be explored.[2] This article follows three frames of analysis: (a) translation, (b) multilingualism, and (c) literary sciences. Through a consideration of *The Coral Rosary*, I argue that Azad's method involved what I call an adaptive capacity, an ability to bend literary languages to make equivalences between discrete literary sciences.

Azad came from a lineage of Muslim scholars who went against literary norms and were invested in the Hindustani vernaculars of Hindavi, Avadhi, and Brajbhasha (henceforth glossed as Hindi).[3] Although he was born in the north Indian region known as Avadh, he travelled to Lahore, Multan, Sind, and spent a year in the *ḥijāz* from 1738 to 1739. Upon his return from pilgrimage in 1739 until his death he settled in the Deccan city of Aurangabad. Azad's movement from Avadh southwards to the Deccan distinguishes his itinerary and

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1 I write Āzād as Azad throughout the text and footnotes, whereas all other names are fully transliterated. I utilize translated names of titles of works that appear repeatedly. For instance, *Subḥat al-marjān fī āthār Hindūstān* is *The Coral Rosary*. I write v. and vv. for poetic verse numbers.

2 See M.G. Zubaid Ahmad, *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic Literature: from Ancient Times to 1857* (Lahore: Ashraf Press, 1947); P. Setu Madhava Rao, "Maratha-Nizam Relations, 'The Khazana-i-Amira' of Gulam Ali Azad Bilgrami," *Journal of Indian History* 38 (1960): 303–26; Carl Ernst, "India as a Sacred Islamic Land," in *Religions of India in Practice*, ed. by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 556–64; Ernst, "Reconfiguring South Asian Islam: From the 18th to the 19th Century," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 5, no. 2 (2011): 247–72; Ernst, "Indian Lovers in an Arabic and Persian Guise: Āzād Bilgrāmī's Depiction of *Nāyikas*," *Journal of Hindu Studies* 6, no. 1 (2013): 37–51; Shawkat Toorawa, "Introduction," in *Shifāʾ al-ʿAlīl*, ed. by Shawkat Toorawa (Hyderabad: Government of Andhra Pradesh Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Institute, 2007), 1–17; Toorawa, "The Shifāʾ al-ʿAlīl of Āzād Bilgrāmī (d. 1200/1786): Introducing an Eighteenth-Century Indian Work on al-Mutannabī's Poetry," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 11, no. 2 (2008): 249–64; Toorawa, "Āzād Bilgrāmī (29 June 1704–15 September 1786)," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography: 1350–1850*, ed. by Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 91–7; and Sunil Sharma, "Translating Gender: Āzād Bilgrāmī on the Poetics of the Love Lyric and Cultural Synthesis," *The Translator* 15, no. 1 (2009): 87–103.

3 See Abhishek Kaicker, "The Promises and Perils of Courtly Poetry: The Case of Mir ʿAbd al-Jalil Bilgrami (1660–1725) in the Late Mughal Empire," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 61, no. 3 (2018): 327–60 and Francesca Orsini, "'Krishna is the Truth of Man': Mir 'Abdul Wahid Bilgrami's *Haqāʾiq-i Hindī* (Indian Truths) and the Circulation of *Dhrupad* and *Bishnupad*," in *Culture and Circulation: Literature in Motion in Early Modern India*, ed. by Thomas de Bruijn and Allison Busch (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 222–46.

it is for this reason that many manuscripts of his works remain in libraries in Central India.[4]

Scholars have only recently started considering Azad's Arabic works, whereas they have almost exclusively focused on his Persian output previously.[5] In Persian, Azad wrote a compendium of commemorative biographies (*taẕkirah*s) of Hindi and Persian poets known as *Maʾāṣir al-kirām* (1752–53), historical writing such as *Khizānah-yi ʿāmirah* (1762–63), and a later adaptation of *The Coral Rosary*'s sections on Hindi poetics known as *Ghizlān al-Hind* (*The Gazelles of India*, 1764–65). In comparison, his Arabic corpus is far more extensive. It consists of a large body of poetry, literary biography, commentary on Arabic poetry, Islamic exegesis, and *The Coral Rosary*.[6] In view of the intertextuality between Azad's many works, one of the primary exercises of this article is to put Azad's Arabic and Persian works in dialogue, while taking premodern Indic (Hindi, Sanskrit) literature into account.

As Azad translates between multiple languages, translation serves as the first frame in which I examine his literary contributions. Translation as a practice during Azad's time was not exactly an attempt to closely render one language in another. As such, this article pays specific attention to Azad's practices of Arabization (*taʿrīb*) and Persianization (*tafrīs*) of Indic literary systems. Beyond Azad, scholars have shown how Sanskrit to Persian translation projects ran the gamut in the medieval and early modern periods. Recent studies on Persian retellings of Sanskrit texts signal that one must exercise caution in deploying the term translation for textual practices, which at face value might seem to be strategies—albeit imperfect and interpretive—to capture the knowledge of one language in another.[7] These efforts also demonstrate different methods of understanding the "kinship" that binds these languages

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4 See Toorawa, "Introduction," 1–17, and Vivek Gupta, "Āzād Bilgrāmī," in *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions*, ed. by Arvind Sharma et al. (Netherlands: Springer, 2018), 144–6.

5 See Ernst, "India as a Sacred Islamic Land," 556–64; Toorawa, "Introduction, 1–17; Sharma, 'Translating Gender,'" 87–103, and Mana Kia, *Persianate Selves: Memories of Place and Origin Before Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020).

6 Toorawa, "Āzād Bilgrāmī (29 June 1704–15 September 1786)," 91–7, offers the most comprehensive summary of Azad's Arabic corpus to date.

7 Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Faizi's *Nal-Daman* and Its Long Afterlife," in *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 204–48; Audrey Truschke, "The Mughal *Book of War*: A Persian Translation of the Sanskrit *Mahabharata*," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31, no. 2 (2011): 506–20; Truschke, "Cosmopolitan Encounters: Sanskrit and Persian at the Mughal Court" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012); Truschke, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Shankar Nair, *Translating Wisdom: Hindu-Muslim Intellectual Interactions in Early Modern South Asia* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), 42–7.

together through the processes of translation.[8] This becomes especially important in the case of Azad who often shows a particular self-awareness in his decision to translate Hindi poetics into Arabic and Persian.

Through Azad's translations of multiple poetic systems his works contribute to scholarship on multilingualism. Although scant in comparison to Persian, Hindi, or Sanskrit, Arabic literature certainly developed in Hindustan and was part and parcel of its multilingual milieu.[9] As work on Indian multilingualism has focused on Sanskrit/Persian or Hindi/Persian bilingual relationships, Azad offers scholars insight into a true *multi*lingual whose works encompass at least three languages.[10] In *The Coral Rosary*'s second half, which concerns the history of Arabic scholars of Hindustan, Azad mentions one of his noteworthy Arabic predecessors, Ibn Maʿṣūm (b. 1642, Medina, d. 1708, Golkonda). Interestingly, Ibn Maʿṣūm composed a work entitled *Anwār al-rabīʿ fī anwāʿ al-badīʿ* (*Spring's*

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8 Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913–1926*, ed. by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 255.

9 Ahmad's *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic Literature* is the only monograph on the subject. Abdul Muid Khan, *The Arabian Poets of Golconda* (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1963) offers insight into Arab poets in the Deccan. Nawwāb Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Ḥasan, *Nashwat al-sakrān min ṣahbāʾ tadhkār al-ghizlān* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1998) is a resource for studies of this topic. Honoring the title of *The Coral Rosary*, my use of "Hindustan" and "Hindustani" throughout this article aims to conjure a precolonial sense of place. See Manan Ahmed, *The Loss of Hindustan: The Invention of India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020).

10 For scholarship on Sanskrit/Persian see Carl Ernst, "Muslim Studies of Hinduism?: A Reconsideration of Arabic and Persian Translations from Indian Languages," *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 2 (2003): 173–95; Alam and Subrahmanyam, "Faizi's Nal-Daman and Its Long Afterlife," 204–48; Truschke, "The Mughal *Book of War*," 506–20; and Truschke, "Cosmopolitan Encounters." For Hindi/Persian, see Shantanu Phukan, "Through a Persian Prism: Hindi and Padmavat in the Mughal Imagination" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2000); Phukan, "'Through throats where many rivers meet': The ecology of Hindi in the world of Persian," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 38, no. 1 (2001): 33–58; Francesca Orsini, "How to do multilingual literary history? Lessons from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century north India," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 49, no. 2 (2012): 225–46; and Orsini, "'Krishna is the Truth of Man,'" 225–46. For Hindi/Sanskrit, see Sheldon Pollock, "The Languages of Science in Early Modern India," in *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800*, ed. by Sheldon Pollock (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 19–48; Allison Busch, "The Anxiety of Innovation: The Practice of Literary Science in the Hindi/*Riti* Tradition," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 45–59; and Busch, "Hidden in Plain View: Brajbhasha Poets at the Mughal Court," *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2010): 267–306.

Blossoms, on the Varieties of Poetic Tropes, Golkonda, 1666/67)[11] that consists of a 147-line *badīʿiyyah* poem (a poetic catalogue of rhetorical tropes), describing and illustrating various tropes and rhetorical devices in Arabic poetry.[12] This genre developed as a formal imitation of the panegyric of the prophet, the *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah* of al-Būṣīrī (d. 1294). I draw attention to Azad's knowledge of Ibn Maʿṣūm as evidence of how Azad was inscribed within a Hindustani tradition of Arabic literature, though it may not have been expansive. For one of Ibn Maʿṣūm's other works known as *Salwat al-gharīb wa-uswat al-arīb* (*Comfort for the Stranger and Consolation for the Artful*, 1662–65), Lowry infers that it was possible to obtain a broad education in Arabic literature in the mid-seventeenth century Deccan.[13] Azad's oeuvre makes this point clear for the northern region of Avadh and the Deccan city of Aurangabad in the eighteenth century.

In terms of method, scholarship on Indian multilingualism sometimes assigns languages functions and uses. For instance, Tahera Qutbuddin compares uses of Arabic and Persian in India, and concludes that Arabic maintains a primarily religious use, whereas Persian served cultural/bureaucratic purposes, and held a secondary Sufi use.[14] In Francesca Orsini's analysis of Mīr ʿAbd al-Waḥīd Bilgrāmī's *Ḥaqāʾiq-i Hindī*, a Sufi treatise on words and images in *dhrupad*, *bishnupad*, and other "Hindavi" (premodern Hindi) songs, she characterizes the linguistic situation in North India as follows: "within the tri-lingual world of North Indian Sufis, Arabic was the scriptural language, Persian was the textual language of exposition and poetry, and Hindavi was comfortably the local language of Islam and a parallel poetic language to that of Persian."[15] Such a characterization implies that Arabic was limited to scripture, and Persian and Hindi were for Sufi literature. Do Hindi and Persian's Sufi usage negate Arabic's importance to Sufi literature? The function-based approach to multilingualism allows us to assess a particular linguistic situation, but it also can obscure the fluidity between languages by implicitly

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11   Ghulām ʿAlī "Āzād" Bilgrāmī, *Subḥat al-marjān fī āthār Hindūstān*, vol. 1 (Alīgarh: Jāmiʿat ʿAlīgarh al-Islāmiyya, 1976–80), 221–3.

12   Joseph Lowry, "Ibn Maʿṣūm (1642–1708)," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography: 1350–1850*, ed. by Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 174–84.

13   Lowry, "Ibn Maʿṣūm," 177.

14   Tahera Qutbuddin, "Arabic in India: A Survey and Classification of Its Uses, Compared with Persian," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127, no. 3 (2007): 315–38.

15   Orsini, "'Krishna is the Truth of Man,'" 223; Muzaffar Alam points to Ḥasan Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Injū's observation in his Persian lexicon, *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (1708), that Persian as well as Arabic were the languages of Islam. See Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200–1800* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 133.

putting up barriers between them. By categorizing language uses one may neglect archives of material such as Hindustani Arabic literature.

As an alternative to teasing out the functions of languages, I find Shantanu Phukan's study of the "ecology" of early modern literary communities a useful analytical framework for understanding Azad's corpus as it relates to the place of Arabic literature in Hindustan. This article is an attempt to take Phukan's call seriously: "to do justice to such a complex and adamantly heteroglot literary community, we must, I believe, redirect our gaze at the blurred peripheries of literary canons, for it is there that we glimpse at the intricate inter-dependencies and rivalries—in a word the 'ecology'—of literary communities."[16] Azad's corpus is a site of confluent literary voices, and one cannot avoid the interdependencies between Hindi, Arabic, and Persian when thinking about *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles*. To excavate the ecology of Azad's literary community is easier said than done. It means to cease thinking exclusively in terms of Hindi, Arabic, and Persian studies, and to think about how these multiple literary voices interacted with each other.

In Hindustan there were several streams of discourse on poetics (literary science), even if most research has noticed only those in Sanskrit and Persian, seen as India's two dominant cosmopolitan languages.[17] Literary science thus forms the final methodological concern at stake in Azad's corpus. Although literary science in Sanskrit had been a vast field of learning for more than a millennium, this was not the case for Persian. The first treatises on Persian literary science from the twelfth century onwards were indeed written in Persian, but they relied heavily on Arabic. The first known Persian treatise on poetics, *Tarjumān al-balāghah* by Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar Rādūyānī (fl. 1088–1114), was modeled on an earlier Arabic text.[18] More influential than Rādūyānī, Rashīd al-Dīn al-Vaṭvāṭ (d. 1182–83), a high-ranking official in the Khwarazm court in the twelfth century, produced a bilingual Arabic/Persian treatise on Persian

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16 Phukan, "Through throats," 37. Orsini, "How to do multilingual literary history?" responds to Phukan's call. Pankaj Jha's analysis of Vidyapati's multilingual oeuvre also answers Phukan. See Jha, *A Political History of Literature: Vidyapati and the Fifteenth Century* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019).

17 Pollock, "The Languages of Science"; Truschke, "The Mughal *Book of War*"; and Richard M. Eaton and Phillip B. Wagoner, *Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested Sites in India's Deccan Plateau, 1300–1600* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014) are examples of scholarship that imply that Sanskrit and Persian were the dominant literary sciences in India. The Perso-Indica project (www.perso-indica.net) also sets up a binary between these languages.

18 Bo Utas, "'Genres' in Persian Literature 900–1900," in *Literary History: Towards a Global Perspective*, vol. 2, ed. by Gunilla Lindberg-Wada (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), 213.

poetry, *Ḥadāʾiq al-siḥr fī daqāʾiq al-shiʿr* (*Gardens of Magic in the Subtleties of Poetry*).

ʿIlm al-badīʿ or *ʿilm-i badīʿ*, which can be translated as the science of innovative literary devices, rhetoric, or the new science, was one of the earliest fields of Persian literary science to mature and it was heir to Arabic.[19] The celebrated Abbasid scholar Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 908) is known as the founder of this science with his composition of *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*.[20] The Arabic *badīʿiyyah* emerged as a genre of poetry in which each line contains a specific figure of speech that is poetic ornamentation.[21] Julie Meisami notes that the early Persian writers drew heavily upon the Arabic texts and there were few differences between the Arabic and Persian *ʿilm al-badīʿ*.[22] The notion of ornamentation is worth emphasizing here because *ʿilm al-badīʿ* in Arabic and Persian shares valences with Sanskrit *alaṃkāraśāstra*, which can also be glossed as the science of poetic ornaments.

In the Hindustani context for Persian literary science, scholars have directed attention towards the evidence that it had been the center of the production for an abundance of lexicons. Alam and Subrahmanyam indicate that these Persian grammars and commentaries on phrases and proverbs show their author's interest in developing Persian in Hindustan, and they cite *Mirʾāt al-iṣṭilāḥ* by Ānand Rām "Mukhliṣ" (1699–1750), *Bahār-i ʿajam* (d. 1766) by Tek Chand "Bahār," and *Muṣṭalaḥāt al-shuʿarā* of Siyālkotī Mal "Vārasta" (d. 1766) as examples.[23] Kinra inscribes the Indian Persian dictionaries such as Ḥasan Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Injū's *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (1708) within a broader narrative of the Persian *farhang* and concludes that the Indian dictionaries mediated between cosmopolitan coherence and local vernacularity.[24] The negotiation

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19 Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Orient Pearls* (London: Routledge, 2003), 246.

20 Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 245–6 is a summary.

21 Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "Toward a Redefinition of 'Badīʿ' Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 12 (1981): 1–29 revisits Ibn al-Muʿtazz, and Wolfhart P. Heinrichs, "Ibn Al-Muʿtazz," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 311: Arabic Literary Culture, 500–925*, ed. by Michael Cooperson and Shawkat Toorawa (Detroit: Gale, 2005), 164–71 provides an overview. See also Lara Harb, *Arabic Poetics: Aesthetic Experience in Classical Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 52–3.

22 Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 246.

23 Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a *Munshi*," in *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800*, ed. by Sheldon Pollock (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 187–8.

24 Rajeev Kinra, "This Noble Science: Indo-Persian Comparative Philology, c. 1000–1800 CE," in *South Asian Texts in History: Critical Engagements with Sheldon Pollock*, ed. by Yigal Bronner, Whitney Cox, and Lawrence McCrea (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2011), 361. Based on the evidence of manuscripts, I have also demonstrated this through

between the cosmopolitan and local becomes central for this engagement with Azad's work on literary science. Azad's Persian, in its relationship to the cosmopolitan idiom of Arabic and the vernacular of Hindi, instantiates Kinra's observation. Azad's gesture towards Arabic complicates current understandings of Indian Persian literary science, and Arabic also becomes a medium for the mediation between cosmopolitan coherence and local vernacularity.[25]

I have offered three methods to situate Azad's comparative practice—translation, multilingualism, and literary science. Azad's works help us expand the parameters of each of these terms often in unexpected ways for Hindustani and Arabic literature.

1   Translation as Arabization (*ta'rīb*) and Persianization (*tafrīs*)

To trace how Azad moves between Indic and Islamicate forms of knowledge, we must first attend to his own ideas of translation. The prefaces to his works offer readers many descriptions of his translation process. In the preface to *The Coral Rosary*, Azad signals a self-aware usage of a specifically Indian flavor of Arabic:

> From the beginning of the world until now, the Indians, who worshiped idols and who are firmly rooted in their Indianness (*al-tahannud*), have recorded a science of poetic innovation (*'ilm al-badī'*) in their language as well. They have fashioned jewelry from the gold of their eloquence and have perfumed their gatherings with the scent of sandalwood. Therefore, I would venture to render some of their innovations into the language of pure Arabs. And I add the voice of the local cuckoo to the cooing of the dove.[26]

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an analysis of the earliest known illustrated Persian *farhang* (dictionary, lexicon), the *Miftāḥ al-Fużalā'*, the text of which dates to 1468 and manuscript to the 1490s. See Vivek Gupta, "Images for Instruction: A Multilingual Illustrated Dictionary in Fifteenth-Century Sultanate India," *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World* 38 (2021): 77–112. Walter N. Hakala traces the development of lexicography in North Indian vernaculars from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. See *Negotiating Languages: Urdu, Hindi, and the Definition of Modern South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

25   Kinra, "This Noble Science," 361.

26   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 1, 4.

والهنود الذين هم عبدة الأوثان والغريقون في التهند من بدو والعالم إلى الآن، أيضا
دونوا علم البديع في لسانهم وصاغوا حليا من إبريز بيانهم، فعطروا المحافل بعرف
الصنادل، وأرجوا المجامع بأرج المنادل. فأحببت أن أنقل بعض بديعهم إلى لسان
العرب العربآء، وأضيف صوت الكوكلآء إلى سجع الورقاء.

This passage suggests that Azad composes his text in Arabic because he hopes it will reach a broader Arabic cosmopolis.[27] He takes on the role of a non-Arab scholar who informs Arabic readership of the *ʿilm al-badīʿ* of Indian languages and does so while demonstrating mastery of the Arabic language, while writing in rhymed prose (*sajʿ*). He juxtaposes "Indians who are firm in Indianness [*al-gharīqūn fī l-tahannud*]" with "pure Arabs [*al-ʿarab al-ʿarabāʾ*]." Whether *al-tahannud*, which has the same root as both *al-Hind* (India) and Hindu, carries ethnic or religious implications remains unclear; nonetheless, *al-tahannud* as a word signifies the author's innovation, because it is not standard Arabic found in dictionaries and is subject to the reader's interpretation. Azad also extols the work of Indians by describing their eloquence through the metaphor of local Indian scents that perfume gatherings, and he claims that he introduces the voice of the cuckoo (*ṣawt al-kawkilāʾ*) to the cooing of the doves (*sajʿ al-waraqāʾ*).[28] The last sentence of this passage playfully transliterates and rhymes the name of the South Asian bird, the *kokilā* (in Hindi transliteration), with *sajʿ al-waraqāʾ* (cooing of the dove). These choices of birds aptly fit the field of premodern Hindi poetry, which serves as the source of much of his translation. All in all, Azad reveals his agency as a translator of Hindustani sciences, specifically of Hindi poetics.

Azad's literary stylings were met with some response in Hindustani Arabic. Nawwāb Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Ḥasan's late nineteenth-century *Nashwat al-sakrān* (*Ecstasy of the Drunken*) derives its name from "the wine of the remembrance of the *ghizlān* [female beloveds, gazelles]"[29] and includes Azad's Arabic head-to-toe poetic description of a woman known as *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* (*The Mirror of Beauty*, 1773). In the chapter of this work where Ḥasan defines the different types of lovers in Indian poetry, he quotes Azad verbatim:

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27   See Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

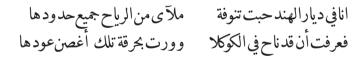28   Thanks to Simon Leese for clarifying this translation for me.

29   Nawwāb Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Ḥasan, *Nashwat al-sakrān*, 2.

It is known that most Arabic poets describe ruins and places that they cry about as they describe the desert trees such as the cedar, jujube, toothbrush tree, frankincense, and others. The camel, the camel-driver, and night-travel are described, and these are particular to Persian poetry and not Indian poetry. Most of the Indians describe birds, breezes, and clouds, and most of the Persian poets focus on the first and the second. In relation to the third, the doves, in their stead the Indians have the bird, *al-kawkilāʾ*.[30]

اعلم أن شعراء العرب أكثروا من أغزالهم ذكر الاطلال والأماكن والبكاء عليها
بعد ما خلت عن الاحبة وذكر الأشجار الصحرائية كالاثل والضال والاراك والبان
وغيرها وذكر الجمل والحادى والسرى وهذا الطريق مختص بهم ماهو في الفرس
ولا في الاهاند وكذا اكثر واذكر الحمائم والنسائم والغنائم وشعراء الفرس شاكروهم في
الأولى والثانية وشعراء الهند في الثالثة ولهؤلاء مكان الحمامة الكوكلاء.

Al-kawkilāʾ or *kokilā* (Hindi transliteration) is then thoroughly glossed in a note by Ḥasan, which also lifts straight from Azad. Ḥasan quotes Azad in writing that that the *kokilā* is a feminine bird. He then cites Azad's poem:

I am in the homes of Hind and traversed a wasteland full of fragrance in all its borders.

It is known that the *kokilā* had lamented there and those branches were burned forever.[31]

ملآى من الرياح جميع حدودها   انا في ديار الهند حبت تنوفة
وورت بحرقة تلك أغصن عودها   فعرفت أن قدناح في الكوكلا

The *kokilā* is a special bird that typifies the experience of Hind for Azad. As Azad's corpus is a rich field for comparative poetics it inspires his commentators to undertake his ambition of establishing translingual parameters for comparison. This commentary on Azad's use of a single Hindi word, *kokilā*, in Arabic signifies a broader effort to make sense of Azad's sensibilities. It also affirms the idea that the word *kokilā* would exoticize an Arabic text.

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30   Nawwāb Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Ḥasan, *Nashwat al-sakrān*, 84–5; *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 487.

31   Nawwāb Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Ḥasan, *Nashwat al-sakrān*, 84–5.

Just as Azad claims to localize Arabic with an Indian sensibility, he also Arabizes and Persianizes local forms when he renders Indic poetics in Arabic or Persian idioms. For instance, in Persian, where Azad would mention a *kokilā* in Arabic he goes with the parrot or *ṭūṭī*, a pervasive Persian metonym for India that became part of the epithet of the famous Indian Persian poet Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī (1253–1325).[32] In his Persian preface to *The Gazelles of India*, Azad states, "It should be known that just as the Arab doves and Persian nightingales listen to the sweet melody, so do the Indian parrots [*ṭūṭiyān-i hind*] have the taste for a saccharine sweetness."[33] As Azad renders Indian poetic devices into Arabic and Persian, Arab doves and Persian nightingales are primed to appreciate these forms, and through Azad's act of Arabization (*ta'rīb*) or Persianization (*tafrīs*) these forms become available for a new group of litterateurs. *Tafrīs*, for instance, appears in the first chapter title of *The Gazelles*, "On the Persianization (*tafrīs*) of Hindi figures of speech." Both Arabic and Persian sections on Hindi poetic innovations have a nearly identical list of entries. The Arabic and Persian exemplary verses of definitions often differ, whereas the definitions remain mostly translated from Arabic into Persian.

Ta'rīb and *tafrīs* mark the specific modes of translation that Azad uses. Unlike today's translators, Azad is not concerned with getting every term right; rather, he strives to make Indic forms intelligible in Arabic or Persian. He most likely had the facility with Arabic, Persian, and Hindi to produce word-for-word translations, but that was not what he valued. Instead, he modifies and adds to poetic devices to give them a new life in Arabic and Persian with the intention to show his Arabic and Persian readers his mastery of the traditions, traces, or antiquities of Hindustan (*āthār Hindūstān*). There is thus a clear negotiation between innovating within Arabic and Persian and making foreign forms fit the conventions of a literary culture. Azad makes local Indic forms innovations within Arabic and Persian idiomatic conventions. His translation processes thus merge the cosmopolitan and local that Kinra finds in Persian lexicons.[34]

The need to take stock of an ecology of literary communities and a scholar's propensities in assessing his translation process pertains strongly to Azad's discussion on the Hindi typologies of female heroines known as *nāyikābheda*. In Azad's prefatory comments on the fourth part of *The Coral Rosary* on the Hindi *nāyikābheda*, he employs the term *ta'rīb*. He states,

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32   Paul Losensky and Sunil Sharma, *In the Bazaar of Love: The Selected Poetry of Amīr Khusrau* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), xi.

33   Ghulām 'Alī "Āzād" Bilgrāmī, *Ghizlān al-Hind muṭāla'ah-i taṭbīqī-i balāghat-i Hindī va Fārsī bih inżimām-i faṣlī dar zanshināsī* (Tehran: Ṣidā-yi Mu'āṣir, 2003), 28.

34   Kinra, "This Noble Science," 361.

Indians have a peculiar style that makes a lasting impression upon one's soul; it is called 'the secrets of women' (*asrār al-niswān*). It is a luscious garden full of beautiful gazelles, and I seek to Arabize (*taʿrīb*) it, and I present a new amatory theme (*nasīb*) to Arabic writers.[35]

إنّي رأيت الأهاند لهم فن عجيب الأسلوب، آخذ بمجامع القلوب سوّه باسم معناه أسرار النسوان. وهو روض أريض ترتع فيه أوانس الغزلان، فوددت أن أخلع عليه خلعة التعريب، وأهدى إلى ادباء نوعا جديدا من النسيب.

Interpreting what Azad means by *taʿrīb* requires close attention to what he does with these female beloveds (the *nāyikā*s) across *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles*, and the broader literary milieu in which Azad participates. Sunil Sharma, for his part, notices Azad's gloss for *nāyikābheda* as *asrār al-nisvān* in Persian, and argues that he may have misinterpreted the term "*bheda*" which means "type" in the context of the *nāyikā*s and not "secret," yet it also means "secret" in other contexts.[36] Although Azad may have taken poetic license with "the secrets of women," he definitely read *nāyikābheda* texts in Hindi. He quotes them at length in his biographical compendium of poets known as the *Maʾāṣir al-kirām*.[37] Beyond the preface, Azad also provides a full transliteration of the term *nāyikābheda* in Persian, and transliterates the words *nāyaka* (hero) and *nāyikā* (heroine) and translates these terms as husband and wife respectively in Arabic.[38] In light of Azad's potential to innovate we must be careful readers when he provides an interpretation that initially seems incorrect. In fact, the analytical categories of correctness, incorrectness, and mistakes fail when a writer explicitly states his purpose to Arabize or Persianize an Indic literary system. While *bheda* in the context of classical Indic *nāyikābheda* may not mean secret, what new meaning does "the secrets of women" create? Could the many different psychological states of a heroine vis-à-vis her hero not be her secrets?

Azad employs a theoretical language to describe his *taʿrīb* and *tafrīs* processes. For instance, he often describes translation through metaphors of

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35   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 1, 4.
36   Sharma, "Translating Gender," 97; Allison Busch, "Poetry in Motion: Literary Circulation in Mughal India," in *Culture and Circulation: Literature in Motion in Early Modern India*, ed. by Thomas de Bruijn and Allison Busch (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 212.
37   Azad, *Maʾāṣir al-kirām* (Hyderabad: Asafiya Library, 1910), 352–407.
38   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 327.

sartorial transumption (the act of dressing one thing up as another).[39] This calls to mind Walter Benjamin's aperçu: "the language of translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds."[40] Sharma notes that in the introduction to *The Gazelles* Azad's students and friends asked him to "clothe the last two chapters [of *The Coral Rosary*] in a Persian garb."[41] Azad deploys similar metaphors in Arabic as he uses Arabic verbs such as *khalaʿ ʿala*, and *kasw*, both of which have sartorial connotations, to characterize the act of representing Indian knowledge.[42] If Azad intentionally dresses up Hindi in Persian and Arabic, we might wonder what the point would be to search for the original sources of Azad's Indic knowledge. Through paying attention Azad's own ideas about his process, we learn that he wants transcreated Indic ideas to be assessed on their own terms.

Alterations and additions to poetic systems are other ways Azad Arabizes and Persianizes local poetic systems. Azad adds nine new female beloveds to the traditional Indic system of female heroines[43] and sections devoted entirely to poetic devices he has authored himself.[44] Before taking an example, it must be noted that innovation within poetic systems with the addition or alteration of different poetic devices was a trend across the literary communities of Azad's context. Even in the most orthodox of literary cultures such as Sanskrit, changes to systems of poetics were common.[45] Similarly, books on method (*rītigranth*s) in Hindi frequently riff on old tropes.[46] It was common for Hindi poets writing *nāyikābheda* texts to invent within the different typologies of beloveds.[47] As such, Azad's innovation of poetic devices of female beloveds in Arabic and Persian directly relates to norms within Sanskrit and Hindi literary traditions

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39   I borrow this term from Finbarr Barry Flood where he states that comparisons between linguistic translation and sartorial transumption are relatively common. See, "Cultural Cross-dressing," in *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and the Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 61–88.

40   Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 258.

41   Sharma, "Translating Gender," 96, citing Azad, *Ghizlān*, 24.

42   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 1, 4; *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 5.

43   Ernst, "Indian Lovers in an Arabic and Persian Guise," 39; Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 390–96.

44   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 132–233; *Ghizlān*, 69–112.

45   In Yigal Bronner's research on Appayya Dīkṣita's manual on Sanskrit poetic ornaments *Kuvalayānanda* (*Joy of the Water Lily*, sixteenth century), he shows how Appayya innovated on older models by expanding the domain of previous *alaṃkāraśāstra* (Sanskrit literary science) to include material that was either elided or implied by *dhvani* (poetic suggestion), and altered and added to taxonomies of poetic adornments (*alaṃkāra*s). Yigal Bronner, "Back to the Future: Appayya Dīkṣita's *Kuvalayānanda* and the Rewriting of Sanskrit Poetics," *Vienna Journal of South Asian Studies* 48 (2004): 67.

46   Busch, "The Anxiety of Innovation."

47   Busch, "The Anxiety of Innovation," 51.

while at the same time are a component of his Arabizing and Persianizing processes.[48] These additions to poetic systems thus could be conceived of as his participation in Hindustani literary culture just as a Sanskrit or Hindi writer would.

As an exercise, it is instructive to compare the differences of his treatment of the same subject in Arabic and Persian. Let us take his addition of a Bedouin female beloved to Hindi poetry. In Persian, Azad's Arab or Bedouin *nāyikā* (female beloved of Indic poetry) is called "*al-badawiyyah*" (Bedouin).[49] *The Gazelles* illustrates the Bedouin girl with a quote from a master of Persian and Arabic verse, Mīrzā Muḥammad ʿAlī Ṣāʾib Tabrīzī (d. 1677):

> Her heart is prone towards Persian men (*ʿajamī zādigān*)
> although our Laylī, sitting in the desert, is Arab.[50]

<div dir="rtl">

دلش به ما عجمی زادگان بود مایل   اگر چه لیلی صحرانشین عربی است

</div>

Azad's use of this Persian verse in *The Gazelles* makes Laylī's Arab identity acceptable to the *ʿajamī zādigān*. No such verse appears in his Arabic rendition in *The Coral Rosary*. The Bedouin girl does bear a slightly different name in Arabic, "*al-aʿrābiyyah*," although immediately following this title she is described as "*al-badawiyyah*." Azad is comparatively terse in his description of her in Arabic. He provides a verse that describes her as adorned with Bedouin jewelry. She wears a necklace and bracelet made of "*dam al-ghazālān*," which comes from "*dam al-ghazāl*," a deep red plant that grows in the desert. This plant reflects a specific stylistic choice related to the concept of the *ghizlān* (gazelles), which is Azad's Arabic and Persian analogue for the concept of the *nāyikā*.[51] As Azad invents a new Bedouin *nāyikā* here, his method of illustrating his definition with a poem is particularly important because it draws attention to his *taʿrīb* or *tafrīs*. In Persian he cites poets familiar to a Persian community, and in Arabic, the more direct source of the Bedouin type, he refers to specific kinds of jewelry, as if she were made from the desert itself. A range of

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48   Innovating new poetic devices was also characteristic of Arabic and Persian poetics. See Stetkevych, "Toward a Redefinition," for Arabic. I have previously cited Rādūyānī and al-Vaṭvāṭ's early works of Persian literary science as examples of how Persian features new systems.

49   Azad, *Ghizlān*, 144.

50   Ibid.

51   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 99. Azad later cites the *dam al-ghazāl* as an example of *dhvani/al-tawriyah*.

techniques emerges for *taʿrīb* or *tafrīs* across both languages and oftentimes his method to illustrate a given definition differs in Arabic and Persian.

Taʿrīb and *tafrīs* are the conceptual tools in Azad's texts for adapting Hindi poetics in Arabic and Persian idioms. They are the translational processes by which Azad establishes kinship between these languages. Azad is not concerned with getting it right; instead, he invents within Arabic and Persian while also making his works fit within Arabic and Persian conventions. Azad's comparative poetics thus evince a constant negotiation between convention and innovation, and between cosmopolitan and local idioms.

2 Eighteenth-Century Multilingualism

Given Azad's multilingual propensities, how do we analyze the constellation of languages present in his corpus? In answer to Phukan's call to study how languages interacted with each other, I respond to work that has analyzed a particular literary bilingualism.[52] Relevant to this article, Arabic/Persian and Hindi/Persian are two forms of literary bilingualism that have received attention from scholars. As oral culture falls outside of the purview of this analysis, I distinguish literary bilingualism from spoken bilingualism.[53] Centuries of cross-pollination between Arabic and Persian religious thought and literary traditions by no means came to a halt in Hindustan.[54] For all the pitfalls of the category "Perso-Arabic," scholars from Persian milieus with fluency in both Arabic and Persian were ubiquitous, and there are innumerable examples of Perso-Arabic literary bilingualism, which need to be understood. Though Hindi and Persian bilingualism remains a nascent field of research, scholars have managed to show that Persian and Hindi litterateurs were intertwined on the level of genre and lexicon.[55]

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52   Francesca Orsini has approached this problem in terms of diglossia and bilingualism in "Traces of a Multilingual World: Hindavi in Persian Texts," in *After Timur Left: Culture and Circulation in Fifteenth-Century North India*, ed. by Francesca Orsini and Samira Sheikh (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 404–37.

53   If a scholar may have been literarily bilingual in Arabic and Persian, this does not mean they spoke either of these languages.

54   On various aspects of Arabic and Persian literary bilingualism in Persian regions see Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, and Travis Zadeh, *The Vernacular Qurʾan: Translation and the Rise of Persian Exegesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For the less-studied topic of Arabic and Persian literary bilingualism in India see Ahmad, *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan*.

55   Nalini Delvoye, "The Image of Akbar as a Patron of Music in Indo-Persian and Vernacular Sources," in *Akbar and His India*, ed. by Irfan Habib (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997),

My decision to consider the relationships between Persian/Arabic and Hindi/Persian comes also in response to Orsini's recent analysis of multilingual history. Writes Orsini, "Multilingual history … 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."[56] Part of cultivating this awareness is isolating the affinities between discrete literary languages. While a focus on bilingualisms may appear counter to Phukan's "ecology," I adopt them here as a tool to allow us to isolate the relationships between two languages so that we can fully appreciate multilingualism when we zoom further out. *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* demonstrate that these two bilingualisms are not mutually exclusive and show their contemporaneity and interdependencies in the context of eighteenth-century literary sciences. Rigid categories of "Persian," "Arabic," and "Hindi" literary cultures inhibit us from seeing how these literatures interacted with each other, and all that is fundamental to one literary tradition is not written down in that language. The purpose of teasing out these bilingual relationships is to illuminate how languages can depend on each other. The function-oriented approach to multilingualism is a model that potentially discounts Azad of his contributions to Arabic literature and overlooks the rich relationships between languages that can upend the stability of linguistic categories.

2.1   *The Case of Arabic and Hindi*

It is worth stating at the outset that if we are true to Phukan's "ecology" that we must acknowledge that these forms of literary cross-pollination between Arabic and Hindi may have been enabled by Persian. Nevertheless, a compelling example of how Azad's Arabic writings evokes Hindi is in his Arabic composition in a work of 105 couplets entitled *The Mirror of Beauty*. This poem consists of a full head-to-toe description of the beloved that recalls the Persian *sarāpā* and Indic *śikh-nakh* (head-to-toe description) or *aṅgdarpan* (the mirror of the body) in Hindi.[57] While Azad could be drawing on Persian to compose *The Mirror of Beauty*, the main source of his inspiration is likely Hindi. The

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188–214; Phukan, "Through a Persian Prism"; Busch, "Poetry in Motion"; Orsini, "Traces of a Multilingual World"; and, Gupta, "Images for Instruction." Elizabeth M. Thelen, *Urban Histories of Rajasthan: Religion, Politics and Society (1550–1800)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), is a pioneering study that puts Persian and Hindi archives in dialogue.

56   Orsini, "How to do multilingual literary history?" 243.

57   Allison Busch, *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 158; Busch, "Poetry in Motion," 195.

mirror (*mirʾāt* and *darpan*) in the titles of these Arabic and Hindi works is one similarity. Azad's Persian biographical compendium of poets, the *Maʾāṣir al-kirām*, composed in 1752/3 (twenty years before *The Mirror of Beauty*) also offers further insight. In Azad's entries on Hindi poets such as ʿAbd al-Jalīl Bilgrāmī and Muḥammad ʿĀrif Bilgrāmī we find *śikh-nakh*s in couplets (*dohā*s) and quatrains (*kavitt*s). We also notice a *śikh-nakh* and *aṅgdarpan* in the entry on one of the most skilled Hindi poets, Sayyid Ghulām Nabī Bilgrāmī "Raslīn" (1699–1750), strengthening the possibility that Azad borrows from Hindi in *The Mirror of Beauty*.

The version of Raslīn's *The Mirror of Her Body* quoted in Azad's *Maʾāṣir al-kirām* is of specific interest because it appears in a *taẕkirah* (Persian commemorative biography) of Hindi poets. *Taẕkirah*s such as this often account for the literary merits of a poet in addition to providing biographical details. This *taẕkirah* is also valuable for our understanding of Azad's multilingualism because it emphasizes that he read and perhaps admired the Hindi verses that he quotes.[58]

Azad's *The Mirror of Beauty* and the Hindi poet Raslīn's *The Mirror of Her Body* share stylistic features lending them to comparison.[59] Both describe several corresponding body parts (nose, lips, thighs), and both give special attention to the woman's adornments (Arabic/Hindi/translation: *al-sawwār*/ *cūrī*[60]/bracelets, *al-khalkhāl*/*nūpur* and *pāyal*[61]/anklets, *al-kuḥl*/*kājar*/kohl, *al-ḥinnāʾ*/*mehndī*/henna), which are all standard conventions of this genre. An even closer detail is that both *The Mirror of Beauty* and the Rampur *The Mirror of Her Body* describe various fabrics of the woman's clothing.[62] Other than the

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58 *The Mirror of Her Body* that appears in the *Maʾāṣir al-kirām* is an abridgment of the entire work as it only contains 22 verses and the long version in the Rampur Library 1997 edition has 179 verses. There are many discrepancies in the *Maʾāṣir al-kirām*'s version such as missing words and differences in transliteration. My reading of Raslīn's Hindi approximates the verses using all available editions relying on both Nastaʿliq and Devanagari script editions.

59 I have also consulted the Nagaripracarini Sabha 1967 edition and the Devanagari/ Nastaʿliq edition published by the Raza Rampur Library in 1997. Raslīn, *Raslīngranthāvalī* (Varanasi: Nagaripracarini Sabha, 1969) and Raslīn, *Aṅgdarpan* (Rampur: Rampur Raza Library, 1997).

60 Raslīn, *Aṅgdarpan*, v. 117.

61 Raslīn, *Aṅgdarpan*, vv. 167–8.

62 Ḥasan, *Nashwat*, 120. *The Mirror of Beauty* describes white, red, yellow, black, green, blue, and sandalwood-perfumed clothing. The sandalwood-perfumed clothing is called *al-libās al-muṣandal* and the word *muṣandal* appears in *Dehkhoda Persian Dictionary*, rather than any consulted Arabic dictionary. Despite its absence from Arabic dictionaries, it is an adjectival form of the noun for sandalwood in Arabic. In *The Mirror of Beauty*, the scent of this clothing has pacifying attributes.

final lace or sandalwood-perfumed clothes and the Arab black clothing, all colors match.[63] These stylistic similarities alone implicate a Hindi source for *The Mirror of Beauty* in Arabic.

Reading the Hindi and Arabic poems in tandem raises several questions about Azad's inspiration for writing *The Mirror of Beauty*. Let us take the Hindi and Arabic verses on the kohl for comparison. Raslīn's Hindi verses read:

> Description of the kohl:
> Her eyes are aware of the mind's wonderful ways,
> Drinking the poison of her own kohl, she takes the life of others.
>
> Description of the kohl at the corner of her eye:
> As she has colored the kohl at the corner of her eye, do its wings begin
>   to flutter?
> As the wagtail-eyes are seen, their wings (the eyelids) make the invisible
>   (her eyes) visible.
>
> *kājara varṇan:*
> *re mana rīta vicitra yaha tiya nayanana ke ceta*
> *viṣa kājara nija khāīke jiya aurana ko leta*
>
> *kājara koreṅ varṇan:*
> *tiya kājara koreṅ baḍhī pūrana kiyo kabi paccha (pakṣa) pacchi*
> *lakhiyata khañjana akṣi kī paccha alaccha pratyaccha*[64]

Azad's Arabic verse on kohl reads:

> I look at the kohl on her eyelashes
> it is the steel of the Indian and Yemeni swords.
>
> Or the most innovative painter with jet-black calligraphy
> that adds to the splendor of the passing of the cup.[65]

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63   Raslīn, *Aṅgdarpan*, vv. 133–8; *Raslīngranthāvalī*, vv. 135–40. The Rampur and Nagaripra-carini Sabha *The Mirror of Her Body*s describe white, blue, red, green, yellow, and lace (*jālī*) bodices (*kancukī*).

64   Azad, *Ma'āṣir al-kirām*, 374–5; Raslīn, *Aṅgdarpan*, vv. 38–9; *Raslīngranthāvalī*, vv. 41, 43, 259–60.

65   Ḥasan, *Nashwat*, 114–5.

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الكحل

أنظر إلى كحل على اهدابها   هوجوهرلمهند ويمان

أوأبدع النقاش خطا حالكا   ليزيد رونق دورة الفنجان

</div>

The Hindi verses feature qualities we would expect of this poetry: the eyes express the sentiments of the mind, and the stock metaphor of the wagtail bird represents the eyes. Raslīn plays with the *ccha* sounds in Hindi (from Sanskrit *kṣa*), creating alliteration with *paccha alaccha pratyaccha*, another convention of Hindi poetry. In Arabic, Azad accentuates the sharpness of the beloved's lashes by comparing them to the Indian sword (*muhannad*). The Indianness of the *muhannad* implies an attempt to metaphorically localize the kohl whereas poetic conventions like the passing of the cup Arabize it. Both Azad's Arabic verse and Raslīn's Hindi verses characterize the kohl as dangerously beautiful—it greases the Indian sword-like eyelashes in Arabic and it is poisonous in Hindi.[66] This leads us to question if Raslīn's metaphor inspired Azad. Not only are the formal qualities of a Hindi *aṅgdarpan* expressed in Arabic, but Azad's *The Mirror of Beauty* brings Hindi poetic sensibilities into Arabic.

Here, it is worth questioning if there was a Persian intermediary between Hindi and Arabic. *The Mirror of Beauty* relies on the vocabulary of Persian poetic beauty and its meter might even be related to Persian meters.[67] Yet, the several similarities between *The Mirror of Beauty* and Raslīn's *The Mirror of Her Body*, seem to point to Persian's secondary nature in this process. Whether or not there was a Persian intermediary nevertheless remains an open question. Keeping it in the back of our minds is being attentive to the ecology of this literary community.

Nevertheless, Azad's writings contain many chances to discover the development of analogue genres as we witness between the *aṅgdarpan* and *The Mirror of Beauty*. In a discussion of Hindi and Persian relationships, Allison Busch pointed to such genres in ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Khān-i Khānān's (d. 1626) Hindi *Nagarśobhā* (*Splendor of the City*) and the Persian genre of *shahr-āshūb* (lament for the city).[68] Like the *Splendor of the City*'s relationship to Hindi

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66   Aditya Behl's reading of *Ḥaqāʾiq-i Hindī* accounts for the beautiful (*jamālī*) and fearsome (*jalālī*) types of beauty that are common to the head-to-toe description in premodern Hindi. See, *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379–1545*, ed. by Wendy Doniger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 226–7.

67   Khan, *The Arabian Poets of Golconda*, 13.

68   Busch, "Poetry in Motion," 195–6.

literature, *The Mirror of Beauty* is exceptional in the expanse of Arabic literature. The *Splendor of the City* and *The Mirror of Beauty* demonstrate how genres can cross linguistic boundaries. This, of course, should be of no surprise, as the *qaṣīdah*, *ghazal*, and several other genres made crossings. In this case, however, the *Splendor of the City* and *The Mirror of Beauty*'s genres do not heavily mature in either Hindi or Arabic. Regarding Azad's other works, analogical relationships take on several forms across *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles*. In some cases, Azad discloses how he brings an element of one literary culture into another, while others call for us to read between the lines. The spectrum of analogical relationships in Azad's corpus, from the easily discernible to the cryptic, leaves today's scholar wondering if his comparative exercises attest to more cross-linguistic relationships than ever imaginable.

2.2 *The Case of Arabic and Persian*

The prevalence of literary bilingualism between Arabic and Persian across Azad's corpus captures the strong affinity between these two literary cultures and the adaptive capacity of their forms.[69] In contrast to the idea of an analogue, many Arabic and Persian relations come to view by means of direct allusion or quotation.[70] In *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles*' sections on poetics, Azad recycles the majority of his Arabic terminology in Persian. His Persian definitions are often direct translations of *The Coral Rosary*. His mixture of Arabic and Persian attests to a continued fluidity between these languages.[71]

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[69] Simon Leese illustrates another case of Arabic-Persian bilingualism in the works of the Delhi intellectual Shāh Walī-Allāh (d. 1762) who preserved specific sounds of Arabic utterances in his translation of the Qurʾan into Persian. See Leese, "Arabic utterances in a multilingual world: Shāh Walī-Allāh and Qurʾanic translatability in North India," *Translation Studies* 14, no. 2 (2021): 242–61.

[70] Here, I dwell on how Azad's Persian depends on his Arabic writings, although we can also show the opposite. For instance, Azad's Arabic poetry draws on Persian literature in his composition of a "*qaṣīdat al-wāw*" in his third *diwan*. For a full discussion see, Ghulām Zarqānī, *Ghulām ʿAlī Āzād al-Bilgrāmī wa-musāhamatuhu fī ithrāʾ al-lughah al-ʿarabiyyah wa-ādābihā* (Delhi: Darul-Kitab, 2004), 139. Azad was aware of how Arabic writers were inspired by Persian as he even notes how the eminent Arabian poet Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zuhayr (d. 1258) adapted a Persian meter in Arabic. See Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 248.

[71] Alam implies fluidity between Arabic and Persian as well. See his discussions of *sharīʿah* and *akhlāq* (ethics) literature in *The Languages of Political Islam* in which he cites several medieval and early modern writers who move easily between Arabic and Persian. Francesca Orsini's reading of a Persian treatise on Hindi poetic and musical genres, *Ḥaqāʾiq-i Hindī*, also features instances where Arabic becomes rather significant to the interpretation of a Persian text. Take the fact that the parting of a woman's hairline (*māṅg* in Hindi) is explained as the *ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, or the straight path from the opening verse of the *Qurʾān* (*al-fātiḥa*). See Orsini, "'Krishna is the Truth of Man,'" 235. Aditya Behl

One prominent figure who adduces Arabic in his composition of Persian is Azad's contemporary, the philologist Sīrāj al-Dīn ʿAlī Khān-i "Ārzū" (ca. 1687/ 8–1756). Ārzū's works form an important point of comparison to Azad's because they are written during roughly the same period and concern similar topics. For instance, Ārzū explicitly bases his *Muṣmir* (*Fruitful*) on the fifteenth-century Egyptian theologian Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's *al-Muzhir fī ʿulūm al-lughah wa-anwāʿihā* (*The Luminous Work Concerning the Sciences of Language and its Subfields*).[72] A cursory glance at Azad and al-Suyūṭī's works reveals that *The Coral Rosary of Hindustan's Traditions* or *Subḥat al-marjān fī āthār Hindūstān*, as a title, carries a striking similarity to al-Suyūṭī's *al-Durr al-manthūr fī l-tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr* (1505) (*The Scattered Pearls of Historical Exegesis*).[73] Both titles refer to aquatic stones, resonate *āthār* (literally: antiquities) with the word *maʾthūr* (transmitted, handed down), and employ the convention of *sajʿ* (rhymed Arabic prose). Their similarity is unsurprising as Azad often refers to sections of *al-Durr* where al-Suyūṭī cites an *isnād* claiming that Adam first descended to earth in India and likens the bodies of water surrounding Serendip (identified with modern Sri Lanka) to pearls.

The relationship between Ārzū and Azad's works demand further comparison as there is evidence that these two philologists maintained an epistolary relationship.[74] Furthermore, Azad and Ārzū's allusions to al-Suyūṭī's works are not mere fashion choices. Such allusions and shifts in register link Hindustani Arabic and Persian works to broader trajectories of literary production in both

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also cites the Persian *pūl-i sirāṭ* in its relationship to a description of a woman's part in the poet Manjhan's Sufi romance *Madhumālatī* (1545). Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic*, 227.

72 Arthur Dudney, "A Desire for Meaning: Khān-i Ārzū's Philology and the Place of India in the Eighteenth-Century Persianate World" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014), 6. Several Persian texts produced in India, ranging from the thirteenth-century *Chachnāmah* to Khān-i Ārzū's eighteenth century *Muṣmir*, refer to another Arabic palimpsest that served as the source of the text's composition. Manan Ahmed discusses the *Chachnāmah*'s uncertain Arabic predecessor. See Manan Ahmed, "The Long Thirteenth Century of the *Chachnama*," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 49, no. 4 (2012): 459–91.

73 *Sūrat al-Insān* (76:19) features the phrase, "*lūʾluʾ manthūr*," or scattered pearls. *Al-Qurʾān*, transl. by Ahmed Ali (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 515. According to al-Suyūṭī's reading of "*al-durr al-manthūr*," the pearls serve as a metaphor for the beauty God bestowed on earth in the human form. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-manthūr fī l-tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr* (Beirut: Dār al-maʿrifah, 1978), 300–1. In al-Suyūṭī's exegesis he has used the word *al-durr*, instead of *al-lūʾluʾ* for pearl. *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (55:22) refers to both the coral and pearls from these titles. *Al-Qurʾān*, transl. Ahmed Ali, 461.

74 Dudney, "A Desire for Meaning," 52–3. Azad cites Ārzū's poetry and conceptions for his own poetic devices. Azad, *Ghizlān*, 92, 104. See also Arthur Dudney, *India in the Persian World of Letters: Khān-i Ārzū among the Eighteenth-Century Philologists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

languages. In the case of Persian in India, when litterateurs such as Ārzū and Azad used Arabic for their Persian compositions, it is difficult to conceive of these two literary cultures as separate.

Liturgical writing in Arabic often has literary consequences in Persian. Although Azad does not include a chapter in *The Gazelles* containing exegesis as in *The Coral Rosary*, upon close reading of his Persian works we discover echoes of Azad's *tafsīr* (religious exegesis) in both *The Gazelles* and even in the *Maʾāṣir al-kirām*. In the introduction to *The Gazelles*, Azad includes a section entitled "The Manifestation of Insight in *The Coral Rosary*," which summarizes Azad's exegesis in *The Coral Rosary*, with particular attention to the site of Adam's descent (*mahbaṭ-i ādam*).[75] Azad translates entire sections from his previous Arabic citations of al-Suyūṭī into Persian.[76] It is even more interesting to find traces of Azad's quotations of al-Suyūṭī in *Maʾāṣir al-kirām* when it was purportedly written twenty years before *The Coral Rosary*.[77] This would suggest that the arguments of *The Coral Rosary* carry a genealogy in Azad's Persian work.

At the end of Azad's section on Hindi poetics in Persian he includes three words found in the Qurʾān that al-Suyūṭī's exegesis claims have meanings in Hindi. These words are *ṭūbā* which he deduces is a name for heaven in Hindi, and *sundus*, which he concludes is the same as brocade (*rafīq al-dībāj*).[78] *Ablaʿī*, an Arabic imperative of the verb "to swallow," corresponds to a Hindi word "to drink."[79] These linguistic explanations appear in both *The Gazelles* and *The Coral Rosary*, and they elevate Hindi literature by showing a Qurʾanic connection, whether they are cited in Arabic or Persian.[80]

These examples pose somewhat of a conundrum: Is it worthwhile to think of Azad's quotations from Qurʾanic exegesis as crossings between Arabic and Persian knowledge systems? Or, do they constitute a single episteme? Is it valid to call this episteme "Persian" as much of it is "Arabic"? Is it valid to call it "Islamic" when much of it has little to do with religion? What are the rhetorical functions of Arabic in Persian, and in some cases, Persian in Arabic?

2.3 *Azad's Representation of Indic Languages in Arabic and Persian*

With these thoughts on Arabic/Hindi and Arabic/Persian relationships in Azad's corpus in mind, let us now query how Azad presents Hindi and Sanskrit

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75   Azad, *Ghizlān*, 24–5.

76   Azad, *Ghizlān*, 26.

77   Azad, *Maʾāṣir al-kirām*, 406.

78   Azad, *Maʾāṣir al-kirām*, 406, and *Al-Qurʾān*, transl. Ahmed Ali, 214 (13:29), 253 (18:31), 426 (44:53), 515 (76:21). *Ṭūbā* appears once and *sundus* three times.

79   *Al-Qurʾān*, transl. Ahmed Ali, 192 (11:44).

80   Azad, *Ghizlān*, 27; Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 1, 48–9.

sources in Arabic and Persian. His inspirations for Arabizing and Persianizing Hindi poetics were likely multiple. The field of Hindi poetics flourished through the rise of *rītigranth*s (books of method).[81] *Rītigranth*s were immensely popular and made Sanskrit knowledge more accessible in a vernacular medium. Hindi *rītigranth*s served as both theoretical and literary works and comprised definitions of Sanskrit poetic devices (*lakṣaṇ*) with illustrations of these devices (*udāharaṇ*).[82] Sanskrit poetics, known in its highly classical nomenclature as *alaṃkāraśāstra*, abounds with typologies and types of poetic devices. While it is known that Azad read Hindi works, he must have accessed Sanskrit to produce his own codification of Hindi poetics.[83] Although Azad is explicit that the poetic devices are from *al-hindiyyah*, denoting Hindi, there is most likely not a single author in Hindi or Sanskrit to which his works relate exclusively.[84]

Azad's description of Sanskrit in Arabic is a revealing attempt of making Sanskrit knowledge accessible to those with little knowledge of it. In *The Coral Rosary*'s passage following Azad's comparisons between genders in Arabic, Persian and Hindi, he describes Sanskrit as such:

> The Indians have a language called Sanskrit. It is pronounced with a short A sound after the S, no vowels for the N and second S, a short I sound after the K (in the word Sanskrit), and no vowel after the R and T. [The Indians] have recorded their entire science in this language. This language has a dual case, and its marker is an attached *hamzah* and an O sound attached to the end of the word. The plural form in Sanskrit is formed with the *alif* at the end of the word, and its script (*qalam*) is in no other but the most widely circulated script in Hind, the Deccan, and Gujarat—all these scripts go from the left to the right, without a break for the letters and words like the Greek script. It has unique characters not found in other languages including the neuter, singular, dual, and plural forms, and the pronouns [for all of those] are different, apart from the masculine and feminine forms and their pronouns. This language is not spoken, and it continues to be written.

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81 Pollock, "The Languages of Science" lists some important figures in the field of Hindi literary science.
82 Busch, "The Anxiety of Innovation," 45.
83 Azad, *Maʾāṣir al-kirām*, 364–6.
84 Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 1, 1.

[The Indians] have four divine books that they claim to be complete with preaching, wisdom, and accounts in Sanskrit. Hundreds of thousands[85] of years ago, when there was no beauty in Sanskrit prose, and in other prose of other languages of India and the Deccan, they expressed the rules of their sciences in poetry. Their ancients have taken several thousands of years to perfect their science of astrology and have recorded four hundred thousand *śloka*s (*al-ashlūk*, verses) in Sanskrit, to which they continue to add. And the *lakūk*, the plural of *lak* (with a short A sound), in Hindi denotes 100,000. And *ashlūk* (with a short I sound, no vowel for the SH sound, an O sound attached to the L [in *ashlūk*], no vowel above the O or K sounds [in *ashlūk*]), and it is comprised of four hemistitches (*maṣārīʿ*) like a verse (*bayt*).[86]

ولاهاند لغة اسمها سنسكرت بفتح السين المهملة وسكون النون وسكون السين المهمة الثانية وكسر الكاف وسكون الراء آخرها تاء فوقانية ساكنة، دونواعلومهم كلهم في هذه اللغة. وفيها التثنية كالعربية وعلامتها الهمزة المضمونة والواوالساكنة تلحق أخرالكلمة وجمعها بالالف في الآخر وقلبها على حدة سوى الأقلام المروجة في بلاد الهند والدكن والكجرات وأقلامهم كلها من اليمين إلى اليسار بلا تركيب الحروف المفردات كقلم اليونانيين ولها مختصات لا توجد في غيرها. منها انّها وضع وضعها للخنثى صيغ الواحد والتثنية والجمع وضمائرها على حدة سوى صيغ التذكير والتأنيث وضمائر وهذه اللغة متروكة في محاوراتها وباقية في كتبهم.

ولهم أربعة كتب سماوية على زعمهم مشتملة على المواعظ والأحكام والأخبار بسنس كرت ومضى لزمان إنزالها الكوك من السنين ولما لم يكن حسن في نثر سنسكرت ولا في نثرالألسنة الاخرالتي هي دائرة في ديار الهند والدكن بينوا قواعد علومهم في النظم من ذلك أن قدمائهم الذين مضى لزمانهم آلاف كثيرة من السنين نظموا في علم التنجيم أربعة لكوك من الا شلوك بسنسكرت وزاد عليها متأخروهم. واللكوك جمع لك بالفتح وهو بالهندية مائة الف والا شلوك بكسر الهمزة وسكون الشين المعجمة وضم اللام وسكون الواو والكاف نظم مخصوص فيه أربعة مصاريع كالبيت.

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85   The word here is *lakūk* in Arabic which I take as the plural form of the word *lākh* in Hindi to denote 100,000, or to connote very many.

86   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 28–9.

The corresponding section in Persian is only one sentence long and describes the function of gender in the language.[87] The tenor of this longer Arabic passage suggests that Azad writes *as if* for a foreign community, whereas its analogous Persianization addresses a readership more acquainted with Sanskrit. In Arabic, Azad provides a full vocalization for the word "Sanskrit." His description of the Indic Devanagari script, its orientation, and its alphabet suggests the intent to address a community who has less exposure to Hindustan. In Persian, this is completely left out. His strategy to vocalize and to describe the word *śloka* accurately in Arabic evinces familiarity with one of the most common Sanskrit poetic meters.

On the one hand, Azad does not single out his Hindi or Sanskrit inspirations in *The Coral Rosary*. On the other hand, he does single out several Hindi poets associated with the *qaṣbah* of Bilgram in the *Maʾāṣir al-kirām*, promoting the region of North India known as Avadh as a rich site for Hindi literary culture.[88] His silence on Hindi sources in *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* may add to the cachet of Hindi's foreignness in these languages. Hindi was certainly not novel to Persian contexts during this period, so it is possible that Azad never cites a Hindi or Sanskrit poet in *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* because he seeks agency as an innovator of Hindi poetics in Arabic and Persian.[89]

3   Literary Sciences

Just as Azad compares languages, he also compares literary sciences. Arabic prose, for him, is superior.[90] In the passage immediately following the description of Sanskrit, he explains various meters in Arabic, Persian, and Hindi:

> Most Arabic, Persian, and Hindi meters are different and so few of them are agreed on, such as the *mutaqārib*[91] meter, running horse meter, and the fast meter, which have come in three languages. In Hindi, the *mutaqārib* meter is made of eight parts, and the basis of every hemistich is the running horse meter, sometimes from six or eight syllables, or sometimes there is a light or heavy syllable in the beginning of the line, or a light syllable at the end of the line. Therefore, the *faʿlana* (one poetic

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87   Azad, *Ghizlān*, 28.
88   Shailesh Zaidi, *Bilgrām ke musalmān hindī kavi* (Varanasi: Nagari Pracharini Sabha, 1969); Orsini, "'Krishna is the Truth of Man.'"
89   This would relate to the ideas put forth by Bronner and Busch on innovation in Sanskrit and Brajbhasha poetics.
90   Azad, *Ghizlān*, 28.
91   *Mutaqārib* is a common meter in Arabic poetry.

foot), with an unvowelled *ʿayn*, occurs seven more times, and this meter is called *savaiyā*.[92]

والبحور العربية والفارسية والهندية أَكْثُرها متفقة منها متفقة كالمتقارب وركض
الخيل والسريع فأنّها جاءت في الألسنة الثلاثة وفي الهندية بناءكل مصارع من
المتقارب على ثمانية أجزاء وبناءكل مصارع من ركض الخيل تارة على ستة أجزاء وتارة
على ثمانية أجزاء وتارة يجعلون سبا خفيفا أوثقيلا في اول المصارع وسبا خفيفا في
أخره ويجعلون فعلن بسكون العين وحركتها سبع مرات في وسطها ويسمون هذا
الوزن بالسين المهملة والواو محركة وتشديد الياء التحتانية.

In the corresponding section found in *The Gazelles*, Azad adds that the *bhujaṅg prayāt* (Pers. *bujank prāt*) is a version of the *mutaqārib* meter in addition to the *savaiyā*. *Bhujaṅg prayāt* was famously used in the sixteenth-century *Pṛthvīrāj Rāso* and other martial texts from western India[93] and Azad's decision to include this in *The Gazelles* indicates his comfort with inserting technical Hindi terminology in Persian unlike in Arabic. In any case, his attention to Hindi meters such as *bhujaṅg prayāt*, *savaiyā*, and *chappay* across *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* indicates his sophisticated connoisseurship of Hindi.

Azad's approach to Persian poetics demonstrates a dependency of Persian on Arabic literary sciences in his corpus. In both *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles*, Azad notes that the *ʿilm al-badīʿ* originates with the Abbasid scholar Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 908), the author of *Kitāb al-badīʿ*, from whom the Persians adopted their "*fann al-badīʿ*" (art/science of poetic innovation.)[94] He even lists the names of other Arabic litterateurs who added to forms of *al-badīʿiyyāt*. For Persian meters in *The Coral Rosary* he finds that most of them are extremely natural (*fī ghāyat al-maṭbūʿiyyah*) and that these poets compose verse without knowing prosody (*al-ʿarūḍ*) and it comes to them instinctively.[95] Here, Azad contrasts the scientific nature of Arabic and Hindi with the naturalness of Persian, as he also goes on to write about how the Persians derived their *ʿilm al-badīʿ* from Arabic. In *The Gazelles* he is not as direct about these poets who do not know prosody, and he does emphasize elements Persian poetry, such as

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92   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 29.

93   Allison Busch, personal communication.

94   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 35; *Ghizlān*, 30.

95   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 31.

the *radīf* (end-rhyme word), which reappears in *The Coral Rosary*. The absence of this statement on the Persian poets who write without knowing prosody likely stems from Azad's consideration for the Persian readers of *The Gazelles*.

Even though the study of Persian poetics depended on Arabic for Azad, to compare the differences between *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* belies the idea of a one-way dependency. The tables of contents for Part III of *The Coral Rosary* and the corresponding Part I of *The Gazelles of India* read as follows:

> *The Coral Rosary* (Part III, Arabic)
> 1. On the beauties (poetic devices, *al-muḥassināt*) that are translated from Hindi into Arabic (28 entries)
> 2. On the figures of speech invented by the author (35 entries)
> 3. On Amīr Khusraw's figures of speech and Rashīd al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Jalīl (d. 1117/8, Khwarazm) (8 entries)
> 4. Two forms specific to Arabs (3 entries)
> 5. *al-qaṣīdat al-badīʿiyyah* (90 entries)

> *The Gazelles of India* (Part I, Persian)
> 1. On the Persianization (*tafrīs*) of Hindi figures of speech (32 entries)
> 2. On the beauties invented by the author (33 entries)
> 3. On Amīr Khusraw's figures of speech (1 entry)
> 4. On three older forms (3 entries)

One noticeable inconsistency between *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* is that Azad elides a section of 90 entries regarding *al-qaṣīdat al-badīʿiyyah* (poetic innovation in Arabic) in *The Gazelles*. It is possible that Azad aimed to prove his talents of Arabic in Arabic and thus rendering these entries into Persian would defeat the purpose of their composition. The meaning of this elision will be explored below, but before that, allow me to explain the significance of Azad's *al-badīʿiyyāt*.

The Arabic literary science of *al-badīʿiyyāt* is Azad's analogue for the Hindi literary science of *rītigranth*s. He was not the first to use *al-badīʿ* (originality, innovativeness) as an analogue for an Indic system of poetics. The third chapter of Mīrzā Khān ibn Fakhr al-Dīn's Persian treatise *Tuḥfat al-Hind* (*Bounty of India*, ca. 1674/5) bears the title, "Chapter Three on the Science of *alankār* or *ʿilm-i badīʿ-i hindī*." Here, Mīrzā Khān fully transliterates the word *alankār*, which is the Sanskrit term *alaṃkāra* (poetic ornament). Azad employs the term *muḥassināt* for his specific kinds of rhetorical devices, which is a word that denotes beauties, an idea associated with adorning. Azad's choice of

al-badīʿiyyah as an Arabic analogue for Hindi literary science reveals his skill in comparing Arabic and Hindi.[96]

Later scholars of Arabic also stress the importance of *badīʿ* to Azad's work. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy ibn Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī's (d. 1923) early twentieth-century *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir wa-bahjat al-masāmiʿ wa-l-nawāẓir*, a monumental biographical dictionary of thousands of Arabic luminaries relevant to Hindustan for the first thirteen Islamic centuries, lists entries on Azad and his grandfather ʿAbd al-Jalīl. These entries highlight how the concept of *badīʿ* was hardwired into Azad's intellectual machinery. In ʿAbd al-Jalīl's entry, ʿAbd al-Ḥayy provides an anecdote that reveals ʿAbd al-Jalīl's command of *badīʿ*. He cites a story from *The Coral Rosary*. Apparently, one day Ibrāhīm al-Ghazī from Balkh sent ʿAbd al-Jalīl a "*qawl al-badīʿah*" (original saying) in the form of a verse of the famous late tenth-century author of the *Maqāmāt*, al-Hamadhānī.[97] Supposedly, the beauty of al-Hamadhānī's verse confounded ʿAbd al-Jalīl when al-Ghazī asked for a response from him. In the end, ʿAbd al-Jalīl performs poetic acrobatics to produce a verse that switches around some of Hamadhānī's words and creates a new meaning that impresses his correspondent.

It is noteworthy that the idea of *ʿilm al-badīʿah* or the science of innovative poetry is so strongly imbued in Azad's legacy.[98] As a project *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir* is a treasure trove for tracing intellectual networks of Arabic writers with some relationship to Hindustan. Attention to these Hindustani Arabic works reveals that they were spaces for literary innovation, literally "*al-badāʿah*," and integral to their Indic and Persian contexts.

3.1   *Azad's* dhvani *and* śleṣa

Let us now consider how Azad treats two of the most beloved Indic poetic techniques, *dhvani* (poetic suggestion) and *śleṣa* (pun), as they comprise *al-badīʿiyyāt*. Azad's definitions of the Indic poetic devices of *dhvani* and *śleṣa* are far from ambiguous, though it is odd that *The Gazelles* section on Hindi

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96   Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 244–318. In her chapter on *al-badīʿ*, Meisami places emphasis on adornment.

97   ʿAbd al-Ḥayy ibn Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī, *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir wa-bahjat al-masāmiʿ wa-l-nawāẓir*, vol. 2 (Lucknow: 1962), 745. Muhammad Qasim Zaman mentions the *Nuzhat* in relation to ʿAbd al-Ḥayy's son. See Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Arabic, the Arab Middle East, and the Definition of Muslim Identity in Twentieth Century India," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 8, no. 1 (1998): 62. Derryl N. MacLean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind* (Leiden: Brill, 1989) is one of the few English-language texts to analyze the works of ʿAbd al-Ḥayy.

98   It is also worth noting that in ʿAbd al-Ḥayy's entry on Azad, he appropriately characterizes his expertise in Arabic and Persian, but he is relatively silent on his interest in Hindi poetics. See vol. 2, 771–3.

poetics leaves out a section on *dhvani*. *Dhvani* is one of Indic poetry's favorite devices manifesting across a range of artistic practices. For *dhvani*, Azad utilizes the term *al-tawriyah*, which means "to make a pun," or "punning." This word comes from the Arabic root *warā* as in the common word for "behind" or "the rear," *warāʾa*. In a sense *al-tawriyah* conceals a hidden meaning behind the superficial one. *Al-tawriyah* manifests in several forms throughout *The Coral Rosary*. It is defined as a Hindi poetic device, as a component to one of Amir Khusraw's poetic innovations, and as related to four separate devices in Arabic. Of the four entries in Arabic, *al-tawriyah* also receives its own specific section. No sections that explicitly reference *al-tawriyah* appear in *The Gazelles*.

Despite Azad's claims about *dhvani* in Hindi poetry, it is also worth noting that *dhvani* did not actually manifest in Hindi as a dominant *alaṃkāra*. Whereas it guided a major literary movement in Sanskrit poetry,[99] scant evidence attests to its importance to Hindi. One of the few Hindi writers who provides definitions and example verses of *dhvani* is the poet Bhikhārīdās (fl. 1730) writing in Pratapgarh in Avadh, close to where Azad had spent his early life.[100] In Bhikhārīdās' entry on *dhvani* from the *Kāvyanirṇaya* he gives the following definition of *dhvani* in a couplet:

> *Dhvani* consists of two meanings, so say those in whom Sarasvati resides (i.e. poets).
> It has been identified by "unintended" and "intended" meanings.

> *dhuni ko bheda dubhāṇti ko, bhanai bhāratī-dhāma*
> *abibāṇkṣito bibāṇkṣito, bāchya duhuṃna ke nāma*[101]

Bhikhārīdās offers thorough explanations of both the *avivakṣita* (unintended) and *vivakṣita* (intended) meanings and many of *dhvani*'s other defining characteristics, but the trope is not put in direct conversation with *śleṣa* as it would be in *The Coral Rosary*. Considering just one example of *dhvani* from a Hindi *rītigranth*, and its comparative prominence in Sanskrit, perhaps Azad's incorporation of *dhvani* in his treatise on Hindi poetics reveals another instance of his participation in local literary culture.

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99   See Ānandavardhana, *The Dhvanyāloka of Ānandvardhana with the Locana of Abhinava-gupta*, transl. by Daniel H.H. Ingalls, Jeffrey Moussaieff, and M.V. Patwardhan, ed. by Daniel H.H. Ingalls (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

100   Busch, "The Anxiety of Innovation," 52–3; Bhikhārīdās, *Bhikhārīdāsgranthāvalī*, vol. 2 (Varanasi: Nagaripracarini Sabha, 1956), 44–61 on *dhvani*, and 287–91 on *śleṣa*.

101   Bhikhārīdās, *Bhikhārīdāsgranthāvalī*, vol. 2, 45, v. 3.

Now, let us turn to one of *The Coral Rosary's* finest achievements: Azad's entry on the *dhvani* of Hindi poetics. Azad's *dhvani* marks one of his longest entries on a single poetic device with some of the most diverse poetic illustrations. In the entry, Azad provides example verses from poets ranging from the Ghaznavid Saʿd ibn Salmān al-Lahōrī to Arab litterateurs far and wide to the local intelligentsia of Bilgram.[102] The inclusion of the Bilgram poets in these entries inserts litterateurs close to Azad into a wider intellectual imagination. In addition to inscribing himself and his family in the Arabic cosmopolis through illustrative poems, Azad puts Indic poetry in an outward-facing framework of poetics.[103] He begins the entry on Hindi *dhvani* by deeming *al-tawriyah/dhvani* to be the "*sultan al-muḥassināt*," or the sultan of all the *alaṃkāra*s. He defines it as a device in which the speaker conceals the far-away meaning (*al-maʿnī al-baʿīd*) in the close meaning (*al-maʿnī al-qarīb*).[104] Through the distinction between this term and the trope he calls "spending of the treasury" (*ṣarf al-khizānah*), which is the Arabic version of the widespread Sanskrit/Hindi device of *śleṣa*, it becomes apparent that Azad is Arabizing *dhvani*. According to Azad,

> The difference between [*al-tawriyah* and *ṣarf al-khizānah*] is that if all the meanings for a single word are each deliberately intended, then that is *ṣarf al-khizānah*, but if the apparent meaning weakens the faraway meaning, then that is *al-tawriyah*.[105]

الفرق بينهما أنّ اللفظ المتعدد المعنى إن كان كل واحد من معانية مقصودا بالذات فهو صرف الخزانة وإن كان المعنى القريب من معانيه توطئة والمعنى البعيد مقصودا بالذات فهيك التورية.

Indic poetics demands theoretical rigor, and Azad fully harnesses the creative resources of the Arabic language to display his mastery. According to Bronner's

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102   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 86–102.

103   As *al-tawriyah* receives a definition for Hindi, it also has one for Arabic. In Azad's entry on Arabic *al-tawriyah* he cites al-Zawzanī's analysis of the *qaṣīdah* of the pre-Islamic poet ʿAntarah (d. 608):

    Disasters befalling them after their journey

    on their deserted resting places (Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 295)

al-tawriyah is explained by al-Zawzanī as "the circle (*al-dāʾirah*, referring back to 'bad circles' in the poem) is the name of an event and it is named such because it oscillates between good and evil."

104   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 86.

105   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 87.

study of simultaneous narration, "a *śleṣa*, at least in some cases, is not solely an 'embrace' of the signified, which it certainly is, but also and perhaps primarily, a union of two sets of signifiers, each with its own signified."[106] *Ṣarf al-khizānah*, the Arabic term for *śleṣa*, is when the subject and object can be read in manifold ways and each way is valid. Thus, Azad makes the main distinction between *śleṣa/ṣarf al-khizānah* and *dhvani/al-tawriyah* that multiple readings are possible with *śleṣa*, but there is a preferred, implicit meaning with *dhvani*.

If the distinction between *dhvani* and *śleṣa* is so fundamental in Sanskrit poetics, why does Azad do away with *al-tawriyah* in *The Gazelles*? The answer to this question is the importance of *īhām* or a similar literary doubling, which is an analogous notion of suggestion that came to be closely associated with Persian in Hindustan, especially in the works of Indian Persian poet Amīr Khusraw (1253–1325).[107] At the end of Azad's entry on *ṣarf al-khizānah/śleṣa* in *The Gazelles*, he defines *īhām* in exactly the same terms he utilizes for *dhvani/al-tawriyah* in *The Coral Rosary*. For *īhām* the faraway meaning is fully intended, and it is masked by the close meaning.[108] As *īhām* already possesses a well-established history in Persian literature, Azad does not provide an entry on its Arabic and Hindi/Sanskrit analogue, *dhvani*. But does the elision of *al-tawriyah* in Persian and Azad's satisfaction with *īhām* shortchange *dhvani* in the transmission of Hindi poetics to Persian? Such are the imperfect resolutions of Arabization and Persianization (*taʿrīb* and *tafrīs*).

3.2   *Azad's Wondrous* Abū qalamūn

The story does not end with just two versions of *al-tawriyah/dhvani*, for there are four more related poetic devices in *The Coral Rosary*. The first bears an enigmatic title of "*Abū qalamūn*" and is included in the section of devices that distinguished Amir Khusraw.[109] The last three are included in the section on the Arabic *badīʿiyyāt*: "*Abū qalamūn fī istikhdām al-maẓhar*" (explicit *Abū qalamūn*), "*Abū qalamūn fī istikhdām al-muḍmir*" (implicit *Abū qalamūn*), and "*Abū qalamūn fī l-tawriyah*" (*Abū qalamūn* in poetic suggestion).[110] Only one of these entries makes it into *The Gazelles*, which is the one related to Amir

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106   Yigal Bronner, *Extreme Poetry: The South Asian Movement of Simultaneous Narration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 5.

107   *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 87. An important discussion of *īhām* is in Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, *Urdū ghazal ke aham mauṛ: īhām, riʿāyat, munāsibat* (New Delhi: Ghalib Academy, 1997).

108   Azad, *Ghizlān*, 51.

109   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 239.

110   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 293, 316.

Khusraw simply known as "*Abū qalamūn*."[111] Here we get to the crux of the matter: *Abū qalamūn* is arguably Azad's most thrilling poetic innovation.

According to Azad's definition of *Abū qalamūn* in *The Coral Rosary*: "It is language that is like a woolen cloak saturated with colors. Such vibrancy is called '*Abū qalamūn*' and it is marked by a shared word between two or more languages."[112] He specifies that sometimes both meanings are valid, or sometimes its implied meaning is preferred (*al-tawriyah*). Composite poetic suggestion with more than one language sweetens the taste.[113] Azad translates his definition in *The Gazelles* straight from his Arabic, but where Azad refers to *al-tawriyah* in the definition, he substitutes *īhām* in Persian. His Arabic entry is far more detailed than the Persian version as it specifies that Amir Khusraw specialized in a version of *Abū qalamūn* in which "the speaker uses Arabic, but the essence (*qalb*) of his speech is Persian, or the speaker uses Persian, but the essence of his speech is Arabic."[114] The inclusion of this specialty of Amir Khusraw's further explains Azad's awareness of the poetic cross-pollination between Arabic and Persian since at least the medieval period in Hindustan. Such a direct statement on the Persian borrowings from Arabic is completely absent in *The Gazelles*' section on *Abū qalamūn*.

Scholars have recently assessed issues such as code mixing and registers in pre-modern dialects of Hindi, but clearly at least one eighteenth-century

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111   Azad, *Ghizlān*, 103.

112   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 239. As a noun in Persian, it can also mean a chameleon or turkey. Matthew Saba's reading of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's (d. 1072–78) eleventh-century *Safarnāmah* (*Book of Travels*) calls attention to how Nāṣir-i Khusraw utilizes *būqalamūn* to describe the iridescence of cups, bowls, and plates that he observes in old Cairo, and how this term is also utilized to describe textiles. See Matthew Saba, "Abbasid Lustreware and the Aesthetics of 'Ajab," *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 192–3. See also Vivek Gupta, "Wonder Reoriented: Manuscripts and Experience in Islamicate Societies of South Asia (ca. 1450–1600)" (PhD diss., SOAS University of London, 2020), 193–6, for a further discussion; Gupta, "Images for Instruction," 98–9. When used as a noun, the Arabic term *Abū qalamūn* and the Persian *būqalamūn* both can denote a colored cloak or damask. The poet Saʿdī uses it to mean iridescent, and the Mughal emperor Babur refers to the *būqalamūn* as a colorful bird. Shaykh Mushrifuddin Saʿdi of Shiraz, *The Gulistān* (*Rose Garden*) *of Saʿdi*, transl. by Wheeler M. Thackston, (Bethesda: Ibex Publishers, 2008), 7; Babur, Emperor of Hindustan, *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, transl. by Wheeler M. Thackston (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1996), 340. Based on illustrations of the *Bāburnāmah* (Walters MS. W.598, fol. 31b) we can surmise that the bird is most certainly not represented as a turkey, which it is in modern Persian usage. Bābur writes, "*Lucha* (this is supposedly the name of the bird, a word that remains a mystery for Thackston). This bird is also called *buqalamun*. From head to tail it has five or six different colors that shimmer like a pigeon's throat" (340).

113   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 239.

114   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 239.

scholar was already attempting to codify these very phenomena.[115] One argument that emerges from this reading of Azad's corpus is that we can think of these issues in terms of existing poetic systems (*badīʿ*, *alaṃkāraśāstra*, *rītigranth*) when tackling issues of linguistic exchanges. Although *Abū qalamūn* does not explicitly factor into Azad's section on Hindi poetics, Arabic and Persian words certainly resonate in Hindi as well. On "*Abū qalamūn fī l-tawriyah*" (*Abū qalamūn* through poetic suggestion) Azad provides an example that might implicate Hindi.[116] The entry begins with a poem and has a one-line explanation:

> May Medina (*Madīnat al-muṣṭafā*) remain excellent (*makramah*)
> In it, I saw emanations of generosity (*al-karam*)
> *Al-karam* in Arabic is the opposite of blame, and in Hindi it means fortune (*al-bakht*).

<div dir="rtl">

بهارأيت أفاضت من الكرم   مدينة المصطفى دامت مكرمة

الكرم بالعربية ضد اللوم وبالهندية البخت.

</div>

Azad's awareness of the slippages between *karam* and *karma* (*karam*: "generosity" in Arabic; *karma* as in the common word from Hindi) recalls how Hindi litterateurs too used a technique like *Abū qalamūn*. In Hindi, this device could be called a *yamaka* (pun, homonym) from Sanskrit literature, but it also neatly fits Azad's definition of *Abū qalamūn*. Although *Abū qalamūn* exists in sections exclusively related to Arabic and Persian literary cultures, Hindi poets use it as well, whether it is named as such.

The nature of *Abū qalamūn* puns also dictates their inclusion in *The Coral Rosary* or *The Gazelles*. Elided from *The Gazelles' Abū qalamūn* is a delightful political anecdote about the Afsharid ruler Nādir Shāh (r. 1736–47) and Niẓām al-Mulk (r. 1724–48) of Hyderabad who supposedly used the *Abū qalamūn* in their correspondence. The story goes like this:

> When Nādir Shāh conquered India and wanted to return home, he told the messenger of Niẓām al-Mulk that he was leaving and the Niẓām asked, "is this true?" One of those present in the gathering said, "It is as if the Nādir has completely vanished." (*al-nādir ka-l-maʿdūm*).

115   Imre Bangha, "Rekhta: Poetry in Mixed Language: The Emergence of Khari Boli Literature in North India," in *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture*, ed. by Francesca Orsini (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010), 24–9.

116   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 316.

ولما تسلط نادر شاه والى ايران على الهند وأراد أن يرجع إلى دياره مخبر نظام
الملك برجوعه فقال نظام هل لهذا الخبر أصل فقال بعض حضار المجلس "النادر
كالمعدوم" معناه بالعربية ظاهر. وكل بالهندية بمعنى غد يعني النادر غدا معدوم. وفي
النادر أيضا تورية.

Azad then comments on this exchange, "the meaning in Arabic is plain, but
kal in Hindi means tomorrow. Therefore, this means that the Nadir will van-
ish tomorrow, and in *al-nādir*, there is also an element of *al-tawriyah*."[117] This
use of wit draws attention to Azad's observation of how these poetic devices
infiltrate political life and are not limited to master poets. The absence of this
story from *The Gazelles* could possibly be due to the nature of the pun. Neither
version of *kal* in Hindi nor *ka* plus *al* in Arabic work in Persian, making it
difficult to follow the joke in Persian. *Abū qalamūn*'s longer Arabic entry
includes words that only have some Arabic resonance as well. The following
list is a selection of words that Azad cites as examples of *Abū qalamūn* in *The
Coral Rosary*:

> *Nadī*: A gathering (Ar.); river (Hind.)
> *Fardā*: Solitary, alone as in *munfarid* (Ar.); tomorrow (Pers.)
> *Nār*: Fire (Ar.); woman (Hind.)
> *Be/arār*: Open country, steppe (Ar.); location in the Deccan (Hind.)
> *Bahā'*: Beauty (Ar.); value (Pers.)
> *Sūr*: Wall (Ar.); banquet (Pers.); bravery[118] (Hind.)
> *Shām*: Levant (Ar.); Nighttime (Pers.)[119]

The presence of equivalences between Arabic, Persian and Hindi on the level
of lexicon sheds light on Azad's ability to playfully move between languages
and therefore put them in conversation.

The multiple systems of poetics in *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* are
often self-referential and their diverse strands of typologies merge in ways
that complicate understandings of Hindi, Persian, and Arabic literary cultures.
Only by considering both these works in tandem can we trace the full geneal-
ogy of a given poetic device in Azad's framework.

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117   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 240–1.
118   I take Azad's definitions for these words. *Sūr* in Hindi has many more meanings such as
       "god" or "sound." One meaning is a brave man to which Azad's gloss of bravery relates.
119   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 2, 240–5.

Comparative practice takes stamina. If we rely solely on *The Gazelles*, we do not see how *Abū qalamūn* relates to a wider expanse of Arabic and Hindi literary cultures. Silences occur in both Arabic and Persian, and without access to both *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* we lose sight of these consequential absences. The silences become even more salient if the texts are approached with knowledge of Hindi poetics. We begin to detect the actual forms Azad may be Arabizing or Persianizing, and we perceive how *badīʿ* serves as a close analogue genre for the *rītigranth*. From Azad's equivalences and exchanges between different literary sciences, *The Coral Rosary* and *The Gazelles* both participate in the broader literary culture in which innovation within literary science was customary.

4   Conclusion: The Adaptive Capacity of Poetics

This reading of Azad's oeuvre suggests that it is possible to subject a work of literature to a framework of poetics not intended for it. For Azad, the parameters of Hindi poetics can apply to Arabic and Persian and vice versa. Poetics blurs the lines between literary cultures. As a specific type of simile, metaphor, or pun can exist in multiple languages, a particular poetic device becomes the tool to make analogues and equivalences between literary cultures. Languages thus possess an adaptive capacity on the level of poetics.

In the words of the post-colonial Francophone writer Abdelwahab Meddeb, "When I write in one language, the other language is hidden in the first; it is at work somewhere, deliberately in spite of me. The pressure of the absent language in the language in which I write can, in the end, make up a poetics."[120] This idea of a hidden language at work captures the problem facing a study of comparative literature in eighteenth-century Hindustan. It is often impossible to decide which poetics a writer draws on if he or she is immersed in a multilingual milieu. Azad's works imply that multiple poetic systems are possible at once. As many Hindustani intellectuals possessed a command over various fields of expertise as impressive as Azad, this article prompts us to revisit those writers in search of traces of a hidden comparative poetics.

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120   Mohamed-Salah Omri, "Voicing a culture 'dispersed by time': Metropolitan location and identity in the literature and art of Sabiha al Khemir," in *The Arab Diaspora: Voices of an anguished scream*, ed. by Zahia Smail Salhi and Ian Richard Netton (New York: Routledge, 2006), 54–5.

Let me conclude with comments on each language this account of Azad's works has addressed, starting with Persian.

By reading Hindi and Arabic alongside Persian several discoveries come to light. On the one hand, we see how Persian is heavily vernacularized, and on the other, we see how it links to cosmopolitan trajectories of Arabic literary production. Reading in multiple languages provides glimpses into how distinct literary sciences share fundamental notions such as poetic ornamentation. No one can be a jack-of-all-literary-trades, master of all, as Azad may have been, but his comparative poetics inspires us to be open to possibilities of how languages interacted with each other when interpreting Persian texts both written and read in Hindustan. Azad's Persian incorporates local and cosmopolitan idioms necessitating us to acknowledge both when reading his work.

Hindi becomes the very source of innovation in Azad's Arabic and Persian. In other words, the vernacular generates newness.[121] The spheres of vernacular and cosmopolitan languages collide and overlap, breaking down these formulations in the first place. What Azad teaches us is that it is possible to experiment with Arabic and Persian just as one might with Hindi or even Sanskrit. His imaginative abilities with devices such as *Abū qalamūn* indicate his participation in Hindustani literary culture. An eighteenth-century scholar's awareness and practice of this experimentation might provoke us to look closer for potential fields of analysis and ways in which literary interdependencies and analogues emerge. Azad tested and maximized the capacity of Arabic and Persian to adapt Hindi forms.

Finally, Arabic literature in Hindustan remains a fertile field of inquiry and its story remains largely untold.[122] As I have drawn attention to other Arabic literary texts produced in Hindustan from writers ranging from Ibn Maʿṣūm (1642–1708) to ʿAbd al-Ḥayy (d. 1923) I point to a large field of uncharted literary production. The Arabic cosmopolis certainly stretched at least as far as Hindustan, and Islam enabled its spread. Yet, Arabic did not manifest across regions uniformly. While we may never know Azad's motivation in writing *The Coral Rosary*, this article demonstrates how a comparative framework profoundly enriches reading Arabic poetry produced in Hindustan. Without thinking comparatively, can we understand how writers such as Azad negotiated their own set of languages, communities, and cultures? Can we detect

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121   Part II on "The Vernacular Millennium" of Sheldon Pollock's *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) theorizes the cosmopolitan and vernacular divide in South Asian literature.

122   Simon Leese, "Longing for Salmá and Hind: (Re)producing Arabic Literature in 18th and 19th-Century North India" (PhD diss., SOAS University of London, 2020) tells this story.

traces of a hidden poetics and perhaps hear the voice of the Indian cuckoo amidst the cooing of the dove?[123]

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123   Azad, *Subḥat*, vol. 1, 4.

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