Becoming Literature: The Formation of *Adabiyāt* as an Academic Discipline in Iran and
Afghanistan (1895-1945)

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the historical process by which a new discourse of literature, called *adabiyāt* in Persian, was made institutionally thinkable, culturally authoritative, and socially prevalent in twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. It identifies early twentieth-century *anjoman*s, or literary associations, as the main site for the production and proliferation of this new mode of literary knowledge. By focusing on literary associations, I challenge the misconception that charting a national domain for Persian literature —a distinctly transregional literary tradition— was limited to Iran or that it exclusively involved contact with European literary cultures. The programmatic nature and intellectual context in which literary associations operated illustrate that Iran and Afghanistan were fully conversant with each other as much as they were with global interlocutors.

Often used as a shorthand for strictly local, I argue that the term "national" in this period means intensely and programmatically global. In analyzing the work of two generations of Iranian and Afghan intellectuals, this dissertation demonstrates the ways in which they brought their countries into closer alignment with an emerging world in which literature functioned as an essential identitarian discourse. They did so not by working within ready-made models borrowed wholesale from Europe, but by critically working at the intersection of their classical literary heritage and the discursive demands of nationalism.

Chapter one examines the inauguration of *adabiyāt*, as a bounded conceptual category operative within institutions of literature. It unpacks the process of its formation as a new discourse of literature in three distinct episodes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: 1) the polemical writings of reform-minded Iranian intellectuals living in the Caucasus 2) newspapers printed in Tehran and Kabul 3) literary textbooks developed for modern educational institutions in Iran and Afghanistan. These cases demonstrate that before *adabiyāt* accrued its modern sense as literature, the term designated an *adab*-derived discipline, associated with a literary form of self-conduct and etiquette in the premodern context.

The conceptual realignment taking place in the late nineteenth century constituted the paradigm within which literary associations proliferated in the twentieth century. Chapter one also shows how a careful reassessment of the blurred semantic relationship between *adab* and *adabiyāt* is equally vital for understanding the ways in which Persian-language intellectuals understood and implemented the European conception of literature within their national contexts.

Chapter two focuses on the life and afterlife of the Dāneshkadeh Literary Association (1916-1919) in Mashhad and Tehran. It demonstrates the consequential nature of the organizations, despite the fact that they did not last into later periods. Dāneshkadeh consisted of

a highly influential group of Iranian intellectuals that, under the leadership of Iran's poet laureate Mohammad Taqi Bahār (d. 1951), pioneered new ways of writing about Persian literary history, translation, and literary criticism through articles in the association's eponymous journal. Following the dissolution of the group in 1919, many of these members played an integral role in the establishment of new institutions of literature that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s such as the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, the Society for National Monuments, and the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters. As Iran's first significant literary association, Dāneshkadeh's organizational structure and its ideas about literature and nation were instrumental in creating the need and context for the rise of Iran's first faculty of letters, founded in 1935.

Chapter three examines the history and intellectual output of the Kabul Literary Association (1930-1940). As Afghanistan's first formal literary association, it brought together a diverse group of poets, translators, historiographers, diplomats and artists who collectively worked to create a new discourse of literature. Through its ties with the Afghan state, the association intensified literary connections with other countries, particularly Iran and India. It also published a high-quality journal called *Kabul* and an eponymous yearbook. In such venues, contributing writers and members delineated a new cultural and literary historiography of Afghanistan, making their country visible in an emerging configuration of nation-states each in possession of their unique (often singular) literary tradition. The Kabul Literary Association may have been formally dissolved in 1940, but it made thinkable a social paradigm within which other institutions of literature were created in the 1940s: the Afghanistan Historical Society, the Faculty of Letters at the University of Kabul, and the Encyclopedia Association. By emphasizing discursive continuity, this chapter shifts our attention away from the life of particular associations and toward associational culture more broadly.

Chapter four investigates Iran-Afghanistan literary relations in the 1930s and 40s. It analyzes a series of correspondence between the Kabul Literary Association and the Iranian journal *Āyandeh* and examines poems exchanged between Iranian and Afghan literati in the 1930s and 40s. It challenges the problematic idea that Persian literature in the twentieth century developed in national milieus that were sealed off from one another, with each country scrambling to emulate the European model for literary institutionalization. While fully cognizant of the European sphere of influence, the intercultural exchanges that occurred between Iran and Afghanistan represent a crucial and productive site for understanding how a new mode of literary knowledge was inaugurated in the twentieth century. Comparing how Iran and Afghanistan sought to nationalize their literary heritage allows us to see that the twentieth century intensified cultural contact and literary exchange between Persian-speaking societies, as opposed to severing their pre-existing connections.

In conclusion, this dissertation argues that to better understand the discursive continuity and rupture associated with the formation of *adabiyāt* as a new mode of literary knowledge, we must critically investigate the making of institutions of literature —literary and historical associations, language academies, faculties of letters, and other entities that preside over our understanding of what constitutes literature and ascribe to them a certain cultural authority and social import. As a case study, I argue that early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan is a particularly productive site for rethinking the nature, formation and operation of literary institutions and remapping their connection to discourses of literature and nation.

for Goli Emami
with abiding
love and respect

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Note on Transliteration

This dissertation adheres to the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES) schema for consonants in Persian and the *Iranian Studies* schema for vowels. While the IJMES schema maintains diacritics to avoid ambiguities with Persian homophones (i.e. z, ż, ẓ and so on), the *Iranian Studies* schema represents the vowels in a manner more easily recognizable to readers acquainted with the institutionalized variant of Persian spoken in contemporary Iran. I modify this system to accurately reflect the Afghan variation of Persian (ex. *ah* instead *eh* at the end of words, *w* instead of *v*, i.e. Jāwid, and not Jāvid). I have refrained from using diacritics on well-recognized names (e.g. Qajar, Shah, Kabul, etc). The mark ʿ indicates the letter *ʿayn* and ʾ marks the *hamze*.

Vowels

Short	Long	Diphthongs
a (as in *ashk*)	a or â (as in *ensân*)	
e (as in *fekr*)	i (as in *melli*)	ey (as in T**ey**mur)
o (as in *pol*)	u (as in T**u**s)	ow (as in *rowshan*)

Any transliteration system inevitably includes certain shortcomings, but it is hoped that the adopted system here will combine ease of reading with orthographical precision. I have followed the IJMES system for the transliteration of Arabic and Urdu words. Proper names with an established spelling in English will not be modified (ex. Islam, Kabul, munshi, etc). I have omitted the diacritic that indicates the long ā in well-recognized names (e.g. Kabul, Shah, etc).

All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

Introduction

The Rise of Literature as a Global Discourse (1750-1950)

Becoming Literature is about the formation of a new literary discourse called *adabiyāt* and the ways in which it became institutionally thinkable, socially prevalent, and culturally authoritative in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. It illustrates how these two Persian-speaking countries embedded themselves within a worldwide —albeit an uneven and asymmetrical—process through which literature became a utilitarian discourse of nation-building. The term "*adabiyāt*" remains deliberately untranslated to qualify it as a designation for a specific discourse of literature created within a particular literary tradition and also to challenge the extent to which it has become automatized in Persian literary culture today. The concept of literature, which is at the core of this study, may no longer pose as universal, transhistorical, or free-standing. Its taken-for-granted usage, a common practice for many decades, has increasingly been taken to task, thus foregrounding historical processes, aesthetic contingencies, and institutionally-embedded practices that have collectively constituted literature as a transnational phenomenon in different corners of the world.

Joining a scholarly impetus aimed to investigate the formation of literature as a discourse, this dissertation examines the historical rise of *adabiyāt* in early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. It focuses not only on its operation, but on its *becoming* a bounded category. It traces this development through people, products, and sites of literary production. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there emerged a group of learned scholars (people) who were brought together by *anjoman*s or literary associations (sites) as a part of a programmatic effort to establish *adabiyāt* as a discourse of nation-building. They forged different definitions of literature, critically introduced Orientalist methodology, brought Persian literary manuscripts into the form of commercial print, and brought about a distinctly new historiographical tradition with the nation as its subject of history. Early twentieth-century Iranian and Afghan scholars actively worked at the intersections of European literary knowledge, the discursive demands of modular nationalism, and the Persian literary tradition. In doing so, they undertook a monumental cultural and political enterprise, bringing *adabiyāt* into close alignment with the modern European concept of literature.

Through foregrounding a process of conceptual realignment unique to Persian literary culture, this dissertation departs from existing studies that examine non-European literary cultures only to the extent that they bear the discursive imprint of coming in contact with European discourses of literature. *Becoming Literature* is about how the building blocks of a new literary discourse were produced, assembled, and realigned. It aims to animate and restore to our critical attention the semantic and historical specificities that developed during this process of conceptual realignment through which *adabiyāt*, once a plural noun denoting different branches of language arts, became a singular appellation for literature, a proprietary byword for civilizational achievement.

This introduction deliberately refrains from rehashing the political history of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan, as is commonly done in many area studies dissertations. There is an extensive body of scholarship that has examined cultural and

political developments in late Qajar and early Pahlavi Iran and Mosāhebān-ruled Afghanistan.[1] However, there have been few attempts at locating these cultural developments within a more global context, primarily to move away from methodological nationalism and make more critical inroads into the field of comparative literature. Instead, it sets to place the emergence of *adabiyāt* within a global —albeit in this instance mostly Anglophone— historical and scholarly context.

By analyzing the conceptual genealogy of literature in English literary culture, Terry Eagleton (1983), David Shumway (1994), and Peter Widdowson (1999) have rendered anachronistic and universalist uses of the term "literature" problematic.[2] I adhere to Widdowson's critical observation that while the literary, as a phenomenon, has always existed in different forms in all traditions, literature as a conceptual category corresponds to the rise of commercial print culture and romantic nationalism.[3] The semantic domain of the term "literature" in English has undergone transformative changes since it first entered the language in the late fourteenth century, the same period as the oldest use of the term "*adabiyāt*" has been registered in Persian.[4] In its fourteenth-century context, literature and *adabiyāt* denoted language arts or book learning, the former associated with the domain of letters and the latter with the discourse of *adab*. Both designated a learned person, or *adib*, who cultivated a set of skills embodied by a certain corpus of writing.

The conceptualization of literature in English literary culture did not occur in a vacuum. It took shape through contact and exchange with classical literary traditions such as Hebrew, Arabic, Sanskrit, and Persian. In *Archaeology of Babel*, Siraj Ahmed argues that the rise of literature as a conceptual category was entangled with the rise of philology in British India in the seventeen century and its epistemic assumptions about textuality, language, and cultural difference.[5] The philological method purported that "language pertains to history, not divine

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[1] See Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner, *Culture and Cultural Politics Under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Wali Ahmadi, *Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan: Anomalous Visions of History and Form* (London: Routledge, 2008); *Afghanistan in Ink: Literature between Diaspora and Nation*; *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940*; Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2015); *Afghan History through Afghan Eyes*.

[2] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983); David R. Shumway, *Creating American Civilization: A Genealogy of American Literature As an Academic Discipline* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Peter Widdowson, *Literature* (London: Routledge, 1999). These studies are indebted to Michel Foucault's critique of knowledge production and its inherent ties to power and to Louis Althusser's theory of institutions and their connection to ideology. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Routledge, 2002); Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *La Pensée*, 151 (1976): 67-125.

[3] Widdowson, *Literature*, 26.

[4] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, cited by Widdowson, the term "literature" first entered the English language in 1375. *Literature*, 31. Regarding *adabiyāt*, see *Loghatnāmeh-ye fārsi*, (Tehran: Dāneshgāh-e Tehran, Mo'asseseh-ye loghatnāmeh-ye Dehkhodā, vol. 12, 1994), 1739.

[5] In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault had made this argument. Ahmed wrote, "In Foucault's account, the concept of 'literature' is born, in fact, only after late eighteenth-century philology discloses language's multiple 'modes of being.' When different modes of language inhabit the same place, they create what Foucault referred to as an 'unthinkable space.' 'Literature' is Foucault's name for the discursive practice and the theoretical concepts that occupy this space." *The Order of Things*: *An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 299-300; Siraj D. Ahmed,

providence or the laws of nature; each language produces its own history; and the history disclosed by literature belongs to national peoples."[6] These ideas, Ahmed contends, were the offspring of Europeans' cultural encounter with non-European literary traditions in the context of colonial rule in British India.

One of the hallmarks of the philological method was the idea that each nation possesses a distinct genealogy best identified by "the history of its language," which later became institutionally and politically manifest in ontological nationalism.[7] The philological method helped to reify different national peoples each being in possession of a singular literary tradition and history. The writings of Sir William Jones (d. 1794) contributed significantly to the making of European philology, informing a new conceptualization of literature.[8] A British polymath and linguist, Jones came into contact with Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit literary cultures in British-ruled Bengal. He translated into European languages such works as the Arabic *muʿallaqāt,* Hāfez's Persian poetry, and the Sanskrit *Śakuntalā*. In his "An Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations," Jones wrote, "... every nation has a set of images, and expressions, peculiar to itself, which arise from the difference of its climate, manners, and history."[9] The idea that every people is shaped by their climate and history has had many iterations in different time periods, languages, and geographies. As Ahmed argues, Jones' idea was different in that it proposed philology as the method through which human difference may be mapped.[10]

As a linguist and translator who was preoccupied with poetry, the affinity of languages, and with the law, the term "literature" did not occupy a central place in Jones' vocabulary. It appears only eight times in the six-hundred plus pages of the fourth volume of his collected works in which his essay on Eastern poetry was featured. In that volume, Jones invoked

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Archaeology of Babel: The Colonial Foundation of the Humanities (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2018), 54-55.

[6] *Archaeology of Babel*, 2.

[7] Ibid., 22.

[8] Sir William Jones, *The Collected Works of Sir William Jones*. Edited by Garland Canon. 13 Vols. (New York: New York University Press, 1993). For critical works regarding Jones' impact on the formation of Iranian national historiography, see Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001); Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Beyond Translation: Interactions between English and Persian Poetry," *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics.* Edited by Keddie Nikki R. and Rudolph P. Matthee (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 36-60.

[9] Sir William jones, "An Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations," In *The Collected Works of Sir William Jones,* Vol 4 (London: Printed for John Stockdale, Piccadilly; and John Walker, Paternoster-Row, 1807), 539. Nonetheless, Jones identified linguistic and literary affinities among "Eastern" and "Western" traditions. This is the broader context of his statement, left out by Siraj Ahmed, Jones writes: "We are apt to censure the oriental style for being so full of metaphors taken from the sun and moon...but they do not reflect that every nation has a set of images, and expressions, peculiar to itself, which arise from the difference of its climate, manners, and history." In the same essay, however, Jones cited a poem by Hāfez and argued that it is not all that different from certain sonnets by Shakespeare. In fact, Jones' broader project was to draw inspiration from "Asiatic languages" and their poetic tradition so that "a new and ample field would be opened for speculation" in European literary culture.

[10] *Archaeology of Babel*, 26.

literature in different senses none of which was necessarily fixed. He used it in contradistinction to another entity, as in "literature and science" (disciplinary) or "poetry and literature" (generic), and in reference to the "literature of Asia" (geographic) or "ancient literature" (temporal).[11] But an older sense of the term still lingered in the late eighteenth century. In 1771, Jones published *A Grammar of the Persian Language* which offered one of the first European schematizations of Persian grammar. In his Persian-English glossary, Jones opted for the terms "learning" and "literature" as equivalents for the Persian noun "*dāneshmandi.*" The latter is a composite word consisting of *dānesh*, or knowledge, and the suffix *mand,* denoting a person engaged with a certain profession."[12] Similarly, in his "The History of the Persian Language," he framed Persian as an "obscure branch of literature," invoking "literature" in the sense of book learning or language arts, as opposed to its modern sense of a canon of writing composed in a particular language.[13]

In "The History of the Persian Language," Jones aimed to forge what later cohered into the well-recognized genre of literary history. Cognizant of the novelty of his subject, he wrote, "The title of my piece seems, indeed, to give a reasonable ground for [readers'] apprehensions; and the transition appears rather abrupt, from the history of Monarchs to *the history of mere words*, and from the revolution of *the Persian Empire* to the variations of *the Persian idiom*."[14] To justify the idea that a language may have its own history, not fully separate but distinct from dynastic or political history, he offered the following caveat: "...it may be alledged, that a *considerable change in the language of any nation is usually effected by a change in the government;* so that *literary and civil history* are nearly allied, and may often be used with advantage to prove and illustrate one another." (italics in the original)[15] He divided the transformation of Persian literature into two periods, the "Sassanian and Mohammedan dynasties."[16] Jones was operating in a milieu in which the history of language development was inseparable from the history of a people, and "studying the evolution of the former unlocked the historical truth of the latter."[17]

Jones' essay is one of the earliest —arguably the first— articulations of Persian literature in its modern sense in any language. The qualifier "modern" here refers mainly to two novel ideas: the notion that language should be studied and placed within its distinct history, as opposed to being studied and understood within a discipline of language arts (i.e. *adabiyāt* in its premodern sense), consisting of grammar and lexicography. The second idea is conceptualizing

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[11] The references appeared respectively on the following pages: *The Collected Works of Sir William Jones,* Vol 4), 5, 544, 404, and 4.

[12] Sir William Jones, "A Grammar of the Persian Language," In *The Collected Works of Sir William Jones*. Ed. Garland Canon. Vol 2 (New York: New York University Press, 1993). 276.

[13] Sir William Jones, "The History of the Persian Language," In *The Collected Works of Sir William Jones*. Ed. Garland Canon. Vol 2 (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 303. For perspective, Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of The English Language* (1755) defined literature as "Learning; skill in letters;" also quoted in *Archaeology of Babel*. Under the entry "scholar," there appeared the words "learning; literature; knowledge." Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol 2 (London: Printed by W. Strahan, for J. and P. Knapton, 1755), 33, 609.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid, 304.

[17] *Archaeology of Babel*, 10.

the Persian language as the historical property of a single ethnicity (i.e. Persians), giving rise to the assertion that languages consist of "archives of national spirit."[18] Jones was far from an isolated figure; he was fully conversant with the works of both European and Asian savants, figures like Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (d. 1805) and Siraj al-Din Khan Ārzu (1756). Jones' project came on the heels of a much larger transnational circle of scholars who worked within different linguistic traditions in the late seventeenth century that changed the semantic domain of literature, language, and learning.

Thus far, we have sketched the changing conceptualization of literature in early modern English literary culture through particular figures (Jones) and products (texts). In *Forget English!*, Aamir Mufti highlights the role of particular sites of literary production by analyzing the way in which such colonial institutions as the College of Fort William in Calcutta, within which Sir William Jones operated, the Baptist mission at Serampore in Bengal, and the College of Fort St. George in Madras helped to establish what the author calls "Orientalism's Indian 'project.'"[19] Translators, teachers, colonial officials, and local pundits collectively worked within these sites to invent a certain philological discipline that cohered into one iteration of Orientalism, standing among its many global and linguistic iterations, or what Mufti calls "Orientalisms."

For Mufti, Orientalism, and by extension world literature, has always operated as a "border regime, a system for the regulation of movement, rather than as a set of literary relations beyond or without borders."[20] Put differently, this border regime works through a programmatic impulse to flag certain modes of knowledge production as legitimate, rendering them mobile within the cultural system while others stand outside its borders. Literature as a new mode of literary knowledge, arguably inaugurated in the seventeenth century, has functioned as a "system of cultural mapping" whereby the world was conceptualized as "an assemblage of civilizational entities, each in possession of its own textual and/or expressive traditions."[21] Jones' "The History of the Persian Language" in which he outlined the historical development of Persian as strictly tied to the cultural condition of an ethnic people and sole property of their civilization may be seen as an early example of this mapping.

Mufti identifies the genre of literary history as one of the most salient modalities of (world) literature as a system of cultural mapping.[22] Published between 1902 and 1924, Edward Granville Browne's four-volume *A Literary History of Persia* was in many ways precisely the type of historical conceptualization that Sir William Jones had gestured towards a little over a

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[18] Ibid, 2. This idea is manifest in the following statement: "It was a long time before the native *Persians* could recover from the shock of this violent revolution; and *their language* seems to have been very little cultivated under the Califs, who gave greater encouragement to the literature of the *Arabians* (italics in the original). Sir William Jones, "The History of the Persian Language," 309.

[19] Aamir Mufti, *Forget English!: Orientalisms and World Literatures* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 116.

[20] Ibid, 9. Mufti clarifies the relationship between Orientalism and literature, explaining that "Orientalism, broadly speaking, may be understood, then, as a set of processes for the reorganization of language, literature, and culture on a planetary scale that effected the assimilation of heterogeneous and dispersed bodies of writing onto the plane of equivalence and evaluability that is (world) literature." Ibid, 145. Or, when he contends that "a genealogy of world literature leads to Orientalism." Ibid, 19.

[21] Ibid, 20.

[22] Ibid, 131.

century earlier. During this hundred-year period, Persian literary culture had expanded its domain in Europe mainly through Orientalist circles that had studied, translated, commented on and critically produced Persian literary texts.[23] Browne's preface pointed in the direction of his own conceptual models: John Richard Green's *Short History of the English People* (1874) and Jean Jules Jusserand's *A Literary History of the English People* (1894).[24] Browne placed his work within a nationalist historiographical modality, grounding its object of study —the literary history of a people/civilization, rather than a transregional language (Persian)— in a "notion of indigeneity as the condition of culture."[25]

Persian literature as a fixture had multiple valences for Browne. He understood it to mean the constellation of "poets and authors who expressed their thoughts through the medium of the Persian language."[26] The fact that these figures wrote within the same linguistic medium placed them in a binding national tradition. For Browne, a literary tradition had a distinct history which embodied the "national genius" of a distinctive people he identified as Persians. Unlike for Jones, Persian literature in the time of Browne denoted a professional field with a worldwide network of scholars working in different languages and within different iterations of Orientalism. Browne alluded to a corpus of "Oriental scholarship" and addressed his academic readers as "the Orientals by profession."[27] His understanding of literature encompassed works of "Religion, Philosophy, and Science," and not just "the domain of Literature in the narrower sense."[28] Browne's qualification indicates that the boundaries of literature —between learning of language arts and a canon of imaginative writing— were still being negotiated in the early twentieth century. Nonetheless, the meaning of literature with a capital L, as Browne spelled it, clearly invoked civilizational achievement by the late nineteenth.

Michael Allan's *In the Shadow of World Literature* examines the way literature operates as a conceptual category.[29] Literature for Allan is "contingent upon a series of practices, norms, and sensibilities integral to recognizing certain texts as literature and certain practices of response as reading."[30] In so doing, Allan shifts our understanding of (world) literature from "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original

[23] John D. Yohannan's *Persian Poetry in England and America: A 200-Year History* (Delmar, N.Y: Caravan Books, 1977) and Hasan Javadi's *Persian Literary Influence on English Literature: With Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2005) are two monographs focused on this period. In the same period, Persian dictionaries and language textbooks were produced in British-ruled India, some of which were designed to improve upon Jones's *A Grammar of the Persian Language.* Arthur Dudney, "Persian Grammar Books as a Get Rich Scheme in Colonial Calcutta," delivered at the British Library: soundcloud.com/the-british-library/persian-grammar-books.

[24] Ahmad Karimi Hakkak has examined the historiographical models that informed *A Literary History of Persia*, see "Edward Browne va mas'aleh-ye e'tebār-e tārikhi," *Bud va nemud-e sokhan* (Los Angeles: Ketab, 2016), 185-203. Another work that became a model for the writing of literary history was E. J. W. Gibb's *A History of Ottoman Poetry* (Havertown: Gibb Memorial Trust, 1902).

[25] *Forget English!*, 37.

[26] Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (New York: Scribner, 1902), viii.

[27] Ibid., ix.

[28] Ibid., viii.

[29] Michael Allan, *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[30] Ibid., 145.

language," as formulated by David Damrosch, to a transnational community of reading publics defined by their cultivation of and engagement with certain reading modalities.[31] Moving away from literature as a static, taken-for-granted, timeless framework, he analyzes how and why literature comes to matter within a specific culture (Arabic-speaking Egypt) and time (post-colonial).

According to Allan, Egypt's encounter with colonial modes of knowledge set in motion the transformation of *ādāb* as language arts into *adab* as literature. *Adab* in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Egypt began to operate as the subject of modern literary studies within the framework of socially prevalent and culturally authoritative institutions of literature that emerged by and large in the wake of print culture: national schools, teachers' training colleges, faculties of letters, publishing houses, and libraries. By analyzing *adab* as a "disciplined manner of reading," he argues, we form an "understanding of literature that is less an attribute of a text than the archaeology of a discipline."[32] For instance, Jurji Zaydān's series of articles on Arabic literary history titled *Tārīkh ādāb al-lughah al-ʿArabiyyah*, featured in the journal *Al-Hilāl* between 1894-95, is less about what Arabic literature is or is not, and more about what tools and methods Zaydān used to flag certain texts as literary and construct a narrative of Arabic literary history within a particular language theory and political historiography.

Ahmed, Mufti, and Allan all locate an epistemic impulse within literature as a conceptual category that draws, regulates, and authenticates certain boundaries of knowledge. In the case of Ahmed, these boundaries consist of reified cultural and political practices that reconceptualized Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit literary cultures through the philological method in British-ruled India. For Mufti, (world) literature as a distinct "border regime" is entangled with the rise of English as a global language in the seventeenth century. He convincingly shows how the English cultural sphere is in fact bordered by a "regime of enforced of mobility" and immobility.[33] By rendering non-normative the English conceptualization of literature (thus forgetting it as "a single and world-extensive reality"), Mufti has invited us to remember that there exist many other conceptualizations of (world) literature around the world that have yet to be analyzed and incorporated into critical debates in comparative literature. For Allan, literature embodies certain reading practices, cultivated within particular cultural and institutional contexts, that pose as normatively modern and literary, dismissing those who do not read according to their disciplinary paradigm as unmodern and unliterary.

To challenge English world literature's impulse to bring all literary traditions into a single "plane of equivalence and evaluability,"[34] it is vitally important to expose its colonial provinciality (Ahmed), analyze the ways in which it operates as a "disciplined manner of reading" (Allan) or "border regime" of (im)mobility (Mufti), and recognize that not all modern conceptualizations of literature have the same intellectual and historical genealogy. But there are also limits to such an approach; it runs the risk of reading English texts only, even if we are reading to forget their global primacy. *Becoming Literature* does not reframe or reread established thinkers of world literature —figures like Pascale Casanova, Erich Auerbach, Edward Said— or European colonial scholars like Sir William Jones. It is primarily —if not

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[31] David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 4.

[32] Michael Allan, "How *Adab* Became Literary: Formalism, Orientalism, and the Institution of World Literature," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 176.

[33] *Forget English!,* 9.

[34] Ibid, 145.

exclusively— focused on a generation of Persian-language scholars in early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan who are virtually unknown in the field of comparative literature while many of these scholars are in need of critical reintroduction in the field of Persian and Iranian Studies. This study seeks to de-marginalize the inventiveness with which this generation created a new discourse of literature and made it institutionally thinkable and culturally authoritative from Kabul to Tehran.

Placing Iran and Afghanistan in Conversation (1920-1960)

Current studies tend to trace the ways the rise of European discourses of literature has changed our understanding of Eastern literary cultures (Ahmed and Mufti) or, variously, the ways such discourses are received and implemented within an Eastern literary tradition (Allan). They have outlined admirably the complex and symbiotic relationship between literature as a conceptual category, Orientalism as a mode of knowledge production, and nationalism as a political discourse and process. It is far less common to outline how two non-European countries (Iran and Afghanistan), in this case within the same linguistic community, have received and appropriated a European discourse of literature.

Becoming Literature places Iran and Afghanistan in conversation for a number of reasons. The drive to establish literature as an academic discipline follows a similar timeline in Iran and Afghanistan. Even though print culture in Iran developed faster and with far less state control than in Afghanistan, both countries set to institutionalize literature more or less around the same time.[35] The Iranian newspaper *Tarbiyat* forged a clear definition of what literature meant and why it mattered to the nation in the late 1890s while in Afghanistan literature found its most cogent and clear expression in the pages of *Serāj ol-Akhbār* in Kabul in the early 1910s. Operating as laboratories of exchange and literary production, modern *anjoman*s or literary associations emerged in the 1910s in Iran and in the 1930s in Afghanistan. The University of Tehran established its faculty of letters in 1935 and the University of Kabul in 1944. This timeline shows that the rise of literature as an academic discipline in Iran and Afghanistan followed a transregional pattern. This development followed a unique timeline elsewhere. For instance, the emergence of anjomans in British-ruled India dates to the mid nineteenth century while the Asiatic Society of Calcutta was established in the late eighteenth century.[36]

According to received wisdom, the enterprise of creating a national culture in Iran and Afghanistan took place mainly through contact with European modes of knowledge.[37] The nation-state for many of these studies operated as the "fundamental unit of investigation, a

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[35] Farzin Vejdani, "Afterword," In *Afghan History Through Afghan Eyes*. Ed. Nile Green (Oxford; New York Oxford University Press, 2015), 257-261.

[36] For instance, the emergence of *anjoman*s in British-ruled India dates to the mid nineteenth century while the Asiatic Society of Calcutta was established in the late eighteenth century.

[37] This paradigm is best represented by Mostafa Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation: The Construction of National Identity* (New York, NY : Paragon House, 1993). A study of different discourses of writing in Iran, Kamran Talattof's *The Politics of Writing in Iran: A History of Modern Persian Literature* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000) presents nationalism as a self-contained and static discourse strictly limited to Iran.

territorial entity that served as a 'container' for a society."[38] More recently, the role of Colonial India and Ottoman and Republican Turkey has been critically examined in relation to the rise of nationalism in Iran and Afghanistan.[39] *Becoming Literature* joins these studies by recovering an important chapter in the development of Iranian and Afghan national historiography; it shows how they were in conversation even as they looked up to Europe as a source of cultural and political inspiration.

Between the 1920s and 1960s, Iranians and Afghans set out to nationalize Persian literature and institutionalize it within the framework of literary associations, language academies, and faculties of letters. But it would be false to assume that their contacts were severed or even reduced as a result of nationalism. As a result of nationalism in Iran, Bo Utas has argued, "the Persophone literatures of what was then emerging as the modern Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and India were, so to say, orphaned and the non-Persian literatures of the Iranian cultural sphere, like Kurdish and Balochi, were left homeless."[40] Utas' sweeping assertion about nationalism implied that to be canonized (the opposite of orphaned?), the Persophone literature of Tajikistan and Afghanistan needed to be read and valued in Iran or by Iranians (framed as the guardians of Persian literature). The inclusion of Pakistan and India in that statement needs to be qualified for they present a very different case for the afterlife of Persian literature and learning since they are not (and never have been) Persian-speaking societies. But the major assumption here is clear: nationalism has sealed off Persian-speaking societies from one another, giving Iranians sole guardianship, using Utas' metaphor, over the fate of Persian literature in the twentieth century.

As I show, national sites of literary production have in fact intensified contacts among Pesian-speaking countries and opened hitherto unavailable avenues of inquiry and communication. Iranians and Afghans were not only engaged with the world of Persian (and Islamic) learning, but in the early twentieth century they also accessed, discussed, and debated the historical dynamics of their shared literary heritage through engaging the methodology and scholarly output of scholars writing in English, German, French, Russian, Urdu, and other languages. Literary associations in cities like Tehran, Herat, Kabul, and Isfahan established greater contact among Iranian and Afghan scholars as they also connected them to their Persian-

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[38] Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton, New Jersey; Woodstock, Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press, 2017), 3.

[39] Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001); Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); Nile Green, *Afghan History Through Afghan Eyes* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Faiz Ahmed, *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and Statecraft between the Ottoman and British Empires* (Harvard University Press, 2017); Alexander Jabbari, "Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu," PhD dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2017; Michael B. O'Sullivan, "'The Little Brother of the Ottoman State:' Ottoman Technocrats in Kabul and Afghanistan's Development in the Ottoman Imagination, 1908-23," *Modern Asian Studies* 50.6 (2016): 1846-1887; Nile Green, "The Afghan Afterlife of Phileas Fogg: Space and Time in the Literature of Afghan Travel." In *Afghanistan in Ink: Literature between Diaspora and Nation*, edited bt Nile Green and Nushin Arbabzadah, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013): 67-90.

[40] Bo Utas, "Genres in Persian Literature 900-1900," In *Manuscript, Text and Literature: Collected Essays on Middle and New Persian Texts*, Eds. Bo Utas, Carina Jahani, and Dāriyūsh Kārgar (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2008), 225.

speaking counterparts writing in Tbilisi, Berlin, Istanbul, London, and Delhi. In fact, it is necessary to study Afghan and Iranian scholarly sources side by side in order to fully grasp this broader world of Persian learning, Orientalist, and nationalist historiography in the interconnected age of print and national culture. This is mainly because, as Alexander Jabbari reminds us, "people in the Persianate world—and elsewhere around the globe—have experienced modernization" through a set of shared conventions and technologies.[41]

The process by which Iranians and Afghans created a new discourse of literature is not a story about their sustained dialogue, but also one about incorporation. Early twentieth-century literary scholars in Tehran and Kabul regularly cited, commented on, and even republished each other's work in their journals. The University of Kabul had Iranian students, educators, and guest speakers and vice versa. Iranians and Afghans regularly traveled to and corresponded with each other, at times composing poems of friendship that highlighted their linguistic and cultural affinity. Nationalizing Persian literature in this period was not only about laying claim to it as an Iranian or Afghan cultural patrimony, but also recognizing that the frontiers of Persian learning and literary production necessarily surpassed political borders. This recognition did not mean that Iranians and Afghan saw eye to eye on everything. In fact, contestation was a major part of their literary connection. But to contest each other's scholarly projects necessarily meant engaging and placing critical value on the intellectual output and literary production of their counterparts.

This study aims to reverse the passive syntax whereby a modern discourse of literature *was adopted* by Iranians and Afghans and instead reframe the rise of *adabiyāt* as the agentful rewriting of the Persian literary tradition. Through the establishment of institutions of literature, early twentieth-century Iranian and Afghan scholars created concrete networks that linked together people, methods, and texts. Literature became a national enterprise whereby generations of students gained intellectual and professional mobility, being trained and training other generations within the world of *adabiyāt*.[42] In this historical process, Iranians and Afghans needed each other as much as they needed their European interlocutors to make *adabiyāt* thinkable as a discourse of nation-building. The dialogic nature of their historiographical and literary production is now a largely forgotten chapter in the history of their grand cultural undertaking.

Organization

Before outlining the scope of each chapter, I will lay out the argumentative framework of the dissertation as a whole. *Becoming Literature* examines the historical process by which

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[41] *Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu*, 20.

[42] This world had its only limits, most pulling together nationalist-minded intellectuals with a set of shared ideals. In examining the literary career of Adib Pishawari, Abbas Amanat has illustrated how transregional networks of itinerant scholars who used to move through hubs of Persianate learning were, by the early twentieth century, left out by the rise of nationalist institutions such as the University of Tehran. Amanat has captured the changing ethos of this period when he wrote, "...one may argue that the Persianate erudition in which Adib was so well-versed could no longer function as a cross-regional medium." Abbas Amanat, "From Peshawar to Tehran: An Anti Imperialist Poet of the Late Persianate Milieu," In *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, edited by Nile Green (Oakland, University of California Press, 2019), 293.

Persian literature became an academic discipline in early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. I argue that *anjoman*s or literary associations provided the main avenue for the production, promotion, and proliferation of ideas about nation and literature. As such, each chapter deals with institutions of literature, the scholars who operated within their framework and the intellectual products that they created. *Becoming Literature* argues that the impetus behind institutionalizing Persian literature was distinctly programmatic. I do so by showing the ways in which each intellectual product —whether an encyclopedia project or a scholarly journal— contributed to the broader project of reifying Persian literature as a national object of scholarly inquiry. This intellectual enterprise was simultaneously national and international. It set out to define the idea of the nation locally and place it internationally within a rising global order in which each nation possessed a unique literary history and language theory, enshrined by socially prevalent and culturally authoritative institutions of literature.

Chapter one, titled "What is *Adabiyāt*? The Genealogy of a Discourse of Literature (1860-1960)," introduces the central idea of this dissertation: that *adabiyāt* accrued its meaning as literature in the late nineteenth century. This chapter examines the conceptual realignment of *adabiyāt* as a way of outlining the critical stages in the formation of a new discourse of literature. I argue that before it became literature, *adabiyāt* denoted language arts and rhetorical devices associated with *adab* as a literary discourse of civility and self-conduct. In the late nineteenth century, reform-minded Iranian intellectuals introduced the concept of literature as a corpus of prose and poetry, entangled with the ideas of nation, civilization, and progress. They left the term "literature" untranslated to highlight the absence of such a discourse in Pesrian.

The term "*adabiyāt*" found its most cogent and clear expression in the writings of nationalist thinkers Mohammad 'Ali Foughi and Mahmud Tarzi who outlined the social domain of literature in the pages of *Tarbiyat* and *Serāj ol-Akhbār* in Tehran and Kabul respectively. In the 1920s, *adabiyāt* became a vehicle for national education. Literary educators Qāri 'Abdollah and Jalāl Homā'i defined it as an object of national pedagogy in their literary textbooks. Collectively, these episodes sketch out the formation of a new mode of literary knowledge. Even though *adabiyāt* emerged as a result of print culture, it did not entirely jettison its semantic ties with *adab*. I argue that the blurred semantic zone between *adab* and *adabiyāt* is a productive site for understanding how Persian-language scholars actively drew from both Perso-Arabic and European literary cultures.

Chapter two, titled "*Adabiyāt* Proliferating: The Making of Persian Literature as an Academic Discipline in Iran (1916-1947)," focuses on the sites within which *adabiyāt* was created as an academic discipline in Iran. Beginning in the mid 1910s, I focus on the Dāneshkadeh Literary Association as the first voluntary organization that produced a highly consequential journal. Writing in the pages of its eponymous journal, scholars such as 'Abbās Eqbāl Āshtiyāni and Mohammad Taqi Bahār introduced readers to Orientalist scholarship and nationalist literary historiography. The association brought together a group of translators, scholars, poets, and educators who transformed the central ideas of *adabiyāt* into more established fixtures, playing a major role in the proliferation of a new discourse of literature. The establishment of the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters in 1935, the first of its kind in Persian-speaking societies, institutionalized Persian literature by creating an official body consisting of sources, scholars, and students working with a shared disciplinary framework.

Chapter three, titled "Writing for the Nation: Kabul Literary Association and the Institutionalization of Persian Literature in Afghanistan (1930-1956)," analyzes the ways in which a cadre of intellectuals generated a new conception of Afghan history and literature.

Established in 1930, the Kabul Literary Association established the blueprint for associational culture in Afghanistan by sponsoring and housing a diverse group of Afghan intellectuals. *Kabul* and *Kabul Almanac*, its main organs, critically introduced international debates on language theory and literary history and created a distinctly new mode of cultural historiography that articulated Afghanistan as a national subject of history. In 1944 the University of Kabul institutionalized associational patterns of intellectual production and exchange by establishing the country's first Faculty of Letters which in the 1950s launched its first Persian-language scholarly journal*, Adab*. The Encyclopedia Āryānā codified Afghanistan as an object of knowledge couched within language theory and literary history.

Chapter four, titled "Divided by a Common Language?: Iran-Afghanistan Literary Connections (1920-1944)," examines Iran-Afghanistan literary connections. It argues that sites of national thinking, like literary associations, only intensified contact between Iran and Afghanistan, even as they both set to nationalize Persian literature. This contact is most visible within the context of twentieth-century journals that form an interconnected literary ecosystem, mainly through its mechanism of citation. It analyzes a series of correspondence between Mahmud Afshār of *Āyandeh* journal and the Kabul Literary Association that exposes the cultural and ideological faultlines of Iranian and Afghan projects of literary nationalism. Predicated upon the idea of a common literary heritage, Iranian and Afghan scholars forged connections and contestations that broadly made visible their shared belonging to *adabiyāt* as a identitarian discourse of literature.

The conclusion, titled "How Do You Say "Literary Institution" in Persian?" frames faculties of letters as the most enduring —but by no means the only— offspring of *adabiyāt*. The establishment of universities in Iran and Afghanistan marks the culmination of a historical process that transformed *adabiyāt* from a context-dependent notion in the late nineteenth century to a culturally authoritative institution in the 1930s and 40s. I provide a working definition of literary institutions within the context of early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. I argue that to fully understand the rise of *adabiyāt* as a cultural enterprise in Iran, one needs to trace its formation in other Persian-speaking (and Persian-using) societies such as Afghanistan. In doing so, I challenge the common misconception that only Iranians centered their national culture on Persian language and literature and enshrined it as a socially prevalent institution.

Chapter One

What is *Adabiyāt*? The Genealogy of a Discourse of Literature (1860-1960)

Adabiyāt ... knowledge pertaining to *adab* [also] literary works
— Dehkhoda Persian Dictionary

At an assembly of the League of Nations in the late 1920s, a foreign diplomat asked Mohammad ʿAli Forughi which country he was representing.[1] Forughi replied "Iran." But the name registered no reaction. Iran's former Prime Minister then resorted to the internationally recognized name "Persia," but that did not ring any bells either. Forughi tried and failed to introduce his country to the representative sitting by his side. But the foreign diplomat did not give up and eventually inquired, "you might be from the land where Saʿdi comes from, the poet who has said 'all Adam's children are the limbs of one body…'"[2] Forughi was frustrated by this encounter because Saʿdi's oeuvre (d. 1291) preceded Iran/Persia as a political entity. In his multifaceted and immensely influential career, Forughi sought to bring Persian language and literature into close alignment with Iran whereby the former would automatically evoke the latter.

In the first quarter of the twentieth-century, the concept of literature, particularly its linkage to a national identity, was not yet fully formed in the Persian-speaking world. Writing in the shadow of literary institutions today, many studies treat literature as a universal and timeless entity, as illustrated in the next section. Forughi's project of appropriating Persian as Iran's national patrimony necessitated the invention of a new discourse of literature within novel sites of power and literary production that included voluntary associations and educational institutions. To treat literature as a timeless concept is to overlook its discursive construction during this formative period.

Embedded in *adabiyāt*, the Persian term for literature, lies a taken for granted process of conceptual alignment that marks a discursive shift from "*adabiyāt*" as a designation for *adab*-derived disciplines to literature as understood in most nineteenth and twentieth-century European literary cultures as a canon consisting of imaginative prose and poetry.[3] *Adab* is a textual discourse centered on etiquette and self-conduct. The latter iteration of *adabiyāt*, entangled with the monolingual ethos of romantic nationalism, was defined in relation to certain types of identity, be it national or communal. As a result of this discursive shift, *adabiyāt* became a utilitarian concept that reflected the imagined history of a certain group of people. This chapter illustrates how *adabiyāt* as literature became entangled with configurations of identity formation.

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[1] In 1928, Forughi became the first Iranian representative at the League of Nations and later served as its president. Fakhreddin Azimi and Iraj Afshar, "Mohammad ʿAli Forughi Dokaʾ al-Molk." *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Accessed September 29, 2017.

[2] The anecdote is told by Habib Yaghmāʾi in his introduction to *Maqālāt-e Forughi* (Tehran: Tus, 1975), nineteen.

[3] *Adabiyāt* in the sense of an essayistic corpus that contributed to *adab* is best approximated by a regional iteration of belles-lettres in German, Russian, and Eastern European literary traditions which refers to expository writings or treatises that contributed to the discourse of culture, and excluded imaginative prose and poetry.

The history of how "*adabiyāt*," a plural term designating the literary disciplines of *adab* became singular in the image of the European terms "literature/littérature" has not hitherto been examined. Consequently, there has been a longstanding assumption that Persian-language savants like Foroughi merely linked an imported discourse of literature to their nationalist imagining. This assumption gives undue primacy to a transhistorical entity called Europe from which a ready-made discourse of literature was adopted by a passive recipient. It also posits a paradigm wherein the conceptual history of literature is subjugated to the chronology of twentieth-century nationalism. By decoupling Persian literature in the first quarter of the twentieth century from Iran as an eventual nation-state, this chapter seeks to understand the ways in which early twentieth-century essayists, newspaper writers, lexicographers, and literary educators in both Iran and Afghanistan understood and constructed the concept of literature. It argues that literature exceeds its entanglement with any single nationalist imagining, be it Iranian or Afghan, in that the mechanics and semantics of its invention are marked by distinctly transregional routes.

This chapter provides a conceptual history of "*adabiyāt*;" it analyzes literature's form of conceptualization, and does not seek to characterize its varied components. Chapter one tells the story of three generations of Persian-language savants in Iran, Afghanistan, and their diasporas, writing between 1860 and 1940, who drew inspiration from global ideas on literature and its importance for the nation, and excavated and repurposed Persian literary texts in search of a distinct methodology with which to invent "*adabiyāt*" as a term that would designate a new discourse of literature.

Before *Adabiyāt* Became Literature (1335-1860)

"*Adabiyāt*" is the most commonly used term for "literature" in Persian. *Loghatnāmeh-ye fārsi*, a twenty-first century dictionary of Persian cultural history, defines *adabiyāt* as "generally, a canon [*majmu'*] of intellectual and artistic works in prose and poetry pertaining to an ethnic group, and more particularly, works that make an impact on readers' or listeners' emotions as a result of their beauty, eloquence, pleasant phraseology, and an adherence to artistic nuances."[4] The first part is a writerly definition that defines *adabiyāt* as a *type* of writing: prose and poetry. The second part is more readerly, identifying *adabiyāt* based on its aesthetic impact on readers. The third aspect of the definition its utilitarian: literature pertains to a particular group and embodies their history. This is the semantic domain of *adabiyāt* today, one that has been enshrined by social institutions; therefore it warrants a designated space in every dictionary, library, publishing house, book store, university, educational institution, periodical, voluntary association, public squares, and so forth. By comparison, *Loghatnāmeh-ye dehkhodā*, the most comprehensive Persian dictionary published in the first half of the twentieth century, devoted all but a single line to the term "*adabiyāt*," defined as "the knowledge pertaining to *adab*" and "literary works."[5] By comparison, the term was preceded by a four-page entry on *adab*. Dehkhodā's entry demonstrates that even as late as the 1940s, there existed a supple ambiguity to

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[4] *Loghatnāmeh-ye fārsi,* (Tehran: Dāneshgāh-e Tehran, Mo'asseseh-ye loghatnāmeh-ye Dehkhodā, vol. 12, 1994), 1739. I am thankful to Alvand Bahari for providing me with this invaluable reference.
[5] 'Ali Akbar Dehkhodā, Mohammad Mo'in, and Ja'far Shahidi, *Loghatnāmeh* (Tehran: Dāneshgāh-e Tehran, vol. 6, 1949), 1545.

the term "*adabiyāt*," and its identity had not yet been decoupled from *adab*.

What changed in the course of three quarters of a century that warranted *adabiyāt* with half an entire page in *Loghatnāmeh-ye fārsi*? How did *adabiyāt*, a plural term signifying the literary valence of *adab*, become a singular body of prose and poetry belonging to a particular people? This section outlines the conceptual history of the term "*adabiyāt*" in four episodes: the term's "earliest" registered usage in the fourteenth century, the (re)appearance of "*adabiyāt*" in polemical essays in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (1862-1906), the alignment of *adabiyāt* with literature in early twentieth-century newspapers (1896-1918), and the creation of *adabiyāt-e fārsi*, or Persian literature, as a pedagogical object in literary textbooks designed in the second quarter of the twentieth century (1922-1944). The invented alignment of *adabiyāt* with literature has created a great deal of discursive ambivalence and ambiguity in its wake, a feature flattened by literary institutions through recitation and repetition. This chapter examines the sites and ways in which this conceptual alignment has occurred as a way of demythologizing literature as a universal and timeless entity.

Few other terms have been as embedded in the cultural imagination of contemporary Persian speakers as "*adabiyāt*," yet its genealogy prior to the mid-nineteenth century is ambiguous.[6] Etymologically, the term "*adabiyāt*" is derived from the Arabic word *adab*, a capacious concept that refers to "polite learning and its uses: the improvement of one's understanding by instruction and experience, it results in civility and becomes a means of achieving social goals."[7] The Arabic form of *adab*, primarily focused on works of prose, inherited the notions of civility and cultured conduct from the Persianate secretarial class.[8] Scholars continue to grapple with how *adab* in different eras is related to the literary arts which for centuries constituted an essential component of classical education in the Islamicate ecumene, similar to the Latin *trivium* that included grammar, logic, and rhetoric.[9] "*Adabiyāt*" is

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[6] Another example is the term "*mashrutiyat*" or constitutionalism. The concept of *mashruteh* or constitutional rule, much like *adabiyāt*, needed prior introduction. Iranians pored over both concepts in newspapers and gatherings. Discussions on constitutionalism chiefly took place in the pages of such newspapers as *Sur-e Esrāfil* (May 1907 - June 1908) and *Nedā-ye Iran* (December 1906 - October 1907), examined in Negin Nabavi, "Spreading the Word: Iran's First Constitutional Press and the Shaping of a 'New Era.'" *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 14. no. 3 (2005): 307-321.

[7] *Adab* possessed two interlinked valences: the literary and the social. The former was marked by the cultivation of language arts, allowing one to speak and write eloquently and properly, which would in turn enhance one's social standing. See Julia Bray, "Adab" In *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Josef W. Meri (New York: Routledge, 2006), 13. For a historical examination of *adab* in the Arabic literary tradition, see Elias Muhanna, *The World in a Book: Al-nuwayri and the Islamic Encyclopedic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[8] By examining the reception of Saʿdi's *Golestān* in Mughal and post-Mughal India, Mana Kia has illustrated the way in which "social conduct and literary form" were indistinguishable valences of Persianate *adab*. See "*Adab* as Ethics of Literary Form and Social Conduct: Reading the *Gulistān* in Late Mughal India," in *No Tapping Around Philology: A Festschrift in Celebration and Honor of Wheeler McIntosh Thackston Jr.'s 70th Birthday*, edited by Alireza Korangy and Daniel J. Sheffield. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 281-308.

[9] Susan A. Bonebakker, "Adab and the Concept of Belles-Lettres," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: 'Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, edited by Julia Ashtiany , T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, and R. B. Serjeant (Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16-30.

the plural form of *adabiyeh,* subjects derived from and related to *adab.*[10]

In the late nineteenth century, a number of reform-minded intellectuals with cultural ties to Ottoman lands began to refashion *"adabiyāt"* as part of a much wider network of ideas designed to bring Iranian culture into closer alignment with how they imagined European societies.[11] The Tanzimat reforms (1839-1876) in the Ottoman Empire may not have directly dealt with literature, nonetheless they shaped debates regarding the function and domain of literature in the subsequent decades. The Ottoman vision of reform resonated with neighboring countries as well. A wide range of Ottoman-Turkish terms associated with political and social reform entered Persian during and following the Tanzimat era, notably *mashrutiyat* or constitutionalism.[12] Given the influence of Ottoman lands in trafficking key terms through which a generation of Iranian and Afghan intellectuals expressed their political ideals, the longstanding assumption has been that the term *"adabiyāt"* was borrowed from Ottoman Turkish.[13] The history of its usage in Persian dates back, to the best of my knowledge, to the fourteenth century.

Prior to the nineteenth century, *adabiyāt* did not appear more than a handful of times in Persian. In fact, it is, as far as I can tell, absent from different anthological types such as *kashkul* (dervish's bowl), *golshan* (garden), *golchin* (bouquet), *jong* (boat), *safineh* (ark), and *bayāz* (notebook) that compiled poems, proverbs, philosophical ideas and literary lore.[14] As a category of classification, it is also absent from the genre of *tazkareh* or biographical anthologies that

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[10] Hassan Anvari, *Farhang-e bozorg-e sokhan* (Tehran: Sokhan, 2003), 299.

[11] *Edebiyat*, based on its Turkish pronunciation, appeared in Ottoman-language newspapers during the mid-nineteenth century. Jason Vivrette informed me that according to *Nisanyansozluk*, an etymological dictionary for Ottoman/Turkish, *edebiyat* was already in use by the 1860s, as it appeared in Ahmed Vefik Paşa's work *Lehçe-i Osmani* (İstanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1888) in the following forms: *'ulum-i edebiye* [literary knowledge] and *edebiyat*. The term appears in other languages in the twentieth century as well. Gregory M. Bruce shared with me that according to Sayyid Aḥmad Dihlavī's *Farhang-e asafiyah* (Delhi: Naishnal Akāḍemī, 1974), a multilingual Urdu-language dictionary, the earliest use of *adabiyāt* dates back to 1923 in Urdu, which coincided with efforts to institutionalize Urdu literature in universities like Osmania, Jamia Millia, and Aligarh. Alexander Jabbari informed me of an earlier usage by an institution called idāra-e adabiyat-e urdu, a literary and educational association, which was established in Hyderabad in 1920.

[12] Mohammad Taqi Bahār, *Sabkshenāsi, yā, Tārikh Tatavvur She'r-e Fārsi*, Vol 3 (Tehran: 'Elmi, 1968), 403-404.

[13] See e.g. Āzartāsh Āzarnush, "Adab," in *Dāʾerat ol-maʿāref-e bozorg-e eslāmi*, vol. 7, edited by Kazem Musavi Bojnurdi (Tehran: Dāʾerat ol-maʿāref-e bozorg-e eslāmi, 1988), 315. Āzarnush wrote, "The term *adabiyāt* is a neologism [in Persian]. It gained currency when Ottoman Turks sought to translate the French term *littérature* and offered *adabiyāt* as its equivalent."

[14] Each term displays a distinct attitude towards the act of anthologization. For instance, *safineh* or ark evokes the story of Noah's ark in which he selected representative members of wide ranging species (e.g. *Safineh-ye tabriz*). *Bayāz* is a white notebook in which the author pens whatever strikes his/her fancy (e.g. Bayāz-e Tāj ol-Din Ahmad Vazir). *Kashkul* or a dervish's bowl features all types of writing without any intended organizational principle (e.g. *Kashkul-e hātami*). The distinguishing feature of *tazkareh*s is their biographical element; they can also be thematically organized (e.g. *Tazkerat ol-sho'arā*). Anthologies have found an afterlife in the age of print culture and scholarly positivism. For example, the journal *Kelk* and *Bokhārā*, the latter still in publication, have consistently featured a wide range of prose and poetry submitted to their offices, ranging from a single line of poetry to short stories.

document biographies of poets, scholars, and artists and offer specimen of their works.[15] Even a tazkareh as recently composed as Rezā Qoli Khān Hedāyat's (d. 1871) *Majmaʿ ol-fosahā* (The Assembly of the Eloquent), a comprehensive account of 867 Persian poets, does not make use of the term, whether as a classifying category or otherwise. It is in the fourteenth century that *adabiyāt* appeared in *Nafāʾes al-fonun fi ʿarāʾes ol-ʿoyun* (The Jewels of Science and the Springs of Knowledge) composed by 'Allama Shams ol-Din Mohammad ebn-e Mahmud-e Āmoli (d. 1353). Āmoli was a Shiʻi scholar and physician who taught for Il-khanate academies. He also commented on the works of Ibn Sina. *Nafāʾes ol-fonun* was composed between 1335 and 1342 in Shiraz and was dedicated to the Il-khanate ruler 'Abu Saʻid Bahādor Khān (r. 1316-1335).

Āmoli broadly classified all sciences [*ʿolum*] into two time periods: before and after the life of the Prophet of Islam. Each entry gave a succinct summation of a particular branch of science. *Adabiyāt* is used alongside *tabiʿiyāt* [knowledge related to nature], *sharʿiyāt* [knowledge related to religious law] and *riyāziyāt* [knowledge related to mathematics].[16] *ʿOlum-e adabi* or literary knowledge was described next to such varied fields as theology, statistics, jurisprudence, exegesis, moral refinement, geometry and philosophy. For Āmoli, *adabiyāt* encompassed the following literary disciplines:[17]

> *Khatt* (calligraphy), *loghat* (lexicography), *eshteqāq* (derivation), *tasrif* (morphology), *nahw* (syntax), *maʻani* (semantics, a component of rhetoric), *bayān* (clarity, a branch of rhetoric focused on metaphor and simile), *badiʿ* (rhetorical figures, also means elocution), *ʿaruz* (prosody), *qawāfi* (rhyming), *qariz* (canonical metered poetry), *sheʿr* (a capacious term for poetry that includes non-canonical popular poetic forms), *dawāwin* (anthologization), *amsāl* (parables, also narration), *enshāʾ* (prose composition), and *estifāʾ* (accounting or bookkeeping)

Adabiyāt allowed Āmoli to compartmentalize different branches of knowledge derived from and related to *adab* under its capacious term, perhaps best approximated by language arts and rhetoric. The entries explained how each *fan* or discipline has been studied and codified, particularly in the Arabic grammatical and rhetorical tradition.[18] If *adab* broadly constituted what is known as culture today, then *adabiyāt* was its essayistic corpus of knowledge making up its literary form. However, *adabiyāt* was not a static category, and its meaning was contingent upon context.

ʿObayd Zākāni (d. 1370), a contemporary of Āmoli, evoked and satirized *adabiyāt* as an

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[15] Composed in the thirteenth century, Mohammad ʿAwfi's *Lobāb ol-albāb* is often dubbed the first major Persian literary *tazkareh*. E. G. Browne and ʿAllameh Qazvini's critical edition, contains the word *adabiyāt,* inserted by the editors in brackets: "He divided the world into two parts [one is land and the other is sea, and divided literature into two parts] one is poetry and the other is prose" (Leiden: Brill, 1903), 7. However, in Saʻid Nafisi's critical edition, there are no brackets and the term "*sokhan*" appeared instead of *adabiyāt* (Tehran: Ketābkhāneh-e Ebn Sīnā, 1957), 6.

[16] Mohammad Āmoli, *Nafāʾes ol-fonun fi ʿArāʾes al-ʿoyun*, ed. Abol Hasan Sha'rāni (Tehran: Islāmiya, 1957), 16.

[17] Ibid.

[18] *Nafāʾes al-fonun* extensively cited its source. For an overview of Āmoli's sources, see Gholâmreza Mastʿali, "Zendegi-ye Shams ol-Din Mohammad Ebn-e Mahmud-e Āmoli," *Adabiyāt va ʿolum-e ensāni-ye dāneshgāh-e Tehran* (1378): 293-326.

essential part of the education of an *adib* or a cultured individual. *Resāleh-ye taʿrifāt* (The Treatise of Definitions), also called *Resāleh-ye dah fasl* (The Treatise in Ten Chapters), contains more than two hundred satirical definitions that relate to subjects of religion, politics, and social life. In his brief preface, he writes "it is evident to the wise that possessors of aptitude have no choice but to be versed in *adabiyāt* (belles-lettres) and *loghāt* (lexicon)."[19] Under each entry, ʿObayd offered his own definitions for the "great benefit of the novice."[20] He set up his parody by claiming that many "great minds in the past have [already] composed many books" on the subject. He comically added the definite article "al" in Arabic to all 261 terms in his treatise, some of which are etymologically Persian, for instance *al-dāneshmand* or the scholar.[21] Clearly, this is not a treatise of Āmoli's kind. *Adabiyāt* as an integral component of the training of "persons of aptitude" (*ahl-e esteʿdād*), become the subject of ʿObayd's meta-literary parody.[22] *Resāleh-ye taʿrifāt* humorously evoked *adabiyāt* as the disciplinary marker of a certain professional class. ʿObayd's biting parody demonstrates the suppleness of the term "*adabiyāt*," which accommodated different contexts.

The term "*adabiyāt*" may have been sporadically used between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, though I have only found two instances of it.[23] *Nafāʾes al-fonun* is the most expansive context in which *adabiyāt* appeared prior to the nineteenth century. *Nafāʾes al-fonun* later provided twentieth-century savants with an important precedent that afforded them both a set of possibilities and limitations. Overall, *adabiyāt* is registered in Āmoli's treatise as a designation for disciplines related to *adab*, or variously a corpus of expository writing that contributed to the literary valence of *adab*. The term's nineteenth and twentieth-century usage, signifying a body of valued writings entangled with a national imaginary, derives from a distinctly different discourse of literature.

The Invention of a New Discourse of Literature (1860-1906)

In the mid-nineteenth century, *adabiyāt* re-entered the Persian literary imagination with a

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[19] ʿObayd Zākāni, *Resāleh-e Delgoshā: Beh enzemām-e resāleh'hā-ye taʿrifāt, Sad pand va navādir al-amsāl*, edited by ʿAli A. Halabi (Tehran: Asātir, 2004), 191. Here is the Persian text: *bar raʾy-e arbāb-e albāb mobarhan ast ke ahl-e esteʿdād rā az qesm-e adabiyāt va loghāt chāreh nist.*

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 193.

[22] Daniela Meneghini, "ʿObayd Zākāni." *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Accessed September 15, 2017.

[23] The preface of *Shahnameh-ye bāysonghor* stated that Ferdowsi was well versed in Arabic composition, sciences, philosophy and *adabiyāt* of his time (*Ketābkhāneh-ye saltanati*, n.d.) 31, referenced in *Loghatnāmeh-ye fārsi*, vol. 12, 1739. In this context, *adabiyāt* encompassed disciplines derived from *adab*, attesting to Ferdowsi's competence in *adab*'s literary valence. I do not dismiss the possibility that in this particular instance, *adabiyāt* could have been a nonce term. Future research may very well discover that *adabiyāt*'s subterranean existence as a concept outside the zone of written record, perhaps in descriptions of curricula. Such a discovery would help us to better tease out the semantic domain of "*adabiyāt*" beyond the handful of Persian texts examined here. Future research would also have to trace its usage across Near Eastern languages, particularly early Arabic texts on *adab* and its literary disciplines. Nevertheless, my analysis here is not based on the assumption that the term was largely absent in written records.

distinctly different valence.[24] It was no longer evoked only as a discipline derived from *adab* or a regime of cultivation required for the secretarial class, the term began to accommodate a new concept in the 1870s and 1980s: a valued body of imaginative writing with a civilizing force entangled with a particular national imaginary. This discursive shift primarily took place in the writings of a generation of reform-minded intellectuals some of whom lived in the multilingual Ottoman ecumene.[25] They understood literature as a civilizing entity, a vehicle that both embodied and effected ideals of progress in the making of Iran's body politic. The civilizing ethos that they ascribed to literature marked one of the main features of *adabiyāt*, an invented discourse that in the space of half a century was transformed from a polemical concept to a monumental institution. This section analyzes the way in which the concept of literature and the term of "*adabiyāt*" were (re)introduced to Persian literary culture as an instrument of critique directed at what was perceived as an obsolete mode of literary production.

One representative of this generation is Fathʿali Akhundzādeh (d. 1878) who lived formative years of his life in Tbilisi. He helped to invent a polemical mode of cultural critique that posited Europe as an imagined utopia. Akhundzādeh maintained that the literary establishment, embodied by poets and historians at the Qajar court, had corrupted Persian literature which contributed to Iran's cultural decline. Akhundzādeh, who mentored a generation of intellectuals, modeled a more simplified prose, put forth a topic-oriented criterion for poetic composition, and helped to introduce playwriting and essay writing as instruments of literary change in both Persian and Azeri.[26] Ākhundzādeh brought into Persian a stock set of lexicon from Post-Enlightenment Europe, mediated by Russian-language sources, that dovetailed well with his broader project of "recast[ing] Iran into modern national form."[27]

Published in 1865, *Maktubāt* (Correspondences) frontloaded a host of key concepts that Ākhundzādeh argued were missing from Iranian mode of thought. In *Maktubāt*, Ākhundzādeh posed as the Persian translator of three lengthy letters exchanged between two fictitious princes: Kamāl ol-Dowleh, an Indian prince and the son of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, and Jalāl ol-

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[24] The term appeared in the following works Afzal ol-Molk's (d. 1891) *Afzal ol-tavārikh*, Eʿtemād ol-Saltaneh's (d. 1896) *al-maʿāser va al-āsār*, Hajji Sayyāh's (d. 1925) *Khāterāt*, Amin ol-Dowleh's (d. 1904) *Safarnāmeh*, and Ashraf ol-Din Gilāni's (d. 1934) *Divān-e Nasim-e Shomāl*. Referenced in *Loghatnāmeh-ye fārsi*, ibid. *Tazkerat ol-Shoʿarā*'s entry on Ferdowsi, composed in 1487, stated that ʿOnsori tested Ferdowsi knowledge of *adabiyāt* and difficult poems. Poetry was used as a separate category and *adabiyāt*, consisting of expository writings on a wide range of topics including poetry, was seen as its own category. Dowlatshāh Samarqandi, *Ketāb-e Tazkerat ol-Shoʿarā*, ed. Edward G. Browne (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1901), 59.

[25] Fathʿali Ākhundzādeh lived in Tbilisi, Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni (d. 1897) studied in Tehran and later settled in Istanbul, ʿAbd ol-Rahim Tālebof (d. 1911) mainly lived in Buynaksk (Dagestan), Zayn ol-ʿĀbedin Marāghe'i (d. 1911) mainly lived in Istanbul, and Malkom Khān (d. 1908) studied in France and worked in Egypt and Italy. To get a sense of the community of Persian-speaking intellectuals in the Caucasus, see Rebecca Gould, "Dissidence from a Distance: Iranian Politics as Viewed from Colonial Daghestan," In *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, edited by Nile Green (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 259-277.

[26] See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry: Scenarios of Poetic Modernity in Iran* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), chapter one. Iraj Parsinejad, *Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh and Literary Criticism* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1988).

[27] Afshin Marashi. *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 66.

Dowleh, an Iranian prince who resided in Egypt. In the preface, Ākhundzādeh wrote,

> [This writer] came across certain terms from European languages [*alsaneh-ye farangestān*] when translating these correspondences from the original manuscript. Finding corresponding terms in the language of Islam [*zabān-e Islam*, i.e. Persian] seemed extremely difficult; therefore the writer of these correspondences stated them in their original form in the script of Islam [*horuf-e Islam*]. Then, it became necessary to elucidate these terms at the outset so that readers would be educated about their core concept.[28]

The author provided a glossary of twenty one terms and briefly defined each one. Relevant for our purpose are *literātur* (*littérature* written in the Perso-Arabic script) and *poezi* (poésie), the former is the third term that he introduced, following "despot" and "civilization."[29] Ākhundzādeh wrote, "*literātur* consists of any composition whether in prose or poetry."[30] The concept of literature as belletristic discourse, in the form of both prose and poetry, was articulated by the Persian term *sokhan*.

A wide array of meaning has been ascribed to the term "*Sokhan.*" Among Persian poets, Nezāmi Ganjavi (d. 1209) has used the term "*sokhan*" frequently to refer to belletristic speech (prose and poetry), the act and nature of (artistic) creation and poetic *techné*. The term "*sokhan*" has many derivatives in reference to the creators, discerners, and scholars of belletristic discourse (e.g. *sokhanvar, sokhandān, sokhan-shenās,* etc). Today, *sokhan* and *adabiyāt* satisfy two distinct and complementary discourses of literature. Due to its early twentieth-century cultivation as a utilitarian term, *adabiyāt* has gained a certain historical dimension. However, *sokhan* serves a transhistorical or even extra-historical function, focused on the quality of artistic creation and its rhetorical mechanics. Why didn't twentieth-century savants opt for *sokhan* to articulate the concept of literature? Thanks to the pluralizing suffix *yāt*, *adabiyāt* denoted a category, and was deemed better suited to give an institutional identity to a discourse of literature and its discipline in the making than the term "*adab*" or "*sokhan.*"[31] Even as *adabiyāt* proliferated as a conceptual category in the second quarter of the twentieth century, it was possible to make use of *sokhan*, as exemplified by Badio'zammān Foruzanfar who both wrote *Tārikh-e adabiyāt Iran* (The Literary History of Iran) and *Sokhan va Sokhanvarān* (Poetry and Poetry) only within five years of one another. Their titles apart, the two works overlap in their shared conceptualization of literature as a biographical narrative of canonical figures.[32]

In *literātur* Ākhnundzādeh had found a foreign term that embodied his polemical case for

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[28] *Maktubāt* (n.p.: Mard-e Emruz Publications, 1985), 9.

[29] Ibid., 10-11. This glossary also includes the names of Copernicus, Newton. Petrarch, Voltaire, and Xenophon. Ākhundzādeh called the first two sages of Europe [*hokamā*] and the rest European philosophers [*filusufān*].

[30] Ibid., 10.

[31] Like Persian, *a/edebiyāt* is the most common term for literature in Turkish (Türk edebiyatı) and Pashto (da Pashto adabiyāt) while in Arabic and Urdu that role has been assigned to *adab*. In Arabic, *adabiyāt* distinguishes between literary studies and linguistics or *lughawiyyāt* in many faculties of letters.

[32] On Nezāmi Ganjavi's use of *sokhan* and its relation to the Arabic *kalām*, see Hamid Dabashi, "Harf-e nakhostin: mafhum-e sokhan dar nazd-e hakim Nezāmi Ganjavi," *Iran Shenāsi*, vol. 3, no. 12 (1370/1992): 723-739.

radical change. He left *poezi* and *literātur* untranslated and argued that he was importing concepts via translation that were non-existent in Persian.[33] He did not mention from which language he was translating, and it is now widely believed that he composed the work himself. Why did he pose as the work's translator, or variously, why did he opt not to disclose any information about the source language/text? I argue that Ākhnundzādeh used translation as a trope that afforded him imagined distance from the target culture. In other words, the act of translating, imagined as separate from the act of composing, made the conceptual absence of *literātur* and *poésie* more legible.[34] By using distancing and ironizing techniques such as glossing without equivalents, Ākhundzādeh aimed to graft what he understood as a European mode of thought onto Persian literary culture.

Ākhundzādeh and his successors tied *literātur* as a textual entity to the well-being and malaise of the Iranian nation. The specific profile of this nation remained vaguely defined, if at all. Nineteenth-century intellectuals debated the extent to which Iran's literature, seen as morally corrupt, bombastic, and highly formulaic, contributed to the social ills of the country, but they were aligned in their view that *literātur* was inseparable from its imagined nation.[35] Ākhundzādeh's Iran was very different from the Iran of Reza Qoli Khān Hedāyat (d. 1871), the Qajar administrator and poet that he bashed as the embodiment of an ossified literary establishment.[36] Hedāyat lived and died in Tehran, the Qajar seat of power. But when Ākhundzādeh was an adolescent living in Ganja, a region he knew to have been part of Qajar Iran, his hometown was annexed to the Russian Empire.[37] He and his cohort viewed Iran in the shadow of shifting cultural boundaries and the territorial loss that severed them from their imagined homeland. In their writings, Iran featured as a weak and dormant entity stripped of its ancient glory.[38] That is one of the reasons why Ākhundzādeh and his cohort evoked Iran as a

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[33] Ākhundzādeh even argued that referring to poetry as *she'r* highlighted the ignorance of Iranians for poetry was not commensurate with what Iranians understood as poetry and called *she'r*.

[34] The concepts of authorship and translation were more fluid in the nineteenth century. For instance, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (3 vols., London, 1824), written by James Morier, was translated into Persian in the early twentieth century by Mirza Habib. The status of the Persian version was contested for many years: was it originally written in Persian, or was it *just* a translation? Today, it is believed that the idiosyncratic prose style of the Persian text led to such debates. But the broader (and often overlooked) theme is that authorship and translation did not yet belong to two separate domains in the nineteenth century. This argument needs to be backed by further research that would also consider the role of romantic nationalism's monolingual ethos in creating a false tension between "original composition" and "translated copy."

[35] Thus, for example, Kermāni attributed the social ills of Iran to Persian poetry, while Malkom Khān (d. 1908) put forth ideas for an ideal poetic language. Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry*, 41.

[36] Ākhundzādeh wrote an imaginary dialogue with Hedāyat in which he submitted the Qajar courtier to a scathing critique over his historical work *Rowzat ol-safā-ye Nāseri*. His main criticism was that Hedāyat had included poetry in a work of history, two entities that Ākhundzādeh assigned to two separate domains. *Maqālāt* (Tehran: Āvā, 1972), 150. This was a novel rhetorical and historiographical distinction.

[37] The treaties of Golestan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828) led to considerable loss of land for Iran. The territories ceded to Russian control now constitute parts of today's Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, and the Iğdır Province.

[38] Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 67-68.

territorially-defined entity (as opposed to an ecumenical zone).[39]

According to Ākhundzādeh, the task of *literātur* was to articulate the qualities, anxieties, and ideals of the Iranian people. He defined his yardstick for good poetry as follows:

> *Poezy* consists of such a composition as to include the expression of the conditions and character traits [*ahvāl va akhlāq*] of a person or a (group of) people [*tāyefeh*] as it is in truth [*kamā hova haqqoh*], or of the exposition [*sharh*] of a topic, or of the description [*vasf*] of the circumstances of the world of nature in verse in the utmost excellence [*jowdat*] and effectiveness [*taʾsir*].[40]

It is not *techné* that interested Ākhundzādeh, but a topic-oriented poetry that adopted an "excellent" subject matter and moved audiences with its language. Ākhundzādeh never employed the term "*adabiyāt,*" nonetheless helped to shape a discourse of literature articulated by the term "*adabiyāt*" in the late nineteenth century. In his polemical essays, Ākhundzādeh was primarily concerned with reforming a social system that he deemed backwards. He sought to place literature, conceptualized as a civilizing entity, at the service of creating a robust national form for the Iranian body-politic. Europe, in Ākhundzādeh's view, functiond as a byword for progress. As such, it was the polemical performance of *literātur* or *poezy* in Persian that preoccupied him, and not in the least how these concepts had changed or operated in European literary cultures.[41] Ākhundzādeh introduced a network of Post-Enlightenment concepts that the next generation of reform-minded intellectuals incorporated into their writings and mapped onto Persian terms like "*adabiyāt.*"

Āʾineh-ye sekandari (Alexander's Mirror) by Mirzā Aqa Khān Kermāni (d. 1896), a nationalist thinker and essayist, is a historical account of ancient Iran. Lithographed in 1906, Kermāni wrote in the preface that he had composed a book on *adabiyāt-e fārsi* (Persian literature) entitled *Āʾin-e sokhanvari* (A Guideline for Belletristic Discourse), but a wise friend told him that it is not "*literātur* (*littérature*) that we urgently need today, but rather *histuār* (*histoire*)."[42] I was unable to locate a copy of *Āʾin-e sokhanvari*, so I do not know how Kermāni gave meaning to *adabiyāt*. However, the preface of *Āʾineh-ye sekandari* is one of the earliest instantiations of the use of *adabiyāt* in conjunction with *fārsi*, forming a monolingual designation that would later congeal into a familiar construct called Persian literature in the early twentieth century.

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[39] *Recasting Persian Poetry*, 28. Many intellectuals who contributed to the discourse of nationalism lived in the diasporas of Iran and Afghanistan. For an examination of the way in which territorial loss became an impetus for imagining Iran as a national community by a group of diasporic intellectuals, see Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804-1946* (Princeton University Press, 1999).

[40] Ibid., 11. English translation extracted from *Recasting Persian Poetry*, 34-53.

[41] Apart from his nebulous references to "European sciences" or "European philosophers," he did not flesh out his views on the role of literature and philosophy in Europe. Instead, Europe featured as a floating signifier for modernity in his writings. For instance, he used Shakespeare and Homer as models against whom he evaluated Persian-language poets. Ākhundzādeh, *Maktubāt*, 32.

[42] Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni, *Āʾineh-ye sekandari* (Tehran, 1906), 8. Written in 1890, *Aʾin-e sokhanvari*, according to Iraj Parsinejad, was never completed. *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (Maryland: Ibex, 2003), 79.

The preface of *Āʾineh-ye sekandari* included both the terms "*literatur*" and "*adabiyāt*" in the same paragraph: the latter to refer to a manual on belletristic writing and the former to echo Kermani's received wisdom that works of history were urgently needed, as opposed to literature. The appearance of both terms which were brought into close conceptual alignment in the first quarter of the twentieth century demonstrates the level of ambiguity and malleability that existed around the term "*adabiyāt*." In this context, *adabiyāt* and *literatur* are defined against the backdrop of *histuār*, two concepts that Ākhundzadeh and Kermāni viewed as self-contained. The way in which literature and history were conceptualized across imagined faultlines needs to be researched. [43] The conceptualization of *adabiyāt* took varied and contested features, an ambiguous process flattened by literary institutions designed to reify literature as a self-contained entity.

As *Āʾineh-ye sekandari*'s preface repeatedly stated, it was Kermāni's intention to establish the urgency and importance of history over literature. He wrote, "if the history of this [Iranian] nation were to be laid on a sound foundation and the quest for grandeur were to permeate the hearts of the nation, its roots will be firm. Otherwise, the windstorm of events will sway it from side to side."[44] Historiography as it is commonly practiced in the East, he argued, had nothing to offer its readers beyond "listening to stories and myths solely for the sake of passing time." The objective of this type of history writing was "sneer, sycophancy, and utterance of nonsense."[45] Kermāni defined his work against the backdrop of an ossified system of knowledge production that cause Iran's cultural decline. Kermāni contributed to the making of a phenomenon Reza Zia-Ebrahimi has called "dislocative nationalism," the idea that Iran's authentic self is embodied only by the pre-Islamic period.[46] The generation of Iranian and Afghan savants who succeeded Kermāni continued to cultivate a discourse of objectivity through which they presented their mythical inventions as credible and legitimate. The next two chapters examine the content and structure of early twentieth-century myths of literary history.

To sum up, Ākhundzādeh and Kermāni were among a generation of reform-minded intellectuals who cultivated a polemical discourse of social critique. As such, their engagement with the function and meaning of literature was part of a larger scheme of effecting social change in Iran. They understood literature as a body of writing with a civilizing ethos that embodied Iran's national form. Their ideas took the form of polemical essays designed to overhaul a literary establishment they viewed as dated and decadent. By characterizing as "polemical," I am not suggesting that they operated only on an argumentative level, as exemplified by my analysis of *Maktubat*'s distancing and ironizing techniques. These texts were highly crafted, and their polemics functioned primarily through the mediation of such techniques.

Their authors understood their mission to introduce a stock set of idioms that would shock the literary system out of its perceived slumber. The generation succeeding them took inspiration from their cultural polemics and created sites of power and literary production that aimed to reinvent *adabiyāt* as a literary prototype aligned with the idea of literature. They may

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[43] History was historically viewed as a separate entity from poetry in Modern Persian. Nonetheless, the former frequently incorporated lines of poetry which makes Ākhundzādeh criticism of Hedāyat novel.

[44] Ibid., 14.

[45] Ibid., 8.

[46] Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Dislocation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

have differed in their mode of literary production, but both generations viewed literature as a distinct marker of an "evolved nation." In his *Maktubāt*, Ākhundzādeh introduced the idea of literature as a conceptual instrument to challenge the literary establishment of his time. Less than a century later, it became a transregional establishment far more organized and authoritative than the one he had confronted in the 1860s.

Why Does *Adabiyāt* Matter? Literature and Its Nation (1896-1918)

The proliferation of Persian-language newspapers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Iran, Afghanistan and their diasporas marks a turning point in the establishment of *adabiyāt* as a conceptual category of utilitarian value to the project of nation-building. The newspaper provided an ideal space for the cultivation of a literary discourse that had previously taken shape in the polemical essays of Fathʿali Ākhundzadeh and Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni. Newspapers helped to reify the local and translocal as imagined communities; they were regularly published and circulated, and helped to shift literary networks from local sites of gathering — coffee houses and literary salons — to a transregional domain of textual production and readership. Early twentieth-century newspapers adopted a simplified writing and printing style best suited for the proliferation of their educational message. Independently-run newspapers exceeded the state apparatus and its monopoly on defining the nation.[47] It was within the novel form of newspapers that *adabiyāt* became further entangled with the nation.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century newspapers defined *adabiyāt* as a civilizing entity by placing it within a narrative of political, economic, and cultural news and commentary whose fulcrum was the nation and its imagined progress. The ways and extent to which *adabiyāt* represented the nation's social ills or possessed the potential to effect positive change were subject to debate. But such discussions only cemented *adabiyāt*'s civilizing form of conceptualization, a lasting perception that continues to generate debate among Persian-language writers. Mahmud Tarzi (d. 1933), a pioneer of journalism in Afghanistan, and Mohammad ʿAli Forughi (d. 1942) were both preoccupied with defining and delineating the domain of *adabiyāt*. The literary columns of *Serāj ol-Akhbār-e Afghāniyah* (The Torch of Afghan News, 1911-1918) and *Tarbiyat* (Education/Training, 1896-1907) represent one of the earliest efforts to bring *adabiyāt* into close alignment with literature as a utilitarian and civilizing concept. By defining, disseminating, and promulgating *adabiyāt*, these newspapers laid a foundation for literary institutionalization in Persian.

In Tehran, Mohammad ʿAli Tarbiyat founded *Tarbiyat*, Iran's first independent newspaper, thanks in no small part to the new-found political freedom following the assasination of Nāser ol-Din Shah in 1896. *Tarbiyat* was published by an eponymous library in Tehran. The Tarbiyat library was among new sites of reading, distribution, and literary production that proliferated in early twentieth-century Tehran. Mohammad Hosayn Forughi (d. 1907), the father of Mohammad ʿAli Forughi, served as the newspaper's editor. In the same period, the Forughis served as court translators and royal tutors to the Qajar monarch, and developed a wide range of historical and literary textbooks for schools in Iran.[48] In the first issue of *Tarbiyat*, released on

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[47] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 61.

[48] Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 35.

December 16, 1896, Forughi boldly declared that the differences among people and societies boiled down only to their education.[49] Similar to most newspapers at the time, *Tarbiyat* viewed itself as an instrument for mass education. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet has observed that "most newspapers published in the late Qajar period heralded the virtues of education in shaping a civilized and progressive society—ideals to which a beleaguered Iran aspired."[50] In its early years, *Tarbiyat* celebrated the history of printing in Europe as an indispensable first step towards educating the masses.[51] Before delving into the development of literature, one question needs to be addressed: what readership did *Tarbiyat* aim to reach?

Four decades prior to the publication of *Tarbiyat*, Ākhundzādeh had tied the idea of *literātur* to a fragile political entity called Iran while living on its periphery. By the time the Forughis had begun writing in *Tarbiyat* in the early years of the twentieth century, the imagined entity *ahl-e Iran*, the people of Iran, had become a more concrete fixture. *Tarbiyat* and many other twentieth-century Persian-language newspapers confidently addressed *ahl-e Iran* thanks to the proliferation of print culture. *Tarbiyat* may have been primarily addressed an Iranian readership, but its transregional circulation shows that the "people of Iran" was a mobile and global entity. *Tarbiyat*, particularly in its later issues, listed sale prices for Tehran, domestic provinces, Egypt, Ottoman lands, Europe, Russia, and India. *Tarbiyat* also reported on other Persian-language newspapers published outside of Iran, *Hekmat* and *Habl ol-matin* printed respectively in Cairo and Calcutta. Though these periodicals were focused on the question of national identity and education, they collectively intensified transnational contact and interaction. In other words, the mechanics and semantics that rendered newspapers thinkable as a site of nation-building were trafficked through global routes.

Tarbiyat forged *adabiyāt* as a civilizing marker of the Iranian nation. The column *adabiyāt* appeared sporadically in the newspaper among other fixtures like "The Map of Iran," "Determining the Boundaries of Iran Today," "New Inventions," "Scientific News and Its Public Benefit," and "Newly Established Primary and Secondary Schools." The entanglement of *adabiyāt* as a new discourse of literature with a broader discourse of social progress was by no means unique to *Tarbiyat*. *Hekmat*, a Persian-language newspaper published in Cairo five years before *Tarbiyat* was launched, advertised itself as a periodical that regularly spoke to "politics, science, medicine, arts and crafts, inventions, discoveries, and literature."[52] As demonstrated in the introduction, the development of *adabiyāt* as a conceptual category became thinkable within an expanding literary ecosystem that included the formation of periodicals and educational institutions. Print culture rendered viable its production, circulation, and consumption, making literature an integral part of the curricula of a national educational system. *Tarbiyat*'s project was to map *adabiyāt* onto a natonal sphere, primarily by framing Persian-language poets as Iran's literary ancestors. In other words, *adabiyāt* constituted the biography of a nation-state in the making.

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[49] *Tarbiyat*, Tehran: Ketābkhāneh-e Melli-e Jomhuri-ye Eslāmi-ye Irān, no 1 (1896, reprinted in 1997): 2, digitized archive of Universität Bonn, Abteilung für Islamwissenschaft und Nahostsprachen. Accessed September 29, 2017.

[50] Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804-1946*, 291.

[51] For instance, the newspaper featured a biographical series of Johannes Gutenberg (d. 1468), the inventor of the movable-type printing press.

[52] *Hekmat* 8.8 (August 1899): 1.

Tarbiyat featured biographies of Hāfez (d. 1390) and ʿOmar Khayyām (d. 1131) and celebrated them as Iran's literary luminaries.[53] It introduced Hāfez under the new rubric of the literature of Iran's new historical era (*adabiyāt-e dowreh-ye jadid-e tārikh-e Iran*) which referred to the post-Islamic period. *Tarbiyat* placed Hāfez in a historical line of poets that included Ferdowsi (d. 1020), Nezāmi (d. 1209), Sanāʾi (d. 1131), Rumi (d. 1273), and Saʿdi.[54] At the outset, Forughi claimed this his biographical account of Hāfez was done through research, a muted reference to *tazkarehs* or biographical anthologies that were seen by Forughi's cohort as hagiographical, therefore unreliable and "unmodern." Forughi belonged to a generation of Persian-language savants who grappled with positivist approaches to the writing of literature and its history. As chapters two and three will argue, although early twentieth-century savants invented new rhetorical devices and conceptual categories in order to usher in a new chapter in the history of Persian literature, myth-making remained formatively operative in their works. *Adabiyāt* constituted a network of knowledge production, having been posited as the prized object of romantic nationalism and its monolingual ethos. *Tarbiyat*'s literary biographies of Hāfez and 'Omar Khayyām constructed a traceable genealogy for the nation, and in so doing created a literary historiographical model that in the first half of the twentieth century cohered into the genre of *tārikh-e adabiyāt* or literary history.[55]

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, *adabiyāt* would have appeared as a novel and ambiguous concept to the readers of *Tarbiyat* or any other periodical, which prompted Forughi to define the term in various issues. The following definition was featured in 1902: "*Adabiyāt* is the term by which the poetry and prose of a language are identified today, and each nation/ethnicity (*melat*) in the world is recognized by the *adabiyāt* of that nation."[56] The notion that there is no more definitive marker for a nation than its language found a lucid expression in Forughi's writings. There are unmistakable echoes of the German Enlightenment tradition in Forughi's definition, particularly the works of Johann Gottfried Herder in the late eighteenth century on the role of language in the development of a nation, which by the nineteenth century had become a required norm for a modern nation-state. In another issue, Forughi characterized the "prose and poetry of the eloquent" as the means of a "nation's survival."[57] A nation without literature, he argued, was a "lifeless corpse."[58] One of the main objectives of the column *adabiyāt* was to frame Persian as the most enduring element of national Iranian identity. Three decades later Mohammad ʿAli Forughi, representing Reza Shah's Iran at the League of Nations, met the foreign diplomat who did not automatically associate Saʿdi with Iran. His disappointment

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[53] The biographical accounts of Hāfez and Khayyām appeared respectively in issues no. 255 and 274. *Tarbiyat* frequently featured biographies of people it deemed educational for Iran's progress. These figures included Galileo, Benjamin Franklin, Zeynalabdin Taghi oglu Taghiyev (an Azerbaijani philanthropist), Michelangelo, and George Washington.

[54] *Tarbiyat*, no 255 (1902): 1-4.

[55] *Tarbiyat*'s literary biographies featured poetic specimen and repurposed circulated anecdotes about Hāfez and Khayyām within an invented national narrative. M. H. Forughi used his columns to develop textbooks such as *Tārikh-e Iran* (1905), composed for elementary education, and an incomplete manuscript entitled *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e fārsi* (n.p.: 1914).

[56] Ibid., no. 248 (1902): 1.

[57] Ibid., no. 292 (1903): 6.

[58] Ibid., no. 284 (1903): 3.

becomes more pronounced when placed in the context of a literary career devoted to providing a blueprint for the appropriation of Persian as Iran's singular literary patrimony.

As a statesman, Foroughi was in a powerful position to inform different facets of Iran's language policies. In the early 1900s, he was tasked by the Qajar Ministry of Education with developing the literary curricula of elementary and secondary schools, an integral part of which was constituted by literature. Given that many of *Tarbiyat*'s readers were educators, Foroughi used the newspaper as a platform to address the role of literature in developing Iran's national education. In 1903, he reported that the British in India had begun teaching Persian language and literature in their schools.[59] He welcomed the news and asked why Iran had not taken similar initiatives for "our language."[60] What began as a discussion under the title of "Persian literature in India," ended with this lucid conclusion about why *adabiyāt* mattered to Iran: "Acquiring the education of the day without literature, nay without mastering literature, is impossible, and educating the nation (*mellat*) without this condition is not possible lest we wish to change our essence and be dissolved into other beings [that we are not]." [61]

In 1902, under the awkwardly-worded heading "A Brief [Note] on the Procedure of *Adabiyāt*, its Introduction and Outcome" (*tartib-e kār-e adabiyāt va moqaddameh va natijeh-ye ān betowr-e ekhtesār*), Foroughi underlined the importance of being able to properly read and write one's "national language" (*zabān-e vatani*), for literacy was the "foundation" of literature.[62] Foroughi bemoaned the lack of competent educators in the country who could effectively design textbooks for the teaching of syntax and spelling. After teaching literacy, Foroughi argued, then it would be time to introduce poetry, composition, Persian literary history, and Arabic language and literature. "If we wish to have an educated nation and a knowledgeable people," he wrote, "then the said training becomes a necessity."[63] Through his columns in *Tarbiyat* and later in his literary and historical textbooks, Foroughi placed *adabiyāt* at the service of an expanding educational system designed to displace *maktabs* and *madrasas*, the latter seen as idiosyncratic therefore "unmodern" sites of learning. He helped to build a state apparatus that would determine who was a competent educator or not and what subjects needed to be covered, a development that intensified the proliferation of *adabiyāt* well beyond the pages of early twentieth-century newspapers.

Mohammad 'Ali Foroughi, like many statesmen of his era, did not fully devote his time to writing on literature. Nonetheless, his prolific career as a journalist, pedagogue, translator, essayist, and publisher did no less than provide a blueprint for the building of literary institutions in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Institutions like the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters and the Academy of the Persian Language and Literature established in 1935 were designed to safeguard and promulgate Persian as the prized object of Iran's literary heritage.[64] In his writings, lectures, letters, and political advocacy, Foroughi laid the foundation for literary

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[59] Ibid., no. 275 (1903): 3.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., no. 247 (1902): 1.

[63] Ibid., 2.

[64] In the course of his career, Foroughi was involved in building literary institutions. In 1894, when he was seventeen years old, he worked at *Dār ol-tarjomeh* (Translation Bureau) where he helped his father *Zokāʾ ol-Molk*. The culmination of his institution-building vision was the foundation of the Academy of the Persian Language and Literature in 1935 which took place during his premiership.

institutions by articulating the domain of their operation.[65] He also sought to marginalize anti-Arab voices hellbent on purging Persian of Arabic influence, and in so doing proved to be a balancing and pragmatic figure. He characterized Persian's interplay with Arabic and other literary traditions as enriching, but also recognized that the project of spreading literacy, as a vehicle for national progress, meant that Persian's late nineteenth-century prose register, viewed as highly formulaic and therefore inaccessible, had to be simplified.[66] Above all, Foroughi participated in the cultivation of *adabiyāt*, a network of knowledge production at the core of which laid a keen awareness of language as the definitive marker of national identity. The myth of Persian as Iran's singular literary patrimony was contested in different ways, but the structure of that myth which posited that each nation was embodied by its language and literature remained uncontested.

Four years after *Tarbiyat* was discontinued, the bi-weekly journal *Serāj ol-Akhbār-e Afghāniyah* (hereafter *Serāj*) began its career in 1911 in Kabul.[67] *Serāj* also reached the Persian-speaking communities in South and Central Asia, the Caucasus, as well as Ottoman lands where its editor, Mahmud Tarzi, had been exiled for nearly two decades. As a new site of literary production, *Serāj* was the product of a class of professionals in taking charge of lithography, zincography, and calligraphy. These efforts led to the foundation of the 'Enāyat Press, built under the patronage of 'Enāyat Khān, the son-in-law of Tarzi and Amir Habibollah's son (r. 1901-19). It was part of a series of state-building initiatives set in motion by a class of Ottoman technocrats, focusing on reforming Afghanistan's health care, education, and military.[68] These reforms may not have been directly concerned with the domain of literature, but as my analysis of *Tarbiyat* demonstrated, the invented alignment of *adabiyāt* with literature constituted only one strand in a web of social and structural changes. In other words, *adabiyāt* may not be viewed as a self-contained entity, but one whose domain cannot be unproblematically demarcated. In its seven years of publication, *Serāj* conceptualized the role of language in the development of the Afghan state and its imagined nation, and forged a blueprint for the institutionalization of Persian and Pashto as national languages. The creation of literary institutions, historical associations, and their journals in the 1930s and 40s would not have been thinkable without *Serāj*'s influential career.

Serāj's broader project was no less than reifying an entity called Afghanistan by introducing its politics, population, economy, history, geography, dialects, literature, and religion to literate Afghans living both inside and outside of the country. In *Afghanistan at the Beginning*

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[65] See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Language Reform Movement and its Language: the Case of Persian," in *The Politics of Language Purism*, edd. Björn H Jernudd and Michael J. Shapiro (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989), 81-104.

[66] Foroughi wrote: "The course of progress, and all that is advancement, is [achieved through] understanding, teaching, and stimulating pride and persuading people to compete. The key to this is language and perfecting language [which means] mastering literature." Ibid, no. 44 (1897): 3.

[67] See May Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale: Seminario di Studi Asiatici, 1979), 97-101. Also see Vartan Gregorian, "Mahmud Tarzi and *Saraj-ol-Akhbar*: Ideology of Nationalism and Modernization in Afghanistan." *Middle East Journal* 21.3 (Summer 1967): 345-368.

[68] These technocrats contributed articles to *Serāj* on the state of the Ottoman Empire. See Michael B. O'Sullivan, "'The Little Brother of the Ottoman State:' Ottoman Technocrats in Kabul and Afghanistan's Development in the Ottoman Imagination, 1908–23," *Modern Asian Studies* 50, 6 (2016): 1846–1887.

of the Twentieth Century, May Schinasi has comprehensively examined the content and impact of *Serāj*'s output. This section only analyzes writings that appeared under the column "*adabiyāt*" in that newspaper. The question of *adabiyāt* was discussed in relation to such fixtures as Afghanistan's current place within the Muslim community, the origins of the Persian and Pashto languages, and a historical discussion of the Ghaznavid dynasty. The concept of literature in *Serāj* was defined in relation to all facets of the nation. *Serāj*'s literary columns became an early site for the entaglement of Persian and Pashto languages and literatures with an Afghan national imaginary, which placed literature at the service of an expanding literary ecosystem that constituted a national educational system, literary associations and their journals, and later the University of Kabul's Faculty of Letters.

Under the novel rubric of *adabiyāt*, *Serāj* published a wide variety of materials ranging from regional poetry composed in Afghan variations of Persian and Pashto (significantly fewer in the latter) to poets working within established forms like the *ghazal*.[69] It reported and commented on East-West literary relations, European literary history and the creation of Arabic and Turkish literary institutions. The very first issue of *Serāj*, printed on October 9, 1911, featured a column titled *adabiyāt*. It was written by the Afghan poet and scholar Mowlavi ʿAbdol Raʾuf Qandahāri.[70] An editorial note mentioned that Raʾuf contributed the article per Tarzi's request, having appeared word for word in the newspaper.[71] 'Abdol Raʾuf opened his article with a rhyming line: *adabiyāt chistand / va az che bahs mirānand* (what are *adabiytāt* / and what topics do they discuss). He evoked *adabiyāt* in a similar vein to Āmoli's *Nafāʾes al-fonun*: a plural term denoting essayistic contributions to *adab*.[72] 'Abdol Raʾuf argued that *adabiyāt* or the knowledge derived from *adab* (*ʿolum-e adabiyah*) were first studied in *madrasas* and constituted an integral component of Islamic learning.[73] But in the twentieth century, he wrote, *adabiyāt* has entered a new site of literary production: newspapers.

ʿAbdol Raʾuf attributed the new iteration of *adabiyāt* to a professional class of "news and newspaper writers" (*akhbār-nevisān va ruznāmachi negārān*), particularly from Egypt.[74]

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[69] In fact, the first Pashto poem ever published inside Afghanistan appeared under the novel rubric of *adabiyāt*. Thomas Wide has examined how Pashto forged a new domain in the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries by fashioning itself as an ethno-nationalist literary tradition in Afghanistan, a fact that remained contested given that Pashto's transregional literary community had an ambivalent relationship with the Afghan state. See "Demarcating Pashto: Cross-Border Pashto Literature and the Afghan State, 1880-1930." *In Afghanistan in Ink: Literature between Diaspora and Nation*, ed. Nile Green and Nushin Arbabzadah (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 91-112. For an extensive account of Pashto literary culture in Persian, see Zalmay Hewādmal, *Farhang-e Adabiyāt-e Pashto* (Kabul: Enteshārāt-e Komitah-ye Dowlati-e Tabʿ va Nashr, 1986).

[70] *Serāj ol-Akhbār,* Kabul: Matbaʿah-e Māshin Khānah, 1911-1918, no. 1 (1911): 10-12. Digitized in Afghanistan Digital Library, New York University Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

[71] For an examination of 'Abdol Raʿuf's article, see Nushin Arbabzadah, "Modernizing, Nationalizing, Internationalizing: How Mahmud Tarzi's Hybrid Identity Transformed Afghan Literature," in *Afghanistan in Ink: Literature between Diaspora and Nation*, 31-65.

[72] Another example of *adabiyāt* being used as a plural noun in the early twentieth-century is by 'Isā Sadiq in an article on the importance of education in Iran in which he wrote "From a literary standpoint, Iran certainly has one of the greatest literature (as opposed to *adabiyāt-hā*) in the world." "Iran dar qadim," *Farhang* 1.1 (November 1919): 10.

[73] *Serāj ol-Akhbār*, no. 1 (1911): 11.

[74] Ibid.

According to newspaper writers, he argued, there are three branches of knowledge: literary (*adabiyah*), political (*siyāsiyah*), and economic (*eqtesādiyah*). ʿAbdol Raʿuf defined "*adabiyāt*" as a capacious term that encompassed all said branches of knowledge. He understood *adabiyāt* as a canon of human knowledge composed in different fields and languages. It included such varied discourses as Greek philosophy, Islamic mysticism and the collection of modern arts "through which the people of Europe have surpassed the people of Islam."[75] After forging this radically new and inclusive definition, ʿAbdol Raʾuf reminded his readers that the terms *adab* and *adabiyāt* have a distinct genealogy in Persian wherein they both hosted a textual discourse centered on self-conduct, as was familiar to the "majority of the world's cultured people."[76] He quoted a number of Persian poets such as Hāfez, Bidel (d. 1720), and Rumi to illuminate the contours of the *adab*/*adabiyāt* textual tradition. That said, none of the cited examples included the term "*adabiyāt*," and only evoked *adab* in the vein of civility, good manners, and grace. So, why did the author use the terms "*adabiyāt*" and "*adab*" interchangeably when all his examples excluded the former?

ʿAbdol Raʾuf's definition left a series of discursive ambiguities in its wake characteristic of early twentieth-century efforts that aimed to redefine the semantic domain of *adabiyāt*. For instance, how could *adab* and *adabiyāt* be used interchangeably when the latter, a term he used in its plural form, constituted branches of knowledge derived from the former? But such a question would not have arisen for ʿAbdol Raʾuf or Tarzi as they sought to participate in a transregional project of bringing *adabiyāt* into alignment with the European conceptualization of literature, a body of valued writing entangled with a national imaginary and its mythical tropes of civilizational progress and backwardness. Tarzi recruited ʿAbdol Raʾuf, a trained *adib* (a person steeped in *adab*), to render legitimate his newspaper's vision of introducing new literary genres and ideas to Afghan readers. Pursuing systematic change in Afghanistan's literary culture, as envisioned by Tarzi, first necessitated the invention of a literary network of knowledge producers that would make such changes meaningfully legible. In this process, *adabiyāt*, a plural noun signifying the literary form of *adab*, became singular, signified by the nation and its invented history. In other words, the term "*adabiyāt*" was transformed from a signifier into the signified, a discursive mold in which notions of civilizational achievement and national distinction were placed. One question remains unaddressed, why did ʿAbdol Raʿuf map *adabiyāt* onto the domain of *adab*?

By referencing the poetry Hāfez, Bidel, and Rumi, Abdol Raʾuf aimed to ground the concept of *adab* (and purportedly *adabiyāt*) in the textual authority of Persian poetry. By placing *adabiyāt*, a term undergoing conceptual realignment, in the genealogy of *adab*, he attempted to embed the former in the imagination of Afghan readers already familiar with the discourse of *adab*. Abdol Raʾuf nodded to the fact that a discourse of literature is not produced and sustained in a vacuum, but rather in certain sites of literary production. He argued that *adabiyāt* was first cultivated and studied in *madrasas*, but newspaper writers across the world were now producing a different if not entirely new definition. He conceptualized the role of *Serāj* in shifting the domain of *adabiyāt* not as a standalone example, but rather as part of an interconnected global literary ecosystem. The ambiguity and ambivalence with which ʿAbdol Raʿuf's opening article treated the term "*adabiyāt*" were later flattened by authoritative iterations that posited *adabiyāt*

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

as the prized object of literary institutions. Following Abdol Ra'uf's endorsement, Mahmud Tarzi's series of articles helped to reify *adabiyāt* as a conceptual category.

In a column on *akhlāqiyāt* or ethics, Tarzi wrote, "Every people is alive through its language, and every language through its literature."[77] He argued that the existence of a people depended on how well they safeguard their language, forming an organicist idea whereby the nation and its literature constituted a whole. Tarzi's views on language are echoed by Foroughi in Iran and a global constellation of intellectuals writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Tarzi, particularly later in his career, insisted on making a case for Pashto, or the Afghani language as he called it, as the distinguishing factor of the Afghan people. Persian as a transregional language of literary production and political administration in Afghanistan, he argued, did not need any state promulgation; it was Pashto that needed to be systematically taught and further cultivated as a literary tradition.[78] Foroughi and Tarzi may have invented different myths regarding Persian's place in the Iranian and Afghan projects of nation-building, but the structure of their myth (as opposed to its content) was dictated by the monolingual ethos of romantic nationalism. As such, early twentieth-century Afghan conceptualizations of language displayed anxieties similar to those voiced in Iran. For instance, in a note titled "Pashto, the Ancestor of All Languages," Tarzi argued that through modern ethnography (*etno-gherāfi*), we will be able to trace the most ancient language all the way to Pashto (*lesān-e afghāni*).[79] The notion that Pashto as a literary tradition predated Persian was part of a broader effort to falsely decouple the two languages after centuries of historical interplay. The significance of his rhetorical argument aside, Tarzi, like most Pashtun savants of his time, primarily wrote in Persian.

In "*adabiyāt-e melli: fārsi-afghāni*" ("National Literature: Persian-Pashto"), Tarzi set out to define every component of his title by asking what is literature, what is national, and what are Persian and Pashto.[80] J. G. Herder's notion of *Nationalliteratur* is echoed here as it had been a decade earlier in Foroughi's writings in *Tarbiyat*. Tarzi stated that "[*adabiyāt*] consists of all that has derived from *adab*," and conjured up the latter as manners of self-conduct.[81] By mapping *adabiyāt* onto the discourse of *adab* and its long textual tradition in Persian and Arabic, Tarzi, like Abdol Ra'uf, aimed to reify *adabiyāt* as a historically traceable conceptual category. Having placed *adabiyāt* within the domain of *adab*, Tarzi characterized the former's different valence. Tarzi wrote, "the term '*adabiyāt*' has taken on an adjectival *yā* and a pluralizing *āt*, which only means that it signifies a canon of [norms and conventions] that pertain to the arrangement and adornment of belletristic discourse (*sokhan*)."[82] *Sokhan*, he argued, pertains to language and language is the most unique property of a nation. Tarzi's lexical break down of the term

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[77] Mahmud Tarzi and Farhadi A. G. Ravān, *Maqālāt-e Mahmud-e Tarzi* (Kabul: Mo'assesah-e Enteshārāt-e Bayhaqi, 1977), 632.

[78] For a critical examination of Mahmud Tarzi's views on Persian and Pashto, see Wali Ahmadi, *Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan: Anomalous Visions of History and Form* (London: Routledge, 2008), chapters 2 & 3.

[79] *Maqālāt-e Mahmud-e Tarzi*, 615. This intellectual phenomenon was global with similar iterations emerging from the Netherlands to Turkey. In the latter it is known as Güneş Dil Teorisi or the Sun Language Theory.

[80] Ibid., 632.

[81] Ibid., 634.

[82] Ibid., 637.

"*adabiyāt*" and its definition as a body of rules governing *sokhan* demonstrate his lingering ambivalence toward this concept: did *adabiyāt* constitute a canon of valued writings, like the poetry of Hāfez and Rumi cited in the opening article, or did it consist of an essayistic body of rules on how to write beautifully? Tarzi and his generation did not feel the need to tease out this difference as they aimed to synthesize the old with the new.[83]

In 1913, Tarzi published a literary selection of his prose and poetry under the novel category of *adabiyāt*. As with many literary works published in the early twentieth century, it had a pedagogical aim. In the introduction, Tarzi wrote that his writings both fit within and went beyond the recognizable domain of *adabiyāt*. He was referring to a body of knowledge on *adab* related subjects like syntax, rhetoric, eloquence, and other skills meant to guide one towards refinement in language and self-conduct. His selection spoke to wide-ranging topics from geography to pilgrimage with an edifying tone. Printing his writings as *adabiyāt* was one of the ways in which Tarzi aimed to shift (or in his mind expand) the meaning and function of *adabiyāt*. His selection bears an unmistakable resemblance to *kashkul* anthologies which consisted of an admixture of pithy writings in prose and poetry on a series of unrelated themes. The alignment of *adabiyāt* with literature did not take place only within the new form of newspapers, but also within the pages of popular anthologies that were dismissed in the second half of the twentieth-century as "uncritical."[84]

One aspect of *adabiyāt* was quite clear in Tarzi's mind: its connection with the nation. What keeps a nation from subjugation to other nations, he observed, is its literature.[85] Tarzi then explained, in the most basic terms possible, the concept of *adabiyāt-e melli* (national literature), which shows that his readers would have seen as an unfamiliar concept. Afghanistan, he declared, is a composite nation, and for this reason it is heir to two literatures: Persian and Pashto.[86] The mission of *Serāj*, Tarzi wrote, is to keep the Afghan nation informed, promote its "national languages and literatures," and develop "national feelings and perceptions that are embedded in the prose and poetry of our nation."[87] But if we only lay claim to Persian literature, he warned, we will have deviated from our objectives.[88] The two national literatures, Persian and Pashto, have to accompany one another in order to create the entity that he called "Afghan national literature." Unlike Iran, Pashto and Persian both played a role in state formation in the first half of the twentieth century in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, the state patronage of Pashto was informed by the monolingual ethos of romantic nationalism. Thus, it created a false tension between Persian and Pashto, whereby some Afghan savants writing in the latter felt urged to decouple Pashto's literary domain from that of Persian.[89] This project was doomed for failure from the outset.

Overall, *Serāj* introduced a set of fixtures and idioms that shaped the Afghan cultural landscape for decades, one of which was the term "*adabiyāt*." One of the more consequential

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[83] Mahmud Tarzi, *Az har dahan sokhani va az har chaman samani* (Kabul: 'Enāyat Press, 1913).

[84] In his numerous publications on the development of literary criticism in Persian, Iraj Parsinejad has entirely dismissed the critical value of any anthology or treatise composed prior to the nineteenth century. See *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran, 1866-1951*.

[85] *Maqālāt-e Mahmud-e Tarzi*, 637.

[86] Ibid., 638-639.

[87] Ibid., 639.

[88] Ibid., 640.

[89] For two critical references, see footnote 89.

outcomes of this bi-weekly journal was the creation of a collective consciousness of the question of language and its relation to the nation. Tarzi did not just initiate conversations on what it meant to speak of a distinctly Afghan literature or language; he also helped to create entities such as the ʿEnāyat Press and gestured towards the need to create literary institutions in order to make the literary patrimony of Afghanistan more recognizable inside and outside of the country. What Tarzi had in mind was a resourceful entity, financially tied to the state, tasked with safeguarding and regulating Persian and Pashto. When the Literary Association of Kabul was founded in 1931, Tarzi had been exiled from Afghanistan, and he did not live to see the establishment of the Faculty of Letters at the University of Kabul in 1944. But the existence of both institutions would have been unimaginable without *Serāj* in general and Mahmud Tarzi's literary career in particular.

As the literary careers of Foroughi and Tarzi have shown, the project of bringing *adabiyāt* into alignment with literature was far from automatic and predestined. It necessitated the creation of newspapers as a site of power and literary production and its alignment left behind a great deal of ambivalence and ambiguity the recognition of which requires a certain critical literacy today. Foroughi and Tarzi defined *adabiyāt* as a term of achievement, one that evoked "a sense of belonging to a shared national organism" at home, and rendered their nation visible within a civilizational discourse abroad.[90] The literary columns of Foroughi and Tarzi in *Tarbiyat* and *Serāj* exhibit a limited part of their influential careers, but they are representative of their systematic effort, in any field of operation, to create a capacious landscape with clear signposts aimed to invite and guide future generations of professionals. In that light, the use of *adabiyāt* in their writings emerges not as a concept only, but a literary institution in the making. Foroughi and Tarzi should be seen as some of the earliest advocates of literary institutionalization in Iran and Afghanistan.

Adabiyāt and the Making of a Pedagogical Object (1922-1944)

Having been reified as a conceptual category in the pages of early twentieth-century newspapers, *adabiyāt* became the pedagogical object of educational institutions in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Thus, *adabiyāt* entered another site of power and literary production with the aim of "creating more standardized nationalist narratives."[91] State-built schools operated within a self-proclaimed "scientific" framework, in opposition to the *maktab/madrasa* system which it has been designed to marginalize. A recurring early twentieth-century criticism of the *maktab/madrasa* system was that it was idiosyncratic (as opposed to homogeneous), and relied only on recitation and repetition as an instrument of *talqin*, a concept ranging from suggestion to indoctrination. State-built schools framed their teaching method as scientific, not based on recitation and repetition but on textbooks. Textbook production as a state-sponsored enterprise aimed to reconfigure Persian as a suitable vehicle for scientific transmission.[92]

This section examines the ways in which two prominent literary educators in Iran and Afghanistan transformed *adabiyāt* into an object of national pedagogy. Qāri Abdollah (d. 1943)

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[90] Widdowson, *Literature*, 47.
[91] *Making History in Iran*, 3.
[92] Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 89-104.

and Jalāl Homāʾi (d. 1980) composed some of the earlier literary textbooks printed respectively in Afghanistan and Iran.[93] These textbooks were not conceptualized separately or distinctly as pedagogical materials only to be used in educational settings; they also served the discourse of literary history and canon formation. On the constitution of *adab* as a literary discipline in Egypt, Michael Allan writes, "The distinction between theory and pedagogy, between literary history and the question of what is literature, gets entirely blurred."[94] Similarly in Iran and Afghanistan, literary textbooks developed as part of a continuum that included periodicals and educational institutions, and both were equally nourished by them.

During the 1920s, Qāri Abdollah Khān (hereafter Qāri) began to design literary textbooks for elementary and secondary education in Afghanistan. As the *malek ol-shoʿarā* (Poet Laureate) of Mohammad Zāher Shah (r. 1933-1973), an educator and translator, Qāri was well known outside of Afghanistan, particularly in Iran and India.[95] After the establishment of Kabul Literary Association in 1931, he contributed original articles and translations to its namesake journal. He taught Persian and Arabic at a number of schools in Kabul, namely the Habibiya high school founded in 1903.[96] Qāri also served as an adviser to the Ministry of Press in the 1930s, and played an instrumental role in the development of literary education in Afghanistan. His pedagogical labor may be seen as the realization of Mahmud Tarzi's institutionalizing vision outlined a decade earlier. Tarzi had helped to reify *adabiyāt* as a conceptual category in the pages of *Serāj* in the 1910s, and by the 1930s it became more cemented as a fixture through its place in Qāri's literary textbooks.[97]

Qāri's *Adabiyāt barā-ye senf-e dovom-e aʿdādi* (Second Grade Literature for Elementary Education) was published in 1922 by the Ministry of Education in Kabul.[98] On the first page, he

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[93] Persian literature as an academic subject was taught at elite high schools as well as in courts in Iran and Afghanistan in the mid and late nineteenth century. Due to the dearth of written/published record, we do not know specifically what constituted Persian literature in general or literary history in particular at the time. In Iran, Mohammad Hosayn Forughi and ʿAbdol ʿAzim Qarib Garakāni (d. 1965) developed some of the earliest literary textbooks in Iran, predating Jalāl Homāʾi's work. Forughi's literary lectures were later compiled by his son but were never published. Unlike Forughi, Homāʾi's literary textbook has been reprinted multiple times since its publication in 1929. On Forughi and Qarib's literary textbooks, see *Making History in Iran*, 157-158.

[94] Michael Allan, "How Adab Became Literary," *Journal of Arabic Literature: Formalism, Orientalism and the Institutions of World Literature* 43 (2012), 182.

[95] Among his works, Qāri Abdollah translated into Persian Mowlānā Mohammad Hosayn Āzād's *Sokhandān-e fārs* in 1936, published by the Kabul Literary Association. Before its publication, excerpts from the book were regularly featured in the literary journal *Kabul*. Mawlānā Khāl Muhammad Khastah, *Moʿāserin-e sokhanvar* (Peshawer: Dānish khparandūah tulanah, 2007), 261.

[96] Gholām Farmand, *Do malek ol-shoʿarā-ye hamruzgār: Qāri va Bitāb* (Kabul: Enteshārāt-e riyāsat-e farhang va adab, 2006).

[97] The proliferation of Kabul-produced literary textbooks in other urban areas like Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif, and Jalalabad in the first quarter of the twentieth century merits its own investigation.

[98] In the Afghan educational system, *aʿdādiya* referred to grades 1-6 and *roshdiya* corresponded with grades 7 and higher. These terms were introduced in the 1910s and 20s by the Turkish staff in the Ministry of Education in Kabul. In the 1940s and 50s, *aʿdādiya* and *roshdiya* were replaced by *ebtedāyia* (primary school), *motevaseta* (middle school, grades 7 and 9 and sometimes 9) and *lysa* (from French lycée, corresponding with grades 9, or 10, 12). Some schools had no *motevaseta* which meant that the *lysa* cycle started from 7th grade and continued to 12th grade.

explained that he used a number of sources in order to create a "monograph called Persian literature" for the esteemed Ministry of Education.[99] He then listed thirty nine sources, and even included an extra item for "books I may have forgotten."[100] He drew primarily from Persian-language sources, but also made use of Urdu and Arabic-language sources. His textbook relied on *divān*s (collected works) of Saʿdi, Bidel, Saʾeb, Kalim, and many others. He also used such well-known *tazkarehs* (biographical anthologies) as *Lobāb ol-albāb* and *Tazkerat ol-shoʿarā,* and works by his contemporaries such as Shibli Noʿmāni (d. 1914) in India, and Mohammad ʿAli Foroughi, Rashid Yāsami (d. 1951), ʿAbbās Eqbāl Āshtiyāni (d.1956), Badioʿzammān Foruzānfar (d. 1970) in Iran. The way the author systematically referenced previous scholarship points in the direction of novel scholarly or specifically positivist devices and practices such as footnoting, referencing the publisher, attention to dates of birth and death, and emphasis on the poet's ethnic and geographical origins.[101] Qāri and his cohort cultivated these devices as a method of distinguishing their work from *tazkareh*s which were increasingly viewed in the early twentieth century as hagiographical, hence lacking objective or discernible truth. The next two chapters trace the afterlife of hagiography in early twentieth-century literary journals, and argue that myth-making were central to all modes of literary production. But what is at stake here is that scholarly devices used by Qāri Abdollah placed him within a transregional network of scholars working at cross-purpose to usher a new historical chapter in the development of Persian literature.

Qāri's literary textbook located Persian poetry and prose within a dynastic history and introduced each poet with a biographical narrative. For instance, Qāri wrote that according to Hedāyat's *Majmaʿ ol-Fosahā*, a biographical anthology of Persian poets composed in 1871, Persian poetry experienced a decline in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[102] Without directly refuting Hedāyat's claim, Qāri argued that the poets of *sabk-e hend* (Style of India) took the Persian *ghazal* to its zenith. He further stated, without any apparent hint of value judgement, that the "Style of India" has fallen out of favor among contemporary poets whose poems no longer adhere to the rules of classical prosody.[103] Qāri's grounding of *adabiyāt* in invented historical narratives, whether dynastic or stylistic, ushered a monumental discursive change: *adabiyāt* continuing a shift away from embodying *adab* as a discipline, as exemplified by *Nafāʾes al-fonun*, and into close entanglement with national history as an emerging genre in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Literary textbooks and later works of literary history consolidated the ethos that in order to comprehend literature, we must return to its imagined history. Literary textbooks constituted a major space within which *adabiyāt* as a conceptual category was programmed to evoke history, even as a standalone term. Early twentieth-century literary journals constituted another formative space for this development, a subject examined in the next chapter.

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[99] Qari 'Abdollah, *Adabiyāt barā-ye senf-e dovom-e aʿdādi* (Kabul: Vezārat-e maʿāref, 1922), 1.
[100] Ibid., 2.
[101] For instance, under the item "Rubāʿiyāt of ʿOmar Khayyām," Qāri mentioned *moʾasseseh-ye khāvar*, a literary publisher in Iran. In another example, Qāri called his contemporary, Rashid Yāsami, an erudite man of letters (*dāneshmand-e adib*).
[102] *Adabiyāt barā-ye senf-e dovom-e aʿdādi*, 7.
[103] Ibid.

Qāri also developed a literary textbook for secondary education (*roshdiyah*), printed in 1930/31.[104] On the cover, the author's name appeared with the vocational marker *mo'allem* or teacher. His textbook for secondary schools treated *adabiyāt* as a self-contained category, distinctly separate from other entities. The first page defined what *adabiyāt* meant to the author: "A type of literature is poetry, and poetry stimulates a novel feeling; therefore a type of literature stimulates a novel feeling and consists of two entities"[105] These two entities were prose and poetry, the former defined as consisting of various lines and being free of a "particular meter and music."[106] In light of *adabiyāt*'s development as a new discourse of literature, it came to encompass *she'r* as a sub-category, which remains a contested matter in Persian today.[107] *tazkarehs* have largely treated poetry as its own conceptual category, so why would an *adib* scholar like Qāri conceive of poetry as a sub-category of *adabiyāt* so early in the twentieth century? The fact that he opted for *adabiyāt*, albeit with a great deal of ambivalence the recognition of which requires critical literacy today, demonstrates the proliferation of a once fragile conceptual category that by the 1930s became an integral fixture of national education.

To further establish *adabiyāt* as a pedagogical object, Qāri's literary textbook declared its independence from other self-contained entities. Under the heading "Literature and Other Sciences," he wrote, "*Adabiyāt* is connected to and interacts with some sciences, at times it speaks of them; through its sweet language it makes accessible their benefits."[108] He provided examples for how *adabiyāt* conveys ideas derived from *falsafa* (philosophy), *akhlāq* (ethics), *tasavvuf* (mysticism), *'elm-e ejtemā'* (civility and public service), and *tārikh* (history). On the connection between literature and history, he wrote,

> Literature is one of three [types of] sources [used in] history. The same manner one can decipher the state of a nation through oral narratives and ancient artifacts, one can decipher the customs and manners of that nation through literature. Also, the inscriptions of monuments, fragments of history, and the biography of people may all be literature, but they also aid with [the writing of] history.[109]

The common denominator of literature and history, according to Qāri, is how they both embody the nation. The task of drawing shared elements between self-contained entities called *adabiyāt* and *tārikh* (history) would not have made any sense to Qāri's literary predecessors in the early nineteenth century who operated outside of national educational institutions. In the many literary

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[104] Qari 'Abdollah, *Adabiyāt: senf-e sevom-e roshdiyah* (Kabul: Vezārat-e ma'aref, 1930/31).

[105] Ibid., 1.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Some have objected to conceptualizing *she'r* (poetry) as a sub-category of *adabiyāt*, and argued the former constitutes its own conceptual category. For instance, in an interview with Deutsche Welle's Persian-language service, Mohammad 'Ali Sepānlu (d. 2015) raised the question whether poetry is literature ("āya aslan she'r adabiyāt ast?"). See: www.dw.com/fa-ir/خانگی-شعر-امروز-از-پایبست-ویران-است/ گفتگویی-با-محمدعلی-سپانلو/a-2407346. Ahmad Kasravi however has contended that *adabiyāt* in Persian only encompasses poetry unlike the French term "littérature" which was erroneously deemed its equivalent by Constitution-era educators. Ahmad Kasravi, *Dar Pirāmun-e Adabiyāt* (Nashr-e elekteroniki, 2008), 7. These contesting views illustrate that the conceptual genealogy of *adabiyāt* remains ambiguous.

[108] *Adabiyāt: senf-e sevom-e roshdiyah*, 4.

[109] Ibid., 7-8.

textbooks that he developed, Qāri was in search of a taxonomy capable of delineating a scholarly landscape for both educators and students of Persian literature. Even though he did not live to teach at the University of Kabul's Faculty of Letters, his literary textbooks contributed to the making of a recognizable literary discipline in Afghanistan.

Published in 1929 in Tabriz, Iran, Jalāl Homāʾi's *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran: az qadimitarin ʿasr-e tārikhi tā ʿasr-e hāzer* (The History of Iranian Literature: From the Earliest Historical Era to the Present Period), was designed as a textbook for high schools.[110] The author's name in the first page bears the title *moʿallem-e adabiyāt* (teacher of literature), which points to a newly institutionalized vocation. The main title "Iranian literature" was also a new construct, appearing over two decades after the terms "Persian literature" had appeared in Kermāni's *Āʾineh-ye sekandari* as a monolingual entity. Homāʾi's title was part of a systematic effort to map Persian, a transregional literary tradition, onto Iran as a politically-defined territory.[111] His textbook represented broader efforts aimed at programing literature in educational spaces to automatically evoke an invented narrative of civilizational achievement and ethnic if not racial distinction.[112] Literature's entanglement with history first required transforming "*adabiyāt*" into a functional term.

In his introduction, Homāʾi outlined *ʿolum-e adabi* or literary knowledge according to the Arabic and Persian-language *qodamā,* or the ancients.[113] The sciences Homāʾi mentioned under the category of *ʿolum-e adabi* are similar, if not identical to Āmoli's *Nafāʾes al-fonun*, a text cited by the author.[114] In his classification of literary knowledge, Homāʾi particularly alluded to

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[110] Jalāl ol-Din Homāʾi, *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran* (Tehran: Eslāmiyeh, 1957).

[111] Others have also opted for the title *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran* (History of Iranian Literature) when their work exclusively or mainly refers to the linguistic domain of Persian only, and excludes all other Iranian languages. For instance, Badioʿzammān Foruzānfar's lectures and notes on literary history were published as *Mabāhesi dar tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran* (Some Topics on the History of Iranian Literature, Tehran: Dehkhoda, 1975); it was later republished as *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran: baʿd az eslām tā pāyān-e taymuriyān* (From the Inception of Islam till the End of the Timurids). One of the most successful graduates of the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters, Zabihollah Safā, developed an encyclopedic literary history under the title *Tārikh-e adabiyāt dar Iran* (History of Literature in Iran, Tehran: Ferdows, 1990). Safā's work included entries on many poets who were born and lived outside of Iran. The development of national histories with their centralizing disposition did not mean the end of local historical writing. For instance, Homāʾi wrote a literary history of Iran as well as a cultural history of his native Isfahan. *Tārikh-e Isfahān: Mojallad-e honar va honarmandān* (Tehran: Pazhuheshgāh-e ʿolum-e ensāni va mutāleʿāt-e farhangi, 1996). That said, local histories were conceptualized as part of national history. For an analysis on the ways in which twentieth-century national and local histories have interacted, see Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture*, 117-144.

[112] The idea of a people's particular genius resonated with Homāʾi and his cohort. In his literary textbook, Homāʾi named *nezhād* or race as an important factor that shapes literature. He wrote, "Some races possess innate intelligence and acumen whereas other [races] become brainless and stupid." *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran*, 57. The idea of *volk* genius, echoed by most early twentieth-century Iranian and Afghan savants, has been built into the concept of *adabiyāt*.

[113] Among those Homāʾi cited are Abd ol-Rahman Maʿruf (Ebn Anbāri), Mohammad Ibn ʿOmar Khwārazmi, and Qāzi ʿAmid ol-Din Zakariyā.

[114] Homāʾi used a variety of terms interchangeably to refer to literary disciplines: *ʿelm-e adab, ʿolum-e adabiyeh, and arkān-e ʿelm-e adab.*

ʿelm-e estifāʾ or bookkeeping). *Nafāʾes al-fonun*, he argued, had classified bookkeeping as a literary science only in its conventional sense. Bookkeeping was part of a *munshi* or secretary's training, he clarified. But here, he clarified, we are referring to a *munshi* steeped in *adab* (*munshi-ye adib*) which is distinctly different from Āmoli's *munshi*.[115] Homāʾi was familiar with Āmoli's literary milieu in which *munshi*s were versed in a discourse of civility and ethics and were expected to demonstrate competence in prose composition, poetry, penmanship, and bookkeeping.[116] Nonetheless, he viewed bookkeeping as an element that did not fit into his understanding of *adabiyāt*.[117] Homāʾi's new definition might seem minute, but it points in the direction of how a modern discourse of literature retained certain elements of *adab* and jettisoned others. This discursive shift also meant that *adabiyāt* was no longer under the purview of *adib*s like Āmoli, but now it fell under the purview of *ostad*s or professors. Just as *enshāʿ* or prose composition was no longer under the purview of *munshi*s, but rather of *moʿallem* or teacher.

Under the headline of *Adab va adabiyāt be estelāh-e jadid-e orupāʾiyān* (Literature According to Its New European Iteration), Homāʾi defined literary knowledge, glossing it as *littérature*, and the study of *adabiyāt* as "gaining skills in the two disciplines [*fan*] of prose and poetry, not only in the language and style of eloquence and rhetoric but also possessing a 'critical spirit' [*ruh-e enteqādi*]."[118] He argued that this "critical spirit" was a feature peculiar to European literature, and was extremely scarce in Persian. Any poet or *munshi*, he proclaimed, ought to critically scrutinize all "natural events, social ills, and shortcomings of dignitaries, sovereigns, rulers, and other authorities."[119] Furthermore, poets should offer solutions for the reform of "national ethics and public and administrative institutions through [their] poetic statements and delightful expressions in a way that would stimulate human emotions…"[120] For Homāʾi, critiquing the status quo and elevating the nation's moral standards constituted the sole purpose of literature in Europe, one to be emulated in Iran. According to the author, Persian-language poets did not compose literature according to its "European way" mainly due to the power of intolerant and despotic rulers, save for ʿOmar Khayyām (d. 1131) and Abu al-ʿAlaʾ al-Maʿarri (d. 1057), an Arabic-language poet, who embodied this "critical spirit."[121] Homāʾi's emphasis on content mirrors Ākhundzādeh's topic-oriented approach to discerning good literature expressed over half a century earlier. Overall, Homāʾi presented literature as an idea borrowed from Europe.

In his lengthy introduction, Homāʾi sought to reach a discursive compromise between

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[115] Homāʾi, *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran: az qadimitarin ʿasr-e tārikhi tā ʿasr-e hāzer* (Tabriz, Ketabkhaneh-ye adabiyeh, 1929), 33. "'Elm-e estifāʾ'" in *Nafāʾes al-fonun fi ʿarāʾes ol-ʿoyun* (Tehran: Islāmīya, 1957), 303-328.

[116] For an account of the secretarial tradition in the Persianate world, see Rajeev Kinra, *Writing Self, Writing Empire: Chandar Bhan Brahman and the Cultural World of the Indo-Persian State Secretary* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015).

[117] Arguing against the inclusion of bookkeeping as part of *adabiyāt* reveals a perceived tension between quantifiable sciences and the humanities, one that would have struck Āmoli as foreign. Homāʾi sought to strike a compromise between his new understanding of literature and Āmoli's classification. Homāʾs straddling these two iterations of literature is what makes tārikh-e adabiyāt a deeply ambivalent work.

[118] Ibid., 34.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid., 40.

adabiyāt as a signifier for *adab*-derived disciplines, codified by the "ancients," and "*adabiyāt*" as a term of achievement that in early twentieth-century Iran increasingly referrred to a singular canon of writings that embodied the nation and its imagined history. This discursive compromise left in its wake a host of ambiguities that illustrate the ambivalence with which the scholar navigated a changing literary ecosystem. This ambiguity is best seen in the way in which Homāʾi aimed to bring *adab, adabiyāt,* and literature all into close alignment. He did so by using each term in its supple ambiguity in order to cultivate an institutionally recognizable discourse capable of accommodating a host of similar yet different concepts. Within this discourse of literature, *adabiyāt* may be seen both as a signifier for the literary valence of *adab* yet also signify the European iteration of literature; disciplines that constituted *adab*'s literary valence may be glossed as *littérature*, and *adab* may encompass both *adabiyāt* and *littérature* yet remain conceptually independent as a discourse of self-conduct and belles-lettres.[122]

This discourse of literature, coded *adabiyāt*, was invented within the ministry of education as a novel site of literary production, one that aimed to produce and propagate a state ideology. Homāʾi's teachers at the Isfahani *madrasas* of Qodsiyeh and Nimāvard — where he learned the principles of *adab* — operated outside the purview of institutions that rendered *adabiyāt* thinkable as a conceptual category. Homāʾi was part of a transregional generation of Persian-language savants who became intellectually and vocationally preoccupied with literature as a national enterprise. In that sense, the title of Homāʾi's textbook, *The History of Iranian Literature*, itself operated as an institution: a series of reified entities that gained meaning through an expansive network of knowledge production.

By the 1920s, the ideas that informed the development of Homāʾi's literary textbook had been in global circulation, as seen in his references. He cited Jurji Zaydān's (d. 1914) *Tārīkh ādāb al-lughah al-ʿArabiyya* (The History of Arabic Literature), which was a compilation of the author's columns in the journal *al-Hilāl* printed in Cairo, as mentioned in the Introduction. Zaydān's *Tārīkh* invented "an Arab literary past in the context of world literature and as part of the global spread of the modern literary disciplines."[123] The importance of periodicals like *al-Hilāl* in constituting another major site of power and literary production must be noted. Within these sites, "'literature' emerges not only as a category, but a category that demands a certain historicization within a national linguistic tradition," as argued by Allan.[124] Zaydān may have

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[122] The effort to bring *adab* and *adabiyāt* into conceptual alignment is common in this period. Badioʿzammān Foruzānfar's published lectures at the University of Tehran' Faculty of Letters, delivered in the early 1940s, begin by teasing out *adabiyāt* from *adab*. *Taqrirāt-e ostād Badiʿozammān Foruzānfar dar shoʿbeh-'e zabān va adabiyāt-e fārsi-e dāneshkadeh-e adabiyāt-e dāneshgah-e tehran (1320 tā 1322 Shamsi) Darbāreh-'e tārikh-e adabiyāt-e iran* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Khojasteh, 2007). Even scholars who have attempted to historicize *adabiyāt* as a new discourse of literature have not illuminated this trend, and instead added more confusion to the subject. In "Taʿrif-e adabiyāt" (Defining Literature), Mahmud Fotuhi asserts that *adabiyāt* displaced *adab* as a result of contact with Western culures in the early twentieth century, an argument that also gives undue primacy to a timeless and one can even say cartoonish entity called "Western culture." Even though his stated objective was to define *adabiyāt*, a twentieth-century discourse of literature, Fotuhi still felt the need to offer a long-winded definition of *adab*. Fotuhi's article, published in 2001, stayed within the same paradigm invented by Foruzānfar, Qāri, and their cohort in the first quarter of the twentieth century. "Taʿrif-e adabiyāt," *Dāneshkadeh-e adabiyāt va ʿolum-e ensāni*, no. 32 (2001): 172-195.

[123] Michael Allan, "How Adab Became Literary," 185.

[124] Ibid.

been primarily preoccupied with creating a uniquely Arabic (as opposed to Islamic) literary history, but the ways in which he had brought *adab* into close alignment with literature, posited as a monolingual entity, armed Homāʾiʾ and his cohort in Iran and beyond with tools of a new mode of literary knowledge.[125] Overall, works of literary history, both on Persian and other literary traditions, were on the radar of Iranian and Afghan savants as they sought to create a model for the writing of Persian literary history. This is exemplified by the publication of Zaydān's articles in Persian-language journals in twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan.

Qāri and Homāʾi both belonged to a generation of *madrasa*-educated *adib*s primarily known for their investment in Arabic letters. They came of age at a time when the state in Iran and Afghanistan set out to marginalize *maktabs* and *madrasas*, and replace them with a unified national educational system. Literature constituted a major part of national education, and the state's efforts to form a cultural ideology. In the absence of ready-made models, Qāri and Homāʾi sought to transform *adabiyāt* into a pedagogical object. By bringing *adabiyāt* into close alignment with the concept of literature, they aimed to turn the former term into an institutional category, one that would give a disciplinary identity to schools, teachers' training colleges, and faculties of letters. Ambiguity and ambivalence are arguably the function of any conceptual realignment, and they were certainly formative to the way in which Qāri, Homāʾi, and their cohort mapped *adabiyāt* onto literature.

However, the educational space in which *adabiyāt* proliferated was inhospitable to the presence of ambiguity, and even less so to ambivalence. Literary textbooks were intended for memorization, tested both orally and in writing, and definitions of what constituted literature, poetry, and prose were intended to be learned as ready-made formulas.[126] The pedagogical ethos of this educational space extended well beyond traditional classrooms. These textbooks were also consumed by the public as literary history, and their pedagogical design concerns only academics today. In fact, Persian-language savants would not have necessarily distinguished between pedagogy and public consumption. Without intending to set up a false equivalency between state-built schools and *maktabs/madrasas*, it must be noted that the former did not depart from the method of recitation and repetition prevalent in the latter. As *adabiyāt* became an institution, the critical literacy that made Qāri and Homāʾi's ambiguity and ambivalence legible was erased by another form of literacy that highlighted *adabiyāt* as a self-proclaimed secular entity. What is at stake in losing such critical literacy? In the second quarter of the twentieth century, the state in Iran and Afghanistan became the "chief national pedagogue," but that does not mean that Qāri and Homāʾi worked with ready-made or universal models.[127] Understanding the ways in which early twentieth-century literary educators exhibited ambivalence towards the concept of literature or the ambiguity embedded in their invented models is the key to restoring their agency, and recovering the array of meaning discarded as *adabiyāt* became a singular noun signifying a canon of valued writings and its national history.

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[125] In the section on literary history, Homāʾi also cited an article by Eqbāl Āshtiyāni published in *Dāneshkadeh* which was itself inspired by Zaydān's ideas.

[126] Based on letters exchanged between educators and administrators regarding methods of assessment, it is clear that literary textbooks were designed to be largely memorized and regurgitated. For instance, see Bahār's letters to the Faculty of Letters at the University of Tehran. *Nāmeh'hā-ye Malek ol-Shoʿarā Bahār*, ed. Ali Mir Ansar (Tehran: Sāzmān-e Asnād-e Melli-ye Iran, Pazhuheshkadeh-ye Asnād, 2001).

[127] *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940*, 13.

Conclusion

Mohammad ʿAli Forughi, Iran's representative at the League of Nations in the late 1920s, was disappointed in the fact that his counterpart did not automatically associate Saʿdi with Iran. "He knew Saʿdi yet he did not know Iran!" Forughi exclaimed.[128] He later told the story to younger Iranians in order to make the case that Iran must better highlight its rightful claim to Persian literature. In 1938, Forughi wrote an article in *Taʿlim va Tarbiyat* (Education), a journal printed by the Ministry of Education, in which he outlined his vision for marking Saʿdi's seven hundredth birth year.[129] He argued that Saʿdi's oeuvre constitutes one of the four pillars of Iranian (as opposed to Persian-language) culture and education. This cultural pillar had to be enshrined, and Forughi's ambitious plan included building a mausoleum in Saʿdi's birthplace Shiraz, erecting smaller monuments for the poet in other Iranian cities, publishing his work in different formats and for different audiences, producing a well-researched biography of the poet, and establishing a library in his name in Tehran that would hold all the translations and adaptations of his work.[130] In the 1930s, various institutions were established in Iran in order to execute Forughi's ambitious plan.[131]

Texts and monuments designed to celebrate Saʿdi's contribution to Persian literature and connection with Iran were cast as a belated yet timeless practice to honor national luminaries. By examining the ways in which *adabiyāt* was (re)invented as a term of civilizational achievement, this chapter aimed to demythologize literature as a timeless and universal concept by returning its making to particular sites of power and literary production in early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. To treat literature as transhistorical is to entirely ignore the enterprising labor of Persian-language savants who defined a new discourse of literature and charted its social domain in the course of their careers. Such a treatment will inevitably also obscure the constructedness of *adabiyāt*. The state built an apparatus tasked with regulating sites of literary production and bringing their practitioners fully under its ideological control. But the nature of creating a new literary model was too alinear, inconsistent, and messy to be recognized and therefore fully regulated by any state apparatus.

Tarzi, Forughi, Qāri, and Homāʾi, and before them Ākhundzādeh and Kermāni, did not work within a pre-packaged literary model imported from a single source (read Europe). They did not invent formulaic and static categories designed to participate in a teleological march towards nation-statehood. Early twentieth-century Persian-language savants labored to synthesize a host of sources, many of which in global circulation, with an aim to usher structural changes to Persian literature as they understood it. They often worked at cross-purpose from one another, yet their efforts were focused on bringing *adabiyāt* into close alignment with the literature as a utilitarian term. The process of aligning two concepts that were fragile and

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[128] Forughi, *Maqālāt-e Forughi*, edited by Habib Yaghmāʾi (Tehran: Tus, 1975), nineteen.

[129] "Barnāmeh-ye adā-ye taklif nesbat beh Shaykh-e Saʿdi," in *Maqālāt-e Forughi*, 256-263.

[130] Ibid., 258-59.

[131] The building of Saʿdi mausoleum in Shiraz was carried out by the Society for National Monuments (SNM). The Society built other mausoleums across Iran: Ibn Sina (Hamadan), Hāfez (Shiraz), Ferdowsi (Tus), ʿAttar (Nishapur), Khayyām (Nishabour), Shaykh-e Ruzbahan (Shiraz), Saʾib (Isfahan), and Hamdullah Mastawfi (Qazvin). Talinn Grigor has examined the role of SNM in nationalizing and modernizing these sites through the lens of architecture. *Building Iran: Modernism, Architecture, and National Heritage under the Pahlavi Monarchs* (New York: Periscope Publishing, 2009).

malleable in the early twentieth century left in its wake a sense of ambiguity and ambivalence, a quality collapsed by the authoritative certainty of literary institutions. In its stead, literature has emerged in the second part of the twentieth century as an institutionally enshrined and timeless category, inhospitable to historicizing attempts directed at restoring its process of formation. Hence, literature operates through a series of self-fulfilling prophecies validating its invented object of knowledge, coded Persian literature, and erasing the critical literacy required to locate the ambiguity and ambivalence with which it was once invented. Like the nation-state, literature has become an imposingly ubiquitous model, one that has arrested our historical imagination to its "homogenous, empty time."[132]

What is at stake when one looks up the term "*adabiyāt*" in a dictionary? John Richardson's Persian-English dictionary, printed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, glossed *adabiyāt* as follows: [fem. plur.] Relating to humanity, politeness. Accomplishments.[133] Francis Steingass's comprehensive Persian-English dictionary, published near the end of the nineteenth century, did not give an entry to "*adabiyāt*" altogther.[134] By contrast, most twentieth-century dictionaries have glossed "*adabiyāt*" as literature, as with its other European cognates: *littérature, letteratura,* or *literatur*.[135] But the term was not just invoked in its narrower sense as aestheticized writing. Solaymān Hayyem's English-Persian dictionary, developed in the beginning of the 1930s, glossed literature as *adabiyāt*, and defined it as "any writing, all books [written] on a specific subject (if marked as definite), any printed material." This generic definition illustrates that even when *adabiyāt* was proliferating as a term of civilizational achievement during the 1950s, there co-existed a non-discriminatory iteration of it as well. In his Persian-English dictionary, developed in the mid 1930s, Hayyem defined *adabiyāt* not as any printed material, but as the feminine plural of "*adabiyeh*," a term referring to subjects derived from and related to *adab*, while the new iteration of the term was not listed.[136]

Nevertheless, most if not all dictionaries printed in the last quarter of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have offered "*adabiyāt*" as an equivalent for "literature" and vice versa.[137] This conceptual alignment marks the fruition of two generations of intellectual and institution-building labor in Iran, Afghanistan, and their diasporas. Today, the term "*adabiyāt*" subconsciously activates an expansive network of interrelated myths about civilizational history, national identity, canonical figures, linguistic community, and ethnic or even racial lineage. Embedded in this mythical network are transregional communities of myth-makers who sought

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[132] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 70. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007).

[133] John Richardson, *A Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English: With a Dissertation on the Languages, Literature, and Manners of Eastern Nations* (London: Printed by W. Bulmer for W.J. and J. Richardson, 1806), 27.

[134] Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to Be Met with in Persian Literature* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1892).

[135] Solaymān Hayyem, *The Larger English-Persian Dictionary: Designed to Give the Persian Meanings of 80,000 Words, Idioms, Phrases, and Proverbs in the English Language, As Well As the Transliteration of Difficult Persian Words* (Tehran: Beroukhim, 1960), 75.

[136] Solaymān Hayyem, *Farhang-e moʿāser: Fārsi-ingilisi, ingilisi-fārsi*, one volume (Tehran: Farhang-e moʿāser, 2000), 34.

[137] Karim Emami, *Farhang-e moʿāser: Kimia Persian-English Dictionary* (Tehran: Farhang moʿāser, 2007), 50.

to bring the once plural "*adabiyāt*" into close alignment with the concept of literature, a singular noun.

      Adabiyāt still plays a secondary role as a signifier of *adab* even after decades during which it accrued a sense of civilizational achievement, framed as the most enduring expression of a nation's highest character. While an element like *estifa'* or bookkeeping was jettisoned in the process of the discursive realignment, the overall meaning of *adab* as civil discourse and social etiquette was retained, albeit as a secondary connotation. Consider the following title from an essay written in 2018: "A President's Discourse [*adabiyāt*]: Eight Years of Ahmadinejad's Bewildering Speech and Tone."[138] In this context, *adabiyāt* refers not to literature but to the types of linguistic register that Iran's former president used when addressing different audiences. The terms "speech" and "tone" in the subtitle clearly hint at the notion of civility and even decency associated with *adab*. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, the concept of literature remained malleable and context-dependent, as opposed to stable and self-referential. In spite of social and institutional efforts to assign a singular essence to *adabiyāt* and make it pose as a fixed taxonomy of literature, its supple ambiguity presides over the ways in which native speakers of Persian think and write about it today.

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[138] Radio Farda. Accessed November 20, 2018. www.radiofarda.com/a/f7_ahmadinejad_literature/25065094.html. It is particularly curious that in the URL, *adabiyāt* has been (mis)translated as literature.

Chapter Two

Adabiyāt Proliferating: The Making of Persian Literature as an Academic Discipline in Iran (1916-1947)

Persian-language newspapers, textbooks of literature, and literary journals were instrumental in inventing and disseminating *adabiyāt* as a new discourse in early twentieth-century Iran. Returning *adabiyāt* to particular sites of power and literary production dispels the false notion that taxonomies of literature are universal, static, or that they may be imported wholesale from another source. That the Persian conceptualization of literature significantly changed at a certain point in the late nineteenth century is hardly a new argument. This chapter outlines the ways in which this conceptual alignment took form, and in turn will not take for granted the intellectual and institution-building labor required for its materialization. The next two chapters seek to understand the role of *anjomans* or literary associations in shaping *adabiyāt* in early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. Ultimately, they aim to illustrate the way in which institutions of literature emerged and influenced the literary collective operative at their core.

As with "*adabiyāt*," the term "*anjoman*" began to proliferate in a new semantic form in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. On the term's usage Farzin Vejdani writes, "From the 1906 Constitutional Revolution onward, the term *anjuman* came to signify local and provincial bodies of informal and formal governance, guild and workers' associations, confessional representative bodies, and literary associations."[1] While the term "voluntary association" broadly captures the range of educational visions and social agendas that drove late nineteenth and early twentieth-century *anjomans*, this study opts for "literary association" to specifically refer to *anjoman*s that had a literary disposition.[2] Persian-language savants even assigned an institutional meaning to the term "*anjoman*," understood as an entity designed to produce and regulate a discourse on language and literature. As early as the late nineteenth century, Mohammad Hosayn Forughi invoked Académie française, which he rendered as Anjoman-e adabiyāt-e farānseh, and lauded its role in developing the French language to best meet the shifting needs of time.[3]

Literary associations attracted different types of individuals, not all of whom necessarily composed poetry or imaginative prose. Some members were administrators who were familiar with state bureaucracy, others were traveling merchants with a knowledge of foreign languages. Members of a literary association would frequently gather in a private home or a place of business to recite (their) poetry or prose, plan producing a book or more often a literary journal

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[1] Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2015), 99.

[2] This chapter applies the qualifier "literary" to associations that viewed themselves as such; therefore it refrains from using the term evaluatively.

[3] Mohammad Hosayn Forughi, *Tārikh-e adabiyāt* (Tehran, Unpublished, 1914), 3. Today, Académie française is commonly identified by a neologism, *farhangestān-e farānseh*, which was invented in the early 1930s to designate the Academy of Persian Language and Literature (Farhangestān-e zabān va adab-e farsi).

or anthology, and generally discuss the state of Persian literature on a local and translocal level.[4] Literary associations created a space in which *adabiyāt* as a utilitarian discourse of literature proliferated well beyond newspapers and literary textbooks.

Arbiters of Knowledge: The Dāneshkadeh Literary Association and Its Vision

One of the more influential literary associations created in the mid 1910s is Dāneshkadeh. In January 1916, Mohammad Taqi Bahār (d. 1951), Iran's former Poet Laureate and political activist, gathered a group of poets and scholars called *Jargeh-ye dāneshvari* or the Dāneshvari Circle.[5] It was soon renamed to *Jargeh-ye adabi* or the Literary Circle. In early 1918, the group ultimately adopted Dāneshkadeh, a name that denotes a place (*kadeh*) for the discernment and production of knowledge (*dānesh*).[6] The name would have appeared as unfamiliar to many Iranians in the early twentieth century; it was carefully selected to articulate and embody the vision of the literary association: our purpose is not to merely gather and compile literary works and biographical information, as literary biographers do; we are here to discern and produce knowledge. A self-proclaimed departure from *tazkereh* or biographical anthologies as a mode of literary production was formative to the way Dāneshkadeh perceived its modernizing role in early twentieth-century Iran, as is also reflected in the output of the association's eponymous journal. Following the establishment of universities in the mid 1930s and 40s in Iran and Afghanistan, the term "Dāneshkadeh" came to denote a department, as exemplified by "*dāneshkadeh-ye adabiyāt*" or "faculty of letters."

Adabiyāt, a malleable and ambiguous concept in the 1910s, was transformed into a

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[4] Notable literary associations of this period are as follows: an unnamed literary association founded by Hasan Vosuq ol-Dowleh in the early 1910s, *Anjoman-e adabi-ye iran* (Iran Literary Association) organized by Vahid Dastgerdi in the early 1920s, *Anjoman-e hakim nezāmi* (Hakim Nezāmi Literary Association) founded in 1932 after the Iran Literary Association was dissolved, and in the early 1940s the Iran Literary Association was revitalized by Adib ol-Saltaneh Samiʿi, and their gatherings took place in the building of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature in Tehran. Yahyā Āryanpur, *Az Sabā tā Nimā: Tārikh-e 150 sāl adab-e fārsi* (Tehran: Sherkat-e Sahāmi-e Ketābhāy-e Jibi, 1971), Vol 2, 429-431.

[5] There are many scholarly studies on Bahār many of which are listed in "Bahar, Mohammad-Taqi." *Encyclopædia Iranica*, March 2, 2018. I have also benefited from the following recent studies: Roxane Haag-Higuchi, "Modernization in Literary History: Malek al-Shoʿara Bahar's *Stylistics*," in *Culture and Cultural Politics Under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran,* edited by. Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner (New York: Routledge, 2014), 19-36. Matthew C. Smith. "Literary Connections: Bahar's *Sabkshenasi* and the *Bazgasht-e Adabi*." *Journal of Persianate Studies.* vol. 2 (2009): 194-209. Wali Ahmadi, "The Institution of Persian Literature and the Genealogy of Bahar's *Stylistics*." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2004): 141-152.

[6] According to Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, the suffix *kadeh* denotes a "disposition toward, a preoccupation with, or an engagement in something." *Recasting Persian Poetry: Scenarios of Poetic Modernity in Iran* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 105. In Afghanistan, the Persian term "*dāneshkadeh*" is used alongside the Pashto term "*pohanzi,*" the latter also meaning a place of knowledge.

institutionally-cemented discourse of literature during the first half of the twentieth century.[7] Writing in the shadow of literary institutions, many contemporary scholars have assessed Dāneshkadeh's radical vision according to their own standards and historical circumstances. In *Az Sabā tā Nimā* (From Sabā to Nimā), a book that covers the last hundred and fifty years of Persian literature, Yahyā Āryanpur (d. 1985) characterized Dāneshkadeh as a literary association with an "ambitious claim" to effect change in "the method and procedure of Iran's literature," but one that "in practice achieved nothing except for testing [their] poetic talent in the style of the ghazals of the classics."[8] By the time Āryanpur was compiling *Az Sabā tā Nimā* in the mid 1960s, the discourse of poetic modernism had become a perennial fixture, several faculties of letters were operating in Tehran and major urban centers, and such influential literary institutions as the Institute for Translation and Publication (*Bongāh-e tarjomeh va nashr-e ketāb*, 1953) had been established in Iran. Hence, Āryanpur's yardstick for change reflected a distinctly different milieu than Bahār's early twentieth-century Iran.

Gholāmʿali Raʿdi-Āzarakhshi (d. 1999), writing in the same period as Āryanpur, expressed a similar though much less evaluative opinion. In a series of articles on "Iran's Contemporary Poetry," he commented on a famous debate that had taken place between Bahār and the poet Taqi Rafʿat (d. 1920) in 1918. According to Raʿdi-Āzarakhshi, Bahār's journal *Dāneshkadeh* advocated for gradual change in Persian poetry whereas Rafʿat, writing in his newspaper *Tajaddod* (Modernity or modernization), militated for a radical break from the Persian poetic heritage. For Rafʿat, Bahār was too conservative.[9] Raʿdi-Āzarakhshi invoked Dāneshkadeh Literary Association to outline two extremely different outlooks on poetic change: *Tajaddod*'s radical literary vision juxtaposed with *Dāneshkadeh*'s imagined moderation, if not traditionalism.[10]

Āryanpur and Raʿdi-Āzarakhshi, both writing half a century after Dāneshkadeh had been formed, framed the literary association as aligned with the Persian literary tradition. Āryanpur's characterization of Dāneshkadeh as "traditional" is code for imitative and unoriginal, thus without literary value. Without being grounded in a set of historical contingencies, "traditional" (or "modern" for that matter) is a problematically nebulous descriptive category at best and a

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[7] *Dāneshkadeh* featured short prose pieces in translation under the rubric of *adabiyāt* while *sheʿr* or poetry was featured under its own category. However, a column on *tārikh-e adabi* or literary history conceptualized both poetry and prose as sub-categories of *adabiyāt*. The distinct ways in which *adabiyāt* operated as a category in the early twentieth century illustrates that the concept of literature remained malleable and context-dependent.

[8] *Az Sabā tā Nimā: Tārikh-e 150 sāl Adab-e fārsi*, vol 2, 430. He also argues that literary modernization (*tajadod-e adabi*) has created two opposite camps: old school conservatives (*kohne-parastān va mohāfeze-karān*) and modernists (*motejadedin*). vol 2, 430-440.

[9] Gholāmʿali Raʿdi Āzarakhshi, "Sheʿr-e moʿāser-e Iran," *Yaghmā* no. 244 (Dey 1347/January 1969): 548-555.

[10] Raʿdi Āzarakhshi, *Yaghmā*, 548. The full quotation is as follows: "In the thoughts and poetry of the late Taqi Rafʿat and followers of his school [there became apparent] a disregard for conspicuous and inconspicuous connections and natural and indispensable continuities of Persian poetry with the distinct style of poetic thought and literary imagination and the quality of authentic Iranian sentiment." On Bahār's debate with Rafʿat, see Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), chapter three.

floating signifier for an unmediated and timeless construct called the "Persian literary tradition" at worst. Then, it is important to place Dāneshkadeh in its historical context, divorced from its given role as a historiographical placeholder against which "traditional" or "radical" models of literary change would be reified.[11] Placing literary journals in two teleological camps of traditional versus modern necessarily obscures their belonging to and participation in a broader literary ecosystem, no less in one that was highly conscious of its interconnected nature and its role in proliferating a new discourse of literature.

Rashid Kermānshāhi, who later adopted the surname Yāsami (d. 1951), one of the members of Dāneshkadeh, reflected on its inception in an article titled "Poetry in the Current Age." He wrote, "Our cohort gathered during set times and did not admit others. We spoke of the unruly chaos in the literature of our beloved country, and expressed our disgust and nostalgia towards its disorderly condition." Yasami described his cohort as "young and inexperienced" writers who needed the mentorship of "older and experienced" figures like Bahār to have "lasting consistency."[12] Since the early 1900s, Bahār had tried to establish a periodical centered around a group of like-minded scholars.[13] In 1910, his efforts bore fruit as he established *No-Bahār*, a Persian-language newspaper that covered national and world news, and featured a series titled "The History of Political Parties in Iran," in which Bahār aimed to privde an objective and edifying narrative of political life in Iran. Publishing *No-Bahār* expanded his literary network and taught him how to navigate state bureaucracy. Consequently, in 1916 Bahār formed a literary association centered on the question of literature and its social and historical domain.

The notable (and male-only) members of Dāneshkadeh Literary Association included Yasami, ʿAli Asghar Hekmat (d. 1980), the minister of education in 1918-1929, 'Abbās Eqbāl Āshtiyāni (d. 1956), a literary educator and writer, ʿAbdol Hosayn Teymurtāsh, translator and Khorāsān's representative in the *majles* or the parliament, and Saʿid Nafisi (d. 1966), a scholar and translator. One feature of creating Persian literature as an academic discipline is the fact that it was a heavily male-dominated enterprise. Many of these men later taught Persian literature and Iranian history at the University of Tehran in the late 1930s. Among them, they had access to literary sources in Arabic, French, Russian, German, English, and Ottoman Turkish. The active members of this literary association were a mix of graduates from Iran's elite high schools such as Dār ol-Fonun and the School of Political Science, founded in 1851 and 1899 respectively in Tehran, and European educational institutions that were training Iranian students since the

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[11] *Dāneshkadeh*'s contributions to the discourse of poetic modernism has been examined in *Recasting Persian Poetry* (chapter three) and Amr Taher Ahmed's *La révolution littéraire: Étude de l'influence de la poésie française sur la modernisation des formes poétiques persanes au début du Xxe siècle* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, ÖAW, 2012).

[12] Yāsami wrote the article in French; it was translated into Persian by Ahmad Ahmadi. It appeared in an edited collection of his essays and articles: Rashid Yāsami, *Maqālah'hā va Resāleh'hā*. eds. Iraj Afshār and Muḥammad R. Daryāgasht (Tehran: Bonyād-e Mowqufāt-e Doktor Mahmud Afshār, 1994), 320.

[13] On September 29, 1909, Bahār wrote a letter to Khorāsān's Ministry of Education requesting a permit to print a newspaper called *Ehtiyāj*. It is not clear whether or not he was granted permission to publish *Ehtiyāj*, but in the following year he began to publish his newspaper *No-Bahār*. For his letter, see Mohammad Taqi Bahār, *Nāmeh'hā-ye Malek ol-Shoʿarā Bahār*, edited by ʿAli Mir Ansāri, (Tehran: Sāzman-e asnād-e melli-ye Iran, Pazhuheshkadeh-ye asnād, 2001), 3-4.

nineteenth century. [14] In addition to Dāneshkadeh's permanent members, administrators, businessmen, translators, and poets attended meetings, held regularly in Bahār's home. [15] Educational institutions and literary associations often overlapped in their literary network, constituting a literary ecosystem that invented and disseminated *adabiyāt* as a utilitarian discourse of literature.

The literary curricula of elite high schools and colleges in Iran, prior to the foundation of the Faculty of Letters at the University of Tehran in 1935, have been described only in broad generic terms. For instance, Monica Ringer confirms that Persian and Arabic were taught at Dār ol-Fonun and that they were marginal compared to other subjects.[16] This dearth of information is primarily due to the lack of written (or published) records on what constituted literature as an academic subject in mid- and late nineteenth-century Iranian educational institutions. Therefore, the longstanding assumption has been that subjects like literary history took form as a result of the translation of Orientalist works of scholarship into Persian, providing an impetus for the development of Persian literature as an academic discipline in the 1930s.[17] However, Persian literature in general and literary history in particular, informed by the new discourse of literature, were already in the making in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century in Iran.

Mohammad Hosayn Forughi, whose contributions to the newspaper *Tarbiyat* (1896-1907) were examined in the previous chapter, taught literature at the School of Political Science in Tehran in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Before his passing in 1907, he set out to publish his literary lectures as part of a collection titled *tārikh-e adabiyāt* or literary history. His son, Mohammad ʿAli, compiled his lectures and wrote an introduction for the collection in November 1914, but he too was unable to publish them due to his political obligations.[18] Forughi's lectures

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[14] I am grateful to Alvand Bahari who provided me with a copy of Forughi's lectures titled *tārikh-e adabiyāt* or literary history.

[15] Regular attendees included Olfat Ebrāhim, a poet, Bozorg-Niā, a poet and businessman, Hesābi, a writer, Zarreh, a poet, Rayhān, a poet and newspaper writer who was familiar with French, ʿErfān, an *adib*, Nejāt, an *adib*, Vālah, a poet, Honari, a man familiar with German, Āsef ol-Mamālek Kermāni, a calligrapher, poet, and Kerman's representative in the *majles*, Afsar, a poet, *adib*, and Khorāsān's representative in the *majles*, Marāt Kermānshāhi, a poet, *adib*, and Kermānshāh's representative.

[16] Ringer writes, "Although courses in history, Arabic and Persian were offered [at Dār ol-Fonun], these were considered to be supplemental and not major fields of study, despite the fact that the report mentions two students majoring in Persian [in 1858]." There are no specifics on what constituted Persian literature as an academic program in the mid-nineteenth century. *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2001), 79.

[17] Vejdani has corrected the assertion that Persian literary history was imported wholesale from Europe by examining the ways in which Iranian scholars and educators produced a national narrative of Persian literary history. He was the first to recognize that Forughi, along with ʿAbdol ʿAzim Qarib Garakāni, developed the earliest literary textbooks in Iran. *Making History in Iran*, 157.

[18] Forughi's lectures on literature may not have been published, nonetheless early twentieth-century scholars had access to them. For instance, 'Abbās Eqbāl Āshtiyāni cited Forughi's *Tārikh-e adabiyāt* (Literary history) on several occasions in his series on Persian literary history, for one such footnote see "Tārikh-e adabi" *Dāneshkadeh* 1.8 (1919): 408.

on literature, currently available only in manuscript in the Archives of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature in Tehran, are an invaluable resource for they show that Iranian scholars and literary educators were preoccupied with the question of literary history as a pedagogical object before national schools or literary associations proliferated, and well before the establishment of the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters. Foroughi was lecturing on Persian literature at a time when most influential works of Persian literary history in Europe and South Asia had not yet been published, let alone translated into Persian. His lectures merit further examination, but for the purposes of this study they mark an early stage in the gestation of a new discourse of literature that made thinkable the establishment and operation of literary associations such as Dāneshkadeh.

In spite of financial challenges, the Dāneshkadeh Literary Association managed to publish a literary journal, ten issues of which were released between April 1918 and April 1919. In a letter written in 1919 to his wife, Sudābeh, Bahār complained about how difficult and time-consuming it was to find white paper and a functioning printing press in Tehran.[19] To acquire the means to continue printing *Dāneshkadeh*, Bahār had to travel to Baku, a port at the intersection of Ottoman lands, the Caucasus, and Russia. As his letter explained, he had to first communicate with the British embassy for they controlled sea traffic between Anzali and Baku in the Caspian Sea. Ultimately, he managed to raise 10,000 *tomāns* among the members of the literary association, enough to hire someone to bring paper and printing press to Tehran, a process that could have taken weeks if not months. In a poem, he also spoke of financial losses he suffered as a result of publishing the journal.[20] Bahār's personal letter not only highlights challenges of publishing with limited or no state support, but it also evinces the nature of building institutions of literature; they are haphazardly-funded and collectively deliberated by informal networks, and not just imported wholesale by a state apparatus.

Similar to the way Bahār obtained the mechanics of printing by navigating a particular process, the semantics of writing about literature in the early twentieth century did not come in a pre-packaged model. In other words, literary associations were not operating within a ready-made discourse of literature, which by the time of Āryanpur— in the second and third quarters of the twentieth century— had cohered into a social institution. Early twentieth-century literary associations were seeking to shape a new discourse of literature, defining its vocational dimensions along the way.[21] Vejdani writes, "many of the ideas forged in the 1910s and early 1920s in these literary circles and associations became central to the state's official educational policy on literature by the late 1920s and 1930s."[22] The Pahlavi state may have established Iran's first faculty of letters at the University of Tehran and an Academy of Persian Language and Literature in 1935, but the discourse of literature that undergirded their institutional authority took form in the gatherings of literary associations such as Dāneshkadeh and in the pages of literary journals during the early years of the twentieth century.

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[19] *Nameh'hā-ye Malek ol-Shoʿarā Bahār*, 56-57. Bahār also alluded to the difficulty of printing *Dāneshkadeh* in his opening editorial. See *Dāneshkadeh*, no 1 (1918): 3.

[20] "Dāneshkadeh." *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Accessed November 2, 2017.

[21] Vocational dimension refers to the creation of certain fields or subfields of study like literary history or *Stylistics* which were defined in literary journals and later became tenured-positions at faculties of letters.

[22] *Making History in Iran*, 156.

Dāneshkadeh: Writing on Persian Literature in Early Twentieth-century Iran (1918-1919)

In the first issue of *Dāneshkadeh*, dated April 21, 1918, Mohammad Taqi Bahār outlined the journal's vision: "*Dāneshkadeh* is launched to promote a literary spirit and determine a new roadmap for literature (*adabiyāt*) in Iran.[23] This journal is run by Dāneshkadeh [literary association], so what's the harm in getting to know *Dāneshkadeh*?"[24] He then recounted how the circle was formed: "In [our] literary association, members tested their poetic talent by reciting *ghazals* in the style of the classics. The number of members gradually increased and in the early 1916, our small poetry association believed it was capable of [adopting] newer principles [by] becoming dexterous in dissecting prose and poetry and translating foreign literature."[25] The literary association crafted an ambitious constitution centered on "rethinking the method and procedure of Iran's literature."[26]

Crafting a constitution for a literary association was a novel act that distinguished Dāneshkadeh from many other literary gatherings that regularly took place across the country.[27] In writing a constitution for Dāneshkadeh, Bahār would have drawn ideas not only from well-known models like the Académie française, but also from voluntary associations that had proliferated in the latter part of the nineteenth century in India, as exemplified by the Scientific Society of Aligarh, first established a translation society in 1862, Jalsah-e Tahzib, established in 1868, Anjuman-e Dar-us-Salam formed circa 1888, and Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu founded in 1903. Operating in the public arena, these associations created a network of members, readers, and patrons centered on cultural self-assertion whose impact went beyond their self-styled literary concerns. Ryan Perkins characterizes voluntary associations proliferating in late nineteenth-century India as "civilizing projects," which were, according to Ulrike Stark, "based on notions of individual morality and merit, civic participation, public service, and social reform." Dāneshkadeh's self-declared mission to reform the state of literature in Iran, though developed in a different context than British India, aimed to define and disseminate a new discourse of literature.

Writing only seven years after the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911) and less than a year after the Russian Revolution of 1917, Bahār aimed to set in motion a literary revolution in

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[23] Readers received the journal by subscription or obtained a copy at the office of *No-Bahār*, Khalkhāli Press, Ganj-e Dānesh Press, or the Center for the Distribution of Periodicals located on Lālehzār Street in Tehran.

[24] "Marām-e mā," *Dāneshkadeh* 1.1, (1918): 1.

[25] Ibid., 2.

[26] Ibid.

[27] See Ryan Perkins, "A New Pablik: Abdul Halim Sharar, Volunteerism, and the Anjuman-e Dar-us-Salam in Late Nineteenth-century India." *Modern Asian Studies* 49, 4 (2015): 1050. Ulrike Stark, "Associational Culture and Civic Engagement in Colonial Lucknow: The Jalsah-e Tahzib." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 48, 1 (2011): 4. Bahar corresponded with a number of South Asian scholars in the course of his career, and would have been aware of literary developments in India. See *Nameh'hā-ye Malek ol-Shoʿarā Bahār*.

early twentieth-century Iran.[28] He argued that change was already in the air as revolutions swept the world "from oceans to deserts and mountains, from big countries to small families, and [changing] the form of clothes and words and expressions."[29] "Therefore, it would not be surprising," he continued, "if our literature, or even our words and idioms, and our manner of self-expression, were also to undergo certain changes."[30] Reassuring his readers of the gradual nature of his idea of literary reform, he wrote, "At the same time, we do not wish to act before the trajectory of evolution (*seyr-e takāmol*) demands our action."[31] In other words, he suggested, this literary change would be implemented in accordance with the current needs of our environment.[32] Bahār likened the process of literary modernization (*tajaddod*) to repairing the edifice built by our literary ancestors while building new monuments next to it, as opposed to tearing down [the ancestral edifice] altogether.[33] Bahār's manifesto aimed to bring readers into alignment with his vision of literary change. By examining the literary output of *Dāneshkadeh*, I seek to understand how Bahār and his cohort shaped *adabiyāt* as a new discourse of literature in the late 1910s.

Dāneshkadeh as a literary association must be seen as a distinct entity from its eponymous journal, established two years later. The journal encompasses the written and more fixed form of dialogue that took place among members of the literary association both before and during the publication of *Dāneshkadeh*. Therefore, the journal offers only a segment of the overall intellectual output of the literary association. Examining the journal's marginalia helps to partially recover the oral space of Dāneshkadeh. The practice of *eqterāh* or a test of poetic talent is one such example. An *eqterāh* featured a prose text, in *Dāneshkadeh*'s case a French-language fable in translation with an edifying message, and asked readers to compose a poem in response to it. The reader-response poems were published alongside the *eqterāh* or in the following issue.

This literary practice makes it possible to imagine the following scenario: a French-language text entered the oral space of the literary association, it resonated with members who translated it into Persian. For publication, it was framed as a source of literary inspiration, taking on the distinct form of the journal's literary vision. Ultimately, the French text came to be embodied by Persian poems composed in response to it.[34] The source text and its reader-response

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[28] While *Dāneshkadeh* looked up to France as a model for political and literary revolution, it was nonetheless aware of the Russian revolution, as exemplified by a poem called the "Bolshevik Song" in Persian translation: 1.2 (2018): 95-98.

[29] *Dāneshkadeh* 1.1, (1918): 3.

[30] Ibid., 3-4.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid. "Tearing down our ancestral edifice" was a critical reference to Taqi Rafʿat and his radical vision of literary modernization. In another issue, Bahār directly addressed Rafʿat's criticism in his editorial. See *Dāneshkadeh* 1.3, (1918): 115-124.

[34] For an analysis of the way in which *eqterāh* facilitated the appropration of French fables by Persian poetry, see *Recasting Persian Poetry*, chapter four.

poems represent only a single scenario out of many others that may have been discussed and discarded in the oral space of Dāneshkadeh. Similarly, embedded in *adabiyāt* as a new discourse of literature lies a host of semantic and discursive scenarios that were seen viable at point and were later discarded. The previous chapter unpacked the supple ambiguity of the term "*adabiyāt*" in the early twentieth century as a way of demonstrating the array of meaning assigned to literature as a conceptual category during a period widely seen as the consolidation of modular nationalism. Literary associations like Dāneshkadeh did not inherit *adabiyāt* as an ontological essence, rather they shaped it in distinct ways as a discursive construct.

The core of the journal *Dāneshkadeh* consisted of two exentsive series that appeared under the titles "Enqelāb-e adabi" (Literary Revolution) and "Tārikh-e adabi" (Literary History), written respectively by Rashid Yāsami (except for one issue written by Saʿid Nafisi) and Abbās Eqbāl-Āshtiyāni (henceforth Eqbāl).[35] Yāsami's column provided readers with an account of French literary history, likely adapted and translated from a French-language literary textbook used for secondary education.[36] Eqbāl's column was an account of Persian literary history which will be extensively examined in this chapter. Yāsami's column on French literature complemented and facilitated the reception of Eqbāl's series by making visible the need for a narrative of Persian literary history, invented in the mold of a French nationalist literary historiography. By recounting how French literature was revolutionized, Yāsami was no doubt making a case for the type of literary reform envisioned by his literary association. By writing on two seemingly different subjects, Yāsami and Eqbāl both brought *adabiyāt* into closer alignment with a new discourse of cultural mapping in which the nation was bounded by a distinct literary tradition.

Having received his primary education in Kermānshah, Rashid Yāsami moved to Tehran to attend St. Louis, a French-language high school established by the Lazarists in 1862. The Lazarist schools in Tehran were more focused on educating their students in modern sciences and French literature than in religious sciences.[37] At St. Louis high school, Yāsami would have become familiar with French literary history as a pedagogical subject during a time when Persian-language educators were beginning to conceptualize Persian literature as a pedagogical object of an emerging national education. Yāsami would later teach and design textbooks for a number of educational institutions that were established in the 1930s. His participation in the Dāneshkadeh Literary Association gave him the space to develop and test his ideas while the journal provided him with a platform to define a new mode of literary historiography.

Yāsami's column, "Literary Revolution," introduced early twentieth-century Persian readers to French-language poets, philosophers, playwrights, and kings from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The names of people and places often appeared both in the Perso-Arabic and in the Latin scripts. In every issue, readers learned about central debates that shaped each period of French literary history. But there was a framing narrative to which every episode of French literature adhered: in the sixteenth century, French literary culture dramatically came back to life from the slumber of the Dark Ages and ushered in a literary Renaissance. This

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[35] For Yāsami's views on history and his role in its institutionalization in Iran, see *Making History in Iran*, chapter three.

[36] *Recasting Persian Poetry*, 298.

[37] "French Schools in Persia." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Accessed July 22, 2018.

French literary awakening was caused by a return to the literary style of Greek and Latin masterpieces which constituted the roots of French literature. Even though French language and literature were initially nourished by Greek and Latin works, their influence became excessive and even misguided as many French writers became "subservient" to the style of the ancients (*qodamā*).[38] The statement is somewhat contradictory, but its main truth-value for Yāsami was the fact that languages have to protect themselves from borrowing "too much" in order to maintain or even create their distinct identity.

According to Yāsami, sixteenth-century French littérateurs also promoted writing only in French, even though many of them continued writing in "foreign languages," displaying "a lack of compliance with the national disposition."[39] He lauded the role of literary associations such as La Pléiade, the Académie française and the Encyclopédie française in institutionalizing French language and literature.[40] Throughout the series, Yāsami was less preoccupied with reifying French as a self-contained linguistic or ethno-nationalist category, and more concerned with charting the passage of a literary tradition through revolutionary change. Using French literature as a case study, he aimed to demonstrate that a trajectory of literary change may be set in motion by literary associations like Dāneshkadeh, which in turn can effect structural changes in society. Yāsami's "Literary Revolution" posited French literary history as a universal model for the envisioned development of Persian literature in the course of the twentieth century. As visible in journal's output, half of which had been adapted or translated from French, his view resonated among members of Dāneshkadeh.[41]

"Literary Revolution" sought to turn the idea of French literary history, posited as a manifestation of a discursive and structural change in literature, into a fixture in early twentieth-century Iran. Yāsami's implied message throughout the series was clear: if there exists a narrative of French literary history, then a Persian literary history must also exist as its parallel. In the final issue of *Dāneshkadeh*, he spelled out this message: "The series 'Literary Revolution' was in harmony with [our] journal and served its mission of introducing literary changes and revolutions (though in a brief and compact yet correct method and in consideration of general trends), [its coverage ending with] the threshold of revolution and new changes that are anticipated in the style of French literature (which may be parallel to our small literary movement in contemporary Iran) …"[42] The development of Persian literary history within a new discourse of literature was not the automatic product of a series of translations from European languages, as exemplified by "Literary Revolution," it required a process of creating parallel

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[38] *Dāneshkadeh* 1.1, (1918): 24. He echoed this sentiment throughout the series, e.g. in 1.5 (1918): 256.

[39] Ibid., 30.

[40] La Pléiade referred to a group of sixteenth-century French Renaissance poets consisting of Pierre de Ronsard, Joachim du Bellay, and Jean-Antoine de Baïf.

[41] Under a series titled "The Greats" (*Bozorgān*), the journal featured biographical accounts of French literary figures like Rousseau, Lamartine, Hugo, Zola and others. The journal also designed a literary competition by providing readers with a prose translation of a French poem and asking them to compose a Persian poetic response.

[42] "Enqelāb-e adabi," *Dāneshkadeh* 1.11-12 (1919): 579.

fixtures that set in motion, in an alinear and inconsistent manner, certain changes that signaled a new mode of conceptualizing literature and its history.

By introducing its readers to French literature, *Dāneshkadeh* was building on the work of *Bahār* (1910-1911), a journal-anthology published by Mirzā Yusof Eʿtesāmi in 1910-1911. It featured a variety of expository writings that ranged from reports, interviews, opinion pieces, and aphorisms, all presented under the broad rubric of beneficial for public education. *Bahār* boldly aimed to disseminate a culture of reading in Iran by providing readers with "scientific, literary, ethical, historical, and economic information."[43] Although Eʿtesāmi also knew Turkish and Arabic, the source of *Bahār*'s output was mostly French. *Bahār* was criticized for paying more attention to European authors, a fact that they explicitly acknowledged in their twelfth issue. "The work of our poets and writers has been translated into foreign languages, embellishing the world's repository of knowledge; is it not appropriate that we familiarize ourselves to an extent with Western poets and writers?"[44] Eʿtesāmi then attributed the following dictum to Victor Hugo: "Literature is the hidden secret of civilization."[45] "That is why the masses are in need of literature," he concluded. Directly addressing his critics, he wrote, "But you make up some other meanings for literature [*adabiyāt*]; you do not irrigate [the minds of] those who are thirsty for knowledge from [literature's] pure pond." Clearly, what was at stake for Eʿtesāmi went beyond introducing European literary figures; it was about defining a new discourse of literature.

A few years later, *Dāneshkadeh* found itself in *Bahār*'s position, having to justify its mission. The following note, which was part of a broader effort to establish a give-and-take relationship with readers, was printed in the second issue of *Dāneshkadeh*:

> Some of our esteemed readers may ponder why *Dāneshkadeh* has given preference to introducing Western literary greats and does not mention Eastern literary greats, our own greats. Yes, our greats are dearer to us on all counts. But we would equally hold dear gaining knowledge of the poets and littérateurs of other [nations]. We already know our literary greats. Let us gain knowledge of others as well, much like how Europeans have gained knowledge of our greats.[46]

However, assuming that "our own tradition" existed in a primordial form as part of a ready-made discourse of literature denies and even erases the impact of literary associations like Dāneshkadeh and their journals in creating a new discourse of literature that reified "our own tradition" as a conventional fixture. It is also not clear to what specific criticism *Bahār* and *Dāneshkadeh* were responding since they did not publish any such letter. It may be entirely plausible that they adopted a defensive tone to more emphatically state their vision, offering another iteration of their initial manifesto.

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[43] *Bahār* 1.1 (1910): 1

[44] *Bahār* 2.12 (1911): 706.

[45] Ibid., 707.

[46] *Dāneshkadeh* 1.2 (1918): 89.

A Narrative of Decline and Regeneration: ʿAbbās Eqbāl's "Literary History" (1918-1919)

Abbās Eqbāl was an educator, literary scholar, and a member of Dāneshkadeh.[47] His column "Tārikh-e adabi," or "literary history" appeared in nine (out of twelve) issues of *Dāneshkadeh*, before his dispute with Bahār led to the journal's discontinuation. They argued over a number of historical and literary issues, primarily the reading of a line of poetry that Bahār claimed had been falsely attributed to Rudaki (d. 941).[48] The subtext behind their dispute was negotiating the scholarly domain of literature in contradistinction to history's scholarly domain. The former was dominated by poets with varying degrees of social recognition, and in the case of Bahār an internationally acclaimed one. There was an unspoken expectation that a scholar of literature should bolster his scholarly credentials in literature by (successfully) composing poetry. Unlike Bahār and Yāsami, Eqbāl did not compose poetry. He later established himself as a scholar of history and geography. Nonetheless, he contributed immensely to the field of literary studies by editing and annotating manuscripts and serving as a member of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature.

His column in *Dāneshkadeh* illustrates one of the earlier efforts in Iran to invent a narrative of Persian literary history. It predates most Persian literary histories that proliferated in the 1930s and 40s. As demonstrated in the last chapter, *adabiyāt* was developed in the space of periodicals and national schools. Hence, the idea of literary history traveled through a fluid domain that linked literary associations, their periodicals, and educational institutions in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Iran. These sites should be viewed as part of a continuum for it would be difficult to tease out their social and cultural domain from one another. In the early 1910s, Eqbal moved to Tehran to attend Dār ol-Fonun wherein he would have been exposed to literary history, then understood as a series of biographical accounts of Persian literary luminaries framed as Iran's national pantheon. As a member of Dāneshkadeh, he would have continued to engage the question of literary history alongside other members, many of whom were shaping Iran's educational and cultural policies. Eqbāl continued writing for literary periodicals in the 1920s and began to teach literature, geography, and history at Dār ol-Fonun and Teachers' Training College in Tehran. Hence, writing a column in *Dāneshkadeh* for Eqbāl was only one outlet among many that helped him to finalize his thoughts on literary history at the time. His "Literary History" does not mark the completion of a discursive construct, but instead is an important benchmark in its gestation.

In the first issue of *Dāneshkadeh*, Eqbāl defined what he understood as literature. He offered two different definitions of *adabiyāt*, beginning with the term's "classical iteration" (*beh estelāh-e qodamā*): *adab* and *adabiyāt* constituted a culture of self-conduct and a knowledge of the poetics of prose and poetry. Like other literary scholars in his generation, Eqbāl did not

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[47] For an overview of his scholarly career, see "Eqbāl Āshtiyāni, ʿAbbās." *Encyclopædia Iranica.* Accessed December 1, 2017. Hushang Etehād, *Pazhuheshgarān-e moʿāser-e Iran,* vol. 5 (Tehran: Farhang-e moʿāser, 2009): 1-241.

[48] *Dāneshkadeh* 1.9 (1919): 498-499. Eqbāl responded to Bahār's criticism in issues 11-12 (1919): 582-587. Bahār also replied to his response in the same issue, see 588-593.

distinguish between *adab* and *adabiyāt*.[49] He then characterized what he called its European iteration (*beh estelāh-e orupāiyān*): in addition to encompassing poetics of prose and poetry, *adabiyāt* includes a "critical spirit" (*ruh-e enteqādi*), a quality that according to Eqbāl was lacking in "our literature."[50] It is through this "critical spirit" that the "true objective of literature" is conveyed. Followed by "critical spirit," in parentheses he wrote the term "revue" (review/journal) in the French script. Eqbāl's message to readers was clear: as a scholar of literature, I have the authority to adjudicate what literary texts embody or lack a "critical spirit," and in turn determine its historical and aesthetic value.[51] Posing two different iterations of *adabiyāt* as commensurate (yet privileging one over the other) represents a larger paradigm designed to bring *adabiyāt* into close alignment with the European discourse of literature, which in the case of Dāneshkadeh meant French.

Eqbāl then defined what he understood as *tārikh-e adabi*: a history of the "thoughts, dispositions and ideas that have constituted a nation."[52] Like his contemporaries, the writing of Persian literature for Eqbāl could not be disentangled from the history of the Iranian people. Eqbāl also enumerated key elements that shape a nation's literary production: "necessity, race, climate, period, and genetics."[53] He argued that poets and writers have historically been conditioned by these elements. In another article on literary criticism, Eqbāl asserted that one of the tasks of the critic to foreground these elements as part of "scientific rules and principles" of literary criticism.[54] By laying down his conceptual foundation, Eqbāl placed literary history within a distinctly ethno-nationalist paradigm. According to him, Iranian poets possessed innate talent and their literary disposition was further cultivated by Iran's suitable climate.[55]

Mohammad Taqi Bahār wrote two articles titled "Taʾsir-e mohit dar adabiyāt" (The Influence of Environment on Literature) in which he expounded on Eqbāl's thoughts on the role of the environment in shaping literary history.[56] Bahār made a case for the ways in which the

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[49] For example, see Jalāl Homāʾi, *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran az qadimtarin ʿasr-e tārikhi tā ʿasr-e hāzer* (Tabriz, Ketābkhāneh-ye adabiye, 1930), 1-4.

[50] "Tārikh-e adabi," 1.1 (1918): 9.

[51] Homāʾi echoed the same notion in *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran*, 4.

[52] "Tārikh-e adabi," 1.1 (1918): 12.

[53] Ibid, 13-16.

[54] "Enteqād-e adabi," 1.4 (1918): 224.

[55] "Tārikh-e adabi," 1.2 (1918): 61.

[56] "Taʾsir-e mohit dar adabiyāt," 1.4 (1918): 171-178; 1.5 (1918): 227-235. Curiously, Muhammad Husain Āzād (d. 1910), an Indian scholar of Urdu and Persian literature, made a very similar argument in his philological study on the history of Persian language literature titled *Sokhandān-e fārs* (Lāhaur: Matbaʿ-e Mufīd-e ʿām, 1907). In a section called "The Influence of Environment's Seasons on Literature," Āzād examined the ways in which literature, specifically Persian poetry, was a product of its environment. I consulted the Persian translation of *Sokhandān-e fārs*, translated by Qāri Abdollah (Kabul: Matbaʿ-e ʿomumi, 1936), 167-185. Bahār does not seem to have been aware of Āzād's argument or made use of it, at lease to the extent known in his text. Nevertheless, it shows that there was a concerted effort, before and during Bahār's literary career, to tie literature to a certain geographical and historical context.

material and spiritual state of a people's environment shape their literary output. His argument was based on a circular logic: people make their environment and are also made by their environment. Seeking to create a better environment, Bahār encouraged readers to return to Persian literary history in search of constructive and edifying tools with which they can change their environment. Indirectly alluding to Yāsami's series on French literature, he observed that literary revolutions are not possible without first changing one's environment. As will be discussed later on in this chapter, Bahār's popularization of the idea of s*abk* or literary style took form within this ethno-nationalist paradigm invented in the pages of *Dāneshkadeh*. Bahār, Yāsami, and Eqbāl were all operating, though in different capacities, within the framework of *anjoman*s, a programmatic mode of social congregation that rendered *adabiyāt* institutionally thinkable and culturally authoritative.

Eqbāl's "Literary History" examined the historical period between the use of ancient Persian in the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC) and the proliferation of New Persian in Eastern Islamic lands in the ninth and tenth centuries. The author had planned to fully cover the history of the next millennium (10th-20th c.) but the journal was discontinued. Throughout his series, Eqbāl aimed to reify Iran as the singular and primordial agent of Persian literary history. He repeatedly painted ancient empires as "Persian states" (*dowlat-e ʿajam*) and ancient Iranians as "our ancestors" (*ajdād-e mā*). Iranians of the Sassanian Empire (224–651), he argued, are "the very ancestors of Khayyām, Ferdowsi and Ibn Sinā," and are "our magnanimous forefathers who were the only civilized people in the world."[57] Eqbāl's sentiment echoes the opening sentence of a history textbook developed by the Forughis for elementary education: "Our country is Iran, we are Iranians, and our forefathers were also Iranians."[58] Eqbāl's narrativization of Persian literary history in the late 1910s would have been unthinkable without Mohammad Hosayn Forughi's translations at the Qājār Translation Bureau, his literary lectures at elite high schools, and his literary column in the newspaper *Tarbiyat*.

Iran, the country at the center of Eqbāl's narrative of Persian literary history, was a timeless political and ethno-nationalist entity. He understood Iran as an ontological essence whose people were "innately talented" (*esteʿdād-e fetri*), "poets by nature" (*tabiʿatan shāʿer*), "eloquent by essence" (*zātan fasih*) and "attracted to music and poetry by [their] nature" (*tabiʿat-e irani...majzub-e musiqi va sheʿr ast*).[59] He attributed the defeat of the Achaemenids at the hands of Alexander the Great in 330 BC and the subsequent establishment of the Seleucid Empire (306-c.150 BC) to deviating from Zoroastrian teachings and becoming too complacent and lazy as a result of decades of political stability, security and comfort.[60] The period of "foreign rule" (*estilā-ye khārejiyān*), he observed, led to literary interregnum (*enhetāt-e adabi / fetrat-e adabi*) in Iran.[61] The period of literary interregnum ended only when Iranians began to

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[57] "Tārikh-e adabi," 1.2 (1918): 60. This trend appeared in other issues as well, see 1.2 (1918): 68 and 1.4 (1918): 191.

[58] *Tārikh-e mokhtasar-e Iran: Makhsus-e kelāsha-ye panjom va sheshom-e madāres-e ebtedāʾi* (Tehran, Ketābkhāneh-ye ʿelmiyeh eslāmiye, 1928).

[59] These references are from the following issues, respectively: 1.2 (1918): 62, 1.2 (1918): 61, 1.4 (1918): 186, and 1.4 (1918): 179.

[60] "Tārikh-e adabi" (1918): 237.

[61] 1.3 (1918): 126.

compose their works in Middle Persian during the Sassanian period. Eqbāl applied the idea of literary interregnum again, this time to characterize the period following the inception of Islam in the seventh century. The establishment of Arabic as the main language of scientific production and cultural importance between the seventh and tenth centuries in Iran meant centuries of "subjugation" (*estilā*).[62]

For centuries, Iranians were silent because they could not write in their "own script" (*khat-e khod*) or speak in the "Iranian language" (*zabān-e Irani*).[63] In spite of framing the early centuries following the inception of Islam as a period of literary decline, Eqbāl alluded to the fact that Middle Persian literary lore and knowledge was translated into Arabic, enriching that literary tradition. The ethno-nationalist, one could even say racialized, implication is hardly subtle: it is in Persian only that Iranians can convey their "own" thoughts. The term *khod* or "one's own" is central to the author's project of transforming Persian into an identitarian symbol of Iran. As examined in the previous chapter, Eqbāl's nationalizing project itself had distinctly transregional routes. Iranian scholars like Eqbāl, Bahār, and others who laid claim to Persian as Iran's national patrimony were regularly in contact with Anatolia, Central and South Asia. Eqbāl's nationalist ideas did not develop in spite of global contact; they developed as a result of it.

Eqbāl's undifferentiated reference to literary interregnum operated as a myth-making device through which he invented a narrative of Persian literary history rooted in the notion of cultural continuity. I use the term "myth" here not as it is often invoked in common parlance as a story that is untrue, but rather in its anthropological sense as a production of a (national) narrative that embodies a certain truth-value for its society. Similarly, the notion of "centuries of subjugation" at the hands of Arabic-speaking Muslims functioned as a melodramatic preamble to make the birth of modern Persian a momentous event within the mythical narrative of Persian literary history.[64] According to him, the rise of Persian-speaking empires of the tenth century led to the "revitalization" (*ehyā*) of Persian arts and literature.[65] He viewed the Arab invasion as an assault on Iran's cultural, territorial and political continuity, and the formation of modern Persian signaled the persistence of Iran as a primordial entity.[66] He valorized the founders of tenth-century Persian-speaking polities as part of a predestined narrative of return to Iranians' lost culture and literature.

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[62] 1.7 (1918): 361. For Eqbāl, the fall of the Sassanians to Arab Muslims marked the subjugation of a "civilized nation" (*mellat-e motemadden*) to a "primitive tribe" (*qowm-e badavi*) who set to erase their cultural heritage.

[63] 1.6 (1918): 292.

[64] Eqbāl positively alluded to the literary output of Iranian scholars operating in the 'Abbasid court. But since they composed their works in Arabic (and not in Persian), he still viewed this period as one of literary interregnum. See 1.6 (1918): 294-300.

[65] 1.7 (1918): 361.

[66] This historiographical trend predates Eqbāl. Afshin Marashi has analyzed the way Jalāl ol-Din Mirzā's (d. 1872) *Nāmeh-ye Khosravān*, composed during the reign of Nāser ol-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896), framed the Arab-Muslim conquest of the seventh century and the Mongol invasions of the twelfth century as "assaults that only momentarily disrupted the underlying continuity of Iran's indivisible existence." *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 64.

Eqbāl did not seek to analyze Persian literary history, rather it aimed to produce a historical narrative, primarily by synthesizing critical sources available to him. His "Literary History" gathered and assimilated a variety of texts and conversations that were pollinated through networks primarily created by literary associations.[67] This corpus included Orientalist scholarship, works of contemporary Iranian and Arab scholars, West and South Asian literary periodicals, Persian and Arabic-language *tazkerehs* or biographical dictionaries as well as histories and commentaries. Eqbāl's in-text citations and footnotes — the latter a novel device in the 1910s — chronicle and display the author's familiarity with a wealth of literary and scholarly sources. Not only did he establish his authority through footnotes, but he also placed himself in a transregional community of literary scholars operative in sites of knowledge production.

Eqbāl's references might chronicle his belonging to a distinctly global literary network, but the internal focus of his narrative was on a singular geography: Iran. "Literary History" aimed to map Persian literary history onto early twentieth-century Iran by muting its ecumenical routes. Throughout his series, the author used Iran and Persian interchangeably. He spoke of Iranian literature (*adabiyāt-e iran*) when he was chiefly — if not exclusively — referring to literature composed in Persian. This trend did not start with Eqbāl and became only more prevalent in works of literary history written in the second half of the twentieth century. Another way he mapped Persian onto Iran was through periodization. Having bifurcated Iranian history into two entities of pre- and post-Islamic Iran, Eqbāl classified modern Persian literary production as follows:[68]

1. First era: From the inception of Islam till the emergence of the Ghaznavid dynasty
2. Second period: From the emergence of the Ghaznavids to the formation of the Seljuq dynasty
3. Third era: From the beginning of the Seljuq dynasty till the Mongol invasion
4. Fourth era: From the beginning of the Mongol invasion till the formation of the Safavid dynasty
5. Fifth era: From the formation of the Safavid dynasty till the formation of the Qājār dynasty
6. Sixth era: From the beginning of the Qājār dynasty till the Constitutional [Revolution] in Iran.

He explained that his periodization scheme favored "historical relations and events of import" at the expense of "progress and decline of literature."[69] In spite of foregrounding political events, he argued, this periodization scheme was not far off from the "progress and decline" of literature.

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[67] One of the main objectives of literary associations was to build a library for scholars and students of Persian literature. For example, as part of its millennial celebration of Ferdowsi in 1934, Anjoman-e āsār-e melli (Society for National Monuments) set out to gather valuable manuscripts of the *Shāhnāmeh* from around the world. In 1932, Taymurtāsh wrote a letter to Eqbāl who provided him with a thorough list of manuscripts and the state of *Shāhnāmeh* studies. Eqbāl and Taymurtāsh were both members of Dāneshkadeh in the mid 1910s. For Eqbāl's letter, see ʿAli Mir-Ansāri, *Mashāhir-e adab-e moʿāser-e Iran*, vol. 1 (Enteshārāt-e sāzmān-e asnād-e melli-ye Iran, 1997), 289-297.

[68] 1.7 (1918): 362.

[69] Ibid.

Therefore, the notion of decline, itself operative as a myth-making device, became part of the basis upon which another myth —periodization of Persian literature— was invented. Eqbāl's periodization scheme entirely sidestepped the history of Persian-using empires in Anatolia, Central and South Asia, hence forging Iran as the historical agent of a distinctly transregional literary tradition.

Overall, how does Eqbāl's "Literary History" function as a narrative? Even though it set to recount the history of Persian literature, the series revolved around Iran. In other words, Iran operated as a primordial stage upon which political dynasties, some of which were framed as nativist (hence authentic) while others were flagged as invading foreigners (hence inauthentic), enacted history. "Literary History" as a narrative contained various myth-making devices: an imagined genesis, genius, subjugation, decline, rebirth, and return to glory. Eqbāl's "generic and undifferentiated" use of fixtures like cultural rebirth or literary interregnum echoed Yāsami's "Literary Revolution" in which he flagged the imagined departure of French from the literary influence of Latin and Greek as a literary renaissance.[70] "Literary Revolution" reinforced the narrative logic of "Literary History," both operating within the same mode of literary knowledge. Eqbāl and Yāsami wrote series that fulfilled the main "function of literary history [which] is to produce useful fictions about the past."[71]

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century modes of historical production in Iran were increasingly informed by European models of positivist historiography.[72] As a result, *tazkereh*s (biographical dictionaries), and generally the tradition of *tazkereh* writing, was increasingly thought to be unreliable or even devoid of historical and critical value. Hagiography, which informed *tazkereh* production, was seen in early twentieth-century Iran as a suspension of objectivity, hence it was deemed unmodern. As exemplified by the name of their literary association, Eqbāl and other members of Dāneshkadeh understood their work as historical, as opposed to *tazkereh*s that were seen as transhistorical. Alexander Jabbari has convincingly demonstrated the way Persian-language *tazkereh*s were repurposed and repackaged by the invention of formal and thematic conventions that constituted nationalist literary histories.[73] This chapter added to this argument by illustrating the way in which early twentieth-century literary history as a discursive construct did not depart from myth-making. In fact, what rendered the discursive distinction of literary histories legible from *tazkereh*s was their reconfiguration — and not a suspension — of myth-making as a mode of signification.[74]

In the early years of the twentieth century, Mohammad Hosayn Forughi defined *adabiyāt*

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[70] Fakhreddin Azimi, "ʿAbbās Eqbāl-Āshtiyāni," in *Persian Historiography*, edited by Charles Melville (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 381.

[71] David Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 182.

[72] Ernest Tucker, "Naser-al-Din Shah and the Twilight of the Court Chronicle Tradition," in *Persian Historiography*, edited by Charles Melville (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 291.

[73] Alexander Jabbari, "The Making of Modernity in Persianate Literary History," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 36. no. 3 (2016): 418-434; "Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu," PhD dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2017.

[74] The corpus of Persian-language *tazkereh*s is too vast and varied to coalesce into a single genre with a predetermined set of features. The use of hagiography in Persian *tazkereh*s merits extensive analysis.

and explained why it mattered to the nation. His literary column in the newspaper *Tarbiyat* bled into his lectures on literature in elite high schools and vice versa. For Foroughi, literary history amounted to a treatise-style exposition of *adab* and its language components, *adabiyāt* as literature, and biographies of poets he deemed canonical.[75] Less than two decades later, Eqbāl's series in *Dāneshkadeh* gave narrative form to the concept of literary history in Persian.[76] In the first issue, he wrote, "A nation's literary history is the history of the thoughts of its sons and the impact of that history on their souls and manners, and as such measuring a nation's scientific progress is that nation's advantage over another nation."[77] The question of presentational mode must not be overlooked when examining the way in which literary history defined itself in contradistinction to *tazkereh*s. As illustrated in this section, Eqbāl wrote with a certain presentational style to inform and entertain his readers. His task, as he understood it, was not just to gather and present information to initiated readers, but rather to produce an attractive narrative that would give a certain order and structure to its prized object, Persian literature. For this reason, Eqbāl's series became a reference point for scholars in the second quarter of the twentieth century and played a role in the conventionalization of literary history as a genre in Iran.

Bahār and Scenarios of Literary Scholarship (1932-1947)

The publication of *Dāneshkadeh* was discontinued in April 1919, exactly a year after the release of its first issue. Based on existing sources, it is not clear whether or not the literary association formally dissolved around the same time. Nonetheless, Bahār maintained his regular contact with the community of literary scholars in Tehran and beyond. In the early 1930s, he opened a bookstall on Shāhābād street in Tehran to supplement the meager salary he earned from writing and editing for various entities.[78] The bookstall, also named Dāneshkadeh, printed and distributed a number of books, namely Bahār's collected poems. Similar to the literary association active in the late 1910s, Dāneshkadeh became a gathering place for writers, poets, educators, merchants, scholars, and administrators. Bahār even moved his private collection and displayed it at the bookstall. At this time, he was commissioned by the Ministry of Education to produce critical editions of *Tārikh-e sistān* (The History of Sistān) and *Majmaʿ ol-Tavārikh* (The Assembly of Histories). Bahār edited and consulted manuscripts at the bookstall in the midst of

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[75] Foroughi's unpublished lectures on literature featured biographies of twelve poets: Rudaki, Daqiqi, Ferdowsi, ʿOnsori, Farrokhi Sistāni, Manuchehri, Abu Hanife Eskāfi, Masʿud Saʿd-e Salmān, ʿOmar Khayyām, ʿAttār, Saʿdi, and Hāfez. All but one poet —Abu Hanife Eskāfi — are widely known today.

[76] Eqbāl and his cohort took inspiration from E. G. Browne's *A Literary History of Persia*, the first volume of which was published in 1902. While Browne was preoccupied with conceptualizing Persian literary history, Browne was inspired by John Richard Green's *Short History of the English People* (1874) and Jean Jules Jusserand's *A Literary History of the English People* (1894).

[77] "Tārikh-e adabi," 1.1 (1918): 13.

[78] Kāmyār ʿĀbedi, *Beh yād-e mihan: Zendegi va sheʿr-e malek ol-shoʿarā bahār* (Tehran: Nashr-e sāles, 1997), 70.

social encounters and discussions that took place on a daily basis.[79] By selling books, he had hoped to ease his financial difficulties, but was soon forced to close down Dāneshkadeh by the Pahlavi state.[80]

Early twentieth-century bookstalls, however short-lived, played a vital role in creating a network of book merchants, publishers, scholars, educators, and their reading public. Performing some of the main functions later assigned to libraries, bookstalls constituted a major site of power and literary production in early twentieth-century Iran.[81] These functions included gathering primary sources, discussing and forging methods of literary scholarship, printing and disseminating new books, and more importantly, creating a social space frequented by Persian-language savants. If Iran's National Library, established in 1935, was able to gather, categorize, and control the production of knowledge on one of the bigger literary archives in the country, it was thanks to the collective work of hundreds of bookstalls like Dāneshkadeh that disseminated a new discourse of literature in the first quarter of the twentieth century.[82]

In the mid 1910s, Bahār opted for a novel term in "*dāneshkadeh*" —a place for the engagement of knowledge— to embody a new site of power and literary production. Bahār and his cohort had to first outline a process for operating within the framework of a new discourse of literature. Dāneshkadeh literary association set in motion a process of writing about Persian literature that percolated well beyond its gatherings and the pages of its literary journal. Dāneshkadeh's prominent members continued to write for emerging periodicals in the 1920s, as exemplified by Bahār's writings on literature in *Armaghān* (1920-1979), *Tufān Weekly* (1927-1928)*,* and *Mehr* (1933-1967).[83] With the establishment of the University of Tehran in 1935, the term "*dāneshkadeh*" began to denote a faculty or department. The institutional transformation of the term signaled a process put in place by literary journals in the first three decades of the twentieth century.

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[79] Ibid., 71.

[80] Following the publication of his collected poems, some spread rumors that Bahār had composed poems against the Pahlavi monarch. Rezā Shah's suspicion led to the poet's arrest in March 1933 after which Dāneshkadeh was closed down. Its books were moved to another bookseller. Ibid., 76.

[81] Afshin Marashi has examined the role of bookstalls in disseminating print culture in the first half of the twentieth century, see "Print Culture and Its Publics: A Social History of Bookstores in Tehran, 1900-1950," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 47 (2015): 89-108. There remains a dearth of studies on the role of libraries in the development of Persian literature in the twentieth century.

[82] The Pahlavi state celebrated the opening of Iran's National Library as a uniquely modern site. For its history, see Mitrā Samiʿi, "Ketābkāaneh-ye melli-ye Iran," *Koliyāt* 133 (January 2009): 32-45. ʿAbbās Kaymanesh has gathered a thorough list of Persian-language libraries that proliferated in the mid eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries in Iran and beyond: "Ketābkhānehhā-ye bozorg-e Iran dar dowreh-ye moʿāser." *Dāneshkadeh-ye adabiyāt va ʿolum-e ensāni* 146-147 (1998): 35-69.

[83] Like Bahār, other members of *Dāneshkadeh* began to publish in other periodicals like *Gol-e zard*, *No-bahār*, *Sharq,* and *Armaghān*. These journals often indicated their associational affiliation by writing ʿ*ozv-e dāneshkadeh* or member of Dāneshkadeh at the bottom of their article. Following the establishment of faculties of letters in the 1930s and 40s, the term *ostād-e dāneshgāh* or university professor gained more prominence. The term *doktor* later gained currency as the second generation of literary scholars came of age in the 1950s and 60s who, unlike their advisers, had earned a doctoral degree.

Using "traditional" and "modern" as nebulous and static categories of analysis, as seen earlier in the work of Yahyā Āryanpur, reduces the development of this historical process into two binary opposites. Early twentieth-century literary journals have generally been placed within a passive paradigm in which they were thought to have merely reflected —as opposed to having produced— a (ready-made) discourse of literary modernization. For example, writing in 2015, Kamran Talattof uses a taken-for-granted idea of modernity as a category of analysis in a chapter focused on early twentieth-century literary journals in which he argues that "the rise of Iranian journals … coincided with a call for social change and modernization of the country by intellectuals who had come into contact with Western thought in Europe, Caucasus, the Ottoman territories, India or elsewhere."[84] This chapter challenges such a scholarly paradigm within which literary journals are viewed as passive mediators between Europe, the latter posited as the source of literary modernization, and Iran, its agentless recipient. My analysis seeks to reverse the passive syntax with which the role of literary journals in the development of Persian literature is discussed.

This section examines scenarios of literary scholarship developed in his writings on Persian literature from *Dāneshkadeh* in 1918-1919 to the establishment of the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters in 1935.[85] I opted for the term "scenario" to characterize their scholarly output for it illuminates its gestation during which their suggested ideas and methods were more malleable, not yet posing as stable taxonomies of literature. One of Bahār's most widely read articles is "The Influence of Environment on Literature" in which he linked the development of Persian literature to a host of interconnected elements that shape a nation's environment.[86] "A nation/people's environment (*mellat*)," Bahār wrote, "is defined by a constellation of influencing factors like climate, food, location, and circumstances attributed to [a specific location] such as proliferation of religious, scientific and political thoughts, historical events, and their consequences including subjugation, migrations, [racial] mixings, etc."[87] For instance, "a subjugated nation that has had to submit to horrifying and debased effects of subjugation … does not have epic and war poetry."[88] Linking the state of a nation's literature to its environment was not inevitable or by any means automatic as Bahār sought to define Persian literature as a field of scholarly inquiry in the late 1910s.

Positing *mohit* or environment as the driving force of historical change allowed Bahār to explain the political and cultural dominance of Europe and suggest ways to best deal with it. He attributed the civilizational rise of Europe to planetary changes that created a climate suitable for

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[84] Kamran Talattof, "Early Twentieth-century Journals in Iran: Response to Modernity in Literary Reviews," In *Literature of the Early Twentieth Century: From the Constitutional Period to Reza Shah,* edited by Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 412.

[85] Prior to the late 1910s, Bahār was an active contributor to Persian-language periodicals like *No-Bahār*. But his writings gained a distinctly scholarly focus in light of his participation in Dāneshkadeh literary association and its literary journal.

[86] "Taʾsir-e mohit dar adabiyāt," 1.4 (1918): 171-178; 1.5 (1918): 227-235.

[87] 1.4 (1918): 171.

[88] Ibid., 174.

the cultivation of such great men as Napoleon, Peter, Frederick, and others.[89] Bahār wrote, "Today, they [Europeans] are in the same business as we [Asians, particularly Iranians] were eight to five thousand years ago."[90] Then, he posed his central question: "In what way must our literature today, which is essentially the result of ten centuries of great revolutions and big changes in Iran's spiritual environment, be modernized?"[91] In his first article, he had already asserted that such change will not be realized through imitating Western literature and music. Bahār compared that to a child wearing his father's big shoes by virtue of which he will not become his father.[92] For him, abandoning the classical literary heritage was not an option either; he advocated for what he argued was a balanced approach.

By posing this question, Bahār returned to Dāneshkadeh's mission statement: "to raise new vistas over the classical edifice of the past."[93] He argued that Persian literature, in its internal and external forms [*maʿnavi va lafzi*], must seek to reform its environment. When reciting poetry, an example of literature's internal form, one must dispel the "superstitions and lies that inherited from ignorant teachers cultivated by a defeated and wretched environment."[94] Instead, new elements must replace them, familiarizing our people with "arts and sciences, physical and mental exercises, perseverance, national pride, lack of concern towards foreigners, and appreciation."[95] At the same time, he continued, "we should encourage our governments to pursue justice [and] equity, punish thieves and bandits, establish free-of-cost male and female schools, equip faithful soldiers, create arms manufacturing factories, expand the railway system, promote industrialism and trade, and discover sources of wealth."[96] Gradually, Bahār predicted, our environment will change and we will take charge of destiny without having to rely on planetary changes that take centuries to take place.[97] As such, our literature will change for the better in a suitable environment, "providing education and progress for posterity."[98]

The idea of the environment as an agent of historical change allowed Bahār to marginalize race as a central factor in the production of literature. According to Bahār, the "spirit of literature," a concept that became a fixture in the early twentieth century, was primarily

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[89] 1.5 (1918): 230-231.

[90] Ibid, 230.

[91] Ibid, 231.

[92] 1.4 (1918): 178.

[93] 1.5 (1918): 232.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 233.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

determined by a people's environment, and not their racial genius.[99] Like most of his contemporaries, Bahār understood Iranians as an ontological category. For instance, he flagged the Sāmānid, Ghaznavid, and Seljuk environment as distinctly different from the Mongol environment for the former marked Iran's conquests while the latter marked its subjugation.[100] Iran lay in the core of Bahār's notion of environment as a primordial home of an ethnically and culturally distinctive people. Therefore, what constituted a good environment for Persian literature, a transregional literary tradition, was Iran's political stability and strength.

Bahār's idea of environment helped to bring Persian literary history into a closer alignment with the cultural and political history of Iran. While Mohammad Hosayn Foroughi's literary lectures, developed in the mid and late nineteenth century, had conceptualized Persian literary history primarily as a biographical narrative of canonical figures, Bahār suggested a roadmap for the synthesis of a nation's politics, religion, climate, and culture into its history of literature. Published in 1929, Jalāl ol-Din Homāʾi's *The Literary History of Iran* featured the first part of Bahār's "The Influence of Environment on Literature" in its preface in which the author defined the concept of literary history.[101] Unlike Bahār, Homāʾi emphasized the role of race as an influencing favor in shaping literary production. He even inaccurately suggested that Bahār had argued that changes in the environment lead to facial and muscular differences in people.[102] He continued by arguing that some races possess an innate sense of intelligence as opposed to others that lack any intelligence.[103] Bahār's ideas echoed well beyond *Dāneshkadeh*, but were interpreted differently. In his articles written in the early 30s, Bahār moved beyond the concept of environment as a descriptive category.

In the 1930s, Bahār's writings displayed a scholarly preoccupation with the concept of *sabk* or style in literature. Like Eqbāl, Yāsami, Lotfʿali Suratgar (d. 1969), Fatemeh Sayyāh (d. 1948), and many other early twentieth-century scholars who used it in their writings, Bahār did not provide a fixed working definition of style. Similar to the use of the term "*adabiyāt*" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the meaning of *sabk* remained unsettled and depended on context. At times, it functioned as a byword for a literary movement (as in the style of Classics or Romantics), a particular genre (*qasideh* or *ghazal*), or broadly referred to (an often unexplained) series of salient features such as syntax, phraseology, or use of rhetorical devices that distinguished a certain type of writing.[104] Bahār and his cohort were still searching for a

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[99] For instance, *Dāneshkadeh*'s declared mission was to "promote the literary spirit (*ruh-e adabi*)" of Iran. 1.1 (1918): 1. The "spirit of" fixture was used well beyond the domain of literature in the first half of the twentieth century.

[100] 1.4 (1919): 175-176.

[101] Jalāl ol-Din Homāʾi, *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Iran* vol. 1 (Tehran: Eslāmiyeh, 1957), 49-56.

[102] Ibid., 56. Bahār attributed certain physical features such as a tender singing voice to changes in the environment whereas Homāʾi followed it with a discussion on race, an element absent from Bahār's formulation.

[103] Ibid., 57.

[104] For an example of *sabk* as a literary movement, see Lotfʿali Suratgar, "Sabk-e jadid dar adabiyāt," *Mehr* 26 (June 1936): 133-139. For *sabk* as a genre, see Eqbāl, "Literary History" *Dāneshkadeh* 1.8 (1919): 418. In the same page, Eqbāl invoked *sabk* not as a genre but as a certain type of writing when he wrote that "the poetry of every nation in each period has particular features and style [*oslub va sabki*] that

Persian equivalent to best approximate the French term "*style*" in the early 1930s. In certain articles, he opted to couple *tarz* with *shiveh*, both meaning type, way or method while other times he used *sabk* and *tarz* by themselves.[105] Among the three terms, "*tarz*" was arguably better known given that it had been used by Persian *tazkereh* writers and poets who wished to identify or be identified as creators of a distinctive style of writing, as with the Tarzi family in Afghanistan in the nineteenth century or the Safavid poet Tarzi Shirāzi more than three centuries before them.[106] The term has also appeared in Persian poetry in reference to a particular poetic type as in this verse by Hāfez: That who in the style [*tarz*] of *ghazal* taught Hāfez a lesson / is my sweet-tongued beloved of few words.[107]

In the 1940s and with the publication of Bahār's three-volume study of Persian prose styles titled *Sabk-shenāsi* or *Stylistics*, he became associated with *sabk* and the categories his work posited became pillars of Persian literary historiography in the second half of the twentieth century.[108] However, Bahār's articles in the 1930s displayed less preoccupation with creating fixed categories and more focused on how to embody a scholarly process of discerning knowledge, as exemplified by his alternating between different terms to more precisely approximate the term "*style*." Published in 1932-33 in two issues of the journal *Armaghān*, "Bāzgasht-e adabi" (Literary Return) is one of the first articles in which Bahār invoked the

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reflect the inner condition of the poets of that era." On the fact that the criteria of *sabk* often remained unexplained and taken for granted, see *Dāneshkadeh* 1.10 (1919): 531 in which Eqbāl cited verses by Abu Shakur Balkhi and Ferdowsi in order to demonstrate the poetic superiority of the latter. As his reasoning, he offered the following statement: "The discerners of poetic discourse know [why] the second verse is more excellent in comparison with the first one [and they know] just how firm is the foundation of the latter's phraseology and flowing eloquence."

[105] For instance, in his review of E. G. Browne's *A Literary History of Persia*, he used "tarz va shiveh-ye nazm va nasr" (style of prose and poetry). *Mehr* 55 (January 1937): 770. Elsewhere, he opted for *sabk* in the article's title: "Sabk-e sheʿr-e farsi" (Style of Persian Poetry). *Mehr* 48 (May 1937): 1189-1196.

[106] On why the Tarzi family picked their family name, see Nushin Arbabzadah, "Modernizing, Nationalizing, Internationalizing: How Mahmud Tarzi's Hybrid Identity Transformed Afghan Literature," in *Afghanistan in Ink: Literature between Diaspora and Nation*, 31-65.

[107] *Divān-e Hāfez*. Edited and annotated by Parviz Nātel Khānlari (Tehran: Nil, 1981), 120. The Persian reads: *Ān ke dar tarz-e ghazal nokteh beh hāfez āmukht / yār shirin-sokhan-e nādereh-goftār-e man ast.*

[108] The narrative and scope of *Stylistics* has been examined in the following studies: Wali Ahmadi, "The Institution of Persian Literature and the Genealogy of Bahar's *Stylistics*," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31.2 (2004): 141-152; Roxane Haag-Higuchi, "Modernization in Literary History: Malek al-Shoʿara Bahar's Stylistics," in *Culture and Cultural Politics Under Reza Shah: New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran*, edited by Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner (New York: Routledge, 2014): 19-36; Alexander Jabbari, "The Making of Modernity in Persianate Literary History," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 36.3 (2016): 418-434.

concept of *sabk*.[109] Initially, Bahār had delivered it as a talk to Anjoman-e Iran, or Iran Literary Association established in 1921 by Vahid Dastgerdi, the editor of *Armaghān*.[110]

In "Literary Return," Bahār sought to understand the history of Persian poetry by identifying major stages of its development by using *sabk* as an unexplained rubric. He began with the rise of Modern Persian in Khorāsān to the east of the ʿAbbāsid dominion, away from the metropolitan centers of Arabic literary production. Following the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, centers of Persian poetry shifted from Khorāsān to ʿErāq, giving rise to the ʿErāqi style of Persian poetry. Persian poetry experienced a decline once centers of literary production shifted from Western Iran to South Asia in the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the marketplace of poetry began to thrive in the Afshārid and Qājār dynasties, but Persian poetry never fully recovered from the Mongol invasion. Fearing that some might associate the idea of *sabk* regionally, Bahār offered this caveat: "But the ʿEraqi style which appears vis-à-vis the Khorāsāni style everywhere is not based on the fact that they differ in quality or literary taste; this duality of style [*tarz va shiveh*] is related to time [*zamān*]."[111] Throughout his article, Bahār reiterated his argument that difference in literary style had nothing to do with a particular region or its people, but is only attributed to a set of circumstances that shaped a certain era.[112] Bahār's idea of time echoes the concept of *zeitgeist* which also encapsulates his understanding of environment and its influence on literature.

Recovering What Was Once "Natural"

In 1933, Majid Movaqar, Dezful's representative in the *majles* (National Consultative Assembly), gathered a group of scholars, including Nafisi, Yāsami, and Eqbāl who —along with Bahār— constituted the core of *Dāneshkadeh*. Framing itself as a scientific and educational journal, *Mehr* gave Bahār a platform to further develop his credentials as a scholar of literature. In 1937, Bahār wrote an article titled "The Style of Persian Poetry" in which he traced the origins of Persian poetry.[113] As with his other articles, the idea of *sabk* remained unexplained, treated as self-evident. The article opened with the following declaration: "One of the features of the Aryan race is that its most ancient prophets and guides, whether in Iran, India, or Greece, have been poets."[114] He wrote, "the vedas, the melodic poems of *Mahābhārata*, *Ramayana*, and *Gathas*, the

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[109] "Bāzgasht-e adabi," *Armaghān* 14.1 (March 1932): 57-61; *Armaghān* 15.10 (January 1933): 713-720.

[110] The members of Iran Literary Associations first gathered in private homes but once the Ministry of Education officially recognized them, their meetings moved to its saloon. For more on Iran Literary Association, see *Az Sabā tā Nimā*, vol 2, 430.

[111] Mohammad Taqi Bahār, *Bahār va adab-e farsi: Majmuʿe-ye sad maqāleh az Malek ol-Shoʿarā*, edited by Mohammad Golbon. vol 1 (Tehran: Sherkat-e sahāmi-ye ketābha-ye jibi, 1972), 45.

[112] In "Sheʿr beh sabk-e khorāsāni dar hend" (Khorāsāni Style of Poetry in India), he emphasized that poetic style was not determined by the region where it was produced. He examined a few verses by the Persian-language poets of India and claimed that they were composed in the Khorāsāni style. *Mehr* 2.3 (1934): 298-299.

[113] "Sabk-e sheʿr-e farsi," *Mehr* 48 (May 1937): 1189-1196.

[114] Ibid., 1189.

Avestan hymns, and Homer's *Iliad* are the best representatives works of the three nations that share [the same] race."[115] Bahār then dismissively referenced the literary heritage of the "yellow-colored race" and Semitic peoples. Regarding the latter, he claimed that Arabs did not have any poets, and began to compose poetry only after mixing with the Iranian people.[116] His opening statement illustrates the understudied impact of race thinking on literary historiography in the early twentieth century to which Bahār felt the need to give a nod in his article.[117]

Bahār located the origins of Persian in the Sassanian period where existed three types of poetry existed: *dāstān, tarāneh,* and *sorud*. *Sorud* was a syllabic verse and its social function was limited to kings and *mubeds* or Zoroastrian cleric. *Dāstān* consisted of legendary figures and laudatory accounts of heroes and kings and their vitures. It was recited with music in public for the occasion of national celebrations or games, attended by royalty. *Tarāneh* was reserved for love poems or *ghazal*s and belonged to the masses; it was seldom recited in the company of a royal audience.[118] After the inception of Islam, *dāstān* and *sorud* fell out of favor, and only *tarāneh* survived because it matched the "simple and degraded spirit" of Arabs who were unfamiliar with the Persian language.[119] Arabs took inspiration from *tarāneh* and developed it into a poetic tradition at which point it proliferated to Iran, its place of origin. Unfortunately, Bahār decried, Iranian historians have largely been unaware of the fact that pre-Islamic Iran had its own distinct poetic tradition.[120] He quoted *Tārikh-e Sistān*, whose *editio princeps* he produced, to prove that Iranian histories attributed poetry as a unique feature of Arab culture. This is because Iranian historians had only encountered Arabic poetry and had no knowledge of pre-Islamic Persian poetry.

Quantitative Persian poetry, the lyrical verse based on Arabic prosody, came into being when the Persian-speaking rulers of Khorāsān came into power in the tenth century.[121] Bahār then sought to recover what he understood as the emic terms with which poetic terms were once known in pre-Islamic Iran. The terms *dāstān, sorud, tarāneh* were replaced respectively by Arabic terms *qasida, mathnavi* (or *masnavi*), and *dobayti*. The term "*sorud*" became *chakāmeh* and narrative poems became known as *chāmeh*, and the term "*tarāneh*" was changed to *ghazal*. Here, Bahār is attempting to map the poetic realignment that took place when New Persian adopted and modified forms of Arabic poetry. He concluded his article by meditating on what poetic meter suited what literary genre and provided specific examples.

"The Style of Persian Poetry" was so well received that it prompted Movaqar to ask Bahār to develop it into a series which appeared in nine issues of *Mehr* between June and March

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] On the idea of the Aryan race and its impact in historiography and pedagogy of early twentieth-century Iran, see *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), chapter three.

[118] "Sabk-e sheʿr-e fārsi," 1191.

[119] Ibid., 1192.

[120] Ibid., 1193.

[121] Ibid., 1194.

1938. Bahār opted for a new title by leaving out the term "*sabk*," simply calling the series "Poetry in Iran." He expanded his inquiry into other Iranian languages including Middle Persian, Sogdian, and Kurdish. In each issue, he focused on specific texts ranging from fragments derived from *Shabuhragan*, the sacred book of the Manichaean religion, *Chāmeh-ye Shah Bahrām*, a post-Islamic Zoroastrian text, to a newly-discovered manuscript that he claimed contained the oldest works of Kurdish poetry. His broader project was to show the extent to which syllabic poetry was common in Iran before Modern Persian adopted the ʿarudh system of Arabic prosody in the ninth century. He also sought to understand the impact of regional variations of Persian and local languages such as Tabari, from northern Iran, on the development of Modern Persian prosody. In his last article, Bahār even examined syllabic poetry attributed to the Arabic-language poet Abu Nuwās (d. 814).[122]

In "Poetry in Iran," Bahār aims to recover what he considers to be Persian's natural state, one that was lost when the practice of syllabic poetry became ossified at the expense of ʿarudhi-style Arabic prosody. Bahār flagged syllabic poetry as simple, positing simplicity as a manifestation of linguistic authenticity. In his penultimate article, he concluded that "...the natural and simple style [*sabk va tarz*] of syllabic poetry of Iran, if unmanipulated by new civilizations, is precisely the style of centuries past..."[123] This view does not automatically mean that Bahār dismissed the heritage of Modern Persian poetry, a tradition that developed in the ninth century as a result of interplay with Arabic poetry. It also does not mean that Modern Persian poetry had less value or beauty for him. In his career as a poet and scholar of literature, he was invested in Arabic literary culture, like most of his cohort. Nonetheless, he conceptualized literary history as the history of a people, leading him to tease out elements that in his view were authentically Iranian and flag other elements as foreign. Studying the pre-Islamic culture of Iran for Bahār was a way of locating and recovering a lost authenticity that resides in syllabic poetry. Framing non-ʿarudhi poetry as simple was a way of reifying that authenticity.

Treated as self-evident, the term "*sabk*" appeared in Bahār's scholarly articles in the 1930s and performed different functions. In "The Style of Persian Poetry," *sabk* did not allude to salient features that distinguish different types of Persian poetry. In this context, *sabk* broadly referred to a method of poetic composition unique to Persian-language poets, in contradistinction to other literary traditions. It functioned as a rhetorical device designed to decouple Persian from the Arabic literary tradition and define the identity of the former primarily through continuity with Middle Persian. Far from a fixed category in his writings, it is primarily used by Bahār to give narrative form to Persian literary history. Through the idea of *sabk* —Khorāsāni, ʿErāqi, and Hendi (Indian)— Bahār aimed to give an inner logic to the emerging narrative of Persian literature as the history of the Iranian people and their changing "environment." It helped him to highlight events of political import such as the Mongol invasion, outline the contours of a polycentric literary tradition, and assign a certain order to its historical trajectory. In his articles that drew on the idea of style, Bahār oscillated between *sabk* as a descriptive category and a category of analysis, not quite settling for one. This is evident in the uneven and multivalent manner in which he used it. Ultimately, Bahār gave more weight to the process of discerning and

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[122] "Sheʿr dar Iran," *Mehr* 57 (March 1938): 1069-1076.

[123] "Sheʿr dar Iran," *Mehr* 54 (February 1938): 843.

producing knowledge on Persian literature than to creating *sabk* as the definitive outcome of his literary scholarship.

In the 1930s, Bahār invested more time in his literary scholarship, as exemplified by the number of scholarly articles he wrote for different journals. This decade marked the establishment of literary institutions that set in motion a new stage in the development of Persian literature. In 1934, the Society for National Monuments organized the millennial celebration of Ferdowsi in Tehran. It intensified contact and collaboration between Iranian and international scholars.[124] It also gave occasion to ʿAli Asghar Hekmat, the minister of education, to convince Reza Shah to allow Bahār, who was living in exile in Isfahan, to participate in the celebration. In Tehran, Bahār joined Hekmat, Yāsami, Nafisi, and Eqbāl —former members of Dāneshkadeh— and a group of more than seventy Iranologists, archaeologists, and foreign dignitaries who had traveled to Tehran from Israel to India. This event generated much excitement among the scholarly community in Iran and its resonance —as far as sources and methods of scholarship were concerned— echoed well beyond the study of the *Shāhnmaeh*.

A year later, three other institutions were founded in Tehran: Iran's first National Library, the Academy of Persian Language and Literature known as Farhangestān, and the University of Tehran.[125] In 1937, when the doctoral program in Persian literature was established at the Faculty of Letters, Hekmat asked Bahār to teach at the University of Tehran. Unlike some of his cohort, Bahār was never granted tenure there and was paid on an hourly basis. This was due to his precarious relationship with the Pahlavi state, dating back to 1925 when Bahār, a representative in the fifth *majles*, voted against the coronation of Reza Khān (later Reza Shāh). In October 1925, he even escaped an attempted assassination following a debate in the *majles*.[126] Bahār never believed in Reza Shah as a leader and considered him a dictator, and the latter held a grudge against the poet and scholar, mainly because of his vote.

In spite of serving only as an adjunct at the Faculty of Letters, Bahār shaped the discipline of Persian literature in monumental ways. His inquiry into *sabk*, featured in *Armaghān* and *Mehr* in the 1930s, prompted the Ministry of Education to commission him to write a textbook for the doctoral program in Persian literature. In 1942, he published the first two volumes of his seminal work *Sabk-shenāsi* or *Stylistics* which he framed as the "history of the development of Persian prose."[127] Its third and final volume was published in 1947. He had also outlined a stylistic history of Persian poetry, a project he was unable to complete due to illness and subsequent hospitalization in Europe in the late 1940s.[128] In spite of resistance from certain

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[124] Prior to this event, there had been regular contact between scholars. In fact, what animated Bahār's investment to pre-Islamic Iran was studying Middle Persian under the tutelage of Ernst Herzfeld (d. 1948), a prominent German archaeologist and Iranologist.

[125] Like "Dāneshkadeh," the neologism "Farhangestān" lexically denoted an institution. It was a combination of *farhang*, or culture, with the suffix *estān*, from *estādan* meaning to stay or reside.

[126] "Bahār, Mohammad Taqi." *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Accessed August 23, 2018.

[127] Mohammad Taqi Bahār, *Sabk-shenāsi: yā tārikh-e tatavvor-e nasr-e farsi, barāy-e tadris dar dāneshkadeh va dowreh-ye doktori-ye adabiyāt* (Chāpkhāneh-e khudkār, 1942).

[128] His outline was included in a letter written to ʿAli Akbar Siyāsi in 1943. Bahār's notes on poetic style were gathered and edited by ʿAliqoli Mahmudi Bakhtiyāri and published in 1950, one year before his passing. *Nameh'hā-ye Malek ol-Shoʿarā Bahār*, 223-224.

faculty members regarding the validity of his study, Bahār was able to insert *Stylistics* into the newly-established program's literary regime.

In 1950, in a letter to Ali Akbar Siyāsi, the president of the University of Tehran, Bahār specified exam materials for the doctoral program. He wrote "... in addition to learning all three volumes of *Stylistics*, and passing oral and written exams [based on it], as usual, it is also necessary to prepare Ferdowsi's *Shāhnameh*, Bayhaqi, Abol Faraj Runi, *al-Moʿjam*'s sections on prosody and rhyme for their oral exams."[129] *Stylistics* resonated beyond Iran and most likely it was used in different academic programs around the world. In 1951, Bahār's colleague, ʿAbdol Hamid ʿErfani, sent him a copy of *Stylistics* to sign and return it to Pakistan.[130] Bahār may not have received tenure, but a scholarly field he helped to establish became a tenured chair at the University of Tehran, first held by Hosayn Khatibi. In the second half of the twentieth century, there emerged a number of similar studies that bear the title *Stylistics*, all harking back to Bahār's seminal work.

The institutionalization of *Stylistics* within the pedagogical framework of university education in Iran has obscured its scholarly process. Bahār's scholarly trajectory, dating back to his involvement with Dāneshkadeh in the mid 1910s, illustrates his efforts in charting different scenarios of literary scholarship, falsely assumed today to have existed as a ready-made model seeking to participate in a monolithic discourse of modular nationalism. Bahār's trajectory as a scholar of literature is best captured by the suffix of his three-volume work, *Sabk-shenāsi*, denoting an act of studying a certain subject or acquiring a particular knowledge.[131] It mirrors his lifelong engagement with creating sites of literary production as also embodied by the term "dāneshkadeh." In the mid 1930s, Bahār and his cohort increasingly left autonomous literary associations and entered state-run institutions that set to regulate and standardize Persian literature, their invented object of knowledge.[132] Bahār's legacy lies in the subversive manner in which he helped to lay the foundation for institutions of literature yet operated beyond their ideological framework.

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., 227.

[131] Overall, *Sabk-shenāsi* does not represent a single coherent scholarly approach or methodology. It is a work of many trends and methods some of which stand out more than others, for instance Bahār's preference for pre-Mongol Persian prose. This is particularly evident in the *Sabk-shenāsi*'s subtitle which reads *Or a History of the Evolution of Persian Prose*. The term *tatavvor* denotes the transformation of an object from one type or manner to another, but it also means evolution, particularly in light of Bahār's reception of Darwin's idea. In spite of his reference to Darwin, *Sabk-shenāsi* does not adhere to a linear narrative of Persian prose evolving towards an imagined stage of development.

[132] For instance, an organization called Komisiyun-e kotob-e darsi or The Textbook Commission was established within the Ministry of Education to further homogenize national education in Iran. See ʿAbd ol-Hosayn Āzarang, *Tārikh va tahavvul-e nashr: Darāmadi beh barrasi-e nashr-e ketāb dar Irān, az āghāz tā āstāneh-ye enqelāb* (Tehran: Khāneh-ye ketāb, 2016), 287.

From Literary Associations to Faculties of Letters: Enshrining Persian Literature as an Academic Discipline (1935-1947)

The development of Persian literature as an object of scholarly inquiry and national pedagogy in Iran can be isolated to the period between the 1860s and 1930s. The establishment of faculties of letters, first at the University of Tehran in 1935, marks the culmination —and not the beginning— of this historical process. [133] Institutional history is often told from the celebratory perspective of a few individuals, almost always its chief administrators, and is rarely placed within a broader context in which to consider the contributions of a wide spectrum of social agents. Early twentieth-century literary associations should be seen as precursors to faculties of letters for they constituted a network of literary scholars and educators, outlined different scenarios of literary scholarship, and gathered, printed, and disseminated primary sources and scholarly writings primarily in the form of journals. Simply put, literary associations made thinkable a world in which faculties of letters would operate as an institution of literature.

By framing literary associations as precursors to faculties of letters, I do not wish to assume any linearity or teleological trajectory in the institutionalization of Persian literature. My objective is to challenge the mythical aura created around the University of Tehran as the original site of power and literary production by challenging the false assumption that most early twentieth-century literary associations appeared for a short while, had little or no impact on Iran's literary life, and disappeared into oblivion.[134] As demonstrated in this section, the Faculty of Letters at the University of Tehran operated within *adabiyāt* as a new mode of literary knowledge set in motion by half haphazardly-funded literary associations like Dāneshkadeh that formally lasted no more than a few years.

Institutions of literature invented a language of symbolism that activates a network of myths at the core of their *raison d'être*. Instilling pride and appreciation towards the Persian literary heritage, posited as Iran's national patrimony, was integral to the pedagogical ethos of faculties of letters. Literary scholarship was often framed as a means of rendering this appreciation legitimate and legible to Iranian and international audiences. The most popular iteration of the University of Tehran's founding story, told by ʿAli Asghar Hekmat, once a member of Dāneshkadeh, illustrates the way in which myth-making was operative in the discourse of institutional authority. Hekmat served as a minister of education in the early 1930s and the first president of the University of Tehran between 1935 and 1938. This is how the University of Tehran came into being according to its first president:

> In February 1934, during a cabinet meeting, the discussion turned to Tehran's development and growth. In the company of Reza Shah, Mohammad ʿAli Foroughi and other statesmen, I praised the Pahlavi monarch for having built such an impressive seat of power. But the capital has a unique shortcoming: the absence of a building that marks its

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[133] Mahmud Fotuhi is currently writing a monograph on the development of Persian literature as an academic discipline in Iran. Like other scholars, he has thus far ignored the role of literary associations in paving the way for the establishment of faculties of letters. See "Sad sāl adabiyāt shenāsi dar iran," *Bokhārā* 120 (October/November 2017): 276-354.

[134] Yahyār Āryanpur's dismissive evaluation of literary associations contributed to this assumption and set a longstanding trend in ignoring their impact. See *Az Sabā tā Nimā*, vol 2, 429.

université. "Very well," said the monarch, "build it!." On May 29, a law passed in the National Consultative Majles approbating the establishment of the university. By February 1935, less than a year later, the monarch was asked to lay in the ground the first foundation plaque of the University of Tehran. On that particular day, there was fear that heavy rain would prevent the Shah from attending the celebration. Once he was informed, Reza Shah insisted that he would not miss this momentous event even if stones were to fall from the sky. That is how the University of Tehran, Iran's first modern institution of higher learning, came into existence.[135]

In Hekmat's account, *université* is a byword for imagined progress and modernization, necessary for any modern seat of power. Certain aspects of Hekmat's story have been contested, primarily the fact that he positioned himself as the main architect of the University of Tehran and Reza Shah as its royal advocate.[136] Also elided in his story are the debates on higher education that chiefly took place in journals among educationalists and policy makers in the 1920s.[137] Nonetheless, what remains uncontested is the symbolic value that the University of Tehran's foundation held for its nation. The University was seen as a secular shrine that embodied Iran's cultural heritage and its aspirations to "take possession of the achievements of the West."[138]

Hekmat was more focused on the question of location, giving a detailed account of how the most suitable land for the University of Tehran's central campus was found.[139] He was well aware of the importance of erecting monuments as an embodiment of the state and its political and cultural vision. In the 1920s, he was a member of the Society for National Monuments (SNM), a state-run organization tasked with designing and building mausoleums for literary luminaries in Iran. Talinn Grigor has illustrated the way in which SNM transformed the resting place of poets into sites of national memory, and in turn helped to enshrine the Persian literary heritage as Iran's national patrimony.[140] Hekmat shaped the discourse on public monuments in

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[135] ʿAli Asghar Hekmat, *Si khātereh az ʿaṣr-e farkhondeh-ye Pahlavi* (Tehran: Sāzmān-i enteshārāt-e vahid, 1976), 361-362. This story has been reprinted numerous times in different periodicals and books.

[136] Mohammad ʿAli Mowlavi, "Negāhi digar beh haftādomin sāl-e taʾsis-e dāneshgāh-e Tehran." *Hāfez Quarterly* 11 (1383/2006): 82-84; Mohammad Rezā Jalāli Nāʾni, "Haftādomin sāl-e taʾsis-i dāneshgāh-e Tihran." *Āfez* 7 (1383/2005): 5-7.

[137] Hekmat ignored the significant role played by ʿIsā Sadiq, Taymurtāsh, and Qaraguzlu in laying the foundation for the University of Tehran. David Menashri set the record straight in his monograph on modern education in Iran in which he also argued that fidelity to historical facts came second to the value of fiction in Hekmat's account. *Education and the Making of Modern Iran* (Cornell University Press, 1992), 145-146.

[138] Christl Catanzaro, "Policy or Puzzle? The Foundation of the University of Tehran Between Ideal Conception and Pragmatic Realization," In *Culture and Cultural Politics Under Reza Shah*, edited by Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner (New York, Routledge, 2014), 45.

[139] His focus on land came at the expense of procedural details, primarily the fact that the Majles approved only ten out of twenty one articles of the law pertaining to the foundation of the University of Tehran while the whole law was not even voted on.

[140] Talinn Grigor, *Building Iran: Modernism, Architecture, and National Heritage under the Pahlavi Monarchs* (New York: Periscope Publishing, 2009).

early twentieth-century Iran, and adhered to the ethos that "architecture was not only a symbol of progress and modernity, but also a means to those ends."[141] He was instrumental in shaping the fanfare surrounding the foundation of the University of Tehran.[142] Hekmat was far less concerned with providing a well balanced account of how the University of Tehran came into existence, and primarily preoccupied with creating a language of symbolism anchored in nationalist myths.

Assuming the role of academic ambassador, Hekmat widely lectured about the University and its importance both in Iran and abroad. In a lecture delivered on December 10, 1945 at The Iran Society in London, Hekmat surveyed the place of education starting with "Old Persia" in the fifth century B.C.[143] He began his talk by referring to Plato's writings as evidence for the "existence of an educated court in Persia" in the Achaemenid Empire.[144] Then, he framed the Sassanians as a "completely national civilization...developed in the Iranian area proper," followed by a description of the *maktab* and *madrassa* system in the "Golden Age of Islam."[145] The last period, he observed, is "marked by great changes and reforms in both political and social life" which began with Persia's "serious military defeat at the hands of the Russians" and ended with "the organization of the University of Tehran," framed as the culmination of education in Iran.[146] Therefore, the University was not to be seen as a standalone institution, the first of its kind in Iran, but the inheritor of an ancient cultural heritage that goes back to Plato.

The University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters was established in 1935 through consolidating the sources of preexisting institutions. It took the library and academic cadre of Tehran's Teachers' Training College.[147] It established a printing press that gradually began to commission scholarly works and publish journals. The Faculty hosted foreign leaders and literary delegations, a function previously served by literary associations and colleges. It also began to commemorate notable figures, past and present, national and international. In 1955, the University of Tehran began its commemorative series by honoring Ibn Sina, an event held at the Ferdowsi Hall. In 1937, it established its doctoral program and set out to establish itself internationally as a place for the study of Persian language and literature. To earn a doctorate in Persian literature, graduate students had to take courses in six fields two which were literary

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[141] Ibid., 13.

[142] Periodicals, tourist guides, radio and TV programs all featured special reports. Poets like Bahār and Badioʻzammān Foruzānfar composed eulogies marking the creation of the University of Tehran. The news was also celebrated by intellectuals and scholars in Europe and South Asia. As part of the celebration of 2,500 years of the Persian Empire in 1971, the state published a celebratory account of university education in Iran: Hosayn Mahbubi Ardakāni, *Tārikh-e tahavol-e dāneshgāh-e tehran va moʾassesāt-e ʿāli-e āmuzeshi-ye iran dar ʿasr-e khojasteh-ye pahlavi*,(Tehran: Daneshgāh, 1972).

[143] ʿAli Asghar Hekmat, *A Discussion on Iranian Education Delivered to the Iran Society* (London: Iran Society, 1945).

[144] Ibid, 3.

[145] Ibid, 4.

[146] Ibid, 5-7.

[147] "Faculty of Letters and Humanities." *Encyclopædia Iranica.* Accessed December 20, 2017.

history and *Stylistics*.[148] In the 1940s, the Faculty established a chair for both fields first held by Zabihollāh Safā (literary history) and Hosayn Khatibi (*Stylistics*) in 1952. What the writers of Dāneshkadeh had set in motion in the pages of their journal in the late 1910s had morphed into a literary institution. This marked a shift from a self-regulated association to a state-controlled institution.

The development of Persian literature as an academic discipline, as with the formation of the Faculty of Letters, was the result of the "consolidation of modern forms of social authority and institutional domination."[149] As exemplified by Hekmat's writings, the Faculty as an institution was designed to mask the discursive practices that undergirded its authority. It framed itself as modern and an inheritor of ancient wisdom at one and the same time. However, as illustrated in this chapter, literary associations mediated between different modes of literary scholarship. They constitute an overlooked missing link that points in the direction of different scenarios of literary scholarship that were later enshrined or discarded within the framework literary institutions. The legacy of literary associations lives on in the DNA of institutions of literature: when it was time to find a Persian equivalent for the word "*faculté*" in the mid 1930s, they settled for no other than the term "*dāneshkadeh*."

Conclusion

This chapter was a study of the formation of Persian as a literary discipline in early twentieth-century Iran which formed an integral part of a national drive toward creating institutions of literature. The cultural context for this grand effort is related to an increasingly systematic contact zone between Persian-speaking societies and European literary cultures and a gradual intensification of literary translation from Europeans languages into Persian. However, the constitution of a new discipline of literature cannot be simply framed as a matter of translation from European languages for it sidesteps local sites of literary production and their integral role in the development of *adabiyāt* as a utilitarian discourse of literature which in turn made a new literary discipline thinkable.

Early twentieth-century literary associations such as Dāneshkadeh created a network for the pollination of texts and ideas and their ensured their synthesis into emerging scenarios of literary scholarship. These scholarly scenarios did not travel as an unmediated source of knowledge from a single intellectual pole (Europe) to another (Iran). Instead, they took form through scholarly give-and-takes within the framework of literary associations that mediated their production and dissemination. Literary associations established a written platform that intensified literary encounters on a transregional level, as shown in chapter five. Early twentieth-century readers first became familiar with the idea of literary history or the field of *Stylistics* not in the form of a *resāleh* or treatise, but in the pages of literary journals, and their distinctly novel form was integral to the development of rhetorical devices that differentiated them from older modes of literary historiography. Therefore, literary journals were not a byproduct of a new discourse of literature, but its productive source. And it is no exaggeration to assert that literary associations brought Persian literature into a new era.

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[148] ʿIsā Sadiq, "Darajeh-ye doktorā," *Mehr* 52 (May 1937): 421.

[149] Wali Ahmadi, "The Institution of Persian Literature and the Genealogy of Bahar's *Stylistics*," 141.

Chapter one unpacked the conceptual genealogy of *adabiyāt* while this chapter restored part of the process by which it proliferated. Genealogies are only important so far as they elucidate process, not origins. By focusing on the life and afterlife of a single literary association, I treated Bahār, Yāsami, Eqbāl, and Hekmat not as originators of static categories with clear-cut historiographical outcomes, but as men operating within a larger institutional network within which certain ideas and behaviors towards literature took form. This approach should also be extended to "Orientalist" and "nativist scholar," posited as monolithic and transhistorical categories. As a "nativist scholar," is Bahār automatically more similar to Hekmat than he is to E. G. Browne? Such categories become utilitarian only when anchored in a defined set of contingencies, namely the literary network in which scholars were operative. This chapter did not aim to articulate what Persian literature is or is not according to early twentieth-century Iranian savants. Instead, it illustrated how at a certain historical juncture and within specific sites of literary production *adabiyāt* became thinkable as a discourse of literature and an academic discipline.

Chapter Three

Writing for the Nation: The Institutionalization of Persian Literature in Afghanistan
(1930-1956)

In the 1920s, a class of Afghan scholars and educators, operating within local sites of literary production, became increasingly preoccupied with institutionalizing Persian literature in Afghanistan. As indicated in the introduction, by institutions, I am referring to organizations tasked with presiding over the creation and dissemination of a new discourse of literature. These Afghan intellectuals understood their task as bringing Afghanistan into lockstep with the wider region—early Republican Turkey, early Pahlavi Iran and British India—where literature was emerging as an identitarian discourse in the service of nation-building.[1] They broadly understood Afghanistan as an ethno-political entity that fit within a global assemblage of civilizations, each possessing its unique literary tradition(s).[2] Thus, this chapter describes Afghanistan as an emerging nation-state in the early twentieth century, represented by a group of elite albeit heterogeneous intellectuals.

These intellectuals viewed the establishment of *anjoman*s, or literary associations, as best suited to their aspirations. Associational culture had a long precedence in elite Afghan culture. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, literary associations had also proliferated in West, Central, and South Asia. By the 1930s, the term "*anjoman*" clearly invoked the concept of a literary association with many historical models operative in British India and Pahlavi Iran, in the case of the former as early as the 1860s. The term "*anjoman*" approximated such terms as "academy," "association," "institute," or "society," which were commonly used in nineteenth and early twentieth-century European literary culture, or in the case of the *Académie française*, as early as the seventeenth century. As Ulrike Stark has argued in the context of nineteenth-century South Asia, the proliferation of associational culture was one of the hallmarks of an emerging urban middle class that helped to expand print culture and ushered a new literary, cultural, and political public consciousness.[3]

The establishment of *Anjoman-e adabi-ye Kabul*, or the Kabul Literary Association, in 1930 signaled Afghanistan's entry into a new discursive domain in the minds of early twentieth-century audiences.[4] René Dollot, the French foreign minister to Kabul, registered his impressions

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[1] Michael B. O'Sullivan has placed nation-making in Afghanistan into a transnational context of anti-colonial movement in the interwar period. See "'The Little Brother of the Ottoman State:' Ottoman Technocrats in Kabul and Afghanistan's Development in the Ottoman Imagination, 1908–23," *Modern Asian Studies* 50, 6 (2016): 1846–1887.

[2] Aamir Mufti views world literature as "an articulated and effective imperial system of *cultural mapping*, which produced for the first time a conception of the world as an assemblage of civilizational entities, each in possession of its own textual and/or expressive traditions." *Forget English!: Orientalisms and World Literatures* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 20.

[3] Ulrike Stark, "Associational Culture and Civic Engagement in Colonial Lucknow: The Jalsah-e Tahzib." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 48, 1 (2011): 1-33.

[4] Kabul Literary Society. *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Accessed September 15, 2017; Mohammad Haydar Zhubal, *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Afghanistan* (Peshawar: Saba Ketabkhana, 1957), 166. On the history of literary associations in general in Afghanistan, see Hasan Anusheh, "Adab-e fārsi dar Afghanistan," In

of the association's mission during his visit in 1936.[5] He wrote, "Cognizant of the need to create a treasure trove of national poetry and facilitate the efflorescence of a uniquely Afghan literature, King Nāder Shah…perhaps in imitation of the Académie française, which has been [operative] in Paris for many years, founded the Kabul Literary Circle in its example in 1930, three years before his death."[6] He then linked the establishment of the association to the country's "civilizational progress," an idea built into *littérature*/*adabiyāt* as a discourse of literature.[7] In the minds of Afghan elites just like their cosmopolitan peers arriving from overseas, the Kabul Literary Association was tasked with articulating Afghanistan's belonging to a new discourse of literature.[8]

A deeper investigation of the Kabul Literary Association allows us to recognize the ways the charting of a national domain for Persian and Pashto literature intensified contacts with literary institutions in other countries, facilitated the foundation of other influential literary and historical associations in Afghanistan, particularly *Pashto tolana* or the Pashto Academy (1937) and *Anjoman-e tārikh-e Afghanistan* or the Afghan Historical Society (1942).[9] The establishment of the Kabul Literary Association was the culmination of educational institutions and literary networks that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s.[10] The association built upon the conceptual

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Dāneshnāmeh-ye adab-e fārsi, vol. 3, (Tehran: Moʾassaseh-ye farhangi va enteshārāti-e dāneshnāmeh, 1996), 126-133.

[5] René Dollot, *L'Afghanistan: Histoire, Description, Mœurs et Coutumes, Folklore, Fouilles* (Paris: Payot, 1937). Nile Green first referenced Dollot's book in "From Persianate Pasts to Aryan Antiquity Transnationalism and Transformation in Afghan Intellectual History, c. 1880-1940," *Afghanistan* 1.1 (2018), 36.

[6] Dollot, *L'Afghanistan*, 261. Translation is my own.

[7] Ibid. For a regional analysis of how the idea of civilization and its progress informed literary interaction see Afshin Marashi, "Imagining Hāfez: Rabindranath Tagore in Iran, 1932." *Journal of Persianate Studies* 3.1 (2010): 46-77.

[8] As I noted in the introduction, chapter is less concerned with what constitutes an institution of literature. Instead, it outlines the ways in which literature as an institution is constructed at the local level through a cultural negotiation between the Persian literary tradition and the discursive demands of ontological nationalism. In other words, when it comes to literature as an institution my analysis is centered on the question of *how* as opposed to *what*.

[9] On the way in which Ahmad 'Ali Kohzād participated in the establishment of Afghan Historical Society, see Nile Green, "The Afghan Discovery of Buddha: Civilizational History and the Nationalizing of Afghan Antiquity." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 49 (2017): 47-70. On the way the Kabul Literary Association ushered in a new mode of historical writing in Afghanistan, see Nile Green, "From Persianate Pasts to Aryan Antiquity Transnationalism and Transformation in Afghan Intellectual History, c. 1880-1940;" Senzil Nawid, "Writing National History: Afghan Historiography in the Twentieth Century," *Afghan History Through Afghan Eyes*, edited by Nile Green. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 185-210. On the development of Pashto in this period, see James Caron, "Ambiguities of Orality and Literacy, Territory and Border Crossings: Public Activism and Pashto Literature in Afghanistan, 1930-2010." In *Afghanistan in Ink: Literature between Diaspora and Nation*, edited by Nile Green and Nushin Arbabzadah. New York: Columbia University Press (2013): 113-139.

[10] By the 1920s, *adabiyāt* had become a discipline in state-designed curricula for primary and secondary education in Afghanistan. A program created by Teachers' Training College in Kabul designated

category of literature formed in the pages of Mahmud Tarzi's newspaper *Serāj ol-akhbār* and Qāri ʿAbdollah's literary textbooks, the latter developed for Shah Amānollah (r. 1919-1929) and Mohammad Nāder Shah's (r. 1929-1933) ministries of education.

While the rise of literature as an institution has been largely attributed to Afghanistan's contact with European literary cultures, as evidenced in Dollot's observation, precedents within Afghan literary culture that enabled the construction of a European-inspired discourse of literature are far less understood. For instance, literary gatherings of different kinds, including *moshāʿera* (poetic assemblies), *mahfel* (literary salon), and *ʿors* (a ceremony marking a poet's death anniversary), have taken place in Afghanistan for centuries. These gatherings are typically designated as "premodern" — a term that has meaning only in relation to the elusive concept of "modern"— but I will refrain from doing so. The term "premodern" often registers a simplistic and even cartoonish way of characterizing centuries of literary exchange and interaction.[11] Moreover, it obscures formative continuities in the ways in which such gatherings have shaped the literary canon and aesthetic norms of different periods; it only illuminates the conceptual poverty regarding taxonomies of literature that exists in the field of Persian literary studies today. Instead, I mainly qualify the Kabul Literary Association by two caveats: it was a formal network because it was sponsored by the Afghan state (as opposed to Dāneshkadeh which was a voluntary association) and it operated within the discursive domain of *adabiyāt*.[12]

The establishment of educational institutions in Afghanistan dates back to Habibollah Khan's rule (r. 1901-19) who facilitated the process of state-building by encouraging the return of exiled intellectuals like Tarzi from British India and Ottoman lands. These educational institutions include the Habibiya High School (1903), Teachers' Training College (1912), and

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adabiyāt-e farsiya or Persian literature as a subject for third and fourth grade curricula: ʿAbdol Haq Bitāb, *Porughrām* (Kabul: Ministry of Education, 1926-27) 27-28. What is curious about the term *adabiyāt-e farsiya* is that it treats *adabiyāt* as a feminine plural noun, as opposed to a singular noun which it later became, as evident in feminine grammatical ending of *farsiya*. It shows that, at this time, not just the concept but also literary taxonomies were unsettled.

[11] If we maintain that there is such a concept as literary modernism and conceptualize the cultural and social developments of early twentieth-century Afghanistan under its rubric, then we must discard a linear, Eurocentric model of modernism. Instead, modernism is to embody a multitude of temporal, ideological, and geographic iterations with conflicting and overlapping sites of power and production.

[12] If we maintain that there is such a concept as literary modernism and conceptualize the cultural and social developments of early twentieth-century Afghanistan under its rubric, then we must discard a universalized and linear model of modernism. Instead, this chapter understands modernism to embody a multitude of temporal, ideological, and geographic iterations operating within a polycentric sphere with conflicting and overlapping patterns of formation and transformation. Twentieth-century Afghanistan has much insight to add to ongoing debates and discussions on marginal modernisms. Chana Kronfeld has outlined a model for the critical examination of marginal modernisms, see *On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). Wali Ahmadi has situated the introduction and reception of modernity in twentieth-century Afghanistan. See *Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan: Anomalous Visions of History and Form* (London: Routledge, 2008). This chapter avoids using the term "modern" not because I do not wish to directly respond to these studies but because my primary sources do not speak to a discourse of cultural modernity or more specifically literary modernism.

the country's first Ministry of Education (1913).[13] Less than ten years after Habibiya was founded, Mahmud Tarzi launched the influential newspaper *Serāj ol-Akhbār* (see chapter one). The emergence of these institutions was also the result of Afghanistan's widening cultural and diplomatic relations with Europe, South Asia, and Ottoman lands in the 1910s, a trend augmented by the termination of the third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919 which gave Afghanistan the right to establish formal diplomatic relations with other countries.[14]

Afghanistan did not enter a new discursive domain by importing a ready-made and static associational model or a prepackaged discourse of literature. As noted in the previous chapter, social engagement was central to the formation and operation of the Kabul Literary Association as a laboratory of exchange. In other words, its rise was not the inevitable outcome of a linear discourse of nationalism marching towards a predestined goal. Instead, it had to do with a group of Afghan scholars, educators, translators, artists, and policy makers who worked in dialogue with local and transregional models of social organization and literary production to take their country across the threshold of scholarly innovation and literary change. The establishment of the Kabul Literary Association was a watershed moment in the intellectual and cultural history of Afghanistan and for adhering to wider trends within the region.

Unlike Dāneshkadeh, the Kabul Literary Association was state-sponsored, directly funded and supervised by Mohammad Nāder Shah and later by his successor Zāher Shah (r. 1933-1973). It was part of broader efforts in the 1930s to form a state ideology in Afghanistan. Jamiʿyat-e ʿolamā, or the Circle of Scholars, was another entity established by Mohammad Nāder Shah during his short reign (1929-1933), designed to create a standardized and state-approved religious curriculum. The fact that the Kabul Literary Association was sponsored by the Afghan state gave it a certain level of political visibility and status which put it on the radar of more intellectuals in India, Iran, Turkey, and other countries. Describing the Afghan state's agenda of cultural modernity in the 1930s, Wali Ahmadi writes, "... the post-Shāh Amān Allāh (r. 1919-1929) state, with the aim of extending its hegemony over *all* forms of cultural and intellectual production, sanctioned the establishment and consolidation of a number of educational and literary-cultural institutions. During the Musāhiban rule, literary societies, historical and archaeological organizations, faculties of letters within institutions of higher learning, academic journals, etc. were established and flourished."[15]

Characterizing the Kabul Literary Association as state-sponsored does not automatically mean that its members were all ideologically committed to further the state agenda. More importantly, there was no monolithic and pre-manufactured model of literary nationalism to which members of the association would be beholden. Instead, the association helped to forge scenarios of literary and historical nationalism in Afghanistan. Just like individuals who served within the Afghan state, members of the Kabul Literary Association held different views and

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[13] On the history of Habibiya high school, see *Habibiya diruz va emruz: tārikhche-ye lise-ye habibiya* (Kabul: Matbaʿa defāʿ-e melli); Habibiya School. *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Accessed September 1, 2017.

[14] Ahmad ʿAli Kuhzād attributed the establishment of literary and historical associations to the fact that Afghans "became ready to embrace a new worldly civilization," following the end of the Third Anglo-Afghan War in the late 1910s. *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Afghānistān* (Kabul: Da Kābul ʿomumi matbaʿah, 1951), 408.

[15] *Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan*, 70.

methods, putting some of them at odds with the state.[16] Overall, working as an intellectual within a state-sponsored entity was a case of conflicting and overlapping ideologies, not one in which they served as its homogeneous voice.[17]

The Kabul Literary Association: A Laboratory of Exchange (1930-1940)

Prior to the establishment of the Kabul Literary Association, there existed a network engaged in the production, translation, and dissemination of scholarship related to Persian literature. Between 1925-27, the Ministry of Education in Kabul commissioned a Persian translation of Shibli Nuʿmāni's influential Urdu-language history of Persian poetry titled *Shiʿr ul-ʿajam*, or *Poetry of the Persians*, published between 1908-1918 in British India.[18] Sarwar Guyā Eʿtemādi (d. 1968), one of six translators who worked on the project, later became a key member of the Kabul Literary Association in the 1930s.[19] Shibli (d. 1914), a historian of Islam, wrote *Shiʿr ul-ʿajam* at a time when Persian was in a precarious position in British India's educational system. His broader mission, as he understood it, was to revitalize Islamic learning and bring it into alignment with the colonial ethos of social reform in India.[20]

Producing the first Persian translation of *Shiʿr ul-ʿajam* served not just to transmit a recent work of scholarship on Persian literary history and aesthetics, but it also made a treasure trove of primary sources well known among Afghan scholars to research and appropriate as a

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[16] One such example was Mir Gholām-Mohammad Ghobār (d. 1978) who had an anti-monarchy disposition which put him in a precarious situation in relation to the Afghan state. Nevertheless, there was also overlap between what the state in Afghanistan sought to appropriate and the model of political historiography cultivated by Ghobār. Another example was Gholām Sarwar Juyā who was imprisoned following the assassination of Mohammad Nāder Shah in 1933.

[17] On the relationship between Afghan intellectuals and the state in the first half of the twentieth century, see Ahmadi, *Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan*; Vartan Gregorian, "Mahmud Tarzi and Saraj-ol-Akhbar: Ideology of Nationalism and Modernization in Afghanistan." *Middle East Journal* 21.3 (Summer 1967): 345-368; Senzil Nawid, "Writing National History: Afghan Historiography in the Twentieth Century," In *Afghan History Through Afghan Eyes*, edited by Nile Green. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 185-210.

[18] Shibli Nuʿmāni, *Shiʿr al-ʿajam*, 5 vols. (Azamgarh: Maʿārif Press, 1920). In the late nineteenth century, Shibli Nuʿmāni had already been on the radar of Afghan statesmen in South Asia. In 1899, the Consul of Afghanistan in India tried and failed to commission Shibli to oversee the translation of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*. In a letter to ʿAli Hasan, Shibli wrote about turning down the Afghan offer. *Makātīb-i Shiblī* (Lucknow, 1927), 2:168-169. His status as the first secretary of an influential Urdu literary association, Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu (1903), further increased his visibility. I thank Gregory M. Bruce for sharing this reference with me.

[19] The other five translators were Mansur Ansāri, Borhān o-Din Khan Kushkaki, Fayz Mohammad Khan, Shir Mohammad Khan, and Sardār Gol.

[20] On the impact of *Shiʿr ul-ʿajam* on the development of Persian literary historiography in Iran, see Alexander Jabbari, "The Making of Modernity in Persianate Literary History," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 36. no. 3 (2016): 418-434; "Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu," PhD dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2017.

model of literary historiography. By the late 1920s, Afghan intellectuals felt the need to create an umbrella organization that would give more order and structure to existing networks engaged in literary production and put Afghanistan on the literary map of the region.[21] Mohammad Nāder Shah shared this view and in 1930, only a year after assuming power, the Kabul Literary Association was inaugurated. Having been educated in Uttarakhand, India and served as Afghanistan's ambassador in Paris during the mid 1920s, he was familiar with different associational models in Europe and South Asia. The association further emulated European forms of organization by designating a role of president and vice president. Mohammad Nowruz Khan, the chief royal scribe, served as the association's president and Ahmad ʿAli Khān Dorrāni as vice president (the latter succeeded Nowruz Khan to the presidency in 1932).

Apart from the president and vice president, other male-only members of the association included Mir Gholām Mohammad Khān Ghobār (historian), ʿAbdol ʿAli Khān Mostaghni (poet), Sarwar Khān Guyā Eʿtemādi (scholar and translator of English and Arabic), ʿAbdol Ghafur Khān (scholar and translator of English), ʿAbdol Bāqi Khān Latifi (translator of English), Mohammad Khān Puyā, Gholām Jānkhān, Mohammad Akbar Khān Fāregh, Amin ol-Allah Khān (scholar and translator of Pashto), Mohammad Yaʿqub Khān, Sarwar Khān Juyā (poet and scholar), and Gholām Jilāni Khān Aʿzami (scholar and journalist). There were also prominent members of Afghanistan's literati who contributed to the association's journal, *Kabul*, but who were not official members of the association. This group included Qāri ʿAbdollah (Afghanistan's Poet Laureate, educators, translator of Arabic and Urdu), ʿAbdol-Haq Bitāb (poet and educator who succeeded Qāri as Poet Laureate,) Mohammad Anvar Besmel (poet), Ahmad ʿAli Kohzād (an influential historian and translator of French), Mohammad Karim Nazihi (a historian and English translator), and ʿAbdol-Ghafur Breshnā (celebrated painter and musician). According to Dollot, two non-Afghan correspondents, one from the U.S. and the other from Spain, also worked for the association.[22]

The members of the Kabul Literary Association regularly gathered in their center, located in a garden pavilion and between the National Bank, the Royal Citadel, and the Court Ministry in Kabul.[23] Collectively, they had access to German, English, French, Urdu/Hindi, Russian, Arabic, and Turkish-language sources, aside from Pashto and Persian. They brought various skills to the table of the association, including a variegated knowledge in history writing, rhetorical devices, poetic composition and prosody, translation, Qur'anic exegesis, and manuscript editing. The output of the journal *Kabul* mirrored the ways in which these new sources, from Europe to South Asia, cultivated a new historiographical toolbox and eventually ushered in a new literary historiography.[24] In dialogue with one another, members of the association expanded their scope

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[21] The Bureau of Literature, or *Dār ol-taʾlif-e adabiyāt*, operating within the Ministry of Education, responsible for the translation of *Shiʿr ul-ʿajam* is one such example. Another example is the Office of Compilation and Translation, or *Shoʿba-ye taʾlif wa tarjomah*, a governmental entity tasked with translating and publishing various materials.

[22] Dollot, *L'Afghanistan*, 265. The Spaniard is named M. Hey Horace, a professor at the University of Bombay while the American was unnamed. I was unable to find any information on the former.

[23] Ibid., 262.

[24] Urdu-language travelogues constituted one of these sources, see Nile Green, "The Afghan Afterlife of Phileas Fogg: Space and Time in the Literature of Afghan Travel." In *Afghanistan in Ink: Literature*

of writing and inaugurated a new public consciousness regarding literature and its importance for the nation.

The association began to accrue a large collection of books and manuscripts in different languages which created a functioning library for research and textual editing located at the royal garden pavilion. The association regularly received copies of periodicals printed in Europe, Iran, Central and South Asia, keeping its members abreast of the recent social, political, and literary debates taking place around the world. The establishment of the Kabul Literary Association as a modern institution with an unprecedented mission required the consolidation and restructuring of literary resources and networks already in place in Afghanistan. In the 1920s, Afghans interacted with poets, writers, and educators in other countries and regularly received them in Kabul.[25] What the Kabul Literary Association did was intensify existing contact and interaction and create a formal setting in which Persian literature was to be represented to both Afghans and the outside world as an index of Afghan national identity. As illustrated in chapter one, the conceptual task of representation was baked into *adabiyāt* as a utilitarian discourse of literature and was integral to the operation of literary associations that proliferated in the 1930s and 40s in Afghanistan.

Framing itself as an official body that represented Afghanistan culturally, the Kabul Literary Association hosted foreign dignitaries and literary luminaries in the 1930s. It was important for the association to establish bona fide ties with Afghanistan's neighbors through exhibiting trends in cultural modernity, thus operating well beyond the scope of a literary association today. In October 1933, the association hosted a group of distinguished scholars and educators from colonial India, including the famed Persian and Urdu-language poet Muhammad Iqbāl (d. 1938), Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi (d. 1953), a scholar of Islam and the editor of an educational journal published in Azamgarh, British India, Sayyid Ross Masood (d. 1937), the vice chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, Hadi Hasan (d. 1963), a scholar of Persian literature, and Gholām Rasul Khan, who had served as an education adviser to Habibollah Khan in the 1910s.[26] Invited by Nāder Shah to advise Afghans on issues of state education, the group met and spent time with prime minister Mohammad Hāshem Khan (d. 1953) and members of the literary association.[27]

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between Diaspora and Nation, edited by Nile Green and Nushin Arbabzadah (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 67-90.

[25] The journal *Armaghān* (1920-1979) reported one such event organized in 1922 at the Ministry of State in Kabul attended by Afghan, Iranian, and Bukharan poets who spoke of the unity of Persian speakers. "Odabā-ye Afghan," 3.1 (April 1922): 41-42. In an earlier issue, *Armaghān* wrote about Mir Mohammad 'Ali Khan, known as Āzad Kabuli, an Afghan poet, who attended a poetry recitation held at the Iran Literary Association. "Odabā-ye pārsi-zabān-e Afghan 1.6-7 (September 1920): 197-200.

[26] This visit was part of a longer history of Afghanistan-India cultural relations. The foundation of Aligarh Muslim University in 1875 informed the curriculum of educational institutions such as Habibiya high school in Afghanistan. India even sent a group of educators who taught in Habibiya.

[27] In the early 1930s, Nāder Shah increased contact with the Urdu literary sphere in South Asia. Having lived in British-ruled India until he was eighteen, he was quite familiar with Urdu literary culture. Nile Green, "From Persianate Pasts to Aryan Antiquity Transnationalism and Transformation in Afghan Intellectual History, c. 1880-1940;" 35.

In his Urdu-language travelogue, Nadvi registered his observations of Afghanistan in the early 1930s.[28] One of the main members of the association, Guyā Eʿtemādi, who impressed Nadvi with his knowledge of Persian poetry and *tazkereh* sources, took Nadvi and his colleagues on a tour of the National Museum of Afghanistan, which had only recently been founded by Shah Amānollah in 1922. Nadvi noticed the prominent status the museum gave to pre-Islamic history, as evident by Bactrian Greek and Gandharan Buddhist exhibits.[29] In the 1930s, Ahmad ʿAli Kohzād, one of *Kabul*'s contributors, strove to promote the study of Afghanistan's ancient history. He curated the National Museum and ultimately established the Afghan Historical Society and edited its bilingual journal *Āryānā* in the early 1940s. Nadvi was also taken on a tour of various educational institutions in Kabul and the publishing house, which as he commented, was attached to the Royal Citadel. He was quite impressed with the modern machinery used to print *Kabul*, the association's main journal, along with government newspapers, stamps, and textbooks. "... [P]eriodicals and printing houses constitute the second pillar of modern civilization and culture, [second only to schools]," Nadvi quipped.[30] Based on Nadvi's impressions, Guyā Eʿtemādi seems to have succeeded in illustrating that Afghanistan was now in lockstep with its modernized neighbors.

The group also met with other members of the Kabul Literary Association. At a formal dinner, Ahmad ʿAli Khan Dorrāni, president of the Association, delivered a speech in which he praised India, Afghanistan and Iran as the "homeland of Persian literature."[31] Like other guests, Nadvi was asked to address the association, or as he suggestively called it in his travelogue, the Royal Academy of Kabul.[32] He praised Afghanistan's glorious past by highlighting the court of Mahmud Ghaznavi (d. 1030) and the rule of Turko-Afghans in northern India.[33] He echoed Dorrāni's sentiment by speaking of Persian as a literary heritage shared among Indians, Afghans and Iranians. The past and present of Afghanistan and India, he argued, is connected by luminaries, from Ibn Sina and Daqiqi to Iqbal and Shibli Nuʿmāni, from Mahmud Ghaznavi to Nāder Shah. "Neighboring brothers," Nadvi proclaimed, "is it not surprising that we know each and every poet and littérateur of England, France and Germany and shower praise on their literary masterpieces, but remain unfamiliar with and ignorant of the writers of [our] neighboring countries?"[34] He then commended the association for taking steps in promoting Persian literature. Nadvi here did not invoke colonial India, but rather alluded to al-Hind, a place in the Muslim mindset that had historically welcomed Muslim scholars

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[28] Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi, *Sair-i Afghanistan* (Hyderabad: Government Educational Printers, 1945). I accessed its Persian translation: Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi, *Safarnāmah-ye Afghanistan*: *Se hamsafar,* Trans. Nazir Ahmad Salami (Zāhedān: Tohid, 2003).

[29] Ibid., 45.

[30] Ibid., 91.

[31] Ahmad ʿAli Dorrāni, "Savād-e bayāniyah-ye raʾis-e anjoman-e adabi," *Kabul* 3.7 (December 1933): 83.

[32] *Safarnāmah-ye Afghanistan*, 57.

[33] *Kabul* 3.7 (December 1933): 88-91.

[34] Ibid.

The core mission of the Kabul Literary Association was to clearly chart a national domain for Persian (and Pashto in the 1940s) literature in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the idea that national sites of literary production were by nature inward-looking or isolated is ahistorical. The Kabul Literary Association's transregional scope of contact and interaction was formative to the way it constructed a new discourse of literature in Afghanistan. Afghans did not scramble in isolation to catch up with European literary culture. They were instead global co-conspirators in a shared project of literary nationalization. European interlocutors were integral to the making of the project, but so was the idea of the regional Persian literary heritage. Nadvi and members of the Kabul Literary Association repeatedly acknowledged their shared Persianate literary heritage while articulating the need to embrace new sciences and establish modern language academies. Chapter four examines Iran-Afghanistan literary relations in the 1930s and 40s as a way of recovering the importance of the concept of Persian as a shared literary heritage to the making of a national discourse of literature.

Kabul: Transforming an Unsettled Concept into a Bounded Category (1931-1940)

As illustrated in the previous section, the Kabul Literary Association was not established in a vacuum by a singular royal figure determined to import into Afghanistan a discourse of modernization from the outside. Instead, it was a culmination of intellectual and institutional developments since the early twentieth century that set in motion the emergence of literature as an institution. This section aims to demonstrate how *adabiyāt*, first articulated as a novel concept in the pages of Mahmud Tarzi's *Sirāj ol-akhbār* in the 1910s, became a bounded category that gave order and meaning to the operation of literary circles and their intellectual output in the 1930s. One of the hallmarks of the Kabul Literary Association was the publication of an eponymous monthly journal of unprecedented intellectual and print quality in Afghanistan. The first issue of *Kabul* was printed on December 15, 1931. The journal published original and translated articles on the cultures, society, history, languages, and literatures of Afghanistan.[35] It also covered national and international events. Initially, the journal's length was 40 to 60 pages which later grew to 80-120 pages. *Kabul* also solicited and featured original poetry by announcing literary prizes.

Writing the association's mission statement in *Kabul*, Sarwar Khan Guyā praised the Ministry of Education for "taking serious and measured steps" in "compensating for [the country's] past and recovering the damages [done] in the years gone to waste."[36] Guyā described the association's "ultimate and singular objective" as "reforming and unifying the style of the literature of [our] homeland" (*eslāh va tawhid-e sabk-e adabiyāt-e watan*).[37] Following the mission statement, *Kabul* featured an unsigned and lengthier article titled "The Importance of Literature and Its Place Among Nations," which echoed Mahmud Tarzi's views on the function

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[35] These translations were primarily done from Arabic and French, many of which were extracted from the Egyptian literary-scientific periodical *Al-Hilāl*, established by Jurji Zaydan in 1892. These translations mediated the cultural and literary trends of the Nahda for a Persian-speaking readership in early twentieth-century Afghanistan.

[36] Sarwar Khan Guyā, "Marām-e mā" (*Kabul*, 1.1, December 1931), 2.

[37] Ibid., 5.

and social domain of literature in Afghanistan. Preserving and enshrining one's own language and literature, the article stated, will provide the most robust roadmap to maintaining political autonomy and national sovereignty. To bolster its point, the article invoked colonies that have been "devoured" by colonial powers as a result of losing their language and literature.[38]

In an article titled *"*The Literature of Afghanistan," Mir Gholām-Mohammad Ghobār sought to make Afghanistan visible within the literary map of the world. He began by describing the linguistic family of ancient Afghanistan and lamented the fact that only New Persian and Pashto have survived today. After the inception of Islam, Ghobār wrote, it was Afghans who labored the most to cultivate New Persian in Khorāsān, a term he used to refer to ancient Afghanistan. By revitalizing New Persian in Eastern Islamic lands, Afghans played a critical role in establishing its literary tradition. Ghobār then turned to contemporary Afghan writers and poets, inviting them to recover the innovative ways in which their literary predecessors reconfigured the Persian language to best meet their contemporary needs. Through blind imitation, he argued, writers will not be influential or relevant. He called upon poets and writers to "put their pen to service" in order to address "the dictates of time" and "the needs of society."[39] Ghobār heralded an era of literary institutions by saying that "the singular way through which [we can] choose the path [of progress] is by maintaining associations, societies, newspapers, journals, conferences and literary speeches."[40]

Early twentieth-century literary journals pioneered the use of a variety of modernizing tools that changed Persian orthography, typography, and prose style.[41] These changes helped to transform *adabiyāt* from an unsettled concept into a bounded category. These devices include European-style punctuation and footnotes. The use of visualization has often been ignored as a modernizing device. The technology to print drawings and photographs and employ different fonts was new in the 1930s in Afghanistan.[42] *Kabul* was no different within this trend, and it liberally employed visual techniques to better introduce readers to Afghan monarchs, monuments, poets and patrons, both past and present.[43] European statesmen and littérateurs were introduced through images, thus forging a parallel between European and Afghan notable figures.[44]

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[38] "Ahamiyat-e adabiyāt va mawqeʿ-e ān dar melal" (*Kabul*, 1.1, December 1931), 11.

[39] Mir Gholām-Mohammad Ghobār, "Adabiyāt-e Afghanistan" (*Kabul* 1.1, December 1931), 17.

[40] Ibid.

[41] See Alexander Jabbari. *Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu*. PhD dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2017.

[42] In 1932, *Kabul* printed a series of Persian aphorisms using different fonts and sizes. The same issue also printed patterns and images of coins, stamps, flowers and members of the Kabul Literary Association to exhibit the new technology adopted by the Kabul Printing Press (*Kabul* 2.1, June 1932), 92-112.

[43] For instance, in 1933, *Kabul* printed the photograph of ʿAbdol Rahim Khan, the editor of the literary journal *Bidār,* published in Mazār-e Sharif, and Fakhr ol-Din Khan Saljuqi, the editor of the journal *Herat*. An accompanying note encouraged readers to look for their biography and poetry in the future issues of *Kabul*.

[44] *Kabul* was not alone is using visualization as a modern pedagogical tool. *Āyandeh*, printed in Tehran, frequently featured photographs of European and Iranian diplomats and littérateurs. Both *Āyandeh* and

One particular artist played a key role in the design of *Kabul*: ʿAbd ol-Ghafur Khan Breshnā (1907–74). Celebrated composer, Breshnā used his lithographic skills which he had cultivated in Munich, to design Jugendstil-inspired covers and artwork.[45] He was among a group of Afghan students who were sent to Europe by Shah Amānollah in the 1920s. In *Kabul*, Breshnā's designs appeared notably above the columns *adabiyāt* and *tārikh* (history). The term "*tārikh*" was regularly spelled next to a drawing of the gate of Ghazni and the minaret of Jam in Ghor as historical symbols in search of a national referent. *Kabul* used the same visual symbol, with the addition of the Buddhas of Bamiyān, on its cover for several issues. These designs have received little scholarly attention as a critical paratextual mechanism to place the text within a certain paradigm.[46] As such, these designs are integral to the ways in which *adabiyāt* and *tārikh* accrued a new semantic and historiographical domain through visual reification (see figure 1 below).[47]

Figure 1

The column *adabiyāt* appears on the left and *tārikh* is on the right
Extracted from the Collection of the U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Furthermore, Breshnā's artwork, along with the work of other artists such as Gholām Mohammad Meimangi, Khayr Mohammad Rassām, and in the 1940s and 50s Mohammad Yusof

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Kabul both often published standalone images without accompanying them by articles written about the figures featured in the photograph.

[45] Nile Green, "From Persianate Pasts to Aryan Antiquity: Transnationalism and Transformation in Afghan Intellectual History, c. 1880-1940," (Afghanistan vol. 1, no. 1, 2018), 38. Breshnā later became the director of Maktab-e sanāyeʿ-e nafisa or the School of Fine Arts in Kabul. His painting of Ahmad Shah Dorrāni's coronation as the founding father of Afghanistan brought him more fame in the early 1940s.

[46] For a critical examination of the ways paratextual mechanisms actively shape the text, see Genette Gérard, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[47] It is curious that literary columns in which biographies of poets and littérateurs appeared for the most part avoided the term *tazkereh*. Perhaps they did so to distance themselves from an expansive and well known tradition.

Kohzād, collectively formed a visual language of symbolism that framed literary and historical associations as representatives of Afghanistan as a nation-state (as exemplified by Figure 2).[48]

Figure 2

Kabul had a number of established columns most of which drew from *tazkereh*s or biographical dictionaries on Persian and Pashto-language poets, patrons, scholars, mystics, travelers, and artists. Given the proliferation of print culture in the early twentieth century, one of the main objectives of *Kabul* was to introduce readers to historical sources of documentation many of whom were students and educators. *Kabul* aimed to animate these sources within the novel format of the magazine, making them more accessible for a generation of Afghan professionals expected to enter a discipline that was being forged and defined in the 1930s. These columns include: Qāri Abdollah's "Rawāyat-e afghanistan dar hadis" (Contemporary Narrative of Afghanistan)*,* Sarvar Khan Guyā's "Sho'arā-ye Afghanistan" (The Poets of Afghanistan)*,* and Gholām Jilāni Jalāli's "Az Mashāhir-e tārikh-ye watan" (The Notables of Homeland's History).[49] This list does not account for numerous standalone articles that followed the same format as a biographical dictionary.

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[48] Marjan Wardaki's doctoral dissertation deals with a generation of Afghan students who are sent to Europe. She argues that the language used in state documents is highly symbolic, activating a set of myths created around the importance of the nation, its progress and development. "Knowledge-Migrants between South Asia and Europe: The Production of Technical and Scientific Ideas among Students and Scientists, 1919-1945," PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2019.

[49] This trend was also prevalent in other journals, printed in Iran and Afghanistan. *Dāneshkadeh*, featured column titled "Bozorgān" or (the Greats) that adhered to a similar model but instead introduced European literary figures. *Bahār*, the literary journal published by Yusef Eʿtesām ol-Molk, featured a column titled "Tarājem-e mashāhir" (Biographies of the Notables) presenting Iranian and European literary figures. The journal *Armaghān*, published by the *Iran Society* in Tehran, featured a column titled "Tazkereh-ye Armaghān va odabā-ye Afghan" (The Biographical Dictionary of Afghan Litterateurs) in which it introduced contemporary Iranian and Afghan poets. *Āyandeh*, edited by Mahmud Afshār, featured a column called "Tahqiqāt-e adabi" (Literary research), written by Rashid Yāsami, Mahmud ʿErfān and Saʿid Nafisi, which drew from both *tazkerehs* and Orientalist sources to craft biographies of Persian

Sarwar Guyā Eʿtemādi in particular had an extensive knowledge of Persian manuscripts and collected volumes of poetry, often citing them from memory.[50] His column, "The Poets of Afghanistan," adhered to the following format (the order varied): poet's name (with variations registered in different *tazkereh*s), place and date of birth, prosopography, poetic pedigree, the poet's relation to dynastic court, characteristics of his poetry (mastery of certain forms, quality of diction, etc), titles of *divān*, sample of poetry, poet's contemporaries, and date and place of death. Guyā Eʿtemādi employed two main mechanisms of citation: unspecified reference to *tazkereh-nevisān* (*tazkereh* writers) as a generic entity and citation of specific *tazkereh*s either within the text or in a footnote. In this column, he introduced scores of Persian-language poets. The foci of his biographical accounts changed from poet to poet, but there was one criterion that was presented as the central point of these serialised biographies: the poets' belonging to a specific locale named Afghanistan. In other words, Guyā Eʿtemādi's column "compiles and organizes those items of biographical data that *mark an individual's belonging to a group*."[51] In fact, I argue that literary journals mark the most significant afterlife of the *tazkereh* as a site of anthologization and canonization. By collating the biographies of hundreds of poets under a new framework, Guyā Eʿtemādi and his colleagues at the Kabul Literary Association actively rewrote the terms of their belonging to the Persian literary canon. In so doing, they composed an autobiography for their imagined nation.[52]

The Kabul Literary Association distributed its discourse of literature through a multitude of mechanisms one of which was commissioning, translating, editing, prefacing, and publishing a number of studies modeled on the new historiography. The Association published Yaʿqub Hasan Khan's *Afghanistan-e qadim* (*Ancient Afghanistan*, 1940), André Godard's *Les antiquités bouddhiques de Bamiyan*, Mawlanā Muhammad Husain Āzād's *Sokhandān-e fārs* (Urdu), and Shibli Nuʿmāni's *Shiʿr ul-ʿajam* (Urdu), and numerous other titles translated from English, Turkish, and Hindi.[53] There were also several translation projects from Persian into Pashto,

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literary figures. The journal *Sharq*, published in Tehran, featured a column titled "Guyandegān-e qadim" (Poets of the Past). All these columns assimilated different sources in Persian and other languages within the novel framework of the magazine.

[50] During his visit to Afghanistan, Nadvi was so impressed with him that he devoted a section of his book to his impressions of him. *Safarnāmah-ye Afghanistan*: *Se hamsafar* (Kabul: Tohid, 2003), 24. Guyā Eʿtemādi's articles, including his biographical writing on Afghan poets, were later compiled and edited in two volumes titled *Maqālāt-e Sarwar Guyā Eʿtemādi*, edited by Sayyed Mahmud Rād (Kabul: Ketāb Shah Mohammad, 2006).

[51] Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), xxv. Italics in original.

[52] I borrow this phrase from Rev. Charles Kingsley who was one of the founders of English literature as a discipline. In his inaugural lecture at Queen's College, titled "On English Composition," Kingsley said, "the literature of every nation is its auto-biography." Frederick D Maurice and Charles Kingsley, *Introductory Lectures Delivered at Queen's College* (London. London: J.W. Parker, 1849), 57.

[53] Godard's work was translated by Ahmad ʿAli Kohzād, a member of the Afghan Historical Society. Alongside such figures as Mir Gholām-Mohammad Ghobār and Abdol Hayy Habibi, Kohzād played a significant role in developing in Afghanistan's modern historiography. See Nile Green, "The Afghan Discovery of Buddha: Civilizational History and the Nationalizing of Afghan Antiquity," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 49 (2017): 47-70.

which provided Pashto with a repository of literary and historical works in translation. The association also published a number of works that included the republication of classics such as Saʿdi's *Bustān*, Persian-language textbooks for elementary reading and composition by Mohammad Anwar Besmel and Sarwar Guyā, and a biographical dictionary of Afghanistan's notable figures by Gholām Jilāni.[54] Such projects afforded the association greater circulatory capacity and acted as an extended organ for its main published organ, *Kabul*.

The cultural impact of the Kabul Literary Association was not limited to the books it published during its lifetime. "Between 1930 and the end of Zāher Shah's constitutional monarchy in 1973, and continuing through the republican government of Muhammad Daʾud between 1973 and 1978," writes Senzil Nawid, "historiography had as its primary purpose to define Afghanistan's national identity; to document its cultural past; and to affirm its place in the modern world."[55] The following works may have been published between the 1950s and 70s, but they fully represent the programmatic drive of the 1930s, as described by Nawid, that set in motion a new mode of historiography in twentieth-century Afghanistan: Mohammad Haydar Zhubal's *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Afghanistan* (*The Literary History of Afghanistan*), *Tārikh-e adabiyāt-e Afghanistan-e panj ostād* (*The Literary History of Afghanistan as Told by Five Professors*), Mir Gholām-Mohammad Ghobār's *Afghanistan dar masir-e tārikh* (*Afghanistan in the Course of History*), and many others.[56]

The Kabul Almanac (1932-1937)

Since "publishing a yearbook was customary in the world of print and few nations ever lack it," in 1932 the Kabul Literary Association released *Sālnāmah-ye Kabul* or the Kabul Almanac.[57] It has continued to be published since then, but under the guise of different organizations and a different name since the 1940s.[58] Each issue ranged from 450 to 500 pages and covered wide ranging topics that all pertained to the development of Afghanistan as a nation-state in the 1930s: the Afghan royal family, local and national governments, plans to develop the country's economy, educational system, military, official agencies, and domestic and foreign affairs. It also included critical writings on the history, culture, literature, and languages of Afghanistan. The yearbook may have read more like a report, but it accurately reflected the capacious scope of members' interest in topics conventionally excluded from the category of "literature," such as military training and infrastructural development. When the yearbook was

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[54] One such example was *Pādshāhān-e moteʾakherin-e Afghanistan* composed by Mirza Yaʿqub-ʿAli Khāfi Kabuli (Kabul, 1889-90).

[55] Senzil Nawid, "Writing National History: Afghan Historiography in the Twentieth Century," *Afghan History Through Afghan Eyes,* edited by Nile Green. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 209.

[56] The five professors who authored this collection are Mohammad Ali Kohzād, ʿAli Mohamamd Zahmā, ʿAli Ahmad Naʿimi, Mohammad Ebrāhim Khan Safā, Mir Gholām Mohammad Khan Ghobār.

[57] *Sālnāma-ye Kabul* 1 (1311/1932), I.

[58] The publication of the yearbook was only disrupted during 1990-2001 due to war. The yearbook was printed by its Persian name, *Sālnāmah-ye kabul* until 1942 after which it was called *Da Kābul Kālanay* ("yearbook" in Pashto). It also began to pay more attention to Pashto language and literature.

published by the Kabul Literary Association, it was primarily in Persian, with some notes in Pashto, French, and English. According to the Library of Congress, the target audience for the yearbook was "a mix of local and international readers, civil society organizations, and other public and private individuals interested in Afghanistan."[59]

The editors of the yearbook were Sayyed Qāsem Khan Reshtiyā and Hafizollah Khan. Reshtiyā (meaning "truth" in Pashto) was a noted cultural figure, journalist and historian who contributed to such Afghan periodicals as *Anis, Wafā,* and *Āryānā* in the 1930s, and 40s.[60] After the assassination of Mohammad Nāder Shah (November 8, 1933), he assumed a more central position within the association, in part due to his close ties with Sardār Mohammad Naʿim Khan, the cousin of the new monarch Zāher Shah, and other elite members of the ruling Mohammadzāi family. Reshtiyā authored his political memoirs during his exile in Switzerland after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the ensuing civil war. In his memoirs, he described the political climate that led to the incarceration of some members of the Kabul Literary Association, like Ghobār, by Mohammad Nāder Shah in the early 1930s.[61] He also wrote about the monarch regularly visiting the printing press to review the contents of *Kabul* and *Kabul Almanac*.[62] The other editor, Hafizollah Khan, served as a consul of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul for many years.[63]

The analysis of articles in the Kabul Almanac that pertain to economic, infrastructural, and military developments in Afghanistan in the 1930s is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, it is important to note that while *Kabul* was primarily a literary journal, albeit with a capacious scope by design, the *Kabul Almanac* was more concerned with the affairs of Afghanistan as a political entity. But the two aspects only seem separate to contemporary scholars for informing readers in the 1930s of literary, cultural, and ethnic history of Afghanistan would have been seen as an integral part of national development. The journal *Kabul* and the *Kabul Almanac* operated within the same paradigm, notwithstanding differences in orientation. Both were intended to educate their reading public on an emerging narrative of Afghan national history.

In the mid 1930s, when the *Kabul Almanac* was managed by the Kabul Literary Association, there appeared two extensive articles titled "Languages in Afghanistan" and "History of Literature in Afghanistan" written respectively by Yaʿqub Hasan Khan in 1935 and Mohammad Karim Nazihi in 1936.[64] Both writers worked in the association as historians and

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[59] *Kabul Almanac*, Library of Congress, https://www.wdl.org/en/search/?q=Kabul+Almanac#17926 (Accessed May 9, 2019).

[60] Hasan Anusheh, Dāneshnāmeh-ye adab-e fārsi, Vol. 3, "Adab-e fārsi dar Afghanistan" (Tehran: Moʾassaseh-ye farhangi va enteshārāti-e dāneshnāmeh, 1996), 433-434.

[61] Sayyed Qāsem Rishtiyā, *Khāterāt-e Siyāsi-e Sayyid Qāsem Reshtiyā, 1311 (1932) Tā 1371 (1992),* Ed. Mohammad Qawi Kushān (Peshāwar: Markaz-e Matbuʿāt-e Afghāni-e Peshāwar, 1990).

[62] Ibid, 22.

[63] Born in Qandahar, he was an active member of both the Kabul Literary Association and the Afghanistan Historical Society. He wrote under the pen name Abu Ziyāʾ Qandahari.

[64] Yaʿqūb Hasan Khan, "Tārikh-e zabānhā dar Afghanistan," *Sālnāma-ye Kabul* 3 (1313/1935), 119–130; Mohammad Karim Nazihi, "Tārikh-e adabiyāt dar Afghanistan," *Sālnāma-ye Kabul* 4 (1314/1936), 189-228.

English-language translators. The *Kabul Almanac* afforded writers more space to further develop their ideas beyond the scope of the journal. Nazihi's article was thirty-nine pages long and listed his primary sources. These two articles are significant because they set out to define and introduce Afghanistan as an object of scholarly research and spell out the implications of such scholarship for Afghan literary and cultural historiography. I will return to Yaʿqub Hasan Khan's article later this chapter; this section delves only into Nazihi's "History of Literature in Afghanistan."

Nazihi's article began with an important note acknowledging the challenges he had faced in researching and writing about Afghan literary history. These challenges ranged from restricted access to key primary sources to working through the historical scope and complexity of Persian literary history.[65] This note is particularly important given the fact that literary history today has become an automatized aspect of Persian literary culture. As a result, scholarly studies that examine the formation of Persian literature as an academic discipline tend to take for granted the pioneering work of early literary scholars such as Nazihi by falsely assuming that they worked within ready-made models.[66] Recognizing the challenges with which Nazihi's generation worked does not necessarily mean uncritically receiving their intellectual output. It means understanding their ideas and the value of their scholarship within a certain historical context in which different conceptual models for the writing of literary history were being actively created.

Nazihi's narrative of Afghan literary history was an amalgamation of different genres and source texts that included annalistic, genealogical, and general history, rhetorical treatises, biographical dictionaries or *tazkereh*s, collected poems and utterances, and modern literary histories composed by his contemporaries in Iran. The latter included works by Saʿid Nafisi, Sādeq Rezāzādeh Shafaq, ʿAbbās Eqbāl Āshtiyāni, Badioʿzammān Foruzānfar, and Jalāl Homāʾi. As chapter four argues, Afghan and Iranian literary scholars were fully conversant even as they set to chart a national domain for Persian literature in their respective countries.

Nazihi argued that literary history was necessarily entangled with the question of language and its historical development. Therefore, he began his article by stating that language, or more specifically speech, is what distinguishes humans from animals and establishes civility.[67] Then, he defined the (deliberately) blurred semantic domain of *adab* and *adabiyāt*, one that encompasses notions of civility, etiquette, and critique.[68] His understanding of literary history found its clearest expression in the following statement: "... the literature of a nation is testament of the different periods of its life, natural circumstances, and environment. It is considered the singular expression of its frames of mind, emotions, and ethical subtleties."[69] Nazihi's article was part of a broader institutional impetus to forge a distinct "system of cultural mapping" by which Afghanistan would make visible its literary, linguistic, and historical boundaries in an emerging configuration of nation-states each in possession of a distinct literary tradition.[70]

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[65] Ibid., 189.

[66] See Mahmud Fotuhi, *Darāmadi bar adabiyāt shenāsi* (Tehran: Pazhuheshgāh-e ʿolum-e ensāni va motaleʿāt-e farhangi, 2017).

[67] Ibid., 190.

[68] Ibid., 191.

[69] Ibid., 191.

[70] *Forget English!*, 20.

Having defined a number of fixtures related to literary history, Nazihi set an ambitious objective to survey the history of Persian literature in two broad historical junctures: Pre- and Post-Islamic and Pre- and Post-Alexander the Great.[71] What is particularly striking in Nazihi's article is his multidisciplinary approach to the writing of Persian literary history. In his characterization of each historical period, he drew from findings in archaeology, anthropology, numismatics, linguistics, and philology. He included in his article colored images from the Museum of Kabul, exhibiting artifacts that were adorned with the Latin or Arabic script. As a historian, Nazihi displayed a broad intellectual investment in historiography and drew from various disciplines to locate different pieces of a complex puzzle that for him comprised "Persian literary history." That is why unlike most of his contemporaries, particularly in Iran, he put forth a more capacious framework for understanding literary history.

Nazihi's article introduced the major voices and texts from different periods of Persian literary production. It also set to introduce readers to different areas of scholarly inquiry and illustrate how they seamlessly fit within *adabiyāt* as a bounded conceptual category. Forging a blurred semantic domain between *adab* and *adabiyāt* bolstered his programatic effort to define Persian literature as a discipline interconnected with other fields of study —anthropology, archaeology, history, linguistics— but also chart literature's connection with the nation, embodying its ethical character. The *Kabul Almanac,* an annual report on the nation's past and future developments, was a particularly suitable venue to drive that twofold point home.

The Rise of Literary Institutions: the Afterlife of the Kabul Literary Association

The Faculty of Letters at the University of Kabul

In the autumn of 1944, the University of Kabul inaugurated its Faculty of Letters and Humanities (Puhanżi-ye adabiyāt va ʿolūm-e bashari), less than a decade after its counterpart had been established at the University of Tehran.[72] It was the fourth faculty established by the university, following the Faculty of Medicine (1932), the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences (1938) and the Faculty of Science (1942). Initially, the Faculty of Letters included both Persian and Pashto language and literature, but the two were separated in 1956.[73] It began to operate with a core faculty of eighteen domestic professors, two foreign professors, and ten students who majored in Persian and Pashto literature.[74] The Faculty offered courses on such fields as history, linguistics, literary history, poetry, journalism, and geography. It also employed sixty-five

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[71] The article ended with the Ghurid dynasty in the thirteenth century. Given that I was unable to locate the *Kabul Almanac* printed in 1938 and 1939, I was unable to ascertain whether or not Nazihi's series continued.

[72] See Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1969), 309-311.

[73] Najib Ullah, *Islamic Literature: An Introductory History with Selections* (New York: A Washington Square Press Book, 1963), 357.

[74] Farid Shāyān, *Āshenā'i bā puhantun-e Kabul* (Nashriya-ye ekhtesāsi-ye jadid al-shomulān-e puhantun-e Kabul, 1973/74), 18.

domestic and seven foreign lecturers on a permanent basis to teach its courses.[75] Unlike the program in Tehran, students majoring in Persian literature in Kabul were required to take courses in Pashto language and literature and vice versa.[76] In 1948, three students were the first to graduate from the program and this number increased in the following years.[77]

The Faculty of Letters was established, according to its own mission statement, in order to "comprehend the historical quality…of our thriving national culture" so that the youth may "study, research and examine aspects of Afghanistan's rich and substantial languages, arts and literature and become familiar with the proud values of Afghan arts and literature."[78] Its objective was to "educate and prepare [students] to discover and safeguard this precious and ancient national heritage." The ultimate vision for the graduates was thus to seek employment in "cultural-research institutions, in the publishing industry or in the press" so that they went on to "protect, discover and expand what has been culturally entrusted to them."[79]

As exemplified by this mission statement, the formation of Persian literature as an academic discipline was a response to a global discourse on nation-building that viewed literature as the prized possession of any elevated nation. This discourse had become quite pervasive by the 1930s and 40s. That said, it would be a mistake to read the term "national" as a shorthand for a locality strictly limited to a political entity called Afghanistan. As I argued in chapter one, the construction and proliferation of a new discourse of literature in the early twentieth century occurred within multiple intellectual networks and was not anchored in a single center (i.e. Europe) from which it was evenly distributed to its cultural peripheries (i.e. Persian-speaking societies).[80] The foundation of the University of Kabul's Faculty of Letters only intensified pre-existing cultural contact with Afghanistan's neighbors.

In addition to recruiting foreign professors and lecturers, the University of Kabul also awarded scholarships to non-Afghan students to study Persian and Pashto.[81] A number of Iranian scholars taught at the University of Kabul as visiting professors and many more gave lectures

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[75] Ibid., 24.

[76] Ibid., 22-23. Other required subjects included literary history, literary devices, pedagogy, linguistics, Bidel Studies, prosody, logic, the literary history of the Timurid and Mughal periods, mysticism, and courses in Arabic language and literature and English language. The program in Persian language and literature at the University of Tehran only required the study of Arabic language while no other languages such as Azeri Turkish were offered.

[77] Ibid., 25. In 1958, the number of graduates was twenty four while a hundred and forty one students completed the program in 1968.

[78] Ibid., 18.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Although Aamir Mufti deals primarily with the construction of literature as a new conceptual category, he gives a nod to the fact that its construction in different literary traditions has followed its own particular trajectory. *Forget English!: Orientalisms and World Literatures* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[81] In 1958, fifty eight students, most of whom were from the Soviet Union and the United States, enrolled at the University of Kabul to study Persian and Pashto. *Āshenā'i bā puhantun-e Kabul* (1973/74), 59.

there.[82] Overall, the emergence of university education increased Iranian-Afghan literary relations, a topic discussed in chapter four. Many Afghan students and scholars, now affiliated with the University of Kabul, were sent to institutions around the world to acquire new knowledge and return to Afghanistan in order to teach topics ranging from journalism to law. Many of these students spent time in universities in the U.S., Iran, France, and elsewhere between 1946-49, funded by the university. For instance, ʿAbdol Ahmad Jāwid left Kabul in 1946 to obtain a doctoral degree in Persian language and literature at the University of Tehran and returned to Kabul in the 1950s to teach at the Faculty of Letters.[83] He was the first student from Afghanistan to have earned a Ph.D. at the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters.

After its inauguration in the mid 1940s, the Faculty of Letters recruited three scholars, all of whom had been affiliated with with the Kabul Literary Association and helped develop formal associational culture in Afghanistan in the 1930s: Sufi ʿAbdol Haq Bitāb (Afghanistan's poet laureate under Zāher Shah), Gholām Jilāni Jalāli (literature and history), and Mohammad Haydar Zhubal (literary history). In the 1950s, the Faculty also employed ʿAbdol Hay Habibi (literary history and criticism, and the first chair of the faculty), Amin Mirzā, Mohammad ʿAli Meymandi, Mir Najm o-Din Ansāri (poet and second chair of the faculty), and Gholām ʿOmar Sāleh. In 1960s, Mohammad Karim Nazihi, known by his Persian and Uzbek poetic pen name "Jelwa" and one of the contributors to the journal and the *Kabul Almanac*, also joined the faculty after serving a two-decade ban on literary activity imposed on him by the Afghan government.[84]

In the 1950s, the Faculty of Letters launched three scholarly journals: *Adab* (1953-1978) written mostly in Persian but periodically featured articles in Pashto and English; *Wazhma*, meaning breeze, printed entirely in Pashto with some articles in English; and *Joghrāfiyā*, or Geography, published in both Persian and Pashto.[85] Even though by the 1940s *"adabiyāt"* had become a pervasive term for literature as an emerging national discipline, it did not entirely displace other terms such as "*adab*" and "*sokhan*." That the first scholarly journal launched by the Faculty of Letters (*Puhanżi-ye adabiyāt*) is called *Adab* is significant. It illustrates that *adabiyāt* did not only serve as a Persian-language calque for a new European discourse of literature, it also embodied a process of conceptual realignment that left in its wake certain historiographical features and concepts that remain unique to the Persian literary tradition. By falsely assuming that literature as a European conceptual category was evenly and universally translated into all literary traditions, we inevitably erase historical and discursive specificities that should instead be activated in order to modify and expand existing models of literariness.

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[82] Sādeq Rezāzādeh Shafaq, Saʿid Nafisi, and later Mohammad ʿAli Eslāmi Nodushan all spent time as visiting professor at the University of Kabul.

[83] "*Tārikhcheh-ye pohanzi*," *Adab* 2.2 (1954): 4.

[84] The following Pashto-language titles were used to denote newly-established academic positions at the Faculty of Letters: *puhand* as Full Professor, *puhanwal* as Associate Professor (Step II), *puhanduy* as Associate Professor (Step I), *puhanmal* as Assistant Professor (Step II), *puhanyar* as Assistant Professor (Step I), and *puhyalay* as Lecturer.

[85] In the literary and academic domains, one may not neatly separate Persian from Pashto or vice versa. Many articles composed in Persian extensively quoted Pashto verses and often left them untranslated. Pashto articles quoted Persian poetry even more regularly. Topics related to Pashto literature (e.g. the Pashto *qasida*) were sometimes written in Persian. Overall, the two languages are inextricably entangled as they seek to chart a disciplinary domain in the 1940s and 50s.

By the 1940s, *adab*, the Islamicate discourse on self-conduct, occupied a new institutional space as an academic discipline called *adabiyāt*. In the context of literature as a discipline, *adab* in its twentieth-century usage did not only invoke a certain corpus of belletristic texts with an edifying tone on a wide variety of subjects meant to delight and edify the reader in a certain type of urban civility and erudition.[86] Instead, *adab* in the second quarter of the twentieth century accrued a novel conceptual form through the venue of a small magazine format that spoke to a particular target audience operating within emerging modern institutions: undergraduate and graduate students of literature, scholars within the humanities, and intellectuals and statesmen both inside and outside of Afghanistan. *Adab* as a discursive designation, in this specific context, no longer took the form of a treatise (*resāleh*), as with Āmoli's *Nafāʾes ol-Fonun,* but a periodical. The journal *Adab* opted for a broad framework: scientific, literary, social, philosophical, historical, and geographical. The capacious nature of *adab* as a premodern discourse lent its discursive recognizability to an academic discipline seeking to define itself further. The ways in which *adab* gained, retained, and jettisoned certain valences in the twentieth century have not yet been fully investigated.

The emergence of the Faculty of Letters in Kabul, the first of its kind in Afghanistan, should be seen in the context of the organizational structure and model of literary production established by the Kabul Literary Association in the 1930s. The faculty did not only tap into the intellectual network and resources created by the association; it also continued its project of publishing original and translated monographs.[87] It did so through one of its main organs, the journal *Adab* which regularly featured articles translated from German, Arabic, English, Russian, and many other languages. The Faculty of Letters had subscribed to major scholarly journals around the world so its members kept abreast of academic topics and debates ranging from pedagogy to stylistics. Overall, translation was central for the national project of making Persian and Pashto literature visible within an emerging global discipline.

The establishment of the Faculty of Letters in Kabul represents only one part of a wider shift toward forming academic disciplines which, as illustrated in chapter one, necessarily required the construction of conceptual categories such as literature that posed as self-contained, self-referential, and fixed. In 1944, the University of Kabul also established a school for the study of Islamic law which six years later became the Faculty of Theology and Islamic Law.[88] The mid and late 1940s was a period in which the Afghan state sought to transition from associational organizations like the Kabul Literary Association (1931), the Pashto Academy (1940) and the Afghanistan Historical Society (1942) to more regulated and socially programmatic disciplines. This transition, as demonstrated in this section, was achieved by consolidating and reordering pre-existing resources into newly-made structures. The Faculty of

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[86] Saʿdi's *Golestān* and Jāmi's *Bahārestān* exemplify the Persian genre of *adab*.

[87] These titles include Muhammad ʿAbdul Hādi Misri's *Tārikh-e falsafeh-ye Islam* (The History of Philosophy in Islam), translated from Arabic into Persian by ʿAbdul Haq Bitāb; *Pashu masāder* (Infinitives in Pashto) by Mr. Ayāzi; *ʿElm-e tarbiya* (The Science of Education/Training) translated by Pāyandah Mohammad from Turkish into Persian, and from Persian into Pashto translated by Zahir Hāshem Shāyeq.

[88] On the graduates of this faculty, see Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History: Monarchy, Despotism or Democracy?: the Problems of Governance in the Muslim Tradition* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 34.

Letters was certainly not created in a vacuum or built entirely on ready-made models imported wholesale from Europe. It was formed in alignment with previous literary associations in Afghanistan and based on an intense dialogue with such organizations not only in Europe, but also in Pahlavi Iran, British India, Republican Turkey.

The Encyclopedia Āryānā Project (1949-1970)

In 1944, a group of Afghan scholars founded the Encyclopedia Association or *Anjoman-e dāʾerat ol-maʿāref*.[89] The Association developed its own bylaws in 1954 and operated as a semi-independent entity supervised by the Secretary of Education.[90] It commissioned and published books in Persian and Pashto on a variety of topics pertaining to the history, geology, geography, literary and educational history of Afghanistan, both ancient and modern.[91] The Association's grand project was called *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, the first Persian-language encyclopedia in the modern sense of the term. It was focused on —but by no means limited to— the languages, literature, politics, history, religions, folklore, and the notable figures of Afghanistan. The encyclopedia was organized alphabetically and included diagrams and illustrations. All six volumes were first composed in Persian and then immediately translated into Pashto by the Pashto Academy, established in 1940. The first volume was released in 1949 and the last volume was printed twenty-one years later.[92]

The project's nomenclature —*Dāʾerat ol-maʿāref-e Āryānā*— reveals some of its historical significance. During the period between the establishment of the National Museum of Afghanistan in 1922 and the Afghanistan Historical Society in 1942, the term "*Āryānā*" accrued a new historiographical referent: ancient Afghanistan. Afghan intellectuals like Ahmad ʿAli Kohzād, who later joined the Encyclopedia Association, operated within twentieth-century institutions and helped to construct a national history for Afghanistan. As such, the term "*Āryānā*" in the 1940s signaled the historicity of Afghanistan as a political entity. In the second half of the twentieth century, *Encyclopedia Āryānā* would have been seen as a national effort to take ownership over production of a new mode of knowledge related to Afghanistan. The idea that "evolved" nations engage in the production of encyclopedias in order to historicize their folklore, ethnicity, music, poetry, and other cultural fixtures resonated widely in the early twentieth century with Persian-language scholars. I will more closely examine the historiographical implications of the term "*Āryānā*" in chapter four.

The use of the term *dāʾerat ol-maʿāref* or "the circle [of the object] of knowledge," an Arabic calque for the pseudo-Greek term "encyclopedia," is also novel in this instance.[93] The

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[89] Dāneshnāmeh-ye adab-e fārsi, vol. 3, "Adab-e fārsi dar Afghanistan" (Tehran: Mo'assaseh-ye farhangi va enteshārāti-e dāneshnāmeh, 1996), 128.

[90] *Dāʾerat ol-maʿāref-e Āryānā,* vol. 3, (Matbaʿa-ye ʿomumi-ye Kabul, 1956), i. In 1955, the Encyclopedia Association became affiliated with the Ministry of Education.

[91] Ibid.

[92] The dates of release for other volumes are as follows: second (1951), third (1956), fourth (1962), fifth and sixth (1970).

[93] Elias Muhanna, *The World in a Book: Al-nuwayri and the Islamic Encyclopedic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 10.

case of *Encyclopedia Āryānā* is, to my knowledge, the first time any work has been self-classified as an "encyclopedia" in the Persian language. Encyclopedism is a more general category that has a longstanding history in the Perso-Islamic tradition.[94] Here, I am not broadly referring to works that possess encyclopedic features and techniques or a certain expansive compilatory scope. What specifically concerns my analysis here is the encyclopedia as a new genre in the Persian literary tradition, inaugurated in twentieth-century Afghanistan. *Encyclopedia Āryānā* is a landmark work of scholarship that embodies the new discourse of literature referred to as *adabiyāt*. Its creation, publication, and dissemination was programmatic and collaborative, setting in motion a new mode of encyclopedic production in Persian, and by extension, Pashto. Persian-language encyclopedias in Iran and Tajikistan were all developed later than and in response to the *Encyclopedia Āryānā*.[95]

Examining *Encyclopedia Āryānā* as a whole is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Here I focus on the sub-entry "Afghan literary history," subsumed under "Afghanistan," included in the third volume, released in 1956. The team that contributed to researching and writing this section included Mir Gholām Mohammad Ghobār, Ahmad Jāwid, Ahmad ʿAli Kohzād, Khāl Mohammad Khasta, ʿAbdol Haq Bitāb, ʿAbdol Raʾuf Binawā, ʿAbdol Ghafur Rawān Farhādi, and Mohammad Hosayn Behruz.[96] The production and dissemination of *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, which thus far has not been examined in English-language scholarship, marked a significant point in the institutionalization of Persian literature by codifying a new mode of literary knowledge into an encyclopedic category that posed as bounded and settled.

In the 1930s, the Kabul Literary Association served as a major platform for the development of a new generation of Afghan intellectuals whose "most revolutionary adoption from their interlocutors' work was to emphasize the ancient and pre-Islamic past in their quest

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[94] For a critical examination of encyclopedism in Arabic literary tradition, specifically the Mamluk period, see Elias Muhanna, *The World in a Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). For a history of Persian-language encyclopedias, see Mahnāz Moqaddasi, *Dāneshnāmeh'hā-ye Irāni* (Tehran: Daftar-e pazhuheshhā-ye farhangi), 2006. Though it must be said that the author has a very capacious understanding of what constitutes an encyclopedia which seems to include any volume with an expansive compilatory scope of any knowledge. The book is also titled "Iranian Encyclopedias" even though it includes a chapter on encyclopedias composed in Afghanistan and Central Asia. As I argued in this study, conflating Iran with Persian, now a pervasive trope, is a byproduct of the idea that Persian is the exclusive domain of Iran as a nation-state.

[95] In Iran, *Dāʾerat ol-maʿāref-e fārsi* or the Persian-language Encyclopedia, directed by Gholām-Hosayn Mosāheb and his associates, was published in three volumes in 1966, 1977, and 1995. In 1975, Ehsan Yarshater launched *Dāneshnameh-ye iran va islam* or the Encyclopedia of Iran and Islam. In its title, the Persian term "*dāneshnameh*" [literally, 'book of knowledge'], dating back to Ebn Sina's *Dāneshnāmeh-ye ʿalāʾi* (1034-1049), replaced the Arabic calque *dāʾerat ol-maʿāref*. In the 1980s, the name of the project was changed to the *Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, which is still ongoing. In Central Asia, the first Persian-language encyclopedia developed in the late 1970s as an outgrowth of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. Named the *Tajik Soviet Encyclopedia* (Энциклопедияи советии точик), it was published in eight volumes between 1978 and 1988.

[96] The latter had earned his bachelor's degree in Persian language and literature from the University of Kabul, connoting the fulfillment of the recently developed discipline of literature within the national educational system. He went to Moscow to earn his Ph.D. and worked with a group pf Soviet Orientalists on a critical edition of the *Shahnamah*.

for the deep history of Afghanistan and its people."[97] Afghan scholars enthusiastically turned toward the study of numismatics, archaeology, and linguistics to couch their nation in a certain historicity. One example of this trend is Yaʿqub Hasan Khan's article on "Languages in Afghanistan," printed in 1935 in the *Kabul Almanac*, in which he drew from English-language scholarship on language theory to establish a certain linguistic genealogy for his nation.[98] The main discursive assumption of "Languages in Afghanistan" is that language, and by extension literature, possesses the historical index of Afghans as a distinct people. This idea has been largely attributed to the writings of Sir William Jones whose preoccupation with Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit literary traditions led to a new discursive configuration of literature as a conceptual category in the end of the eighteenth century.[99] Overall, the 1930s marked an era during which Afghan intellectuals, working within the framework of *anjoman*s, sought to adopt new historiographical methods and techniques and in so doing made Afghanistan visible within a group of nations whose historicity was embodied by institutions of literature —language academies, national libraries, and faculties of letters— that emerged in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

The third volume of *Encyclopedia Āryānā* (1956) included an extensive entry on Afghanistan in which the contributors seamlessly synthesized the most recent research on language theory, literary history, and cultural archaeology into a methodically coherent and sound narrative. In the 1930s and 40s, journals such as *Kabul, ʿErfān, Herat,* and *Āryānā* introduced professional readers to literary and historical sources and presented them through the discourse of *adabiyāt*. *Encyclopedia Āryānā* took a significant step in gathering, consolidating, and authenticating two decades of research. In writing a literary history of Afghanistan, Afghan encyclopedists grappled with such broad questions as: How have different literary traditions contributed historically to the making of Afghan culture and literature? What is the role of Eastern Islamic lands in the rise of New Persian as a polycentric literary language? In 228 pages, they aimed to chart Afghan literary history not only as a certain political narrative but also as an emerging field of study with a distinct set of methodological tools and primary sources.

In the early 1930s, the concept of literary history needed to be defined clearly in the pages of the journal *Kabul*. In delineating models for the writing of literary history, Afghan scholars drew from a wide variety of sources, including ʿAbbās Eqbāl Āshtiyāni's column in *Dāneshkadeh*, Shibli Nuʿmāni's *Shiʿr ul-ʿajam*, and Edward Browne's *A Literary History of Persia*, and many others. By the mid 1950s, literary history posed as a bounded category, occupying a central place in the historiography of Afghanistan as a nation-state. *Encyclopedia Āryānā*'s entry on Afghan literary history included the following main sections:

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[97] Green, "From Persianate Pasts to Aryan Antiquity Transnationalism and Transformation in Afghan Intellectual History, c. 1880-1940," 34.

[98] Yaʿqūb Hasan Khan, "Tārikh-e zabānhā dar Afghanistan," *Sālnāma-ye Kabul* 3 (1313/1935), 119–130.

[99] For an analysis on Sir William Jones' writings, see Siraj D. Ahmed, *Archaeology of Babel: The Colonial Foundation of the Humanities* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2018). For Jones' role in colonial translation, see Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Poststructuralism and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

1. Indo-European Languages[100]
2. Veda Literature as it Relates to Afghanistan
3. Avestan Language and Literature
4. The Origins of Orthography and Its Variations in Afghanistan
5. The Proliferation of Greek Language, Literature, and Orthography in Afghanistan
6. Parthava or the Pahlavi Language and Literature of Khorasan
7. The Reviving and Flourishing of Sanskrit Literature in the Kushan Period in Afghanistan
8. Afghanistan and Middle Persian Literature
9. New Persian Language and Literature

These section headings clearly demonstrate the expansive research scope of Afghan encyclopedists and their capacious understanding of literary history which entailed wide-ranging topics such as orthography, literary canon and scripture. These sections included scholarly discussions on the ways in which such literary traditions as Greek, Sogdian, Sanskrit, and Eastern Middle Persian shaped the literary culture of contemporary Afghanistan. As such, these encyclopedists did not seek to chart the literary history of a certain region as a self-contained entity or highlight the role of a single literary tradition at the expense of others. Instead, they aimed to fully situate Afghanistan within a distinctly multilingual and transregional ecumene. In turn, they articulated a literary history whose contours were not restricted to Afghanistan's politically determined borders or limited to literature produced exclusively in its institutionalized languages, Persian and Pashto.

The entry on Afghan literary history opened with the following statement: "A new avenue of inquiry was created in 1876 in linguistics and scholars discovered that there are similarities among European and Indian languages such as Greek, Latin and Sanskrit."[101] Inspired by and in response to the work of Sir William Jones, a body of language theories emerged in the nineteenth century that elaborated on the idea of language families by such linguists as Gaston-Laurent Coeurdoux (d. 1779), Franz Bopp (d. 1867), Jacob Grimm (d. 1863), and Karl Verner (d. 1896).[102] Afghan encyclopedists offered summaries of these scholars' work and asserted that formal similarities among languages are explained by the fact that there once existed one primordial Indo-European tongue, an idea referred to as proto Indo-European by linguists today.[103] They contended that each Indo-European language is in possession of a unique set of features and that geography is the key factor that determines those unique features.

Indo-European language theory opened new horizons for Afghan scholars who sought to historicize the ethnic constitution of their nation and locate its distinctive place in an emerging cultural configuration within which every nation was imagined to possess its unique literary

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[100] Indo-European and Indo-Iranian were separate categories in the Encyclopedia. *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, vol. 3 (Matbaʿa-ye ʿomumi-ye kabul, 1956), 937-943.

[101] Ibid., 408.

[102] 1876 may refer to the publication year of Verner's article "Eine Ausnahme der ersten Lautverschiebung" or "An Exception to the First Sound Shift" in the Journal *Comparative Linguistic Research.*

[103] *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, 408.

tradition.[104] This objective found its most lucid expression in the following paragraph which prefaced sub-entries on Indo-European languages:

> If the speakers of the initial and primordial Indo-European language are enfolded in the layers of prehistory, the speakers of the Indo-Aryan family of languages enter the scene in the beginning of the historical period. They consisted of a series of tribes that used to live in Aryana Vaeja, in the upper range of Syr Darya and Amu Darya, and the domain of their common living extended to the region of Bactria [*Bākhtar*] in northern Aryana or present-day Afghanistan. The communal life and position of Aryans or Indo-Aryans has had a significant impact on the literary history of our country, because this living together is what led to the formation of Aryan language(s), from which common Indian and common Aryan languages have derived. The oldest contrasting branches [*shākha-hā-ye motaqābbelah*] of these languages are Vedic Sanskrit and Avestan languages, which have been identified by present day linguistic research as the origin of the Indian and Aryan families of languages, respectively.[105]

The idea that the proto Indo-European language originated in present-day Afghanistan was informed by a much broader scholarly impetus to shed light on the role of Central Asian languages and cultures in the making of the Sassanian Empire before the advent of Islam and the rise of New Persian in the courts of Persian-using dynasties between the early ninth and tenth centuries. It drew on archaeological findings and historical writings regularly published in journals such as *Āryāna*, the main organ of the Afghanistan Historical Society. This was also an effort to reorient Persian literary history as imagined by Iran-centric accounts.

By Iran-centric, I am referring to literary histories that posited Iran, a politically demarcated entity, as the heartland of Persian literary culture. For instance, the Iranian scholar Eqbāl Āshtiyānī's series of articles titled "Literary History," offered one of the earliest schemes of Persian literary periodization in the late 1910s. His schema fragmented previously overlooked Persianate empires whose centers of power fell outside the borders of twentieth-century Iran. *Encyclopedia Āryānā* focused on Persianate polities such as the Ghurid (879–1215) and Kurt (1244-1381) dynasties that ruled from a territory most of which falls into what is today Afghanistan; nonetheless, they consistently emphasized the polycentric nature of Persian literary culture.[106] In the 1940s and early 50s, Afghan encyclopedists had limited access to scholarly sources, but their main instinct to push against the marginal place assigned to Central Asia has become an accepted narrative today.[107] Highlighting the place of Central Asia as an integral part of a Persian-speaking ecumene, and not as a marginal land in-between civilizations, was integral

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[104] Aamir Mufti, *Forget English!: Orientalisms and World Literatures.*

[105] *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, 408-409.

[106] For instance, the mass migration of Persian-speaking scholars and poets to Mughal South Asia was marked as a normative event given that the Persian language had made inroads into the Subcontinent in previous centuries. See *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, 516.

[107] For a recent study of the place of Central Asia in shaping Persian and Perso-Islamic empires, see Khodadad Rezakhani, *Reorienting the Sasanians: East Iran in Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

to the reification of a literary history subsumed under a larger encyclopedic entry, a field of knowledge, called Afghanistan.

The bulk of the entry on Afghan literary history was focused on New Persian literature. It was organized as follows:

1. The Persian Language and Literature
    a. Nomenclature
    b. The Place of Origin and Development of the Persian Language
    c. The Earliest Persian-language Poets
        i.   Oldest Prose Works
    d. Arab Domination and Arabic-Persian Interplay
    e. Tahirid Dynasty (821-873)
        i.   Poets
    f. Saffarid Dynasty (861-1003)
        i.   Poets
    g. Samanid Dynasty (819-999)
        i.   Samanid Poets
        ii.   Prose in the Samanid Period
        iii. The Characteristics of Samanid Prose and Poetry
            1. Poetic Style [*Sabk*] and Historical Periods
    h. The Poetic Style [*Sabk*] of the Ghaznavid Period (977–1186)
    i. Scientific Production in the Twelfth Century
        i.   Arabic-language Works by Ghaznavid Scholars
    j. Literature in the Seljuq Period (1037–1194)
    k. The ʿErāqi Style
    l. The Ghurid Dynasty (879–1215)
    m. Persian Prose in the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Centuries
    n. The Rise of the Mongols and Its Influence on Persian Literature
    o. The Kurt Dynasty (1244-1381)
    p. The Timurid Period (1370–1507)
    q. The Second Period of Persian Prose
    r. Literary Works of the Sixteenth Century
    s. Afghan Literature After Sultan Hosayn Mirza (d. 1506)
        i.   The Indian Style or Alternatively, the Style of Modern Poets [*Moteʾakherin*]
    t. The Poets of the Seventeenth Century
    u. The Third Period of Persian Prose
        i.   The Published Prose Works of the Seventeenth Century
    v. Afghan Literature from Nāder Shah Afshār (d. 1747) to Mohammad Nāder Shah (d. 1933)
        i.   Afghan Poets of the Twentieth Century
        ii. The Fourth Period of Persian Prose
    w. Sources
        i.   tazkerehs
        ii.   History
        iii. Literary History

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    iv.   Collected Poems (*Divān*)
    v.   Selected Works and Anthologies
    vi.   Collected Periodicals
    vii.   Miscellaneous Works

This section illustrated an impressive breadth and depth of scholarship, covering more than a millennium of Persian literary production by placing the works of dozens of Persian-language poets and scholars in historical and stylistic contexts. In conceptualizing and transforming this millennial literary history into more manageable units, Afghan encyclopedists did not commit to a single organizational principle. They employed a multitude of methods such as dynastic (e.g. Timurid), fields (e.g. history), stylistic (e.g. Indian), formal genres (e.g. ghazal). As a result, they represented Persian as a multi-discursive and multi-dynastic literary tradition.

      The idea of poetic styles and extrapolating a critical vocabulary with which to study them has a longstanding history in Arabic and Persian poetic debates, rhetorical treatises, and *tazkerehs*. The question of *sabk* or style was particularly pertinent in twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan, a certain iteration of which in the form Mohammad Taqi Bahār's *Sabk-shenāsi* became an integral part of Persian literature as an academic discipline in the 1940s. The idea of *sabk* afforded literary historians a robust mechanism for periodization, a blend of literary typology and dynastic or strictly political frameworks. It also produced a set of philological features with which scholars and students would attempt to identify undated manuscripts.[108] By the early 1950s, Bahār's classification of Persian poetry and prose into the four styles of Khorāsāni, ʿErāqi, Hendi (Indian), and Return had become distinct historiographical signposts for more than a millennium of Persian literary production. As examined in chapter two, Bahār's classification was first articulated in the pages of journals such *Armaghān* and *Mehr*, it was then published in four volumes covering primarily prose but also poetry, and ultimately it entered an encyclopedia entry through *Āryānā*.

      Under the heading "The Characteristics of Samanid Prose and Poetry," *Encyclopedia Āryānā* introduced its readers to the idea of style.[109]

> In the Arabic language, *sabk* (or Style) means to melt and pour gold or silver. In the terminology of contemporary literati [*odabāʾ*] it refers to a distinct kind of prose or poetry as well as to the comprehension and articulation of ideas through the configuration of words, selection of vocabulary, and modes of expression. The branch of knowledge that discusses different styles in a language is called *Sabk-shenāsi* [*Stylistics*][110]

Following this definition, Afghan encyclopedists recognized the fact that the classics [*qodamā*] had their unique critical vocabulary such as *fan* [art or technique], *tarz* [way or method] and *tariqa* [road or pathway] and discussed literary style through many different conceptual frameworks.[111] Ultimately, Afghan encyclopedists argued that *Stylistics* is a new discourse and few others have contributed to its development more than Mohammad Taqi Bahār.[112]

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[108] Thanks to Gregory Maxwell Bruce for bringing this to my attention.

[109] *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, 442.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

Encyclopedia Āryānā's characterization of Bahār's stylistic classification afforded more flexibility in that it was not beholden to *sabk* as a rigid and self-contained category and it did not uncritically reproduce the same value judgements attributed to those stylistic categories by earlier Iranian scholars: "Each style includes many schools and the characteristics [of those schools] differ in nuance but they broadly adhere to the [main] category. Furthermore, there also exist 'in-between' styles which have their own masters."[113] The recognition that there are other stylistic categories beyond what Bahār had identified in his book added complicated philological approaches to the study of Persian literature. For instance, Afghan scholars did not only explain but also qualified the Khorāsāni style, or "ancient Afghanistan" as it was alternatively called. They offered the following caveat: The Khorāsāni style may have originated in Khorāsān but it is not strictly limited to that region; the question of style has to do with era not location.[114] They then offered another important caveat: "In classifying different styles, some have identified a style called Persian [*fārsi*] as distinctly separate from the ʿErāqi style. One should remember that these classifications have a general objective. Should we go by subtle distinctions, one can mention many other styles and even come up with a separate style for each poet."[115]

Afghan encyclopedists recognized that literary styles need to be carefully qualified and that each stylistic category serves a particular purpose, some general and some more specific. At the core of that recognition lies the idea that *sabk* needs to remain a descriptive category modified by the specificities of Persian poetry and prose. Recent scholarly debates on the merit of retaining *Sabk-e hendi* or the Indian Style as a descriptive category and apply it to the study of Persian literary production from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries have taken into account that, ultimately, *sabk* may not serve as a monolithic and fixed category of aesthetics and that many poets possess their own unique styles.[116]

Bahār's fourth stylistic category was called *bāzgasht-e adabi* or literary return, a movement marked by Iranian poets emulating pre-Indian style poets such as Hāfez, Saʿdi, and Ferdowsi. Afghan encyclopedists shared Bahār's impression that "literary return" as a literary movement was happening in Iran.[117] But unlike Bahār, *Encyclopedia Āryānā* did not give sole primacy to "literary return" by adding the words "or new styles" before each category.[118] In

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Jane Mikkelson, "Of Parrots and Crows: Bīdil and Hazīn in Their Own Words," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* Vol. 37, No. 3 (2017): 510-530.

[117] "... and *bāzgasht* in the styles of Khorāsān and ʿErāq which has had currency in Iran since the nineteenth century until today." *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, 442. Kevin Schwartz's dissertation has challenged the idea that "literary return" was happening only in Iran by looking at the ways in which Afghan and Indian poets and *tazkereh* writers were engaged with the work of the masters of Persian poetry in different ways and contexts. "Bâzgasht-i Adabî (Literary Return) and Persianate Literary Culture in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Iran, India, and Afghanistan," PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2014.

[118] Ibid.

referring to "new styles," Afghan encyclopedists broadened their historiographical horizon to include Central Asian poets from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who were overlooked by Bahār's Iran-centric classification. Also in their characterization of Indian Style poetry (16th-18th centuries), the Afghan encyclopedists did not exclusively commit to a single category (*Sabk-e hendi*) by creating an alternative fixture subsumed under "or the style of modern poets."[119]

The inclusion of the disjunctive "or" functioned as a critical mechanism of historiographical rewriting, bringing marginalized and sub-canonical poets back to the center of canonical debates on Persian literary history. It also reflected the broader scholarly impetus of *Encyclopedia Āryānā* to highlight Central and South Asia as a formative site in the formation of the Persianate ecumene. In fact, one of the most valuable features of the entry on Afghan literary history is its extensive list of Central and South Asian poets and samples of their work, most of which was compiled and edited by Mawlānā Khāl Mohammad Khasta (d. 1973), a scholar, *tazkereh* writer and poet from Bukhara who moved to Afghanistan and played an important role in anthologizing the work of two generations of Persian-language poets in that country.[120]

Overall, as with all texts that signaled a new mode of literary knowledge, above all *Encyclopedia Āryānā* was a composite text. It drew from and repurposed a large number of texts reproduced in various time periods and through different discursive practices: biographical dictionaries (*tazkerehs*), poetic anthologies (*jong*), literary histories (*tārikh-e adabiyāt*), *divān*s, historical studies, periodicals, and lecture notes developed for modern educational institutions. Among these sources, one sees texts produced in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and India: Shibli Nuʿmāni's *Shiʿr ul-ʿajam* or *The Poetry of Persians*, Sadr o-Din ʿAini's *Examples of Tajik Literature*, Bahār's *Sabk-shenāsi*, Sādeq Rezāzādeh Shafaq's *History of Iranian Literature,* Khāl Mohammad Khasta's personal manuscripts as well as the journals *Kabul, Āryana, ʿErfān,* and *Adab*. As Alexander Jabbari has argued, the construction of literary history as a modern genre was necessarily an act of repurposing and synthesis.[121] What renders these multi-discursive source texts appear seamlessly as part of a standalone narrative of Afghan literary history is their positioning within the discourse of *adabiyāt*.

The effort to produce the first Persian-language encyclopedia in Kabul was programmatic. That does not mean that Afghan encyclopedists had unmediated access to literary and historical sources or that they worked within ready-made models. It does mean that the nature, context, and substance of their work clearly adhered to a set of methods. The project was developed within the framework of an *anjoman* or literary association which, as this dissertation argues, was the main site for the inauguration of a new mode of literary knowledge in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Their main objective was to create a new literary discipline and enable its operation in institutions of literature and education across the country: primary and secondary schools, museums, national libraries, university faculties of letters, and language academies.

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[119] *Encyclopedia Āryānā*, 516.

[120] His two anthologies include *Moʾaserin-e sokhanwar* (Moʾassasah-e nasharāti-e anis, 1960) and *Yādi az raftagān* (Dawlati matbaʿah, 1965).

[121] Alexander Jabbari, "Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu," PhD dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2017.

The production of *Encyclopedia Āryānā* was distinctly transregional. Note that I am not using the term "transregional" as synonymous with multi-regional, as is often done. The creation of *Encyclopedia Āryānā* reflects discursive patterns that are recognizable far beyond Afghanistan and are in alignment with global efforts to institutionalize a new mode of literary knowledge from London to Cairo to Delhi. Michael Allan has examined post-colonial Egypt as a site of this global configuration.[122] For Allan, the formation of literature as a new conceptual category is primarily the result of Egypt's colonial encounter with Europe. This chapter has not challenged this assertion, but instead it has aimed to point our attention to internal dialogues among Arabic-speaking, or in this case Persian-speaking societies that are often erased from view by such colonial modeling. *Encyclopedia Āryānā* was produced as a result of intense dialogue among Iranian and Afghan scholars and their global interlocutors. This dialogue was not free of certain tensions or disagreements and its existence does not mean there existed an equilibrium between Iranians and Afghans. But Iranian-Afghan literary interactions need to be fully examined in order to push against the facile idea that the nationalization of Persian literature was a strictly local enterprise or that it was a West-East phenomenon, whereby the latter uncritically imported a new discourse of literature and distributed it internally.

Conclusion

When the Kabul Literary Association was established in 1930, its stated objective was to "unify and reform the style [*sabk*] of literature." But the scope of its mission was much broader than just standardizing and regulating the Persian language.[123] The association brought together a cadre of Afghan professionals: artists, historians, poets, translators, *tazkereh* writers, educators, and diplomats. It created a series of organs through its library, the journal *Kabul*, the *Kabul Almanac*, and its publishing network. These organs collectively produced and proliferated a new discourse of literature called *adabiyāt*. In other words, the association created a web of interconnected organs and ideas that transformed literature as a fragile and context-specific concept into a self-referential bounded category.

In 1942, the association was formally dissolved and gave way to the Pashto Academy. Examining Persian-Pashto literary dynamics merits its own investigation.[124] This chapter has focused, however, on the life and afterlife of *adabiyāt* as it traveled from the Kabul Literary Association to emerging institutions of literature in the 1940s and 50s, constituting a robust disciplinary paradigm for the operation of the country's first Faculty of Letters. In so doing, this chapter has shifted our attention toward associational culture —as opposed to a single literary association— and its role in inaugurating a new mode of literary knowledge. One of the major legacies of the Kabul Literary Association was making Afghanistan visible within a new global literary configuration, intensifying the country's literary and cultural connections with countries near and far.

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[122] Michael Allan, *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[123] "Marām-e majjalah," *Kabul* 1.1 (June 1931): 5.

[124] For a scholarly study on this topic in Persian, see Zalmay Hewadmal, *Roshd-e zabān va adab-e Dari dar gostarah-ye farhangi-ye Pashto zabānān* (Peshawar: Ettehādiya-ye nevisandegān-e afghanistan-e āzād, 1997).

Chapter Four

Divided by a Common Language? Iran-Afghanistan Literary Connections (1920-1944)

Most scholarly studies of modern Persian literature —the term "modern" mainly serving a temporal designation, corresponding to the period from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to present— further cement nation-oriented boundaries. Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan as Persian-speaking nation-states are studied either in isolation or primarily in relation to Europe (in the case of Iran), the Soviet Union (in the case of Tajikistan), and South Asia (in the case of Afghanistan). As a result, we have an atomized conceptualization of nationalism in these stubbornly interconnected societies. The extent to which Iranian, Afghan and Tajik literary intellectuals were in conversation, and more importantly, the ways their dialogue shaped the contours of Persian literary culture in a nationalizing age are not clearly or fully understood. The core historical assumption behind nation-oriented approaches is that with the rise of nationalism, each Persian-speaking society became, primarily if not exclusively, inward-looking, disintegrating in the twentieth century into separate nation-states.

The World of Persian Literary Humanism exemplifies this approach whereby Persian, once a distinctly transregional literary tradition, set on a teleological march out of imperial courts in the late eighteenth century and reached its predestined home, *vatan* or homeland (read Iran), in the twentieth century.[1] Ironically, Dabashi articulates this problem convincingly: "[a]s the two dominant modes of Persian literary historiography, European Orientalism and nativist nationalism reflect and complement each other, one assimilated into a narrative Eurocentricity as one of its multiple civilizational others, while the other responded in kind by making it integral to an exclusionary literary nationalism."[2] In both methodology and purview, *The World of Persian Literary Humanism* essentially reinforces the same historiographical problem it outlines and aims to criticize.

In his last two chapters, Dabashi examines the process by which Persian literature becomes nationalized. In the process, he silos each one of his case studies —Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan— while forcing the latter to fit into a pervasive model of nationhood.[3] The assumption at the core of Dabashi's methodological nationalism is that Iranians, Afghans, and

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[1] Hamid Dabashi, *The World of Persian Literary Humanism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[2] Ibid., 68.

[3] For a critical study on the history of modern Persian literature and its interplay with Russian, Uzbek, and Azeri literary traditions in Central Asia, see Samuel Hodgkin, "Lāhūtī: Persian Poetry in the Making of the Literary International, 1906-1957," PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2018. Hodgkin shows the ways in which Persian literature was incorporated into Soviet multinational literary culture that did not adhere to pervasive forms of nationhood in the twentieth century. This research opens up new approaches to the study of Persian literary culture beyond normative models of nation-state building. In arguing that "the institutions and poetics of Soviet internationalism" were in fact "framed in terms of the Persianate cultural legacy," Hodgkin recovers significant transregional linkages erased from view due to methodological nationalism.

Tajiks mitigated or even severed their cultural and literary contacts in order to nationalize Persian literature in their respective countries. His last chapter, covering 1906 to the present, completely rely overlooks literary, artistic, and cinematic expressions by non-Iranians, placing Persian literature in the age of the nation-state exclusively in its purported normative geography, modern day Iran.

The transformation of Persian into a national language has also been treated in isolation.[4] Nile Green observes, "...Persian as language and literary culture was transformed and separated from what were now the other national Persians, dubbed 'Dari' in Afghanistan and 'Tajiki' in Tajikistan for which similarly nationalist dictionaries and literary histories were being composed."[5] Based on this statement, one may be forgiven to assume that a "nationalist" discourse of literature came into being in Persian-speaking countries either as a byproduct of their severed connections or in no small part because of it.[6] As the past three chapters have illustrated, the formation of *adabiyāt* as an identitarian discourse of literature that informed and aided the project of nation-building took place within an interconnected and collaborative space wherein Iranians and Afghans were fully in conversation with each other. The same "nationalist dictionaries and literary histories" produced to reify Persian as a national literary tradition bear the discursive imprint of these early twentieth-century dialogues.

In recent years, the siloization of Persian literature has increasingly come under scrutiny. For instance, "After the Persianate," a special issue of the journal of *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, edited by Mana Kia and Afshin Marashi, examines the ways in which the emergence of nationalism reconfigured, rather than disentangled, models of literary exchange within frontiers of Persian literary production and learning. Alexander Jabbari's article in that issue demonstrates that the formation of Persian literary history as a genre was the result of contact and collaboration among Persian, English, and Urdu-speaking intellectuals from London to Lucknow.[7] Farzin Vejdani's contribution illustrates the way in which English did not drastically sever Indo-Iranian literary connections and in fact became

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[4] The edited volume *Persian Literature* is an example of this tendency. It outlines the contours of Persian as a transnational literary tradition yet it treats the contemporary period in two isolated and separate contexts: "Contemporary Literature of Iran" and "Persian literature outside Iran." This national-oriented classification, whose rubric remained assumed and unexplained, goes beyond accepting (and reproducing) a nationalized history of Persian. It falsely assumes a central if not perennial homeland (Iran) for Persian while relegating other Persian-speaking regions as its periphery (Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent), defined not on their own terms but by negation as non-Iran ("outside Iran"). This classification contradicts with Ehsan Yarshater's statement that "classical Persian letters are the product of many lands and ethnic groups which shared a common tradition," making Iranians, Tajiks and Afghans co-inheritors of a polycentric literary tradition that only later diverged into separate national contexts due to "differing political circumstances" in the modern period (viii). *Persian Literature*, edited by Ehsan Yarshater (Albany, N.Y.: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988).

[5] Nile Green, "Introduction," *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 49.

[6] The following caveat is necessary: Green made this observation in the context of an introduction that investigates the ways in which the Persian literary ecosystem has waxed and waned since its rise in the ninth century as a language of political administration in Central Asia.

[7] Alexander Jabbari, "The Making of Modernity in Persianate Literary History," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 36.3 (2016): 418-434.

another vehicle through which Iranian and Indian savants in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth centuries "debate[d] and reflect[ed] critically on nationalism, colonialism, and cosmopolitanism."[8] These case studies demonstrate that sites of national thinking did not fully sever pre-existing literary connections; rather they reconfigured them.

This chapter thus is a part of a new scholarly impetus that aims to recover internal connections that have been erased from view in the process of colonial modernity.[9] By focusing on Iran-Afghanistan literary connections as a case study, I argue that in the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Persian-speaking societies remained intensely conversant with one another and their connection informed the formation of a new mode of literary knowledge called *adabiyāt*.[10] This chapter illustrates that even as the early Pahlavi elite sought to appropriate Persian as their national patrimony, they still did not stop connecting with Persian-speaking scholars in Afghanistan who were engaged in an equally programmatic effort to lay claim to Persian as a national language. The term "national" in Persian literary historiography has often been used as a byword for the strictly local. In the context of early twentieth-century *anjoman*s or literary associations and their discursive products, the term "national" should be read as fiercely global.

This chapter contains two main sections. The first examines Iran-Afghanistan literary connections in the first part of the twentieth century, looking at the ways in which print culture expanded and intensified pre-existing connections between the two countries. The second section analyzes a series of letters exchanged between Iranian and Afghan intellectuals that illuminate the terms in which they asserted and debated their shared literary heritage.

Iran-Afghanistan Literary Connections and the Formation of a Literary Ecosystem (1920-1945)

The previous two chapters focused on the Dāneshkadeh Literary Association and the Kabul Literary Association as two highly influential examples of *anjoman*s that emerged in the early twentieth century respectively in Iran and Afghanistan. I have argued that literary associations functioned as both patron and platform. They drew from both older and modern models of congregation to bring together communities of people —bearers of *adab*— who produced and proliferated a new mode of literary knowledge called *adabiyāt*. *Anjoman*s helped to produce a national culture centered on the Persian literary heritage. The nature and intellectual substance within which *anjoman*s operated was programmatic and transregional and their

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[8] Farzin Vejdani. "Indo-Iranian Linguistics, Literary, and Religious Entanglements: Between Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism, ca. 1900-1940." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East,* vol. 36, No. 3 (2016), 452.

[9] Mana Kia and Afshin Marashi. "After the Persianate." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 36, no. 3 (2016): 379-383.

[10] The following studies recover important trans- and multiregional Persian literary connections: Alexander Jabbari, "Late Persianate Literary Culture: Modernizing Conventions between Persian and Urdu," PhD dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2017; Kevin Schwartz, "Bâzgasht-i Adabî (Literary Return) and Persianate Literary Culture in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Iran, India, and Afghanistan," PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2014; "Indo-Iranian Linguistic, Literary, and Religious Entanglements Between Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism, ca. 1900–1940;" *Lāhūtī: Persian Poetry in the Making of the Literary International, 1906-1957.*

members spoke to their counterparts who gathered in the same social forms in other locales well beyond politically-determined borders.

Literary journals were the main offspring of *anjoman*s and served as their virtual space, connecting them to other literary and historical associations across the globe that were engaged in a programmatic enterprise of nation-building. Early twentieth-century literary journals reflected critically what *anjoman* members were reading, translating, and debating, how they built a methodological toolkit with which to construct a new literary historiography, and the nature of their intellectual exchanges with local and global interlocutors. They formed a literary ecosystem wherein certain questions, ideas, and behaviors about language, literature, and learning germinated. Journals were hyper aware of their place within this expanding literary ecosystem in that they announced and at times even advertised the launching or discontinuation of other periodicals, regularly republished, referenced, commented on and responded to articles featured in other venues. They frequently reported on the work and legacy of *anjoman*s and journals that had dissolved many years ago, and in so doing, maintained and actively shaped their discursive afterlife. Collectively, journals built a repository of a new mode of literary knowledge. Examining the cultural agenda and literary focus of each journal necessarily requires understanding their place within a broader literary ecosystem.

Literary journals frequently reflected on the state of the press, both on national and international levels, introduced the profiles of journal editors and publishers, and commented on the quality and quantity of the content and style of other periodicals.[11] The foci of twentieth-century literary journals were staggeringly diverse, but they all broadly viewed the expansion and acceleration of print culture, specifically periodicals, as instrumental for national progress.[12] Toward creating a new mode of literary knowledge, they produced a shared vocabulary with which to discuss and debate literature as it pertained to other social domains. In an intensely interconnected space, journals developed new genres (literary history), conceptual categories (*adabiyāt, tārikh,* etc), literary polls, poetic competitions (*eqterāh*), new paratextual devices, and a distinct prose register. During this period, journals generated much pride and excitement by forging new readership communities and creating links between emerging institutions (modern schools, teachers' colleges, universities). To have a dynamic press meant to participate in a rising global order wherein literature, in its most capacious iteration, operated as a utilitarian discourse.

To clearly illustrate these points, this section focuses on a single journal. *Armaghān*, meaning "gift," was first published by *Anjoman-e adabi-ye Iran* or the Iran Literary Association in February 1920. It is one of the most long-lasting Persian-language periodicals, discontinued only in 1979 in the course of the Iranian revolution. The objective of the association was to "develop/gradually perfect literature" (*takāmol-e adabiyāt*) and "revitalize education" for these two realms, literature and education, constitute the "foundation of each country's independence and the source of its national grandeur."[13] The editor of *Armaghān* was Hasan Vahid Dastgerdi

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[11] See, for example, Sarwar Khan Juyā, "Matbuʿāt va nashriyāt-e mā," *Kabul* 2.2 (1932): 67-71; *Kabul* 3.2 (1933): between 148 and 149, unpaginated; Vahid Dastgerdi, "Matbuʿāt va Melal," *Armaghān* 1.9-10 (1921): 285-288.

[12] Dastgerdi, the editor of the journal *Armaghān*, expressed this idea clearly when he wrote, "A scientific, literary, and ethical press, consisting of newspapers and journals, or works of prose and poetry, is the best yardstick for measuring the progress and advancement of any nation and state." Vahid Dastgerdi, "Matbuʿāt va Melal," *Armaghān* 1.9-10 (1921): 285.

[13] *Armaghān*, 1.6-7 (September 1920): 225.

(d. 1942), a Constitution era activist, poet (pen-name: *lamʿeh* meaning "ray"), textual editor, and publisher. He had previously contributed to such newspapers as *Parvāneh, Zāyandeh-rud*, and *Mofatesh-e Iran*. Born in Isfahan, he moved to Tehran in the 1920s where he worked for the Publication Bureau of the Ministry of Education. In Tehran, he also founded another association, *Anjoman-e adabi-ye hakim nezāmi* or the Literary Association of Hakim Nezāmi in 1933. Dastgerdi edited the *khamsa* (five collected works) of Nezāmi Ganjavi which remains authoritative today.[14]

The Iran Literary Association gathered a community of prominent and promising intellectuals such as Mohammad-Taqi Bahār, Rahi Moʿayeri (poet), Hosayn Sāneʾi, Mirzā Naʿimi, Adib ol-Saltaneh (president of the Iran Language Academy), ʿIsā Sadiq (a pioneer of modern education in Iran who also served as the minister of education, 1941-42), ʿAli Asghar Hekmat and Gholām-Rezā Rashid Yāsami, whose work in relation to the Dāneshkadeh Literary Association was examined in chapter two. The association's main offspring, the journal *Armaghān*, was primarily focused on Persian poetry. It introduced mainly contemporary poets from Iran and significantly from Afghanistan and featured poems composed by its own members. The journal also paid critical attention to the study and periodization of poetry. In fact, Bahār's seminal article on "Bāzgasht-e adabi" or literary return, in which he examined the work of Qajar-era poets from a stylistic point of view, was first featured in *Armaghān*.[15]

In October 1920, the Iran Literary Association formed its bylaws and published them in *Armaghān* a year later.[16] It began with the following proclamation: "The national language of every people bears their identity, [it is] a self-evident document upon which they may establish their claim to their national heritage."[17] The next line defined literature, "This document's [i.e. national language] ratifying seal of approval is *adabiyāt*, [a document] no adversarial claimant or conspiratorial denier can foil."[18] But this document did not only serve to establish a nation's literary patrimony; it also "demonstrates other nations' [cultural] indebtedness" to one's own nation.[19] The unsigned article also called for a social and literary revolution, ending with the following terms, each separated by a dash to form a list of keywords: regeneration, modernization, development, and promotion of literature.[20] This is one of the ways in which *Armaghān* helped to recycle and form a shared vocabulary produced in the pages of *Dāneshkadeh* in the late 1910s.

This article laid out the association's vision and agenda while the bylaws, published in 1921, outlined its structural organization. Article one stated that the scope of the association was

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[14] Nezāmi Ganjavi, *Koliyāt-e khamsah-ye Nezāmi Ganjavi,* edited by Vahid Dastgerdi. (Tehran: Moʾasseseh-e enteshārat-e negāh, 2005).

[15] Mohammad-Taqi Bahār, "Bāzgasht-e adabi," *Armaghān* 144 (1932): 57-61; "Bāzgasht-e adabi," 13.10 (1933): 713-720.

[16] "Inak marām-nāmeh anjoman-e adabi-ye Iran," *Armaghān* 1.6-7 (1920): 225-227; "Marām-nāmeh," 17 (1921): 245-250.

[17] "Inak marām-nāmeh anjoman-e adabi-ye Iran," 225.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid, 226.

[20] Ibid, 227.

not strictly limited to modern day Iran: "With the objective of pursuing and implementing all nine articles of its bylaws, the Iran Literary Association has been established in Tehran. It will open offices in other provinces [in Iran] and Persian-speaking countries."[21] The bylaws clearly outlined the qualifications, financial obligations, responsibilities, and the rights of its members. They envisioned a three-tiered membership system: official members (*asli*), honorary members (*eftekhāri*), and members of the broader public (*ʿomum*). Official members were to possess literary taste and talent in the composition of poetry, plays, fiction (*afsāneh*), songs, or excellent prose (*nasr-e momtāz*), or alternatively develop a "craft from fine arts and rhetorical devices."[22] General members had to have "admirable attributes (*khasāʾel-e pasandideh*) and patriotism (*vatan-parasti*), and to have been recognized as noble (*maʿrufiyat be sherāfat*)."[23] The inclusion of "admirable attributes" is reminiscent of elements that distinguished bearers of *adab* as a social discourse of civility and belles-lettres. As a detailed and carefully outlined document, the six-page bylaws signaled significant developments in associational modes of congregation and their organizational structures.

To the best of my knowledge, the Iran Literary Association did not formally open an office in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, *Armaghān* paid close attention to literary and cultural developments in Afghanistan and its copies were available.in Afghan libraries[24] In an article titled "Unity in Language and Literature Form the Basis of True Unity," Dastgerdi commented on the need to further build literary connections with other Persian-speaking countries, particularly Afghanistan.[25] Reflecting on the nature of unity, he wrote, "Unity and oneness between two persons or two nations, if found, would take only two forms: the first [would be] true and inherent unity and the second [would only be] formal or metaphorical unity."[26] He argued that there are three elements that create unity: religion, race or origins, and language and literature.[27] The Great War, he wrote, created united fronts that were not based on true unity, but rather on shifting political circumstances.[28] That stood in contrast to the unity between Iran and Afghanistan which is "true and entirely unique."[29]

Dastgerdi then referenced the *Shahnamah* as a text that attests to this racial and linguistic unity, alluding to the fact that the geography of Zābolestān in Ferdowsi's epic poem largely

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[21] "Marām-nāmeh," 17 (1921): 245.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] The journal featured the profile of Afghan poets and scholars and reported on their visits to Iran. See, for instance, "Odabā-ye Pārsi-zabān-e Afghan." *Armaghān* 1.6-7 (1920): 197-200; "Odabā-ye Afghan (Aqā-ye Mollā Abdol ʿAli mutekhalles be Mostaghni 2.1 (1922): 41-42.

[25] Vahid Dastgerdi, "Vahdat-e zabān va adabiyāt bonyān etehād-e haqiqi ast," *Armaghān*, 1.6-7 (1920): 181-186.

[26] Ibid, 181.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid, 183.

[29] Ibid.

corresponds with modern day Afghanistan.[30] This is a point that Afghan historian Ahmad 'Ali Kohzad fully articulated in the 1970s in his study *Afghanistan dar Shahnamah* (*Afghanistan in the Shahnamah*) by drawing on his archaeological findings and historiographical skills.[31] The root of this unity for Dastgerdi was linguistic and the fact that "the mother tongue of Iranian and Afghans is the Persian language and thus far historical events have failed to forcibly rob them of this [shared] heritage."[32] Having laid out his understanding of this cultural unity, he then made a critical observation: "Truthfully, one must admit that the Afghan people in recent centuries, particularly in the recent past, have labored more than Iranians to preserve Persian language and literature."[33]

Dastgerdi contended that Iranians in recent years had "forgotten the masters of the Persian language and Middle Persian literature" and turned their backs on the great poets that had revived the Persian language.[34] On the reception of Persian poets in Iran, he quoted the Afghan poet Āzād Kabuli: "Great poets and literati who have died [of oblivion] in Iranian cemeteries are alive with their *divāns*, ranks and reputation in Afghanistan. They will always be alive."[35] Dastgerdi attributed this problem to the political and military administration's overreliance on foreign loanwords.[36] He tasked three groups of people with safeguarding both the Persian language and the Iranian-Afghan unity: politicians or statesmen (*zamāmdārān-e siyāsat*), religious scholars and clerics (*'olamā va rowhāniyun*), and poets, educators, and the literati (*odabā' va sho'arā' va ma'aref-pazhuhān*).[37]

Each group was historically associated with sites of learning and literary production such as *madrasas*, *khānaqā*s, and dynastic chanceries responsible for the proliferation of Persian literary culture in West, Central and South Asia. Dastgerdi called upon "periodicals in both countries to extend a hand toward one another, inviting both peoples to buy [periodicals] and keep informed."[38] Commercial print did not fully develop in Iran until the early twentieth century, playing a major role in creating new sites of Persian learning and literary production, primarily national schools emerging in the late 1920s. By this time, print had become "inseparable from the new ideology of nationalism, with its 'modular' formulation of 'one

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[30] Ibid. In Persian, "...*Zābolestān-e bāstāni hamān kābolestān-e konunist...*"

[31] Ahmad 'Ali Kohzād, *Afghānistān dar Shahnamah: Shahnamah dar Khorāsān, yā, Shahnamah dar Āryānā* (Kabul: Bayhaqi ketāb khparawulo mo'assasah, 1976).

[32] "Vahdat-e zabān va adabiyāt bonyān etehād-e haqiqi ast," 183.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid, 184. It is worth noting that Dastgerdi mentioned "Indian-style" poets Sā'eb and Kalim alongside more canonized poets like Ferdowsi and Nezāmi in this group. This is significant because it shows that not all Iranian attitudes toward what cohered into the Indian style, whether as a historiographical category or a corpus of poetry, were the same, particularly at a time when the historiographical idea of a "literary return" as a uniquely Iranian literary style was being forged.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid, 185.

[38] Ibid, 186.

people, one language.'"[39] These sites may have been entangled with the ideology of nationalism, but as Dastgerdi exemplifies, national sites were also transnational in nature, capable of connecting communities of Persian scholars and poets well beyond nationally-drawn boundaries.

Overall, *Armaghān*, like most journals, reflected the transnational scope of Persian learning in the age of print culture. It regularly cited the work of scholars like E. G. Browne and Shibli Nuʿmāni who wrote on Persian literature in English and Urdu respectively.[40] It introduced readers to diasporic Persian-language periodicals and encouraged them to pay attention to their work and ideas.[41] It reported on scholarly gatherings and literary celebrations and conferences and even on their reception in European periodicals.[42] The bottom line could not be clearer: the frequency and systematic manner with which early twentieth-century journals cited each other formed a global pattern of synthesis and scholarly production. In fact, the formation of Persian literature as an academic discipline would have been unthinkable within a strictly local contexts, either in Iran or Afghanistan.

Iran-Afghanistan literary contacts in the second half of the twentieth century were a two way traffic. Following *Armaghān*, such influential Iranian journals as *Yaghmā* (1948-1979)*, Vahid* (1963-1980)*, Dānesh* (1949-?)*,* and *Sokhan* (1943-1979) frequently published the works of Afghan poets and reported on cultural developments in Afghanistan. The establishment of the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters opened up a major site in the transnational geography of Persian learning. The first non-Iranian student to graduate from its doctoral program in Persian language and literature was ʿAbdul Ahmad Jāwid, an Afghan scholar who earned his Ph.D. in 1954 and went on to teach at the University of Kabul. The names of Iranian scholars like Mohammad-Taqi Bahār, Sādeq Rezā Zādeh-Shafaq, ʿAbbās Eqbāl Āshtiyāni, Jalāl Homāʾi, and Badioʿzamman Foruzānfar were regularly referenced in important Afghan periodicals such as *Kabul, Āryānā,* and *Adab*. Iranian students studied Persian literature at the University of Kabul while many scholars from Iran were invited as lecturers, or in the case of Saʿid Nafisi, as visiting professors. Early twentieth-century journals constituted a literary ecosystem that intensified and reconfigured contact between Iran and Afghanistan, the history of which has been inadequately examined due to methodological nationalism.

The Assertion of a Shared Literary Heritage: Letters between Tehran and Kabul (1933-1945)

This section focuses on two letters exchanged in the early 1930s between Mahmud Afshār, the editor of the literary journal *Āyandeh*, meaning "future," in Tehran, and the Kabul Literary Association. The previous chapter examined the establishment of the Kabul Literary Association. The literary journal *Āyandeh* was established in Tehran in 1925 by Afshār. It was primarily preoccupied with three interconnected topics: the political place of Iran in the interwar

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[39] *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, 48.

[40] On the occasion of Browne's sixtieth birthday, *Armaghān* featured a note of appreciation that spoke to the importance of his work in promoting Persian language and literature. "Qadr-shenāsi Irāniyān az zahamāt prufesur Edwārd Browne," *Armaghān* 1.15-16 (1921): 178-181.

[41] See, for instance, "Beshārat va taqriz az gerāmi majaleh-ye Pārs," *Armaghān* 1.13 (1921): 106.

[42] For instance, *Armaghān* translated the *London Times*' coverage of the Millennial Celebration of Ferodwsi in Tehran. Saʿādat Nuri-Esfahāni, "Sheʿr-e fārsi," *Armaghān* 162 (1934): 599-600.

period, the state of modern education in Iran, and the dissemination of *adabiyāt* in the service of building a national culture. The journal's target audience were students and educators who received it at no cost. Compared to other periodicals, *Āyandeh* featured more in-depth articles that ranged from examining the scholarly output and methodology of Orientalists to the trajectory of higher education in Iran. *Āyandeh* brought together a diverse group of participants including Mohammad Qazvini, G. R. Rashid Yāsami, Mahmud ʿErfān, Saʿid Nafisi, Hasan Taqi-Zādeh, and Yahyā Dowlatābādi.

In 1933, the Kabul Literary Association sent six issues of the journal *Kabul,* along with a letter, to Mahmud Afshār in Tehran. Literary associations regularly sent copies of their offspring to other *anjoman*s and educational and state institutions. After reviewing the journal, Afshār sent a lengthy letter to Kabul. In May 1933, *Kabul* published Afshār's letter in its entirety as well as a response to the issues that he had raised. At the time of this exchange, the publication of *Āyandeh* had been discontinued, and to the best of my knowledge, this exchange was not published in Iran at the time. Ultimately, it was featured in *Āyandeh* in April 1945, more than a decade later.[43] In the early 1940s, Afghanistan was talking about the idea of moving the remains of Seyed Jamāl ol-Din Afghāni from Istanbul to Kabul. Afghāni was a renowned political theorist whose place of origin was disputed. The construction of a mausoleum for Afghāni at the campus of the University of Kabul led to the resurfacing of Afshār's dialogue and contestation with the Kabul Literary Association. As such, their dialogue was reprinted in 1945.[44]

Before analyzing the letters, it is useful to provide a summary of their content and context. Afshār's letter was a call for unity among Persian speakers, particularly Iranians and Afghans. The letter opened with the following statement: "Believe me [when I say] I love Afghanistan almost as much I love Iran. Even though Iranians and Afghans have politically formed two independent states, I believe that we are essentially one nation in the form of two countries, one soul in two bodies."[45] He referenced the association's letter in which they had urged Iran to join forces with Afghanistan in promoting the Persian language in Central Asia, particularly because "Afghanistan and Persia [*fārs*] are intertwined in terms of race [*nezhād*], language [*zabān*], and history [*tārikh*]."[46] Afshār validated that sentiment by asserting that the two countries were even politically unified until the end of Nāder Shah's reign (1736-1747). This was a reference to the fact that Afghanistan became a semi-independent polity after one of Nāder Shah's military commanders, Ahmad Shah Dorrāni, rose to power following the assassination of the former and established the Dorrāni empire (1747–1826).

Afshār argued that the association's main organ, *Kabul,* had been largely silent about Iran and Afghanistan's shared literary heritage and even sought to separate their otherwise inseparable literary history. There had been no need to imagine Iran and Afghanistan's literary history, he postulated, up until its point of divergence: the fall of the Afshārid dynasty at the turn of the nineteenth century.[47] He wrote that any effort to arbitrarily separate this shared literary

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[43] The publication of *Āyandeh* had been discontinued in the early 1930s.

[44] *Āyandeh* 7.3 (1945): 362-380.

[45] Mahmud Afshār, *Kabul* 10.2 (May 1933): 83.

[46] Ibid, 84.

[47] Ibid.

history would not be "appropriate, necessary, productive, or acceptable."[48] To bolster his claim, Afshār, quoted an article featured in *Kabul* in which the author, unnamed by Afshār, had argued that the Ghaznavids had introduced the literary language of Afghanistan, meaning Persian, to India, leading to the proliferation and flourishing of Afghan literature (*adabiyāt-e afghāni*) in the Subcontinent.[49] Afshār questioned the historicity of that assertion, writing that

> It is undeniable that certain dynasties of Iran after [the inception] of Islam were located outside of the boundaries of Iran today, taking form in Transoxiana or Afghanistan. The majority of great Persian-language poets were educated and nurtured on the periphery (*atrāf*) of the country/state of Iran today, such as Rumi, Nezāmi of Ganja, ʿOnsori of Balkh, Sanāʾi of Ghazna, and others…but that does not necessitate that an empire called 'the Kingdom of Afghanistan' would have existed. Using this logic, the Tajiks of Central Asia may also invent a 'Kingdom of Tajikistan [in the future].'[50]

Afshār wrote that he had "authenticated [the claim] that Mahmud [of Ghazni] was Afghan" in his book *La Politique Européenne En Perse*.[51] The Ghaznavids (r. 977–1186), a dynasty that originated in what is now Afghanistan and ruled over parts of Khorāsān and the Punjab, was at the center of Afshār's contestation with Afghan intellectuals. Having emphasized that Mahmud was Afghan, Afshār then quoted a *qasida* from Mahmud's poet laureate, 'Onsori (d. 1039), in which he referenced the Ghaznavid emperor as the "King of Iran" (*Shah-e iran*).[52] His point was clear: Mahmud of Ghazni may have been Afghan, but he necessarily belonged to a political entity called Iran (and not Afghanistan).

Afshār then drew on a historical analogy to further establish his point about Persian literary culture: "... Italians today do not refer to and may not refer to an 'Italian empire,' instead of the Roman Empire, or [refer to] 'Italian history and civilization' instead of 'Roman history and civilization,' in spite of the fact that the Italian state today has inherited [a territory] a part of [which corresponds with the geography of] ancient Rome."[53] By that comparison, Afshār argued, "Afghans should not call the Kingdom of Iran, the Kingdom of Afghanistan. Similarly, Iran should not consider itself as the exclusive inheritor of the ancient Kingdom of Iran."[54] Iranians and Afghans may both lay claim to their shared ancestral achievements.[55] As this section illustrates, Afghan scholars did not receive Afshār's comments in a vacuum, but within the larger

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid, 85.

[51] Ibid. Mahmud Afshār Yazdi, *La Politique Européenne En Perse: Quelques Pages De L'histoire Diplomatique* (Téhéran: Chapkhanah-ha-yi marvi va bahman, 1973); Mahmud Afshār Yazdi, *Siyāsāt orupā dar Iran: owrāqi chand dar siyāsat va diplomāsi*, Trans. Ziyā o-Din Dehshiri (Tehran: Bonyād mowqufāt-e doktor Mahmud-e Afshār-e Yazdi, 1979).

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

context of the Pahlavi state building a national culture based on the idea that Iran is the perennial home of Persian literature.[56]

In his letter, Afshār did not frame Iran as a monolithic entity, arguing that there was a multitude of ethnic and social affiliations within its geography. He contended that two concepts existed side by side before the rise of the nation-state: a translocal homeland or *vatan-e ʿām* and multiple local homelands or *vatan-e khāss*.[57] Therefore, based on his view, Afghans were within their right to commemorate ʿOnsori or his patron Mahmud of Ghazni as Afghan notable figures, so long as they also acknowledged that their translocal homeland would have been the Kingdom of Iran, and not Afghanistan.[58] In a way, Afshār's view was a more accommodating iteration of the primordialist idea cultivated by late Qajar and early Pahlavi elite such as ʿAbbās Eqbāl Āshtiyāni that Iran served as the natural focal point for Persian literary culture.[59] Afshār suggested this implicitly in his letter when he wrote that "the majority of great Persian-language poets were educated and nurtured on the periphery (*atrāf*) of the country/state of Iran today."[60]

For Afshār and his cohort, Iran and Persian were locked in a timeless entanglement. That said, his engagement with Afghan scholars was based on an intellectually substantive and durable investment in Afghanistan's cultural and literary history. Iran and Afghanistan may belong to two separate political entities in the twentieth century, Afshār declared, but they are still united by their shared literary heritage. He invited all Afghans to embrace the idea of "Pan-Iranism" or "Unity of Iranians" for all Iranian peoples, whether Tajik, Persian, Kurdish, Balochi or Afghan, who belonged to the same race and literary heritage.[61] He assured the Kabul Literary Association that Pan-Iranism was not a way for Iran to lay claim to the Persian literary heritage at the expense of other Persian-speaking lands.

Afshār advocated for an Iranian-Afghan cultural alliance to promulgate Persian language and literature and combat what he perceived as the misguided influence of Turkish-speaking Central Asia and Anatolia.[62] This was a reference to the fact that Persian in the early twentieth century was increasingly competing with and losing ground to Turkic languages and Russian in Soviet Central Asia.[63] On the decline of Persian in Anatolia, Afshār wrote: "the Ottomans overreach their plundering hands to lay claim to other people's achievements due to their poverty

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[56] There is a growing body of scholarship on different aspects of the Pahlavi national and linguistic ideology. Please see Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner, *Culture and Cultural Politics Under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2015).

[57] Ibid, 89.

[58] Ibid, 87.

[59] Chapter two examined Eqbāl Āshtiyāni's series "Literary history" in the journal *Dāneshkadeh*.

[60] Mahmud Afshār, *Kabul* 10.2 (May 1933): 84.

[61] Ibid, 92.

[62] Ibid, 86.

[63] Marc Toutant, "De-Persifying Court Culture: The Khanate of Khiva's Translation Program," In *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca,* edited by Nile Green (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 243-257.

in literature and their Turkish ways and habits."[64] Afshār contended that Pan-Iranism offered a robust solution against what he called the "yellow danger" or Pan-Turkism.[65] Pan-Iranism does not necessitate the creation of one state, he argued, but only the acknowledgment that we are heirs to a shared literary heritage: "Geographically, we may not be gathered around one national pole," he concluded, "but once we look into our hearts, the fire of love and kindness burns inside them, and from above this land, we see each other in its radiant glow."[66] Afshār's idea of linguistic unity, as evident in the racist overtones of his statements, was based on the notion that Iran and Afghanistan both framed themselves as Aryan nations.[67]

In their official response printed in *Kabul*, the association first summarized Afshār's arguments and asked readers to pay close attention to him for he is a journal writers and a "serious figure."[68] Journal writers "represent and guide [their] nation."[69] *Kabul* viewed Afshār as sincere in his tone and genuine in his objectives which sets him apart from many of his "short-sighted" compatriots.[70] The association then directly addressed some of Afshār's claims or "pontifications" (*lahja-ye moʿallemānah*) as it called them.[71] In his letter, Afshār questioned the use of the term "Fārs" in reference to the entire country of Iran.[72] He critically pointed out an article in *Kabul* in which the Afghan translator (working on an English or French source text)

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[64] Ibid.

[65] In a series of articles featured in *Āyandeh* titled "khatarāt" or Dangers, Afshār articulated his idea of "Pan-Iranism." Previously, Afshār had called on Afghans to embrace the idea of "Pan-Iranism" in an article published in *Shafaq-e Sorkh*. With regards to the reception of this idea in Central Asia, in the late 1940s, leading Tajik writers and officials denounced "Pan-Iranism" as a form of rootless cosmopolitanism, and there followed a definitive victory for the advocates of Tajik literature's primordial distinctness from Persian literature canonized in Iran. Samuel Hodgkin, *Lāhūtī: Persian Poetry in the Making of the Literary International, 1906-1957*, PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2018.

[66] Ibid, 93.

[67] For a critical history of how the modern racial discourse of Aryanism informed the formation of Iranian nationalism, see Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Dislocation* (New York : Columbia University Press, 2016). In the case of Afghanistan, *Kabul* was one of the first journals that introduced Aryan race-thinking and outlined its connection with Afghanistan. For instance, see Mohammad Qadir Khan Taraki, "Osul-e tahqiqāt dar taʾin qawm va manshaʾ-e āriyā" 6.6 (1936): 4-7.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid. It is not clear to what extent this response reflected the views of its diverse members and contributing writers. Nonetheless, it was published as a group response to Afshār's letter.

[70] Ibid, 94.

[71] Ibid.

[72] To provide historical perspective, see the following statement by Sir William Jones, written in the late eighteenth century: "The great empire, which we call *PERSIA*, is known to its natives by the name of *Iran*; since the word *Persia* belongs only to a particular province, the ancient *Persis*, and is very importantly applied by us to the whole kingdom: but, in compliance with the custom of our geographers, I shall give the name of *Persia* to that celebrated country." "An Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations," In *The Collected Works of Sir William Jones,* vol 4 (London: Printed for John Stockdale, Piccadilly; and John Walker, Paternoster-Row, 1807), 538.

had opted for a more direct equivalence of the term "Persia," rendering it as "Fārs," instead of Iran. Afshār insinuated that the Kabul Literary Association had feared that if they used the term "Iran," they would be forgoing Afghanistan's historical contributions to what he called "greater ancient Iran" (*Iran-e bozorg-e bāstāni*).[73]

To argue that Iran can refer to a modern day country and an ancient civilization, Afshār resorted to another translation-based example, writing "what problem is there if a proper noun contains two or more meanings...Luxembourg and Mexico (in English) are both names of cities and states. Or when [the name] America is invoked, it both denotes a specific state (the United States of North America) and a continent that includes North, Central, and South America."[74] It is no coincidence that an Iranian intellectual, in dialogue with the same linguistic community, kept looking outward, mediated by translation, in order to bring his Afghan colleagues into alignment with a changing cultural terrain in which Iran has a national valence. By invoking Italy/Rome and the United States/the Americas, Afshār embedded Iran within a rising global order in which nation-states laid claim to imperial civilizations and mythologized their belonging to their literary and cultural heritage. As this dialogue evinces, these programmatic efforts took place within a multilingual and transnational space. This space was never strictly national or monolingual even though the narrative of nationalism in Iran, unlike Afghanistan, was built on a monolingual logic.

In its defense, *Kabul* wrote, "Dr. [Afshār] has speculated that our association has concocted a well-planned political conspiracy by adhering to the term 'Fārs' instead of Iran designed to monopolize the [ownership] of the [literary] notables for Afghanistan."[75] *Kabul* assured Afshār that as a matter of policy, it calls countries by their preferred name, and that the use of Fārs instead of Iran was an isolated case. In the 1930s, Iranian elites were becoming hyper aware of political and racial discourses of representation surrounding the term "Iran." In fact, on March 21, 1935, Rezā Shah requested that the international community call Persia by its endonym, Iran, in all official correspondence. I do not know whether the Kabul Literary Association took an official stance in relation to this policy, but many Afghan intellectuals interpreted it as yet another nationalist gesture by the Pahlavi state to enfold its national culture within a specific civilizational myth.[76]

In their response, the Kabul Literary Association posed a counterargument: the use of Fārs in reference to Iran is not a source of danger to the unity of a shared literary heritage. The

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[73] Ibid, 88.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid, 96.

[76] According to Shams ol-Haq Āryānfar, specific Afghan intellectuals viewed Iran's decision as an effort to appropriate the cultural and literary heritage of the Iranian world. For instance, Mohammad Karim Nazihi, accompanied by two other scholars, visited Afghanistan's Department of State to voice their opposition to Iran's international name change, arguing that historical Iran, as outlined in the *Shahnamah*, corresponds more closely with Afghanistan than the territorial boundaries of Iran today. See Shams ol-Haq Āryānfar, "Jelwa, Mard-e kherad va siyāsat ke dar mihanash gharib zist," *Farāsu*, http://farasu.net/?p=1919 (Accessed May 25, 2019). In addition to this anecdote, there appeared articles in *Kabul* and the *Kabul Almanac* that emphasized the place of Afghanistan as a cradle of the Āryans civilization. See Ya'qūb Hasan Khan, "Tārikh-e zabānhā dar Afghanistan," *Sālnāma-ye Kabul* 3 (1313/1935), 119–130.

source of danger, as the association viewed it, lay in institutional efforts in Iran aimed at purging Persian of Arabic elements and replacing them with "pure Persian" words.[77] *Kabul* contended that these efforts posed a greater threat to the idea of unity among Persian speakers by diverging from the existing literary style widely used in Afghanistan, Iran, India and Transoxiana. This period predated the establishment of *Farhangestān* or the Academy of Persian Language and Literature in 1935; nonetheless other educational and literary institutions were involved in creating a linguistic register aimed at making Persian a more suitable vehicle for national education.[78]

By contextualizing and analyzing this intellectual exchange, the following paragraphs illustrate the ways in which even nationalist narratives of nation and literature were necessarily built on an acknowledged shared literary past with non-European, intra-linguistic interlocutors. Iranian and Afghan conceptualizations of a modern discourse of literature were not sealed off from one another, rather they took form as a result of never severed and always ongoing mutual literary contacts. The establishment of institutions of literature —*anjoman*s, language academies, faculties of letters— only intensified their pre-existing connections. The discourse of nationalism has undoubtedly caused certain separations and elisions in Iran and India, as notably examined in Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's *Refashioning Iran*. He characterized Persian literary texts produced in South Asia that fell outside the Iranian paradigm nationalism as "homeless."[79] That said, even such separations and elisions are best understood in the context of lingering linkages and new-made connections.

To understand why certain figures and political dynasties had become a lightning rod for Iranian and Afghan intellectuals in the 1930s, it is important to provide some historical context. The formation of the Pahlavi dynasty in the 1920s signaled a turn in the historiographical reception of Nāder Shah.[80] The Pahlavi elites mythologized Nāder as a national hero for restoring and regenerating Iran's lost glory in the post-Safavid world. This effort aimed to frame Qajar monarchs in contrast to Nāder as weak despots during whose rule Iran lost its territorial integrity to imperialist powers. *Āyandeh* featured an *eqterāh* or a test of poetic talent in 1927 in which it asked readers to compose a *qaside* for Nāder Shah, commemorating his sack of Delhi.[81] In the text of the poetic competition, Afshār praised Nāder Shah for restoring the might of Iranians who, prior to his rule, had surrendered their royal crown to "a bunch of Afghans" in 1722.[82]

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[77] Ibid, 96.

[78] One such example is the Teachers' Training College which in 1932 organized a society tasked with coining neologisms. See Mehrdad Kia, "Persian Nationalism and the Campaign for Language Purification," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34.2 (1998): 9-36; Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Language Reform Movement and its Language: the Case of Persian." In *The Politics of Language Purism*, edited by Björn H Jernudd and Michael J. Shapiro (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989), 81-104.

[79] Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001).

[80] Rudolph Matthee, "Nader Shah in Iranian Historiography Warlord or National Hero?" *Institute for Advanced Studies*, 2018, https://www.ias.edu/ideas/2018/matthee-nader-shah, Accessed May 26, 2019.

[81] Mahmud Afshār, *Āyandeh* 2.7 (1927): 446.

[82] Ibid.

Afshār's disparaging comment regarding a "bunch of Afghans" was a reference to the invasion of Safavid Iran by Ghilzāi Afghans in the 1720s. During that time, Nāder Shah, or Nāder-qoli Beg as he was then called, rose in the Safavid military, defeated Afghans at Mihmāndust in 1729, and eventually assumed the throne on March 8, 1736. When corresponding with the Kabul Literary Association, Afshār adopted a conciliatory tone about the Afghan invasion of Isfahan by framing it as a "civil conflict."[83] What changed the way in which he viewed Afghans, having once seen them as savage outsiders wreaking havoc on an autonomous state?[84] The 1930s marked a significant era in institutionalizing a new mode of literary knowledge in Afghanistan, one of the hallmarks of which was the production and proliferation of a historiographical model that articulated Afghanistan as a national subject of history.[85] Simply put, Afshār and the Kabul Literary Association were speaking on the same wavelength, both operating within a shared paradigm of *adabiyāt* as an identitarian discourse of literature.

In the early twentieth century, Afghan historians began to frame the separation of Ahmad Dorrāni (d. 1772) from Nāder's army and the subsequent foundation of the Saduza'i-Dorraāi dynasty as the genesis of modern Afghanistan. Afshār viewed this historical juncture as a fateful divergence, the political separation of two lands with a shared literary culture. *Anjoman*s like the Kabul Literary Association and the Historical Association of Afghanistan appropriated Ahmad Shah Dorrāni as the founding figure of Afghanistan.[86] His coronation was famously visualized in 'Abdol Ghafur Breshnā's painting, who had earlier helped to reify *adabiyāt* and *tārikh* in the pages of *Kabul* as new conceptual categories. Given their shared investment in the eighteenth century as a moment of restored glory or national genesis, Iranian and Afghan intellectuals found themselves in the crosswind of each other's myth making.

Another focal point in Afshār's correspondence with his Afghan colleagues was the Ghaznavid dynasty. As the first major Persian-speaking dynasty after the advent of Islam, the Ghaznavids made military and cultural inroads into India and contributed significantly to the spread of Arabic-script (New) Persian literature in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Ghaznavids ruled over Khorāsān, much of which fell territorially within twentieth-century eastern Iran and Afghanistan. Khorāsān in the ʿAbbasid period (750–1258) referred to Persian-speaking polities in eastern Islamicate lands. In the 1930s, Afghan historians like Ahmad ʿAli Kohzād, ʿAbdol-Hayy Habibi, and Mir Gholām Mohammad Ghobār began to appropriate ecumenical designations like "Khorāsān" and "Aryānā" as civilizational terms, transforming them into bywords for ancient or historical Afghanistan.[87] They did so by drawing from Persian

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[83] Mahmud Afshār, *Kabul* 10.2 (May 1933): 90.

[84] *Āyandeh's* poetic competition featured poems that framed Afghans as uncivilized outsiders that needed to be cleansed from the homeland by Nāder. *Āyandeh* 2.12 (1927).

[85] Nile Green, "From Persianate Pasts to Aryan Antiquity: Transnationalism and Transformation in Afghan Intellectual History, c. 1880-1940," *Afghanistan* vol. 1, no. 1 (2018): 26-67.

[86] Senzil Nawid, "Writing National History: Afghan Historiography in the Twentieth Century," In *Afghan History Through Afghan Eyes*, edited by Nile Green. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 185-210. It is also worth noting that *Āyandeh* republished articles featured in *Āryānā*, the offspring of the Afghanistan Historical Society.

[87] Laying claim to Khorāsān meant framing the genesis of modern Persian as an integral part of an emerging Afghan national identity. Articulating a claim to Khorāsān also enabled Afghans to challenge the Iranian assertion that Khorāsān's cultural legacy belonged to Iran by virtue of having been a part of

literary texts like the *Shahnamah* and adopting archaeological findings and Orientalist methodology for Afghanistan.[88] Therefore, commemorating Mahmud of Ghazni, the founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty (977–1186) as an Afghan emperor in *Kabul* was part of a programmatic effort to create a new historical identity.[89]

     The creation of a national culture in Iran and Afghanistan in the early twentieth century took place through a series of conceptual realignments that left in their wake shifting and often blurred semantic zones. Chapter one examined the way *adabiyāt* was brought into alignment with the idea of literature in the late nineteenth century. In this instance, Afshār sought to draw the semantic zone of Iran in a way that accommodates both what he understood as racial and linguistic unity and ethnic multiplicity. He did so by combining the concept of *vatan* or homeland with the social idea of *khāss* (specific, private) and *'ām* (general or public), which I have translated as "local" and "translocal" homelands respectively. In other words, through these designations, Afshār aimed to create a degree of critical distance between Iran, an emerging nation-state in the 1930s, and an unqualified historical entity he called the greater Iran. But he only managed to create temporal distance between the two precisely because Iran for Afshar, and for most of his Iranian cohort, was a timeless concept that did not require any temporal, dynastic, or conceptual qualifications (such as Timurid Iran, Ilkhanid-ruled Iran, etc). Iran was, in the minds of most early Pahlavi intellectuals, a free-standing and timeless concept. Operating within the framework of a literary association tasked with generating a new historical and literary conception of Afghanistan, Afghan scholars were understandably receptive to the idea of being subsumed under a political entity to which the Pahlavi elite had aggressively laid ownership.

     The notion of a shared literary heritage is the premise upon which Mahmud Afshār and Afghan scholars articulated their connections and contestations. Their dialogue took place within the paradigm of *adabiyāt* as a new mode of literary knowledge. Integral to *adabiyāt* as a discourse was the idea that Persian literary history was a fixed locus through which national identity was articulated. While Afshār and his Afghan colleagues disagreed about the ways in which Iran and Afghanistan may articulate their claim to Persian literary culture, their arguments were both discursively aligned with *adabiyāt*'s nation-building function. In fact, the process of nationalization did not dismantle patterns of literary interaction; it merely reconfigured the terms and manners upon which such exchanges took place. The literary connections and contestations forged between Iranian and Afghan intellectuals rendered visible their discursive belonging to

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the Sassanid Empire (224–651). For instance, Ghobār writing in *Kabul* claimed that Aryānā, a territory referenced by the *Avestā* as the land of the Āryās, largely mapped onto modern Afghanistan. See "Writing National History: Afghan Historiography in the Twentieth Century," 191-96.

[88] "The Afghan Discovery of Buddha: Civilizational History and the Nationalizing of Afghan Antiquity," *Afghanistan* vol. 1, no. 1 (2018): 26-67.

[89] For instance, beginning in 1937, *Kabul* featured translated excerpts of Mohammad Nazim's classic study, titled *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna* (Cambridge University Press, 1931), in the Persian translation of ʿAbdol Ghafur Khan Amini. 7.80 (1937), 763-770. These translations were later turned into a book, see *Hayāt va awqāt-e Sultān Mahmud-e Ghaznavi* (Pishāwar: Markaz-e nashrāti mivand, 1999). This project illustrates clearly the global nature of scholarship: Nazim, an Indian scholar, had drawn from Encyclopedia of Islam and the work of E. G. Browne and ʿAbdol Ghafur Amini brought this English-language work into Persian.

adabiyāt.[90] Iranian and Afghan poets and literati had always been in contact with one another, but this intellectual encounter would have been unthinkable half a century prior to their correspondence.

Afshār's intellectual commitment to Afghan history and literary culture was durable. Invited by the Afghan government, he spent a month in Kabul in 1961. Like many of his colleagues in Iran, Afshār was welcomed warmly by scholars like Sarwar Guyā Eʿtemādi. The fruit of that visit was a three-volume collection of literary and historical essays published between 1980 and 1983. He named the collection *Afghān-namah* (The Book of Afghans), adding that the title invoked both senses of the word *afghān*, meaning a person from Afghanistan and also lamentation.[91] He cited a poem by Rumi: "I am more expressive than a nightingale, but people's envy / has sealed my lips, [hence] lamentation (*afghān*) is my desire."[92] He wrote, "Appropriately, when one cannot speak truth to the tyranny of the powerful or the bigotry of the ignorant, one's heart makes a lamentation."[93] This was perhaps a reference to the fact that it was becoming increasingly difficult for Persian-speaking scholars to visit each other. After the Coup of 1953, the more autocratic Mohammad Reza Pahlavi restricted travel to Soviet-ruled or Soviet-leaning countries, including Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The freedom with which Iranians and Afghans invited one another to Tehran and Kabul between the 1930s and 50s was more restricted between the 1960s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. But even during this time, many Afghans studied in Iran in the 1960s and 70s and many members of the communist Tudeh Party in Iran went to Afghanistan to work with the Khalq/Parcham regime in Kabul in the late 1960s and 70s.

For Afshār writing in the 1930s, Persian was no longer associated with a global network of itinerant sufis, scholars, munshis (imperial secretaries) and poets moving through the shifting centers of Persianate learning from Sarajevo to Surat. Instead, it was increasingly identified as a national language promulgated to varying degrees in three states only. Persian enjoyed an unequivocal status in Pahlavi Iran as the sole language of national education. In Afghanistan, Persian retained its historical status as a language of political administration and cultural importance but on a national level it had to compete with Pashto for the Afghan state in the

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[90] Afshār was part of a group of intellectuals who, to varying degrees, had exposure to early twentieth-century global literary and historiographical trends. He was born in Yazd in 1893, educated in Mumbai where he also learned English. He returned to Iran to study at the School of Political Science (*Madresseh-ye ʿolum-e siyāsi*), founded in 1900 to train an elite cadre for the Foreign Service. Afshār then moved to Lausanne, Switzerland where he completed his doctorate in Political Science. Upon returning to Iran, he was employed at a number of colleges and eventually served in the judicial system and the ministry of culture. The Kabul Literary Association gathered a group of intellectuals whose mission was to introduce a stock set of scientific and archaeological concepts and a lexicon with which to modernize Afghan literary and political historiography. See, Nile Green, "From Persianate Pasts to Aryan Antiquity Transnationalism and Transformation in Afghan Intellectual History, c. 1880-1940," *Afghanistan* vol. 1, no. 1 (2018): 26-67.

[91] Mahmud Afshār Yazdi, *Afghān-nāmah*, vol. 1 (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e bonyād-e mawqufāt-e Mahmud Afshār, 1980), 12. Afshār examined Afghan history and literature in other collected essays. See *Goftār-e adabi* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e bonyād-e mawqufāt-e Mahmud Afshār, 1974).

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

1930s set to promulgate and elevate it to the level of Persian.[94] In Tajikistan, Persian functioned as a national language but it was written in the Cyrillic script and built its lexical repository on modernity and diplomacy through contact with Russian.

If Afshār's main objective in engaging his counterparts in Kabul was to produce a shared vocabulary through which Afghan scholars would articulate their national historiography, then he failed to do so.[95] But his efforts should be understood within a broader historical context. Between the 1920s and 60s, Iranian and Afghan scholars were programmatically committed to incorporate one another's national projects of creating Persian literature as an academic discipline through various methods. These methods ranged from official visits, invited lectures, exchange of letters and poems among intellectuals and drawing from and commenting on works of literary scholarship. In fact, the very sites of literary production —mainly *anjoman*s and faculties of letters— created to articulate and proliferate a culturally authoritative narrative of Persian literature within Iran and Afghanistan only intensified their transnational contact. This study only takes a step toward a critical understanding of the extent and nature of dialogue among Persian speakers in the age of print culture and nationalism.

Conclusion

Saʿid Nafisi, one of the preeminent scholars of Persian literature at the University of Tehran, wrote that the formation of Afghanistan as an independent political entity in 1747 warrants creating a new separate category called "Persian literature in Afghanistan."[96] As a scholar deeply connected with his Afghan counterparts, Nafisi was well aware that Persian literature in Afghanistan was not a self-contained category, sealed off from Persian literature in Iran. Nonetheless, his generation experimented with various literary taxonomies most of which were informed by the political logic of nationalism. Given the rise of the Cold War and dwindling contact between Iranian and Afghan scholars in much of the second half of the twentieth century, nation-oriented and arbitrarily political approaches to the study of Persian literature prevailed.

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[94] See Wali Ahmadi, *Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan: Anomalous Visions of History and Form* (London: Routledge, 2008); Thomas Wide, "Demarcating Pashto: Cross-Border Pashto Literature and the Afghan State, 1880-1930." *In Afghanistan in Ink: Literature between Diaspora and Nation*, ed. Nile Green and Nushin Arbabzadah (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 91-112.

[95] This failure was rather inevitable given that Afshār refuted the historical authenticity of a national conceputalization of Afghanistan on the basis that the term "Afghanistan" was coined only in the eighteenth century. He referenced Faiz Mohammad Kāteb's *Serāj ol-Tawārikh*, commissioned by Habibollah Khan, and a number of European dictionaries none of which mentioned the word "Afghanistan" under their entries for "Āryānā" and "Khorāsān." In spite of his efforts to accommodate the rise of national historiography in Afghanistan, Afshār's overall message was perceived as Iran-centric due to its discursive contradiction. The core of his message was as follows: Iran and Afghanistan were not nations, they were both part of a historical kingdom called Iran. Iran is a nation with a long historical pedigree but Afghanistan was not a nation until it became a nation in 1747. Mahmud Afshār Yazdi, *Afghān-nāmah*, vol. 1 (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e bonyād-e mawqufāt-e Mahmud Afshār, 1980), 62-73, 143-170.

[96] Saʿid Nafisi, "Adabiyāt farsi dar afghanistan," *Dānesh* 1 (1949): 2.

This study adheres to François Jost's critical observation that "National literature cannot constitute a field of study because of its arbitrarily limited perspective: international contextualism in literary history and criticism has become a law."[97] In the early twentieth century, perhaps no other literary institution more effectively disrupts the arbitrary nature of national literary than the rise of Persian literary periodicals. Driven by the global impetus to form a national imaginary, literary journals formed a stubbornly-connected network of scholars, calligraphers, artists, poets, diplomats, and merchants. This chapter aimed to release journals from the chain of national literature by showing the ways in which they formed a transregional literary system, nourishing and feeding off of other periodicals, locally and globally.[98]

In this chapter I argued that the formation of *adabiyāt* as a new mode of literary knowledge within the framework of *anjoman*s was a transregional enterprise. Literary journals, as the main offspring of *anjoman*s, connected Persian-speaking cities like Tehran and Kabul to global hubs of Persian learning like Cambridge, Berlin and Delhi, within a new cultural configuration and intellectual network imbricated with the rise of print culture. This is a global community that Farzin Vejdani has called the "Persian Republic of Letters," a network of scholars and writers not bound by the constraints of territory.[99] By examining Iran-Afghanistan literary connections, I argued that the production and proliferation of *adabiyāt* was necessarily dialogic. Plainly put, Iranians needed Afghans in order to generate a national conception of Persian literature in Iran and vice versa. Each held up a mirror to one another by projecting and modifying discourses of literature and nationhood.

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[97] François Jost, *Introduction to Comparative Literature* (Indianapolis: Pegasus, 1974), 29-30.

[98] See Farzin Vejdani, "Crafting Constitutional Narratives: Iranian and Young Turk Solidarity, 1907–1909," In *Iran's Constitutional Revolution*, edited by Houchang Chehabi and Vanessa Martin (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 319–340; Kamran Rastegar, "Mashruteh and al-Nahda : the Iranian Constitutional Revolution in the Iranian Diaspora Press of Egypt and in Arab Reformist Periodicals," In *Iran's Constitutional Revolution*, edited by Houchang Chehabi and Vanessa Martin (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 357-368. By examining Persian, Ottoman, and Arabic-language periodicals side by side, Vejdani and Rastegar depart from nation-oriented approaches to the study of the Constitutional Revolution and its formative source texts.

[99] Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 147.

Conclusion

How Do You Say "Literary Institution" in Persian?

At the University of Tehran, a young seminary student in his clerical garb waited for the instructor's permission to enter the classroom, as the lecture had already started. The instructor, veteran literary scholar Badiʿozzamān Foruzānfar, was teaching a course on Persian literature. The young student had moved to Tehran to pursue his studies, while Foruzānfar stood on the tail end of a prolific literary career in the late 1960s. He paused his lecture to ask the young man if he had come to the right classroom. "Yes *ostād* (professor), I am enrolled in your Persian literature course," the student replied. Foruzānfar gestured for him to enter, and the student walked to the end of the crowded classroom. Before he was able to fully situate himself, the instructor called him out: "*Ākhund* (cleric), we will destroy you!" Foruzānfar paused to communicate the seriousness of his statement, and continued: "But *then* we will build you anew."[1]

Like the seminary student, Foruzānfar had moved to Tehran in the early 1920s, having left the small town of Boshruyeh in his native Khorāsān.[2] In Khorāsān, he had received a *madrasa* style education with its strong emphasis on Qur'anic studies, Arabic rhetoric and logic, and works of Persian poetry and prose like Saʿdi's *Bustān* and *Golestān*. He had been taught by two men, Adib Neyshāburi and Adib Pishāwari, both of whom bore the epithet *adib* in their titles, marking their erudition in the cross-regional discourse of Persianate *adab*.[3] By contrast, in early Pahlavi Tehran, Foruzānfar embedded himself within modern educational and literary institutions. He was a member of different *anjoman*s, wrote for literary journals, and taught at teachers' training colleges which later cohered into the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters.[4] Between the 1930s and 60s, he helped to shape the emerging genre of literary history which was not part of his own literary curriculum in Khorāsān.[5] Broadly put, Foruzānfar lived in and contributed to the making of a new world in which *adabiyāt* was rising as a global idiom of nation-building, redefining the social domain of language, literature, and learning. Like the young seminary student he would later chastise, he too was built anew.

The preceding chapters have analyzed the rise of *adabiyāt* through different texts, producers and sites of literary production. Collectively, they told the story of how *adabiyāt*

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[1] Personal interview with Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak (Los Angeles, March 26, 2017).

[2] For a thorough biography, please see ʿAlirezā Pur-rafʿati, *Ahvāl va āsār-e Badiʿozammān Foruzānfar* (Tehran: Anjoman āsār va mafākher-e farhangi, 2004).

[3] Abbas Amanat, "From Peshawar to Tehran: An Anti Imperialist Poet of the Late Persianate Milieu," In *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, edited by Nile Green (Oakland, University of California Press, 2019): 279-299.

[4] This is a reference to *Dār ol-moʿallemin-e markazi* (Teachers' Training College, 1918) and *Muʾassaseh-e vaʿz va khetā beh* (Institute for Speeches and Sermons, 1936) itself a branch of *Dāneshkadeh-ye maʿqul va manqul* (College of Theology).

[5] Badiʿozammān Foruzānfar, *Sokhan va Sokhanvarān* (Tehran: Sherkat-e sahāmi-e enteshārāt-e khvārazmi, 1971); *Tarikh-e adabiyat-e Iran: baʿd az eslām tā pāyān-e taymuriyān* (Tehran: Sāzmān-e chāp va enteshārāt, Vezārat-e farhang va ershād-e eslāmi, 2004).

became institutionalized, creating a literary ecosystem of bounded categories and bodies of texts and scholars. Here, it is important to clarify what is meant by a literary institution. Vincent Leitch defines the core function of literary institutions, writing, "through various discursive and technical means, institutions constitute and disseminate systems of rules, conventions, and practices that condition the creation, circulation, and use of resources, information, knowledge, and beliefs."[6] On their make-up, he writes, "institutions include, therefore, both material forms and mechanisms of production, distribution, and consumption and the ideological norms and protocols shaping the reception, comprehension, and application of discourse."[7] This definition closely fits the organizational structure, function, and impact of *anjoman*s or literary associations that proliferated in the early twentieth century in Iran and Afghanistan.

*Anjoman*s created networks of literary scholars who, in dialogue with their global counterparts, placed their countries within a modern discourse of language theory and literary historiography. In Afghanistan, the state led this cultural initiative by establishing and sponsoring the Kabul Literary Association. In Iran, *anjoman*s tended to be more voluntary, nonetheless many of their members were tied to Qajar or Pahlavi political and educational institutions. Collectively, these *anjoman*s created a transnationally-connected milieu of intellectual fervor by establishing an associational culture centered on building a new political identity, cultivating new reading publics, expanding the social domain of print culture through the publication of journals, and building a bridge between national education and literary production. As such, the term "*anjoman*" in this period most closely approximates the concept, function, and cultural scope of literary institutions.[8]

Persian literature as an objective of a new mode of literary knowledge was born in the pages of early twentieth-century journals. Literary journals should be understood as precursors to the rise of university-based studies which took hold of Persian literature after the late 1930s. Broadly put, early twentieth-century journals packaged Persian literature as a modern discourse. They discussed and debated questions of proper reading, canon formation, literary taste and national education and acted as arbiters of literary taste and knowledge. Scholars published excerpts of their works in literary journals before turning them into monographs or textbooks. As such, literary journals shaped the production, reception, and promotion of scholarly works. They forged, normalized, and authorized certain orthographic and grammatical styles. They played a significant role in conventionalizing a simplified prose style by inventing tools and techniques that prescribed pleasure and generated interest among readers. Overall, literary journals operated as a literary institution in the way they narrativized Persian literary history and banished what was improper reading and writing style outside of their literary hierarchy.

In the 1930s and 40s, the state in Iran and Afghanistan set to consolidate, authenticate, and proliferate the literary discourse cultivated in the framework of *anjoman*s between the 1910s and 30s by establishing language academies, encyclopedia projects, faculties of letters, and

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[6] Vincent Leitch, *Cultural Criticism, Literary Theory, Poststructuralism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 127.

[7] Ibid.

[8] In contemporary parlance, the term "*nahād-e adabi*" denotes literary institution while the term "*anjoman*" may be translated as literary salon or association, depending on context.

national libraries.[9] The above story about Foruzānfar and his student encapsulates the social terrain produced by literary institutionalization, having moved away from loosely-organized *anjoman*s and in the direction of officially rounded-up bodies of intellectuals and texts.[10] The story took place within the University of Tehran wherein the instructor, denoted by the novel title *ostād-e dāneshgāh* (university professor), was evaluated by a committee of peers. The committee itself operated within the body a larger institution tied to the state apparatus. The seminary student was not pursuing religious sciences in a *madrasa* or *hawze* as idiosyncratic settings for Islamic learning, nor was he studying Persian prose and poetry at a dynastic court or in a private *mahfel* or literary circle. He was registered in an academic program that required the study of Persian literature, the subject of a discipline that institutionally declared itself autonomous from other fields of study. The making of literature as an institutionalized academic discipline in the 1930s and 40s should be seen alongside the rise of music, law, history, architecture, and theology as academic disciplines, each formed in a dialogic process, radically shaping Iranian and Afghan national cultures and political identities.

One of the most enduring outcomes of literary institutionalization was the invention of the idea that Iran, as a geographical and political entity, possesses primordialist ties with Persian as a transregional literary tradition. Variously put, according to this idea Iran is the historical and natural homeland of the Persian language. For instance, when Zabihollah Safā, a PhD from the University of Tehran, was authoring his multi-volume literary history of Persian, he named it *tārikh-e adabiyāt dar Iran* in spite of the fact that he had devoted tens of pages to the South Asian poets Amir Khosrow Dehlawi (d. 1325) and ʿAbdol Qāder Bidel (d. 1720).[11] Similarly, Jan Rypka's edited volume, written originally in the Czech language, was published in English as *History of Iranian Literature*, in spite of the fact that it was mainly focused on Persian literary production.[12] Both texts were produced in the second half of the twentieth century when the genre of literary history had helped to bring Persian into alignment with the globally-circulated discourse of literature. This dissertation has argued that the invention of *adabiyāt* as a cultural and institutional undertaking was necessarily transnational and was not, by any means, limited to Iran. Outside of Qajar and Pahlavi Iran, it had global participants in the form of Orientalists in Europe, diaspora Iranians, Persian-speaking Central Asians, and South Asian Persianists.

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[9] Different aspects of these entities have been analyzed in the following articles: Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Language Reform Movement and its Language: the Case of Persian," In *The Politics of Language Purism,* edited by Björn H. Jernudd and Michael J. Shapiro (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989), 81-104; Wali Ahmadi. "The Institution of Persian Literature and the Genealogy of Bahar's Stylistics," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 31.2 (2004): 141-152; Roxane Haag-Higuchi, "Modernization in Literary History: Malek al-Shoʿara Bahar's *Stylistics,"* In *Culture and Cultural Politics Under Reza Shah,* edited by Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner (New York: Routledge, 2014), 19-36.

[10] Writing in the context of nineteenth-century Germany, Peter Uwe Hohendahl has characterized the "transition from a loosely organized institution to an established field of university studies-with academic chairs, regular courses, and final examinations-reflected [as] a shift from open discussion to an attitude of affirmation." Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Building a National Literature: The Case of Germany, 1830-1870* (Corner University Press, 1989), 202.

[11] Zabihollah Safā, *Tārikh-e adabiyāt dar Iran: Az āghāz-e ʿahd-e eslāmi ta dawreh-ye saljuqi* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Ferdawsi, 1984).

[12] Rypka, Jan, and Karl Jahn. *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1968).

This seemingly uncontentious observation was not, until recently, part of the received wisdom in the field of Iranian and Persian Studies. For instance, in "Is There a Canon of Persian Poetry?," William Hanaway has argued that Foruzānfar's *Sokhan va sokhanvarān* (Poetry and Poets, 1929-1934) and Zabihollah Safā's *Ganj-e sokhan* (Treasure of Poetry, 1960-61) constituted the first articulation of canonicity in Persian poetry.[13] In no other period, Hanaway observed, had Persian-language poets consciously created a literary canon. He contended that the Persian literary canon began to take shape only when Iranians cut their cultural ties with the wider Persianate world and sought to redefine their own national identity. He opined that the Persian literary canon has been defined by Iranians only and its future will also depend on the way "Iranians … work out their relation to their past."[14]

Hanaway rightly framed Safā and Foruzānfar's texts as products of a distinctly different mode of literary knowledge, therefore signaling a departure from older models of historiographical and literary production. He also demonstrated his awareness of the role of literary institutions in producing and disseminating a certain understanding of Persian literature when he wrote that "this [Persian] canon has been accorded an authority for today [by specialists] that is acknowledged by a great many Iranians."[15] But Hanaway's claim is questionable when he argues that only Iranians have institutionalized Persian literature, as if they are the only people who have spoken for and laid claim to the Persian literary tradition. This is not a standalone claim. On the formation of *adabiyāt* as a discourse, Bo Utas wrote that,

> In Iran, the coverage of this new concept, *adabiyat*, had to be constructed. The classical concept of *adab*, of which *adabiyat*, is a collective derivation, was quite exclusive. It referred to artful pieces of poetry and prose composed according to specific, traditional rules, regarding both form and topic. The new, Europeanized concept was given a much wider scope. Most texts preserved from older periods were, at least potentially, regarded as "literature," and narrative and popular prose was, in principle, included as well. This new-modeled "literature" was made a cornerstone in the nationalistic programme of the emerging (pseudo-) modern state of Iran. It was introduced as a central piece in the curricula of the new schools and it was invested with enormous official prestige.[16]

Here, Utas has spelled out the same argument: Iranians invented the institutional foundation, historiographical techniques, and critical methods with which to bring Persian literature into the modern age. Other Persian-speaking (or Persian-using) nations did not build their national culture with Persian as its cornerstone, or if they did, their efforts were inconsequential, therefore not worth engaging or even mentioning.

By tracing the genesis and life of a new discourse of literature in Iran and Afghanistan side by side, I critically introduced the work of a generation of Afghan scholars who have been

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[13] William L. Hanaway. "Is There a Canon of Persian Poetry?," *Edebiyât* 4.1 (1993): 3-12.

[14] Ibid., 12.

[15] Ibid., 12.

[16] Bo Utas, "Genres in Persian Literature 900-1900," In *Manuscript, Text and Literature: Collected Essays on Middle and New Persian Texts*, edited by Bo Utas, Carina Jahani, and Dāriyūsh Kārgar (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2008), 225.

largely ignored by the methodological nationalism of the field of Persian and Iranian Studies. To fully understand how a new mode of literary knowledge has reconfigured the ways in which language, literature, and learning were reconceptualized among Persian speakers in the early twentieth century, it is necessary —and by no means optional— to examine works such as Foruzānfar's *Sokhan va sokhanvarān* in conversation with anthologies, encyclopedias, textbooks, and literary histories written by non-Iranian scholars like Qāri ʿAbdollah, ʿAhmad ʿAli Kohzād, Gholām Mohammad Ghobār, Mawlānā Khāl Mohammad Khasta, and many other Persianists who worked within a transnational and dialogic context to reify Persian literature as an object of scholarly knowledge. In that vein, Iranians and Afghans should be seen as co-conspirators in a shared project of literary nationalization that shaped their national cultures in lasting and monumental ways.

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