Currents of Metamorphosis across the Indian Ocean

Hiroko Nagasaki, So Yamane, Yutaka Kawasaki (eds.)

Kotoba Books
Kyoto and Vizianagaram

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About the 'HINDOWS' project

So Yamane

Since 2022, the 'Global Area Studies' program of the National Institutes for the Humanities has been promoting area studies projects based on four regions that have developed their own unique cultures and civilizations—the 'Global Mediterranean', the 'Indian Ocean World', 'Maritime Asia and Pacific', and 'East Eurasia'—as joint research projects between multiple universities and research institutions. Indian Ocean World Studies, which is called the 'INDOWS' project, has a geographic focus on the Indian Ocean and its adjoining land areas of Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa. It seeks to explore the dynamism of the movement—of people, goods, information, money, culture and faith—and its role in creating, developing, accumulating and dissolving various relationships within and outside this world. INDOWS has four centres in Japan—the National Museum of Ethnology, the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University and Osaka University—each of which is conducting research on its own unique theme in collaboration with overseas research institutions. The Osaka University Center (HINDOWS), which is part of the Graduate School of Humanities at Osaka University, is conducting research on the theme of 'the intermingling of literature, thought and creativity' with the aim of elucidating the multiple centers of influence and multi-porosity with flows of people, ideas and cultures passing through the Indian Ocean World from the perspective of literature and thought.

The four research centres have been holding international symposiums every year. This pamphlet is a report from an international symposium titled 'Currents of Metamorphosis across the Indian Ocean', which was held by HINDOWS in December 2023 at Osaka University.

In addition to such research meetings, HINDOWS is also working on a project called 'OUDiLHum (Osaka University Digital Library of Humanities)' to digitize valuable manuscripts, documents and paintings from the Indian Ocean World and make them available on the Osaka University website[1].

Additionally, as part of our contribution to society, we have been supporting activities to publicize the music and other artistic culture of this region in various parts of Japan. We would like to continue to promote the publication of research results like this in the future.

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[1] www1.lang.osaka-u.ac.jp/en/activities_cat/oudiulhum-en/

Preface

Hiroko Nagasaki

We, the Editorial Board (So Yamane, Hiroko Nagasaki, Yutaka Kawasaki), are pleased to present the proceedings of the symposium 'Currents of Metamorphosis across the Indian Ocean', an integral part of the INDOWS International Symposium hosted by Osaka University. This symposium, held from December 9 to December 10, 2023, brought together scholars from various disciplines to explore the dynamic interchanges across the Indian Ocean region.

The Indian Ocean, often seen as both a barrier and a conduit connecting diverse cultures and peoples, is a rich canvas for re-examining the relationships and transformations among the nations and communities along its rim. This year's symposium focused on the metamorphosis of literature, culture, thought, and language across this vast area, providing new perspectives on how these elements interact and evolve over space and time.

The symposium was structured around four sessions, each examining different aspects of cultural and linguistic transformations:

1. **The Metamorphosis Stage: The Sea** - Chaired by Hisae Komatsu of Otemon Gakuin University, this session delved into the historical and literary significance of the Indian Ocean as both a cultural conduit and a boundary. Presentations during the session included:

· 'A Genealogy of Kālā Pānī: Indian Convicts and the Idea of Transportation' by Takashi Miyamoto (Osaka University) - Exploring the narratives surrounding Indian convicts and the colonial practice of transportation across the Indian Ocean.

· 'The Indian Ocean in Malay Literature' by Henri Chambert-Loir (École française d'Extrême-Orient) - Discussing the portrayal of the Indian Ocean in Malay literary traditions and its impact on regional cultural narratives.

· 'Bahari: Poetry of the Ocean and an Ocean of Poetry from Zanzibar' by Clarissa Vierke (University of Bayreuth) - Examining the rich poetic expressions from Zanzibar that capture the essence of the ocean as both a physical and metaphorical space.

With Minoru Mio (National Museum of Ethnology) serving as the commentator, this session offered a multifaceted view of the Indian Ocean's role in shaping cultural and historical landscapes.

2. **Metamorphosis of Literature** - Chaired by Hisako Matsukizono of Osaka University, this session examined the transformations and influences of literature across the Indian Ocean, highlighting the interplay of cultural narratives and their adaptations. Presentations included:

·   'Arabic and Vernacular Literacy in the Indian Ocean: Beyond the Sacred Script' by Thibaut d'Hubert (The University of Chicago) - Exploring the role of Arabic alongside vernacular languages in shaping literary traditions and literacy across the Indian Ocean region.

·   'Trans-Indian Ocean Cultural Flows: The Influence of Hindi Cinema in Hausa Popular Fictions' by Musa Ibrahim (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) - Analysing the impact of Hindi cinema on Hausa popular fiction, illustrating the widespread cultural exchange facilitated by media.

·   'The metamorphosis of the role of Sukesi/Kaikasī in the Uttarakāṇḍa: Revisiting Opera Jawa, a contemporary Indonesian cinematic reimagining of the Rāmāyaṇa' by Toru Aoyama (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) – Discussing the reinterpretation of the Rāmāyaṇa in modern Indonesian cinema, focusing on the character transformations and their cultural implications.

With Makoto Kitada (Osaka University) providing commentary, the session offered deep insights into how literature serves as a medium for cultural transmission and transformation across diverse communities.

3. **Metamorphosis of Cultures and Thoughts** - Led by Aya Ikegame (Kyoto University), this session explored the profound impact of cultural and philosophical exchanges across the Indian Ocean. The session featured the following insightful contributions:

·   'A Sonorous Philosophy of Swahili Culture: Zein l'Abdin and the Swahili Art of "Arab Taarab"' by Andrew J. Eisenberg (New York University Abu Dhabi) - This presentation delved into the musical and philosophical aspects of Arab Taarab, showcasing its role in shaping Swahili culture and identity.

·   'The Importance of the Representation of the Sea, Waves, and Ships in the Works of Hamzah Fansuri' by Yumi Sugahara (Osaka University) examined the symbolic significance of maritime imagery in the works of the renowned Sufi poet Hamzah Fansuri, emphasizing its metaphysical and cultural dimensions.

·   'Sonic Waves across the Seas: Radio Ceylon as a Listening Hub' by Ravikant (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies)—Ravikant's study highlighted Radio Ceylon's historical role in broadcasting across the Indian

Ocean, influencing the cultural and social landscapes of its listeners.

Riho Isaka (The University of Tokyo) commented on the discussions. The session examined how cultural and thought processes across the region are interconnected and continuously evolving.

4.   **Metamorphosis of Languages** - The final session, chaired by Toshiki Osada (Research Institute for Humanity and Nature), featured a series of presentations that examined linguistic transformations across the Indian Ocean. This session included:

·   'The Gypsy Languages of Iran: An Overview' by Hassan Rezai Baghbidi (Osaka University) - This presentation provided a comprehensive look at the diversity and characteristics of Gypsy languages in Iran, exploring their origins and adaptations influenced by historical migrations and interactions.
·   "Balochistan as a Linguistic Area" by Liaquat Ali (The University of Balochistan, Quetta) - Liaquat Ali discussed the linguistic diversity and convergences in Balochistan, highlighting the region as a pivotal area for linguistic exchange and influence.
·   'Traces of Indian Ocean Trade in the Swahili Language' by Nobuko Yoneda (Osaka University) - Nobuko Yoneda explored how the Swahili language has incorporated elements from various cultures around the Indian Ocean, facilitated by centuries of trade and cultural exchange.
·   'Metamorphosis of mukha across Maritime Southeast Asia' by Naonori Nagaya (The University of Tokyo) - This study examined the evolution of the word 'mukha' and its variants across Maritime Southeast Asia, illustrating the linguistic impacts of trade and cultural dissemination.

The session commentator, Ritsuko Kikusawa (National Museum of Ethnology), enriched the discussion by presenting maps that visually traced the dissemination of languages across the Indian Ocean region. Her commentary highlighted how the Indian Ocean has served as a dynamic medium for the spread and evolution of languages, providing valuable geographic and historical context to the presentations.

    The symposium concluded with a roundup discussion and closing remarks by So Yamane, the project leader of the Center for Indian Ocean World Studies at Osaka University. This gathering highlighted the ongoing scholarly dialogue and set the stage for future research initiatives.

    This collection of selected papers underwent rigorous peer review by our editorial committee and external reviewers, ensuring the inclusion of high-calibre research. Collectively, these works highlight the dynamic nature of

cultural and linguistic exchanges across the Indian Ocean, contributing to a deeper understanding of its role in shaping global cultures.

Part One

METAMORPHOSIS OF LANGUAGES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

1

Traces of Indian Ocean Trade in the Swahili Language

Nobuko Yoneda

1. Introduction

Swahili, the lingua franca of East Africa, is a language that uniquely blends the grammar of the indigenous Bantu languages with a significant number of loanwords from various external sources, primarily Arabic. These linguistic features are a testament to Swahili's rich contact history with diverse cultures, facilitated largely by the Indian Ocean trade network. It is believed that the Bantu-speaking peoples, who began migrating from their homeland (the border region between present-day south-eastern Nigeria and western Cameroon) 5000 years ago, reached the Indian Ocean coast approximately 2000 years ago.

Over time, their interactions with traders and settlers from Arabia, Persia, and the Indian subcontinent, led to the development of ancient Swahili as a distinct language. Although more than a dozen centuries have passed since then, traces of Indian Ocean trade continue to be observed in Swahili today. This study highlights the traces of Indian Ocean trade within Swahili, focusing on loanwords and nautical expressions embedded in the language. By examining these linguistic remnants, we can acquire a deeper understanding of the historical connections between East Africa and the Indian subcontinent and the lasting impact of these interactions on the development of Swahili.

2. The background history

This section provides the historical background of the Swahili language, both as a Bantu and a contact language.

2.1. Bantu expansion

Swahili is a Bantu language belonging to the Niger-Congo phylum. The Bantu language group comprises approximately 500 to 600 languages (e.g. Yoneda et al. 2012; Van de Velde et al. 2019) and is the largest language group among African languages.

The Niger-Congo phylum has an estimated age of 10,000–12,000 years. A 'Bantu languages' branch emerged 6000–7000 years ago from the Benue-Congo language group, a subgroup of the Niger-Congo phylum. After several offshoots, the ancestral group of the Bantu people formed in the border region between present-day south-eastern Nigeria and western Cameroon (Bostoen 2018).

Approximately 5000 years ago, Bantu-speaking people began migrating from their homeland, across most of central, eastern, and southern Africa. Bantu languages are now widely distributed south of the Equator across the African continent (e.g. Bostoen 2018; Watters 2018; Yoneda 2022), as presented in Figure 1.1. This distribution area spans more than 20 countries, with migration distances of up to 4000 km (Bostoen 2018). It is roughly equivalent to the distance from Zanzibar in Tanzania across the Indian Ocean to Mumbai in India.

Several hypotheses have been proposed regarding the migration path; Figure 1.2 illustrates the hypothesis proposed by Grollemund et al. (2015).

This widespread migration was an important cultural event in the African continent, as it facilitated the spread of not only languages over a large area but also a new sedentary way of life based primarily on agriculture (e.g. Grollemund et al. 2015; Diamond and Bellwood 2003; Bostoen 2006/7; Yoneda 2022).
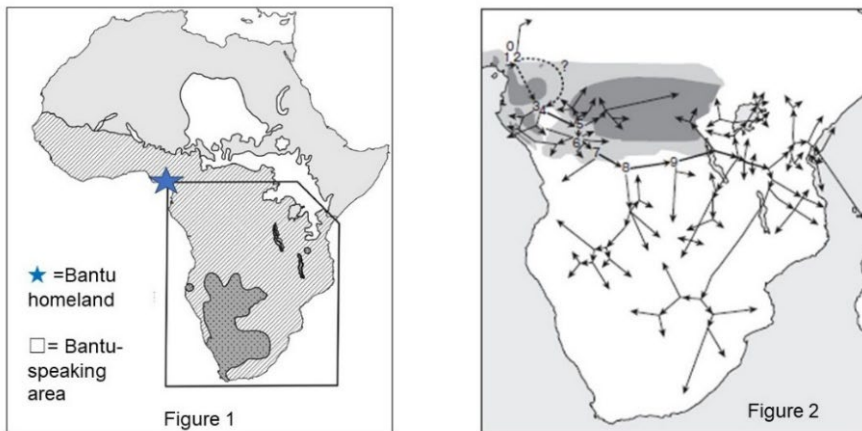
Figures 1.1 and 1.2 are from Yoneda (2022).

2.2. Swahili ancestor

The Indian Ocean is the eastern edge of the Bantu expansion. Limited information exists regarding the history of the first appearance of Bantu-speaking people in East Africa in the first millennium BC until the earliest putative date for the emergence of Swahili around 800 A.D. (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 2). However, it is estimated that Bantu-speaking people arrived on the Indian Ocean shores approximately 2000 years ago. Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993: 23) describe the divergence leading to Swahili: 'An approximate date around or slightly later than 1 A.D. would seem reasonable for Proto-Northeast Coast, perhaps five hundred years later for Proto-Sabaki, shortly after that for Proto-Swahili'.

Beginning around 800 A.D., the Indian Ocean trade facilitated contact with Bantu languages and those from outside Africa, including Arabic, Persian, and Indian languages, resulting in the ancestral language of today's Swahili. Therefore, Swahili can be considered a 'product of the Indian Ocean trade'.

The name 'Swahili' is Arabic, however, the origin of the community of speakers of the language, prior to the name being given, is untraceable; they are believed to comprise various ethnic groups (Miyamoto 2009: 36). Miyamoto (2009) stated that it would be natural to assume that the Africans of various ethnic groups, who were used as slaves by the Arabs, were the core of the 'coastal people', where a common language emerged.

3. Features of Swahili
This section describes the characteristics of the Swahili language.

3.1. Swahili as a Bantu language
Swahili shares grammatical features of Bantu languages, such as the noun classification system and agglutinative verb structure.

Swahili nouns are divided into 15 groups called 'noun classes', which forms the basis of grammatical agreement in Swahili. As presented in Examples (1) and (2), modifiers such as 'good' and 'my' appear in different forms depending on the noun class to which the head noun belongs. For example, in Example (1), *kitabu* 'book' belongs to Class 7 and *kalamu* 'pen' belongs to Class 9, therefore, the adjective *-zuri* 'good' appears with the prefix *ki-* agreeing with Class 7 and *n-* agreeing with Class 9, respectively. The same applies to Example (2), wherein the prefix agreeing with Class 7 is *ch-* and that agreeing with Class 9 is *y-*. Additionally, as Example (3) presents, depending on the noun class to which the subject noun belongs, a different prefix called 'Subject Marker (SM)' is attached to the verbs, which comprises a stem and affixes.

(1) a. kitabu   ***ki-***zuri   'a good book'
         7.book   7-good

     b. kalamu   ***n-***zuri   'a good pen'
         9.pen   9-good

(2) a. kitabu   ***ch-***angu   'my book'
         7.book   7-my

     b. kalamu   ***y-***angu   'my pen'
         9.pen   9-my

(3) a. Kitabu   hiki   ***ki-***na-som-w-a   na watoto   wengi.
         7.book   7.this   SM7-PRS-read-PASS-FV by 2.children 2.many
         'This book is read by many children.'

     b. Kalamu   hii   ***i-***na-tumi-w-a   na   watoto   wengi.
         9.pen   9.this   SM9-PRS-use-PASS-FV   by   2.children 2.many
         'This pen is used by many children.'

These features are common to Bantu languages, confirming that Swahili is a 'Bantu language'.

3.2. Swahili as a contact language

Swahili has another unique and important feature: it has borrowed considerable vocabulary from languages outside Africa. As aforementioned, Bantu-speaking people began to migrate and spread from the current Cameroon-Nigeria border area approximately 5000 years ago and repeatedly diverged. This migration must have led the Bantu languages into repeated contact with neighbouring languages or the languages of the indigenous peoples. Therefore, some Bantu languages have borrowed words from other languages within the Bantu family, as well as from non-Bantu languages such as Nilotic or Cushitic.

However, the loanwords of Swahili differ from those of other Bantu languages in terms of both number and source. Many loanwords in Swahili are not from 'neighbouring languages', and the number of loanwords in Swahili is much larger than that in other Bantu languages. Although the grammar of Swahili undoubtedly belongs to the Bantu family, 40% of its vocabulary is of non-Bantu origin (Miyamoto 2009: 37). The next section closely examines Swahili loanwords.

4. Loanwords in Swahili

As discussed in the previous section, the Swahili lexicon contains several loanwords. This section examines Swahili loanwords more thoroughly.

4.1. Overview

Table 1.1 presents Schadeberg's summary of the languages with which Swahili came into contact and their contact periods.

Most Bantu languages came into contact with and borrowed from other languages within the Bantu family as well as from non-Bantu languages during migration (Table 1.1, Periods 1 and 2). In addition, most Bantu-speaking countries were once controlled by other countries (Table 1.1, Period 5), resulting in most Bantu languages encountering and borrowing from European languages during modernisation (Table 1.1, Period 7). However, Table 1.1, Period 3, which

refers to language contact through the Indian Ocean Trading network, is unique to the Swahili language and led to its formation.

	Period	**Label**	**Donor languages**
1	Before 800 CE	Pre-Swahili	South Cushitic
2	800–2000	Hinterland neighbourhood	North Eastern Coast Bantu: Sambaa, Zaramo, Zigua, etc.
3	800–1920	Indian Ocean Trading network	Arabic, Indian languages, [Persian], [Chinese], Malagasy, Malay
4	1000–2000	Arabic-dominated Islamic culture	Arabic
5		Foreign political dominance:	
a	1500–1700	・Portuguese	Portuguese
b	1600–1920	・Omani	Arabic
c	1800–1960	・Late colonialism	English, German, French, Italian
6	1800–1900	Caravan trade	Nyamwezi
7	1960–2000	Standardisation & modernisation	English, Arabic, Neo-Latin

Table 1.1: History of Swahili language contact (Schadeberg 2009a).

4.2. Loanwords from Arabic

As mentioned above, approximately 40% of the Swahili vocabulary comprises non-Bantu loanwords (Miyamoto 2009: 37), with many originating from Arabic. A considerable number of loanwords of Arabic origin are used probably unconsciously as 'loanwords' in Swahili. The words presented in Examples (4)–(8) are only a few examples from Schadeberg (2009b) that are used daily by people in Tanzania, without the realisation that they are loanwords.

	[Swahili]		[Arabic]
(4)	jamaa	'family'	ğamāʕa

(5)	samaki	'fish'	samak
(6)	damu	'blood'	dam
(7)	homa	'fever'	humma(t)
(8)	sahani	'dish, plate'	sahn

Nouns used in Examples (1), (2), and (3), *kitabu* 'book' and *kalamu* 'pen', are also loanwords from Arabic.

Lodhi (2000: 98) states that Swahili adjectives of Arabic origin outnumber those of Bantu origin. Examples (9)–(11) from Lodhi (2000: 98) present adjectives of Arabic origin.

(9)	ghali	'expensive'
(10)	laini	'soft'
(11)	safi	'clean'

As Table 1.1 presents, Swahili adopted loanwords from Arabic not only through Indian Ocean trading, but also owing to Islamic influence and Omani rule (of Zanzibar). The exact period when many Arabic loanwords entered Swahili remains unknown.

4.3. Loanwords from other languages

It is well known that Arabic is the primary donor language for Swahili loanwords during its formation, whereas English is the primary donor language for today's modern Swahili. However, it is not well known that Swahili also contains many loanwords from languages other than Arabic, such as Indian languages or Persian, through Indian Ocean trading.

According to Lodhi (2000), more than 600 words in the common Swahili lexicon are rooted in Indian languages. Below are examples from Schadeberg (2009b).

	[Swahili]		[Hindi]
(12)	bangili/ bangiri	'bracelet'	bangli
(13)	gundi	'wood gum'	gond

| (14) | patasi | 'chisel' | patāsi[2], pʰāḍsī |
| (15) | taa | 'lamp' | diyā |

Importantly, the word 'Hindi' in Swahili documents does not specifically refer to the 'Hindi language' defined as an official language in the current Indian constitution, but refers to 'Indian languages' more broadly. Lodhi (2000) states that only a few loanwords are borrowed from Hindi; instead, other Indian languages such as Cutchi, Sindhi, and Gujarati are the main donors of most loanwords from Indian languages. Interestingly, however, the names of typical Swahili dishes, such as *chapati, biriyani*, and *sambusa*, were borrowed from the Hindi language, along with their cuisine.

	[Swahili]	[Hindi]
(16)	chapati	capātī
(17)	sambusa	samosā
(18)	biriyani	biryānī

Behnam (2015) lists 78 Swahili loanwords from Persian. Examples are presented in (19)–(22):

	[Swahili]		[Persian]
(19)	kaka	'elder brother'	kākā
(20)	dada	'elder sister'	dādā
(21)	pamba	'cotton'	panbe
(22)	darubini	'microscope'	dūrbīn

4.4. Loanwords whose donor language is ambiguous

The examples presented above refer to a specific donor language. However, as Schadeberg (2009a: 84) explains, in the context of the Indian Ocean trade network, it is often impossible to trace a loanword back to a specific donor language. Therefore, the sources of many Swahili loanwords remain unclear. For

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[2] The reviewer commented that 'patāsi' may be a mistake for 'patāsī'. However, I have retained it as it is in Schadeberg (2009b).

example, *hewa* 'air' in Example (23) could be from Arabic *hawa* or Hindi-Urdu *hava*. Another example is *meza* 'table' in Example (25), whose possible sources are Arabic, Persian, Hindi-Urdu, or Portuguese, however, the specific donor language cannot be determined. Examples (23)–(28) are taken from Schadeberg (2009b).

(23) hewa 'air'

     hawāʔ   Arabic

     havā   Hindi-Urdu

(24) bara 'continent'

     barr   Arabic

     bar   Persian

(25) meza 'table'

     mēz   Arabic

     mez   Persian[3]

     mez~mīz   Hindi-Urdu

     mesa   Portuguese

(26) pesa 'money'

     paisa   Hindi-Urdu

     peça   Portuguese

(27) rangi 'colour'

     rang   Persian

     rang   Hindi-Urdu

(28) bahari 'sea'

     baḥr   Arabic

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[3] The reviewer pointed out that the examples were the other way around, that is, 'mez, mīz: Persian; mez: Hindi-Urdu'. However, here I have left them as they appear in Schadeberg (2009b).

bahra   Persian[4]
baḥr   Hindi-Urdu

Many Swahili loanwords cannot be traced to a single-donor language. Behnam (2015: 215) makes a similar point. He states that the following routes are possible when Persian words are borrowed into Swahili:

(29)   a.   Persian --> Swahili
        b.   Persian --> other language(s) --> Swahili
        c.   other language --> Persian --> Swahili

Behnam (2015) lists 78 loanwords from a Swahili-Japanese dictionary containing 10,000 words that he considers to belong to Examples (29a) or (29b). He concludes that only 33 of them are loanwords from 'pure' Persian (see 4.3.). However, even among these 33 loanwords, some were considered by Schadeberg as 'loanwords of ambiguous etymology' (2009b).

Schadeberg (2009a: 85) lists possible combinations of donor languages of Swahili loanwords whose donor language cannot be identified as a specific single language in Example (30). The following list demonstrates that a wide range of combinations is possible.

(30)   (Indian Ocean) Arabic or Hindi
        (Indian Ocean) Arabic or Persian
        (Indian Ocean) Arabic or Persian or Hindi
        Arabic or Persian or Hindi or Malagasy
        Indian Ocean Arabic or Persian or Hindi or Portuguese
        Arabic or Portuguese
        Persian or Malagasy
        Persian or Hindi
        Hindi or Portuguese

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[4] The reviewer pointed out that it must be 'baḥr: Persian; bahr,bahar: Hindi-Urdu'. However, here I have left them as they appear in Schadeberg (2009b).

Hindi or Malay or Malagasy   Schadegerg (2009a: 85)

Let us consider the phenomenon in which many Swahili loanwords cannot be narrowed down to a single donor language.

Although Arabic was the dominant language in the Indian Ocean trading network and the most important donor language for Swahili, it also served as an important donor language for languages other than Swahili. Additionally, as Arabic functioned as the lingua franca of the Indian Ocean trading network, it must have borrowed words from other languages spoken there. Therefore, most of its vocabulary may have been influenced by the several languages involved. Thus, vocabulary of Indian origin may have entered Swahili via Persian, or vocabulary of Persian origin may have entered Swahili via the Indian languages. Moreover, it is possible that vocabulary borrowed from Arabic originally entered Swahili through another language.

The inability to identify the etymology of Swahili loanwords is a clear indication of the linguistic situation during the Indian Ocean trade. Although Arabic was the dominant language, many other languages were also used and naturally borrowed from each other. This language contact during the Indian Ocean trade enriched all the languages involved.

5. Trace of Indian Ocean trading in Swahili expression

So far, we have discussed traces of Indian Ocean trading in lexical borrowings; however, this can also be observed in expressions in Swahili.

The Swahili words *pandisha* and *shusha* are transitive verbs that mean 'to raise (something)' and 'to lower (something)', respectively, as presented in Example (31). However, in Zanzibar Swahili they are also used to describe travelling on the sea as intransitive verbs, meaning 'go up' and 'go down'.

(31)   a.   Ni-li-pandisha   bendera.
            SM1sg-PST-raise   9.flag
            'I raised the flag.'
       b.   Ni-li-shusha   bendera.
            SM1sg-PST-lower   9.flag
            'I put down my flag.'

(32)   **April to Sept. *Kusi* (south wind)**
   a. Ni-na-pandisha Dar es Salaam.
      SM1sg-PRS-raise Dar es Salaam
      'I am going (up) to Dar es Salam.'
   b. Ni-na-shusha Tanga.
      SM1sg-PRS-lower Tanga
      'I am going (down) to Tanga.'

(33) **Nov. to March. *Kaskazi* (north wind)**
   a. Ni-na-shusha Dar es Salaam.
      SM1sg-PRS-lower Dar es Salaam
      'I am going (down) to Dar es Salaam.'
   b. Ni-na-pandisha Tanga.
      SM1sg-PRS-raise Tanga
      'I am going (up) to Tanga.'

Example (32) is used when travelling from the island of Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam and Tanga on the mainland during the southerly monsoon season. Travelling to Dar es Salaam, which is located south of Zanzibar, is a headwind movement; thus, *pandisha* 'raise' is used as an intransitive verb that means 'go up'. However, travelling to Tanga, which is located north of Zanzibar, is a tailwind movement; thus, *shusha* 'lower' is used as an intransitive verb that means 'go down'. The verb is reversed when the wind direction changes, as presented in Example (33).

Kusi (south wind), April to September

Kaskazi (north wind), November to March

Tanga

Pemba

shusha

pandisha

Stone Town

Bagamoyo

N

Dar es Salaam

Tanga

Pemba

pandisha

shusha

Stone Town
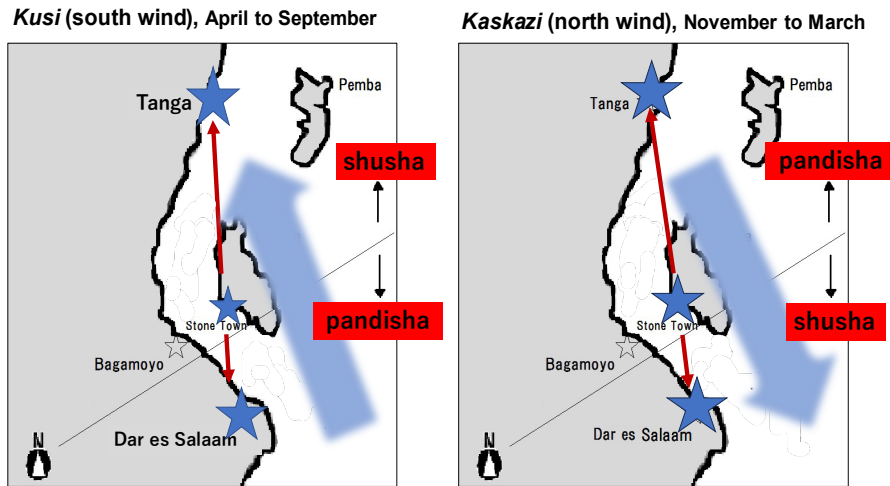
Bagamoyo

N

Dar es Salaam

Figure 1.3: Relation between the monsoon and the verb alternation
(Yoneda and Hatsuda 2018).

The use of 'up' and 'down' for conditions other than physical up and down
can be found in many languages, including Tutuba (Naito 2009) and Lamaholot
(Nagaya 2014). In Japanese, 'up' is used for travel to Tokyo and 'down' for
travel from Tokyo. When referring to something other than physical up and down,
'up' is usually used to describe the movement towards a political or economic
centre, whereas 'down' is used to refer to movement from the centre. However,
in Swahili in Zanzibar, 'up' and 'down' are distinguished by headwind and
tailwind, respectively.

The use of 'go down' to move with the 'natural current' of a tailwind and 'go
up' to move against the current of a headwind appears to have originated during
the Indian Ocean trade conducted through dhows. Indian Ocean trade was
dependent on the monsoon winds of the *Kusi* 'south wind', which blew from the
south from April to September, and the *Kaskazi* 'north wind', which blew from
the north from November to March.

Furthermore, this distinction applies to the expression of land movement.
Shusha 'go down' is used for movement towards Stone Town, the centre of
Zanzibar, while *pandisha* 'go up' is used for movement from Stone Town to the

villages. This is the opposite of 'up' and 'down' in Japanese or other languages. However, in this case, the movement from the villages to the centre is considered 'down' as it is a 'tailwind' movement, which is a natural flow, similar to going south in a north wind.

Although this expression may be confined to the Swahili dialects of coastal areas, it can be considered a unique expression of Swahili, formed during the monsoon trade in the Indian Ocean.

6. Conclusion

The vocabulary and expressions of today's Swahili provide an insight into its history of contact with the outside world. Swahili has been the pre-eminent contact language, not only during the Indian Ocean trade, but also throughout history, as presented in Table 1.1. The history of contact with the outside world plays a crucial role in the identity of Swahili-speaking people. Unlike English, loanwords from the Indian Ocean trade are part of the formation of the Swahili language, many of which are used today without the awareness that they are loanwords. In conclusion, the influence of the Indian Ocean trade is fully integrated into Swahili.

Lodhi (2000:1) notes that 'Swahili on the East African coast is a successful blend of Persian, Arab-Islamic, and West and South Indian elements'. However, Swahili is no longer 'the language of the East African coast', but 'the language of the East Africa'. Moreover, the Indian Ocean rim, which influenced Swahili vocabulary through Indian Ocean trade, had a strong impact on both the coast and interior of Africa, particularly East Africa, through the Swahili language. Considering the extent and speed at which Swahili is spreading, this will undoubtedly continue across Africa in the near future.

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2

The Gypsy Languages of Iran
An Overview

Hassan Rezai Baghbidi

Abstract: Apart from the speakers of the two Indo-Aryan languages, Jaḍgālī and Kholosī, Iran is home to several Gypsy communities that still preserve, to some extent, two varieties of their ancestral languages: Domari and Romani. Traces of Iranian Domari are found only in the jargon developed by these gypsy communities. These jargons are grammatically based on the languages of their host communities, predominantly Persian dialects, but they incorporate a significant number of Domari words of Indo-Aryan origin. In contrast, Iranian Romani (or Romāno, as it is refered to by its speakers) has retained most of its Indo-Aryan features, despite being heavily influenced by Persian and Azari Turkish. This paper offers a brief overview of the primary characteristics of the gypsy languages spoken in Iran.

Keywords: Indo-Aryan languages, Gypsy languages, Gypsy jargons, Domari, Romani

0. Introduction: The migrations of Gypsies have been so extensive that they can now be found in almost every part of the world, where they are known by various names (see: Lyovin 1997: 51; Afšār-e Sistāni 1998: 25-28). The ancestors of Gypsies, who referred to themselves as *ḍomba* in northwestern India (Richardson 2017: 116), migrated westward in three distinct periods: (1) The initial wave of migration occurred around the early 5th century and resulted in the penetration of Gypsies into Iranian lands. According to al-Iṣfahānī, the renowned Iranian historian of the 10th century, upon the request of the Sasanian king Bahrām V (reign: 420-438), the ruler of India sent 12000 minstrels to Iran to be distributed across various parts of the country (ed. Gottwaldt 1844: 54). The same story is echoed in Ferdowsi's *Šāhnāma*, where Šangol, the king of India, sends 10000 male and female minstrels to Bahrām to entertain his subjects (ed. Osmanov and Nušin 1968: VII/451, verses 2557-2561). (2) The second wave of migration occurred before the 12th century towards the Balkan Peninsula in the Greek-

speaking Byzantine Empire, followed by the widespread dispersion of Gypsies across Europe. (3) The third wave of migration also occurred before the 12th century, during which a number of gypsies spread across the Middle East via Iran, departed Syria, and entered Armenian-speaking regions of the southern Caucasus (see also: Windfuhr 2003: 415; Marushiakova and Popov 2016: 77; Richardson 2017: 117). The first group called themselves *ḍōm*, while the second and the third groups used the self-ethnonyms *řom* and *lom,* respectively. Therefore, Gypsy languages can be classified into three main branches: Domari, Romani, and Lomavren.

The long-lasting presence of Gypsies in Iranian lands since their first wave of migration, along with their subsequent migrations to Europe and the southern Caucasus, is the primary reason for the presence of Iranian words in all branches of the Gypsy languages. For example, in addition to containing a large number of Greek loanwords, the European branch (i.e., Romani) still retains a significant number of Iranian loanwords such as *ambrol* ('pear'), *diz* ('fortress'), *nišan* ('mark, sign'), *zen* ('saddle'), *zor* ('power, strength'), and even the prefix *bi-* ('without, -less'). Similarly, the Caucasian branch (i.e., Lomavren) not only contains a large number of Armenian loanwords, but also a considerable number of Iranian loanwords such as *barbar* ('equal'), *bazax* ('sin'), *əras-* ('to arrive'), *piyaz(av)* ('onion'), *suz* ('needle') (see also: Hancock 1995: 34-41; Voskanian 2002: 170-177).

The Domari language soon spread beyond Iranian lands and reached the Caucasus, the Middle East, and North Africa, where it developed into two major varieties: a northern variety spoken in the Caucasus, Syria, and Lebanon, and a southern variety spoken in Palestine and Jordan (Matras 2012: 15). In contrast, 12 dialect groups emerged from Romani in Europe: 1. South Balkan Romani; 2. North Balkan Romani; 3. South Italian Romani; 4. Slovene Romani, 5. South Central Romani, 6. North Central Romani, 7. Transylvanian Romani, 8. Vlax Romani, 9. Ukrainian Romani, 10. Northeastern Romani, 11. Northwestern Romani, 12. Iberian Romani (See: Elšík and Beníšek 2020: 399-408). Around the 18th century, some speakers of South Balkan Romani migrated from northern Greece to Iran and settled in various regions (see also: Matras 2010: 39). Their language, which they call Romāno, has been heavily influenced by Persian and Azari Turkish, yet it has preserved most of its Indo-Aryan features. However, the Lomavren language did not spread significantly beyond the Caucasus and is now spoken primarily by the older generation of the Lom population in Armenia, Georgia, and Turkey (Voskanian 2002: 169; see also: Voskanian 2011: 811-818).

I. The Domari language in Iran

Gypsies can be found in nearly all Iranian provinces, where they are referred to by various names based on their lifestyle, profession, social status, cultural norms, or hypothetical origins. These names include: Āhangar, Čegini, Čingāna,

Dumaki, Foyuj, Harāmi, Jat, Jugi, Kowli, Lavand, Luli, Luri, Luti, Motreb, Pāpati, Qarači/Qarāči, Qarbālband, Qerešmāl, Qorbati, Sudāni, Suzmāni, Tušmāl, Zangi, Zot, and others (for references to Gypsies in Persian literature see: Xatibi 2018). The word 'Kowli,' which is more commonly used in Iran, is often thought to be a distortion of *Kāboli*, i.e., someone coming from Kabul, Afghanistan (e.g., Newbold 1856: 310; De Gobineau 1857: 690; Sykes 1902b: 437; Amanolahi 2000: 109; Digard 2003: 412). However, it has also been linked to the Hindi word *kālā,* meaning 'black' or 'dark' (e.g., Ivanow 1914: 442). Most Iranian Gypsies live a semi-nomadic lifestyle, earning their livelihood through blacksmithing, carpentry, peddling, begging, fortune-telling, and/or singing. However, due to the lack of reliable census data, it is not possible to estimate their population.

The Domari-speaking Gypsies of Iran were compelled to learn the languages of the host communities in which they lived, primarily Persian dialects, and consequently coexistence and linguistic contact led to the development of several jargons or mixed languages among Iranian Gypsies. These jargons were created to facilitate intergroup communication in the presence of outsiders and to prevent others from understanding. These typically employ the simplified grammar of the host community's language, combined with a number of Domari-derived lexical items. Additionally, these languages incorporate words from the languages of other minority groups, particularly the secret language of Iranian Jews, known as Loterāʾi.

Loterāʾi, which appears in variant forms in Persian dictionaries as Lutarā, Lutar, Lutare, Lotra and Lotre, derives from *loʾ-tōrāʾī,* meaning 'Non-Toraic.' This name was chosen by Iranian Jews to distinguish their secret language from the language of the Torah, namely Hebrew (Yarshater 1977: 2). This distinction reflects the fact that most of the vocabulary in this secret language was not Hebrew but Aramaic (see also: Schwartz 2014: 39, 48). Some Jewish Loterāʾi words can be traced back to Old Aramaic, which demonstrated that Jewish Loterāʾi originated during the Achaemenid period (550-330 BC; see also: Schwartz 2012; Schwartz 2014: 37).

The earliest mention of the Domari people in Persian literature is found in the works of the renowned historian Beyhaqi (995-1077). In his *Tārix,* he refers to the 'Domani' people among the minstrels and musicians of the town of Ghaznin, now known as Ghazni in present-day Afghanistan (ed. Yāhaqqi and Sayyedi 2009: I/5). The earliest reference to Loterāʾi appears in the 10th century Persian geographical treatise *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam min al-Mašriq ilā al-Maḡrib*. Under the description of the town of Astarabad in the Deylaman region, it is stated: "They speak two languages: the one is the Lutarā (i.e., Loterāʾi) of Astarabad, and the other is the Persian of Gorgan" (ed. Sotude 1983: 144). Two other early mentions of Loterāʾi are available. The first is found in the margin of a manuscript of *Loqat-e Fors* by Asadi Tusi (c. 1000-1073), where *lif* is said to mean 'beard' in Loterāʾi, The second appears in two verses by the 12th century

poet Suzani of Samarqand, which quote the words *dax* ('good') and *zif* ('bad, wicked') from the Loterāʾi of Karkh, a town in Transoxiana (see: Dehxodā's *Loqatnāme*, ed Moʾin and Šahidi 1998: XIII/19805 under '*lutare*', 19873 under '*lif*'). Schwartz (2012; 2014: 39) has demonstrated the Jewish origins of *dax* and *zif* by tracing them back to the Aramaic words *daxyā*, *dəxē* ('pure, (ritually) correct') and *zayif* ('false').

Words of Loterāʾi origin soon made their way into the secret languages of other minority groups. For example, a group of beggars in the 10th century, known as the Banū Sāsān (i.e., 'the sons of Sāsān'), devised a secret language based on Arabic. This language was referred to in medieval Arabic sources as *luḡat al-mukaddīn* ('the language of beggars') and, after the 13th century, as *luḡat al-ḡurabāʾ* or *lisān al-ḡurabāʾ* ('the language of strangers'). In addition to Jewish Loterāʾi words (see e.g., Bosworth 1976a; Schwartz 2014: 50), this secret language incorporated a few Iranian loanwords, such as *qantat* ('city') (cf. Sogdian *kanθ*) and *kabštar* ('camel') (cf. Persian *šotor*) (see: Bosworth 1976b: 95-96; Richardson 2017: 154).

The vocabulary of the jargons spoken by Iranian Gypsies consists of genuine Domari words, Jewish Loterāʾi words, loanwords from surrounding languages, words of unknown origin, and several artificially created words. One notable lexical characteristic of the mixed languages of Iranian Gypsies is the distortion of words in various ways. For example, in the Qorbati language of Khenejin in the Iranian Markazi Province, *lāxa* from Persian *xāla*, *xāle* ('maternal aunt'), *lāmu* from Persian *amu* ('paternal uncle'), and *lib* from Persian *sib* ('apple') (see: Moqaddam 1949: 27, 47).

I.1. Research background on Iranian Domari

Unfortunately, Iranian Domari has not yet been fully researched, and previous studies have been limited to word samples. Some of the earliest of these can be found in Ouseley's travelogue, where, during his visit to Tabriz in June 1812, he recorded a few words of the Qarāči 'tribe' of Tabriz (Ouseley 1823: 401). A few additional 'Persian Gypsy' words were published in the 19th century by Newbold (1856: 311) and de Gobineau (1857: 695-696). At the beginning of the 20th century, Sykes (1902a: 345-349; 1902b: 438) published a significant number of words in the Qorbati language of Kerman in southern Iran. In a short note appended to Sykes' paper, Dames (1902: 350) analysed the Indo-Aryan origin of some Qorbati words, noting that Qorbati was not 'a true language,' but rather 'an artificial secret dialect or jargon.' In 1903, de Goeje (1903: 40-45) compared some Iranian Gypsy words, published by Ouseley, Newbold, de Gobineau and Sykes with those spoken by Gypsies in other regions, particularly Syria and Egypt. The first examples of words and sentences in the Jugi and Gudāri languages of Astarabad were later published by de Morgan (1904: 304-307). Shortly afterwards, Sykes (1906: 303-310) compiled a comparative list of 96

words from the Qorbati languages of Jiroft and Sirjan in southern Iran and Khorasan in north-eastern Iran. Again, Dames (1906: 311) appended a note highlighting the Indo-Aryan origins of some of these words. De Goeje and Sampson (1907) also contributed notes to the Qorbati words published by Sykes in 1902 and 1906. The extensive notes of Patkanoff (1908: 229-257; 1909: 246-266, 325-334) on the dialects of Transcaucasian Gypsies also included a number of Qarāči words and terms used by the Gypsies of Baluchestan. Ivanow (1914: 445-455) described and published some of the key phonological and morphological features of the language spoken by the Gypsies of Qaʾenat in north-eastern Iran, along with a short vocabulary and a sample story text. A few years later, he dcocumented the languages of Gypsies from Neyshabur, Sabzevar, Birjand, Gonabad, and Qaʾen, who had migrated to Mashhad (Ivanow 1920: 284-291). In this later work, he published new vocabulary and corrected errors in his 1914 paper.

Parallel efforts have been made to collect and describe the secret languages of social and religious minorities. Romaskevich (1945: 142-143) collected a few words from the secret language of the Darvish community in Isfahan in 1914. Ivanow published a vocabulary of the secret language of the Banū Sāsān, based on a late 16th century manuscript he had seen in Bukhara (Ivanow 1922: 379-383). He also recorded a short list of words used by the Xāksāri Darvishes of Shahr-e Babak in southern Iran (Ivanow 1927: 244-245). The exact location of Soltanabad, whose 'Persian Gypsy' vocabulary was published by Wirth (1927), remains unclear because many villages in north-western Iran share the name Soltanabad. Some scattered words from Iranian Gypsy languages have also been found on websites, such as terms from the Gypsy language of Bam in southern Iran (see: Oprisan 2004).

Moqaddam (1949) was the first Iranian scholar to study the Qorbati dialect in Khenejin. In addition to documenting Qorbati vocabulary, he provided Qorbati sentences and explanations of its phonology and word formation (Moqaddam 1949: 23, 26-109, 131, 142-152). Kiyā (1961: xiii-xiv) briefly introduced some of the main lexical characteristics of the mixed languages of Iranian Gypsies, such as polysemy and the distortion of Persian words (e.g., *lamir* from Persian *xamir* 'dough', *guščam* and *gušuzā* from Persian *guš* 'ear'). He also demonstrated that the languages of the Gudār of Gorgan and the Xorāy of Mazandaran were grammatically based on the Mazandarani language. Sotude (1962: 471-477) published a short vocabulary of the Selyari language spoken in 14 villages in Firuzkuh. Amanolahi (1978: 284-285) documented a few words from the secret languages of wandering musicians in Iran, including the Āšiq of Azarbaijan, the Čalli of Baluchestan, the Luti of Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and Lorestan, the Mehtar of Mamasani, the Navāzanda of Torbat-e Jam, the Sāzanda of Band-e Amir and Marv-Dasht, and the Bakhtiari Tušmāl. Bolukbāši (2000) discussed some of the main features of Gypsy languages and Lutarā varieties in Iran. In the summer of 2000, the author of this paper conducted

linguistic fieldwork on Shirazi Qorbati, documenting the findings in 2006 (see: Rezai Baghbidi 2006). Other Iranian scholars have introduced or studied Gypsy languages or Lutarā varieties, including the Lutarā of Gorgan and Chulaʾi Lutarā (Nasri-ye Ašrafi et al. 2002: V/ 2509-2519, 2521-2524), the Kālesi language (Balāli-Moqaddam 2005), the Selyari language (Dumāniyān 2007; Baširnežād 2011; Balāli-Moqaddam 2015; Navāʾiyān and Zabihi 2020), the Jugi language of Mazandaran (Hāšemi 2011), the language of the Borumand family (Hoseyni-ye Maʾsum 2014), and the Arranaji Lutarā which is grammatically based on the Tāti language (Sabzalipur and Delgarm 2016). What remains certain about these so-called Gypsy languages is that they are primarily jargons based on the languages spoken by the communities in which the Gypsies live. Only a few original Indo-Aryan words are still traceable in them.

I.2. Linguistic features of Iranian Domari

Iranian Domari varieties can be classified into four main groups on the basis of their personal pronouns: (1) those with two distinct forms for the direct and oblique (e.g., Qarāči); (2) those with the suffix *-ri* (e.g., Qorbati of Qaʾenat); (3) those with the suffixes *-ki* and *-ri* (e.g., Jugi of Astarabad); (4) those with the suffixes *-ki* and *-ri*, and Persian enclitic pronouns (e.g., Qorbati of Khenejin) (Table 2.1; see also Windfuhr 2003: 418).

Table 2.1: Classification of Iranian Domari varieties based on their personal pronouns.

			Qarāči (cf. Patkanoff 1909: 265)	Qorbati of Qaʾenat (Ivanow 1914: 447)	Jugi of Astarabad (cf. De Morgan 1904: 306)	Qorbati of Khenejin (Moqaddam 1949: 87)
1st person singular		direct	*ma*			
		oblique	*mi-ra*	*me-ri*	*mo-ki*	*xo-ki-m*
2nd person singular		direct	*tu*			
		oblique	*te-ra*	*te-ri*	*to-ki*	*xo-ki-t*
3rd person singular	direct	masculine	*hu*			
		feminine	*ohe*	*u-ri*	*u-ri*	*u-ri*
	oblique	masculine	*hu-ra*			
		feminine	*ohe-ra*			

As mentioned earlier, the Domari varieties in Iran are, in fact, jargons or mixed languages that utilise a simplified grammar derived from the language of the host community. In addition to their genuine Domari words of Indo-Aryan origin, they include words from various other sources, including the languages of other minority groups. For example, excerpts from my fieldwork on Shirazi Qorbati are provided here to demonstrate that the Qorbati variety follows the phonological and grammatical structure of Shirazi Persian, although most of its vocabulary is distinct. Shirazi Qorbati belongs to the fourth group.

Shirazi Qorbati has no grammatical gender. There are two numbers: singular and plural. The plural morpheme is *-ā*: *mārez-ā* ('men'), *ǰāde-ā* ('boys'). The suffix of definition is *-u*: *dirak-u* ('the girl'), *ǰāde-u* ('the boy'). Indefinition is indicated by *ye* ('one'), the suffix *-i*, or both: *ye mārez*, *mārez-i*, *ye mārez-i* ('a man'). Adjectives follow nouns, and possessors follow the possessed. Almost always, the linking particle *-e* (*-y* after vowels) is used between them: *mārez-e dax* ('good man'), *mārez-ā-y dax* ('good men'), *ǰāde-y Ali* ('Ali's son'), *dile-y xokimun* ('our house'). A definite direct object is marked by *-e*: *mār xokim-e tevārt* ('The snake bit me'), *mār-e meytennam* ('I killed the snake'). Comparative adjectives are formed by adding the suffix *-tar*: *dax-tar* ('better'), *letew-tar* ('bigger'). Superlatives do not have a specific marker and are expressed syntactically.

Personal pronouns in Shirazi Qorbati are listed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Personal pronouns in Shirazi Qorbati.

		enclitic	reflexive
1st person singular	*xokim*	*-m*	*xokim*
2nd person singular	*xokit*	*-t*	*xokit*
3rd person singular	*uri*	*-š*	*xokiš*
1st person plural	*xokimun*	*-mun*	*xokimun*
2nd person plural	*xokitun*	*-tun*	*xokitun*
3rd person plural	*uriyā*	*-šun*	*xokišun*

Demonstrative pronouns: *iri* ('this'), *iriyā* ('these'), *uri* ('that'), *uriyā* ('those'). Interrogative pronouns: *kuʾi* ('who?'), *čekam* ('what?').

Table 2.3 presents the Shirazi Qorbati numerals.

Table 2.3: Shirazi Qorbati numerals.

1	*yakāt*	11	*yāzzagilā*	21	*bisyeggilā*
2	*dohāt*	12	*davāzzagilā*	22	*bisdogilā*
3	*sehāt*	13	*sizzagilā*	25	*bispangilā*
4	*čārhāt*	14	*čārdagilā*	30	*sigilā*
5	*pahāt*	15	*punzagilā*	40	*čelgilā*
6	*šišhāt*	16	*šunzagilā*	50	*panǰāgilā*
7	*hafhāt*	17	*hivdagilā*	60	*šasgilā*
8	*hašhāt*	18	*hiždagilā*	70	*haftādgilā*
9	*nohāt*	19	*nuzzagilā*	80	*haštādgilā*
10	*dahāt*	20	*bisgilā*	90	*navadgilā*

100	*lādoy*
1000	*lādoy letew*
10000	*lādoy letewtar*
100000	*lādoy letew-e letew*
1000000	*lādoy letew-e letew-e letew*
157389	*lādoy pahāt-e hafhāt-e sehāt-e hašhāt-e nohāt*

The verb has two stems: present and past. Verbs are inflected for person, number, mood, and tense. The present stem is used to form the present indicative, subjunctive, and imperative. The past stem is used to form the simple past, continuous past, present perfect, and past perfect. Infinitives are formed by adding the suffix -*an* to the past stem. Past participles are formed by adding the suffix -*e* to the past stem. The present indicative and continuous past employ the prefix *mi*-, while the present subjunctive and imperative employ the prefix *be*- (also realised as *bi*- and *bo*-).

The personal endings of Shirazi Qorbati are listed in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Shirazi Qorbati's personal endings.

	present	past	imperative
1st person singular	*-am*	*-am*	
2nd person singular	*-i*	*-i*	*-ø*
3rd person singular	*-e*	*-ø*	
1st person plural	*-im*	*-im*	
2nd person plural	*-id*	*-id*	*-id*
3rd person plural	*-an*	*-an*	

For example:

Table 2.5: Inflection of the Shirazi Qorbati verb *gavidan* ('to go'), present stem: *gav-*, past stem: *gavid-*.

present		past		imperative
indicative	subjunctive	simple	continuous	
mi-gav-am	*be-gav-am*	*gavid-am*	*mi-gavid-am*	
mi-gav-i	*be-gav-i*	*gavid-i*	*mi-gavid-i*	*be-gav*
mi-gav-e	*be-gav-e*	*gavid*	*mi-gavid*	
mi-gav-im	*be-gav-im*	*gavid-im*	*mi-gavid-im*	
mi-gav-id	*be-gav-id*	*gavid-id*	*mi-gavid-id*	*be-gav-id*
mi-gav-an	*be-gav-an*	*gavid-an*	*mi-gavid-an*	

Table 2.6: Inflection of the Shirazi Qorbati verb *homāštan* ('to say'), present stem: *mār-*, past stem: *homāšt-*.

present		past		imperative
indicative	subjunctive	simple	continuous	
mi-mār-am	*be-mār-am*	*homāšt-am*	*mi-homāšt-am*	
mi-mār-i	*be-mār-i*	*homāšt-i*	*mi-homāšt-i*	*be-mār*
mi-mār-e	*be-mār-e*	*homāšt*	*mi-homāšt*	
mi-mār-im	*be-mār-im*	*homāšt-im*	*mi-homāšt-im*	

mi-mār-id	be-mār-id	homāšt-id	mi-homāšt-id	be-mār-id
mi-mār-an	be-mār-an	homāšt-an	mi-homāšt-an	

The main difference between the simple past and present perfect lies in the placement of stress: in the simple past, the stress falls on the last syllable of the past stem, whereas in the present perfect, it falls on the final syllable. Additionally, in the 3rd person singular, the present perfect is formed by the past participle of the verb (ending in *-e*; Table 2.7).

Table 2.7: The simple past versus the present perfect in Shirazi Qorbati.

simple past	gavíd-am	gavíd-i	gavíd	gavíd-im	gavíd-id	gavíd-an
present perfect	gavid-ám	gavid-í	gavid-é	gavid-ím	gavid-íd	gavid-án

The past perfect is formed by using the past participle of the main verb (ending in *-e*) followed by the simple past of the verb *bidan* ('to be') (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: The past perfect in Shirazi Qorbati.

past perfect	gavid-e bid-am	gavid-e bid-i	gavid-e bid	gavid-e bid-im	gavid-e bid-id	gavid-e bid-an

The passive is formed by using the past participle of the main verb (ending in *-e*) followed by the verb *hāvidan* ('to become') in an appropriate tense: *čevid-e mi-hāv-e* ('it is eaten'), *čevid-e hāv-id* ('it was eaten'), *čevid-e hāvid-e bid* ('it had been eaten'), etc.

The causative is formed by adding *-on-* (present causative stem), *-onn-* (past causative stem), or *-onn-an* (causative infinitive) to the present stem: *pehidan* ('to fall'), present stem: *pey-*, past stem: *pehid-*; but: *pey-onn-an* ('to cause to fall; to throw'), present stem: *pey-on-*, past stem: *pey-onn-*.

Denominative verbs are constructed from an auxiliary verb added to a nonverbal element such as a noun or adjective. Some of the most common auxiliary verbs are: *henāštan* (present stem: *narun-/nār-*) ('to do'), *dālidan* (present stem: *dāl-*) ('to receive'), *tevordan* (present stem: *tevor-*) ('to strike'), *veynidan* (present stem: *veyn-*) ('to give'), *varsonnan* (present stem: *varson-/arson-*) ('to take'). Some examples: *bāki henāštan* ('to play') (*bāki* 'play'), *bučāk henāštan* ('to rot') (*bučāk* 'smell'), *dax henāštan* ('to make') (*dax* 'good'), *gal henāštan* ('to put on') (*gal* 'body'), *peyduz henāštan* ('to find') (*peyduz* 'visible'), *šowkā/šowkitā henāštan* ('to weep') (*šowkā/šowkitā* 'weeping'), *vākul*

henāštan ('to open') (*vākul* 'open'), *zennegi henāštan* ('to live') (*zennegi* 'life'), *dennik dālidan* ('to bite') (*dennik* 'tooth'), *gāl tevordan* ('to think') (*gāl* 'thought'), *šekāl tevordan* ('to hunt') (*šekāl* 'prey'), *holčāki veynidan* ('to push') (*holčāki* 'push'), *telkāmi veynidan* ('to press') (*telkāmi* 'pressure'), *lābā varsonnan* ('to vomit') (*lābā* 'up').

II. The Romani language in Iran

Around the 18th century, a group of South Balkan Romani speakers migrated from northern Greece to Iran and settled in various regions. The descendants of these migrants now refer their language as Romāno. Another name for this language is Zargari, as most speakers reside in the village of Zargar, Qazvin Province, in northwestern Iran. The Iranian variety of South Balkan Romani is therefore variously referred to as Iranian Romani, Romāno, or Zargari. Iranian Romani closely resembles other South Balkan Romani varieties spoken in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Turkey (Matras et al. 1997: xvii; Matras 2002: 6; Elšík 2020: 183).

According to the Iranian gazetteer, the village of Zargar had a population of 160 families in 1999 (*Farhang-e Joqrāfiyāʾi* 1999: XXVI/304). Based on the most recent Iranian population census available on the official website of the Statistical Centre of Iran, the village of Zargar had 187 families, totalling 588 people, in 2016. Most of the village's inhabitants are trilingual, speaking Romani, Azari Turkish, and Persian.

The German Egyptologist Brugsch, who travelled to Iran in 1860-1861, reported that the Zargar tribe was descended from Alexander the Great and that they used many Greek words in their language, particularly Greek numerals. However, he confused the Zargari language (i.e., Iranian Romani) with a Persian-based artificial language of the same name. The words he quotes (Brugsch 1862: I/339) are, in fact, examples of artificial Zargari, where Persian words are divided into CV syllables, each syllable followed by a similar one beginning with *z*, e.g., *ye-ze-kī-zi* ('one') derives from Persian *yeki*, and *de-ze-h* ('village') comes from Persian *deh*.

One of the Persian sources in which the Zargar tribe is given a mention is the travel account of Hoseyni-ye Farāhāni written in 1885. While describing his travel to Qazvin, Farāhāni writes:

> "… There is a road of four *farsang*s going from the Qeshlaq caravanserai to the Kavanda caravanserai. It is covered with red earth and becomes muddy during the rainy season. The Zargar tribe of Qazvin live far from and near the road between the two caravanserais. They are all unmerciful robbers, robbing clandestinely and dirtily. Whenever they find an opportunity, day and night, they come to the road in a begging pose, and if they find two or three people unarmed, they rob them of their possessions"

(ed. Golzāri 1983: 16-17).

There are various contradictory oral accounts about the history of the Zargar tribe (see e.g., Kalbāsi 1993: 38-39; Xādemoššariʾe-ye Sāmāni 1994: 29), but the account recorded by Windfuhr (1970: 289) as told by the elder of the Zargar village appears more reliable. According to this version, Nāder Shāh (reign: 1736-1747) brought three highly skilled goldsmith (Persian: *zargar*) brothers from Rum/Rumelia, a historical region in the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire, to Iran. He granted them grazing grounds in the area of what is now Zargar village as winter pastures, and lands in the mountains west of Zanjan for summer pastures. They were also granted exemptions from taxation and military service. During the reign of Rezā Shāh (reign: 1925-1941), the descendants of these brothers settled permanently in the winter pastures, built their homes, and abandoned their summer grounds.

II.1. Research background on Iranian Romani

Windfuhr published the first introductory paper on Iranian Romani in 1970. Tehranizāde-ye Quchani published a short Romāno-Persian glossary in 1991, which was then translated into German by Djoneydi in 1996. In 1993, Kalbāsi published a paper on the morphology of Iranian Romani. In 1994, Xādemoššariʾe-ye Sāmāni wrote his MA dissertation on the Romāno spoken in the Zargar village. He published a short report in 2004. A full description of the Romāno of the Zargar village was published by the present author in 2003, based on fieldwork conducted in 2000-2001. The inhabitants of the Zargar village are typically trilingual in Romāno, Azari Turkish and Persian. However, as the languages of communication within neighbouring communities and education are Azari Turkish and Persian, respectively, Romāno is not effectively transmitted to the younger generation. This process of attrition, further accelerated by exogamy, threatens the complete extinction of Romāno.

Iranian Romani is spoken not only in Zargar village but also in Baqerabad-e Tork and Abyek in Qazvin Province, Shahriyar and Qeshlaq-e Zargarha in Tehran Province, and Quchan in Razavi Khorasan Province. According to the inhabitants of Zargar village, some relatives have migrated to the Iranian cities of Abadan, Khoy, Orumiye (Urmia), Salmas, Shiraz, and Tehran, but all have forgotten their ancestral language.

II.2. Linguistic features of Iranian Romani

Unlike Iranian Domari, Iranian Romani retains most of its Indo-Aryan phonological and morphological features. Iranian Romani has four short vowels (*a, e, o, ö*), four long vowels (*ā, i, u, ü*), and twenty-nine consonants (*p, ph, b, t, th, d, k, kh, g, q, ʾ, m, n, f, v, s, z, š, ž, x, γ, h, č, čh, ǰ, l, r, w, y*) (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 126-127). There is a tendency in some speakers to reduce the tripartite distinction between the voiceless non-aspirates (*p, t, k, č*), voiceless aspirates (*ph,*

th, kh, čh), and voiced non-aspirates (*b, d, g, ǰ*) to a bipartite one, either between the voiceless aspirates (*ph, th, kh, čh*) and voiced non-aspirates (*b, d, g, ǰ*), or between the voiceless non-aspirates (*p, t, k, č*) and voiced non-aspirates (*b, d, g, ǰ*) (Windfuhr 1970: 272-273). The most distinctive feature of Iranian Romani phonology, borrowed from Azari Turkish, is 'vowel harmony', e.g., *bu-lovu* ('moneyless'), derived from **bi-lovu* (with the Persian prefix *bi-* 'without, -less').

Iranian Romani nouns exhibit two genders (masculine and feminine), two numbers (singular and plural), and a two-layered case system. Layer I, consists of the nominative and oblique cases (Tables 2.9 and 2.10), while Layer II comprises secondary cases formed by adding case suffixes to the oblique (Table 2.11). The case suffixes in Iranian Romani may be influenced by vowel harmony (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 130).

Table 2.9: Iranian Romani Layer I case suffixes for vowel stems.

	vowel stems			
	masculine		feminine	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
nominative	*-o*	*-e, -a*	*-i*	*-a*
oblique	*-es*	*-en*	*-a*	*-en*

Table 2.10: Iranian Romani Layer I case suffixes for consonant stems.

	consonant stems			
	masculine		feminine	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
nominative	*-ø*	*-ø, -e, -a*	*-ø*	*-ø, -a*
oblique	*-es*	*-en*	*-a*	*-en*

Table 2.11: Iranian Romani Layer II case suffixes.

genitive/dative:	*-ke*
ablative/instrumental:	*-tār*

ablative	*-dan* (after temporal adverbs)
ablative:	*-āl/-ār* (after local adverbs)
locative:	*-te*
locative:	*-i* (after toponym)
vocative:	*-ā*

Inanimate nouns often have the same nominative and oblique forms: *kher* (m.) ('house'), *pani* (m.) ('water'). Masculine proper names take *-es* (*-s* after vowels) in the nominative and oblique: *Parviz-es gölu* 'Parviz went'; *Parviz-es dikhlom* ('I saw Parviz'); *Ali-s ajili* ('Ali came'); *Ali-s dikhlom* ('I saw Ali'). Feminine proper names take *-a* (*-na* after vowels) in the nominative and oblique: *Parvin-a geli* ('Parvin went'); *Parvin-a dikhlom* ('I saw Parvin'); *Ferešte-na ajili* ('Ferešte came'); *Ferešte-na dikhlom* ('I saw Ferešte').

Words ending in consonants, especially monosyllabic ones, often have the same form in both nominative singular and plural: *murš* (m.) ('man; men'), *dād* (m.) ('father; fathers'), *bār* (m.) ('stone; stones'); but: *dis* (m.) ('day'); *dis-e* ('days'); *čhib* (f.) ('language; tongue'); *čhib-a* ('languages; tongues'). Some words demonstrate irregular plural forms: *čhā*, pl. *čhā-vu* (m.) ('boy; son'); *jukel*, pl. *jukl-e* (m.) ('dog'); *šoru*, pl. *šoru* (m.) ('head'); *bori* (f.), pl. *boyr-a* (f.) ('bride; daughter-in-law').

Examples of layer II case suffixes: *Alis-ki* ('Ali's; to Ali; for Ali'), *madrasas-tār* ('from school'), *Alis-tār* ('with Ali'), *čāqus-tār* ('with a knife'), *ij-dan* ('since yesterday'), *opr-āl* ('from above'), *āngl-ār* ('from the front'), *veškis-ti* ('in the mountain; to the mountain'), *Teran-i* ('in Tehran; to Tehran'), *devl-ā* ('O God!').

There is no definite article in Iranian Romani, but indefiniteness for both genders is shown by the numeral *yek* ('one') or by *yedana* ('one piece of'): *yek murš* ('a man'); *yedana čhay* ('a girl').

Iranian Romani personal pronouns are inflected as in Table 2.12 (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 133).

Table 2.12: Iranian Romani personal pronouns.

	I	**thou**	**he**	**she**
nominative	*min*	*tu*	*(k)ovā*	*(k)oya*
oblique	*mān*	*tut*	*(k)olus,* *-les*	*(k)olā,* *-la*
dative	*māngu*	*tugu*	*(k)olusku,* *leske*	*(k)olāgu,* *lake*

ablative/instrumental	*māndār*	*tudār*	*(k)olustār, lestār*	*(k)olādār*
locative	*māndu*	*tudu*	*(k)olustu, leste*	*(k)olādu*
	we	**you**	**they**	
nominative	*āmun*	*timen*	*(k)olā*	
oblique	*āmun*	*timen*	*(k)olun, -len*	
dative	*āmungu*	*timenge*	*(k)olungu, lenge*	
ablative/instrumental	*āmundār*	*timendār*	*(k)olundār, lendār*	
locative	*āmundu*	*timende*	*(k)olundu, lende*	

The enclitic pronouns *-les*, *-la* and *-len* are only used after verbs: *dikhani-les* ('I see him') (= *olus dikhani*).

The dative forms of personal pronouns are not used in genitive functions; possession is expressed by possessive pronouns, whose nominative cases are shown in Table 2.13 (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 135).

Table 2.13: Nominative cases of Iranian Romani possessive pronouns.

	I	**thou**	**he**	**she**
masculine	*miro, mi-*	*tiro, ti-*	*leske, les(ke) kiro, les-*	*lake, la(ke) kiro, la-*
feminine	*miri, mi-*	*tiri, ti-*	*leske, les(ke) kiri, les-*	*lake, la(ke) kiri, la-*
	we	**you**	**they**	
masculine	*āmāro*	*tumāro*	*lenge, len(ge) kiro, len-*	
feminine	*āmari*	*tumari*	*lenge, len(ge) kiri, len-*	

Iranian Romani has borrowed its reflexive/emphatic pronouns from Azari

Turkish: *özüm* ('myself'), *özin* ('yourself'), *özi* ('himself, herself, itself'), *özimiz* ('ourselves'), *öziz* ('yourselves'), *özlari* ('themselves'). There are also two 3rd person reflexive possessives inflected by case, gender, and number (Table 2.14).

Table 2.14. Iranian Romani 3rd person reflexive possessives.

	singular	plural
masculine	*pi(ro)*	*pumāro*
feminine	*pi(ri)*	*pumari*

Examples: *piro dād/pu-dād* ('his own father; her own father'), *piri day/pi-day* ('his own mother; her own mother').

Attributive adjectives usually precede nouns that they modify. Both attributive and predicative adjectives agree in gender and number with the nouns to which they refer (Table 2.15).

Table 2.15: Iranian Romani adjective endings.

masculine	feminine	plural
-o	*-i*	*-e*

Examples: *lāčho murš* ('good man'), *lāčhi ǰuvel* ('good woman'), *lāčhe qaqina* ('good hens'), *kāvā bāšno pārno si* ('This cock is white'), *kaya qaqini parni si* ('This hen is white').

Unlike European Romani adjectives, Iranian Romani adjectives do not have comparative or superlative forms (see also: Elšík 2020: 167; Elšík and Matras 2006: 145). They are either expressed by words such as *but* 'very' and *dāhā* 'more' (Rezai Baghbidi 2002: 246), or expressed syntactically, e.g., *kāvā lāčho si* ('This is good'); *kāvā kolustār lāčho si* ('This is better than that'); *kāvā sir fendār lāčho si* ('This is the best of all').

After numbers larger than one the plural form is always used, e.g., *yek čhay* ('one daughter; one girl'); *oxto čhaya* ('eight daughters; eight girls'). Ordinal numbers, except *aval* ('first'), are made with the suffix *-(e)dino* and agree in gender and number with the noun they modify, e.g., *šov* ('six'); *šovedino murš* ('the sixth man'); *šovedini ǰuvel (* 'the sixth woman').

Iranian Romani verbs have two stems: present and past. The present stem is used to form the present indicative, the subjunctive, the imperfect, and the imperative. The past stem forms the simple past/present perfect and the pluperfect. The past stem is usually, though not always, created by adding the

suffix *-l* or *-d* to the present stem: *dikh-/dikhl-* ('to see'); *māng-/māngl-* ('to want'); *xā-/xāl-* ('to eat'); *l-/l-* ('to get; to buy'); *biken-/bikend-* ('to sell'); *beš-/bešd-* ('to sit'); *čor-/čord-* ('to steal'); *d-/d-* ('to give').

The suffix *-ay* converts intransitive/transitive present stems into causative present stems. The past stem of such causative forms ends in *-āvd*: *nāšay-/nāšāvd-* ('to make run', from *nāš-* 'to run'); *piyay-/piyāvd-* ('to make drink', from *piy-* 'to drink'). The second type of causative present stem is formed by adding the suffix *-ar* to adjectival and nominal stems, with the past stem ending in *-ard*: *šukhar-/šukhard-* ('to cause to become dry, to dry', from *šukho* 'dry'); *čikar-/čikard-* ('to cause to be muddy, from *čik* 'mud').

The mediopassive stem is formed with the addition of the suffixes *-iv* (present) and *-il* (past) to the past stem of the transitive verb: *čhindiv-/čhindil-* ('to be cut', from *čhin-/čhind-* 'to cut').

The personal endings are shown in Table 2.16 (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 139).

Table 2.16: Iranian Romani personal endings.

	present indicative	present subjunctive	simple past/ present perfect	imperfect	pluperfect	imperative
1st person singular	*-ā*, *-ani*	*-āv*	*-om*	*-āvās*	*-omās*	
2nd person singular	*-esā*, *-esani*	*-es*	*-ān*	*-esās*	*-ānās*	*-ø*
3rd person singular	*-elā*, *-elani*	*-el*	*-ās*	*-elās*	*-āsās*	
1st person plural	*-āsā*, *-āsani*	*-ās*	*-ām*	*-āsās*	*-āmās*	
2nd person plural	*-enā*, *-enani*	*-en*	*-en*	*-enās*	*-enās*	*-en*

3rd person plural	*-enā, -enani*	*-en*	*-e*	*-enās*	*-esās*	

Examples: *dikhā/dikhani* ('I see'), *dikhāv* ('I should see'), *dikhlom* ('I saw; I have seen'), *dikhāvās* ('I was seeing'), *dikhlomās* ('I had seen'), *dikh* ('see!').

It should be noted that the 3rd person singular simple past/present perfect ending for causative and mediopassive verbs is *-i* (not *-ās*), and the 3rd person singular pluperfect ending for such verbs is *-isās* (not *-āsās*).

The present participle is formed by adding the suffixes *-eni/-enis* (m.) and *-enisa* (f.) to the present stem, while the past participle is formed by adding the suffixes *-o* (m.), *-i* (f.), and *-e* (plural) to the past stem: *čhineni/čhinenis* (m.), *čhinenisa* (f.) ('cutting'), *čhindo* (m.), *čhindi* (f.), *čhinde* (plural) ('cut').

As previously mentioned, the present perfect has the same form as the simple past. However, under the influence of Persian, the present perfect can also be formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb *isipey* ('to be') (i.e., *som, sān, si, sām, sen, si*) added to the past participle of the main verb: *bešdo-som* (m.)/*bešdi-som* (f.) ('I have sat down').

The infinitive is formed by adding *-ipey* to the present stem: *čhinipey* ('to cut'). Infinitives borrowed from Azari Turkish end in *-meki* and are conjugated in their original Turkish forms (see also: Elšík and Matras 2006: 320): *akmeki* ('to plant'), *akiram* ('I plant'), *akam* ('I should plant'), *akdim* ('I planted'), *akmišam* ('I have planted'), *akirdim* ('I was planting'), *akmišdim* ('I had planted'), *akaǰiyam* ('I will plant'), *ak* ('plant!').

The adverb of negation is *nā* and the adverb of prohibition is *mā*: *nā-xālām* ('we did not eat/have not eaten'), *mān* (from *mā-ān*) ('Do not bring!').

The modal verbs *ašti* ('can') and *garak* ('must') are not conjugated for person and tense: *ašti ǰani* ('I can go'), *n-ašti ǰālās* ('he/she could not go'), *garak xāv* ('I must eat'), *garak xāvās* ('I had to eat; I must have eaten').

Unlike many European Romani varieties, Iranian Romani is an OV language. Pronominal objects can appear before or after verbs. In the latter case, 3rd person enclitics (i.e., *-les*, *-la* and *-len*) are often used: *āmun na-dikhesān/na-dikhesān āmun* ('you do not see us'), *olus dikhani/dikhani-les* ('I see him'). Direct objects often precede indirect objects: *min parsina Parvināku lom* ('I bought a dress for Parvin').

Resumptive pronouns are not uncommon, especially the 3rd person plural enclitic pronoun *-len*: *Hesenes čhaya kotusi[-len]* ('Hassan's daughters are there'), *dār piter[-len]* ('Open the doors!').

III. The lexicon of Iranian Domari and Romani
One of the key words used to identify Domari and Romani varieties is the term

for 'horse,' which is cognate with the Hindi word *ghoṛā* and traces back to Sanskrit *ghoṭa-*. However, this term is likely not a genuine Indo-Aryan word and seems to have entered Sanskrit from another language (Mayrhofer 1956: 361-362; Mayrhofer 1992: 517). To illustrate this point, here are some cognate words for 'horse' found in Iranian Domari, Romani, and various Lutarā varieties: Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *gura*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *agora*; Gudāri of Astarabad: *gorā*; Iranian Romani: *gerās*; Jugi of Astarabad: *gōra*; Kālesi: *kuri*; Lutarā of the Āšiq of Azarbaijan: *agura*; Lutarā of the Bakhtiari Tušmāl, of the Luti of Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and Lorestan, and of the Sāzanda of Band-e Amir and Marv-Dasht: *gowra*; Lutarā of the Xāksāri Darvishes of Shahr-e Babak: *gure*; Lutarā of the Mehtar of Mamasani: *qual*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur, Qaʾen and Sabzevar: *gorō*; Qorbati of Jiroft, Sirjan and Khenejin: *gorā*; Qorbati of Kerman: *ghora*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *gare*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *gora*; Selyari: *kur*, *kuri*; Selyari of Ramsar: *gurun*.

What follows is a comparative list of some common Indo-Aryan words in Iranian Domari, Romani, and Lutarā.

'Blood': Qorbati of Kerman: *lu*; Qorbati of Qaʾenat: *luhut* (Hindi: *lohū*; Sanskrit: *lohita-*).

'Canal': Jugi of Mazandaran: *kulya* (Sanskrit: *kulyā-*).

'Cold': Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *si*, *sild*, *silda*; Iranian Romani: *šil*; Jugi of Astarabad: *seylok*; Qorbati of Jiroft: *sīlkā*; Qorbati of Qaʾen: *seylāk*, *silākī*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *sirāti*; Qorbati of Sirjan: *sīrāt*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *selekoba*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *silak* (Sanskrit: *śītala-*).

'Ear': Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *kian*, *qan*; Iranian Romani: *kān*; Kālesi: *halkerne*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *kan*; Selyari: *halkernā*, *halkerne* (Hindi: *kān*; Sanskrit: *kárṇa-*).

'Fire': Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *ag*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *ayk*, *ak*, *aq*; Iranian Romani: *yāg*; Qorbati of Jiroft: *āgī*; Qorbati of Neyshabur and Sabzevar: *agi*, *agir*, *ōgi*; Qorbati of Qaʾen: *ogi* (Hindi: *āg*; Sanskrit: *agní-*).

'Hair': Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *val*; Iranian Romani: *bāl*; Qorbati of Jiroft and Kerman: *palmak*; Qorbati of Qaʾenat: *wāl*; Qorbati of Sirjan: *vāl* (Hindi: *bāl*; Sanskrit: *vāla-*).

'Meat': Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *masi*; Iranian Romani: *mās*; Jugi of Mazandaran: *māsi*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur, Qaʾen and Sabzevar: *masi*, *masil*, *masir* (Hindi: *māṁs*; Sanskrit: *māṁsá-*; Vedic: *mās-*).

'Night': Gudāri of Astarabad: *arat*; Iranian Romani: *rāt*; Jugi of Astarabad: *nomārat*; Qorbati of Qaʾenat: *rāt*, *rōt*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *ruat* (Hindi: *rāt*; Sanskrit: *rā̊tri-*).

'Nose': Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *nak*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *nak*, *nank*; Iranian Romani: *nāk*; Jugi of Astarabad: *bowrnoghī*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur and   Qaʾen: *barnōgi*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *bermāq*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *burnāq* (Hindi: *nāk*; Sanskrit: *nakrā̆-*).

'Very': Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *baghu*, *bahu*, *buhu*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *buhu*; Iranian Romani: *but*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur and Qaʾen: *bohōt*; Qorbati of Khorasan: *buhūt*; Selyari of Ramsar: *bitun* (Hindi: *bahut*; Sanskrit: *bahutva-* 'abundance').

'Water': Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *pani*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *bani*, *pani*; Iranian Romani: *pāni*; Jugi of Astarabad: *powno*; Lutarā of the Darvishes of Isfahan: *pōnī*; Qorbati of Bam: *puni*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur, Qaʾen and Sabzevar: *panew*, *punew*, *punow*; Qorbati of Jiroft and Sirjan: *pūnū*; Qorbati of Kerman: *ponū*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *punew*, *punu* (Hindi: *pānī*; Sanskrit: *pānīya-*). Cf. Selyari: *vār*; Kālesi: *vār* (Hindi: *vār*; Sanskrit: *vāri-*).

'Water-pot': Jugi of Mazandaran: *palika* (Sanskrit: *paligha-*).

A number of words in Iranian Domari, Romani, and Lutarā have a Jewish origin, tracing back to either Aramaic or Hebrew. It has been previously demonstrated that the word *dax* ('good') in the 12th century Lutarā of Karkh originates from the Aramaic *daxyā*, *dəxē* ('pure, (ritually) correct'). This word is still in use, with slight pronunciation variations, in several Qorbati and Lutarā varieties. Two additional terms with Jewish roots are as follows:

'To say': Jugi of Astarabad: *homoʾaštan*; Qorbati of Kerman: *imaštan*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *homāštan*, present stem: *mār-*, past stem: *homāšt-*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *homāštan*, present stem: *āmār-*, past stem: *homāšt-* (Jewish Lutarā of Mashhad: *meštā-*; Aramaic: *meštaʿʿē* 'to say', *ʾāmar* 'said').

'Water': Gudāri of Astarabad: *mīōm*; Lutarā of the Bakhtiari Tušmāl, and of the Luti of Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and Lorestan: *meyow*; Lutarā of the Čalli of Baluchestan: *meyab*; Lutarā of the Xāksāri Darvishes: *moy*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *miyow* (Jewish Lutarā: *mayem*; Hebrew: *māyim*; Aramaic: *mayyā*).

A number of words in Iranian Domari, Romani, and Lutarā are borrowings from the Iranian or non-Iranian languages of the host communities:

'Belly': Lutarā of the Borumand family: *batn*; Lutarā of the Darvishes: *batnā*; Selyari of Ramsar: *bitin* (Arabic: *baṭn*); Qorbati of Khorasan: *šīkamtūm* (Persian: *šekam*).

'Crying': Jugi of Mazandaran: *berme* (Mazandarani: *berme*).

'Duck': Jugi of Mazandaran: *sikā* (Mazandarani: *sikā*).

'Ear': Qorbati of Kerman: *guški*; Qorbati of Khorasan and Sirjan: *gūš* (Persian: *guš*).

'Fire': Jugi of Astarabad and Qorbati of Kerman: *narak*; Qorbati of Soltanabad *norek* (Arabic: *nār*); Qorbati of Khorasan: *ātaš* (Persian: *ātaš*).

'Meat': Lutarā of the Borumand family: *lahm*; Lutarā of the coppersmiths of Kāzerun: *lahme*; Lutarā of the Darvishes of Isfahan: *lahmekī*; Lutarā of the Xāksāri Darvishes: *lahmegi* (Arabic: *laḥm*).

'Night': Lutarā of the Borumand family, Lutarā of the Xāksāri Darvishes, and Qorbati of Jiroft, Kerman, and Sirjan: *layl*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *leyl* (Arabic: *layl*).

'Nose': Lutarā of the Borumand family: *anf* (Arabic: *ʾanf*); Qorbati of Jiroft, Kerman, and Sirjan: *damāq* (Persian: *damāq*); Qorbati of Khorasan: *bīnī* (Persian: *bini*).

'Tree': Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *dar* (Persian: *dār*); Qorbati of Kerman: *darraxt*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *redaxt* (Persian: *deraxt*).

'Turtle': Jugi of Mazandaran: *kavez* (Mazandarani: *kavez*).

In Iranian Domari and Lutarā varieties, loanwords are sometimes distorted in various ways. These distortions include changes in vowels or consonants, the transposition of sounds or syllables, or the addition of reduant affixes, making it difficult to recognise the original form. Here are some examples of distorted Persian loanwords in the Qorbati dialect of Shiraz: *angur-čāki* ('grape') (Persian: *angur*); *bād-kāmi* ('grape') (Persian: *bād*); *bāki* ('play') (Persian: *bāzi*); *be-dālidan* ('to tear') (Persian: *daridan*); *doguri* ('other') (Persian: *digari*); *do-hāt* ('two') (Persian: *do*); *garm-ut* ('warm') (Persian: *garm*); *lābā* ('top') (Persian: *bālā*); *lemāre* ('number') (Persian: *šomāre*); *leyxi* ('very)' (Persian: *xeyli*); *lokā* ('hat') (Persian: *kolāh*); *lokoft* ('thick') (Persian: *koloft*); *mā-čāki* ('moon') (Persian: *māh*); *redaxt* ('tree') (Persian: *deraxt*); *rop* ('full') (Persian: *por*); *rotoš* ('sour') (Persian: *torš*); *šekāl* ('hunting') (Persian: *šekār*); *šeter* ('camel')

(Persian: *šotor*); *yāzza-gilā* ('eleven') (Persian: *yāzdah*); *zard-ulā* ('yellow') (Persian: *zard*); *zevun-čāki*, *zevun-kāmi* ('tongue') (Persian: *zabān*).

Iranian Romani contains a number of Greek words which date back to the period before the 18th century, when the ancestors of its speakers lived in northern Greece, e.g., *āndāmā* ('together') (Greek: *αντάμα*); *durom* ('road') (Greek: *δρόμος*); *eftā* ('seven') (Greek: *εφτά*); *enna* ('nine') (Greek: *εννέα*); *luludi* ('flower') (Greek: *λουλούδι*); *oxto* ('eight') (Greek: *οχτώ*); *qoqālā* ('bone') (Greek: *κόκκαλο*); *sārāndā* ('forty') (Greek: *σαράντα*); *tirāndā* ('thirty') (Greek: *τριάντα*); *zimi* ('soup') (Greek: *ζουμί*). On the other hand, the long-lasting presence of Iranian Romani speakers among the Azari Turkish-speaking population of Qazvin Province of northwest Iran paved the way for Iranian Romani to borrow a large number of words from Azari Turkish, e.g., *boluti* ('cloud') (Azari Turkish: *bulut*); *döbiki* ('knee') (Azari Turkish: *döbik*); *kuyruka* ('tail') (Azari Turkish: *kuyruk*); *naštaliki* ('breakfast') (Azari Turkish: *nāštāloq*); *qaši* ('eyebrow') (Azari Turkish: *qāš*); *qatiki* ('yoghurt') (Azari Turkish: *qātoq*); *saremsaki* ('garlic') (Azari Turkish: *sarimsāq*); *süti* ('milk') (Azari Turkish: *süt*); *tosbāqās* ('tortoise') (Azari Turkish: *tosbāqā*); *tulkina* ('fox') (Azari Turkish: *tulki*); *yārpaki* ('leaf') (Azari Turkish: *yārpak*).

A common lexical feature of Iranian Domari, Romani, and Lutarā is the occasional use of both genuine Indo-Aryan words and non-Indo-Aryan loanwords in different meanings: Arranaji: *kalāj* ('prayer') (Persian: *kalāq* 'crow'); Arranaji: *miš* ('woman') (Persian: *miš* 'ewe'); Arranaji: *rušəna* ('water') (Persian: *rowšani* 'light'); Iranian Romani: *murš*; Lutarā of the Borumand family: *māre*, *mārē*; Qorbati of Jiroft and Sirjan: *māruz*; Qorbati of Kerman: *māris*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *mārez* ('man') (Sanskrit: *māriṣa-* 'respectable man'); Iranian Romani: *per*; Qorbati of Jiroft and Sirjan: *pītū*; Qorbati of Shiraz and Khenejin: *pitu* ('belly') (Sanskrit: *peṭa-* 'basket'; cf. Hindi: *peṭ* 'belly'); Jugi of Mazandaran: *leben* ('yoghurt') (Arabic: *laban* 'milk'); Kālesi and Selyari: *zardi* ('fire') (Persian: *zard* 'yellow'); Lutarā of the Bakhtiari Tušmāl, and of the Luti of Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and Lorestan: *nahur*; Lutarā of the Darvishes, and Qorbati of Jiroft, Kerman, and Sirjan: *nuhūr*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *nuhur*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *nur* ('eye') (Talmudic Aramaic: *nəhōrā* 'eyesight'); Qorbati of Kerman: *tirang*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *tireng*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *tirenk* ('ox; cow') (Hindi: *turang*; Sanskrit: *turaṃga-* 'horse'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *čekal*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *čekeli* ('soil') (Hindi: *cikil*; Sanskrit: *cikila-* 'mud'; cf. Iranian Romani: *čik* 'mud'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *kāštā* ('tree') (Sanskrit: *kāṣṭhá-* 'wood'; cf. Iranian Romani: *qāšt* 'wood; tree'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *sokāl* ('tomorrow') (Sanskrit: *sakālam* 'early in the morning'; Hindi: *sakāl* 'early in the morning'); Qorbati of Sirjan: *munīr* ('fire') (Arabic: *munīr* 'shining').

Polysemy is exaggeratingly abundant in Iranian Domari and Lutarā varieties: Arranaji: *pāməǰ* ('horse; donkey; car'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *bohur* ('bicycle; motorcycle; car'); *duhut* ('liver; meat; bone'); *pāveri* ('sky; cloud; sun'); *šildāʾi* ('honey; sugar; jam'); *til* ('oil; fat; butter'); Selyari: *teǰi* ('needle; knife; sword;

scissors').

An interesting common feature of Iranian Domari and Lutarā varieties in their word-formation systems is an exaggerated tendency to compounding: Arranaji: *yuza-liv* ['walnut + leaf'] ('banknote'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *nuhur-e pāveri* ['eye of the sky'] ('star'); Selyari: *bezu-taǰ-vār* ['two + foot + water'] ('duck'); *garez-ketme* ['stone + ground'] ('mountain'); *parduk-taǰ-verāz* ['small + foot + boar'] ('car'); *taǰ-šemer* ['foot + clothes'] ('sock'); *zardi-vār* ['fire + water'] ('oil'); Selyari of Ramsar: *dize-vāš* ['head + grass'] ('hair'); *kuk-vāš* ['eye + grass'] ('eyebrow'); *luču-vāš* ['lip + grass'] ('moustache').

IV. Conclusion

Gypsies have lived in Iran since the early 5th century and have been known by various names, reflecting their lifestyle, profession, social status, cultural norms, or geographic origin. The Domari branch of Gypsy languages, once dominant in Iran, is now no longer spoken. Nevertheless, Domari lexical items remain in nearly all the jargons used for intergroup communication by Iranian Gypsies. These jargons use a simplified grammar of the host language and incorporte words from other minority groups, notably the secret language of Iranian Jews known as Loterāʾi. Despite their fragmentation and geographical dispersion, Iranian Gypsy groups exhibit striking similarities in communication strategies and word-formation processes. The Romani branch of Gypsy languages emerged in Iran around the 18th century, following the migration of several South Balkan Romani speakers from northern Greece. The data presented in this paper from various Gypsy languages of Iran shed light on an important part of a linguistic continuum extending from the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, and Afghanistan through Iran to the Middle East, the Transcaucasus, the Balkan Peninsula, and Europe.

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3

Grammaticalisation of the Brahui Verb *kann-ing* 'to do' into a Modal Auxiliary of Possibility[1]

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Abstract: This paper examines the semantic development of the Brahui verb *kann-ing* 'to do' into a modal auxiliary expressing ability and possibility. In addition to its diverse meanings, *kann-ing* forms a transitive-intransitive pair with *mann-ing* 'to become', which implies achievement—a feature shared by *kann-ing*. We argue that *kann-ing* derived the meaning 'to be able' from its original sense of 'to do, achieve' when used in a durative aspect. Over time, the verb underwent grammaticalisation into a modal auxiliary, and its meaning further generalised to root possibility. Balochi, another major language of Balochistan, also uses the verb *kanag* 'to do' as a modal auxiliary for possibility. Alongside the asyndetic conditional construction, this feature might help characterise Balochistan as a linguistic convergence area distinct from the Indian Subcontinent.

1. Introduction

Brahui is the most westerly Dravidian language spoken primarily in the Pakistani province of Balochistan. Most Brahui speakers are bilingual in Balochi, a West Iranian language that dominates the region, and Brahui exhibits extensive lexical and structural borrowing from Balochi. Despite this, Brahui retains many core

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Dravidian words and morphemes, such as the noun *pāł* 'milk' (cf. Tamil *pāl*), and the future (negative) morpheme *-p(p)*. Brahui, a separate branch within the Dravidian family, is considered to have split off early from the other Dravidian languages, as it has lost several widely shared features, including the spatial deixis morphemes **i-* (proximal) and **a-* (remote).

This paper will first present various uses of the Brahui verb *kann-ing* 'to do'.[2] In addition to its function as a lexical verb, it serves as a modal auxiliary expressing ability and possibility. We will then explore how *kann-ing* developed the meaning 'to be able, can' from its original sense of 'to do, achieve' when used in a durative aspect. Since *kann-ing* forms a transitive-intransitive pair with *mann-ing* ('to become'), we argue that *kann-ing* acquired the connotation of achievement shared by *mann-ing*. Cross-linguistically, achievement verbs often develop an ability meaning through grammaticalisation, a process in which lexical items acquire grammatical functions.

Finally, we will highlight a parallel construction in Balochi with the verb *kanag* 'to do' and explore the possibility of viewing Balochistan as a linguistic convergence area distinct from the Indian Subcontinent. Masica (1976) noted that Brahui and Balochi only partly shared what he considered South Asian linguistic features. However, from the perspective of the Indian Ocean, Balochistan is a clearly defined geographical region and could also represent a distinct convergence area.

2. Grammaticalisation of *kann-ing*

2.1 Usages of Brahui *kann-ing* 'to do'
The verb *kann-ing* 'to do' is one of the most frequently used verbs in Brahui, with eight primary usages outlined below.

i) 'to do'
As a transitive verb, *kann-ing* means 'to do A', with the object noun referring to

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[2] *-ing* of *kann-ing* is the infinitive suffix. The verb has allomorphs *kann-*, *ke-* and *ka-*, and the past stem is *kar-*. *mann-ing* 'to become' has allomorphs *mann-*, *mar-* and *ma-*, and the past stem is *mass-*.

actions, as shown in example (1).

(1) *don-o*   *nekī-as*   ***kar-es***.
  such-INDF   good.deed-INDF   do-PST.2SG
  "You *did* such a kind act."

             (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 401)

ii) 'to make'

In this usage, *kann-ing* means 'to make someone/something A', with an object noun or pronoun in the accusative case, and a predicative adjective (as in example (2)) or noun (as in example (3)). *kann-ing* forms transitive-intransitive pairs with *mann-ing* 'to become', e.g., *baš mann-ing* 'to stand up' vs. *baš kann-ing* 'to make someone stand up' with *baš* 'up'.

(2) *cunā-k* *bāngo-e*   *bevas* ***kar-er***.
  child-PL rooster-ACC   helpless make-PRF.3PL
  "The children *made* the rooster helpless (i.e., subdued it)."

             (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 30)

(3) *paxīr* *karār-ā*   *iraɣ-e*   *musi*
  wanderer slow-ALL   bread-ACC   three

  ṭukkur ***kar-e***.
  piece make-PST.3SG

  "The wanderer slowly *divided* the bread into three pieces."

             (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 36)

 The meaning 'to feign oneself' (e.g., *daršān kann-ing* 'to pretend') also falls under this usage, as shown in example (4), when the object is a reflexive pronoun.

(4) *o* ***ten-e*** *nājoṛ* ***kar-e*** *ki* *ī* *dā* *kārem-ān*
  he REFL-ACC sick do-PST.3SG COMP 1SG this work-ABL

  cuṭṭ-iv.
  escape-SBJV.1SG

  "He *made himself out* to be ill with the idea of shirking this work."

(Bray 1934: 156)

iii) 'to put'

kann-ing means 'to dress, to put on', as in example (5), where it combines with *jān-ā* 'on the body'. When used with nouns denoting merchandise, it means 'to fix the price of' (Bray 1934: 157).

(5) *asiṭ=tā ...*   *saṛok-o*   *baniān-as*
    one=3PL   worn.out-INDF   underwear-INDF

    jān-ā   **kar-esus**.
    body-ALL   do-PLPF.3SG

"One of them *was dressed* in worn-out underwear."

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 30)

iv) Verbs of communication and perception

kann-ing replaces verbs of speaking ('to say') as in example (6) or perception ('to see') as in example (7).

(6) *haft*   *haft*   **kar-issā**   *bann-ing-aṭī*
    seven   seven   do-CVB   come-INF-LOC

    e   *ten-ā*   *xalk-ā*.
    COP.PRS.3SG   self-GEN   village-ALL

"*Chanting* 'Seven, seven', he made his way back to his village."

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 300)

(7) *dun*   **kar-e**   *aṛe*   *panjāī*   *bann-ing* *e*.
    this.way   see-PST.3SG ITJ   PROP   come-IN   COP.PRS.3SG

"They *saw* (and said), 'Look, Panjāī is coming!'"

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 499)

v) 'to move'

kann-ing can also mean 'to move (something)', as in example (8), where it means 'to turn' or 'to roll over', with the reflexive pronoun *ten-e* as its object.

(8) *e*   *phālū-ā*   ***ke-va***   *ten-e*   *zaɣm*   *lagg-ik*.
    that side-ALL   do-PRS.1SG   self-ACC   sword   hit-PRS.3SG

"If I *roll over* on that side (of the bed), the sword (planted on the bed) will pierce me."

<div align="right">(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 321)</div>

vi) Light verb

kann-ing forms verb phrases with incorporated nouns in the absolute case. For example, *pāṭ kann-ing* 'to sell firewood' with *pāṭ* 'firewood' in example (9), *boḍ kann-ing* 'to have lice' with *boḍ* 'louse' in example (10), and *phul kann-ing* 'to bloom' with *phul* 'flower' in example (11). When used with nouns denoting diseases, it can mean 'to seize, affect, of illness' (Bray 1934:156).

(9) *asi*   *ɣarīb-as*   *ass-ak.*   ***pāṭ***   ***kar-eka***.
    one   poor-INDF   COP-PST.3SG   firewood   do-IPF.3SG
    "There was a poor man. He *sold firewood*."

<div align="right">(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 355)</div>

(10) *dā*   *ambal-nā*   *kāṭum-nā*   *puṭṭ-āk*   *o*   *pucc-āk*
    this   friend-GEN   head-GEN   hair-PL   and   clothes-PL

    boḍ   ***kar-era***.
    louse   do-IPF.3PL

"*Lice infested* both his hair and his clothes."

<div align="right">(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 329)</div>

(11) *šaš*   *tū-ān*   *pad*   *bāɣ*   ***phul***   ***kar-e***.
    six   month-ABL   later   garden   flower   do-PST.3SG
    "Six months later, the garden *was in full bloom*."

<div align="right">(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 400)</div>

Light verbs with *kann-ing* are highly developed in Brahui, with many combinations that have non-compositional meanings, such as *mon kann-ing* 'to head towards' with *mon* 'face' in example (12).

(12) *gahnḍo*   *pinn-ā*   *dīr*   *xalk-ā*   ***mon***   ***kar-e***
    dam   break-PST.3SG   water   village-ALL   face   do-PST.3SG

"The dam broke and water headed towards the village." (elicitation)

vii) Progressive aspect

With the imperfective converb in *-isa*, *kann-ing* expresses the progressive aspect ('keep …ing'), as in example (13).

(13) *o*　　　*kan-ā*　　*rand-aṭ*　　　**bar-isa**　　　　**kar-eka**.
　　　he　　　　1SG-GEN　track-INS　　　come-CVB　　　　do-IPF.3SG
　　　"He *kept on* following me."

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 67)

viii) Possibility

Furthermore, *kann-ing* functions as a modal auxiliary meaning 'can, to be able', taking a verb in the infinitive (*-ing*) as its complement, as shown in examples (14) and (15).

(14) *amar*　　*nā*　　*dāī*　　*mann-ing*　　　**ke-va**.
　　　How　　2SG.GEN　midwife　become-INF　　be.able-PRS.1SG
　　　"(I am a man.) How *can* I serve as your midwife?"

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 631)

(15) *ust*　　*husonī-ān*　　　*dīr*　　*ting-ing*　　**ka-ttav**.
　　　heart　pain-ABL　　　　water　drink-INF　be.able-NEG.PST.3SG
　　　"It *could not* drink water due to the distress."

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 341)

Among these meanings, the vii) 'progressive aspect' and viii) 'possibility' are functional, and are believed to have originated from lexical meanings. In the following sections, we explore how these meanings have emerged.

2.2 Process of Grammaticalisation

Grammaticalisation is the process by which a word with lexical meaning shifts to take on a grammatical function. While the original meaning of the word may be lost, it can also be retained. In the case of Brahui *kann-ing*, which primarily

means 'to do' or 'to make', it is originally a lexical verb. Its use as a modal auxiliary probably developed through grammaticalisation.

However, Heine and Kuteva (2002), in their cross-linguistic collection of grammaticalisation cases, do not provide an example of a shift from 'to do' to an expression of ability. In this section, we explore the possible path through which *kann-ing* evolved into a modal auxiliary.

2.3 Implication of achievement

In some examples of *kann-ing* 'to do, to make', such as in examples (16), (17) and (18), we observe an implication of achievement.

(16) *pār-e   lāl.malūk et-e   havāl-e. pār-e   juān **kar-eṭ**.*
　　 say-PST.3SG PROP   give-IMP   news-ACC say-PST.3SG well   do-PST.1SG
　　 "(The giant) said, 'Lāl Malūk, tell me how it went'. (Lāl Malūk) said, 'I *did* it well'".

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 416)

(17) *dā   kul   kārem-te   **kar-e**.*
　　 he   all   work-PL.ACC   do-PST.3SG
　　 "He *fulfilled* every task (I gave him)."

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 482)

(18) *ant-as   pā-re   o   **ke-k**.*
　　 what.REL-INDF   say-PRS.2PL   that   do-PRS.3SG
　　 "He *achieves* whatever task you guys set."

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 491)

When *kann-ing* is used with this meaning of achievement and takes another verb as its object, it conveys the sense of 'to achieve doing A'. If this achievement extends to a stative or durative aspect typically indicated by a present-tense verb (e.g., 'to be in the state of achieving A'), it becomes synonymous with expressing ability ('to be able to do A'). Example (19) illustrates this sense of ability: Over time, the meaning of ability was further generalised, and *kann-ing* evolved to express root possibility, as shown in (20).

(19) *lāl.malūk*   *pār-e*   *ī*   *bann-ing*   **ke-va**.
    PROP   say-PST.3SG   1SG   come-INF   be.able-PRS.1SG

"Lāl Malūk said, 'I can come (to the fairy land with my magic flying sofa)'".

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 428)

(20) *āna-aṭ*   *ant-as*   *mann-ing*   **ke-k**.
    anna-INS   what-INDF   become-INF   be.able-PRS.3SG

"What is possible to happen with an anna (=What can [the shepherd] possibly do with an anna?)"

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 297)

2.4 Transitive-intransitive pair of 'do' and 'become'

Many languages, including English, have verbs meaning 'to do' that also convey a sense of 'to achieve', as seen with Brahui *kann-ing* in examples (16) to (18). However, in these languages, verbs meaning 'to do' have rarely evolved into modal auxiliaries, as *kann-ing* has in Brahui. Therefore, the hypothesis that the meaning of 'accomplishment' developed into 'possibility' may not seem entirely convincing.

In many South Asian languages, verbs meaning 'to do' form transitive and intransitive verb pairs with verbs meaning 'to become'. These pairs function as light verbs combining with nouns that denote actions or events. For example, in the South Dravidian language Toda, the verbs *kïy-* 'to do' and *oˑx-* 'to become' form a pair, as in *uṭ kïy-* 'to create' vs. *uṭ oˑx-* 'to be created' with the noun *uṭ* 'creation'. This is a productive way of forming transitive-intransitive or active-passive pairs in Toda. Similarly, Brahui has   pairs such as *pur kann-ing* 'to fill' vs. *pur mann-ing* 'to become full' from *pur* 'full'.

Furthermore, some languages, including Brahui, use the verb 'to become' with an added connotation of achievement. For instance, in example (21), Brahui *mann-ing* not only means 'to become' but also 'to be achieved'.

(21) *dāsā*   *od-e*   *omet*   *as*   *ki*   *o-nā*
    Now   he-ACC   hope   COP.PST.3SG   COMP   that-GEN

nokarī	*mar-ek*.
employment	become-PRS.3SG

"Now he was hopeful that he would *get* a job (lit. employment would *be achieved* for him)."

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 40)

In Kuṟux, the verb *man-nā* ('to become'), considered cognate with Brahui *mann-ing* (Burrow and Emeneau 1984: 424, s.v. 4778), also means 'to be produced' or 'to be abundant' (Grignard 1924: 480), as shown in example (22).[3]

(22)	*ōnd*	*sāl*	*=jun*	*mal*	*man-ō*	(Kuṟux)
	one	year	FOC	not	become-FUT.3SG.NM	

"For one year, *there will be* no *crop* (lit. it will not become)"

(Kobayashi and Tirkey 2017: 363)

Since *kann-ing* and *mann-ing* form a transitive-intransitive pair, and *mann-ing* has a clear sense of achievement, it is likely that *kann-ing* also acquired this meaning, if it did not possess it initially. As discussed in §2.3, the sense of achievement can evolve into the meaning of ability, which *kann-ing* expresses. Over time, Brahui *kann-ing* underwent grammaticalisation as a modal auxiliary, retaining its original lexical meaning, and its meaning of ability was further extended to encompass possibility.

Given that *mann-ing* is the intransitive counterpart of *kann-ing*, it is reasonable to expect it to denote either ability or possibility. Indeed, *mann-ing* conveys a sense of possibility, as seen in example (23), where the main verb functions as the subject of *mann-ing*.[4]

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[3] Outside Dravidian, Standard Japanese *dekiru* also means both 'to be made, to be achieved' and 'to be able'. In Kagoshima Japanese, *naru* 'to become' functions as an auxiliary verb of possibility.

[4] Since an expression of ability typically requires an object ('to be able to do A'), the intransitive verb *mann-ing* is limited to conveying a possibility meaning ('to do A is possible').

(23) *num*   *guāzī*   *ka-bo.*   *khaṭṭ-ing* **mar-ek**.
     you.PL   practice   do-IMP.PL   win-INF   become-PRS.3SG
     "You practice. *You can* win (lit., It *will be possible* to win)." (elicitation)

A close parallel is found in Toda, which also uses the verb 'to become' as a modal auxiliary for possibility, as shown in example (24).

(24) *i*   *ku·x*   *e·ḍm,*   *neṟy*   *iloθ,*   *muk*   *fi·t*
     this   girl   both   sari   without   up   go.VBN

     o·xofiṇ (Toda)
     become.NEG.COMPL

     "since both these girls being without saris could not go up (to heaven)"

                                                        (Emeneau 1984:370, §169.36)

2.5 Generalisation from Ability to Possibility

If the use of *kann-ing* as a modal auxiliary originates from the 'achievement' meaning of *kann-ing*, the most basic meaning of *kann-ing* as a modal auxiliary would be ability, as in examples (14), (15), and (25), where it implies the speaker's financial ability.

(25) *pūrā*   *kann-ing* **ka-ppara**
     full   do-INF   do-NEG.PRS.1SG
     "I *cannot* cover the price in full"

                                                        (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 313)

Example (26) also appears to illustrate the 'ability' meaning, but here, the speaker refuses to give his daughter in marriage without imposing a bet on the suitor as a matter of principle. Thus, it is better categorised as an example of '(un)acceptability'. Example (27) also describes an unacceptable situation.

(26) *o*   *vaṟ*   *ī*   *kann-ing* **ka-ppara**.
     that   way   1SG   do-INF   do-NEG.PRS.1SG
     "I *cannot* do that way"

                                                        (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 645)

(27) *na   nī   kan-e   kašš-ing   **ke-sa***
      nor   2SG   1SG-ACC   pull.out-INF   be.able-PRS.2SG

      pīrī-ṭī
      old.age-LOC

      (Wife to husband) "You *cannot* leave me alone when we are old."

                                                    (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 572)

Example (28) is spoken by a royal guard who refuses to answer the addressee based on the rules. Here, *kann-ing* indicates permission. The same applies to example (29).

(28) *nī   kan-e   soj   kann-ing   **ka-ppesa***.
      2SG   1SG-ACC   inquiry   do-INF   do-NEG.PRS.2SG
      "You *may not* ask me (directly)."

                                                    (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 621)

(29) *nan   nema-ɣān   pad   kane-ā   bann-ing   **ke-sa***.
      night   middle-ALL after   1SG-ALL   come-INF   be.able-PRS.2SG
      (Bride to bridegroom) "You *may* approach me after midnight."

                                                    (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 320)

(30) implies censure directed at royal guards who dared arrest the speaker, a king. Here, *kann-ing* conveys a sense of impudence.

(30) *num   kan-e   amar   dann-ing   **ke-re***
      2PL   1SG-ACC   how   take-INF   be.able-PRS.2PL
      "How *can* (=How dare) you guys arrest me?"

                                                    (Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 314)

When the 'ability' meaning becomes generalised, *kann-ing* extends to cover root possibility, as seen in examples (31) and (32).

(31) *ant   asiṭ-nā   dušman   kull-anā   dušman   mann-ing*
      Q   one-GEN   enemy   all-GEN   enemy   be-INF

      ke-k.
      be.possible-PRS.3SG

"*Can* the enemy of one be an enemy of all?"

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 140)

(32) *amar   mann-ing   **ke-k**   nī   ten-ā*
     how   become-INF   be.able-PRS.3SG   2SG   self-GEN

    kuben-ā   vaxt-anā   sangatt-e   gīrām   ke-s.
    heavy-ADJ time-GEN   friend-ACC   forgetting do-SBJV.2SG

"How *is it possible* that you forget a friend from your difficult times?"

(Ali and Kobayashi 2024: 77)

Finally, *mann-ing ke-k* further develops into an adverbial phrase meaning 'maybe' or 'perhaps'.

3. Areal Factor

Brahui is spoken in Balochistan, where the majority of the population speaks Balochi, a West Iranian language. Balochi also uses the verb *kanag* 'to do' to express possibility, with a complement verb in the past stem, as shown in example (33).

(33) *man   maróchi shahrá   shota   **nakanán***
     I today   to.town go.PST.   STEM   do.NEG.PRS.1SG
     "I cannot go to town today." (Jahani 2019: 208)

Although this construction (a finite form of *kanag* 'to do' with a past stem) does not exactly parallel the Brahui construction (a finite form of *kann-ing* 'to do' with an infinitive), and the processes of grammaticalisation may differ between Brahui and Balochi, the use of the verb 'to do' as a modal auxiliary is not observed in the languages of the surrounding areas.

Languages in the same geographical area can sometimes develop common features, even if they are not genealogically related. Such an area is referred to as a 'convergence area' or 'linguistic area', with the Balkans and the Indian Subcontinent often cited as examples. In his book on linguistic convergence in

South Asia, Masica (1976:181) notes that Brahui and Balochi, the two major languages of Balochistan, share South Asian features only marginally. Since none of the Dravidian languages we know of, or few Modern Iranian languages, use the verb 'to do' as a modal auxiliary,[5] it is possible that this usage developed in parallel as an areal feature of Balochistan. Although Balochistan may be considered a peripheral region from the perspective of the Indian Subcontinent, it is a clearly defined geographical area within the Indian Ocean and might conceivably constitute a convergence area of its own.

Furthermore, Kobayashi and Ali (2024) observed that Brahui and Balochi share the feature of forming conditional clauses using only the verb in the past tense, without a conjunction such as 'if'. This asyndetic conditional construction, along with the use of the verb 'to do' as a modal auxiliary discussed here, might contribute to defining Balochistan as a convergence area.

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[5] Kurmanji Kurdish uses the verb 'to do' with a subjunctive form of the main verb, and Wakhi uses the verb 'to do' with an infinitive of a transitive verb, to express ability (Fujimoto 2024: 9f.).

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Part Two

METAMORPHOSIS OF INDIAN OCEAN IN THE LITERATURE, CULTURES AND THOUGHTS

4

Trans-Indian Ocean Cultural Flows

The Influence of Hindi Cinema on Hausa Popular Fictions[1]

Musa Ibrahim

Introduction

The sight of a 15 ft image of Sridevi, dancing erotically on the screens of the open-air cinemas of northern Nigeria, or the tall, angular figure of Amitabh Bachchan radiating charisma through the snowy, crackly reception of domestic television have become powerful, resonant images in Hausa popular culture. To this day, stickers of Indian films and stars decorate the taxis and buses of the north, posters of Indian films adorn the walls of tailors' shops and mechanics' garages, and love songs from Indian films songs are borrowed by religious singers who change the words to sing praise of the Prophet Mohammed. For over thirty years, Indian films, their stars and fashions, music and stories have been a dominant part of everyday popular culture in northern Nigeria. If, as Bakhtin (1981) writes, communication is fundamental to human life, and self and society emerge in dialogue with others surrounding them, then Indian films have entered into the dialogic construction of Hausa popular culture offering Hausa men and women an alternative world, similar to their own, from which they may

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imagine other forms of fashion, beauty, love and romance, coloniality and post-coloniality (Larkin 1997:470).

As the above quote from Brian Larkin's 1997 essay 'Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers' reveals, the Hausa people's engagement with Indian films is not just a passing trend but a cultural cornerstone that shapes their everyday life. In the late 1980s, a new wave of Hausa prose fiction writers emerged, weaving love stories and emotional themes in their works. This development prompted comparisons between their storylines and Hindi films among literary and cultural critics, leading to a rich cultural discourse about the influence of Indian cinema on Hausa culture.

Larkin's research, as an outsider, transcends the typical narrative of cultural imperialism, uncovering the intricate connections and influences between Indian and Hausa literary productions through film. His initial expectations, shaped by existing Nigerian and Western scholarship, were of a media landscape dominated by Western and particularly Hollywood films. However, he recounted how his first visit to Kano, a major city in northern Nigeria, revealed a surprising reality: Indian films were screened at cinemas five nights a week, far outpacing Hollywood and Chinese films. The most popular television program was the Sunday morning Indian film on City Television Kano (CTV), and video shops dedicated the majority of their space to Indian movies, followed by Western and Chinese films, Nigerian dramas, and religious videos.

Larkin's observation of the Indian film's influence on Hausa culture was from the 1990s. Fast forward to the present, many Hausa people now speak Indian languages due to decades of watching Bollywood films. Using this ability, some people dubbed Indian films in Hausa, and these have become popular. In tune with current technology, these films are being watched on smartphones either online via the YouTube channels of those who translated and dubbed them in Hausa or offline through video download and distribution kiosks. People pay a small fee to have the videos sent to their smartphones for offline viewing. Nowadays, several FM radio stations across northern Nigeria have programs focusing on various aspects of Indian culture, such as movies, news, and language learning, presented by young Hausa people, both male and female, who have learned Indian languages through watching Indian films.

This paper explores the interactions between the Indian Ocean Region and external regions, focusing on the Hausa community in northern Nigeria. Although the region being studied is not directly connected to the Indian Ocean, it demonstrates that the dynamism of reception and transformation of cultures across the Indian Ocean is not limited to land and maritime routes. It extends as far as West Africa through exchanges facilitated by the global media flow. In this paper, I discuss the influence of Indian cinema on the social life of the Hausa, particularly through the medium of Hausa literature, focusing on *littatafan soyayya* (love stories). I explore how the popular romance genre, which emerged in 1989, has nurtured a readership and literary movement that are passionate about protagonists who mirror the love and sexual encounters depicted in Indian cinema. My analysis also explores the diverse viewpoints and contestations that have arisen among various groups, including authors of those books, readers, cultural critics, and religious leaders. These viewpoints and contestations range from the celebration of cultural exchange to concerns about the erosion of traditional Hausa values.

The data for this article was collected through several phases of fieldwork conducted between 2014 and 2017 as part of my doctoral research. During this period, I interviewed many authors who have also ventured into filmmaking, including scriptwriters and film producers. Additional fieldwork took place in 2023 and 2024, during which I interviewed contemporary Hausa authors and enthusiastic fans of Indian films who are also readers of *soyayya* novels. The active participation of the audience has been instrumental in shaping this research. Along with consultations of secondary sources related to Hausa prose fiction that enrich this study, I employed comparative analyses of selected Hausa books and the corresponding Indian films from which they were adapted.

Framing the paper

While conceptualizing the influence of Indian movies in the metamorphosis of Hausa prose-fiction, I am compelled to engage with the notion of intertextuality, particularly from the multidimensional perspective of how Bollywood shapes the reception, transformation and even repulsion of thoughts and cultures in Hausa literature of northern Nigeria. As the *Indian Ocean World Studies* (INDOWS) symposium (in which this paper was presented earlier) pointed out, literature is

not a self-contained entity but a product of diverse cultural and linguistic influences. These conceptual and analytical perspectives are particularly relevant when examining contemporary Hausa prose-fiction, which is shaped both by external forces (Hindi films in this regard) and the local cultural milieu that produced it. Usman (2021) reinforces this assertion, contending that literary works are deeply embedded in the societal and cultural fabric from which they emerged.

Moreover, while each cultural group may be considered local, they exist in a perpetual dialogue with other cultures with which they intersect. Therefore, by exploring the context, content, and function of literary works within a specific cultural framework, we can gain insights into both external influences and distinctive cultural reactions of different groups within the space in which those cultures interact, which are produced based on divergent worldviews, emotions, feelings, and expectations. Adamu AU (2006) succinctly sums it up when he says that the interplay between local, national, and transnational is shaping a world where dealing with local and domestic issues requires placing them in cross-national contexts and understanding the 'emerging global order' requires greater cultural sensitivity to similar problems elsewhere.

The dynamism of reception and transformation of literature across the Indian Ocean, as pointed out earlier, extends beyond land and maritime connections, as specified in the INDOWS call for papers leading to this publication. It reaches West Africa through media-technology-based exchanges. Therefore, I see the media and transnational cultural flow theory relevant to my analysis of the metamorphosis of Hausa literature that results from media-based exchanges between Nigeria and India. This perspective draws on the works of Larkin (1997), Sheme (2001), and Adamu (2007; 2012), all of whom have studied how the transmission and circulation of media between non-Western nations have influenced Hausa cultural productions.

Within this framework of global media flow, Larkin (1997: 406) echoes Bakhtin's (1981) notion of 'The Dialogical Imagination' that 'as communication is fundamental to human life, that self and society emerge in dialogue with others surrounding them, then Indian films have entered into the dialogic construction of Hausa popular culture by offering Hausa men and women an alternative world, similar to their own, from which they may imagine other forms of fashion, beauty,

love and romance, coloniality and post-coloniality.' This perspective is corroborated by Sheme (2001) and Adamu (2007), who assert that the consumption of Indian films by Nigerian youth has been reflected in the works of Hausa novelists in the 1990s. In the subsequent sections, I will delineate significant milestones in the colonial and postcolonial literary culture of northern Nigeria before returning to the role of Indian cinema in reshaping Hausa literature and the resulting cultural dialogue.

An Overview of Modern Hausa Prose-fiction Writing
The period between 1980 and 1985 marked a significant shift in Hausa prose-fiction writing as the third generation of Hausa writers emerged on the literary scene. This generation of writers showed a great diversity in its themes and opened up new frontiers in the Hausa fiction writing. They explored modern and contemporary themes, departing from traditional topics such as kings and kingdoms, witches and thieves, princes and princesses, horses, and swords. Instead, they ventured into new topics such as politics, the bourgeoisie and proletariat, cars and guns, terrorism, and smuggling, reflecting the changing cultural and social order of their time. This change in Hausa prose-fiction writing was evident in the new books published by the Federal Ministry of Information, based on the same tradition of writing competitions in Nigerian languages. Among the winners were Sulaiman Ibrahim Katsina's *Turmin Danya*, which focused on the issue of smuggling, and Bature Gagare's *karshen Alewa*, which narrated a rebellion by the native Hausa people, also known as Maguzawa (those who practiced traditional Hausa religions).

The emergence of private publishing companies during the early to mid-1980s revolutionized the Hausa literary scene. These companies provided a platform for writers whose books did not make it to the government-organized writing competition to publish their work, thereby democratizing the literary landscape. As a result, prose fiction, which had previously been overshadowed by poetry, gained prominence in the Hausa literary landscape. Novels and novellas became the new face of Hausa literary culture, and Hausa literature became synonymous with prose fiction (Adamu Yusuf Muhammad. 2021).

In addition to the winners of the writing competition mentioned earlier, three other novels had significantly impacted the emerging literary scene in the region.

These novels, namely *Mallakin Zuciya* by Sulaiman Ibrahim Katsina, *So Aljannar Duniya* by Hafsatu Ahmad Abdulwahid, and *Amadi Na Malam Amah* by Magaji Dambatta, all belong to the soyayya (romantic) genre. *So Aljannar Duniya*, in particular, was influential because it was the first novel written by a woman in the Hausa language. This inspired many young people, especially women, to tell similar stories, ultimately leading to the emergence of the fourth-generation Hausa prose-fiction writers from the mid-1980s, whose thematic focus was mainly on soyayya (romance), and their storylines are heavily influenced by decades of watching Bollywood cinema in the region.

The following section delves deeper into the influence of Bollywood cinema on the soyayya books, which have become a prominent genre of Hausa prose-fiction. The cultural discourse surrounding this phenomenon is also analysed.

Indian cinema and the transformation of Hausa literature through litattafan soyayya

The Nigerian Government's education policies, particularly the Universal Primary Education (UPE) initiative launched in 1976, have significantly boosted literacy rates across the country. This policy, aimed at ensuring all school-age children received primary education and encouraging adult evening classes, led to a remarkable 500 percent rise in primary school enrolment within a year (Csapo 1983, 91). Within a decade, a substantial portion of the Hausa-speaking population could read and write in the Hausa Western script format, sparking a surge in creative writing in the Hausa language (Adamu, YM. 2002; Furniss 2003; Krings 2015).

The genre of popular fiction that emerged during this period has some variation in the name among academics. Meanwhile, Malumfashi (1994) refers to it as '*Adabin kasuwar Kano*' or Kano market literature, Adamu YM. (2002) and McCain (2014) call it Kano Literary Movement. Larkin (1997), Whitsitt (2002), and Hirokazu (2012) refer to it as '*Littattafan Soyayya*' (Romance Literature), which is the common name used by ordinary people. Regardless, Adamu YM (2002) and Whitsitt (2002) note that many women and men enrolled in adult literacy classes to learn the Latin script to be able to read books and write their own stories.

During the same period, some state-owned television stations used to

broadcast Hindi films from their transmitters to home viewers. For example, between October 1977 and June 2003, the Kano substation of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA Kano) alone broadcasted 1,176 Hindi films on its transmitters. The first Bollywood movie broadcasted by NTA Kano was *Aann Baan,* directed by Prakash Mehra. When those Hindi films were first introduced for home viewing, young school boys and girls aged seven or less became avid watchers of these films, and they gradually absorbed the behavioural patterns of the screen heroes they admired (Adamu AU 2021).

These intertwining phenomena significantly shaped the direction of the fifth generation of Hausa writers, with a turn towards the soyayya (romance) genre. Initially faced with a shortage of publishing houses across northern Nigeria, this new crop of soyayya book writers and sellers defied the challenges and established their own small-scale printing companies. The first of these Hausa romantic books printed and sold was *Rabin Raina*, written by a female author, Talatu Wada Ahmad, in 1984 (Adamu YM 1996, 2002; Adamu AU 2000; Whitsitt 2002; Furniss 2003). By the mid-1980s, dozens of new writers had emerged in Kano, flooding the city with soyayya novels. As of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, according to Adamu YM (2021: x), no African language had as many female authors writing in a local language as Hausa.

By the late 1980s, more children who had been exposed to both literacies in Latin script and Indian cinema had become novelists, and the imaginative investment of Hausa viewers in Indian films was increasingly reflected in their fictional writings. When the new wave of Hausa soyayya book authors started producing prose fiction interlaced with love stories and emotional themes in mass quantities, literary and textual critics started comparing their storylines with Hindi films, leading to accusations that they rip off such films. Adamu AU (2021) provides examples of some Hausa novels that can be directly identified as rip-offs of Indian cinema. These include *Alkawarin Allah* by Aminu Adamu (1994), a direct adaptation of the 1983 Indian film *Romance,* produced and directed by Ramanand Sagar. Bala Anas Babinlata's novel *Sara Da Sassaka* is an adaptation of the Indian movie 'Iqlik De Khaliya,' while his other work, *Rashin Sani* is inspired by *DostanaI* (1980), directed by Raj Khosla. Additionally, *In Da So Da Kauna,* a Hausa soyayya book by Ado Gidan Dabino, shares similar plot elements with the 1979 Bollywood romantic drama *Amar Deep*, directed by R.

Krishnamurthy and K. Vijayan.

This pamphlet-type literature has created a popular reading public for wilful, passionate heroes and heroines who mimic a style of love and sexual interaction found in Indian films (Larkin 1997). The readership of these novels, much like that of Indian films, is diverse and spans various demographics. A significant portion of readers consists of young females and males. Among female readers, who make up the majority, we find students and married women aged between thirteen and fifty. While the gender distribution among readers varies, greater attention is often directed towards female readers. This focus is understandable given the patriarchal structure of Hausa society, where moral subjectivities tend to favour men. It is important to acknowledge that this description of the readership may be limited. Many men who enjoy this genre might refrain from identifying themselves as readers due to the criticism it faces from predominantly male religious and cultural authorities. In contrast, female readers frequently embrace their association with these books, valuing how the stories resonate with their shared imaginations and reflect their personal experiences.

By the mid-1990s, hundreds of new soyayya novels had flooded the market, sparking a literary movement that gained popularity and cultivated a dedicated readership even beyond the borders of Nigeria and Niger. Hausa in the diaspora became avid fans of these books, and vendors began exporting them to countries like Benin, Togo, Ghana, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Sudan, Gabon, and Central African Republic. Interestingly, the books also gained a following among Hausa people living in Saudi Arabia, and trading in those books became a big business as more booksellers from within and outside Nigeria flocked to Kano to purchase them (Adamu Yusuf Muhammad 2021).
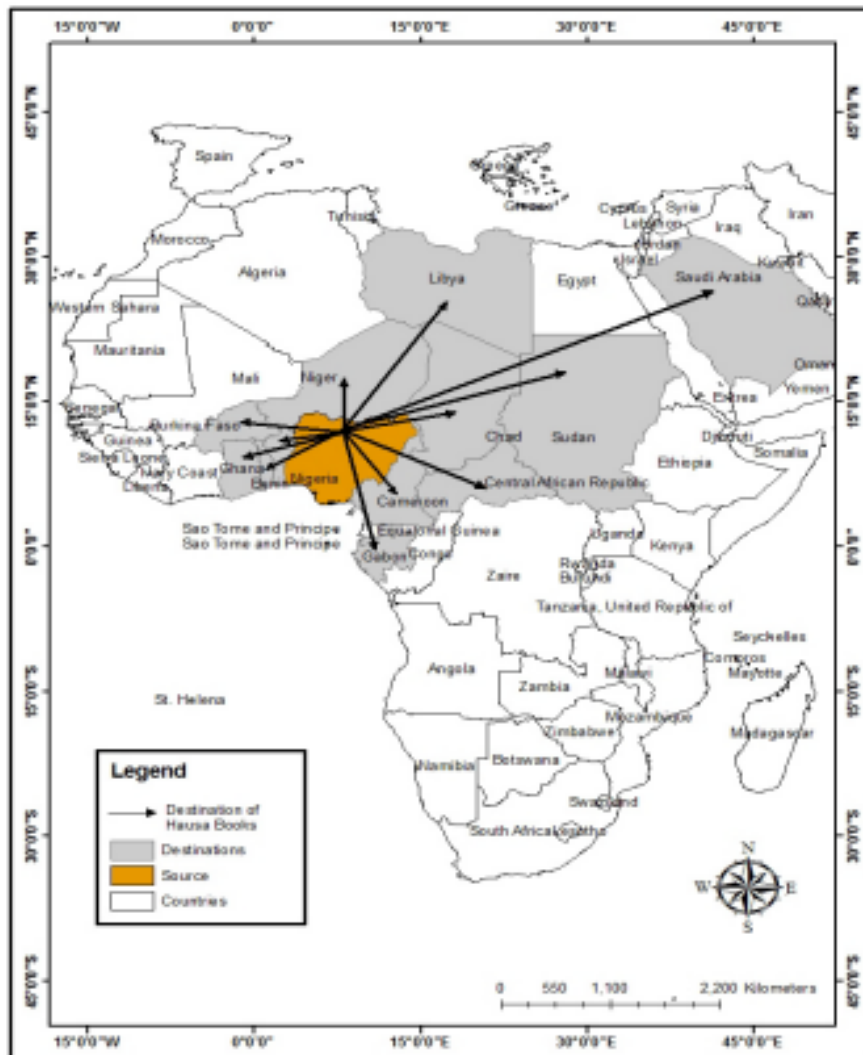
Figure 4.1: Destinations of Hausa Novels.
Source: Adamu Yusuf Muhammad (2021) An Account of Modern Hausa Prose-Fiction in the 21st Century.

In other words, the authors of soyayya books incorporated the imagined alternative of Indian romance within the local Hausa realities, creating an abundance of prose fiction interlaced with love stories and emotional themes (Adamu Yusuf Muhammad 2021; Adamu Abdalla Uba 2021; Ibrahim 2018a). According to Larkin (1997), this long-term exposure of Hausa viewers to Indian films has resulted in a unique dynamic that involves the imaginative engagement of the viewers with forms of tradition different from their own while also conceiving a version of modernity that does not carry the political and ideological significance of the West. Therefore, since the late 1980s, Hausa prose fiction writers established a considerable foundation for the integration of Indian cinematic elements into the local cultural milieu. Nevertheless, a multitude of factors, including the emergence of Kannywood cinema in the 1990s (also influenced by Bollywood) and Politico-Islamic reforms of the 2000s, have contributed to the evolving interactions between Indian films and Hausa culture over the years, as will be further explored in the following section.

Cultural Discourse at the intersection of Bollywood and soyayya novellas
The intersection of Bollywood cinema and soyayya novellas has sparked cultural discourse among various groups. Ibrahim Malumfashi, a professor of Hausa studies, is one of the few academics who have shown interest in the soyayya literature from its inception. He criticized the emerging Hausa popular literature as producing sub-standard literary materials. Malumfashi (1992) approached this literary movement with disdain, categorizing it as mere market literature. This perspective suggests that soyayya books hold little to no literary value, akin to 'Onitsha market literature,' a 20th-century genre characterized by sentimental and moralistic novellas and pamphlets crafted by 'semi-literate' writers, which were sold at the bustling Onitsha market in eastern Nigeria (Rexroth 2021). Examples of Onitsha market literature include titles like 'Rose Only Loved My Money', 'Drunkards Believe the Bar is Heaven', 'Why Some Rich Men Have No Trust in Some Girls', and 'How to Get a Lady in Love'. Additionally, some works serve as guides on various subjects such as writing love letters, managing finances, and achieving prosperity, all of which have seen commercial success (Rexroth 2024).

In his critique of the soyayya literary genre, Malumfashi (1992) expressed

concern over the focus on escapist themes that fail to address the pressing issues of poverty and declining living conditions prevalent in everyday life. He further critiqued the phenomenon of cultural borrowing, describing these books as 'gwanjo' (second-hand) due to their overt reliance on external cultural narratives, which, in his view, fabricate scenarios incongruent with the realities in Hausa society. Malumfashi (2000) predicted the demise of both the soyayya genre and the literary movement it created, and he went on to declare it dead despite its surging popularity.

On the contrary, Larkin (1997) posits that the soyayya literature embodies a convergence of transnational cultures facilitated by media infrastructure. He sees the metamorphosis of Hausa literature through soyayya books as a mode of social inquiry that allows a Hausa audience, and Hausa artists and writers to actively imagine their lives through the mediating lens of a culture they see as similar to their own, particularly Bollywood. Larkin highlights that Indian cinema provided an extended narration of the problems of arranged marriages and of the place of materialism in a 'traditional' society that resonates with everyday Hausa life. By framing certain narratives in soyayya literature as a mode of social inquiry, Larkin underscores the agency of Hausa audiences and writers, positioning them not merely as passive receptors of cultural imperialism but as active participants envisioning their realities through the filter of a culture they find relatable. For soyayya authors, their exploration of love carries didactic and moral implications, endowing their novels with a sense of social responsibility. Larkin contends that incompatibility in marriage partner selection leads daughters to run away from their parents to become 'independent women,' resulting in undesirable outcomes such as prostitution, suicide, or enduring an unhappy marriage, and an early divorce—even if the partner chosen is wealthy (Ibid: 421). Consequently, the soyayya literary movement emerges as a platform for Hausa youth to explore the limits of accepted Hausa attitudes toward love and sexuality through the narratives derived from both Indian film and Hausa traditions.

Despite the prediction of its demise, the soyayya genre has not only persisted but continues to flourish, inciting ongoing discourse about its societal implications. Adamu YM (2000) contributes to this debate by contesting claims that soyayya literature corrupts its readers. He mentioned, 'When a writer writes

about social inequality, brutalization, forced or arranged marriages, moral decadence, cultural imperialism, etc., it is because those things abound in his society' (30-1). Scholars such as McCain (2013), Ibrahim (2018b), and Adamu YM (2021) view these writers as advocates for the marginalized. In a focused examination of novels by Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, Whitsitt (2003a; 2003b) argues that her works critique patriarchal institutions and make the case for women's education.

Figure. 4.2: Covers of soyayya books from the author's collection.

Adamu AU (2021) reasserts that the soyayya genre significantly intersects with societal dynamics, noting that the biggest accusation against the soyayya books, which manifests itself in many of the 160 soyayya-themed novels he studied, is that of empowering girls to voice out a personal choice in marriage. Critiques interpret this influence of Hindi films on Hausa society through the soyayya books as *rashin kunya* (impertinence) or lack of *kawaici* (reticence) and, therefore, outside the scope of *Tarbiyar Bahaushe* (Hausa norms and values). In the archetypal Hausa society, girls subjected to forced marriages are expected to show *hakuri* (endurance) until they eventually get used to the man (or the woman, as the case may be since there are cases of boys being forced to marry girls they do not love). However, soyayya literature prominently features strategies for resisting forced marriage, which are often seen as adaptations from Bollywood cinema. These complex dynamics contribute to the criticism directed at soyayya novelists for allegedly reproducing foreign cultural influences that encourage young people to defy parental authority and adopt new norms and values.

Authors of Hausa romance novels are often vague about their sources. While they acknowledged being fans of Indian films from childhood, many consistently deny ripping off Indian films. Instead, they have asserted that their novels deal with the realities of everyday life and draw from their own experiences. For instance, Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, a popular soyayya novelist, reiterated this view in an interview I did with him, saying that his novels address the realities of everyday life in Hausa society.[2] He has maintained this perspective since the initial criticisms against them. In fact, in 1992, he wrote a rejoinder titled '*Zamani, zo mu tafi*!' ('Let's go with modern times'), which he directed at Malumfashi's (1992) *'Tsakanin gwanjo da orijina'* ('Between second-hand and original'). Gidan Dabino argued that Malumfashi was making sweeping generalizations and insisted that soyayya book writers were not simply copying foreign cultures but also drawing upon their personal experiences to foster positive changes in their society. He posited that if the themes in the Hausa contemporary novels resembled those from other cultures, it simply demonstrated the common humanity in all cultures (Gidan Dabino 1992; Larkin 1997).

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[2] Interview with Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino conducted in Kano in November 2014.

Another prominent author of soyayya books, Dan Azumi Baba, reiterated that they were not copying Indian films while discussing his motivation for writing about love and marriage. He emphasized that the absence of love is the main issue in marriage within Hausa society. Indian cinema only reminded the people watching it about their own local challenges, and now many women understand that love is a necessary ingredient for overcoming any problem that may arise in marriage. As Larkin (1997) pointed out, the concerns expressed in the soyayya book over the increasing commodification of love and the iniquities of forced marriages reflect common themes in soyayya literature and Indian films. According to McCain (2013), this 'teaching' from the soyayya books often takes the form of exposing and challenging the corruption of an older generation and abuses of the elite, valorising romance between young people, and arguing that women and youth should be given greater choices in how they wish to live their lives. The soyayya novelist, 'Dan Azumi Baba, argues that reading soyayya books changes things. Girls do not agree to forced marriage anymore. Parents understand that if they force their daughter into marriage, she may leave them and eventually become a prostitute (Larkin 1997).

The interplay between Indian cinema and soyayya literature in northern Nigeria reflects broader cultural concerns and has sparked extensive public debates regarding the direction of the region's cultural landscape. In August 2007, a remarkable incident occurred when Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, the then Governor of Kano state, led a public 'ceremony' to incinerate thousands of soyayya novels confiscated from students at a local secondary school. Shekarau was elected governor through a populist agenda of implementing sharia (Islamic law) reforms, which included the censorship of popular culture, specifically targeting soyayya literature and Hausa films. Producers of these cultural products faced allegations under the sharia implementation context of perpetrating cultural corruption (Ibrahim 2018a; 2018b; 2020).

During the book-burning event, Bala Muhammad, the head of one of the government agencies tasked with 'sanitizing' the society through censoring literary works, explained that teachers at the secondary school in question, attributed students' academic failure, at least in part, to their reading preferences. To address this concern, teachers searched the students' belongings in their dormitories. 'Incredibly, about four thousand (4,000) romantic and titillating

novellas were retrieved in a school with about 2,000 students!' Muhammad stated that the government's objective was to exchange 'unrecommendable reading materials for our didactic novellas' (Muhammad cited in McCain 2014). While setting fire to the books the girls had chosen for themselves in the presence of journalists, Governor Shekarau labelled them as 'pornographic and immoral to the customs and traditions of Northern Nigeria society'.[3]

Despite censorship challenges, the soyayya literary form has thrived for over four decades, remaining popular among many generations of Nigerians. It has adapted to various trends while evolving in response to changing cultural contexts. For instance, the influence of Indian films on Hausa literary culture persists, yet the rise of the Nigerian film industry—particularly the bourgeoning Kannywood in northern Nigeria (which is not the focus of this chapter)—has introduced a shift from written narratives to audiovisual storytelling within the Hausa-India cultural dialogues (See Ibrahim 2020, 2025). Kannywood movies often draw their storylines and styles either directly from Indian films that resonate deeply with local audiences or indirectly from soyayya literature. Contrary to the initial understanding that Kannywood home videos overshadowed the Hausa literary movement, they actually serve to complement it. In essence, the Hausa literary movement and Kannywood have formed a collaborative yet competitive relationship, fostering a more nuanced dynamic within the popular cultural production sphere in northern Nigeria. Both are influenced by cultural exchanges with Indian cinema and continue to flourish without diminishing the original Indian cinema in the region, as elaborated in the subsequent sections.

The Bollywood-Hausa literary trend continues: A comparative analysis

Not only have literary scholars like Adamu (1994) demonstrated that early Hausa romance novels were influenced by Indian films, but my fieldwork conducted in 2023 and 2024 has revealed that this trend continues among contemporary Hausa writers. While authors tend to be cagey about their sources, local audiences—avid fans of Indian films and readers of Hausa novels—often identify the specific

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[3] https://saharareporters.com/2014/08/24/book-burning-nigerian-minister-education-explains-why-he-did-it-governor-kano [Last accessed: 2025-2-25]

books and movies from which these writers have drawn inspiration. One example is 'Rayuwar Bilkisu,' a Hausa novel by Ayuba Muhammad Danzaki, first printed in 2011 and reprinted in 2016 and 2024. This novel is inspired by the Indian romantic film *Kal Ho Naa Hoa* (2003), directed by Nikhil Advani. I will return to this comparison later.

Additional examples include *Awa Ashirin Da Hudu* (24 Hours), a crime and revenge novel written by Khadija Abdullahi in 2008, which is an adaptation of the 2007 Indian film *Chirutha*, directed by Puri Jagannadh. This film also centres on the theme of revenge. Another example is *Muguwar Kaya,* a Hausa novel by Salmanu Faris Shuaibu Kudan printed in 2022, which is inspired by the 2017 Indian soap opera *Kundali Bhagya* (The Fate of Our Horoscope) directed by Sameer Kulkarni et al. *Kundali Bhagya* gained popularity in northern Nigeria after being dubbed in Hausa by Arewa 24 TV, where it is titled '*Kaddarar Rayuwa'* (literally translated as Fate of Life).

Returning to *Rayuwar Bilkisu* (2022), which offers a reimagined narrative of the Indian film *Kal Ho Naa Hoa* (2003), we can begin by comparing the titles. The phrase '*Kal Ho Naa Hoa,*' meaning 'Tomorrow may never come,' is adapted into '*Rayuwar Bilkisu*' (Bilkisu's Life). The story centres on Bilkisu, a female protagonist whose tomorrow never arrives due to various twists in her love relationships. Both *Kal Ho Naa Hoa* and *Raywwar Bilkisu* revolve around the same theme of intense love relationships, showcasing the connections between Sharukhan and Preity Zinta in the Indian film and between Bilkisu and her boyfriend, Sharfudden, in the Hausa novel.

Both narratives highlight the challenges of loving someone who does not reciprocate those feelings. They also depict the difficulties beautiful women face in public spaces, as they often attract attention from many men, some of whom would go to great lengths to win their affection. Additionally, both narratives touched on the effects of consanguineous and arranged marriages, themes present in both Indian and Hausa cultural contexts.

While discussing with those who have watched *Kal Hoo Naa Hoa* and read *Rayuwar Bilkisu*, many have agreed that the two works share similar plotlines while recognizing some differences informed by the cultural distinctions between Indian and Hausa societies. A major difference lies in the use of spiritual means in achieving objectives. In *Kalho Naa Hoa*, the emphasis is on endurance

and sacrifices to navigate challenges in love relationships and family issues. In contrast, *Rayuwar Bilkusu* incorporates the idea of seeking spiritual assistance from *bokaye* (sorcerers) to achieve certain goals, which include causing harm to an opponent.

Rayuwar Bilkisu is a blend of local knowledge and transnational influence from Bollywood.   Therefore, claims by some Hausa authors that their books originate solely from their original ideas may only be partially true. While striking similarities exist, notable differences also arise—typical of adaptations—and that contributes to the authors' confidence in asserting originality in their works. However, these differences are not as pronounced as the similarities. Adamu (2006, 38) describes this bricolage in the Hausa creative and performing arts industry as 'divergent similarities'.

It is worth noting that the growing popularity of Asian movies beyond Bollywood, such as Korean dramas and Turkish telenovelas, is beginning to influence narratives within soyayya literature. This trend, however, has not diminished the significant impact of Indian cinema, which continues to introduce many satellite channels that air Indian soap operas, competing with media content from other Asian countries consumed in Nigeria. While the traditional themes of love and romance inspired by Indian films continue to thrive, elements from Korean dramas and Turkish films are gradually making their way into the storylines of Hausa soyayya literature. Consequently, authors of soyayya books are diversifying character relationships and expanding the social dynamics explored in their books. This diversification has contributed to the sustained popularity of this genre among readers in northern Nigeria. Moreover, this blending of various Asian film narratives within contemporary Hausa literature has the potential to generate new discourses that critique or celebrate hybridized elements from different cultures across the Indian Ocean and West Africa. In all, the dynamic showcases how literature is not a self-contained entity but a product of diverse cultural and linguistic interactions.

Having undergone various transformations, the demographic dynamics of the Hausa popular culture have also evolved in recent years, largely due to the influence of digital technology. Younger generations who have grown up with digital technology possess differing expectations and engagement levels compared to older generations. Their interactions with media are influenced by

global popular culture trends and local nuances, leading to varying degrees of enthusiasm for and engagement with Indian cinema. Hausa literary communities inspired by Indian and other cinemas have also embraced the digital landscape. Many writers and readers have moved to online novel-sharing platforms such as Wattpad https://www.wattpad.com/list/523145306-hausa-novels. This global website hosted in Korea is for publishing and reading fiction in different languages and connecting with fellow writers and readers. Wattpad is also available as a Smartphone application and YouTube channel. In addition, there are also local online platforms where such novels can be accessed, such as Taskar Novels (a repository of novels https://tnovels.com.ng). Some of these books were acquired through free licensing from the authors, and their motivation was to make their stories heard. The website owners also purchased copyrights of some uploaded books and offered them free to read. Some free and paid books are also distributed through social media sharing platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram.
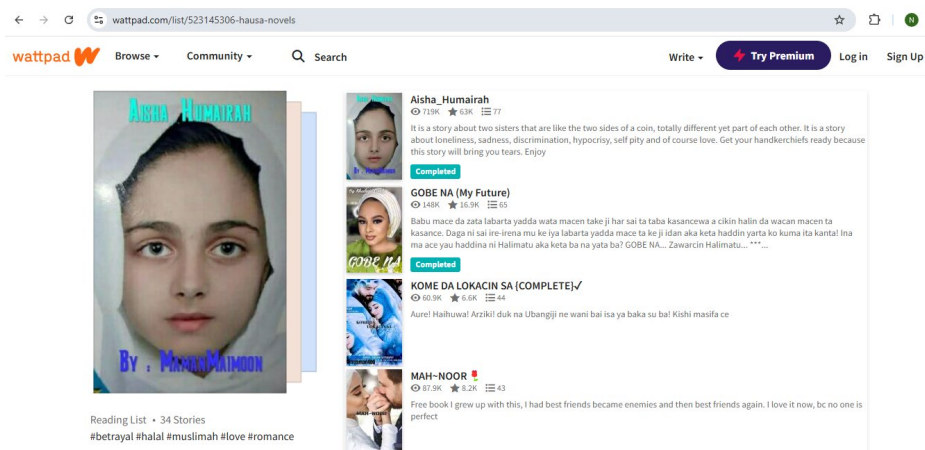

Figure 4.3: A screenshot of the Hausa novels gallery on Wattpad.
(https://www.wattpad.com/list/523145306-hausa-novels)

To conclude, the interplay between Indian films and Hausa romance novels highlights that literature is a dynamic and open phenomenon shaped by various cultures, languages, and nations. The Nigerian Hausa romance novels that blend Indian romance into the local Hausa realities provide a clear example of cultural

exchanges across the Indian Ocean. As expected of any literary work of this composition, adapting Indian romance into Hausa novels sparked cultural discourse, leading to various social and cultural negotiation practices. While some literary critics expressed their discomfort with the direction of Hausa literature of borrowing foreign cultures, particularly Bollywood, others saw it as unavoidable cultural interactions that abound within transnational media exchange. Religious leaders expressed their concerns over social changes the Hausa literature and its readership brought to the Hausa society, leading to contestations and resistance based on different worldviews, emotions, feelings, and expectations of divergent groups. This dynamic has led to book censorship of varying degrees, including confiscation, replacement, and even burning of books. Despite these cultural contestations and negotiations resulting from transnational cultural exchange manifesting through literature, the soyayya books remain popular and have even moved online, where censorship is more difficult to implement.

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5

Contingent Zanzibari Maps

Criss-crossing Geographies in an Anthology of Swahili Indian Ocean Poetry

Clarissa Vierke

"Perhaps we could imagine space
  as the simultaneity of stories so-far"

<div align="right">(Massey, <i>For Space</i>, 9)</div>

"Or to put it in an archaeological way,
  it is as if the details of our lives have accumulated in layers,
  and now some layers
  have been displaced by the friction of other events,
  and bits of contingent pieces
  still remain, accidentally tumbled about."

<div align="right">Abdulrazak Gurnah, <i>By the Sea</i></div>

Introduction[1]

My main concern in this contribution is to show the heterogeneous imaginations of

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the Indian Ocean found in the contemporary Swahili poetry that I have worked on and translated together with a group of Zanzibari poets with the aim of producing an anthology. Our aim is to bring attention to the Swahili poetic production about the Indian Ocean. Despite the increasing scholarly attention to Indian Ocean literary studies over the last decades, Swahili poetry from this region remains significantly under-researched, overshadowed by novels in the European languages of the former colonial rulers. The anthology, by its very nature of being a collection of poems by different poets, brings together a variety of visions of the ocean, which also question some of the patterns of discussing the Indian Ocean in literary scholarship. Indian Ocean literary studies has often overlooked not only locally specific imaginaries and practices of literature but also the particularly troubled positions of contemporary Indian Ocean communities living in places at the intersections of many complex political geographical 'maps' and layers. While Indian Ocean studies has made a huge theoretical contribution in questioning fixed identities as well as the 'container-logic' of confined areas or continents by introducing a perspective of long-term historical encounters, cultural exchange, and hybridity, it has had a tendency to be "disengaged with material critical" contingencies, as Brugioni and Fendler (2021: 169) critically remark. Rather than merely celebrating cosmopolitan visions, one needs to include a perspective that sees that the Indian Ocean "is instead determined by historical and social contingencies established at the core of the colonial and cultural relations that materialize in the Indian Ocean regions and especially in the historical, political and cultural environment of the island(s), which represents a peculiar space-time unit within the Indian Ocean." (ibid.)

Critical perspectives have mostly been taken with regard to the past and in relation to the complicated memories emerging from contexts of slavery and indentured labour at the expense of the "contemporary and contemporaneous", as Srinivas, Ng'weno and Jeychandran (2020: 13) also emphasize in their edited volume, *Reimagining the Indian Ocean*. They make a case for more ethnographic studies of practices in the 'here and now': "While we are interested in the historical, we pay special attention to micro-cultural practices for imagining and simulating spaces, and the many ways pasts influence the present or are reclaimed by various actors. We recognize that there are many worlds and plural modes of belonging that constitute the diverse spaces of the Indian Ocean." (ibid.).

The "microcultural practices" I will consider in the following, are poetic

practices rooted in local understandings of poetry on Zanzibar. The poems comprising the anthology reflect and construct "plural modes of belonging" on Zanzibar. In this respect, I also take inspiration from Srinivas, Ng'weno, and Jeychandran's *Reimaging the Indian Ocean* (2020: 13) because they foreground "place, placemaking, and quotidian practices as valuable frames for the study of Indian Ocean worlds". The poems I am studying are, as I want to argue, ways of worldmaking on Zanzibar. They spell out "plural modes of belonging" and worlds of various scales. As you will see, the poems sometimes consider the ocean in relation to Zanzibar's history of transoceanic exchange and its glorious past; sometimes they make the ocean shrink to a 'pond' limited by the confines of the Tanzanian nation state, obscuring the view of a wider Indian Ocean; and sometimes, in line with both nationalist discourses of development and multinational interests, it becomes an exploitable resource.

The anthology aims to bridge the gap in scholarship by exploring Indian Ocean imaginaries within Swahili poetry, connecting these historical contexts to contemporary creative expressions. In the poems, the ocean is a dynamically constructed and increasingly contested space: the contemporary moment from which the poems emerge points at the changing political and social maps of which that the Zanzibari community has been a part. Moreover, the poems do not merely describe political moments and mirror smaller or larger worlds, but rather take an active part in shaping and imagining them, presenting different visions of world. Poems also call worlds into being.

My contribution has the following structure: To both contextualize Zanzibari poetic practice and give an idea of a changing place, I will firstly situate Zanzibar and Swahili, and its poetic practices, in the larger changing historical context of the Swahili coast and its history of poetry. Secondly, I will describe contemporary poetic practice in Zanzibar to explain how it is situated in people's lifeworlds, and to stress the cultural specificity of poetic practice. Afterwards, I will examine some poetry from the anthology by stressing the polyphony of voices and imaginations of the Indian Ocean. My main aims are to situate the poetry in the typical poetic and discursive practices, as they exist on Zanzibar, and to show how various historical strands have influenced contemporary practice.

A Historical Perspective on Zanzibar, the Dynamic Swahili Coast and its Poetic Practice

Zanzibar, referring to the two islands of Pemba and Unguja, has been interwoven with changing and overlapping geographies defined by maritime interactions. It has had various rulers, first the Portuguese (1498–1698), and then the Omani Arabs (1698–1964) alongside the British (1890–1963), who made Zanzibar a protectorate and part of their colony of Tanganyika until the latter's independence of 1961. The Zanzibari revolution of 1964, which cost the lives of many thousands and sent even more into exile, connected Zanzibar to the nation state of Tanzania. From a cosmopolitan hub, which Zanzibar stone town became in the 19th century, it became a troubled part of the socialist state.

While Zanzibar – more precisely the stone town of Unguja – became the most important trade hub only in the 19th century, Swahili port towns have a longer history: The remnants of urban settlement and coral stone architecture, like mosques, seem to have emerged around 800 and 1000 A.D. together with the Swahili language, accounting for the same "cultural complex", defined by transoceanic trade and Islam, as archaeological and linguistic research suggest (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993, Horton & Middleton 2000). They have existed all along the so-called Swahili Coast, extending roughly from Southern Somalia to Northern Mozambique, constantly forging new alliances amongst themselves, but also with the wider Indian Ocean (see also Kresse and Vierke 2022).

The inhabitants of the coastal towns interacted with each other, exchanging goods, teaching each other Islamic knowledge and intermarrying. Yet, their relations have also been characterised by competition and rivalry. The townspeople did not identify as Swahili, but cherished strong local identities – people still identify as Mombasan, Mwamu (a person from Lamu) or Mwunguja (a person from Unguja) – reflected in the approximately twenty different Swahili dialects. For centuries, music – and particularly poetry – played a key role in acting out rivalry (Biersteker & Shariff 1995), but also in forging constantly changing alliances of various scales (sometimes including outside forces like, from the 15th century onwards, various Omani clans, and later, the colonial powers). In this context of flexible alliances, political power – the capacity to attract followers – and poetic skill – the ability to outplay one's opponent with one's own verses – have been strongly linked. For instance, some of the earliest

Swahili poetry we have has been attributed to the mystical hero Fumo Liyongo, who had to fight for the throne on Pate in what is now northern Kenya (see Miehe at al. 2003). To give another example, in the early 19th century, political rivalry between the flourishing city-states of Lamu and Pate first found its expression in poetic duels, *kujibizana*, before leading to the violent battle of Shela, in which Pate, which had overpowered the region for centuries, lost to Lamu. Under Zanzibari tutelage, the latter became a flourishing centre of Islamic scholarship, poetic production and music in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Biersteker 1996, Biersteker & Shariff 1995, Vierke 2022b). [2] Lamu's dialect, Kiamu, became synonymous with poetic language all along the coast when Swahili poetry spread to northern Mozambique in the context of growing Sufi networks. In the 19th century, Sufi intellectuals systematically trying to reach wider parts of the population composed Islamic poetry in Swahili – which played a decisive role in the adaptation of Arabic motifs, verse prosody and script, as well as in the spread of Swahili and its poetry. Before and parallel to colonial efforts, Swahili became a language associated with writing (in Arabic script), Muslim learning and poetry recitation all along the coast (Vierke and Mutiua 2021, Vierke 2022a).

In the 19th century, the centre of poetic production and scholarship gradually shifted southwards, echoing the shift of the political and economic centre: from Lamu to Zanzibar, where the Omani Said bin Sultan (1790-1856) moved his throne in the 1830s, ruling over the whole Swahili-speaking world. The keen economic interest that motivated the movement to the Western Indian Ocean meant a reorientation of the Swahili world, as Jeremy Prestholdt (2020: 30) describes, "facilitating or strengthening ties with the continental interior as well as with Europe and the Americas. […] The networks of the Indian Ocean extended west through caravan roads engineered by Yao and Nyamwezi merchants. By the late nineteenth century, substantial links between the Great Lakes and the Swahili coast saw regional commodities sold to merchants from as far away as the United States while coastal merchants settled deep in the interior." Following these caravan routes, as well as Muslim networks, the Swahili language reached as far as Mozambique, the Comoros, the West Coast

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[2] The affluence of the Lamu archipelago, based on Indian Ocean trade networks, is reflected in the poetry committed to writing in the 19th century (see Vierke 2022b).

of Madagascar, and far into the hinterland of what is now Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, the Congo, and Burundi (Luffin 2004, Vierke and Mutiua 2021, Alpers 2007: 167ff.).[3] It turned into a language of transregional communication at the Western rim of the Indian Ocean, also absorbing influences from other Bantu languages and often in a position of power and authority over other local languages, which was further enhanced by its use as medium of written communication. As a language of transregional communication, it was used so widely that it was also adopted by the Portuguese, German and British colonial administrations for mostly pragmatic reasons (Whiteley 1969, Mutiua 2015, Bonate 2016).[4]

European colonisation changed the map of the Swahili coast again. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Italian, British, German, French, and Portuguese colonisation redefined the coast along the lines of colonial borders – between Italian Somalia, German, British, and Portuguese East Africa and the French Comoros and Madagascar. When Britain and Germany took over mainland rule from 1895, they constrained Omani rule to Zanzibar itself. In German East Africa, the demarcation of the state's territory went hand in hand with standardising Swahili, creating an official language of German East Africa. The compilation of dictionaries and grammars that missionaries had started in the mid-19th century, as well as the creation of institutions of standardisation from the 1920s onwards, played an important role towards the goal of unifying the language (see Whitely 1969, Robinson 2022).

Reflecting its importance as a centre of power, Kiunguja, the dialect of Zanzibar, was chosen as the basis for the standard language – to the pride but also dismay of the Zanzibari, who have felt increasingly disenfranchised of their language. The Swahili newspaper, the creation of a modern Swahili literature –

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[3] Swahili did not first appear on the Mozambican coast at that time. But, for many along the Mozambican coast in the 18th and particularly the 19th centuries, Swahili became a second or third language (Mutiua 2015, Vierke 2022a).

[4] Along the coast, Swahili poetry had a history of being written in Arabic script which reaches back at least to the early 18th century. From the 19th century onwards, print and colonial education increasingly made Latin script dominant and, from 1899 onwards, when Arabic script was abolished in German East Africa, mandatory (Vierke 2014).

mostly the novel but also poetry – in the new standard language, played an important role in turning Kiunguja from a dialect of the port city into a modern language of the (colonial) state, linked to a standard orthography, taught in school and via a national canon of newly promoted literature.[5]

In many ways, independence, though coming with the 'inaugural narrative' of a new beginning, breaking away from the colonial past, meant the continuation of many aspects. In Tanzania, the project of standardising Swahili and the creation of a modern literature was continued in the name of nationalism after independence. The colonial institutions, promoting research and standardising Swahili, turned into national ones: the East African Swahili Committee turned into the *Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili* (Swahili Research Institute), associated with the University of Dar es Salaam. There is not only a continuity of institutions, like schools and university bodies, associations, and publishing houses, but also in terms of people. The pioneering poets of the independence generation, like Shaaban Robert (1909–1962), Matthias Mnyampala (1917–1969) – the first chairperson of the UKUTA (*Usanifu wa Kiswahili na Ushairi Tanzania*, Standardisation of Kiswahili and Poetry in Tanzania)[6], Amri Abedi (1924–1964), and even Julius Nyerere – who was also a poet and translator, a classmate of Amri Abedi and a patron of UKUTA – were all educated in colonial schools, and quickly climbed the ladder of success. Coming from the mainland, they also embodied the shift (again already part of the colonial project based on defining the state by territory) away from the coast,

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[5] The journal *Kiongozi* published in German East Africa and, later under British rule, *Mambo Leo*, provided newly emerging East African audiences, educated in colonial schools, with a new experience of a variety of texts, like 'news', reports on, for instance, the railway, the warship, and other latest developments in technology, adverts for shipping companies and farmers' supplies, as well as poetry – often in praise of the Kaiser – combined with imagery, forging the notion of belonging to the wider world of the empire (Askew 2014). Translation of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, which appeared in abridged form in the Swahili newspaper *Kiongozi*, or Steere's translations of English prose tales (*Hadithi za Kiingereza*, 1867), Johnson's book-length translation of Kipling's "The Jungle Book" (*Hadithi za Maugli, mtoto aliyelelewa na mbwa mwitu,* 1929) or Gulliver's Travels (*Safari za Gulliver*, 1932) came out with the aim of supplying a Swahili audience with a Western canon.
[6] UKUTA is the state literary association of Tanzania, founded under British rule, in 1959 (see Whiteley 1969).

its transoceanic literary exchanges, and the departure into a modern era also creating a new national poetry. For instance, Mnyampala, a Mgogo, who occupied various high ranking positions as a judge – including for some time, the position of *kadhi* in Dar es Salaam – played a key role in creating a national poetry: Much promoted by Nyerere, he adapted the Gogo genre of *ngonjera*, a genre of dialogic poetry, into Swahili to propagate the ideals of *ujamaa* socialism (Roy 2013). It became (and still is) the most performed genre in schools also in Zanzibar, meant to turn school children into good citizens (*wananchi*).

Nyerere's policy did not merely create continuity but was also embedded into the new world order of the cold war coming with new dichotomies of East and West. The newly created nation states in East Africa adopted different language policies   reflecting the binary world order. In socialist Tanzania, Swahili made the biggest career: Nyerere attributed to Swahili the main role in building a "self-reliant" nation (*kujitegemea*) (see Nyerere 1966). In Tanzania, language and literature – and particularly poetry – became the chief concern of the state, considered a prime vehicle to transport *ujamaa* socialism in the national language Swahili, promoting values of progress and nation-building – very much reflected as well in some of the Zanzibari poetry we worked on.

In reflecting upon the changing ecologies of literature, Alexander Beecroft (2015: 198) describes the introduction of the nation state as a fundamental disruption of previous literary spheres, whose cosmopolitan sources and references become obscured. The nation state imposes a unilineal account of national progress with a normative agenda of literature and language. Texts that cannot be assimilated into the narrative of the national literary history are marginalised (ibid.). Although Zanzibar has had a highly conflictual relation with the nation state, with which it was forced to unite after the revolution in 1964, poetry also became a school subject and a vehicle for progress and development on Zanzibar. A dichotomy emerged between poetry written and printed in schoolbooks following a national canon with an emphasis on writers from the mainland and the so-called oral 'traditional' or 'popular' poetry, mostly drawing on earlier poetic practices – as much as a dichotomy between the standard language and dialects also found in the poems discussed here.[7]

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[7] The label 'traditional' literature was born at the same time as modern literature;

In a telling way, Nyerere himself even deliberately changed the meaning of the word 'Swahili': In an effort to fight against tribalism, he addressed all Tanzanians as Waswahili and delinked the language's prime association with the Swahili coast (Blommaert 1999; Madumulla, Bertoncini, and Blommaert 1999). By simply using Waswahili to emphasise the territorial definition of the nation state and its inhabitants, for a short moment in time, even diasporic Asian communities using Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Gujarati or Hindi at home – or at least in religious and formal discourse (Akhtar 2015, on Khojas) – but who had often adopted Swahili as their language of everyday life, could identify as Swahili (and Tanzanian). A national and deracialised notion of Swahili seemed possible from here. However, the Zanzibar revolution with its bloody massacres, and even more, the economic pressure on Asian communities and their increasing political exclusion, foreclosed such a future early on. In the late 1960s, scholarly debates also increasingly crystallised on dichotomies of Africanness vs. foreignness, and turned the notion of fluid identities against the Swahili coast: the recurrently evoked question "Mswahili ni nani?" ("Who is a Mswahli?") suggesting that the coast with its flexible notions of belonging and its cultural diversity makes the term Swahili open for reinterpretation (as Tanzanian), was increasingly perceived as hostile at the coast (Mazrui and Shariff 1994, Mazrui 1992).[8] Conceiving of culture and people as belonging to mutually exclusive categories of being either 'African', 'autochthonously' part of the Tanzanian nation, or 'Arab' and hence foreign, subsequently gained much prominence (Gaudioso 2022). Feeling disenfranchised of their own identity, this question raised much (persistent) resentment along the coast, adding to a general feeling of marginalisation on Zanzibar.[9] One can read the poems cherishing the

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many Swahili varieties, rich poetic languages, became dialects, which were not accepted in school (see also Mazrui 1992).

[8] It goes without saying that the dichotomy of the Swahili coast with fluid notions of belonging vs. clear-cut ethnic identities in other parts of Tanzania is entirely a construction.

[9] Though far away from being egalitarian, often based on economies of exploitation, for many centuries, Swahili city states had had flexible notions of ancestry, and put more emphasis on Islam as common religion (which in fact meant a large spectrum of practices and belief) and cultural refinement, most prominently language, through which one could gain membership to the city states (cf. also Kresse 2007: 37).

cosmopolitan past (see below), particularly against the recurrent tendency to essentialise identities after independence. The effort to reclaim Zanzibari dialects against the oppressive force of the standard can be considered in a similar vein.

Thus, Zanzibar is far from a unified world, but has been interwoven with changing and intersecting social and political geographies, which Swahili and Swahili poetry have been shaped by but have also co-created. The dynamic view of geography goes together with a view on time that is not merely teleological: As I have outlined, a number of practices and notions do not simply give way to new ones, but like archaeological layers, persist or re-emerge and take new shape. As we shall see, poetry is also traversed by multiple relations and diverse political geographies.

Poetry in Place

In this part, I will briefly describe contemporary poetic practice as it is situated in people's lifeworlds. Studying Indian Ocean literature as poetic practice means to study the making of poetry as it is done, situated in a place that is also being dynamically reshaped. Paying attention to genres specific to Indian Ocean communities also means to avoid simply imposing a notion of literature mostly derived from a Western understanding. This is important, since, poetry, differently from the novel which works much more as a modern, autonomous text, intersects with lifeworlds in many ways. Poetry, as I want to emphasize here, constantly emerges *in locally specific relations* – in relation to other poetry, to genres, institutions, media, social ties, and political discourse, as well as in relation to constantly changing notions of space.

On Zanzibar, poetry is a highly venerated form of public speech and exchange: There is no single important event, the opening of a conference, of a new hospital, a wedding or the *hijra* to Mecca that is unaccompanied by the recitation of a poem. Poetry co-constitutes the event: it does not merely present it as important and public, but it has a "generative force" (Arnold 2002) that calls things into being and blesses them. You also find poetry in the newspaper; all radio stations have poetry programs; it is discussed in conversations in the streets and extends into social media, like WhatsApp and Facebook. The quick serial and dialogic function of social media gives new shape to the much older, but still much appreciated forms of dialogic poetry (*kujibizana*). Evoking earlier coastal

connections between poetry and leadership, and poetic exchanges between the Swahili city-states, but also in Nyerere's promotion of *ngonjera* grounded in his understanding of poetry as a vehicle for political exchange, poetic duels are a platform that poets use, understanding themselves as mouthpieces of their communities.

Poetry creates or sustains sociality and takes institutionalised forms, which again have their roots in various eras. The local poetry association that I have worked with, ChaKuWaza (*Chama cha kuendeleza Washairi Zanzibar*, The Association of Promoting Poets on Zanzibar), has over 230 members from of all walks of lives.[10] Most of the people who belong to the *chama* are *wananchi*, the so-called 'common people'. Mzee Dere, who recently passed away, was a police officer, writing poetry, self-publishing his poetry in six volumes. Abdallah Ali Abdallah, a B.A. student of education in his twenties, finds little jobs here and there to make ends meet and writes ocean poetry inspired by his previous experience as a fisherman. Asha Saidi Yusufu, was born in 1980, has one daughter and a grandchild, and is renowned for both composing poetry on the spot and reciting with a beautiful voice. By selling some of her poetry on CDs, she earns a little money.

The associations (plural *vyama*, singular chama) in which poets organize themselves draw on earlier social organizations of competing Swahili *ngoma* dance groups (Ranger 1975), which provided platforms for the exchange of poetry, but also gesture to the colonial and the socialist states, with their poetry associations (like the UKUTA mentioned before). *Vyama*, like the ChaKuWaZa, are tied to an agenda of promoting progress through language, but also with the idea that poetry is an institutionalised activity, with a spokesperson, a treasurer, and a secretary general – a heritage of the socialist state. Also, the link between poetry and school education – rooted in colonial times and further promoted under socialist rule but still persistent today – has played into popular practices of poetry outside of school. Though popular poetry is appreciated for its oral recitation and ad hoc reactions to topical debates, and hence not for preservation on a page, many ChaKuWaZa poets aspire to publish books that become part of

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[10] This is not the only poetry association on Zanzibar and there are even more on the mainland.

the school curriculum, since it is the only way books sell. Some poets actually manage to publish their own poetry, which sometimes even makes it into school or university courses: The line between popular poetry and "highbrow" or academic poetry taught in school and written by academics is often hard to draw on Zanzibar. Sticking to conventions of rhyme and rhythm, *vina na mizani* ("rhyme and meter"), which were enhanced as a symbol of Swahili "traditional poetry" and against the "revolutionary" modernist, intellectual poems in the 1960s, the poets typically do not understand their poetry as a kind of avant-garde poetry.[11] However, it is also not simply a continuity of "Swahili tradition" (as if this was even possible, as continuity needs to be discursively created). The poets understand their poetry as modern and progressive; sometimes even using an nationalist tone, sometimes, however, also taking proudly Zanzibari perspectives in critique of the state and against the notion of marginalization previously described.

Apart from organizing poetry events and its social media presence, the *chama* creates a social web of mutual obligations, e.g. giving money for funerals, weddings, or hosting poets who come to visit, which hence also exceeds the realm of the 'literary' as an autonomous sphere. The relation between performing poetry and performing other social ties and roles is constantly negotiated. On the one hand, the poetic arena is constructed as different from 'normal life': All poets, for instance, have pen names (see Vierke 2020). The poet takes on a persona, using a veiled language which can be hard-hitting and a tone that is confident and boastful (in contrast to the common code of modesty).[12] In poetic gatherings, gender and age differences, which carry great meaning on Zanzibar, are also suspended to a certain extent: both men and women can perform together at poetry events. Although occasionally, the notion that a good Muslim woman should not go on stage recurs, almost half of the *chama* members are women, who, as our interviews show, have found ways of negotiating their roles as poets with their husbands and wider family, as well as the neighbourhood.[13] On the

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[11] On the fierce debate between the so-called revolutanaries and the traditionalists, see Gaudioso 2022.

[12] Particularly in *kujibizana*, poets use a symbolical language that addresses taboo topics, like rivalry, corruption or love affairs and betrayal (Samsom 1996).

[13] I conducted narrative interviews with all the poets who contributed to the

other hand, the poetic self is also partly convertible into social life: respect – but also conflicts – can extend into other social and political realms, and the other way around. Thus, poets understand themselves largely as intervening and commenting on – but also shaping – social relations from the smaller world of the everyday to the larger arena of the nation state (see Arnold 2002, Askew 2002).

Creating an Anthology of Indian Ocean poetry

Poetry echoes – but also co-constitutes – the changing geopolitical geography. When I first arrived on Zanzibar in the context of the project "Multiple artworks – Multiple Indian Ocean" in 2019 after many years of absence, I found that poetry was considered with the everyday, the small social dramas; its imagination was Zanzibar or the nation state, but the Indian Ocean was strikingly absent. Much of the precolonial poetry that I had worked on takes the audience to the Arabian peninsula in Islamic epics, or depicts the rich interior of Swahili mansions, decorated with porcelain, bronze trays, and textiles, which evoke transoceanic trade connections (see Vierke 2022b). In contrast, in contemporary Zanzibari poetry, Indian Ocean links are largely absent; national discourses of progress dominate, echoing changing socio-political geographies. This has nothing to do with people's experiences, life stories, and genealogies: almost all the poets had an intimate link with the sea, they had grown up next to the sea, some had even been fishermen going out on boats to fish, most (both men and women) had fished close to the shore, harpooned octopuses, or combed the beach, collecting seashells and crabs for food. Some of them could trace their genealogies across the ocean, and many had complicated links with the mainland.

   In 2022, we tried a kind of experiment: We called on Swahili poets to compose poetry about the Indian Ocean. Together with Shani Khalfan and Ali Mwalimu Rashid (both part of the State University of Zanzibar), I invited ChaKuWaZa poets to come and present their poetry in a one-day poetry meeting. Inviting poets to compose and recite poetry concerning a certain topic is not

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anthology with the aim of understanding more about their poetic practice. Bi Jalala Sikudhani, a poet from Dar es Salaam, accompanied me to all the interviews and also asked questions.

unusual: the state and NGOs regularly organize poetry competitions or awareness days, like, for instance, the day of the protection of the sea turtle, where poems have the role to argue for the topic's importance, making mostly a moral appeal the audience (see also Vierke 2020). Poets receive a little money for commissioned work (composing poetry also contributes to households) – and we followed that logic. In the end, thirty poets, including six from the neighbouring island Pemba, answered the call and came.[14] Most of the poets were accompanied by a reciter to give voice to the poems they composed.

In 2023, we started translating the poetry as a team: Shani Khalfan, Ali Mwalimu Rashid, Wanimo (chairman of the ChaKuWaZa), Bi Jalala (poet from Dar es Salaam), Madame Mai (secretary of the ChaKuWaZa) and I sat together to translate the almost sixty poems, preparing an anthology. Its aim is to foreground underexplored poetic voices and offer new insights into the cultural and historical entanglements of the Indian Ocean region. Working on it has been a communal activity: we went through each verse together relying on each other's expertise, often discussing meanings and connotations. We also went to the harbour, the fish market and the beach to talk to fishermen and fishmongers to get a better understanding of fish, boats, and fishing, but also to get more explanations of words. Our translations into English are still a work in progress. For the moment, they convey the sense, but do not mirror the poems' strict prosody.

The anthology, as I will show in the following section, brings together a variety of voices with diverse imaginations of the Indian Ocean.[15] Diversity is a particular strength of anthologies, as Weishin Gui (2022) also argued. He made a compelling case for shifting the focus from single-author novels to literary anthologies of the Indian Ocean. In his case, he referred to the anthologies of Perth's Centre for Stories: "Ways of Being Here" and "Wave after Wave" (Wood 2019).[16] As he argues, those collections of multiple narratives by multiple

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[14] Hence, the selection of poets came mostly naturally: We invited the poets who had composed poetry in response to the call that the ChaKuWaZa poets received.

[15] The anthology is not the first one of Zanzibari poetry. See, for instance, Chama cha Waandishi wa Vitabu Kanda ya Zanzibar 2007.

[16] https://centreforstories.com/product/wave-after-wave/ Founded in 2015, the center in Perth seeks to promote diversity in Australia, by inviting both oral and

authors offer more diverse forms of reading, which echo the fluidity of the ocean. Read from "cover to cover", it offers a "circulatory and fluid" form of "generic wateriness" (Dimock 2007). Hence, the anthology as such, with its different narratives, offers a dynamic and polyphonic construction in its own right, which in its fluid nature, not following a telos or plot, resembles the back and forth of waves. In a similar way, in his anthology of Pacific poetry, the indigenous Pacific islander, poet, and editor of poetry, Craig Santos Perez, describes how it is the anthology that, in its multitude of voices, opens up a new terrain of "the region's multi-faceted history and aesthetic practices" (Santos Perez 2020). Craig Santos Perez (2020, 245) advocates for "reading anthologically" as "a literary navigation" through a range of sources and "multi-voiced perspectives".

I want to take up the notion of "relational wayfinding" for the Swahili poems to underline the flexible imaginaries of Zanzibar and the ocean. I do not seek to read the poems comparatively in the sense of assessing them merely in terms of difference or identity. Rather in parallel to the local understanding of *kujibizana*, in which poems are produced in response to other poems, gradually changing the direction, I want to look at how the poems overlap in certain topics and styles but also branch out differently. As you will see, some notions recur in different formulations, creating links across poems, speaking back to each other, while some reformulate, reaccentuate or refute other views, or ignore them. Thus, there is not one imagination of the Indian Ocean in the poems, nor do they exhaust the topic; they rather open a field. The reading of the poems is inspired by the conversations I have had with the poets, their comments, and the discussions in our translation group.

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written storytelling, particularly by individuals with an Indian Ocean background. "Wave after Wave" is an anthology of stories written by workshop participants from Mauritius to Malaysia.

The Zanzibari poets on the Indian Ocean poetry day on 21ˢᵗ September 2022 (photo: M. Ramadhani)

Looking back, Looking forward: Poetic Constructions of the Indian Ocean

The poems offer a prism or a kaleidoscopic view on the Indian Ocean, construct different worlds, sometimes re-evoking the past, sometimes hoping for a better future. A number of the ocean poems narrate a history of broad transoceanic mercantile exchange, re-evoking Zanzibar's golden age as a hub that flourished under Omani rule (1698-1964). In Ali Mwalimu Rashid's poem, *Pepo Njema Mansuni* ("The Good/Benevolent Monsoon Winds"), he creates a link between the ocean's nature – what the historian Michael Pearson (2003: 13-26) calls "the deep structure" of the Indian Ocean – and its history of cultural exchange: In his poem, the monsoon wind system of the *kusi* and the *kaskazi*, which change directions each season, also change the direction of the ships. Zanzibari culture is a product of the ocean's nature, as the poem suggests. Furthermore, in his poem, which contains many constructions and words from the Pemban dialect, the language situates the poem proudly on the island of Pemba. It is a subtle way of speaking out against the longer history of Pemba being sidelined in the context of the nation and even in Zanzibar (Arnold 2002).

1. Ya Enzi ya enzi zile, karne kadha za nyuma
Kuna pepo zitokele, barahi hindi zevuma
Zikavuma zikendele, mbele na kurudi nyuma
Baharini zinogile, pirika zikaegama
Pepo njema Mansuni, pepo zekuwa na mengi

In the time of those eras, several centuries ago
Winds emerged, and blew on the Indian Ocean
They changed directions, blowing forwards and backwards
They were useful ocean winds, sustaining people's trade
The good winds of the Monsoon, the winds that carried so many things

In the following stanza number ten, the poem narrates Zanzibar's history as one of cultural hybridity. As the poem suggests, similar to the trade network born out of the natural ecology of the Indian Ocean, cultural entanglement grows out of intermarriage.

10. Kuja pia kurudile, ukawa mtindo jama
Wageni walifanyile, wengine hawakuhama
Makazi wakawekele, kwenye mwambao mzima
Damu zichanganikile, tamaduni kufungama
Pepo njema mansuuni, pepo zilileta mengi

Coming and returning became their style
That's how the foreigners did it, some didn't move again
They settled all along the coast
Their blood became mixed, cultures became entangled
The good Monsoon wind, the wind that carried so many things

Fatma Rashid presents a similar perspective in her poem *Hii Ni Asili Yetu* ("This Is Our Origin"). In her poem, sailing ships (*mashua*) brought the foreigners who "started a life with the natives of the mainland" (*Wakaanzisha*

maisha, na wenyeji bara kule). Moreover, the poem creates a link between the language, Swahili, and the cultural hybridity described: It is "a new language" (*lugha mpya*), Swahili, a Bantu language, which the cultural entanglement gave birth to "so that Arabic came to an end" (*Kiarabu kimekwisha*). It is the Bantu element that also made it acceptable in many different coastal contexts (probably she also refers to the African interior), as stanza seven suggests. Swahili, "the blessing", is an oceanic language, as the poem emphasizes, that emerged from the Indian Ocean.

7. Lugha mpya wakazusha, sifaze huku na kule
Kiarabu kimekwisha, Kibantu kimo tele
Hapo pakasawazishwa, lugha imemili vale
Unoziona neema, bahari ituletele

They created a new language which has been praised everywhere
The Arabic language came to an end, the Bantu part (of Swahili) is huge
That's how the language became balanced and acceptable
The blessings that you see – the ocean has brought them to us

While Fatma Rashid's poem proudly emphasizes the power of adaptation to the African context and integration of influences, it is another poem by Ali Mwalimu Rashid, titled *Ni Machungu na Matamu* ("It Is Bitter and Sweet") which seems to question the quasi natural harmony among Zanzibar, the African continent, and the Indian Ocean trade connections. He refers to the slave market on the Zanzibari island of Unguja, situated in Mkunazini.

11. Kituo kili Unguja, paitwa Mkunazini
Pale waliuzwa waja, wakatiwa mnadani
Ikawa hiki kiroja, kusafirishwa kwa pwani
Ni machungu na matamu, bahari yetu ya hindi

The centre was in Unguja, it is called Mkunazini
There the slaves were sold, they were auctioned
And transported (like goods) along the coast – what an absurdity!

There are bitter and sweet stories of our Indian ocean

The third line refers to the inhuman "absurdity" of auctioning and transporting human beings as if they were goods.[17] A number of poems present variations of the topic of Zanzibar's "great history" of transoceanic exchange, as the last recurring verse in Maimuna Hashim's poem with the title *Kubwa yake Histori* ("Its History is Great") shows.

Wageni kwa utitiri, jahazi kusafiria
Kwa njia za manuwari, wakitokea Asia
Wakafika Zenjibari, Lamu, Kilwa, Pate pia
Kubwa yake historia, Bahari hii ya Hindi.

There was a flow of visitors travelling by dhow
By ships coming from Asia
They arrived on Zenjibari, Lamu, Kilwa, Pate as well
Great is the history of the ocean that surrounds us.

History and the ocean are interconnected in her poem. It situates the ancient "Zenjibari" – next to the famous city-states of Lamu, Kilwa, and Pate – evoking the Swahili coast as a historical network of port towns as described before. The poetry resembles Gurnah's writings of alternative maps of connections beyond the colonial and later the national state (Samuelson 2013): Here Zanzibar is narrated as part of a wider world of Asian-African links, but also against the national or colonial narrative of the territory-bound state associated with essentialist notions of autochthony and identity. While the bloody revolution of 1964 is not mentioned in any of the poems – as much as it is silenced in many other discourses – the poems discussed here can be read to come with a critical gesture of evoking the complicated transoceanic links and flexible affinities against the rigid forms of boundary-drawing by the state. Furthermore, this also

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[17] In commenting on the line of his poem, Ali Mwalmu Rashid adds in a conversation: Mja kumwuza mja, hii ni ajabu gani *A human being to sell a fellow human being, what kind of an oddity is that?*

includes a reclaiming – in both message and form – of the Swahili language (and its dialects) as an oceanic language, and not as the lifeless, standard national language.

In quite a number of poems, however, the Indian Ocean past does not matter. While "long durée patterns of interface often inform historical memory and nostalgia, they have also been discarded in reimaginings of the region" (Prestholdt 2020, 25). In Maryam Juma Haji's poem, *Bahari Yetu ya Hindi* ("Our Indian Ocean"), the transoceanic past is irrelevant. Stanza three starts with "Here in our Tanzania" – a controversial position on Zanzibar, where often a particularly Zanzibari identity is highlighted against the nation state. The "here in our Tanzania" is both a temporal and spatial construction, as much as the transoceanic history constructed in the poems discussed before is. In her poem, the ocean is a "national ocean" (*bahari ya taifa*). The 'we' suggests a unity of all Tanzanians. Echoing other leitmotifs of the independent nation state, the ocean is an ocean to be used (see verse three below). It is an ocean of the future (not the past), a huge chance for progress, echoing the myth of modernity as a fast road to the nation's development and the understanding of the poet as the first role-model citizen and the mouthpiece of the state grounded in Nyerere's times. It is after independence, as the poem reminds us, that the ocean became a national resource for growth. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2003, 35) argues, universals, such as development, progress or nation-state does not just "describe the world; it offers visions of the world." As we can see in the poem, it is a world that differs from the transoceanic world envisioned in other poems.

3. Hapa kwetu Tanzania, ni bahari ya taifa
Tulishajitangazia, tulipopata wadhifa
Ndio mana twatumia, muda tunaoutaka
Bahari ya hindi kwani, nani asiyeijua?

Here in our Tanzania, it is the national ocean
We have already announced it, when we got the power/gained independence
That's why we use it, whenever we want
The Indian Ocean, who does not know it?

Stanza six promotes fish as a marketable commodity and the ocean as the engine of the economy.

6. Yafaa tuitambue, faida yake jamani
Samaki tukawavuwe, tuwapeleke sokoni
Uchumi wetu ukuwe, Tanzania nchini
Bahari ya hindi kwani, nani asiyeijua?

We should recognize it, and its benefits, my people
Let us go fishing and let's take the fish to the market
Our economy should grow in our country Tanzania
The Indian Ocean, who does not know it?

The stanza echoes the recently pronounced interest of the national and Zanzibari government in the ocean as part of a bigger policy, called *uchumi wa bluu* (the blue economy). It has been emphasised in presidential speeches, but has also found its way into slogans on school walls (see below) as well as poetry, like the poem *Tanzania Zanzibar* (sic!) by Issa Ali Issa. In stanzas five and six, the poet re-enacts the presidential speech, focusing on the point where Zanzibar's president Hussein Mwinyi addresses the people, introducing the *uchumi wa bluu*.

5. Huseni Rais wetu, naye hindi kaiona
Buluu uchumi wetu, ni fursa kubwa sana
Ametaka wake watu, tuchangamke kwa kina
Tanzania Zanzibar, bahari yetu neema

Hussein is our President, and he saw the Indian Ocean:
"Our Blue Economy, is a great opportunity."
He has demanded from his people: "Let us be really motivated.
Tanzania Zanzibar, our ocean is a blessing."

6. Bahari ni kila kitu, baba Raisi kanena
Ni raslimali yetu, vyema tufaidi sana
Tupige juhudi zetu, mema bahari kuvuna

Tanzania Zanzibar, bahari yetu　neema

"The ocean is everything", Father President said,
"It is our resource, we better benefit from it
Let's make an effort to harvest the good things from the ocean.
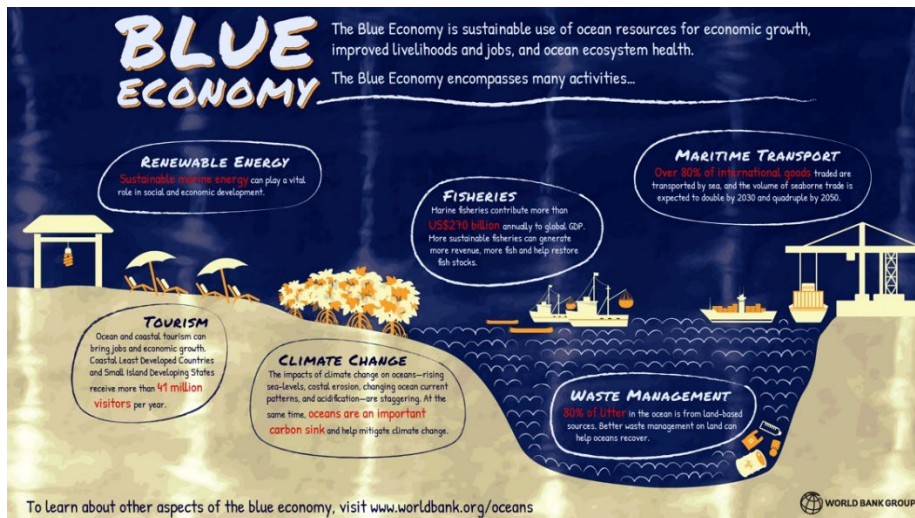*Tanzania Zanzibar, our ocean is a blessing."*

Mural outside of a Secondary School on Zanzibar. It reads, "Keep Marine Environment Out of Debris to Sustain the Blue Economy." (Photo: C. Vierke, 2022).

The *uchumi wa bluu* is the national policy translating the larger agenda of the blue economy fostered by the UN and the world bank into local discourse. It refers to the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem", since the "the economic contribution of the ocean to humankind has been significantly undervalued."[18] In 2020, just after my first arrival in the context of the project, Zanzibar established its "Ministry of the Blue Economy and Fishery" (*wizara ya uchumi wa buluu na uvuvi*)[19], with the proclaimed main goals of increasing the productivity in fishing and moving away from artisanal "small scale fishing" (*uvuvi mdogo*) in "shallow water" (*maji kina kidogo*) using "traditional ways" (*njia za asili*) of fishing.[20] Fishermen can now get loans for fiberglass boats, engines, and fishing gear. In reality, as our conversation with fishermen and fishmongers at the fish market on Zanzibar showed, paying back the loans or renting boats, engines, nylon nets, as well as paying for diesel and the ice for the cooling boxes, is hardly affordable for them, even if they team up. Most of them refer to the pandemic as a point when things started to become extremely difficult, because prices went up. Fish have become scarce. While we were translating the poetry, we could hardly find fish in the small local restaurant called 'Home Base' that we went to every day. Overfishing and   growing demand from the tourist hotels are important reasons. Fishermen have to go far to fish, which means that they have to invest in more and different equipment, which they can hardly afford. Meanwhile, they say that big fish trawlers from foreign countries fishing in the area, like Korea, take most of the fish.

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[18] Quoted from pp. 4 and 5 of the world bank's brochure
https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/cee24b6c-2e2f-5579-b1a4-457011419425/content
[19] http://www.blueeconomysmz.go.tz/biasharanamiundombinu.html
[20] Quotes taken from the ministry's website:
http://www.blueeconomysmz.go.tz/sektayauvuvi.html

Poster of the World Bank listing the "activities" of the Blue Economy, taken from www.worldbank.org/oceans

The discourse on the ocean as a resource that needs to be exploited, occurring in official policy documents, finding its way into education and everyday discourses seems to be a good example of what Hofmeyr (2019) critically calls the "hydrocapitalism" of the Indian Ocean. It is the neoliberal scramble for the oceans, which has found its way into a number of poems with a hope for a future in affluence against the increasing poverty. While some poems adopt a critical lens, warning of the destruction of the environment, for many, the government's promise to bring a better life through exploitation of the ocean is a real hope. Furthermore, as outlined before, many poets do understand themselves as mouthpieces of economic and political agendas of the state. They understand their role as promoting government policies with the hope of profiting from it either directly – by being paid for writing more poetry – or indirectly – by an improvement of the economy. It is an understanding of a poet's role deeply rooted in Tanzanian history, as I explained before, which does not easily fit the often romanticist notions of Indian Ocean literary studies.

Also, mass tourism, an integral part of the World Bank and Zanzibar's policy of the *uchumi wa bluu*, features in many poems as an economic pillar. The

tourism industry has created its own new celebratory version of the Indian Ocean, which has often been sidelined by anthropological or literary Indian Ocean studies. With a romanticist view, academics have tended to read Indian Ocean contexts and texts for transoceanic and cosmopolitan pasts or critical interventions, but seldom with regard to the marketization of a cosmopolitan past, increasingly targeting global consumers. After the end of socialism and amid Tanzania's growing liberalization since the 1990s, cosmopolitanism has been exploited by the tourism sector and supported by the neoliberal state, often leaving local Zanzibari communities with a feeling of dispossession (see Bissell 2012). Indian Ocean dhow cultures also became a brand of Zanzibari festivals and new NGOs linked to a globally entangled and growing creative sector funded by a variety of national and global organizations. The *Sauti za Busara* festival, for instance, the biggest annual music and film festival on Zanzibar, has the aim of "celebrating cultural pluralism" and "promoting Zanzibar globally as a leading destination for cultural tourism" (https://busaramusic.org/about-busara/). The cosmopolitanism of Indian Ocean cultures has also turned into a cultural commodity (see Bissell 2012).

It is tourism and container ships, as the poem "I Have Seen Many Things" (*Mengi Nimeyaona*) by Haji Makame Haji from Pemba also seems to suggest, that have become the new version of transoceanic exchange in the 21st century. The big container ships in the first stanza, and the cruise ships in the second, have taken the place of the ancient dhows. Haji Makame Haji's poem with an emphasis on container ships not only hints at the omnipresence of passing container ships, and containers on the island of Zanzibar and at the harbour, but also echoes the fact that "one-third of the world's bulk cargo, 50% of the world's container traffic (…) pass through Indian Ocean sea lanes" (Singh 2020, 231, quoted from Ghosh 2021, 113). The tales of the ocean's wonders, found in Arabic seafarer tales of sea monsters and miracles, Swahili poetry like *Utenzi wa Masahibu* (Allen 1970) or the Sindbad tales that Samuelson traces in Gurnah's narratives (Samuelson 2013) have found a new form. The lyrical I observes the 'new wonders' and laconically, probably ironically, finds: "I have seen many things on the calm ocean." Rather than understanding the present as a rupture from the past, the poem suggests a continuity or a variation of earlier forms of

transoceanic exchange.

Meli zilobeba mbao, zimenipita pembeni
Makontena mengi ndio, kwa juu yamesheheni
Mabaharia ni mwao, wafanya kazi melini
Ni mengi nimeyaona, kwenye bahari murua

Ships carrying timber, they have passed by my side
Many, indeed many containers are filled on top of the ship,
This is the sailors' habitat, they work on ships
I have seen many things on the calm ocean

Hakuta zenye vioo, watalii wamo ndani
Wengine wa juu hao, wamwirika darubini
Lengo la safari yao, waja kwetu visiwani
Ni mengi nimeyaona, kwenye bahari murua

I have found ships with glass windows, tourists are inside
Some on the deck observe with binoculars
This is the aim of their journey, why they come to our islands
I have seen many things on the calm ocean

Thus, rather than explaining away the national or the local or that which does not fit a sense of wider belonging and the typically evoked melancholy and nostalgia for the past – a mainstay in Indian Ocean literary analysis – the poems composed at and from a specific place in the Indian Ocean urge us to describe diverse imaginaries intersected by changing political geographies. The poems perforated by – but also constructing – political discourse offer conflicting visions of space as well as time. They demand that we take a more materialist perspective in the controversial present, which mirrors Ute Fendler Elena Brugioni's (2021) warning against an uncritical Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism. As I have shown, there is Swahili poetry that cherishes exploitation and a materialist view of the ocean and hence questions our scholarly discussions which tend to, firstly, ignore the present and its multitude of voices in Indian

Ocean places, and, secondly, if turning to verbal art from the region at all, often sticks to a romanticist notion of indigenous knowledge untouched by "hydrocapitalism".

Conclusion

Zanzibar is constantly under construction, and so is its relationship with the Indian Ocean. In addition, as space is "the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality" or a "coexisting heterogeneity", as Doreen Massey (2005, 9) put it, variegate imaginaries of the Indian Ocean also coexist. Hence, there are intersecting imagined maps, as well as overlapping historical layers of connections, which I also sought to outline in the historical overview. Historical practices and ideas do not merely come to an end but often persist, like archaeological layers, which can re-emerge. Time and space are not linear or well confined. The poetry includes moments of forgetting, questioning or rediscovering long-distance Indian Ocean connections, as much as highlighting national cartographies, which overwrite previous maps. Reading anthologically, as I tried to do here, suggests foregrounding the various layers and different imaginations of place and their changing boundaries. The poems, as I tried to show, suggest a complex and contradictory view of the present, redefining the past but also holding visions of the future that include national and transnational discourses of economic exploitation.

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A Genealogy of *Kālā Pānī*

Writings of an Indian Convict and their Colonial and Postcolonial Trajectory

Takashi Miyamoto

Introduction

The Hindustani term *kālā pānī* (black water, or the sea) has drawn the attention of various authors, including historians. It was long believed that Indian communities regarded crossing the sea as taboo since ancient times.[1] This prohibition against *kālā pānī* came to be discussed in many ways with the large-scale movement of people across the sea under the British rule in India. In the 19th century, the taboo of *kālā pānī* was discussed in the contexts of penal transportation, overseas deployment of soldiers, and migration under indentureship. Subsequently, this taboo was also widely debated in relation to overseas students, clerks, engineers and merchants.

Studies have focused on the experiences of Indian convicts and other migrants who crossed the *kālā pānī*.[2] Additionally, writers with roots in the South Asian migration to South America and Africa have created diasporic literature. They often portray sea crossings as acts of liberation from social constraints such as patriarchy and caste. Now, *kālā pānī* appears to have become a part of the discourse on self-representation, comparable to the Black Atlantic.[3] Conversely, within South Asia, the postcolonial experience of *kālā pānī*

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[1] See Anderson [2000: 16-18] for a discussion on the concept of *kālā pānī*.

[2] See Anderson [2000; 2007; 2012], Sen [2000], Yang [2021] for historiographies of penal transportation in British India. Numerous studies have explored Indian indentured labourers and other migrants; see the introduction of Bhardwaj and Misrahi-Barak [2022] for a review.

[3] Bates and Carter [2021] examined the history of the *kālā pānī* discourse, including the literary movements of contemporary South Asian diaspora writers.

discourse has been linked to the development of nationalist narratives. The Andaman Islands became India's major penal colony after the Indian Uprising of 1857. Unlike the descendants of South Asian migrants to South America and Africa, the descendants of convicts rarely produced their own stories as a diaspora. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, nationalist 'political' prisoners began to be sent to the colonies, and their voices came to overshadow those of the 'non-political' convicts. The voices of convicts were easily overwritten by stories of 'freedom fighters', and the Andaman Islands became a site for nationalist memory, while the penal colony itself came to be known as *kālā pānī*. However, the relationship between the historical narrative of penal transportation and nationalism has been historically shaped. In this paper, I focus on the text *Tawārīkh-e ʿAjīb* by Muḥammad Jaʿafar Thānēsarī, which is frequently referred to in historical research as an account written by a convict sent to the Andamans.[4] I examine the historical context in which this book was written and trace the various ways it has been interpreted and utilized since its publication.

Penal Transportation and *Kālā Pānī*

Some ancient texts, such as the *Code of Manu*, describe crossing the sea as taboo [Bates and Carter 2021: 37]. The extent to which this belief was shared across Middle and Early Modern Indian societies remains uncertain. However, during the rule of the British East India Company, the theme of *kālā pānī* garnered significant attention and was widely discussed in English writings. References to Hindus' aversion to crossing the sea, driven by fears of losing their castes, even appeared in popular 19th-century English magazines for boys.[5]

These perceptions were widely debated regarding what constitutes appropriate punishment in India and emphasised in discussions about the effectiveness of penal transportation.[6] The history of penal transportation in colonial India dates back to the late 18th century. In 1788, Charles Cornwallis,

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[4] See Sen [2004] for a detailed discussion of Thānēsarī's book.
[5] For example, in 'A Troublesome Pet', *The Boy's Own Paper*, July 1, 1893, 755 (15): p. 639.
[6] For a general understanding of convict history, see Anderson ed. [2018] and Anderson [2021].

then Governor-General of Bengal, recommended the introduction of overseas penal transportation as part of the 'rule of law'. Penang, located on the Malay Peninsula, was established as a penal colony towards the end of the 18th century, and the Strait Settlements became the principal penal colony of East India in the first half of the 19th century. Although the Prison Discipline Committee of 1836–37 did not explicitly use the term *kālā pānī*, it held that crossing the sea would destroy Indian prisoners' ties to caste or society [RCP 1838: 97]. Penal transportation was therefore expected to have a deterrent effect on crime by instilling the fear of losing caste among the Indian population.

After the Indian Uprising of 1857, managing the large number of 'mutineers' arrested during its suppression became a significant challenge. In the Strait Settlements, which had undergone urbanisation by the 19th century, protests arose against the transportation of mutineers due to fears of social unrest. Consequently, the Government of India selected the Andaman Islands as a new penal colony. During the early years of the penal settlement, prisoners captured during the Indian Uprising of 1857 were sent to the Andamans. Over time, the majority of convicts comprised felons convicted of crimes such as murder, robbery, and sedition. Gradually, the term *kālā pānī* came to be understood as a reference to the Andaman penal colony itself.

However, the fear of *kālā pānī* as a punishment may have been perceived as diminishing by the late 19th century. The 1889 Jail Committee Report stated, 'it is not possible to ignore the fact that transportation is no longer a deterrent form of punishment' [RCJ 1889: 137]. Former convicts returning to the subcontinent after being released from the Andaman penal colony began sharing their experiences. According to the report, convicts' stories about leading comfortable lives, facilitated by 'tickets of leave', completely undermined the deterrent effect of penal transportation. In response to this report, C.J. Lyall, an Indian Civil Service officer, and A.S. Lethbridge, who had also served as a member of the 1889 Committee, examined the deterrent effect of transportation during their tour of Port Blair in 1890. They reported:

Our visits to the Alipore and Presidency Jails and our inspection of the stations of the [Andaman] Penal Settlement have left no doubt in our minds that confinement within the walls of an Indian prison is now a much more

severe form of punishment than transportation, and we are convinced that this fact is well known to the criminal classes. [Lyall and Lethbridge 1890: 1-2]

With the rise of nationalist movements at the end of the 19th century, political prisoners were increasingly transported to the Andamans, where a large prison with a radiational design was built between 1896 and 1906. This new prison, known as the 'Cellular Jail', was designed to house prisoners in separate cells and to impose hard labour during the initial phase of their penal servitude. Political prisoners sent to the penal colony during this period left behind accounts of their experiences, which contributed to shaping the image of the Andamans as a site of memory for the nationalist movement. Such texts include Savarkar's account of his transportation [Sāvarkar 2000 (1966)] and his novel *Kālā Pānī* [Sāvarkar 2019 (1967)], both written in Marathi after his release. These texts played a key role in shaping the image of *kālā pānī* as a symbol of colonial cruelty. In post-independence Port Blair, monuments dedicated to freedom fighters have been erected, and the Cellular Jail has become a popular tourist attraction, serving as a monument to the brutality of colonial rule.[7]

Thus, in postcolonial South Asia, *kālā pānī* is often discussed in association with nationalist narratives. However, historians have also been interested in how *kālā pānī* was imagined in the subcontinent before the rise of the nationalist movement. One of the key texts that draws attention in this context is *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* [1884/85], written by Muḥammad Ja'afar Thānēsarī. The book was written in Hindustani in the Persian script. However, most previous historical studies on Andaman penal transportation have relied on an English translation of the text, the original of which remains unclear.[8] Moreover, other texts written

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[7] For recent literature on colonial and post-colonial Andamans, see Sen [2010], Vaidik [2010], and Anderson, Mazumdar, and Pandya [2018]. Also, see Rath [2022] for a compilation of historical documents related to the Andamans.

[8] Satadru Sen, who wrote an article focusing on Thānēsarī's book, referred to 'an unpublished English translation' in his possession [Sen 2004: 118 note 6]. The translator in question is not mentioned in Sen's article, and whether Sen referred to the original Urdu text is unknown. The references in his article show the Urdū Markaz edition published in 1964 in Delhi, but it is unclear whether it is the source document for the English translation he used. After Sen's passing, the whereabouts

by Thānēsarī have not been sufficiently addressed in previous works. This study examines the experiences of his texts by reviewing how they were created, recast, and reinterpreted.

Thānēsarī and his Texts

Muḥammad Ja'afar Thānēsarī (1838–1905) was born in the town of Thānēsar, Punjab. Although his family was not wealthy, he gained literacy skills and became involved in court-related businesses such as writing petitions for clients. He eventually held important positions in the town. Meanwhile, he was deeply influenced by the thoughts of Saiyid Aḥmad Barēlvī (1786–1831), who had waged *jihad* against the Sikh kingdom in Punjab during the first half of the 19th century. Thānēsarī was arrested in 1864 for transferring funds to anti-British Muslim groups along the north-western frontier of British India. His original sentence was death, but it was commuted to penal transportation for life. He spent time in the Andaman penal colony from 1865 until he was finally released in 1884.

In addition to his Persian and Hindustani literacy skills, which he had acquired before his exile, Thānēsarī learned to read and write English while in the Andamans. Despite being a convict, British officials appreciated him as a scribe and language teacher. Among these officials was Richard C. Temple, who later became the Chief Commissioner of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and was known as an administrative anthropologist.

Encouraged by these British officials, Thānēsarī began writing books. The titles of three of his books, which can be translated as *History of Wonders* with subtle variations in Arabic word forms, display the Hijri year of publication in their chronograms. The themes of the books are, respectively, the history of Port Blair, an account of his life in the penal colony, and a biography of Saiyid Aḥmad Barēlvī.

Tārīkh-e 'Ajīb (History of Port Blair)

His first book, with the English subtitle *History of Port Blair*, was published in

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of his 'unpublished English translation' have remained unknown, but several historians have published works referring to it.

1879. It conveys the history of the Andaman Islands, which Thānēsarī wrote at the suggestion of the British officials who were learning Indian languages from him [Thānēsarī 1879]. The book was published by the renowned Munshi Navalkishor Press, which was actively publishing in Lucknow and Kanpur at the time.[9]

This book describes the geographical location of the Andaman Islands, the history of colonisation, climate and flora, products from the forests and sea (especially wood and shellfish), and customs of the Indigenous people. Thānēsarī's 'ethnographic' description of the Indigenous population was based on existing literature and his own observations. Notably, in his reflections on the origins of the Andamanese people, he offered an interpretation based on the Islamic view of human history, beginning with Adam. Thānēsarī also interpreted the Indigenous people's story of human origins in relation to the Flood of Noah.

Following these geographical and ethnographic observations, the subsequent chapters provide an institutional history of the penal colonies. They offer an overview of the law and administration in the settlement and illustrate the history of governance under successive Superintendents and Chief Commissioners. Thānēsarī also devoted a chapter to Lord Mayo, the Governor-General who was killed by a convict while visiting Port Blair. The book further details prison regulations, outlining the management system under which the convicts lived. It is evident from these accounts that, although a convict, Thānēsarī had access to English sources and could read and understand them adequately. It is also noteworthy that the narrative was written with a pro-British tone. This narrative seems to suggest that he had either somehow 'reformed' from his anti-British stance or was merely attempting to gain the favour and trust of British officials. In his book, Thānēsarī claimed that he was never anti-British.

In his book, Thānēsarī also demonstrates a keen interest in languages, including a table comparing the sentences from various languages spoken in the Andamans with those of Hindi (written in Persian script). The languages listed

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[9] I have seen different impressions of this book in Anjuman Taraqqī Urdū (Karachi), Punjab University Library (Lahore), and the Rekhta.org website, which shows the holdings of several libraries in India. Although different manuscripts for lithographic printing have been used, all the impressions were published by Munshi Navalkishor Press.

include Indigenous languages of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as well as Punjabi, Tamil, Burmese, and other languages spoken in the Indian Ocean region. His comparative linguistic table appears to be amateur work. However, given that Orientalists and administrative anthropologists in British India were greatly interested in languages, it can be understood that Thānēsarī was appropriating the colonial writing style about different cultures.

Thus, the first Hindustani history of the Andaman Islands was an amalgam of Islamic historical views, information from English literature, and the author's ethnographic observations. The text was a node in the existing network of references on the Andamans, presented by an author eager to demonstrate pro-British gestures.[10]

Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb (***Kālā Pānī***)

Thānēsarī's second book was written in 1302 Hijri (1884/85), shortly after his return to his hometown in Punjab [Thānēsarī 1884/85]. The book, which recounts his experiences from 1865 to 1884, including the circumstances before and after his penal transportation, has been reprinted several times under the title *Kālā Pānī*. This text is frequently cited in historical studies of the Andamans.

In this book, he first describes the events that led to his arrest, followed by the trial and sentence of penal transportation. He emphasises the hardships he endured in the prisons of Ambala, Lahore, and Bombay before reaching the Andamans while portraying life in the penal colony itself as relatively pleasant. He further highlights how his connections from his time in Punjab made him a welcomed figure within the society of the penal colony. In addition to serving as a scribe and language teacher, he earned money by writing petitions for other convicts using his English skills. He was also involved in the clandestine acquisition of goods from the Indian subcontinent, which allowed him to accumulate 8,000 rupees before his release in 1883.

Having left behind a wife and two children in Punjab, Thānēsarī married

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[10] The term 'network of references' here refers to Michel Foucault's discussion regarding the unities of discourse in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* [Foucault 1972: 23]. Edward Said's discussion, which refers to Foucault's text, is also significant for the present paper [Said 1983: ch 9].

twice in the Andamans. Although his second wife died shortly thereafter, upon his release, he returned with his third wife and eight children to Punjab, where his first wife and children awaited his return. After his return to Punjab, he capitalised on his language skills and the contacts he had developed with British officials in the Andamans to become a language teacher for British civil servants in Ambala. He was fortunate that Richard Temple, with whom he had become acquainted in the Andamans, was appointed Cantonment Magistrate in Ambala. At the end of the book, Thānēsarī notes that, with Temple's arrival, state surveillance against him in Ambala was relaxed.

Overall, Thānēsarī describes his life in the penal colony as relatively pleasant, though he also stresses how friendly he had been towards the colonial government even before his sentence. The book presents his story in three parts: first, a narrative of suffering until he arrived in the Andamans; second, a narrative of his life in the penal colony as a turning point; and third, a narrative of his return home with wealth and new family members. For him, the key point is to demonstrate that he had been pro-British from the outset and that his arrest was, in fact, a mistake. He does not hesitate to call himself a 'Wahhabi' and admits to sending money to the north-western frontier. However, in his narrative, this is consistent with his pro-British stance. Therefore, his exile should not be interpreted as a story of reformation. However, he does not frame his experience as one of colonial oppression. His suffering on the way to the penal colony is not depicted as an example of colonial tyranny; instead, he presents these hardships as occasional misfortunes, emphasising that divine protection enabled him to overcome them.

Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb has been repeatedly reprinted, with variants that differ in content, leading to confusion. Therefore, it is worthwhile to trace the history of the book's reprints.[11] The original edition is presumed to be the Maṭba'-e Ṭempal Prēs edition, published in 1302 in the Hijri calendar [Thānēsarī 1884/85].[12] It was published in Ambala, where Thānēsarī resided at the time,

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[11] An earlier version of this discussion was published in Miyamoto [2021: 13-17].
[12] Jāmi'ah Hamdard (Delhi) and Anjuman Taraqqī Urdu (Karachi) own the original copy of the Maṭba'-e Ṭempal Prēs edition, and I am currently working on a scholarly edition based on it.

and bears a letter of recommendation in English dated 21 April 1885 by Richard Temple. This edition contains passages not found in other editions and differs significantly in structure, as it is not divided into chapters, sections, or paragraphs. In addition, while *Kālā Pānī* (Black Water) is often used as the main title in other editions, this edition simply carries the title *Tawārīkh-e ʿAjīb*. From these features, it can be assumed that this edition is the original or something very close to the original work of Thānēsarī.

The Maḥbūb al-Maṭābaʿ edition does not mention the year of its publication, but based on its condition, it seems to be a relatively early variant [Thāēsarī *n.d.* (a)].[13] The Ṣūfī Prinṭing ēnḍ Pablishing Kampanī edition might be another early variant [Thānēsarī *n.d.* (b)].[14] An edition titled *Islāmī Teḥrīk kā Mujāhid* (A Warrior of Islamic Movement) was published by Dakkan Pablisharz ēnḍ Prinṭarz [Thānēsarī 1948]. The main part of the book is *Tawārīkh-e ʿAjīb,* but Thānēsarī's preface is omitted. The Sang-e Mīl edition [Thānēsarī 1961 (a)] and the Shuʿāʿ-e Adab edition [Thānēsarī 1961 (b)][15] share the same handwriting, suggesting they likely used a common manuscript for lithographic printing. The Salmān Akēḍmī edition [Thānēsarī 1962] includes commentary and annotations by Muḥammad Aiyūb Qādirī.[16] Sakhāwat Mirzā edited a book containing a collection of Saiyid Aḥmad Barēlvī's letters and *Tawārīkh-e ʿAjīb* [Thānēsarī 1969 (a)]. Saiyid Aḥmad's letters are Persian texts originally included in Chapter 5 of *Tawārīkh-e ʿAjībah* [Thānēsarī (1891): 169-247]. In this edition, Sakhāwat Mirzā translated the letters into Urdu, and the full text of *Kālā Pānī* follows them. Another edition with a preface by Waḥīd al-Dīn Qāsmī, Secretary of All India Dīnī Taʿalīmī Board was also published [Thānēsarī 1969 (b)]. The Maktabah-e Ahl-e Hadīth Ṭrasṭ edition [Thānēsarī *n.d.* (d)] and Ṭāriq Akēḍmī edition [Thānēsarī 1977][17] likely shared a common manuscript for lithographic printing.

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[13] The Rekhta Foundation owns the original copy. https://www.rekhta.org/ebook-detail/kala-pani-tawareekh-e-ajeeb-mohammad-jafar-thanesri-ebooks-1/ [Last accessed: 2024-03-28]

[14] https://www.rekhta.org/ebooks/kala-pani-ya-tawareekh-e-ajeeb-mohammad-jafar-thanesri-ebooks-1 [Last accessed: 2024-03-28]

[15] https://archive.org/details/kala-pani [Last accessed: 2024-03-28]

[16] This book was republished from Idārah-e Yādgār-e Ghālib, Karachi [Thānēsarī 2015]. It was probably re-typed on a computer.

[17] According to the bibliographic information on the back cover of the eighth edition,

Although these manuscripts contain numerous errors and omissions, they are valuable as they illustrate how Thānēsarī was interpreted in later years through their additional commentaries. Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, also published a version probably based on a copy it holds [Thānēsarī 2003].[18] In recent years, an edition compiled by Muḥammad Ḥāmid Sirāj has been published in both India and Pakistan [Thānēsarī 2016; 2018]. Additionally, there is a Lahore Book City edition [Thānēsarī 2022], and a WhatsApp community released an online text edition in 2022.[19]

Among the editions I have yet to identify, Jaweed Ashraf used the 'third reprint published in 1302 AH / 1899 [sic]'[20] as the original text for his English translation of the book [Khairabadi and Thanesari (Ashraf trans.) 2011: xviii]. Abdali used *Kālā Pānī: Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* (Lāhor: Iqbāl Akeḍmī, *n.d.*) as the original text for his abridged English translation [Thanesari (Abdali trans.) 2011]. Hedāyetullāh referred to *Kālāpānī: Dāstān-e 'Ajīb* (Dehlī: Urdū Markaz, 1964) in his Master's thesis [Hedāyetullāh 1970: 180]. Abdali also points out that *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb, al-maʿrūf, Tārīkh-e Kālā Pānī* (Faiṣalābād: Idārah-e Ishāʿat al-Maʿārif, 1974), edited by Abū Raiḥān Ẓiyā al-Raḥmān Fārūqī, is held by the Library of Congress.[21]

To date, several English translations have been published. Javed Ashraf performed a complete translation using a base text that appears to be an early variant of the book [Khairabadi and Thanesari (Ashraf Trans.) 2011]. However, there are some errors in his commentary and even in the title of the book: he referred to Penang as part of Burma in his commentary [*Ibid.*: x]; there is an incorrect conversion between the Hijri and Gregorian calendars; and the title of the book read 'Panel Settlement' when it should have read 'Penal Settlement'. The abridged translation by Abdali shows a more careful examination [Thanesari (Abdali Trans.) 2011]. However, he added supplementary information to his

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the first edition was published in 1975.

[18] https://www.rekhta.org/ebooks/kala-pani-ya-tawareekh-e-ajeeb-mohammad-jafar-thanesri-ebooks-2 [Last accessed: 2024-03-28]

[19] https://اردو.com/کالا-پانی/مولانا-محمد-جعفر-تھانیسری/ادب[Last accessed: 2024-03-28]

[20] The Hijri calendar 1302 actually corresponds to the Christian year of 1884/85.

[21] https://lccn.loc.gov/2001310557 [Last accessed: 2024-03-28]

translated text outside the original. Further, he used a relatively new variant as the base text. There is also a translation by Madrasah Arabia Islamia, the publication year of which is unknown [Thanesari (Madrasah Arabia Islamia Trans.) *n.d.*]. Unfortunately, the translation is inaccurate and has many omissions, making it unsuitable for use in historical studies.

Tawārīkh-e 'Ajībah (Biography of Saiyid Aḥmad Barēlvī)

The last surviving work of Thānēsarī is a biography of Saiyid Aḥmad Barēlvī, believed to be the first biography of him written in Urdu. Barēlvī was a religious leader in the first half of the 19th century who waged *jihad* against the Sikh kingdom and was killed in the Battle of Balakot in 1831.

Muslims' loyalty to the colonial government was widely suspected in post-Mutiny India. Leading Muslim intellectuals, such as Saiyid Aḥmad Khān, made efforts to demonstrate a pro-British stance [Ahmad Khan 1872]. Conversely, among the few Muslim groups that continued to oppose British rule, some followed Barēlvī's ideology. For example, in his highly influential book *Indian Musalmaans*, W.W. Hunter expressed concern about Muslims influenced by Barēlvī. He specifically named Thānēsarī as one of the 'Wahhabi' anti-British fanatics [Hunter 1871: 87-98].

Thānēsarī attempted to refute Hunter's claims in several parts of his previous book. He argued that the accusation of being an anti-British activist was incorrect. While he did not deny being a 'Wahhabi', nor did he deny the ideological influence of Barēlvī, he sought to demonstrate that Barēlvī's 'Wahhabism'—and by extension, his own—was not anti-British.

Tavārīkh-e 'Ajībah [Thānēsarī 1891] can be seen as a part of his effort to demonstrate his ideological innocence.[22] He stated that the book's goal was to reveal the previously unknown accomplishments of Barēlvī to the public and provide an accurate account of his life. This goal was necessary to counter the

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[22] I have assumed that the Bilālī Sṭīm Prēs edition published from Ambala [Thānēsarī (1891)] may be the first edition. However, it is necessary to carefully compare it with the Maṭba' Fārūqī edition published in Delhi [Thānēsarī 1891/92]. Subsequent reprints include the Ṣūfī Prinṭing ēnḍ Pablishing Kampanī edition [Thānēsarī *n.d.* (c)]. Nafīs Akēḍmī published a reprint [Thānēsarī 1968] and an Urdu translation of Barēlvī's letters originally written in Persian [Thānēsarī 1969].

malicious discourse against Muslims, as propagated by Hunter and others, which had influenced the *Sarkār-e Angrēz* (British government). Barēlvī's holiness is emphasised in this biography, and numerous miracles are recounted. According to Thānēsarī, Barēlvī was a Messiah descended from Adam, and his teachings and actions were unrelated to anti-British ideologies. Thānēsarī stresses that Barēlvī's *jihad* was aimed at the oppression of the Sikhs at the time and not at the British. He also writes that Barēlvī went into hiding during the Battle of Balakot but would eventually return as the Messiah.

Thus, while professing his devotion to Barēlvī, Thānēsarī argued that Barēlvī's ideology was not inherently anti-British. He sought to demonstrate his loyalty to the British Raj by portraying a 'harmless' image of Barēlvī. In this context, it is evident that Thānēsarī's *kālā pānī* experience was also framed as a narrative that affirmed his Islamic faith while simultaneously expressing his allegiance to British rule.

The Network of References in which Thānēsarī Wrote

Let me now examine the networks and links of the texts surrounding Thānēsarī's writings.[23] When closely analysing passages in *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* [Thānēsarī 1884/85], where he refers to his earlier work [Thānēsarī 1879], some discrepancies emerge. By examining the variations in these descriptions, the evolutionary trajectory of a network of references may be observed.

Take, for example, Thānēsarī's description of the Indigenous people of the Andamans. In *Tārīkh-e 'Ajīb* [Thānēsarī 1879], he portrayed the physical characteristics of the Indigenous people as follows:

> Yeh lōg cār fuṭ sē pānc fuṭ cār inch tak ūncē mithl Ḥabshiyōṇ kē siyāh fām gōl sar ānkhēṇ ubhrī hu'ī ghūnghar wālē bāl. Magar nihāyat maẓbūṭ hōtē haiṇ.

> These people are four to five feet four inches tall, black like Abyssinians, with round heads, eyes popped, and curly hair, but they are very robust.

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23 I wrote an earlier version of this discussion in Japanese [Miyamoto 2023: 75-79]. The discussion here is a revised and enlarged version.

[*Ibid.*: 15][24]

The expression 'ghūnghar wālē' is a common Hindustani descriptive phrase meaning 'curly' when referring to hair. Next, let us examine how it is described in *Tawārīkh-e ʻAjīb* [Thānēsarī 1884/85].

> Yeh lōg cār fuṭ sē pānc fuṭ cār inch tak ūncē miṯhl Ḥabshiyōṇ kē siyāh fām gōl sar ānkhēṇ ubhrī hu'ī sar par <u>bhēṛ kēsē bāl</u> magar nihāyat maẓbūṯ aur qavī hōtē haiṇ.

> These people are four to five feet four inches tall, black like Abyssinians, with round heads, eyes popped, and <u>sheep-like hair</u> on their heads, but they are very robust and powerful. [*Ibid.*: 47]

Here, the expression is changed to 'sheep-like hair' (bhēṛ kēsē bāl). As the expressions in the rest of the sentences are similar, it is likely that the modifiers were intentionally substituted. This phrase in *Tawārīkh-e ʻAjīb* appears to have a textual origin. Frederic J. Mouat, Inspector General of Prisons in Bengal, conducted a research expedition to find a suitable location for establishing a penal colony in the Andamans after the Indian Uprising of 1857. In his account of his expedition, *Adventures and Researches among the Andaman Islanders*, he described the physical characteristics of the Indigenous people of the Andamans as follows:

> Their hair was of <u>a woolly texture</u>, and their noses of the orthodox flatness. Their lips were thick and projecting, giving an animal-like expression to their unpleasing countenances, which were rarely seen to be lighted up by any amiable feeling. [Mouat 1863: 275]

Mouat uses the adjective 'woolly' in several instances [*Ibid.*: 29, 44, 273, 282, 329, 339]. A word-for-word translation of this into Hindustani seems to be the

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[24] Words underlined by me for emphasis. Urdu texts were romanised and translated by me. The same applies to the following.

expression 'sheep-like hair' (bhēṛ kēsē bāl) in *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb*. However, Mouat's text is not the first instance of this expression. He referred to *Encyclopédie des Gens du Monde*, compiled in France between 1833 and 1844 [*Ibid.* 43-44].

> Ils sont d'une taille grèle, d'un teint noir; <u>ils ont les cheveux crépus et laineux</u> et le nez aplati.

> They are of a slender build with a dark complexion;<u> they have frizzy and woolly hair</u> and flat noses. [*Encyclopédie des Gens du Monde* 1833: 697]

An even older example of this expression can be found in a text by Colebrook, who explored the Andamans at the end of the 18th century.

> Their limbs are ill formed and slender, their bellies prominent, and, like the Africans, they have <u>woolly heads</u>, thick lips, and flat noses. [Colebrook 1799: 405-406]

The expression 'sheep-like' (bhēṛ kēsē) in Thānēsarī's *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* appears to have originated from the English adjective 'woolly', which has long been used to describe the hair of the Indigenous people of the Andamans. The expression 'curly' (ghūnghar wālē) was likely replaced with 'sheep-like' owing to Thānēsarī reading books written in English. This change may seem trivial. However, it signifies a moment when Hindustani writings began to connect with the network of references that had developed over decades regarding the Andaman Islands. His newly acquired English proficiency and access to the archive of texts accumulated in the penal colony enabled this connection.

The texts subsequently added to this archive included works by anthropologists, such as Richard Temple and Radcliffe-Brown. Temple, who was acquainted with Thānēsarī, even wrote a letter of recommendation for *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* while stationed in Ambala as Cantonment Magistrate. Thānēsarī's text emerged from this network.

Postcolonial Trajectory of Thānēsarī's *Kālā Pānī*

After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the colonial textual network within which Thānēsarī's books had been written quickly fell into oblivion. His exile was subsequently 'misread' as a narrative of political activism.

Mas'ūd 'Ālam Nadvī, a prolific author closely associated with Abū al-A'lā Maudūdī, wrote about Thānēsarī's exile experience in his *Hindustān kī Pehlī Islāmī Taḥrīk* (Early Islamic Movements of Hindustan) [Nadvī (1952)], drawing on *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb*. In this work, Nadvī portrayed Thānēsarī as a figure who engaged in an anti-British struggle underpinned by strong Islamic faith. Despite Thānēsarī's explicit pro-British gestures in his writings, Nadvī interprets his movement as 'actually' aligning with broader political Muslim movements.[25]

Since independence, *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* has been repeatedly reprinted under the title *Kālā Pānī*. Many editions were published in India and Pakistan, particularly during the 1960s and 70s.[26] These reprints established the work as a representative text on *kālā pānī* in Urdu literature. As a result, Thānēsarī's name became widely recognised as the author of this work. However, his two other works have not received much attention.[27] This seems to have led to *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* being read in isolation, disconnected from the network of references within which it was originally written.

In the 1970s, Thānēsarī's image as a political Muslim became associated with that of 'freedom fighters'. In his *Jang-e Āzādī 1857* (Independence War of 1857), Muḥammad Ayūb Qādirī wrote about Thānēsarī [Qādirī 1976: 70-89]. Prior to this work, Qādirī had also compiled a scholarly edition of *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* with

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[25] Shāhīn Fārūqī expressed a similar view, emphasising the ideological connection between Barēlvī and Thānēsarī in his preface to *Islāmī Teḥrīk kā Mujāhid* or *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* [Thānēsarī 1948]. Likewise, Muḥammad Sarwar Ṯāriq and Muḥammad Khālid Saif emphasised the genealogical relationship between Thānēsarī and the thought of Ahl-e Hadīth in their commentaries [Thānēsarī *n.d.* (d); 1977].

[26] Among the copies printed in the 1970s and 1980s, I have identified impressions of the Ṯāriq Akēḍmī edition (1977; 1989) and the Sang-e Mīl edition (1972; 1982). It appears that both publishers have continuously produced reprints of the book. Raja refers to an impression of the Ṯāriq Akeḍemī edition printed in 2004 [Raja 2006: 59-64]. I have copies of the Sang-e Mīl edition printed in 1993 and 2018 in my possession. Other editions may have been published, but I have not identified hem.

[27] I was only able to locate reprints of *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajībah* from the late 1960s [Thānēsarī 1968; 1969].

commentaries [Thānēsarī 1962]. In Qādirī's writings, Thānēsarī was portrayed as both a *mujāhid* and a freedom fighter. Within the national framework of Pakistan, Qādirī found no contradiction in depicting Thānēsarī as simultaneously embodying both roles. Qādirī's views on Thānēsarī remain influential among contemporary authors.[28]

However, in recent years, Thānēsarī's image as a freedom fighter has been further emphasised, while his portrayal as a *mujāhid* has been marginalised. In 2010, Sa'īd published a directory of activists involved in the Indian Uprising of 1857. Thānēsarī was listed among the fighters of the 'war of independence' [Sa'īd 2010: 81-83]. The book was first published in Delhi, followed by a Pakistani edition released in Lahore two years later [Sa'īd 2012]. It was one of numerous books published in both India and Pakistan around 2007 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Indian Uprising. On that occasion, many publications referred to the uprising as the 'first war of independence', a term popularised earlier by Savarkar [Savarkar 1909].

With the rapid rise of Hindu nationalism in India, pressure on the Muslim community has intensified. In this context, an impetus emerged to highlight the role of Muslims in the 'first war of independence' as a way to underscore their contribution to the building of the Indian nation. At the same time, emphasising the Muslim contribution to the 'first war of independence' does not contradict the national narrative in Pakistan. Consequently, the 'first war of independence' of 1857 has been reaffirmed as a shared past that both Indian and Pakistani Muslims can safely talk about. Thānēsarī's writings are now interpreted within this context, even though they were not directly connected to the Uprising of 1857.

Conclusion

I examined the colonial and postcolonial trajectory of another *kālā pānī* discourse, distinct from the diasporic *kālā pānī* literature recently highlighted in scholarship. Thānēsarī's works were written as he learned English and encountered existing texts on the Andamans written in English. His text emerged

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[28] See, for example, the editor's preface to Thānēsarī [2018] by Muḥammad Ḥāmid Sirāj.

within a colonial network of references, wherein he developed a pro-British discourse through dialogue with other texts. In his writings, there was no contradiction between expressing a pro-British attitude and articulating his 'Wahhabi' Islamic faith. Furthermore, he improvised a writing strategy that portrayed Saiyid Aḥmad Barēlvī as a figure 'safe' for the colonial regime.

However, with the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, his texts began to be read differently. His narrative is now understood as a story of political Islam, and his writings have been reinterpreted as aligned with the narrative of nationalism. More recently, his writings have been referred to in discussions that seek to emphasise the contribution of Muslims in the 'first war of independence'. While the context and purports of his writings have faded into obscurity, *Tawārīkh-e 'Ajīb* has become *Kālā Pānī* and continues to be repurposed by various forces in different ways as a 'useful past' in the postcolonial nation-states.

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7

The Voyage to India in Malay Literature

Henri Chambert-Loir

The Malay world is an immense archipelago comprising thousands of islands. Its maritime space is nearly three times larger than its land space. The seas are an essential part of its geography, they have forged its history, they mark its identity. In Indonesian and Malay, the homeland is called *tanah air*: 'land and water'.

The coastal populations of the archipelago have always been sailors, the best known being the Malays, the Javanese and the Bugis. From prehistoric times until today, the seas have played a fundamental role in settlement, migration, trade and exchange. The Malays developed specific nautical techniques very early on. The first foreigners to visit the archipelago, in the 16th century, were surprised to see very large boats (up to a hundred meters long, capable of carrying a thousand barrels).

These groups (say, 'the Malays' to designate them in general) also sailed the oceans to the West and to the East. Contacts with India started even before the Current Era. The Kingdom of Srivijaya (7th–13th c.) was in close contact with India as well as with China (Hoogervorst 2017, Manguin 2023). During the same period, a Malay colony was emigrating beyond India, to Madagascar (Adelaar 1989). The coastal Malay states of the following centuries (Pasai, Malacca, Aceh, Banten, Makassar and many others) were major emporiums in the trade network that joined the Red Sea to the China Sea. The Malays were familiar with the Indian Ocean until the arrival of the Europeans, who soon imposed their superiority and monopoly (Reid 1990).

The sea is omnipresent in Malay reality, it also has a privileged place in their imagination. It is the source of myths, tales and metaphors. In the secular field, the boat and its crew bear, in various societies of the Malay world, the same name as households or small communities, and are used as metaphors for the social

order (Manguin 2001). The symbolism of the sea and the boat is even richer in
the religious domain: first in primitive religions, in which the boat appears as a
motif in textiles and in shamanic rites (*Ibidem*), and later in a complex Sufi
symbolism: the Malay poet Hamzah Fansuri, around 1500, and his followers in
the 16th century, developed a mystical Muslim system around the sea
representing the divine essence as well as individual existence, the boat
symbolizing the human body, the universe and the creation, and the sea voyage
symbolizing the journey of human life and the mystical union with the divinity
(Drewes & Brakel 1986 ; Braginsky 2004, 2007).

In this context of the omnipresence of the sea in geographical reality, in
history and in imagination, what representation of the Indian Ocean does Malay
literature give us? Surprisingly, voyages by sea are numerous and even constant
in the texts, but the sea is absent. The journeys are not described, they are reduced
to a few summary notations: the characters reach their destination in one
sentence: they leave and they arrive; nothing happened; the ocean is not
dangerous, it is not an obstacle or an ordeal; it is absent, erased, the transparent
space of communication between the Malay world and the high centers of
civilization.

A large part of the two major texts that I will discuss below, the *Sulalat al-
Salatin* and the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, concern Malacca's relations with foreign
states, both inside the Malay world and far away to the East and the West.

The *Sulalat al-Salatin* mentions dozens and dozens of sea trips to countries
neighboring the Strait of Malacca, either on the Peninsula (Lingga, Bintan,
Singapura, Pahang, Kampar, Perak, Kelantan, Patani), or on the coasts of
Sumatra (Fansur, Perlak, Lamuri, Aru, Pasai, Siak, Indragiri); in Java (Tuban,
Surabaya); in countries located further east (Brunei, Campa, China); in Siam
(Syahrun-Nuwi), and in India (Goa, Keling, Ma'abri, Bija Negara). The *Hikayat
Hang Tuah* mentions trips to some of the same countries, as well as Mecca and
Istanbul. These very numerous trips are mentioned in one sentence: the shortest
are: *datanglah* ('they arrived') and *setelah sampai* ('after they arrived'); and in
a slightly more elaborate way: *Setelah berapa lamanya di jalan maka sampailah*
('after some time on the way they arrived'). When a duration is mentioned, it is
a literary cliché with no relation to reality: Hang Tuah for example travels from

India to China in two months (*Hikayat Hang Tuah* 2008: 409).

Exceptionally, a boat is shipwrecked between India and Ceylon (not because of a storm, but following a curse; see Brown 1970: 134-5), a boat experiences a storm (Manusama 1977: 194-5), or the hero is attacked at sea by the Portuguese, whom he easily defeats, partly thanks to a magic formula (*Hikayat Hang Tuah* 2008: 417) – still, the journeys are not described.

This absence of travel stories is not unique to Malay literature: it seems that ancient Javanese literature also contains none (see Kuntara 1992, Worsley 2012, Jákl 2020).

The texts relate events occurring in the visited countries, as they do about Malacca, but the cities are almost never described either. Malay historians do not describe, they tell stories. They do not describe the environment which is the setting of their story: the city, the forests, the buildings or the objects, any more than they describe the sea voyages. The reason for this absence of descriptions is probably the fact that a description presupposes a concept – concept of city, of society, of environment, of geography – but Malay literature does not deal with concepts, only with stories and anecdotes. The indifference to the reality of cities is spectacularly illustrated by the description, in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, of the city of Istanbul – which the author believes to be located at a 40 days walk inland – in three parts, one of which is copied from the description of Vijayanagar in the same text (see below), the second is copied from the description of Vijayanagar in the *Sulalat al-Salatin* (*idem*), and the third is copied from the description of Bandar Aceh in another Malay text: the *Bustan al-Salatin*.

This latter text is a notable exception, because it contains a long description of a garden created in Bandar Aceh around 1640 by Sultan Iskandar Thani (see Nuruddin ar-Raniri 1966: 48-52). This exception is due to the fact that this description is included in a very short chapter of an historical nature, within a voluminous work of a religious nature. And discourse, including descriptions, does exist in the domain of religious works.

The only cities described, or rather sketched, in literary texts are located outside the Malay world, and still in an extremely small number, id est the capital of China, Istanbul, a few cities in India and a few in the Red Sea. Yet these descriptions are mostly made up of literary clichés rather than factual observations. The only country in fact that is mentioned several times and in any

detail, is the Indian subcontinent.

I will give a brief overview of the representation of India in nine Malay texts dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries. These evocations tell us nothing about India that we do not yet know from other sources, but they illustrate the way in which the various authors perceived the country, their literary strategy and their historiographic stance. India in these texts is referred to as 'Keling', a name derived from that of the ancient kingdom of Kalinga. I will present the texts in a more or less chronological order.

The first text is the History of the Kings of Pasai (*Hikayat Raja Pasai*, see Hikayat Raja Pasai 1960, 1987), at the northern tip of Sumatra. It covers a long period of Pasai's history from its mythical origins to the fall of the kingdom following an attack by Majapahit, which from other sources we know to date from the 14th century. The beginning of the text, which probably dates from ca. 1400, reports that a ship was sent from Mecca to Sumatra in order to convert Pasai, following an instruction given by the Prophet himself. On the way, the boat stops in Ma'abri, on the Coromanel coast. The local Sultan then abdicates, dresses like a dervish, boards the boat and takes part in the Islamization of Pasai. This episode illustrates in an anecdotal way the role of India in the Islamization of the Malay world; a historical reminiscence embellished by literature. In a second, undatable, part of the text, a yogi comes to Pasai to demonstrate his talents, but the sultan proves to have superior magical powers. Later on, Indian warriors come to Pasai in search of worthy adversaries, but they soon retreat, humbled by the superiority of the Sultan's son.

Here already appears the concern of Malay authors to show the equality or even the superiority of the Malay world in relation to India.

The second text is the 'Malay Annals' (*Sulalat al-Salatin* aka *Sejarah Melayu*, see Sulalat al-Salatin 1998, Brown 1952), the most famous of all Malay historical texts. It probably developed in several stages; the final version was written in Johor (south of the Malay Peninsula) in 1612, but the versions we have today have all been truncated at some point and have been more or less subsequently rewritten. The text is the history of the Malay royal dynasty, mainly during the life of the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century.

The first chapter reports the origin of the Malay dynasty. The second relates

the history of the country of Nagapatnam: king Raja Shulan conquers all the countries up to the west coast of the Malay peninsula, where a Malay king resists him, but is finally slain. Raja Shulan then defeats the king of Lenggui and later marries his daughter. He then returns to India and founds the city of Bija Negara (Vijayanagar). His descendants rule this kingdom 'to this day', says the text. This story seems to be a vague reminiscence of the coming to the Straits of Malacca of a Chola armada which attacked the capital of Srivijaya at the beginning of the 11th century. But at the same time it tells of an alliance by marriage between the king of Vijayanagar and a Malay royal family.

The city of Bija Negara is described in the text in unrealistic terms, which are probably borrowed from a literary text:

> Its fort was of black stone with walls seven fathoms thick and nine fathoms high, and so skilled were the masons that not an interstice was to be seen; it was as though the masonry had been poured into place. The gate was of hammered gold, with studs of gold bejewelled. As for the extent of the fort, there were seven mountains within its compass, and in the midst of the city was a lake, so large that it looked like a sea and if an elephant stood on the far shore it could not be seen from the near shore. Into this lake the king released fish of every sort, and in the middle of it stood an island of great height, over which vapour constantly hovered as though the summit was wrapped in dewy mist. And on this island he planted trees of all kinds, and every sort of flower and fruit-tree that exists in this world was to be found there. It was to this island that the king resorted for pleasure. And by the side of this island he made a great forest into which he released wild beasts of every kind; and when he wished to go hunting or to capture elephants, it was to this forest that he went. When the city was completed, Raja Shulan gave it the name of Bija-nagara. The city exists to this day in the country of Kalinga. (Brown 1970: 9.)

Later on, as the Malay dynasty has settled in Singapore, the daughter of the king of Keling is married to the son of the king of Singapore; they have children who will rule over the country. Later still, when the Malay dynasty has settled in

Malacca and converted to Islam, a Muslim prince from the kingdom of Pahili in the country of Keling goes into exile in the Malay world; he marries the daughter of the king of Pasai, then he settles in Malacca, where he marries the daughter of a high dignitary.

Much later, the Sultan of Malacca sends a courtier to India to buy fabrics decorated with thousands of floral motifs. Indian craftsmen are unable to produce them, and it is finally the Malay envoy who designs them. On the way back the envoy's boat sinks; he himself reaches Ceylon, whose king wants to retain him for his artistic talents, but he manages to escape and return to Malacca. We therefore see again in this text the affirmation of multiple alliances through marriages between the Malay world and India, as well as, in a trivial anecdote, an example of the superiority of the Malays.

The Novel of Hang Tuah (*Hikayat Hang Tuah*),[1] also written in Johor at the end of the 17th century, is a historical narrative centered on the person of a great officer of Malacca in the second half of the 15th century: he is the Laksamana, the chief admiral, who is one of the main characters of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* quoted above. The hero's adventures are mostly legendary, but the story of his journey to India preserves reminiscences of the past.

The beginning of the text relates the origin of the Malay dynasty: a child of divine origin, Sang Purba, is made king in Palembang. From a princess also of divine origin, he has four sons, whom diviners predict are destined to become kings of Malacca, Keling, Java and Minangkabau. One of them becomes king of the city he founded himself: Malacca. He summons one of his brothers and designates him as his successor, but soon, following a slander, he expels him from the palace. The brother becomes a fisherman and lives miserably. Then a rich merchant arrives from the country of Bijaya Nagaram (Vijayanagar), looking for a son of Sang Purba to reign over Keling; he meets the destitute brother by chance and obtains the king's permission to take him to Keling. This is how the second son of Sang Purba becomes king of Bijaya Nagaram, which becomes prosperous.

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[1] The standard edition of the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* is that of Kassim Ahmad, first published in 1964. The page numbers below refer to the edition in the Karya Agung series, 2008.

Later still, the king of Malacca sends Hang Tuah on an embassy to Bijaya Nagaram. On the way Hang Tuah makes a stop at an island, where he meets the prophet Khidr. Then after a while at sea he reaches Nagapatam and from there goes to Bijaya Nagaram on horseback to meet King Kisna Rayan (id est Krishna Deva Raya, r. 1509-1529). The text reminds us that the royal house of Malacca is older than that of Vijayanagar ('Malacca's Sultan is the elder brother of His Highness Kisna Rayan' p. 388). And when the missive from the Sultan of Malacca that Hang Tuah has brought with him is taken to the king's palace with great ceremony, the fascinated crowd observes that indeed 'the king of Malacca is our king's elder', p. 392).

The city and the court are described according to literary stereotypes, as in the following example:

> Getting close, the Admiral [Hang Tuah] could see that all the gates of the fort were carved with images of the most beautiful animals. One layer was made of sapphire, another one of black stone like shiny beetle wings, another one, as the Admiral could see, was illustrated with the story of Seri Rama, another one with the story of the victorious Pandawa, another one with various kinds of animals in the jungle, while the gate was made of copper. (p. 391)

Hang Tuah commands admiration because he speaks the local language:

> then Kisna Rayan and the prime minister and all the kings and ministers attending were amazed at seeing that the Admiral knew the Nagaram language, because among all those kings and ministers only selected ones were conversant in it. Kisna Rayan was pleased to see how fluently the Admiral was speaking in the Keling language, with a fair countenance, a melodious voice, and with perfectly tactful words. (pp. 392-3)

Hang Tuah is treated with the greatest respect. The king is dazzled by Hang Tuah's elegance, politeness, bravery and wisdom, and he showers him with gifts. Hang Tuah demonstrates his multiple talents: he manages to ride an untameable

horse that no warrior has been able to master; he makes a magical remedy thanks to which the wife of the governor of Nagapatam, Nala Sang Guna, who until then had not been able to have children, becomes pregnant. He saves Nala Sang Guna from humiliation when the king sets a trap for him (the king invites himself to dinner with thousands of courtiers, but forbids all his subjects from selling him wood to cook this dinner; Hang Tuah advises him to use thousands of cloths soaked in oil as fuel); Hang Tuah offers the king a seed which, once planted, produces in an instant a growing tree, bearing delicious fruits, and which disappears as soon as the fruits are eaten (a magic seed given to him by the prophet Al-Khidr himself on the way to India); Hang Tuah kills a supposedly invincible Indian warrior who attacked him. Hang Tuah causes such admiration that the king appoints him to lead an embassy to China, which he accomplishes perfectly.

The court of Kisna Rayan displays unparalleled wealth and magnificence. The city also displays incomparable prosperity. Hang Tuah is fascinated by the abundance, the wealth and the luxury. He observes that 'ten Malay merchants are not as rich as one Indian merchant' (p. 390). And further 'The king of Keling is indeed a great king, and every merchant is immensely rich. Ten Malay kings cannot compare with one Indian merchant.' (p. 395)

Hang Tuah visits the city together with Nala Sang Guna. They see a large number of charitable foundations (*balai derma*), and they spend two nights in a temple of great beauty designated as *sitam berama*, a probable corruption of Chidambaram, the name of the famous temple in Tamil Nadu.[2] Nobles go there to worship the deity during festivals, and captains and merchants in need of funds borrow money at a rate of five percent: 'for each twenty catty he borrowed, he presented one catty to the deity, and so it is that the gold of the temple multiplied' (p. 407). This is a truly interesting observation, as we know that Indian temples at that time acted as money lenders (see Spencer 1968, who gave a much higher interest rate in the early 11th century). Inside the temple they also see a pond filled with oil, a fact which again fits with historical evidence (many devotees made donations in the form of ghee, clarified butter, see Spencer 1968). They then visit a charity foundation: all donations, clothing and food, are distributed

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[2] I thank Arlo Griffiths for suggesting this identification.

to the needy.

Still further in the text, the king of Malacca sends an embassy to Ceylon to purchase precious stones. This very long chapter of the novel of Hang Tuah reveals a real fascination for the wealth and splendor of India, but it is based on the postulate that the Malay royal house is the elder of the Indian one, and it exposes through a series of anecdotes how a Malay hero can prove himself superior to all the high officers of the Indian court.

My fourth text, entitled 'History of Hitu' (*Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, see Manusama 1977; Straver et al. 2004) was written in Makassar, around 1650, by a dignitary from the principality of Hitu, in the Moluccas, named Rijali. It is an exceptional text in the history of Malay literature because it is dedicated to a factual and truthful account of the history of this tiny state. Rijali was a man of some importance, and in 1621 he accompanied his cousin on an embassy to the Governor General of the Dutch VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) in Batavia. The cousin in question made a six-month trip to the Coromandel coast on a Dutch ship on this occasion, and it seems that Rijali also accompanied him. Leaving in July 1622, they landed at Tevanapatam and followed the coast towards the north. In Pondicherry, they observed a slave market, where slaves were sold four times cheaper than in Batavia. They stopped at Nagapatinam, São Tomé, where they visited the Portuguese church, Pulicat, where they resided in a Dutch fort (Fort Geldria), and Masulipatnam, where they stayed for a while. Rijali echoes his cousin's amazement at the wonders and horrors he discovers in this city:

> Next they sailed to the trading port of Masulipatam, where he stayed at the house of a merchant named Haji Baba. There Mihirjiguna became famous under the name of Sultan Karanful ['Clove'] Kipati Syah. There he saw all the jewels of the world; things our ancestors had never seen. Moreover, many creations cannot be described, such as luxurious objects dedicated to beauty and to man's desire, but just as indescribable were the evil and hateful ones, joy and sorrow, like wealthy and poor people, and people who lived under the ground, and people who did not have a place to live, and people who cleaned up human filth in that country. There was a public bath with both warm and cold water. In the

morning people bathed in hot water, and at mid-day they bathed in cold water. All these refined worldly deeds he saw, for Masulipatam was the trading port of Kutb Syah, the king of Golconda, during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Quli.

Rijali's text is extremely short and contains little information, but it is the rare testimony, especially at such a (relatively) remote time, of a 'Malay' traveler simply recording what he has seen. It is significant that Rijali cites Golconda and not Vijayanagar, which is the reference of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* and the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*.

The following text, the 'History of the Kingdom of Banjarmasin' (*Hikayat Banjar*, see Ras 1968), is very close chronologically, as it is generally dated 1663. The beginning of the text reports the founding of the Kingdom of Banjar by a Keling merchant. The story is the following: before dying, an immensely rich merchant of Keling advises his son to leave the country, where he has no future, and to look for a foreign land in which to settle. The son follows this advice and settles in southern Borneo, where he founds the kingdom of Nagara Dipa. He subdues the surrounding countries and becomes rich. He names king and queen a pair of wooden statues that he has had carved and which he later replaces with bronze statues, but after his death, his sons discover a young girl born from the foam in a river and a boy coming from the sun, whom they take for king and queen.

This story is borrowed from Javanese traditions, in which Keling designates a kingdom in East Java, but the name was certainly interpreted by Malay readers and listeners of the Malay *hikayat* as designating Southern India. Here we have again the intervention of an Indian merchant in the history of the Malay world, as well as an interesting negotiation of the status of the royalty: initially the king and queen are a couple of statues elected to royal status, but subsequently they are replaced by two divine beings in conformity with the Malay myth of origin.

A jump of about a century leads to the next text, the *Syair Hemop* (see Syair Hemop 1935, Kern 1948), so named after the name of the main character, the Dutchman Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff, who was to become Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. This text is an extremely long poem dating from the end of the 18th century, perhaps around 1760, and very poorly known. The first

part of the poem relates in great detail (it is more than a thousand four-line stanzas long) events concerning the Dutch presence in Ceylon in the 1730s. In short, the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) attempted to impose a system of commercial monopoly, particularly on cinnamon, through acts of intimidation and the blockade of ports, finally causing conflicts and battles with the population and with the royal administration. The poem muddles up some facts and considerably amplifies the clashes, transforming skirmishes into disproportionate fights involving thousands of men.

Beyond a literary strategy and a few errors, the poem nevertheless reveals a real knowledge of history and even a familiarity with the high echelons of power in Batavia. Also apparent is the desire to present van Imhoff as a hero and the previous Governor-General, Adriaan Valckenier, as a manipulative and corrupt character. Van Imhoff was governor of Ceylon in 1736-1740; he restored peace and was able to maintain good relations with the king of Kandi. The poem claims that he was sent to Ceylon by Valckenier, when in reality, the latter was only appointed Governor-General a year later, in 1737, but this is probably a literary device rather than a lack of knowledge of the facts.

The rest of the *syair* deals with the massacre of the Chinese in Batavia, in October 1740, and the ensuing war across Java. We therefore have, in this poem, a historical narrative relating to Ceylon which is not an exact and reliable historical account, but which is based on a realistic stance and – this is the most important - on a political vision, the opposite of the fabrications of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* and the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*.

The following text provides the account of a trip actually made to India. This is the 'Narrative of the Condition of Bengal' (*Hikayat Perintah Negeri Benggala*, see Ahmad Rijaluddin 1982, Skinner 1976, 1978) written by Ahmad Rijaluddin ibn Hakim Long Fakir Kandu, a clerk from the Chulia community of Pulau Penang in Malaya after a trip to Bengal in 1810. Ahmad Rijaluddin accompanied, perhaps as a translator, an English trader by the name of Robert Scott, who was close to Lord Minto. Ahmad Rijaluddin has most probably written this text at the instigation of one of the English gentlemen with whom he was in contact (including Raffles and John Leyden), but his postulated readers may in fact have been his fellow Chulias in Penang, who are known in Malay as 'Melayu Keling'

and who were at the time, in Penang, more numerous than the Malays.[3] The story, long and detailed, is very strongly marked by the weight of the Malay literary tradition: Skinner (Ahmad Rijaluddin 1982, p. 160, n. 51) points out for example a parallel between the description of Lord Minto's residence and a passage from the *Hikayat Sri Rama*, the succinct Malay adaptation of the *Ramayana*. Some descriptions even seem to owe more to literary clichés from Malay epics than to the reality of the places and monuments he observed – for example this evocation of the ponds in the park of the English residences of Barrackpore:

> The water in the tank is as clear as tear-drops and it is here that the English girls come to bathe in their hundreds. In warm weather, all the girls go to bathe in the tanks, a beautiful sight, it is as though the nymph Sekerba had come down from paradise; the girls splash about in great numbers, like ducks swimming in a pond. (p. 85)

Despite this weight of the literary tradition Ahmad Rijaluddin's story is still striking for the amount of information it contains. Ahmad describes several dozen places: villages, markets, monuments, gardens, places of prostitution, with an obvious effort at completeness, a wealth of details and an abundance of vernacular (Urdus) terms, which supposes either a careful observation carried out personally on the spot, or more likely a host of questions asked to local informants and duly recorded. His description of the Government House in Calcutta would deserve to be compared with two descriptions made in the same year, under the same circumstances: that of Ibrahim Kandu (below) and that of Maria Graham (1812, p. 137, see Figure 1). Ahmad took his task very seriously; he describes each town according to an identical plan (he successively evokes, and sometimes in identical terms, the head of government (the *raja*), the fort, the palace, the market, the prostitutes' district, the places of worship, the residences

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[3] Observing that Ahmad borrows his tropes from classical Malay literature, B.W. Andaya (2017: 22) concludes that "these 'Keling Malays' identified with Malay society and that they were writing for Malay audiences", but in fact those 'Keling Malays' had long appropriated classical Malay literature: writing in 'classical Malay style' did not imply any kind of audience, whether Malay or Chulia (or Chinese).

The Government House in Calcutta in 1811.
Source : Maria Graham, Journal of a Residence in India (1812), p. 137.

of the wealthy and the countryside. The omnipresent prostitutes' neighborhoods (one would never have guessed there were so many prostitutes in British India!) are also described following an identical plan and using formulas repeated from one to the other.

Ahmad is of Chulia origin, but he describes Calcutta and its environs without ever suggesting any sense of familiarity. He makes no general remarks, he records no personal impression – apart from a fascination with grandeur, wealth and luxury, which were already a trope of 'classic' Malay authors – he strives to an objectivity which is totally foreign to some of the classic texts we saw above. His account, however, betrays a personal fascination with brothels, which he describes several times in picturesque and romantic terms, as if they were places solely devoted to music and dancing (e.g. p. 89, 95, 113), and which give rise to a unique episode of this text: evoking a prostitution district, he recounts how bar owners lure sailors, get them drunk, then hand them over to prostitutes, who strip them of all their money, and this unspecific anecdote leads to a personalized story, in which a prostitute who kept a sailor for a week in her place, claims to be desperate to see him leave and, following an exchange of romantic pantuns, ends up extorting his last pennies (pp. 59-60). This curious comedy (which however ends in court) is followed by the description of the Tabut festival which celebrates, in the month of Muharram, the martyrdom of Husayn at Karbala. Then follows the description of six other settlements upstream of Calcutta: Barrackpore, Dumdum, Serampore, Chandernagore, Chinsura and Hooghly.

Finally, Lord Minto, with the consent of the 'ruler of Europe', sends an armada to attack Mauritius and take it from the French, which is promptly done. Then Lord Minto decides to also attack Batavia. A fleet sets out, but Ahmad Rijaluddin's story ends here abruptly.

Another Chulia from Penang, Ibrahim bin Kandu, who was perhaps Ahmad's younger brother, visited Calcutta the same year, in the company of another Englishman, the famous linguist John Leyden. He wrote a very short text, a few pages only, on his impressions of the trip, in which he essentially describes the Government House in Calcutta and the 'Public Disputation' which took place there in September 1810, to which he was very proud to have been invited. Ibrahim is much more personal in his notes than Ahmad. Admiring the superlatively pretty ladies seated in the room, he singles out the most beautiful
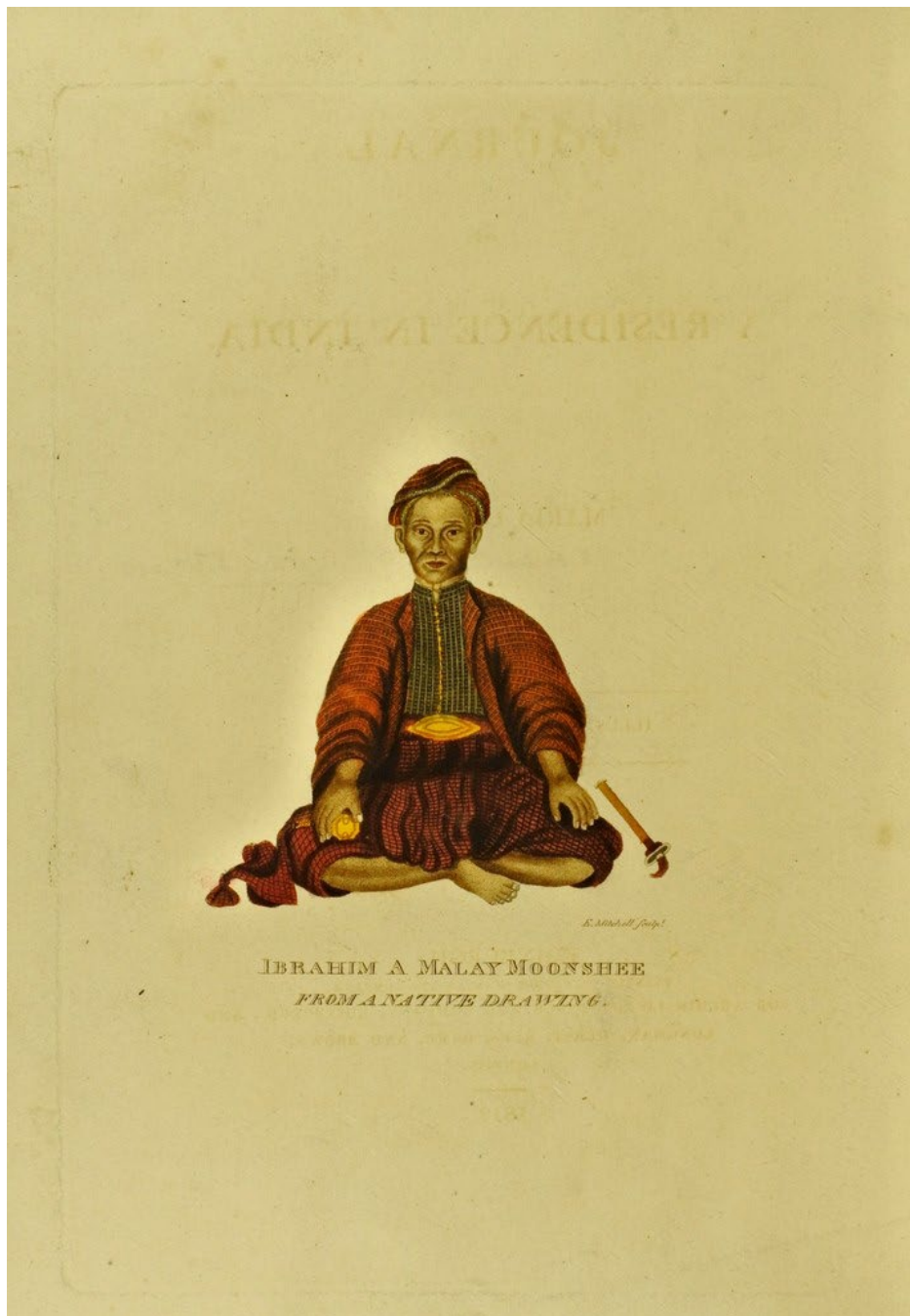
Ibrahim Munshi, author of a Malay 'Account of Bengal' in 1811.
Source : Maria Graham, Journal of a Residence in India (1812), frontispice.

of them – and eight months pregnant – and remarks: 'She resembled Fatima, the wife of I, Ibrahim, the son of Candu the merchant, but she was more beautiful.' And to those heavenly creatures he dedicates a poem.

Ibrahim's text, 'An Account of Bengal, and of a Visit to the Government House, by Ibrahim, the son of Candu the poor merchant of Keddah', was published, in the English translation by John Leyden, in the Maria Graham' book,

Journal of a Residence in India (1812), who was present at this event.[4] She had noticed Ibrahim in the crowd and gives his portrait as the frontispiece of her book (see Illustration 2). Ibrahim's story naively expresses his boundless admiration for everything he observes, but it is a remarkably realistic and factual description, which is the fruit of personal observation. Ibrahim insists on the fact that he is welcomed with kindness and respect by all the English lords ('*tuan-tuan*') present; it is probably the first Malay text to express this cultural shock (that we will find again, in Indonesia, in Mas Marco Kartodikromo's novel *Student Hijo*, one century later).

Our last text is also written by a man of mixed ascendency, in this case Arab, Indian and Malay. This is the most famous Malay author of the 19th century, Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi (see Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi 2005; Ché-Ross 2000). Although an extremely devout Muslim, he worked for years in the service of American missionaries, who taught him English and printing techniques, and introduced him to Western modernity. Abdullah's discourse, resolutely modern and realistic, is totally different from that of the texts we have seen so far. At the age of 58, in 1854, Abdullah undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca. He made the journey, reaching Jeddah and then Mecca, but died a few days later of illness, probably cholera. The text that we possess, the 'Narrative of Abdullah's journey to Mecca' (*Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah*) therefore only includes the account of his journey to the Holy Land. The boat leaves Singapore and makes two stopovers of a few days in India, i.e. in Allepey (Alappuzha) and Calicut. In these two cities, as he would later do in three cities on the Red Sea, Abdullah, as a curious and observant man eager to know and

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[4] The text is edited in Skinner's edition of the *Hikayat Perintah Negeri Benggala*, 1982.

understand, questions the people he meets, makes sketches, draws maps. He inquires about everything: history, government, law, economy, clothing, habitat, architecture, wildlife, livestock, vegetation, currency, mosques, other places of worship, ethnic diversity, climate, condition of the streets, markets, agriculture, food, tombs of renowned people, and the use of *qat*. Having seen in Calicut a very large impressive three-storey mosque with a large pool, he thought that 'whosoever would read this book later would surely like to know who had created it', so that he asked a great number of people until an old man, 'about eighty years of age', told him the story, but only after asking himself: 'Now this is a surprise! No one has ever bothered to ask about how it was built before. Where are you from? And why do you wish to know this?' (Ché-Ross 2000: 191). We too as readers may be surprised by Abdullah's insatiable curiosity and perseverance. Here is an example of the information he collected in Allepey:

> There are no other races to be seen in this country except for Chettys, Indian Muslims, and *Mamans*, who are merchants. There is an extremely wealthy *Maman* who had built four to five three-masted ships and eight to nine *Petamari*, which are ships whose mast leans towards the front, and his name is Haji Yaacob. He has built a congregational mosque but the person who began building it originally was his father, (whose) name was Yusuf Sabur. His son then completed it and people have estimated its cost to be around twenty thousand *Ringgit*. (Ché-Ross 2000: 188)

Abdullah masters Tamil, Urdu and English, but he is not 'Keling' in the least: he observes India as a foreign country, without prejudice, without expectations, and he makes judgments like a man of his time; he deplores for instance the fact that in Allepey as in Calicut, he is constantly harassed by beggars. With Abdullah ends the fantastic, irrational and impersonal mode which characterized ancient literature. The world is now described with objectivity in mind. Abdullah was a learned man who had a very good knowledge of ancient Malay literature, but he had no regard for the view of history it offered. He describes the India he saw (two towns in Kerala), which has completely lost the splendor and glory of the kingdoms that fascinated the Malays of the past.

The nine texts that I have summarized are called *hikayat* (except for one *syair*), but they do not belong to the same genre. The texts which report the history of a kingdom (*Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Sulalat al-Salatin* and *Hikayat Banjar*), as well as the historical novel *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, are written for a royal court, with the aim of celebrating the glory of the ruling dynasty. The description of India is entirely stereotypical; India is represented as a country of immense wealth and splendor unlike any other in the world, whose merchants are incomparably rich, and which is epitomized in the empire of Vijayanagar.

Three stories in the course of two centuries: that of Rijali around 1650 (*Hikayat Tanah Hitu*), that of Ibrahim Kandu in 1811, and that of Abdullah Munshi in 1854 (*Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah*) contrast with this literary tradition through their realism: they report an individual experience and give an evocation of India in relation to the circumstances of their respective journeys. The text by Ahmad Rijaluddin, in 1810, is halfway between these two genres: the author describes India (or rather Bengal) as he saw it, but through the filter of the stereotypes of ancient literature. It is no coincidence that the four mythical and legendary texts of the first genre are anonymous, while the other four are signed. Despite their disparity from a literary and historiographical point of view, those Malay texts reflect the evolution of India between the period of kingdoms and empires and that of colonization.

Aside from those prose texts, one poem from about 1760 does not record a personal memory of a voyage to India, but a historical account with an intention of authenticity.

These Malay historical texts do not teach us anything about India that we do not already know from other sources, but they teach us, or remind us, something about Malay literature: it is commonly accepted that realism is the mark of modernity introduced by the influence of European culture in the 19th century. Barbara W. Andaya (2017) has commented with utmost erudition five of the nine texts analysed here, viz. *Sulalat al-Salatin*, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, *Hikayat Perintah Negeri Benggala*, and Ibrahim Kandu's 'Account of Bengal', to conclude that all of them reflected 'the dictates of the Malay hikayat tradition' (p. 24). That is the way the 'imagined India' of classical hikayats, that legendary image of an immensely powerful and prosperous India, dominated

Malay accounts of India all the way from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries: 'these imaginings persisted in communal memory, even when they contrasted with lived experience and even when the historical environment itself had changed significantly' (p. 8). We can see here that, in reality, two tendencies coexisted within Malay literature, at least as early as the mid-17th century, namely a tendency to favor legend and myth (e.g. *Sulalat al-Salatin*, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*) and a tendency towards realism (*Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, *Syair Hemop*). As we can see, the Indian Ocean, like other seas, has played an important role in the history of the Malay world, but it is absent from literature. India, on the other hand, is present, more present than any other country with which the Malay world was in contact. India has had a deeper impact on Malay imagination than any other country. A category of ancient texts, inspired by confused reminiscences of past events, has created a fictional collective memory, a sort of folklorization of history. The other texts do not take this heritage into account; they recount a personal experience, but we can see that they have not contributed to collective memory: whether in Indonesia or Malaysia, their texts are today totally ignored, while the previous ones have long been forgotten. India today is known through the international media.

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The Metamorphosis of Kaikasī to Sukesi

Revisiting Opera Jawa, a Contemporary Indonesian Cinematic Re-imagining of the Rāmāyaṇa[1]

Toru Aoyama

1. Sukesi in the film *Opera Jawa*

Kaikasī is the mother of Rāvaṇa, the primary antagonist in the famous epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. However, Kaikasī remains a minor character in the epic. She appears only in the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the seventh and final book of the Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* story, and even there, she is mentioned only passingly as the mother of Rāvaṇa and his siblings, although the circumstances of her marriage to their father are intriguingly told.

Nevertheless, she has gained fame in Javanese literature, where she has been known as Sukesi since the 18th century.[2] The story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, along with the *Mahābhārata*, spread across the Bay of Bengal through the process of the Indianisation of Southeast Asia. However, few areas have adopted this process more rigorously than Javanese literature. Javanese literature embraced the stories introduced across the Bay of Bengal and embellished and adapted them within

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[2] Little is known about how the name changed from Kaikasī to Sukesi. However, it is possible to conjecture that her grandfather's name Sukeśa might have influenced later Javanese writers. The use of the prefix *su*, meaning "good", and the use of the suffix *i* for a female person are both well-observed practices in Modern Javanese. Finally, it must be noted that a seemingly transitional "Kaikeśī" appears in the English translation of the Old Javanese *Arjunawijaya* (Supomo 1997: 183), but this seems to be an inadvertent error because "Kaikaśī" is the name used in the Old Javanese text, and only this spelling conforms the metric requirement of the text.

the contexts of Javanese society. The *Uttarakāṇḍa* has captured the Javanese imagination throughout history. Having been introduced to Java by the 9th century, the *Uttarakāṇḍa* was first translated into Old Javanese at the end of the 10th century. At the height of the kingdom of Majapahit in the second half of the 14th century, the birth and exploits of Rāvaṇa were immortalised in an Old Javanese epic poem. In the Islamic era, the story was adapted in Modern Javanese from the end of the 18th century to the early 19th century and subsequently propagated into a repertory of shadow puppet theatre (*wayang kulit*). One of her most impressive incarnations recently appeared in an Indonesian film production, *Opera Jawa*, where she plays a more significant role than ever. This essay begins with this contemporary cinematic adaptation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and further explores her journey of transformation from Kaikasī into Sukesi.

The film *Opera Jawa* (English title: *Requiem from Java*) was directed by the renowned Indonesian filmmaker Garin Nugroho. Commissioned for a cultural art festival in Vienna to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth, the film was first released in Indonesia in 2006. It represents a significant intersection of culture and cinema, blending classical Western, traditional, and contemporary Javanese elements. The film presents choreographed scenes of dancing (both traditional Javanese court dancing and contemporary dancing) accompanied by Javanese *gamelan* music and singing in Javanese. It ends in a poignant final act, which opens with the solemn chanting of a requiem and unfolds into a series of spiritual rites for the deceased. As its English title suggests, Nugroho demonstrates his appreciation of Mozart's works through references to operatic style and the solemnity of the requiem. Beyond these elements, however, the film is distinctly Javanese. In other words, the film has Javanese contents within the framework of a Mozartian requiem.

Garin Nugroho was born on June 6, 1961, in Yogyakarta, a city located in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Together with Surakarta in Central Java, Yogyakarta is widely recognized as a cultural centre of Java. The city is also home to the Sultan's royal palace.[3] Nugroho studied filmmaking at the Jakarta

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[3] The Sultanate of Yogyakarta officially became part of the Republic of Indonesia as the Special Region of Yogyakarta in 1950 after Indonesia's independence. The

Institute of the Arts while studying law and politics at the University of Indonesia. Since his debut film in 1991, he has directed nationally and internationally acclaimed films. After his mother's death, he envisioned creating a work based on Central Javanese culture as a dedication to her memory (Kunang Helmi 2011). Thus, upon accepting the commission, he ventured to adapt the *Rāmāyaṇa* into a cinematic form reflective of his cultural roots.

Set in a contemporary rural Javanese town, *Opera Jawa* revolves around three main characters: Setyo, the gentle local potter; Siti, his beautiful and loyal wife; and Ludiro, the butcher and influential town boss who controls the townsfolk by coercion. These three characters, formerly fellow actors in a local traditional theatre troupe, find their real lives strangely paralleled with the roles they once played—Setyo as Rāma, Siti as Sītā, and Ludiro as Rāvaṇa. Their love triangle culminates in a tense, violent clash between Setyo's and Ludiro's factions in the town, leading to a dramatic and tragic outcome.

In the film's narrative, two female characters stand out. The first is naturally Siti. As I have already explored Garin Nugroho's visionary adaptation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* elsewhere (Aoyama 2012), I will not need to touch upon this character too much. In the film, Ludiro, who secretly desires Setyo's wife, Siti, tries to attract her by inviting her to dance again as Sinta (as Sītā is known in Modern Javanese) in his presence. In fact, dance is Siti's passion, but she suppresses it for Setyo's sake. She rejects Ludiro's overbearing and sometimes male-chauvinistic advances. She also refuses to conform to Setyo's quiet but obsessive desire to control her, stemming from jealousy toward Ludiro. The tension between Siti and Setyo is vividly portrayed in the scene where she rejects his attempt to mould her literally like clay, underscoring her quest for autonomy. In the end, her determination leads to her choosing death over submission, challenging patriarchal control.

The other outstanding female character is Ludiro's mother, Sukesi, who in the film is a well-off businessperson running a dressmaker's workshop with a group of employees to create clothing. The importance given to her role is apparent in the fact that it is listed fourth in the cast list following Setyo, Ludiro

Sultanate of Yogyakarta came into existence in 1755 when the Sultanate of Mataram was split into Yogyakarta Sultanate and Surakarta Sunanate.

and Siti, and that her name is taken directly from the original source without change, while other characters' names were altered. In this essay, I will focus on this less-discussed yet important character, whose significance I did not fully explore in my previous paper. This analysis illuminates the film's intricate balance between traditional storytelling and contemporary social themes.

Sukesi plays a significant role in the film in shaping the course of the story by actively supporting Ludiro's desire for Siti. In fact, it is Sukesi's idea to send a letter to Siti inviting her to dance as Sinta again for Ludiro. Sukesi also prepares a long red cloth which magically — the film effortlessly blurs the line between the real and the imagined — extends from her house through a road in the middle of rice fields to Siti's house. The long red cloth lures Siti away from her house to Ludiro's place. When Siti eventually rejects and leaves Ludiro, Sukesi gracefully accepts Ludiro's sorrow and consoles the dejected Ludiro, who reveals he wishes to return to his mother's womb. Thus, Sukesi consistently supports Ludiro's morally questionable pursuit of the love of another man's wife. There is an emotionally strong mother-son relationship between the two characters. However, Sukesi's most crucial role emerges in the film's last thirty minutes.

In the film's epilogue, after the main characters have exited from the main stage, Sukesi, attired in black, emerges as the officiant of a requiem. She initiates the ritual by chanting prayers in Latin, the sacred language: *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis, cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia plus es* (Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and may light perpetual shine on them, in the company of Thy saints for evermore, because Thou art merciful.). The requiem text in Latin is taken from Mozart's *Requiem*. Then, there was a long procession led by Sukesi on the sandy beach along the Indian Ocean. After the procession, she conducts a spiritual rite for the deceased, who include Ludiro and Siti and other victims of the violent clash between the two factions who support Ludiro and Setyo in the community. The rite, conducted on the beach along the Indian Ocean, strongly resonates with a traditional Javanese *labuhan* ceremony, where offerings are given to the goddess of Southern Sea, ruler of the spiritual world. However, a question remains. Why is Sukesi's character constructed in such a way that she can conduct a ritual for the deceased, let alone utter words

in Latin, a sacred language? To answer the question, we must go back to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in particular its seventh book, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

2. The impact of Indianisation and vernacularisation

The *Rāmāyaṇa*, one of India's great epics, has profoundly influenced cultures across South and Southeast Asia for centuries. Its introduction to Javanese society is part of a broader historical phenomenon known as the Indianisation of Southeast Asia (Coedès 1968: 15–16), which occurred primarily in the first millennium and influenced regions such as Indonesia, especially Java. This process, facilitated by extensive maritime trade across the Indian Ocean, enabled the rulers of emergent early Southeast Asian states to adopt Indian-style court rituals, titles, and administrative techniques, through the medium of the Sanskrit language.

The introduction of Sanskrit literature and its writing system brought about literacy, at least among local elites, and enriched the vocabulary of local literary production. Stories from the Indian epics like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* became popular and were locally represented in various art forms. As a result, this period has left not only tangible legacies like the Borobudur Buddhist temple and the Prambanan Hindu temple compound in Central Java but also intangible ones, notably the extensive Hindu-Buddhist literary corpus in the Javanese language. Java, along with other Southeast and South Asian regions, became part of what Pollock (1998) termed the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' — a shared cultural sphere unified not by centralized authority but by accepting the revered Sanskrit language.

A pivotal development in this cultural integration was the vernacularisation of literacy (Pollock 1998), a process as crucial as the introduction of Sanskrit itself in shaping Javanese Hindu-Buddhist culture. This led to significant socio-cultural transformations within Javanese society, including the use of Indic script, a large number of Sanskrit loanwords, the adaptation of Indic poetry, the adoption of Sanskrit literature, and most importantly, as a result of the combination of these elements, the creation of a rich body of literature in Old Javanese. Old Javanese belongs to the Austronesian language family and is cognate to Modern Javanese and Indonesian. The linguistic distance between Sanskrit and Old Javanese makes it all the more significant that the Javanese

poets successfully adapted the Sanskrit literary genre *kāvya* with an intricate metric system to develop the Old Javanese *kakawin* genre, a group of literary works that generally recount epic narratives in the Indian-inspired metric system.

The earliest extant Old Javanese translation of a Sanskrit literary work is the Old Javanese translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This Old Javanese translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was based not on Vālmīki's version but on the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* (also known as *Rāvaṇavadha*), a 7th-century Sanskrit rendition of Vālmīki's epic (Robson 2015). The Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* is also regarded as the first extant example of the *kakawin* genre. The internal evidence suggests that the translation was completed in the late 9th century. This makes the text, in fact, one of the oldest vernacular translations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* across South and Southeast Asia. The Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* comprises six books, notably excluding the seventh book, *Uttarakāṇḍa*. This omission, however, does not stem from the Javanese perception of the *Uttarakāṇḍa* as an interpolation, about which we discuss more below, but simply reflects the fact that its source text, the *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, itself lacks the *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

3. Hindu-Buddhist era: Adaption of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*

The *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the seventh and final book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, is considered by scholars to be a later interpolation, but as Supomo (1977: 18) asserts, when the *Uttarakāṇḍa* was first translated into Old Javanese, the process of incorporation had been already completed, and it was recognized as an authentic part of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. From the viewpoint of contents, the *Uttarakāṇḍa* consists of two related but discrete stories. After Rāma and Sītā's triumphant return to Ayodhya, a group of sages led by Agastya pay a visit to Rāma to congratulate him on his victory. On this occasion, as requested by Rāma, Agastya explains the birth of Rāvaṇa and his siblings and his series of misdeeds before he finally comes across Rāma. This part may be called a prequel to the main story. After Agastya completes his tale and the sages depart, the story resumes its narrative of Rāma and Sītā, which includes Sītā's banishment to the forest and the birth of Rāma's two sons and their subsequent reunion with Rāma. This second half may be called a sequel to the main story. Notably, the prequel part of the *Uttarakāṇḍa* later developed significantly in Javanese literature, and it is precisely in this part that Kaikasī plays a role.

In the prequel part, Agastya explains the circumstances of Rāvaṇa's birth. The once-powerful and dominating *rākṣasa*s (ogres) had been nearly eradicated by the god Viṣṇu. King Sumālī, one of the surviving *rākṣasa*s who had taken refuge in a netherworld, emerged one day from the netherworld and witnessed the glorious Vaiśravaṇa (also known as Kubera, and regarded as the god of wealth) on the way to visit his father, the sage Viśrava. Inspired by this sight, Sumālī conceived a plan to make Viśrava his son-in-law, hoping to have a grandchild equal to Vaiśravaṇa who could rival the god Viṣṇu, thus restoring the *rākṣasa*s' former glory and prosperity. Sumālī urged his beautiful daughter Kaikasī to seek to marry the sage Viśrava with intent of bearing powerful children to fulfil his ambitions. The sage accepted Kaikasī's proposal, but because her visit interrupted his daily ritual, their union resulted in the birth of monstrous children: the ten-headed Daśagrīva (also known as Daśamukha, and later as Rāvaṇa), the gigantic Kumbhakarṇa, and the hideous Śūrpaṇakhā. Only the last child, Vibhīṣaṇa, inherited his father's virtuous nature. From a narrative perspective, Kaikasī's primary role is to account for the birth of Rāvaṇa and his siblings.

Although the *Uttarakāṇḍa* is not included in the Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa*, its presence in the reliefs of the 9th-century Prambanan temple indicates the contents of the book were known to the Javanese.[4] At the end of the 10th or the early 11th century, the *Uttarakāṇḍa* was translated into Old Javanese prose, which closely follows the story of the Sanskrit version, including both the story of Rāvaṇa's birth and the story of the birth of Rāma's sons (Supomo 1977: 18; Zoetmulder 1974). Subsequently, in the late 14th century, at the height of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit, Rāvaṇa's life story, highlighting his

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[4] The reliefs depicting the story of *Rāmāyaṇa* are found in the central Śiva temple and the Brahmā temple located on the southern side (Aoyama 2018; Stutterheim 1989). The reliefs in the Śiva temple begin with the incarnation of the god Viṣṇu as Rāma and end with the advance of Rāma's army to the island of Laṅkā. The story continues to the reliefs in the Brahmā temple. Although, compared to the Śiva temple, the restoration of the reliefs in the Brahmā temple is in poor condition, it is still possible to identify, among others, the scenes of Rāvaṇa's death and the birth of Rāma's two sons. Thus, from the latter scene, it can be concluded that the final book *Uttarakāṇḍa* is included in the *Rāmāyaṇa* reliefs in the Prambanan temple.

confrontation with the king Arjunasasrabāhu,[5] was made into an independent verse work, the *Arjunawijaya*. It has been established that the author Tantular used parts of the Old Javanese prose *Uttarakāṇḍa*, mainly from sarga 9 (the birth of Daśamukha) to sarga 19 (the defeat of Daśamukha by Arjunasasrabāhu), as the basis for his work (Supomo 1977: 10, 19–26).

4. Islamic era: Sukesi in Modern Javanese literature

The transition of Javanese literature from the Hindu-Buddhist era to the Islamic era, around the late 15th and early 16th centuries, marked a significant cultural shift. This period saw such fundamental changes as the decline of the Majapahit kingdom and the rise of Islamic kingdoms, the establishment of Islam in Java, the linguistic transition from Old Javanese to Modern Javanese, and the change of the medium of writing from *lontar* (palm leaf) to paper. Nevertheless, the cultural legacy of the Hindu-Buddhist traditions remained remarkably resilient in Javanese society. For instance, the Indic script remained in use, although an attempt was made to write Javanese in a modified Arabic script.

These cultural changes were reflected in the literature of the period. Johns (1966: 40) conveniently classifies the literature of the transitional period into three categories: those rooted in Hindu-Buddhist traditions, those distinctly Islamic, and those that attempt a synthesis of both. The *Uttarakāṇḍa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, belonging to the first category, continued to be preserved both orally and textually. However, with the advent of Islam, they underwent significant transformations in interpretation and cultural significance. Notably, these transformations involve not only increasing Islamic influences but also the incorporation of indigenous elements, recontextualising the stories within Javanese society.

Sears (2004: 278–283) identifies three Modern Javanese texts that recount the birth of Rāvaṇa, who is known as Rahwana in Modern Javanese literature (similarly, Kaikasī as Sukesi, Sumālī as Sumali, and Viśrava as Wisrawa). The earliest known mention, which reflects oral rather than textual tradition, is found

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[5] Arjunasasrabāhu is also known as Kārtavīrya Arjuna. In the Indian tradition the capital of his kingdom is Māhiṣmati, whereas in the Old Javanese text it is Mahispati (Supomo 1977: 117).

in the 18th-century *Serat Kanda* as recorded in Raffles' famous *History of Java* (Sears 2004: 278–279; Raffles, 1817: Vol. 1, 424–426). The theme gained further prominence during the late 18th to early 19th century, a period often described as the era of the 'renaissance' of Javanese literature at the Surakarta court. Two significant works from this era are attributed to the renowned court poets Yasadipura I and his son Yasadipura II. While different in detail, both texts share the narrative of Sukesi's marriage with the sage Wisrawa and the subsequent birth of Rahwana. Yasadipura I and II composed in total three Modern Javanese renderings of the Old Javanese *Arjunawijaya*. Yasadipura I, who died in 1803, wrote the text in the *macapat* style, but the text is no longer extant.[6] This text was composed at the request of Pakubuwana III, who reigned at the court of Surakarta between 1749 and 1788. Yasadipura II first composed a text in the *kawi miring* style in 1803 and later, in 1829, rewrote it in the *macapat* style.[7] This version is probably the best known among the three and most influential in contributing to the popularity of the theme in Javanese society today (Day 1981: 60–77 as cited in Sears 2004: 281).[8]

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[6] *Macapat* is an indigenous form of poetry in Modern Javanese, in contrast to the Indian-influenced poetry of the *kakawin* literature in Old Javanese.

[7] *Kawi miring* is a poetic style in Modern Javanese, which is, compared to *macapat*, 'inclined' (*miring*) towards the *kakawin* texts of the Old Javanese period.

[8] In 1892, ten years after Yasadipura II's work was composed, Sindusastra wrote the *macapat* work *Lokapala* based on the *Arjunawijaya*. This work has also been influential in Javanese society. Although this work incorporated elements of the universal history from the *Serat Kandha*, the story's core closely parallels that of Yasadipura II's work.

Another interesting characteristic of Sindusastara's version of *Lokapala* is the insertion of the character Jambumangli. He is a son of Sumali and is secretly in love with his cousin Sukesi. In this version, one of the conditions of Sukesi's *sayembara* (see the following note 11), beside the teaching of *sastrajendra*, is to fight with Jambumangli, and all of the suitors except Wisrawa fail. This episode recalls a similar event involving Bhīṣma in the *Mahābhārata*, where he goes to the kingdom of Kāśī to attend a *svayaṃvara* ceremony held for the three princesses to choose their spouses. The lover of one of the princesses challenges Bhīṣma, but Bhīṣma easily defeats him and obtains the right to marry the princesses on behalf of his younger half-brother. This episode was known in Javanese society through the Old Javanese *Ādiparwa* (Zoetmulder 1974: 70). The episode of Wisrawa's participation in Sukesi's *sayembara* on his son's behalf and his defeating Jambumangli, who is secretly in love with Sukesi, may have been influenced by the episode of Bhīṣma.

According to Yasadipura II's rendering, the story concerning Sukesi is told as follows (Drewes 1966: 356–357): Wisrawa, the king of Lokapala, abdicates to become an ascetic and passes the throne to his son Danapati (another name for Waisrawana, from Sanskrit Dānapati, a name more commonly used in Modern Javanese). Danapati hears that Sumali, the king of *rākṣasa*s in Ngalengka (Laṅkā), has a beautiful daughter Sukesi and wishes to marry her. He asks his father to go to Lokapala and arrange the marriage on his behalf. In Ngalengka, Sumali accepts the proposal of marriage on the condition that Wisrawa initiates him into the mystical teachings of the *Serat Jendrayuningrat*.[9] Wisrawa agrees and, pleased with his newly obtained knowledge, Sumali also asks Wisrawa to initiate his daughter. Wisrawa again concedes, but when he explains the mystical knowledge to Sukesi at night, this unauthorized revelation of secret teachings throws heaven into turmoil. Bathara Guru (the god Śiva in Modern Javanese) and his consort Durga (Durgā) descend from heaven and enter the bodies of Wisrawa and Sukesi. As a consequence, Wisrawa becomes enamored and desires to marry Sukesi himself. News of this marriage infuriates Danapati in Lokapala. He wants to fight with his father but is dissuaded by the god Endra (Indra), who offers him two beautiful celestial nymphs as compensation. From the union of Wisrawa and Sukesi, three monstrous children, Rahwana, Kumbakarna, and Sarpakanaka, and one son, Wibisana, whose nobility equals that of Danapati, are born. This marks Sukesi's last appearance in the story; from this point onward, she is never mentioned again, even as the narrative continues.

Regarding Sukesi's role, Yasadipura II's rendering represents two major common characteristics in Modern Javanese texts and *wayang* performances. First, unlike Sanskrit and Old Javanese texts, the *rākṣasa* king Sumali has not lost his kingdom of Ngalengka, while Danapati is the king of Lokapala.[10] Thus,

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[9] In Modern Javanese, *serat* means "book" and the word is commonly used as a part of the title of a literary work. A compound word *jendrayuningrat* is less intelligible, although the part *ayuningrat* may mean 'the peace and prosperity of the world'. Supomo (1977) suggests that the word is the result of a corrupt reading of an Old Javanese manuscript. In any case, the very obscurity of the title must have contributed to the teaching's mystical status.

[10] In the Sanskrit and Old Javanese texts, Vaiśravaṇa is appointed by the god as one of the four protectors of the world. Thus, he gains the epithet Lokapāla (the protector of the world). This designation must have given rise to the notion in the Modern

as Sumali is on an equal footing with other kings, his daughter is pursued by princes of other kingdoms by means of *sayembara*.[11] Second, the condition for prospective suiters for a successful proposal is to be able to impart the knowledge of the universe and life, the *serat jendrayuningrat*, more commonly known as *sastra harjendrayuningrat*, or simply as *sastrajendra*, which is so secret that it should not be disclosed to anyone other than gods. Wisrawa's disclosure leads to the descent of Bhatara Guru and Durga, resulting in the marriage between Sukesi and Wisrawa. In this twisted way, the Modern Javanese rendition maintains Sukesi/Kaikasī's core role; that is, mothering Rahwana/Rāvaṇa and his siblings with Wisrawa/Viśrava.[12]

Supomo demonstrates that the origin of the expression results from cacography during the translation of an Old Javanese manuscript into Modern Javanese (Supomo 1977: 285–286, note for 1, 11a). In his study of the Old Javanese *Arjunawijaya* manuscripts, Supomo identifies two traditions: Balinese and Javanese. He reconstructed the manuscript from which the existing Javanese tradition manuscripts descended. In this reconstructed manuscript Supomo found a corrupt reading in one place (1.11a) where diacritical marks used in Javanese script for 'ṅ' and 'y' were overlooked, thus resulting in the reading *sastra hajöṅ* ('beautiful book', implying certain mystical knowledge, which Viśrava possesses) instead of the original *saṅ stryāhajöṅ* ('beautiful maiden', referring

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Javanese texts that Danapati is the king of the domain called Lokapala. This change of meaning is another case of creative contextualisation by Javanese writers.

[11] A *sayembara*, from Sanskrit *svayaṃvara*, is a ceremony in which a noblewoman chooses her husband by holding a competition or setting a task for suitors. The winner marries the woman.

[12] The following diagram (Figure 8.1) may help in understanding the difference between the genealogical positions of Kaikasī in Sanskrit and Old Javanese, and Sukesi in Modern Javanese renderings.
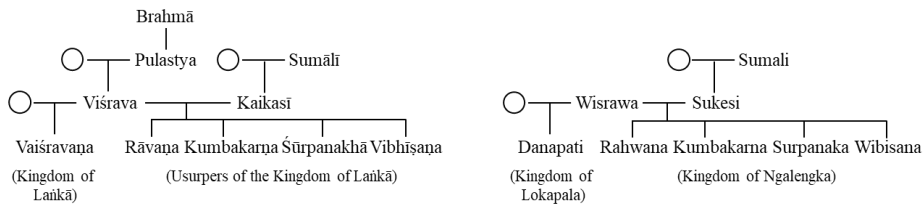

Figure 8.1: Schematic comparison of the genealogies of Kaikasī in Sanskrit/Old Javanese (left) and Sukesi in Modern Javanese renderings (right).

to Kaikasī). This new reading led to a new interpretation that Viśrava possesses a book of specific mystical knowledge (known typically as *sastra harjendra* or *sastrajendra* in the Modern Javanese literature), and that this knowledge is the purpose of Kaikasī's approach to him.

Interestingly, a group of three existing Javanese manuscripts (designated as M by Supomo) are copies of the same manuscript. This original manuscript is not extant, but according to the colophon, it was 'once in the possession of the Crown Prince of Surakarta' (Supomo 1997: 84). The colophon also indicates that the time of copying was 1782. The year coincides with the reign of Pakubuwana III (r. 1749–1788), whom Yasadipura I served. Thus, although we cannot ascertain who this Crown Prince of Surakarta was, this Surakarta manuscript might be the one, or one of those, Yasadipura I consulted when he was preparing the Modern Javanese rendering of *Arjunawijaya*, and the concept of the book of mystical knowledge became part of the text's tradition.

The persistence of this new reading should not be dismissed as a simple misunderstanding by Javanese writers. Rather, its perpetuation and acceptance represent a creative reinterpretation of the text. As Sears (2004: 280) observes, this is a way of 'recontextualization of the stories that made them more understandable to their audiences'. The Javanese phrase *sastrajendra* has become a recurring motif in Modern Javanese literature, particularly in *wayang* theatre (Sears 2004: 284–286). Its significance endures to this day. In the contemporary *wayang* theatre, Sukesi's marriage is enacted in a play titled 'Alap-alapan Sukesi' (the marriage of Sukesi), where the transmission of the secret knowledge *sastrajendra* is a popular theme.[13] Given this cultural context, it is unsurprising that the director Nugroho, born in Yogyakarta and raised in a Javanese cultural environment, is deeply familiar with Sukesi's story.

5. Sukesi as an officiant of the ritual

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[13]   The story regarding the marriage of Sukesi and the birth of Rahwana continues to be a popular theme in *wayang* theatre. In contemporary performances, *sastarajendra* is typically understood in the context of *kejawen*, Javanese mysticism (Sears 2004: 287). Moreover, there is a trend to adapt the story to modern conditions, ensuring its ongoing relevance (for example, B. Djoko Suseno 2018; Andi Wicaksono 2012).

Garin Nugroho's cinematic work does more than merely recount the *Rāmāyaṇa*; it demonstrates the profound and enduring influence of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, in particular its prequel part, on Javanese literature and culture. It is important to note that the film *Opera Jawa* is not a literal adaptation of either the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, but rather a creative re-imagining of these stories. The film's characters – Siti, Setyo, and Ludiro – are not straightforward representations of Sītā, Rāma, and Rāvaṇa, but rather human figures whose relationships parallel those in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Particularly, Nugroho's treatment of Sukesi is an original creation. While she is absent in the main part of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, her role in the film takes on new significance. When compared with both oral and written Javanese literary traditions, several noteworthy peculiarities in Nugroho's interpretation draw our attention.

Notably, Ludiro's father, Sukesi's husband, is entirely absent from the film version. As far as the film's narrative is concerned, her husband's absence makes it easy for her to take the role of the officiant of the requiem. The death of the director's mother certainly motivated him to explore a mother character in the film. The absence of the father figure also allows Nugroho to explore the relationship between Ludiro and Sukesi. Sukesi's devastation and despair after her son's death is moving.

Furthermore, she actively supports Ludiro's pursuit of Siti and consoles him after his failure. In other words, Sukesi is Ludiro's accomplice. This portrayal interestingly echoes elements from earlier versions of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*. In both Sanskrit and Old Javanese texts, Kaikasī, mindful of her father's ambitions, urges Rāvaṇa to strive to be equal to Vaiśravaṇa. This encouragement leads Rāvaṇa to undergo severe penance to obtain divine power to overcome Vaiśravaṇa. So, she is not entirely blameless for Rāvaṇa's misconduct. This is a crucial moment where her agency influences the course of the narrative. Interestingly, the Old Javanese *Arjunawijaya* omits this part of Kaikasī's role. Whether intentionally or coincidentally, Nugroho's portrayal of Sukesi aligns more closely with the original *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

In any case, Sukesi's agency is most fully manifested in her role in the requiem part of the film. In this part, while the other main characters – Siti, Setyo and Ludiro – are absent, she alone conducts a ritual for the dead. Sukesi chants a phrase from the Latin requiem and leads a long procession to the beach along

the Indian Ocean, where she conducts a ritual for the deceased, including Siti and Ludiro and other victims of the violence. As the film ends, this dedication appears on the screen: 'This film is a requiem for the victims of violence and natural disasters throughout the world especially for those in Yogyakarta and Central Java'. This message underscores that Sukesi's role as an officiant of the requiem extends from the private sphere to society in general.

Sukesi can assume the role of officiant of the requiem due to her attainment of the mystical knowledge *sastrajendra* in the Modern Javanese tradition. She demands this knowledge from Wisrawa and successfully acquires it. Her action leads to their marriage and the birth of their son, Rahwana. Her attainment of the supreme teachings is thus inseparably connected to her son, resonating with an intimate mother-son relationship in the film. Nugroho's *Opera Java* creatively reinterprets the classic epic rather than merely adapting it. Even Sukesi's familial background is absent from the film's narrative. Her characterization, however, remains firmly grounded in Modern Javanese tradition. Her possession of universal mysteries, as established in this tradition, makes her a fitting leader for such a sacred ritual.

6. Conclusion: The metamorphosis of Kaikasī to Sukesi

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize two key points. First, the *Uttarakāṇḍa* has played a crucial yet often overlooked role in Javanese literary tradition. It has been well known that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has spread to Southeast Asia, including Java, and exerted influence on local culture. However, what is less known is that the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the final book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, has also taken deep root in and has influenced Javanese society. This leads us to recognize the scope and depth of the influence of Indian literary tradition, both oral and textual, on Javanese society. The Hindu-Buddhist texts continued to survive through the period of Islamic influence, even though the texts underwent considerable transformation.

Equally significant is the evolution of Kaikasī/Sukesi's character in Javanese literature. Initially a minor figure in the Sanskrit and Old Javanese *Uttarakāṇḍa*, Kaikasī briefly appears as Rāvaṇa's mother, mainly to explain why Rāvaṇa and his siblings are born as monstrous *rākṣasa*s. However, Sukesi assumes a more critical role as an agent of higher knowledge in later Modern Javanese texts. Its formative stage is evident in Yasadipura I's reworking of the Old Javanese

Arujunawijaya, where Sukesi learns the universal wisdom *sastrajendra*. Nugroho's work must have taken a cue from this episode and made her the central agent in the requiem part of the film. Sukesi is now portrayed not only as a mother but also as a woman privy to cosmic secrets. This shift in her portrayal reflects a nuanced representation of female agency and knowledge within the continually evolving Javanese literary tradition.

Together with the portrayal of Siti/Sītā, the portrayal of Sukesi/Kaikasī represents a powerful counter-narrative to the traditional patriarchal dominance over women's bodies and minds. Nugroho's *Opera Jawa* thus becomes a site of remarkable literary metamorphosis, redefining female agency and knowledge in a long tradition of Javanese literature and culture, influenced by cultures from across the Indian Ocean. Setting a requiem scene at the end of the story is indeed Nugroho's brilliant idea, using Mozart's requiem as a framing device. However, what is equally essential is the choice of Sukesi as an officiant of a requiem ceremony, which has only become possible because of the director's profound understanding of Javanese tradition, which through successive transformations ultimately goes back to the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the final book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

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The sea is a barrier that separates people, while also connecting them as a path that enables them to come and go freely. When we focus on the sea called "the Indian Ocean" and consider how the people living around it have imagined it and what it has brought to them, the inherent ambiguity of the sea also comes to the fore. Specifically, while the Indian Ocean has emerged as a barrier, it has also continued to play a rich role as a mediator.

The Indian Ocean World, stretching from Southeast Asia to India and Africa, is a place of exchange among different cultures and peoples, where ideas and philosophies influence each other, and many religions coexist. While previous studies have focused on individual countries and events in relation to adjacent regions, positioning the Indian Ocean World as a single cultural zone and viewing micro-phenomena from a macro-perspective will provide a new horizon of research.

Just as organisms in the sea are dispersed by ocean currents and transformed into new forms when they arrive at new destinations, we would like to depict the various metamorphoses of literature, culture, thought, and language in the Indian Ocean World.