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Travel Writing and the Global Imagination in Muslim South Asia
Daniel Joseph Majchrowicz
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The World in Words

Based on over a decade of original archival research, this book shows how Urdu travel writing gave voice to a global imagination that reflected the ambition and aspiration of Indians and Pakistanis as they negotiated their place in the changing world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this interdisciplinary study, author Daniel Majchrowicz traces the social and literary history of the Urdu travelogue from 1840 to 1990 in six chronological chapters. Each chapter asks how travel writers used the genre to give meaning to the shifting social and political realities of their colonial and postcolonial worlds. The book particularly highlights the role of women writers in the production of a global imagination in Urdu with an emphasis on travel writing on Asia and Africa.

Daniel Majchrowicz is Assistant Professor of South Asian Literature and Culture and Director of the South Asia Research Forum at Northwestern University. He is a co-author of *Three Centuries of Travel Writing by Muslim Women* (2022).

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سیر کر دنیا کی غافل زندگانی پھر کہاں
 زندگی گر کچھ رہی تو یہ جوانی پھر کہاں

सैर कर दुनिया की गाफ़िल ज़िंदगानी फिर कहाँ
 ज़िंदगी गर कुछ रही तो यह जवानी फिर कहाँ

Sair kar dunya ki ghafil zindagani phir kahañ
Zindagi gar kuchh rahi to yeh javani phir kahañ

*Travel the world, O fool! you only have so much life to live,
 And even if your life is long, when will you be young again?*

—Khwaja Mir Dard (1721–1785)

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Acknowledgments

This book is a travelogue, a narrative of my own peregrinations in search of a history. It is a map that details the countries and cities I traveled to for research, to give a talk, or simply to find a warm beach to write on. Nearly every page in this book reminds me of where I was when I wrote it. One passage bears me to a library in Lahore, where I conducted archival research, and another to Indonesia, where I spent the plague years of 2020 and 2021 editing and revising. As I flick through these pages, the Philippines, Colombia, India, Switzerland, Tanzania, Trinidad, and Turkey appear before me. I see in these pages too the many people who kept me safe, kept me fed, and saved me time and again from being lost in intellectual dead ends or from dying of thirst in deserts of academic despondency. I thank them all; I would never have reached my destination alone. They are more than I can name, for the journey to completing this book lasted well over a decade. Still, I will try.

I began this journey when I was still an undergraduate student at the University of Texas at Austin. There, while completing a degree in Spanish literature, I stumbled into learning Urdu and taking classes on South Asian history and literature. Akbar Hyder helped nurture my interest in this field, ultimately inspiring me to do a Master's and then a PhD. He has provided unflinching support and guidance ever since, and I am deeply grateful to him for it. While still at Texas, Kathryn Hansen, Rupert Snell, Gail Minault, Carla Petievich, Martha Selby, Cynthia Talbot, and Kamran Asdar Ali gave me further support and guidance; I am profoundly indebted to them all. My fellow graduate students at Texas have become both colleagues and lifelong friends, among them Ameem Lutfi, Adeem Suhail, Ammar Jan, Natasha Raheja, Nathan Tabor, Gwendolyn Kirk, Nishtha Mehta, Sarah Hakeem, Suzanne Schultz, Mubashir Rizvi,

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From Lausanne I traveled to Evanston, Illinois, where I joined Northwestern's Department of Asian Languages and Cultures. I have been incredibly lucky to spend the last several years working with Northwestern's vibrant and inclusive faculty. Laura Brueck's support has been immense; I have learned from her about practically every aspect of academic life. Rajeev Kinra has likewise provided constant, irreplaceable support. My intellectual life at Northwestern has been enriched by its ever-expanding group of scholars working on South Asia, including Ashish Koul, Brannon Ingram, Sarah Jacobi, Yuthika Sharma, Rami Nair, David Boyk, Timsal Masud, and Mark McClish. I have also learned from so many colleagues in ALC and around the university, particularly Thomas Gaubatz, Paola Zamperini, Patrick Noonan, Corey Byrnes, Mi-Ryong Shim, Annabel We, Dahye Kim, Jules Law, and Amy Stanley. Jean Deven has kept me organized and on track, fielding all my oddball questions and offering foster care to my chronically neglected office plants. Lastly, I thank my students, whose enthusiasm and curiosity keep my own afire. Sharmain Siddiqui, Hassan Sayed, Narmeen Noorullah, Hajra Malik, Hamnah Malik, and Yashwardhan Bairathi all read portions of this book or helped me conduct research for it. May everyone be blessed with students like them.

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Note on Translation and Transliteration

This book uses a consistent transliteration scheme for all South Asian languages, including Urdu, Hindi, Persian, Arabic, Punjabi, Gujarati, and Marathi, according to their spelling in the Perso-Arabic script and pronunciation in the South Asian context. This scheme is a simplified version of that advocated by the *Journal of Urdu Studies*. To facilitate readability for non-specialists, I have generally eschewed the use of diacritics and removed the silent final *-b* from words such as *safarnama*. The *izafa* is written *-i*, and the Arabic definite article as *al-*. Foreign terms are generally only italicized on their first occurrence in each chapter. Proper nouns are given according to their English spelling where relevant. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.