

**« Modernity, Heterotopia, and Homeless Texts ».**  
*Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 18, 2 (1998), pp. 2-16.

**Rudi Matthee**

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- 1 Informed by the theories of Foucault and brimming with the terminology of postcolonialism, this article explores the notion of heterotopias, civilization's alternative real spaces, counter-sites, loci of alterity. In modern times most of the world has seen the West as its heterotopia. It wasn't always like that, the author contends; as late as the 18th century, Montesquieu and Samuel Johnson found their heterotopias in Abyssinia and Iran. And for good reason! Before the global dominance of the West created binary oppositions and firm borders, before the European Enlightenment robbed the non-West of its history, Indo-Persia produced a vast body of literary and historiographical texts – texts that subsequently became homeless. The author is certainly right to state that since the erection of modern borders and boundaries the Indo-Persian cultural tradition has become somewhat orphaned, though the argument that these texts have become elided from the history of Iranian and Indian modernity is simply exaggerated. His discussion of supposed paragons of Indo-Persian modernity ironically mostly covers those versed in astronomy, the pursuit of which was less a token of modernity than an integral part of the Islamic scientific tradition.

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**Thèmes** : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

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