SHAMSUR RAHMAN FARUQI

A Stranger In The City: The Poetics of *Sabk-e Hindi*

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: Originals of Persian and Urdu verses quoted are to be found in the Appendix.

All translations from Persian and Urdu are by me, except for the extract from Bahār's essay on Ṣā'ib which I have gratefully taken from Thackston.

Following the convention of English literature, I have translated the poems depicting the beloved as female. Since Persian has no gender markers, most poems in which the beloved appears can be read as being about a female, or about God, or about just an idea of "belovedness." In some cases the gender is more or less clearly specified as male, though the poems translated by me here do not present any such situation. (For a somewhat extended discussion of the problem of gender in identifying the beloved, see Faruqi 2002b; Naim 2004.)

The meaning-independent two-line verse or poem that appears in all traditional genres of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu poetry in groups of two or more and is the basic unit in which the poetry is discussed by critic and reader alike, is called *bait* ("house") in Arabic, and extremely often also in Persian. In Urdu, the term is *she'r* ("something composed or versified") which is used also in Arabic in the sense of *bait*, though very rarely, and oftener in Persian. It has been generally translated as "couplet" which I feel gives quite the wrong impression. For one thing, very few *baits* rhyme; they follow a given rhyme structure that is determined at the beginning of the poem (ghazal, *qaṣīda*). So most *baits*, except those occurring in a *maṣ̱navī*, have no rhyme scheme, and the two lines of the *bait* do not rhyme, except in very exceptional cases. So I have used *she'r, verse, poem* interchangeably for *bait*, unless the context requires otherwise.

Each of the two lines of a *bait/she'r* is called a *miṣra'* ("the leaf of a door"). I have translated *miṣra'* invariably as "line."

I am thankful to my friend Azizuddin Usmani of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, for freely making available to me a large number of new and old Persian texts without which this study could not have been attempted.

Thanks are also due to Naqi Husain Jafari, Professor of English at the Jamia Millia University, New Delhi, whose gentle but persistent reminders made me finally sit down and work out my ideas on paper instead of airing them in conversation.]

If there is a knower of tongues here, fetch him;
There's a stranger in the city
And he has many things to say.

(Ghālib 1872, 442; 1998, 184)

The phrase *sabk-e hindī* (Indian Style) has long had a faint air of rakish insubordination and unrespectability about it and it is only recently that it has started to evoke comparatively positive feelings.[1] However, this change is clearly symptomatic of a process of gentrification and seems to be powered as much by political considerations as by literary ones. Hence the proposal by some scholars to describe the style as "Safavid-Mughal," or "Isfahani" or plain "Safavid" rather than "Indian."[2] Wheeler Thackston even believes that "there is nothing particularly Indian about the 'Indian-style'.... The more accurate description is 'High-Period' style" (2002, 94).

The term *sabk-e hindī* was coined perhaps by the Iranian poet, critic, and politician Maliku'sh-Shu'arā' Muḥammad Taqī Bahār (1886–1951) in the first quarter of the twentieth century. It signposted a poetry in the

[1]"In the last two decades, the works of many unrecognized poets have been edited and published for the first time.... material is now readily available to allow literary critics, scholars and historians to begin to study Safavid-Mughal poetry in all its variety and richness."—(Losensky 1998, 3).

[2]See *ibid.*, 4–5. Laṅgrūdī believes the origin of the Indian Style to have been in Isfahan but effects a compromise by always using a conjoint appellative: *sabk-e hindī* (*isfahānī*) (1993); also Kadkanī 1998, 15. Amīrī Fīrūz Kohī is firmly of the belief that the Indian Style should justly be named *sabk-e isfahānī* (see his preface in Ṣā'ib 1957, 3–4).

Persian language, especially ghazal, written mostly from the sixteenth century onward by Indian and Iranian poets, the latter term to include poets of Iranian origin who spent long periods of their creative life in India. "Iranian" here means a native of "greater" Iran, a cultural entity that was generally meant to comprise all of present-day Iran and Azerbaijan in the north and west, Afghanistan in the south and east, and Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the east. Similarly, "India" stands not for just *Hindustan* (the part of the country that lies north of the river Narbada) but for the entire Subcontinent.

Although almost always viewed with disfavor and disdain by the modern Iranian literati and their Indian followers (whose number has tended to increase since the nineteenth century), *sabk-e hindī* has loomed large enough in the historical consciousness of the Iranian as well as the Indo-Muslim literary community for several speculations to be made about its origin which has invariably been found to have been in a place or area other than India.[3] The case for Fughānī Shīrāzī (d. 1519) being the originator of the style has been supported by many, including the great Shiblī Nu'mānī (1857–1914) (1956, 24; 1957, 57) and more recently by Paul Losensky.[4] A case has been made even for as early a poet as Khāqānī Sharvānī (1126–1198/99) who wrote very few ghazals and is recognized as a master of the *qaṣīda* while *sabk-e hindī* is associated overwhelmingly with the ghazal.[5]

The Iranians' disapproval of the Indian Style betrays a certain puzzled anxiety—for the poetry, though occasionally bristling with uncomfortably high imaginative flourishes, unusual images, and unconventional constructs has yet a potency, vigor and éclat which mainstream Iranian poetry would be hard put to match. One reason for the Iranian eagerness to find a non-Indian place of origin for the Indian Style could lie in the fact that some of the major Iranian poets of that style never went to India: the names of Shifā'ī Mashhadī (d. 1613), Mirzā Jalāl Asīr (d. 1630/31), Shau-

[3]Khurasan or Herat (in modern day Afghanistan) have been proposed as the Indian Style's true place of origin (Rypka 1968, 295–6; Becka 1968, 496–7).

[4]Losensky describes Fughānī as a "literary artist" who "manipulated the traditional themes and images of the ghazal to create a distinctive poetic voice that would serve as a model and inspiration for generations of poets to come" (1998, 9).

[5]Dashtī (1977) argues at length in favor of Khāqānī as the paradigmatic "Indian Style" poet.

kat Bukharī (d. 1695/99) and Mir Ṭāhir Vaḥīd (d. 1708) come instantly to mind. If native, untraveled Iranians too wrote in the Indian Style, this was a matter for further anxiety unless a non-Indian, Iranian origin could be found for the style.

Amīrī Fīrūz Kohī has a nice point when he says that new styles arise in a given age because of the intuitive urgings in the minds of speakers of a language to bring about such an event of freshness whether in everyday linguistic usage or in the language of literature and poetry, and no one person can be credited with the invention of a given style. Interactions between peoples and civilizations are the true agents of change. Then he goes on to say that India under the Mughals attracted poets and scholars and artists from Iran and elsewhere because it was then a land of fortune and a center for both commerce and the arts. Unfortunately if predictably, Fīrūz Kohī becomes entirely unhistorical at this point and goes on to say that the foundation of the new style was laid by Iranians and it reached its perfection in Isfahan because of the presence there of Ṣā'ib and his Iranian imitators. It was these poets who, according to Fīrūz Kohī, found their imitators in the quintessential poets of the Indian Style, in Shaukat Bukhārī, Mirzā Bēdil, Mullā Ghanī Kashmīrī, Nāṣir 'Alī Sarhindī, and others (Ṣā'ib 1957, 4–5).

Ghanī Kashmīrī (d. 1666) and Ṣā'ib Tabrīzī (1601–1669) were almost exact contemporaries and according to the tradition in Kashmir, Ṣā'ib went all the way to Kashmir to make Ghanī's acquaintance. According to Shiblī, Ṣā'ib mentions Ghanī admiringly,[6] so the influence, if any, should have worked the other way round. Bēdil lived from 1644 to 1720 and Shaukat Bukhārī died in 1695/99. They are poets of the Indian Style but are too remote in time for Ṣā'ib or any direct imitator of his to have influenced either of them directly. There had been poets before Ṣā'ib, for example 'Urfī (d. 1590/92), Faiẓī (d. 1595), and Naẓīrī (d. 1612) who are now recognized among the chief poets of *sabk-e hindī* and who were active in

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[6]Shiblī (1956, 75) quotes the following *she'r* from Ṣā'ib:

> Ṣā'ib, this ghazal is in reply to the one from Ghanī:
> "Oh the memory of those days when the cooking pot of my desire
> Had a covering on its top."

I couldn't find this *she'r* in Ṣā'ib's *Kulliyāt*; nor could I locate the ghazal of Ghanī's to which Ṣā'ib purportedly wrote this reply. It is possible that Shiblī found the Ṣā'ib *she'r* in some manuscript, and the Ghanī ghazal is now lost.

India well before Ṣā'ib matured as a poet. In fact, Ṣā'ib even said that he could not hope to emulate Naẓīrī because even 'Urfī could not approach Naẓīrī in poetic excellence:

> Ṣā'ib should become just as Naẓīrī?
> What a foolish thought!
> Even 'Urfī didn't push poetry
> To Naẓīrī's level
>
> (1875, 102)

While Losensky detects "a deep sense of artistic inadequacy" (1998, 304) in Ṣā'ib when confronting Naẓīrī, Fīrūz Kohī would have us believe that Ṣā'ib is the fountainhead of all *sabk-e hindī* poetry. Fīrūz Kohī apparently clinches his argument in favor of Isfahan and Ṣā'ib by quoting a *she'r* from Ṣā'ib:

> It was quite by chance that I found a *maqṭa'* [concluding verse] in the poems of Ṣā'ib that supports the idea that Isfahan at that time was the dearly loved one of the people of literature and was the lodestar of the circle of poetry. The *she'r* is:
>
> > I swear by the new manner, Ṣā'ib,
> > The station of the Nightingale of Āmul is vacant in Isfahan.
>
> It is clear that by the phrase "new manner" (*ṭarz-e tāza*) Ṣā'ib means just the Isfahani style which he had brought to perfection.
>
> (Ṣā'ib 1957, 6)

"The Nightingale of" is Ṭālib of Āmul (d. 1626), poet-laureate to Jahangir and one the greatest of Persian poets, and not just of the Indian Style. By *ṭarz-e tāza* Ṣā'ib certainly means Ṭālib's manner (or style) which is the same as what we now describe as the Indian Style, but it is by no means the case that Ṣā'ib is here claiming to have brought the *sabk-e hindī* to perfection, far less that he is claiming Isfahan to be the Indian Style's place of origin. With the masterly ease in creating polysemic texts so typical of *sabk-e hindī*, Ṣā'ib is saying many things in this *she'r*, but not those which Fīrūz Kohī seems keen to foist on it. More importantly, Fīrūz Kohī has misremembered the text. Where Fīrūz Kohī has "vacant" (*khālī*), Ṣā'ib's true text has *paidā* which means "visible," "taken shape," "made an appearance," "apparent," "evident," and much more in the same mode.

The end-rhyme word (*radīf*) of the ghazal in Ṣā'ib's *Kulliyāt* (and also Shiblī) is *paidāst*[7] (is visible, has taken shape, made appearance, etc.) (Ṣā'ib 1875, 143; Shiblī 1956, 175). So there is no way that the *she'r* could have *khālī* (vacant) as the penultimate word. Further, the true text has "Ṭālib of Āmul" and not "Nightingale of Āmul" as quoted by Fīrūz Kohī. Anyway, this doesn't alter the sense, but "vacant" instead of "has made appearance," etc., does. The main meaning now is that the spirit of Ṭālib has moved from Āmul and has made its appearance at Isfahan [in the shape of Ṣā'ib].

It might be of some interest to mention here that neither the word *sabk* (Arabic *sabk*=mode or manner of formulation) nor the compound *sabk-e hindī* (or in fact *sabk-e* anything at all) occurs in standard classical Persian. It does not find a place in any of the older dictionaries of the language. The three major dictionaries of Persian produced in the nineteenth century also are unaware of these vocables.[8] It is only the great modern dictionaries that enter this word and define it as "style" (written *isteel*, with a soft "t" in Persian; the borrowing is obviously from French, rather than English) (Dehkhodā 1931/2–81; Mo'īn 1965, II).[9]

This silence of the earlier dictionaries of classical Persian raises the suspicion that the concept of differentiated "authorial styles" or "style" as exemplified by individual writers, or specific schools or circles of literary creation is foreign to the Indo-Persian literary culture, and our awareness

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[7]Both these sources also have "Ṭālib of Āmul," and not "Nightingale of Āmul."

[8]They are: *Shamsu'l Lughat* (1804–5), compiled by some scholars at the request of one Mr. Joseph Bretho Jenner and printed at Mumbai: Maṭba'-e Fatḥu'l-Karīm, 1891/1892; Ghiāsu'd-Dīn Rāmpūrī's *Ghiāsu'l-Lughat* (1826), numerous printings in the nineteenth century, for example, Kānpūr: Maṭba'-e Intiẓāmī, 1894; Muḥammad Pādshāh Shād's *Farhaṅg-e Ānandrāj*, completed in Banaras in 1888 and printed twice in India over the next ten years; an Iranian seven-volume edition is by Dabīr Siyāqī, ed. (Tehran: Kitāb Farōshī-e Khayyām, 1363 (=1984).

[9]'Alī Akbar Dehkhodā (1881–1955) says, "Writers of the recent times have meant it to mean very nearly the same as the European term "Style [*isteel*]" ([1931/2–1981]). Muḥammad Mo'īn (d. 1971) doesn't use the word *isteel* but says substantially the same things as Dehkhodā. Neither authority suggests that the word *sabk* was ever used in classical Persian at all. I am grateful to Āṣif Na'īm Ṣiddīqī of Muslim University, Aligarh, for enabling me to consult these two dictionaries.

of the problem of an "Indian" style of the Persian ghazal is more of a modern construct than a living reality of the tradition. Doubtless, words like *ṭarz, ravish,* and *shēvah* were often present in the traditional discourse and we nowadays routinely translate them as "style." Yet it is quite likely that *ṭarz* meant "manner," *ravish* meant "mode," "general deportment," "behavior," and *shēvah* signified "practice." Amīr Khusrau, in his seminal preface (*Dībāča*) to his divan *Ghurratu'l-Kamāl* (1294) has some very interesting things to say about *ṭarz*. (He too doesn't use *sabk*, or *uslūb*, or any of the words now used in the sense of the English word "style.")

Of all the Indo-Persian poets, or perhaps all Persian poets ever, Khusrau revelled most in theorizing about poetry. He used his highly concentrated and even occasionally elliptical prose in the *Dībāča* to say delightful things about the nature of poetry and the business of making poems. In the section on the concept of *ustād* ("Master") in poetry, Khusrau says that there are five "forms" or "faces" of poetry. Here, and throughout the discussion that follows, Khusrau uses words like *ṭarz* in the sense of "manner, form, face," and so forth. He says: "Thus, it is a waste of words to use them in prose. The second form [of poetry] is temperate, and that is the manner [*ṭarz*] that is called 'poetic' " (1974, 35).

Khusrau goes on to discuss the manifestation or evidence of "intellectual wisdom" [*dānā'ī*] in poetry and says that again it is seen in poetry in five "forms" or "faces": "The fifth [kind of] wisdom is poetic, and it is such that each of the other manners [*ṭarz*] of wisdom attains to the highest in this manner [*ṭarz*]" (*ibid.*, 36).

Now Khusrau comes to the main exposition of his theme, he wants us to know which kinds of poets most express or make manifest the "poetic wisdom" and how:

> The polo-player of the field of speech cannot but be of one of three states. A manner (*ṭarz*) becomes available to him on his own, that no one ever had before. For example, the manner (*ṭarz*) of Majd-e Majdūd Sanā'ī or Anvarī, or Ẓahīr Fāryābī, or Niẓāmī: a manner (*ṭarz*) special [to the poet who is], king of that domain, [and of] a splendid and refulgent mode (*ravish*). [His is the case] unlike that of Khāqānī who is [an imitator] of Mujīr [Bailqānī], or Kamāl Ismā'īl who is [an imitator] of Maulāna Raẓīu'd-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, or Mu'izzī [Nīshāpūrī] who is [an imitator] of Mas'ūd-e Sa'd. Or then, he [the poet] walks after the manner (*ṭarz*) of the Ancients and the Contemporaneous.... And if no special method or way (*ṭarīq)*, or no mode (*ravish*) of specialization becomes apparent for the embroiderer of the pearl-strings of poetry (*naẓm*), he takes his business

> forward by following behind his predecessors and pulling behind those who are the remnants, … I regard him too as "Master," but only half a one. Thus a Master is one who owns a manner (*ṭarz*), and the follower in the footsteps of that Master is the Disciple.
>
> (*ibid.*, 38–41)

Toward the end of this part of his discussion Khusrau makes the startling declaration that he is not a Master because

> [w]hatever I have composed in situations of preaching and wise words, my case is that of a follower of the temperaments of Sanā'ī and Khāqānī … and whatever I have let flow in *maṣnavī* and ghazal, is by virtue of my following the temperaments of Niẓāmī and Sa'dī … Thus, how could I be [suited for the title of] Master?
>
> (*ibid.*, 40)

It must be noted that I have been almost entirely unable to convey in English the delightful and subtle wordplay of Khusrau. But his meaning, I hope, is clear: it is not necessary for good or even great poets to have individual styles, and *ṭarz, ravish,* mode, and words to this effect, do not convey in Classical Persian the sense that the words *style* and *sabk* have in Modern English and Modern Persian respectively. Khusrau's categories, which were never challenged and were more or less unconsciously followed throughout in subsequent centuries, clearly establish the fact that with regard to the nature of poetry, words like *ṭarz, ravish,* and mode, represented an ontological, and not an epistemological situation. Poems exist in certain modes, and each mode is a *ṭarz*, and each *ṭarz* can have any number of followers or imitators.

This is made clear by Mirzā Asadu'l-Lāh Khān Ghālib (1797–1869), the last great Indo-Persian poet in the classical mode and a person of wide learning in the Persian poetry of all ages. In an 1863 Urdu letter to Čhaudʰrī 'Abdu'l-Ghafūr Surūr, Ghālib wrote:

> From Rūdakī and Firdausī to Khāqānī, and Sanā'ī, and Anvarī, and some others, is one group. The poetry of these venerable ones is of one mould or make (*vaẓ'*) with small differences. Then the venerable Sa'dī invented a special manner (*ṭarz*)…. Fughānī became the inventor of yet another special practice (*shēvah*)…. This practice (*shēvah*) was perfected by Ẓahūrī, and Naẓīrī, and 'Urfī…. Ṣā'ib, and Salīm, and Qudsī, and Ḥakīm Shifā'ī are in this category…. Thus there are now three manners (*ṭarzēṅ*) determined and established: Khāqānī, and those who are close to him;

> Ẓahūrī, and those who are like him; Ṣā'ib, and those for whom Ṣā'ib provides the precept.[10]
>
> (1985, 613–4)

Shiblī uses the actual English word "style" as a synonym for *ṭarz*, though it is clear that by *ṭarz* he means the manner of using themes and not the manner of using words. He says, "Different *ṭarz* (styles) were established in the ghazal," and then he speaks of the *ṭarz* of "*vaqū'a gō'ī*" or "*mu'āmila bandī*" which he defines as the "depiction of events and transactions that occur in the business of love and loving" and further says that the inventor of this *ṭarz* is Sa'dī (1184–1291) and that Khusrau (1253–1325) "made substantive addition to it." Then Shiblī goes on to list "the commingling of philosophy in the ghazal" as another *ṭarz* which he credits especially to 'Urfī Shīrāzī (1554–1590/2) (1956, 17–24).[11]

This is not to say that there is no such thing as an Indian sensibility that plays upon the Persian ghazal like an expert or inspired musician playing a musical instrument. There is, certainly, a non-Iranian air in the ghazals written in the *sabk-e hindī*, but it is not oppressive, while the word *sabk* (mode or manner of formulating something) gives the impression of artifice and strain and oppression.

Shiblī does not use the phrase *sabk-e hindī* (his five volumes were written between 1909 and 1914, published 1909–1918, and the work of Bahār came later). But he clearly credits Fughānī with being the "founder" of the "new age" in poetry which is marked by "subtleties of thoughts and themes" (1956, 24) and he describes Fughānī as the "*grandpere* Adam of this new age" (1957, 57) and "the inventor of the new style" (*ibid.*, 58). Later, he twice mentions the influence of India on this new style:

> The [literary and cultural] taste of this place [India] engendered yet more sumptuous colorfulness and delicate subtlety in the poetry of 'Urfī and Naẓīrī.
>
> (*ibid.*, 61)

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[10]The exact date of the letter is not known. It was written sometime in July, 1863.

[11]Throughout the discussion here Shiblī uses the following words as interchangeable: *tarz* (manner), *raṅg* (hue, tint), and *andāz* (manner, conduct); once he employs *tarz* and glosses it in parentheses as "style," using the English word.

> Intermixing with India generated delicate subtlety of thought and imagination. The delicate subtlety of thought and imagination that one sees in the poetry of the Iranians who made India their domicile is not at all to be found in the [Iranian domiciled] Iranians."
>
> (*ibid.*, 70)

The words that I translate as "sumptuous colorfulness" and "delicate subtlety" are *raṅgīnī* and *laṭāfat* in the Urdu original. Though they sound somewhat vague to the modern ear, they are keywords in the poetics of the eighteenth-century Urdu ghazal, the direct inheritor of the Persian *sabk-e hindī.* Shiblī wasn't much in love with *sabk-e hindī* and was particularly disdainful of its Indian practitioners save Faiẓī Faiyāẓī (1547–1595) but he had excellent taste and unerring intuition about what he perceived as the main strengths of *sabk-e hindī*. His close acquaintance with the poetic theory and practice of the Delhi Urdu poets of the eighteenth century also gave him an advantage which was not available to the Iranian students of the Indian Style. For example, he made a very perceptive remark about a (now) comparatively obscure Iranian poet Mirzā Valī (d. 1590/91) that his poetry reminded him of the Urdu poet Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Mīr (1722/23–1810) (*ibid.*, 64).

Shiblī did not have a theoretical turn of mind, and his general dislike of cerebral, abstract thought in poetry further disabled him in his enterprise to provide an etiology and a diachronic morphology for the Indian Style ghazal. All the important points that he made about the "new style" were thrown out in a casual, almost offhand manner and were not backed by analysis or theory. With tantalizing vagueness and making a promise that he never found time to fulfil, he wrote:

> This fact must be remembered from the life history of poetry, that Persian poetry upon arrival in India acquired a particular kind of newness. I'll narrate the details of this newness at some suitable time in the future.
>
> (1956, 10)

Enumerating the "new manners" (manner=*ṭarz)* that marked the poetry of the new age, Shiblī Nu'mānī identifies a *ṭarz*, which he names *miṣāliya* (=exemplifying). Better known as *tamṣīl* (exemplification), it is one of the two most prominent characteristics of the ghazal in the Indian Style. This is all that Shiblī says about it:

> [*Miṣāliya,* that is,] to assert something and then state a poetic proof for it: The founders of this manner (=*ṭarz*) are Kalīm [Kāshānī-Hamadānī, d.

> 1651], ʿAlī [*sic*, actually Muḥammad] Qulī Salīm [d. 1657], Mirzā [Muḥammad ʿAlī] Ṣāʾib [1601-1669], and [Muḥammad Ṭāhir] Ghanī [Kashmīrī, d. 1666]. This *ṭarz* became extremely popular, so that it continued [to be current] till the very end of [the new] poetry.
>
> (*ibid.*, 18–19)

Shiblī offers no analysis, not even examples of how exemplification is effected. He doesn't define his keyword "poetic proof" (*shāʿirāna dalīl*). Perhaps he believed that his reader would have a fair notion of what a poetic proof was all about. Even so, he reckoned without the change in poetic taste and the idiom of literary theory that was overtaking the Urdu literary community in his own day, and he neglected, even in Vol. v, to provide the theoretical underpinnings of this and other terms with the result that their import is not quite clear to most readers today.

It is true that since a "poetic proof" depends on metaphor mostly, or on statements which are regarded as axiomatic (*iddiʿa-e shāʿirāna*=poetical assertion)[12] in the realm of poetry, it is not quite possible to enunciate or frame rules to define what constitutes a "poetic proof." Echoing Coleridge, one might say that acceptance of poetic axioms or proofs "constitutes true poetic faith." But seeing as how exemplification (*tamṯīl*) is one of the foundations on which the edifice of *sabk-e hindī* rests, taxonomies of different kinds of proofs and axiomatic statements should have been attempted. However, in a culture where appreciation and enjoyment of poetry were largely matters of intuition, and where theory almost always consisted of what had been handed down from the ancients, new matters were rarely theorized about. Vālih Dāghestānī (1724–56) devoted a large chapter of his *tażkira Riyāẕu'sh-Shuʿarā'* (1749) to prosody and rhetoric. In it he gave just three lines to *tamṯīl* as follows:

> It is [the way of] strengthening and emphasizing the [poetic] utterance by means of another utterance [which asserts something] which is well known [accepted as fact]. And between the two utterances there should be similitude as regards content. And the simile is a kind of exemplification.
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> (2001, 554).

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[12]To be distinguished from the "poet's assertion" (*iddiʿā-e shāʿir)* which is a statement made by the poet/speaker of the poem and thus it stands in need of "proof," a poetical assertion contains a fact which is conventionally taken as true and no additional proof is needed for it. For the key role of convention in classical Urdu and Persian poetry, see Pritchett 1979 and Faruqi 2002a.

Two *she'rs*, one from Ṣā'ib, and the other from Muḥammad Jān Qudsī (d. 1646), and neither of them a particularly arresting example of *tamṯīl* follow this definition, and that's all that Vālih is going to give us on this matter. Needless to say, the definition leaves much unsaid, and gives no indication of the importance of *tamṯīl* in the poetics of the Indian Style.

Shiblī identified yet another, and more vital feature of the Indian Style when he said:

> Many of the [poetic] themes of that time [that is, the time of the new style] are founded on words and on the device of punning. That is to say, the literal meaning of a word is treated as its actual meaning and the foundation of the [poetic] theme is established on it.
>
> (1956, 21)

This is a profoundly seminal statement but couched as it is in terse, somewhat inexact and nearly incomprehensible language, small wonder that no one realized its importance or followed it up. The solitary example with comments that Shiblī appends to his pronouncement here hardly makes the matter clearer.

I'll return to Shiblī's points presently. Let me first make it clear that although Shiblī is perhaps the most percipient of all the critics who wrote about Indo-Persian poetry, he is not the most sympathetic (that distinction should perhaps go to Ḥasan Ḥusainī). In fact, with his immense authority and his generally decisive manner, Shiblī dealt a blow to the prestige of the *sabk-e hindī* in India from which it has still not recovered. At least two vastly influential anthologies of Persian poetry appeared in India during the past three or four decades. Both were put together by leading Persianists of their time who had held the chair of Persian literature at Aligarh Muslim University. Neither anthology allows adequate representation to the *sabk-e hindī* poets, especially those of Indian origin. The one edited by Hadi Hasan (1972) grudgingly allows a page and a half to Mirzā 'Abdu'l-Qādir Bēdil (1644–1720) and no space at all to Ghālib, arguably the two greatest Indian-origin poets of the Indian Style. In addition to other major Indian Style poets of Indian origin like Munīr Lāhōrī (1609–1645), Nisbatī Tʰānēsarī (d. 1688), Nāṣir 'Alī Sarhindī (d. 1696/97), Muḥammad Afẕal Sarkhush (1640–1714), Nūru'-l'Ain Vāqif (d. 1781), Khvāja Mīr Dard (1722–85), all of whom he ignores, Hadi Hasan also doesn't recognize the earliest Indian poets, however distinguished, who wrote in Persian.

The other anthology, edited by Ẓiā Aḥmad Badāyūnī (1968) ignores Bēdil altogether, but admits Ghālib to its assembly of the greats. With one exception—a token presence of Mas'ūd Sa'd Salmān Lāhōrī (1046–1121), quite like the token presence of Bēdil in the earlier anthology—all the others mentioned by me above are missing from Badāyūnī's opus as well. Needless to say, they are missing from Shiblī's luminous pages too.

By way of contrast, we can look at two other anthologies of Persian poetry from the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-e Jānāṅ's (1699–1781) renowned *Kharīṭa-e Javāhir* (apparently put together c. 1756) is of medium length and is more a celebration of *sabk-e hindī* than of Persian poetry as a whole. Jān-e Jānāṅ, himself a notable Persian poet of his time, coolly allows more space individually to Jalālu'd-Dīn Siyādat Lāhōrī (Indian, fl. 1690–1700), Nisbatī Tʰānēsarī (Indian), and Mirzā Raẓī Dānish (Indo-Iranian, d. 1665) than he allows to Sa'dī, Ḥāfiẓ, or Rūmī (the latter doesn't appear at all, but Bēdil is also absent, and that's an omission that I can't account for, except by hazarding the guess that Jān-e Jānāṅ, though a Sufi and intellectual of note, didn't somehow like the cerebral quality of Bēdil's poetry). Navāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān's (1828–95) anthology *al-Maghnamu'l-Bārid li'l-Vārid wa'ṣ-Ṣādir* contains only *rubā'īs*. The *rubā'ī* is a genre where the Iranians are generally believed to have done better, and more, than the Indians. Khān chose more than 4000 *rubā'īs* from far and wide in time and space and included even minor Indo-Iranian poets or poets of Indian origin, poets in whose company Shiblī would not have even liked to be seen dead.[13]

The following summation from Shiblī should give an idea of the sweep of his understanding, and also the harm that he could cause by his authoritarian judgment of the Indian Style:

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[13]Yet another anthology of Persian (specifically, Indo-Persian) poetry came out from Aligarh, apparently with the view of righting the injustice done to *sabk-e hindī* in the two earlier anthologies: *Dreams Forgotten*, edited by Waris Kirmani, an admirer of *sabk-e hindī*. He performed a major service to the Indo-Persian tradition by bringing together many poets who were but names in the tradition. In fact, many weren't even names: they didn't exist in the literary community's consciousness. Kirmani also wrote an essay (not very adequate, unfortunately) on *sabk-e hindī* by way of an introduction to his book in English. In spite of having tried to cast a wide net, he missed out on some significant names, like Shāhīdī Qumī (d. 1626), Ḥakīm Ḥusain Shuhrat Shīrāzī who spent a good part of his life in India and died here in 1736, Ḥakīm Lāhōrī (fl. 1770s) and quite a few others (see Kirmani 1984).

> Gradually, in the mode introduced by Fughānī, there arose the tendency toward abstract themes [*khiyāl bandī*], creation of [new] themes [*maẓmūn āfirīnī*], preference for difficulty and complexity [*diqqat pasandī*]. These things began with 'Urfī. Ẓahūrī [d. 1616], Jalāl Asīr, Ṭālib Āmulī [d. 1626], Kalīm, and others promoted and advanced these tendencies even further, and this manner became popular and supervened over the whole realm of [Persian] poetry. And since intemperateness in this mode leads to extremely deleterious consequences, poetry's dominion came under the authority and sway of Nāṣir 'Alī [Sarhindī], Bēdil, and others. And thus ended a mode and series of great magnificence.
>
> (1957, 65)

One might almost say that given such friends, one doesn't need enemies, but Shiblī's biases are beautifully and subtly modulated. One may not perceive all his biases at first reading, but insidiously, like a drop of oil on a smooth surface, the biases did spread and over time found a lasting place in the literary consciousness of a wide variety of students of Persian (and of Urdu) literature on the Subcontinent.[14] The hierarchies that Shiblī's pronouncement maps out can be described as follows:

–Fughanī, Grandpere, poet par excellence (d. 1519): Indefinite number of minor successors

–'Urfī (d. 1592): Inheritor and Improver by dint of personal excellence

–Ẓahūrī, Jalāl Asīr, Ṭālib Āmulī, Kalīm, [all Iranian,]: Cousins, more or less distant, but recognizable as Fughanī's progeny

–Nāṣir 'Alī Sarhindī (d. 1696/97), Bēdil (d. 1720), et al., [interlopers, all Indians,]: Extremely poor and villainous relations.

The above still holds true to a large degree. It can't be denied that though Shiblī's negative perceptions have parallels among the Iranians, they are actually powered by what Shiblī believed to be the rightly-guided and Western (read English) principles and beliefs about the nature of poetry. In the paragraph that follows the one that I just quoted above, Shiblī tells us that "this revolution caused harm to ghazal, for ghazal in fact is the name [for the depiction] of emotions pertaining to love…" (*ibid.*, 65). This is not a formulation that can be found in any Arabic or Persian treatise on literary theory, though it may not sound out of place in a similar work by an English or German Romantic critic.

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[14]I have examined some aspects of this matter in another essay (Faruqi 1998).

2

The first ninety pages of the fourth volume of *She'ru'l-'Ajam* are easily some of the most delectable Urdu prose ever written. The abundance of examples, the swiftness of allusion, the breadth of range which encompasses Arabic, Persian, and Urdu with equal felicity, and serious and independent, even if brief and flawed, assessments of some Western views on the nature of poetry, the writer's obvious and infectious delight in the experience of reading poetry all go to make these pages a tour de force of literary criticism as well as of creative prose. Much of the theory that can be extracted or inferred from this text is clearly derived from the practice of the *sabk-e hindī* poets. But Shiblī's guardian angel remains a steadfast Victorian. Shiblī regards with disfavor what he calls "the intemperateness of the imagination" and says that there is "no worse fate for poetry than improper use of the imagination" (1951, 40). Shiblī then cites some verses in the *sabk-e hindī* as examples of such "improper use of the imagination."

Later Shiblī discusses hyperbole which is universally acknowledged as a form or function of metaphor. He grants a limited value to hyperbole, yet his bias against the "new" (or, in our parlance, *sabk-e hindī*) poets whom he often calls *muta'akkhirīn* (the later ones, in Shiblī the word somehow has a faint sense of Johnny-come-lately), leads him into one of his illogicalities. He says:

> Examine the poets whose poetry is cited to prove the [inherent] goodness of hyperbole and see to which era they belong. If they are among the later ones (*muta'akkhirīn*), then know that it is a flaw in the culture which has affected the people's [good] taste too, so that they regard hyperbole with approval. Thus, in that case, neither the poet deserves to be admired, nor can the taste of the people which approves such poets be treated as reliable. Rather, one must believe that the civilization's decay has corrupted the taste of both the poet and his audience.
>
> (*ibid.*, 72)

Apart from the gross illogicality and circularity of this argument, what is worthy of note here is the fact that the argument flies in the face of all Arab-Persian literary theory and that it is clearly influenced by what Shiblī considered to be "modern" and "Western" notions about the nature of poetry which was supposed to require poetry to be "natural," not "artificial." In the very beginning of his disquisition, he offered the following definitions of poetry:

> The function of feeling is not perception … its function is just to become affected when some affecting thing happens…. This power, which can be designated *iḥsās* [the power to feel], *infi'āl* [to be affected], or *feeling*,[15] is another name for poetry. That is, this very *iḥsās* becomes poetry when it puts on the clothing of words.
>
> (*ibid.*, 2)

Shiblī goes on for many pages in this strain, giving alternative models of his definition, none of which can be found in Arab-Persian literary theory, though traces of Sanskrit literary thought can be occasionally glimpsed in his thesis. My point is that Shiblī's discomfort with and the Iranians' dislike of *sabk-e hindī* should not be viewed merely as a function of ethnic-cultural arrogance. (All along, Shiblī consciously identified himself with Iranian linguistic usage, literary taste and fashion.)

It is impossible for me here to resist the temptation to cite yet another powerful condemnation of *sabk-e hindī* delivered by Shiblī. Writing about Ṣā'ib, whom he much admires, he notes that Ṣā'ib has praised 'Urfī, and proceeds to say:

> Well, it was all right thus far, but what a pity, because of the common people's favorable faith, or influenced by their general reputation, Ṣā'ib praises even Ẓahūrī and Jalāl Asīr … [he quotes from Ṣā'ib one verse each in praise of Ẓahūrī and Jalāl Asīr]. This was the first step of wretched taste which ultimately resulted in the building of a whole highway and things have come to such a pass today that people swoon at the poems of Naṣir 'Alī, Bēdil, Shaukat Bukhārī, and their likes. *The foundation of tyranny in the world was initially little. Everyone who came later, added to it.*[16]
>
> (1956, 177)

The first major voice against *sabk-e hindī* on literary as opposed to personal or linguistic grounds was that of Luṭf 'Alī Bēg Āżar (d. 1780) who in his *tażkira Ātashkada* (1779) came out specifically against Ṭālib Āmulī and Ṣā'ib. Āżar had no real literary theory though, and his hostility to the Indian Style could perhaps be read as an assertion of the Iranian linguistic identity at a time when the Persian language had shrunk from its im-

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[15]English in the original.

[16]Italics added. The sentence in italics is a direct Persian quote from the *Gulistān* of Sa'dī. In my copy (Kānpūr: Maṭba'-e Majīdī, 1909), the quote appears on p. 45.

mense loci in Central Asia to within the Safavid boundaries of the late eighteenth century (Alam 2003, 178). Riẓā Qulī Khān Hidāyat was no better (and was in fact almost abusive) in his *Majma'u'l-Fuṣaḥā'* (1867/68). The hostility of Āżar and Hidāyat has also been attributed to the Iranian literary "movement" of "Literary Return" (*Bāzgasht-e Adabī*). Shams Laṅgrūdī, however, disputes this and says that the decline of the Safavids caused poets to "turn their faces" from *sabk-e hindī* because the poetry of this style is that of "the intellect, power, and thought," while the devastation, loss, and sorrow wrought by the fall of the Safavids at the hands of the Afghans needed a "poetry of the heart" which gradually established itself in place of *sabk-e hindī* (1996, 43–4).

This interpretation is both fanciful and ahistorical, for *sabk-e hindī* was very much in evidence in Iran under Afghan rule and until even much later. Anyway, the main point is that the earliest opponents of Indian Persian, like 'Alī Ḥazīn and Vālih Dāghestānī, were themselves distinguished poets of the Indian Style and they were disdainful of the Indian register of Persian, and not of the Indian Style of Persian poetry. Ḥazīn's hostility seems to have been driven by pure malice. Vālih Dāghestānī says with barely concealed sarcasm that Ḥazīn's "innate generosity and personal sense of justice" led him to write "cheap satires" on everybody, the King and his nobles included, in spite of the "highest degree of affection and consideration showered upon him by the King and the nobles" (2001, 202).

As for Vālih, his dislike of Indian-Persian poetry was clearly based on parochial grounds and was powered by the native speaker's blind pride in his competence in the mother tongue. He quotes a reasonably good *rubā'ī* by an Indian woman poet called Kāmila Bēgam and says that it is also attributed to one Salīma Bēgam, but

> [t]his servant attributes it to neither, for it is more than a hundred years since the time of Faiẓī that the propagation of the Persian language has been expanding in India with the passage of time, yet I find that even the men here do not know or understand Persian, so what would their women know of the language?
>
> (*ibid.*, 602)

By the time of Shiblī and Bahār, the world had changed for India and Iran in many ways and the impact of "modernizing" (read Western) influences in Shiblī and in his Iranian contemporaries must not be underestimated. Shiblī's disapproval of abstraction, complex metaphoricity, am-

biguity and high imaginativeness particularly recalls the prevalent Victorian literary bias against these things.

The problem of the early Iranian hostility to *sabk-e hindī* has thus many dimensions. Muzaffar Alam sums up very well:

> The gap between the Iranian and Indian views of *sabk-e hindī* cannot be explained simply in terms of the ethnic and geographical location of the critics. Differences in the nature of the knowledge of poetry, the definition of poetry, the autonomy and innovativeness of the poet, and issues of communication (*iblāgh*) as well as reception are also factors.
>
> (2003, 182)

There must also, however, be something in the Indian literary temperament that loves complexity and bold creativity in the themes and language of poetry. Muḥammad Afẓal Sarkhush in his *Kalimatu'sh-Shu'arā'* (1682) and Kishan Čand Ikhlāṣ (d. 1748/54) in his *tażkira Hamēsha Bahār* (1723) cannot conceal their delight in poets who are *ma'nī yāb* (seekers and finders of new themes) and *tāza gō* (composers of the fresh and new). Ikhlāṣ in fact often lifts words and phrases from Sarkhush. This suggests that they used a critical vocabulary that had become standardized by the early eighteenth century. Now let's just listen to Bēdil from his very long *maṣnavī 'Irfān* (begun 1682, finished 1712) telling us about *sukhan* (=poetry, speech, utterance, discourse, word):

> If you tear asunder the veil on poetry's face
> You get to things that are beyond imagining,
> Ignorance becomes knowledge by the light of discourse.
> Knowledge is ignorance if word doesn't show itself,
> Word is what owns the high note as also the low
> Not just the weeping, it owns the silence too.
> When one speaks with the imagination
> One chooses a manner from poetry's manners,
> And if silence has its hints and gestures
> So has speech its own texts too.[17]
>
> (1997, III, 87–8)

[17]Bēdil uses only the word *sukhan* throughout this extract. Determining what I hope would suit the context of the individual verse best, I translate it variously as poetry, word, and so on. For a very good introduction to some Hindu-Sanskrit aspects of *'Irfān*, see Shukla 2003.

In his long philosophical prose work *Čahār 'Unṣur* ("The Four Elements") Bēdil goes even further. "The word (*sukhan*)," he says, is

> [t]he soul of the universe and the true principle of the reality of existing things. When the word strives in the path of the concealment of meaning-reality, it is like a whole world locking its breath in its breast. And when it boils over to reveal the text, it is a whole world growing up and rising upon it.
>
> (1963–64a, 196)

These texts are at once a theory of language and a theory of poetry, and it is not perhaps accidental that they remind us of Bhartrihari. These matters are obviously a far cry from the hostile reader's fears of abstraction or imagination running riot and leaving the reader alone to tease out, or wrestle with the hidden meaning in the poetic utterance.

Iranian critics describe the poetry of *sabk-e hindī* as generally difficult to comprehend. Even Shams Laṅgrūdī who is a staunch admirer, particularly of Kalīm Kāshānī, can barely contain his impatience at what he describes as the opaqueness of some of the poetry:

> Although even before [the coming of the *sabk-e hindī*], brevity and punning have always had an acknowledged authority in poetry, the poets of this style used these elements so much and in such a way that sometimes their poetry became compact and concise to the extent of impenetrability.
>
> (1993, 75)

Similarly, Muḥammad Riẓā Shafī'ī Kadkanī, whose admiration for Bēdil perhaps exceeds that of Laṅgrūdī for Kalīm Kāshānī says a little ruefully:

> Sad to say, all his far flying imaginings and thoughts of numerous hues and shades have remained so much hidden behind the veil of ambiguity and the darkness of faulty expression that even for comprehending his ordinary *she'rs* the reader needs inevitably to spend his time and mental effort…. Most of his verses are a kind of riddle for whose solution it is necessary to obtain help from the poet [himself].
>
> (Kadkanī 1998, 19)

One feels that this is scarcely an improvement on Shiblī, except that Kadkanī clearly implies that Bēdil repays many times over the effort one expends in figuring out his meaning. But the most important thing to

note here is that Kadkanī is apparently unmindful of the fact that, to the Indian ear, Bēdil is extremely mellifluous, and to the Indian mind he is not more difficult than say, ʻUrfī or Naẓīrī. Indeed this is as true of the Afghan and the Tajik as it is true of the Indian.

3

So what exactly did the *sabk-e hindī* poet do, or not do? Losensky has a point when he says that people have mostly been defining *sabk-e hindī* in terms merely of "rhetorical and stylistic devices" and at best such descriptions provide only a "synchronic overview" and help orient the modern reader in a terrain which remains essentially unfamiliar to this day. Losensky however falls into an error common among Western critics of Persian poetry when he complains that these conventional descriptions do not pay any regard to the "original context or chronology" of the poetry; "isolated, individual verses" are cited and this "loses sight of the poem, the fundamental unit of artistic organization and poetic performance" (1998, 3–4). In fact, all poetry in the Indo-Persian literary culture is seen as synchronic, and in the world of ghazal there is no concept of a "poem." The ghazal consists of a number of individual verses, most often unconnected with each other by theme or mood. Even in performance, the poet may not recite all the *sheʻrs* of his ghazal, or may change their order, or even add a few on the spur of the moment, or incorporate *sheʻrs* from another ghazal in the same rhyme and meter.[18]

It is quite proper therefore to attempt a critique of the poetry of *sabk-e hindī* by focusing on individual *sheʻrs*. One great advantage of this method is that it promotes the sense of intertextuality that permeates all premodern Persian and Urdu ghazal. Then, this method makes comparativism easier, because instead of presenting ten poems or ghazals from ten poets and losing sight of the forest for the trees, one can cite ten *sheʻrs* from ten poets and provide a view that is overarching and yet short. Conventional critics of *sabk-e hindī* have failed to give us anything much about the spirit of the poetry because they haven't attempted to go beyond and behind the lists of "metaphorical conceits, personification, proverbs, po-

[18]For a good discussion of the question of "unity" in the ghazal, see Pritchett 1993. Pritchett shows, to my mind quite conclusively, that there is in principle, no unity in the ghazal. Also see "Poet-Audience Interaction at Urdu Musha'iras" (Naim 2004).

etic etiology, unusual imagery, colloquialisms, and tangled syntax" that, according to them, characterizes *sabk-e hindī*. Further, as Losensky is quick to point out, most of the so-called distinctive

> [f]eatures of the fresh style can also be found in the poetry of other poets. By setting aside previous uses of these rhetorical devices, Safavid-Mughal poetry is made to appear as a strange and unprecedented intrusion on the classical tradition.
>
> (1998, 4)

What Muḥammad Taqī Bahār has to say about *sabk-e hindī* bears out Losensky's charge that Indian Style Persian poetry was described in such terms as to make it sound alien, if not entirely bizarre and outré. Bahār, with a blind arrogance that better suits a provincial administrator than a literary historian and critic, made up the following list of *sabk-e hindī*'s characteristics:

(1) Little attention paid to eloquence of diction
(2) Unusual and exotic words not used
(3) Archaic expressions never employed
(4) More attention given to new conceits than to anything else
(5) Psychic states and internal excitement were not expressed by means of words but through conceits and metaphor
(6) Lofty ideals and high thoughts expressive of noble life and extraordinary character are not found
(7) The majority is ghazal in form, and the contents convey feelings of debilitation, humility, and vileness
(8) Vocabulary drawn from the bazaar and low level of diction as compared with previous eras
(9) Many new expressions that had not existed before
(10) The greatest fault is that the personality of the poet cannot be known through his poetry; the poet does not invent conceits to suit his "message," rather he first finds the conceit and then invents a message to suit his conceit
(11) Monotonous.

(As translated and quoted by Thackston 2002, 94)

Apart from the fact that very nearly all of the above counts could be shown to be false, or wrong-headed, or meaningless, or untrue to the classical tradition (for example, numbers 6, 7, and 10 above are points a classical Persian poet would scarcely comprehend, much less grant their validity), the chief point to be made here is that the list betrays an anxiety, a haste to condemn, and a willingness to risk being described as inca-

pable of understanding any poetry but that of one's own tradition, that is truly remarkable.

If Bahār's analysis is more of a denunciation than an analysis, perhaps because of nationalistic considerations, 'Alī Dashtī has a vested interest in *sabk-e hindī* because his agenda aims at setting up Khāqānī as the originator of *sabk-e hindī*. He finds the poetry of the Indian Style to be laden with "metaphor and metaphorical constructions" and sees the hallmarks of the style as:

> [f]ine and rare thinking, going in search of new themes however unfamiliar, not resting content with the totality of a theme but taking aid from fine details, observations, habits, avoidance of clarity and simplicity in utterances, joining up with metaphors and symbols, using cognate or metaphorical constructions and having so much regard to wordplay and verbal homogeneity that the meaning is lost.[19]
>
> (1977, 67)

The generally sympathetic attitude of 'Alī Dashtī notwithstanding, his analysis suffers from a methodological failure because he doesn't tell us how the "fine and rare thinking" works in the poem, or whether "avoidance of clarity and simplicity" is the same as failure to communicate or find (in the Coleridgian sense) the best words in the best order. 'Alī Dashtī does not define his categories and thus leaves room for misunderstanding. For instance, in the eighteenth century when much of the poetics of *sabk-e hindī* came to be formulated if not entirely articulated, "metaphor" was understood somewhat differently than it is now. In *Ḥadā'iqu'l-Balāghat* (1768) by Shamsu'd-Dīn Faqīr of Delhi (1703/4–69/70) we have what is perhaps the best and most authoritative Persian treatise of the eighteenth century on prosody and rhetoric (1813, especially 67–119). In his theory of metaphor, Faqīr is a close follower of the Arab theorist 'Abdu'l-Qāhir Jurjānī (d. 1078) and in fact directly lifts some of Jurjānī's examples in his discourse. Without going into the subtleties of the position of Jurjānī and Faqīr, suffice it to say that both grant the possibility of a metaphor being valid as metaphor only if the metaphor-word is inter-

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[19]See also Faruqi 1979, 1–21 and Memon's very stimulating introduction (1979, ix–xxi), especially pp. xv–xviii, where he discusses Alessandro Bausani and others and makes the perceptive remark that the Urdu ghazal represents "the specific Muslim response to the age old tension between orthodox belief and individual freedom" (xv).

preted in its literal sense. Faqīr gives the name of *majāz-e 'aqlī* (metaphor of intellect) to such metaphors and says that metaphors are different from false statements because metaphors are amenable to *tā'vīl* (interpreting in a manner not according to the obvious meaning) and have *qarīna* (general tenor, analogical context) for a certain meaning, and the metaphor maker clarifies that he is not using the metaphor-word strictly for the object for which the word was originally designed, while false statements have no such *qarīna* or amenability to *ta'vīl* (*ibid.*, 119).

While it is clear that such subtleties do not enter the consideration of *sabk-e hindī*'s critics and denigrators, the main point lies elsewhere: It is not just the excessiveness or even "excesses" of metaphor in *sabk-e hindī* which the critic needs to highlight. He needs to ask about the *use* that the metaphor was put to, the task that it was made to perform. In a literary tradition where modes (even new modes) of composing poetry are like territories to be worked by all-comers, the important thing to map is not the territory, but the manner of the working of it. This is a matter where even an extremely sympathetic and astute critic like Ṣalāhu'd-Dīn Saljūqī was led into deception. In his admirable *Naqd-e Bēdil* Saljūqī wrote:

> Thus the thing which the fashioners of styles (*sabks*) describe as *sabk-e hindī* (Indian Style) is largely sufistic ghazalness (*taghazzul-e taṣavvufī*), and not *sabk-e hindī*.... The thing which has been named *sabk-e hindī* did not in itself originate in India, but has descended [into this world] from the firmament of Sufism. But India has been the land where the inspirations issuing forth from the firmament of Sufism have flown in a measure greater than in other lands, and Sufism has specially flourished and developed there. It is because of this that this style can be observed in every poet to the extent of how deep he is in Sufism.
>
> (1991, 88)

Apart from the fact that this is a classic instance of "explain all, explain nothing," Saljūqī's main error is in not appreciating that the important thing is not "how deep" a poet is in Sufism: what matters is what use the poet makes of Sufi material, what meanings he derives or acquires from it. Later in his book Saljūqī makes a feeble attempt to declare that Bēdil is a true disciple of Rūmī because the former embellished and made more colorful Rūmī's "everlasting construct" of "verbal inventiveness and originality" (*ibid.*, 114). But then all great poets excel in "verbal inventiveness and originality," and none more so than Ḥāfiẓ whose model Saljūqī doesn't invoke. And in any case, Bēdil's language was much more unor-

thodox than that of Rūmī or Ḥāfiẓ and in fact invited criticism even from his Indian contemporaries.[20]

All metaphor tends to do violence to the language and thus it commits a kind of unkindness or aggression on the hearer or reader in testing his faculty of deciphering or figuring out the information content of the utterance directed to him. This violence is not the crude, anti-syntactical or turgid, ungrammatical speech that we encounter in degraded linguistic environments. The violence that metaphoric language perpetrates tends to destroy, or conflate, or change the nature of the categories that it deals with. Ḥāfiẓ, for instance, is not generally given to the kind of metaphor that we are talking about here. But the nature of language and of metaphor is such that both revel in stretching each other to the utterance. I translate literally:

> Without your sunface no light remains
> In my day, and as for my life,
> There's nothing left but the longest night of winter.
>
> (Ḥāfiẓ 1992, 28)

This apparently simple set of metaphors releases a number of reverberations: Quite easily and with sufficient justification the poet could have said *nūr* (light) instead of *mehr* (sun), but *mehr* also means "love," so the phrase now has the additional suggestion of "love," that is, the loss of the sunface also involves loss of love, but *mehr-e rukhat* can also mean "the love of your face." So the loss of the sunface at one level suggests loss of love for the sunface. For some reason the protagonist has fallen into the horrible misfortune of not loving the face, that is, the face of the woman whom he was to have been in love with. But what exactly is the sunface? Is it properly the sun? Perhaps so, because without it no light remains in the narrator's day. But if the absence of the sunface is just an intensifier-metaphor, then there is no reason to say no light now remains for (or in) the *rōz* (day), for it is a tautology at best. But *rōz* also means "life, days, age." So the sunface functions yet again as a metaphor: it is something whose absence darkens the speaker's life in a physical, and not just a figural sense. The second *miṣra'* (line) of this verse presents new problems. Is all that is left now of the speaker's life just one long winter night in the

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[20]See, for instance, Āzād Bilgrāmī (1871, 153), who, however, acknowledges Bēdil's right to improvise in the language and cites the great critic and linguist Khān-e Ārzū (1689–1756) in his support.

literal sense, or should we understand this to mean that the life that is now left for the narrator will be cold and lonely and long, like winter's longest night? But note that the poem does not quite say so. It equates the remainder of life to the longest cold night of the year. But does the equation work only on some inner, ontological level, and not on a physical, epistemological level? One would be entitled, I believe, to read the second line literally and then read metaphors into it.

This is precisely the kind of thing that the Indian Style poets were doing, except that they were more adventurous, or venturesome, than Ḥāfiẓ and the rest of their great forebears. They knew that poems were made from, or on, a theme, (*maẕmūn)* and each theme was a domain, a territory, and a *ṭarz*. They also knew that while there was no ideal or necessary reason to exclude a *maẕmūn* (theme, domain, territory, ontological entity, *ṭarz*), there was something in the nature of things that precluded certain domains or ontological entities from becoming part of the notionally infinite fraternity of *maẕmūns.* So the idea was to create new *maẕmūns* (*maẕmūn āfirīnī*), or to look at old *maẕmūns* with new eyes. But the problem wasn't quite that simple. For what exactly is a *maẕmūn* in poetry? The first thing to remember here is that it is characterized by smallness, rather than largeness. The smaller and more specific the object, the better *maẕmūn* it can be for the purpose of poem-making, given of course a truly creative mind. Consider the following:

A favorite *maẕmūn* is of course Love. Love unrequited, or love frustrated and unsuccessful are fine *maẕmūns* too. But the nature of the *maẕmūn* demands specificity. So, Love: Desire to see the beloved: Make Effort to do so: Get to see her: A glance: Get to speak to her: A kiss: Get to kiss her: She kisses: She kisses something: She speaks: She speaks to someone [to me, the lover, maybe]: A word by the lover to himself: A kiss by proxy … Such are some of the more obvious branches of invention where a *maẕmūn* may be found blooming feebly or in strong colors. The greater the metaphoric or unusual content in the *maẕmūn*, the better example of "*maẕmūn*-creation" it will be. Yet Love, or Death, or Faith, or Fidelity are too great and too common as *maẕmūns* to be of real value in poetry. The finer you grind them, the better the atomicity that results. And still, the restless and the intrepid ones want always to go out and capture unlikely and intractable themes and forge them into poetic respectability. The "theme-creating" or "theme-discovering" (*maẕmūn āfirīn)* poet is the most intrepid creature in the universe, and the Indian Style Persian poet was the epitome of all intrepidity. He sought to convert non-*maẕmūn* material from everyday life into *maẕmūn* by means of plain

poetic assertion, exemplification (*tamṣīl*), and "poetic proof," and by pulling together the most unlikely things imaginable.

I'll begin by quoting two comparatively low-key examples from the Urdu poet Imām Bakhsh Nāsikh (1776–1838) because it's easier in this case to "bare the device," or reveal "the verbal contraption." Nāsikh's *maẕmūn* is … a blowpipe. Here's what he makes of it:

> Your blossom-color mouth has made the blowpipe so fragrant
> The rose-saturated hookah pipe is shamed by it;
>
> *
>
> Let the rival's ear be shot with jealousy's dart
> Speak to me today through your blowpipe. [21]

The unlikely *maẕmūn* is yoked to the duty of love in a conventional way, but there are some interesting semantic and cultural nuances: the hookah-pipe is kissed and sucked by the beloved, it draws in; the blowpipe is also kissed, but it draws out, it throws its tongue out, as it were. Also, when the beloved blows through the blowpipe, her own sweet breath, excelling any sweetness and coolness of air from anywhere, plays upon the blowpipe, as on a flute, making the pipe sweeter still. Even so intimate an engine as a hookah-pipe can't begin to compete with the love-action involved in the play with and upon the blowpipe.

In the next *she'r*, we find the lover and (hopefully for him) his beloved reverting to childhood games. It was common in India for children to speak to each other in play or fun using a blowpipe or hollow reed. Here the beloved is being invited to reverse the actual lethal role of the pipe and give it a make-believe role which, if enacted, will immediately establish a friendly equation between the lover and the beloved, and will also make the Rival, the Competitor, as unhappy as if he'd been shot in the ear.

But there is a main meaning to *tufang* Translated here quite properly as "blowpipe," the main meaning of *tufang* is "musket, heavy calibre gun." Now the tension generated by the jealousy of the Rival takes on a more sinister dimension. And if the beloved takes *tufang* in its main meaning, she may end up shooting the lover. In that case, the sound that will shoot through the Rival's ear will be the report of a gun, and it will make him jealous, for the protagonist would have had, through an error

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[21]Nāsikh 1846, 365–6. The modern text *Dīvān-e Nāsikh* (1987, 1, 446) is not reliable here.

of communication, his heart's desire (because he was put to death by his beloved, but which is not what he wanted right then; right then his main aim was to stun the Rival with jealousy) and the Rival would have got nothing but a big bang. So whose ear is going to be shot away? This is a question that makes us a trifle uneasy. The text seems to be going back upon itself.

We can see that there is not a plenitude of splendid meanings here, for "meaning-creation" was not always the business of the *maẕmūn*-creating poet. Yet it is clear that even this thin and barren theme (blowpipe) has yielded some enjoyable results. Indo-Persian poets invested a great deal of their creative energy on *maẕmūn*-creation. Let's take a brief walk through some of the most apparently barren or forbidding bylanes of their imagination:

Lenses for weak eyes had long been ground from suitable kinds of stone, and the power of sight was supposed to reside in the eye from where "rays of sight" emanated to illumine the environment. So Ghanī combines the two images to make this striking yet strangely light-gossamer *maẕmūn*:

> It's not a pair of glasses that I have on my eyes
> Due to old age,
> My sight, in its ardent desire to look at you,
> Beats its head against stone.
>
> (1964, 184)

The lover's ultimate fate is never in doubt: he will live and die unfulfilled, unrequited. But this gnosis needs to be expressed in newer, global, more dramatic ways, better still that it was expressed through a theme which one would normally not imagine suitable or proper for a poem. Muḥammad Qulī Salīm says:

> The lover dies the moment he holds the object
> Of his desire in his arms;
> The blossom on the flower branch of the heart
> Is the bubo.
>
> (quoted in Bahār 1865/66, II, 494)

It needs to be said that the poem rests on the convention that in Indo-Muslim culture the armpit also is described as the site of the heart in the human body, and the bubo of course appears in the armpit, and

the heart is often described as an "unopened bloom" or a "knot," or "a drop/clot of blood."

The breeze is supposed to be free, but its waves are assumed to be like links in a chain. Mad people are kept in chains, for obvious reasons. So if a person in chains is seen roaming about freely, there must be a reason for it. In the following *she'r* by 'Alī Qulī Mailī, the poet-narrator finds the *maẕmūn* of the breeze's madness and liberation, banal in itself, but made new by the new character, the breeze:

> If the breeze didn't pass by the chains of
> The beloved's tresses, how come she lost
> Her mind and broke her chains?
>
> (Ṣiddīqī n.d., 229)

The point is that the breeze should properly remain chained, and all of it should be pulled by natural forces together, and such indeed is the case, for the breeze comes and goes as one set or gust of waves. If it was in chains, it was sane, normal, as it should be. Broken chains flowing around her body, she moves everywhere like one deranged.

Flower-petals are everywhere in the garden, naturally. Some of them are blown over by the breeze into the stream or lifted up into the air. These trite enough themes are just the stuff on which the imagination of the *sabk-e hindī* poets feeds. The following examples are doubly helpful because they deal with the same theme. The following is from Mullā Bāqar Hiravī:

> I see rose-petals floating on the morning breeze
> So now the garden too has found
> A messenger to send to her!
>
> (quoted in Jān-e Jānāṅ 1855, 99)

Abū Ṭālib Kalīm Kāshānī finds a gleefully callous, yet entirely appropriate *maẕmūn* here:

> Those are the pages of the Spring's beauty-list
> Washed away and discarded during your sovereign rule,
> Those aren't rose petals blown by the breeze
> Into the water-channel.
>
> (Kalīm Kāshānī in Laṅgrūdī 1993, 150)

The beloved is by definition heartless and incapable of keeping faith. But what if someone wants to say differently, and how does one go about

collecting proof for such an assertion? The cycle of seasons and the practice of measuring distance in terms of time provide the answer:

> The lovely ones too have the desire,
> And the fact that the rose comes back
> For the bulbul from a whole year's journey
> Should suffice as proof for love's practitioners.
> (Ṣaidī Tehrānī quoted in Jān-e Jānāṅ 1855, 127)

Two of the most popular *maẕmūns*, and in fact almost banal in their popularity, are color and lamentation, and their immediate associations: the rose itself (gul in Persian means "red rose"); the (rosy) color of the beloved's visage; the (rosy/red) color of wine; the color of the sky, the lament's feebleness, or effectiveness, or ceaselessness, or its beauty, and so forth. I now give you two verses and no comment, except that in the face of such poems the superior, priggish and unfeeling comments of Muḥammad Taqī Bahār and his followers (the *sabk-e hindī* poems express feelings of debilitation, humility, and vileness; the personality of the poet cannot be known through his poetry) seem like deliberate attempts at obfuscation. The first one is by Ḥakīm Ḥusain Shuhrat (d. 1736):

> My heart's portion was a blossom's breath
> One fell swoop and Rose took it away,
> I had a line of lament for my song
> One fell swoop and Bulbul took that away.
> (quoted in Jān-e Jānāṅ 1855, 123)

Now listen to Shaukat Bukhārī (d. 1695/99):

> The wineglass struck a rare hue on your Frankish face
> Wine became rose-oil for the lamp that is your body.
> (quoted in Jān-e Jānāṅ 1855, 123)

And finally Mirzā Raẕī Dānish (d. 1665) going off entirely elsewhere and pushing the *maẕmūn*, image, metaphor, whatever, to the utterance:

> Down there in the forest
> Clouds have laid the foundation for the red poppy's
> bedchamber;
> So what are you doing here, diverting yourself
> With painted walls and doors at home?
> (quoted in Ṣiddīqī n.d., 85)

I must confess to have made the translation somewhat freer than is my wont. There are two reasons for this impertinence: the literal sense of what I have translated as "laid the foundation" is actually "poured out the color(s)"; it's a delicate play on the idiom *rang rekhtan* (=to lay the foundation [of]). My second reason is intertextual: the literal meaning of Mirzā Dānish's second line is, "What for are you looking at the pictured decorations at home?" This is an echo, or in fact recuperation of a *she'r* from Sanā'ī Ghaznavī (1080/7–1131/41):

> Look, my entire counsel to you
> Is just this: You are a child
> And the house is full of colors.[22]

How many strands of text, world, and meaning Dānish has pulled into his *she'r* I leave to the redoubtable Maliku'sh-Shu'arā's progeny to figure out.

4

The strategies of *maẕmūn*-creation are too numerous, in fact infinite, and what one really misses in the critics of *sabk-e hindī* is their general unwillingness to allow intertextuality as a legitimate literary device. This matter is too vast and complex to be dealt with here; suffice it to say that the whole poetics of *maẕmūn āfirīnī* and *ma'nī āfirīnī* (meaning-creation) is one of the functions of convention and intertextuality. Poems were made from other poems, or were founded upon other poems. Incessantly challenged, imitated, and improved upon, each poem became a notional paradigm. Wordplay became the most important weapon in meaning-creation because one could insert two or more possibilities into the poem for the price of one word. Exemplification often turned on wordplay and enlarged and enriched the utterance. Consider the following examples:

> The world never stays, however hard your grasp,
> However tightly one closes the fist,
> The color of the henna cannot not fade away.
>
> (Laṅgrūdī 1993, 162)

> The heart without love

[22]From the *maṣnavī Ḥadīqa*, quoted in Shād (1984, 1, 454).

Is far from God's grace,
Dead bodies are washed ashore
By the ocean.

(Mirzā Rafī' Vā'iẓ quoted in Jān-e Jānāṅ 1855, 167)

Fighting is okay for the fool:
For me, fighting is a flaw
A ruby that has a vein in it is flawed;
Likewise the wise man
Who has a vein in his neck
Has a flaw.

(Muḥammad Qulī Salīm quoted in Khān 1876, 201)

The point of the last verse is that in Persian, "to have a vein in the neck" means "to be conceited and stuck up." Wordplay by itself provides a powerful incentive to meaning-creation but it must be remembered that it was the discovery of the distinction between "*maẕmūn*" (=what is the poem about?), and "*ma'nī*" (=what does the poem mean?) that made such stupendous advances possible in enlarging the range and scope of *sabk-e hindī*. Ghanī uses the *maẕmūn āftāb* (the sun) to say two different things:

As far as possible
Do not fall in love with a fickle one
The sunflower is quite distracted and deranged
By the sun.

(1964, 89)

Like the traveler who walks with the sun in his eye
I journeyed toward my beloved
But I didn't see her face.

(*ibid.*, 91)

Obliqueness of expression, or fashioning poems consisting of half-statements and half-suggestions is an art that one often associates with *sabk-e hindī*. Direct evidence is lacking as yet, but the influence of Sanskrit poetics can be discerned here in many ways. As I have had occasion to note elsewhere, classical Arab-Persian poetics used the single word *ma'nī* to indicate the theme or the content of the poem. Persian did have two distinct words *ma'nī* and *maẕmūn* to indicate two different things. But the concept was never developed and gradually the term *maẕmūn* gave way entirely to *ma'nī* whose initial, actual sense of "meaning" was practically

abandoned in literary theory. But how does one excavate, or generate, different meanings from a source which is ostensibly one and the same? The Arab theorist, holding that a poem meant what it contained, generally equated the "content" (*mā fīhi*) of the poem with its meaning and thus saw no need for a new category to describe something that could be got out of a poem, though it was not necessarily intrinsic to the overt verbal structure of the poem.

Ksamendra's idea of *auchitya* (appropriateness), very similar to the Arabic notion of *balāgha* (full expressiveness),[23] seems to have joined somewhere in the Indo-Persian mind with the Sanskrit notion of *sahitya* (appropriateness of word to theme) and thus given rise in the seventeenth century to the revival of the term *maẕmūn* as a category distinct from *ma'nī*. Persian and Urdu poets from the seventeenth century seem to be using it not as two sides of the same coin, but as two entities that serve to make a *she'r*. The Dakani Urdu poet Mullā Vajhī (d. 1669?/1671?) wrote in his *maṣnavī Quṭb Mushtarī* (1609/10):

> In the art of poetry it is rather difficult
> To make both word and meaning coincide,
> Use only those words in your poem
> Which have found favor with the masters,
> If you have the ear for poetry's meter
> Choose words with care and write high themes.
> Even if there's but one powerful theme
> It enhances the pleasure of the speech.
>
> (1991, 53)

Once it was recognized that a poem's *maẕmūn* (theme, subject, idea) need not be all the meaning that a poem may have, the foundation for ambiguity, obliqueness, metaphoricity, wordplay, verbal congruity (*munā-*

[23]The main plank of Ksamendra's theory, according to Tiwari, is his emphasis on the "placing together of things which are mutually agreeable or in harmony." He asserts that Ksamendra did not produce "any novel theory of poetry" (1984, 269, 292). Yet if Ksamendra's definition of *auchitya* had reached Arab lands it would have struck a familiar chord in the imagination of his Arab contemporary 'Abdu'l-Qāhir Jurjānī (d. 1078) who regarded the *naẓm* (organization, construction) of the words in a text as the main source of excellence.

sibat), and similar creative devices (very testing devices, most of them) was laid down forever.

In his *maṣnavī Gulshan-e 'Ishq* (1657), we find another great Dakani Urdu poet Nuṣratī Bījāpūrī (1600–74?) making the assertion:

> Some beauties of Hindi poetry cannot
> Be transported to Persian properly;
> I drew the essence
> Of the two arts and made new poetry,
> Mixing the two.
>
> (quoted in Jālibī 1977, I, 335)[24]

Later, in his major work *'Alī Nāma*, Nuṣratī says in prayer:

> Reveal, on the screen of my thought
> The virgin faces of all fresh *maẓmūns*,
>
> *
>
> Instill thus the nectar of meaning in my words
> That even the moon may lust to drink it.
>
> (1959, 9)
>
> *
>
> The manner new, well woven, desired
> By all hearts; Colorful themes
> Lofty meanings.
>
> (*ibid.*, 425)

It is clear that significant things are happening here in Indian poetics. It is not just Urdu that is being affected; it is clear that Persian is interacting with Urdu. We have just seen Nuṣratī claiming to have distilled the essence of the two traditions and created a new solution. Elsewhere in *Gulshan-e 'Ishq* he says:

> I fashioned the poetry of the Deccan to be like Persian.
>
> (Jālibī 1977, 335)

What is less clear, but can quite easily be inferred, is that these changes are occurring in Persian through direct or indirect transactions with Sanskrit. Urdu's first great poet Shaikh Khūb Muḥammad Čishtī (d.

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[24]"Hindi" of course here means "Dakani" or "Urdu," to give its modern name, (the language name "Urdu" was not in existence then).

1614) wrote a treatise on meter where he discussed both *pingala* and Persian-Arabic prosody; both were much in use in Urdu at that time apparently. Shaikh Aḥmad Gujrātī (fl. 1580's) knew Sanskrit, and it is very probable that Nuṣratī knew both Sanskrit and Kannada. Amīr Khusrau knew Sanskrit fairly well and it has always seemed to me that his designating the reader (and also the writer) as having the *ṭab'-e vaqqād* (a temperament that is knowing, intelligent, bright, and fiery) is influenced by Abhinavagupta's theory of the *sahridaya* reader. In Abhinavagupta's formulation, "a *sahridaya* has the competence analogous to that of the poet/composer to see, to hear, to feel, to participate, to experience" (Kapoor and Ratnam 1999, 44). Both Abhinavagupta and Khusrau emphasize the role of the reader's creativity in comprehending poetry. Similarly, Rajasekhara's *kavyapurusa*, the ideal being who partakes of the character both of the composer and reader, who stands for all compositions, and who therefore incorporates all possible poets and readers (*ibid.*, 53) reminds us of Khusrau's startling claim that all poetry is in a sense commentary on the Qur'ān, or exemplification of its pronouncements (1967, 39). Among the poets of the later centuries, major and influential poets like Faiẓī Faiyāẓī (1547–95), Bēdil (1644–1720), Bʰūpat Rā'ē Bēgham Bairāgī (d. 1720), Sirāju'd-Dīn 'Alī Khān-e Ārzū (1689–1756), and Ghulām 'Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī (1704–85) knew Sanskrit. Instances of such crosslingual fertilization between two languages over the centuries should be hard to find in other premodern literary traditions in Asia.

All this brings us into the domain of hermeneutics, and poets of *sabk-e hindī* evince sharp awareness of the need for poetry to be interpreted. This again is something unique in the Arab-Persian tradition, but is a given in the Sanskrit. Before I go on to citing *sabk-e hindī* poets, I would like to follow Todorov's mapping, after Mammata, of the situations where there may be a gap between an utterance and its meaning. According to Todorov, Mammata says that interpretation comes into play when there is "an incompatibility between the primary meaning of the word and its context," and where there is also "a relation of association" between the primary and secondary meanings (1982, 27).

Mammata, following Anandavardhan, identified seven differences between direct expression and indirect suggestion:

1. Difference in the nature of the statement: the expressed meaning prohibits or denies, for example, while the suggested meaning commands or affirms.

2. Difference in time: the suggested meaning is grasped after the expressed meaning.
3. Difference in the linguistic material: the expressed meaning emanates from words; the suggested meaning may arise from a sound, a sentence, or an entire work.
4. Difference in the means of apprehension; the expressed meaning is understood by means of grammatical rules, whereas the suggested meaning requires a context as well: spatio-temporal circumstances, an interlocutor, and so on.
5. Difference in effect: the expressed meaning brings about a simple cognitive perception; the suggested meaning also produces them.
6. Difference in number: the expressed meaning is univocal, the suggested meaning may be plurivalent.
7. Difference in the person addressed: the expressed meaning may well be addressed to one character, the suggested meaning to another.

(*ibid.*, 12–3)

Since all Arab literary theory originated from exegeses on the Qur'ān, the Arab theoretical endeavor was toward developing tools that could help determine the ultimate, intended meaning of the text maker. Thus there was little there by way of investigation into the properties of language that lend themselves to ambiguity or polyvalence. Questions of interpretations did arise, but only to be settled one way or another. A good example is the criticism of al-Baqillānī (d. 1013) on Imru'l-Qais where he disagrees with the meaning of specific verses as generally understood, and then proceeds to disagree with his predecessor, offering what he regards as the true meaning of the verse in question (al-Baqillānī 1950, 64–5, 70–1).[25] Occasionally, al-Baqillānī makes an observation which has the force of theory but he doesn't pursue it, as if the whole idea of *ma'nī* being separable from the words were distasteful to him.[26] Grammarians from Sībawaih (d. c. 798) to Abū Ya'qūb Sakkākī (d. 1228)[27] and many others have interesting things to say about the contextual properties of meaning (some of Sakkākī's comments here anticipate I. A. Richards) but

[25]I am obliged to C.M. Naim for making this text available to me.

[26]For instance, "For it often happens that a saying is well worded, but not sustained by any worth while meaning" and "The second verse is lacking in beautiful and original features and is devoid of any idea" (al-Bāqillānī 1950, 64, 65).

[27]For an overall view of the sciences of language in Arabic culture, see Bohas, Guillaume, and Kouloughli 1990.

deliberate ambiguity or plurivalence is not something which enters their ken as a literary device.

On the contrary, poets of the *sabk-e hindī* revel and delight in making poems do more than, or differently than what one expects them to do. They strain at the leash of language, demand attention and concentrated effort at comprehension. Possibly as a consequence of the separation of *ma'nī* and *maẕmūn*, they are extremely conscious of plagiarism. For as long as meaning (in the sense of *maẕmūn*) was common property, there could be no real plagiarism. Using a subtle if somewhat tenuous argument, 'Abdu'l-Qāhir Jurjānī practically denied plagiarism as a category.[28] However, once it was established that common themes can generate uncommon meanings, plagiarism became a hot subject. The question: who derived which meaning first from a given *maẕmūn* could become an occasion for heated investigations and even accusations. On one occasion, even the reclusive and generally uncaring Ghanī had to defend himself in writing against a charge of plagiarism (1964, 257–9). Ironically, it was Ghanī who himself often complained of being plagiarized. In a laconic *she'r* whose point turns upon a delightful (and happily, translatable) pun, he says:

> My peers took my verses
> Pity they didn't take my name.
>
> (*ibid.*, 165)

Kalīm Kāshānī, perhaps the greatest of the *maẕmūn āfirīn* (theme creating) poets, must also have at sometime felt the pinch of the accuser's finger, for he said,

> How can I take the themes of another
> When in my creed
> Redepicting my own themes is thievery?
>
> (Kalīm Kāshānī in Laṅgrūdī 1993, 180)

In the eighteenth century, the most visible controversy about plagiarism was caused in Delhi by the Iranian immigrant poet Shaikh 'Alī Ḥazīn who disdained everything Indian in spite of the most generous patronage

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[28]I am not familiar with any extended discussion in English of Jurjānī's views on plagiarism. Losensky cites von Grunebaum (1944) and also discusses the subject briefly in 1998, 103–7. For a concise Persian source, see Zarrīnkūb 1982, 168–9.

showered on him by the Emperor Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1719–48), by 'Umdatu'l-Mulk Amīr Khān Anjām (d. 1746), and by everybody else everywhere. Anyway, a friend sent to him a *she'r* by Muḥammad Afẓal Ṣābit Ilāhābādī, a leading Persian poet of the time and a protégé of 'Umdatu'l-Mulk, Ḥazīn's own patron. In the words of Vālih Dāghestānī:

> Mīr Muḥammad 'Aẓīm Ṣabāt, who is the true son and successor to Mīr Muḥammad Afẓal Ṣābit, has brought up five hundred *she'rs* from the divan of the Shaikh ['Alī Ḥazīn] where the *maẓmūns* are precisely those of other [poets]. The reason for this matter was this: One of his relations had occasion to send to the Shaikh a verse from the divan of Muḥammad Afẓal Ṣābit. He [Shaikh 'Alī Ḥazīn] wrote back to say that apart from the fact that the *maẓmūn* of this *she'r* is quite lowly, the *maẓmūn* itself is from such and such poet and Ṣābit has stolen it from him. Mīr Muḥammad 'Aẓīm saw that note and his sense of honor was greatly aroused. Within a few days he trashed five hundred of the Shaikh's verses.[29]
>
> (2001, 213)

Thus the separation of "theme" (*maẓmūn*) from "meaning" (*ma'nī)* had three far-reaching consequences for Indo-Persian poetics. First, poets began to look for new *maẓmūns*, or new ways to tackle old *maẓmūns*. This was given many names: *maẓmūn āfirīnī* ("theme creation"), *maẓmūn yābī* ("finding [new] themes"), *maẓmūn bandī* ("depicting [new] themes"), *khiyāl āfirīnī* ("creating [new] thoughts"), and in the extreme case, *khiyāl bandī* ("depicting [abstract] themes and thoughts"). The obvious base for such activity was metaphor, but the chief achievement of the Indian Style poets was to *treat metaphor as fact* and go on to create further metaphors from that fact. Each such metaphor in turn became a fact and was used to generate another metaphor. Metaphor thus became a phenomenon of not merely substitution, but of contiguity. Metaphor, in other words, became syntagmatic rather than paradigmatic. This is perhaps the greatest single innovation in the realm of metaphor in any poetics, but it hasn't been given the attention it deserves. As we saw above, perhaps Shiblī is the only critic who appreciated this point (1956, 21). Shiblī had more to say on this point in his discussion of Kalīm Kāshānī where he informs us somewhat disparagingly:

---

[29]Vālīh goes on to reproduce over the next ten or twelve pages a chunk of Ṣabat's text.

> The thing that people describe as *maẕmūn āfirīnī*, when analyzed, turns out to be a new metaphor, or [new] simile, or some startling hyperbole, or some poetic assertion which is not really true, but the poet makes the claim [to its truth], and proves it by a poetic argument.
>
> (*ibid.*, 194)

Shiblī here omits but implies the crucial point that the metaphor, or whatever figure is in use by the poet is treated by him as a fact. For example, *āb shudan* (to turn to water) means "to be ashamed." Also, *āb* ("water") means, "brightness, cutting edge." Using these metaphors as facts permits the poet to generate new metaphors, thus:

> I am no sword, yet the ocean-hearted Time
> Flings me into the fire
> So as to give me a bit of water.
>
> (Kalīm Kāshānī in Laṅgrūdī 1993, 175)

Note the double use of "fire"; more noteworthy is the image "ocean-hearted" (="bountiful") for it has "congruity" with "water." Use of words which have, or seem to have "congruity" (*munāsibat*) with each other is one of the glories of *sabk-e hindī*. Here's another example of congruity and the *maẕmūn* of *āb* ("water"):

> You passed from my sight
> And I am living still,
> Shame didn't turn me to water
> Dust be on my head.
>
> (Mukhliṣ quoted in 'Abdu'l-Lāh 1992, 156)

The congruity is obvious, and the other interesting point is that "to have dust on the head" has a range of meanings from shame and humiliation and ignominy to death. Ghālib picked up this *maẕmūn* nearly a century later but chose to give up the water-dust congruity for something which shocks and startles:

> I managed to keep alive without you
> And didn't kill myself for the shame of it,
> My life for you, do not come to me now
> I am disgraced before you.
>
> (1872, 418)

Going back to the original *maẕmūn* of water-sword-thirst, we have Ṭālib Āmulī:

> I am so fond of my thirst
> That even if water from your sword-stream
> Was fetched for me, it would
> Not flow down my throat.
>
> (quoted in Jān-e Jānāṅ 1855, 129)

Here the water metaphor is taken to its next stage of contiguity: swords have water (are sharp); streams have water; so sword=stream. "Fondness for thirst" is however another [complicated] story and will not bear telling here.

> I had a mind to give tongue
> To my thirsty lips, but out of shame
> My tongue turned to water and
> Flowed into my throat.
>
> (Āmulī quoted in Qāṭi'ī Hiravī 1989, 138; Nabī Hadī 1978, 218)

The theme of wine as "Vine's daughter" was centuries old by the time Kalīm Kāshānī came to it in the early seventeenth century. It occurs extensively in the *qaṣīdas* of Minūčihrī (d. 1040) and has been studied in depth by William Hanaway (1988). Kalīm gives a new keenness to the *maẕmūn* by using the metaphor "Vine's daughter" in the sense of a real woman:

> When I attend the beloved's assembly, I drink
> Aged wine. Vine's daughter grows old
> By the time it comes to me.
>
> (Kalīm Kāshānī in Laṅgrūdī 1993, 154)

The beauty of the poem comes from two unexpected directions, both emanating from the literal use of the metaphor "Vine's daughter." Old wine is supposed to be good, so the narrator can have no complaint, but an old woman is not supposed to be good. So the same daughter is both good and bad, young and old. A few decades later, Rāhib Iṣfahānī almost duplicates Kalīm's main image of young-old woman, but gives a global sense to the transaction:

> It has been a long time for me
> Yawning away in this wine house,

By the time the toast passes to me
Vine's daughter will have become an aged crone.

(Naqsh 'Alī n.d., 73)

We now encounter Bēdil who uses the same metaphor-fact but adds many new dimensions of meaning by extending the fact-level of the metaphor:

By an excess of headstrongness
Her temperament produces direnesses,
Not having a husband, Vine's daughter
Gives birth to mischiefs.

(1997, II, 73)

Apart from the metaphor-*maẕmūn*, the verse is a triumph of the art of congruity. Practically every word in the poem has more than one connection with each other. Then there's an untranslatable wordplay using *dast[gāh]* ("hand") and *sar* "head." The humor is not a bonus here; it is the main objective. The affinities and the wordplay reinforce the humor. In the following *she'r* from Hulas Rā'ē Raṅgīn (d. 1776) we see the humor taken a degree further in hilarity, though the banter this time favors Vine's daughter:

The Shaikh runs miles away
From Vine's daughter, Look
What a non-manly man he turned out to be.

(Khalīl 1978, 76)

Annemarie Schimmel gave to Amīr Khusrau the honor of being the first poet of the Indian Style. She said:

> … with Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325), the virtuoso in poetry and music and sweet-talking "Parrot of India," the new style of Persian poetry opened its first buds: in his verses we find some of the complicated, even abstruse metaphors and the extremely artistic technique which were later so common in the so-called *sabk-i hindī*, the "Indian Style" of Persian poetry.
>
> (1979, 10)

There is some truth in the general tenor of Schimmel's observation, but it is not so much the "abstruseness" of metaphor as the metaphor-into-fact strategy that we find in Khusrau. A *she'r* like the following could easily have been written by Ṣā'ib, or Bēdil:

Your beauty, by the fire of youth
Brings forth smoke from the lovers' hearts.

(1975b, 230)

It is common enough to describe the lover's sigh as "smoke." It is also common enough to describe the beauty of the beloved, or the radiant face of the beloved, as "fire/fiery/flame," and so on. Khusrau uses both metaphors as belonging to the domain of fact, rather than that of the imagination. Ghālib takes the next step on that path:

Whoever encounters her in the streets
Says, "There goes the fire-worshippers' Lord and Master!"

(1872, 439)

Another example, similar in spirit though not in details, is the following *she'r* from Khusrau, intensely personal and almost tragic in its depth of feeling, it also has an ambiguity, all of which make it a fine instance of *sabk-e hindī* making itself felt ahead of its time:

They say, Khusrau, what are you weeping at?
I am the turtledove of my own spring.

(1975a, 347)

The ambiguity is untranslatable, but it can be seen that the narrator-poet-turtledove's sorrow could be because they are alone and sui generis, or because it is the fate of the turtledove-poet to create his own world and celebrate his own spring by weeping in it and for it. These cosmic considerations of man-poet's role in the universe, and questions of self-worth and the value of being are foreign to the non-Indian Style poets' temperament but fit very well with a poet like Bēdil whose special predilection was for making abstract themes manifest by abstract images. But before we go to Bēdil, let's hear 'Urfī nearly three centuries after Khusrau:

Don't ask, In whose ear
Do you pour your lament, 'Urfi?
For I am the nightingale of the garden
Of my own tastes and desires.

(2000, 457)

Khusrau's image had a degree of abstractness. 'Urfī has more abstraction, greater intellection, but perhaps the sense of pain and loneliness is

greater in Khusrau. One achieves abstraction at some cost, though the cost seems to be worth paying. Let's now hear Bēdil:

I have narrated to no one
The story of my not speaking,
I told it to my ear, yet speak
I didn't.

(1997, II, 431)

Judge it from my instrument and don't ask me
Of the song that I don't have; If you see
You can hear the story that I don't have.

(*ibid.*, 433)

I have earlier commented upon the great value of wordplay in generating new *maẕmūns* (*maẕmūn āfirīnī*) and meanings (*ma'nī āfirīnī*). That wordplay is also an essentially metaphorical device seems not to have been noted by critics and admirers alike of *sabk-e hindī*. Yet wordplay is a favorite device of all Persian poets. Even in academia, for instance, Khusrau is recognized (even if somewhat grudgingly and with an air of embarrassment) as being fond of wordplay. It would therefore be interesting to study an example of wordplay from Khusrau alongside one from a poet of the *sabk-e hindī*.

As we have seen, living on without the beloved, and even eating and drinking, are distasteful and in fact undesirable activities for the lover. Yet life has to go on, and here Khusrau's protagonist justifies a drink of water:

I never watered my heart with water
That was to my desire,
Each drop of water that I drank
Without you was a sword.

(1975a, 482)

We are familiar with the syntagmatism: water-river-sword. Now wordplay introduces a number of new things here: One sense of *āb* is "pure wine." Then, one sense of the original of my first two lines is, "I never found any satisfaction, any comfort (*āb-e khush khurdan=to be happily content, to achieve satisfaction)*; and for the heart to drink water (*āb khurdan-e dil*) is for the heart to gain strength and support. Khusrau says *jigar* ("liver") and not *dil* ("heart") but under the circumstances it does not matter.

Khusrau's subtleties are special to him in the sense that he is a very great poet, but *sabk-e hindī* poets had learned from him, and from the new search for *maʿnī-e bēgāna* ("theme that is alien and unfamiliar"), *maʿnī-e nāzuk* ("subtle and delicate theme") whose successful realization gave greater happiness to the poet than 'Id's crescent moon. Ṣā'ib says:

> The moment of luxury for us is to bring
> A fine and subtle theme within our grasp;
> For nothing else is the crescent moon
> That signals the 'Id for us
> Who think subtle and delicate thoughts.
>
> (1875, 510)

Now listen to him again. Rarely will one find such serene delight and proud yet quiet celebration of creativity and invention in poetry:

> Ṣā'ib, one who gains the acquaintance
> Of strange and alien themes
> Withdraws himself entirely from
> Worldly acquaintances.
>
> (*ibid.*, 38)

This brings us to Bindrāban Khushgō (d. 1756/7) friend and disciple of Bēdil:

> Without you I hold the wineglass
> In my hand; it's like the sun
> Held in eclipse.
>
> (Naqsh 'Alī n.d., 60)

Here, *giriftan* is "to hold," but its nominal form *girifta* is also used to describe the eclipse: *āftāb-e girifta* is "the eclipsed sun." Khushgō now adds two new metaphorical subtleties: a common metaphor for "wine" in Persian is *āftāb* ("the sun"), and for a lover of wine the wineglass is like the sun anyway because it holds wine whose waves are often described as the rays of the sun. Thus it is metaphor-turned-literal-turned-metaphor that we see here.

I briefly mentioned exemplification (*tamṣīl*) as a potent means for creating new meanings. We also made brief mention of "poetic proof" and how Shiblī believes it to be generally false, but the poet makes it come true by his assertive energy. But actually, it is the metaphoric or epistemological appropriateness (the latter based on some common observation

on historical-social practice), or the invoking of some "poetically universal truth" that establishes the poem's argument successfully. Wit and satire also play their role, especially if the "proof" is from the social world. Consider this delightful verse from Ashraf Mažandarānī, affectionately known as Sa'īdā-e Ashraf (d. 1708):

> The pious ones' hypocritical tears
> Were shed in God's House,
> The slattern casts away bastard babies
> At the mosque.
>
> (quoted in Khān-e Ārzū [c. 1752])

From the broad and somewhat sexist satire of Sa'īdā-e Ashraf to 'Urfī's dewdrop delicate gentle wooing is a whole world, but it is the same world, essentially:

> Do not stint your beauty's radiant light
> From my heart. However much the mirror picks
> Beauty's flowers, its harvest never diminishes.
>
> ('Urfī 2000, 273)

Apart from the perfect exemplification, there is the subtlety of the heart-mirror congruity, because the heart is often described as a mirror. Then there is the word *khirman* ("harvest") that suggests plenitude, ripeness, cornucopian perfection, and yet has just that hint of death and destruction which injects a slight pinch of the snake venom of irony into the wooing. (Harvests were traditionally exposed to risk by fire or flood.)

Faiẓī keeps 'Urfī's *maẕmūn* even closer to the world, but omits the undertext of irony. He loses one dimension of meaning, but the poem gains in intimacy of tone:

> Oh, what will your beauty lose?
> You, with a thousand different coquettish ways,
> Were you to give me a little leave to gaze.
>
> (Faiẓī n.d., 89)

Still keeping close to the human world, I'll conclude this part with a *she'r* from Naẓīrī Nīshāpūrī (d. 1612):

> Beauty, for a little time
> Lets arrogance, impudence, and
> Waywardness have their head;

When kings take a new domain
They first leave it open for pillage.

(Naẓīrī n.d., 127)

Naẓīrī is one of the most difficult poets to translate, or even paraphrase concisely, because he has a unique ability to pack more narrative and more words in a two line *she'r* than seems ordinarily possible. Our Urdu poet Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Mīr (1722–1810) shares this quality with him. In the present verse, the narrator has an apparently naïve faith that a conquest by a beloved is like a king's conquest: kings first let their victorious soldiers sack a conquered city and then come back with doses of balm and balsam. The narrator believes that the same thing happens in the contest of love. The beloved first acts cruelly and waywardly and then settles down to the sweet business of romance. What is not articulated here is the major premise that beloveds are by definition wayward and the narrator should not have his hopes up. The *tamṣīl* (exemplification) is appropriate to more worlds than one.

I briefly touched upon the phenomenon of plagiarism in this literary culture, or not the actual occurrence of the phenomenon so much as its being a subject of conversation and disputation. Few people appreciate that plagiarism was never a hotly contended issue in the classical past of Arabic and Persian. It became important only when *maẓmūn* and *ma'nī* came to be seen separately. Some people have thought that issues of "originality," "innovation," "departure," and hence in some sense "rejection" of the past were involved in the "movement" of *tāza gō'ī* in the seventeenth century. Actually, there was no departure, far less rejection in the modern, Western sense. The *istiqbāl*[30] (going forward, welcoming) ghazals written in conscious imitation and improvement of the ghazals of earlier ustāds only affirmed that poetry was a common territory made up of *maẓmūns*, except that now *maẓmūns* could be unfolded or unwrapped to show what inner works they could contain. Discussions or accusations of plagiarism in this culture do not affirm the Western notion of originality: they reveal an anxiety, an eagerness which are both functions of their search for the extended frontiers of poetry. Ṣā'ib said:

Ṣā'ib, though fresh poetry doesn't
Even go for dirt, all masters of poetry

[30]For a full discussion of *istiqbāl* and what it might have entailed, see Losensky 1998.

Steal themes from one another.

(1982, 226)

This is a piquant *she'r*, somewhat difficult to interpret unless one bears in mind the seventeenth-century Persian literary background in India where searching for new themes and making plurivalent texts was the fashion, the need, and indeed the whole raison d'être for the poet. Everybody was sure that new *maẕmūns* could be found, and everybody saw that *maẕmūns* had a strong family resemblance. So there was always the possibility of the poet being charged for having failed in his search for a new theme or word (*talāsh-e maẕmūn-e tāza; talāsh-e lafẓ-e tāza*), or be even directly accused of stealing. It was not a search for originality in our sense, or even of individuality in any special sense that caused the anxiety. It was more like a treasure hunt, where even the slightest lapse from concentration or the tiniest aberration in finding the right word-clue could destroy the whole effort. Or it was like the hunt for a rare and elusive animal whose traces could be obliterated if the light of the imagination went off or even wavered for a nanosecond. Worse still, the hunter could lose the quarry even after running it down:

All the time it tends
To vault away from the nook of the mind,
A new theme is a gazelle that needs
Capturing.

(Ghanī 1964, 132)

Where I have "capturing," Ghanī has *bastan* ("to bind, to tie, to confine"). But *bastan* in a literary context means "to depict, to use in a text," and in other contexts it also means "to copulate, to cross-fertilize," (ghazal or gazelle is a common metaphor for the beloved). Other congruities are perhaps obvious.

As I have suggested above, plagiarism/intertextuality was not unknown in classical Arabic literary thought. Jurjānī's denial was not of the fact, but of the blame that was occasionally seen attaching to it. Later, Sa'du'd-Dīn Tafāzani (1322–90), in his encyclopedic *Muṭavval*, practically forbade the use of the word *saraqa* ("theft, plagiarism") for a literary text unless the fact of borrowing or taking could be demonstrated to have taken place. Rather, the term *tavārud* ("occurring at the same time") should be used. Commenting on this, Āzād Bilgrāmī says:

> Were one to look with the eye of diligence, there won't be found a poet who could be said to be free of *tavārud*. For the store of all information is particular to God's knowledge [of things], great are His tasks. The theme-depicter's pen shoots an arrow in the dark. What does the pen know if the prey [that its arrow shot] was already bound in wing and feather, or if it was flying free.
>
> (1913, 69)

But Āzād Bilgrāmī was writing in 1752, a century and more after the poets were reeling with the intoxication of vast, newfound spaces. In fact, the more inventive the poet, the more was he suspected of skullduggery. Sialkōṭī Mal Vārasta (1698/1703–66) with cruel wit consigned Muḥammad Qulī Salīm to perpetual perdition:

> The only text
> That you didn't break into
> Is the Qur'ān; the only construct
> That you didn't take away is the Ka'ba.
>
> (quoted in Āzād Bilgrāmī 1913, 67)

The wordplays and the congruities are extremely telling in the original but untranslatable in English. I have given the bare membrane, but I hope some of the scorn and gleeful derision comes through. Ironically enough, Salīm himself complained of being often plagiarized and even named the great Ṣā'ib as his chief culprit (*ibid.*, 67–8).

5

When everybody is looking for new themes and is trying to generally increase the word-meaning ratio, poems will tend to feel unfamiliar, even difficult, inviting more than usual application of mind before they can be understood. Ṣā'ib said:

> Ṣā'ib, it's not easy
> To find a complex theme;
> On this turning and twisting road
> The navigator himself is of the turns and twists.
>
> (1982, 247)

If the poet's own temperament both guides and sends astray, the locus of meaning has to be carefully searched out and scrutinized. Poems are not things to be trifled with. They require study and contemplation.

> A person who has no understanding,
> Were he to glue his eye to a book
> He wouldn't still see meaning's visage
> Even in his dreams. The brainless ones do not
> Reflect on poems: the bubble
> Has no capability to dive into the ocean.
>
> (Ghanī 1964, 227)

The treasure hunt for new themes and meanings had some other consequences which were of greater moment than the poet's demand for his poems to be regarded as sites for reflection, and not just artifacts of pleasure. With the freedom of *maẕmūns* came a celebration of ambiguity, of open-endedness in the composition. Poets wanted now to suggest more and say less. Yet a function of this surge of semantic exuberance and richness of subtext was also a sense of inadequacy of language, almost a failure of communication and finally, a celebration of silence as the communication that is most pregnant with meaning. These developments are generally associated with Bēdil, but can in fact be seen in both Faiẓī and 'Urfī, the first great poets of *sabk-e hindī*.

Needless to say, the last two phenomena are also generally associated with modernism and are in any case entirely foreign to Arabic-Persian and Sanskrit, the two literary traditions which went into the shaping of *sabk-e hindī*. Perhaps the Indian mind, which revels in abstraction, led our poets into temptation. They needed to explore the limits of language and perhaps they ultimately found its limits to be too narrow for their purposes. How can meaning be known when the maker of the meaning is unable to put himself into his painting, Ṣā'ib asked. For one can know only those whom we know, or can know on a conceptual level:

> The painting, in silent wonder
> Knows nothing of the painter's state
> Don't ask the figure painted on the cloth
> To reveal the meanings that are hidden.
>
> (Ṣā'ib 1875, 510)

> If your imagination desires and dares to practice
> Freedom, then you must write open-ended themes

Like the blossom's fragrance on the morning breeze.
(Bēdil 1963–64c, 189)

The open-ended theme, stated with energy and power is to be contrasted against the themes and meanings that refuse to come out in the open. Bēdil has three kinds of celebrations: he challenges his people to understand his meanings, for all the old meanings have now lost their resonance; then he says that you'll understand me only when you don't understand. And finally, he extols silence as the most perfect text:

A whole people gained understanding of the manner
Of Names and Attributes, apprehended whole assemblies
Of Unity and abundance. All those words are become
Over-used and ancient.
It's my meanings now that should be understood.

*

An intellect that knew black from white,
Don't believe that it knew God's mystery
As it needed to be known. I spoke a word
But only after I attained perfection:
You will comprehend when you don't comprehend.
(*ibid.*, 1963–64b, 177, 206)

Ẓahūrī Tarshīzī (d. 1616/17) is nowhere as challengingly bold as Bēdil, few poets could be, but even in his love-themes Ẓahūrī found ways of introducing ideas about language that seem to anticipate Bēdil:

You do not weigh and consider coquetry
In the true measure, and you are no connoisseur
Of words. Were it so, you would know that indifference too
Is glance, silence too is speech.
(Khān 1876, 285)

Nāṣir ʿAlī Sarhindī creates a moralizing *maẕmūn* alongside the *maẕmūn* of silence:

The *ʿanqā*'s reputation,
By virtue of his tracelessness, creates for him
Numerous camel-files of fame;
Silence, when it goes beyond all bounds
Has the clamor of caravan-bells.
(Āzād Bilgrāmī 1871, 332)

From Ẓahūrī and Nāṣir ʻAlī to the following *rubāʻī* is a large step, but Bēdil takes it cheerfully. It is to be doubted if any great poet of any tradition has celebrated silence so much and so well as Bēdil, who was also a great conversationalist and raconteur:

> The nature of madness is not a static reality,
> The apparent may fly ever so high, but it can never be
> The Unapparent. Even if the two worlds talked away
> Until they turned to blood, the speech that attains
> The level of silence would be impossible.
>
> (Bēdil 1963–64c, 246)

There can be little doubt that Bēdil's glorification of the enigmatic, his valorization of silence over speech, and his demand that his meanings be heard to the exclusion of all others, all of these have some Sufistic, or even general, non-Islamic mystical dimension. But I am here concerned with the literary statement that such pronouncements make. Communication and comprehension are not the same; silence has a speech of its own, purer and closer to Truth, language often lets the poet down; the poet's speech is not everyday speech, it needs to be interpreted; the speech of philistines comes nowhere near the poet's speech. These propositions are an important part of the poetics of *sabk-e hindī*, and are some of the chief reasons why this poetry sounds so unfamiliar to an ordinary reader of Iranian-Persian poetry.[31]

While it is Bēdil and Ghālib who have most borne the opprobrium of Iran-oriented critics, the flashes of literary theory that I just noted above can be discerned even as early as in Faiẓī and ʻUrfī, the first truly great poets of *sabk-e hindī*. It is remarkable that premodern literary culture everywhere stood on the assumption that poetic competence meant the capability to give words to any thought, any theme, however complex. Yet we have Indian poets of the early sixteenth century anticipating and experiencing dilemmas of language and silence that we regard as the hallmark of twentieth-century modernism.

> Faiẓī, none is able to get to the depth

[31]Quite by chance, I once read Ḥāfiẓ regularly for a number of days. Returning then to Ghālib to prepare for a conference paper, I felt disoriented, as if I was reading a different language.

Of your word of love,
Sealed and secret, your subtle points
Are a riddle with a difference.

*

Footsteps are strangers
On the road that I walk,
The breath is a stranger
From where I speak.[32]

*

How can pen and paper withstand
The fire of my heart?
I have hay and straw in my hands
And the fire is ablaze.

(Faiẓī n.d., 29)

Among the poets of *sabk-e hindī*, 'Urfī and Bēdil have been mythologized most, though for different reasons. 'Urfī has been seen as the "superior other" of Faiẓī: consumptive, resolute and arrogant, dying young[33] in remote Akbarabad far away from his loved home in Shiraz, a spiritual and emotional exile who knew by dint of the native's intuitive genius all those subtleties of Persian language and poetry that Faiẓī had labored so hard but failed to acquire. Ghālib, like Shiblī, an unashamed advocate of Iran against India, loved to posit Faiẓī against 'Urfī. Ghālib once famously said that as far as Persian language is concerned, none among the Indians except Amīr Khusrau is authoritative, and "even Miāṅ Faiẓī slips up on occasion."[34] On the contrary, 'Urfī was for Ghālib "the obeyed one; we are his obeyers and followers." Further, 'Urfī's casual observations even had the

[32]Faiẓī n.d., 25. The ghazal, of which this is the opening verse, also appears (with two *she'rs* missing and a few changes including of course the poet's name in the last *she'r* reading as "Urfī" instead of "Faiẓī") in 'Urfī 2000, 257. This is obviously an incorrect attribution and is based—as Valīu'l-Ḥaq Anṣārī, the editor of 'Urfī's *Dīvān*, himself informs us—on just one MS of 'Urfī's ghazals. The ghazal doesn't appear in 'Urfī 1915. Nabī Hādī (1978, 90) attributes the *she'r* to Faiẓī but gives no source. Misattributions were not uncommon in the culture. Another example of this is discussed below with reference to Khusrau.

[33]'Urfī died at the age of thirty-six. Most of us tend to forget that Faiẓī too didn't live to see fifty. He died of asthma, aged forty-eight.

[34]In a letter to Har Gōpāl Tafta, dated 14 May 1865 (Ghālib 1984, 352). "Miāṅ" means "master" among other things. Here Ghālib has used it derisively.

force and authority of rules.[35] Yet reading 'Urfī's poetry one hardly finds any disdain for India. What one is struck by is 'Urfī's strong sense of the poet's experience as the lonely, creating self. He is the only poet I know who speaks of the pain of being a poet:

My ill repute took the whole world
But I am happy; for the world
Is a foreign country,
No one here is from my people.

('Urfī, 1915, 242)

It is quite proper for 'Urfī to follow Ḥāfiẓ
For he lacerates his heart and knows
The pain of being a poet.

*

Well, what place can there be for 'Urfī's pen
When the pen of even Ḥāfiẓ cannot draw
Images like the ones made by
My theme-portraying pen?

(*ibid.*, 306, 372)

These two *she'rs* are quintessential *sabk-e hindī*, stating as they do the fundamental positions of poets of that style: the literary mode of a poet's existence, the travails that creativity imposes upon the poet, the poet's search for new themes, his role as painter-creator, and the paradoxes of his art: he is the creator, yet as often as not, his medium seems to fail him.

There's not one word that silence
Does not excel, there's no knowledge
That's not excelled by forgetting.

*

My tongue left behind by my subtle thoughts,
My secret meanings remain,
The word's amplitude is exhausted
And yet my word remains unsaid.

*

Don't be in denial
When you don't see any visible emblem,

[35]In a letter to Aḥmad 'Alī Rāmpūrī (undated) (*ibid.* 1993, 1543).

For the enigmatic ones put away
The pen and tablet, and write.

(*ibid.*, 162, 214, 331)

I have commented on Bēdil's *maẓmūns* of silence and failure of communication. When Bēdil sees silence as the greatest form of communication, he seems to be both denying and affirming the word as man's supreme power and achievement. Yet poets of *sabk-e hindī* are conscious not only of the pain and anguish that creativity brings, they also declare and affirm the need for the reader to devise systems of interpretation which can look behind the words. Just as Ghanī said that mere application of labor wasn't enough to fathom the depths of poetry ("the bubble has no capability to dive into the ocean"), so also Ghālib said that his meanings were not expressed in the words, his meanings needed to be mined like precious stones from a quarry:

He doesn't have poetry that could be
Inscribed on paper. Go away,
This Master has gems that need to be mined.

(1872, 442)

It is perhaps not without significance that this *she'r* occurs just before the "stranger in the city" *she'r* which I have made the epigraph of this text. Just as 'Urfī and Faiẓī seem to be anticipating Bēdil on the problem of silence and communication, Ghālib seems to be confirming them by citing his own experience:

Writing is not acceptable to my poems
They are full of lightness and grace;
No dust arises as my charger
Gallops on.

(*ibid.*, 359)

Now consider these *she'rs* from Bēdil who seems to have reserved his greatest and profoundest creative moments for the worship of silence and failure:

Oh, what a multitude of meanings
Discouraged by unintimate, alien language
Remained hidden, for all their bold beauty,
Behind the secret veils of mystery.

(1963–64c, 34)

A text, even if it is entirely full of meaning,
Can be edited or added to: Silence
Is a text from which one cannot pick and choose

(*ibid.*, 251)

Were the silence-theme to blossom,
The floret with unopened lips
Could become the bulbul's teacher.

(1963–64a, 805)

The *maẕmūn* of failure of communication often finds expression through the metaphor of traveling yet not arriving, and also through the metaphor-image of the unpolished mirror which has been employed in amazingly diverse and creative ways by all poets of *sabk-e hindī*.

I traveled: by flying or by the labor
Of stumbles and leaps,
I traveled everywhere until I
Arrived at non-arriving.

(1963–64b, 589)

Ghālib was able to combine the two ideas to create an hourglass-like effect where one theme reflects the other:

What can I say about the length
Of the journey of love's desire?
On this road, sound fell off
Like dust from my caravan-bell.

(1872, 367)

The felicities of congruity, wordplay and metaphor are all but untranslatable in these poems. You'll have to accept me at my word that they are there. That most conventional reading has not yielded the delight and meaningfulness that these verses so abundantly possess is only an indicator of our own inadequate theories of reading. For example, in the "silence-theme" *she'r* above, I translate *gul kardan* as "to blossom." The literal sense of this idiom is "to do or make [a] flower." Metaphorically, it means, "to become apparent." My translation doesn't fully catch any of the multiple meanings in "apparent," but makes a compromise in favor of congruity and wordplay by saying "blossom," thus suggesting the gul ("rose") in the original. Now the sprig or the bud is traditionally seen as

silent, for its petals ("lips") are closed, while the bulbul is the lover of the rose(bud) and his chief quality is eloquent singing (which subsumes lamentation, complaint, weeping, and so forth). So the traditionally silent one becomes the master of the vocal one here. But the rose is also traditionally seen as "deaf" (because it does not "hear" or respond to, or answer, the bulbul's lamentation and complaints). The rose's petals are supposed to resemble ears, so it has ears, but is deaf, and yet it will instruct the bulbul in the art of eloquence, perhaps because it is deaf, because the instruction actually is in the theme of silence, and for a deaf person the whole world is silence. Again, the original has *ta'līm-e bulbul kunad*, which I translate as "become the bulbul's teacher," but there's no way for me to suggest that *ta'līm* ("education; imparting instruction") is also the term used by the dancing girls for formal music lessons. Then the words *gul* ("flower"), *lab* ("lip[s]"), *ghunča* ("bud, sprig"), *ta'lim* ("musical instruction"), and bulbul ("bulbul, the nightingale") all have affinities with each other. None of the affinities, if reduced, would affect the basic *maẕmūn*, but they enhance the delight and the meaning by their presence. All this within the space of nine words and in a meter which is shorter than most popular Persian meters.

Similarly Ghālib, in his "caravan-bell" *she'r* asks in the original, "Oh, what do you ask of the length of the journey…?" This kind of interrogative is one of the great glories of Persian and Urdu but has no equal, not even a remote one, in English. But the point is clear: the narrator can't really answer the question about the journey's toils because the voice has fallen off even from the most vocal and continuously talking member of his caravan: the caravan-bell. If the bell is voiceless, the caravaneer also is bound to be speechless or voiceless. But more importantly, the bell keeps tolling when the caravan is on the move. So if the bell is silent, the caravan must not be on the move. It must be asleep, or dead. Now the congruities: *tul* ("length"), *safar* ("journey"), *rah* ("road"), *gard* ("dust"), *firū rekht* ("fell off"), *jaras* ("caravan-bell"). All the words are from the domain of journeying.

I will conclude this discussion of the themes of silence, communication, and failure to realize one's full expressive potential by quoting first Naẓīrī and then Bēdil:

> My quality of sight and reflection
> Remained buried under a layer of rust,
> He who fashioned my mirror, alas
> Left it unburnished.

(Naẓīrī n.d., 204)

Oh, what a multitude of mirrors
Tormented by the pain of beauty's indifference
Turned to ashes under the rust and did not
Realize their essential luminance.

(Bēdil 1963–64c, 116)

The translation is feeble, but the main drift is clear. The poem recalls and will bear comparison with the *she'r* about the alienness and unintimateness of language. I translate *jauhar*, a term in philosophy, physics and religion, as "essential luminance" because in the context of a (metallic) mirror it signifies the circular or wavy marks that can be seen on highly tempered and burnished steel. "Did not realize" is *paidā na kard* which is something like "did not make apparent, did not acquire or become the possessor of, did not develop or generate," etc. But the special tragic energy of the poem comes from the fact of beauty's indifference to the mirror: Was beauty's indifference a deliberate act of neglect, or was it just the way things were in the mirror's universe, or was beauty not percipient enough to discern the mirror's potential? And what is the role of "torment" (*dard*) in this play of desire and failure? What if the mirror were indifferent to beauty's indifference? Could it then realize its potential still? And what do we learn about the creative self from this verse? Is the poet's heart (the mirror) just the recipient of *maẓmūns* (beauty looking at itself in the mirror) and does not have a will of its own? How are poems made then? What implications do the bitter facts of failure of the imagination, being cheated by language, or being made to wait for inspiration that never comes have for the poet and for ordinary human beings?

There is no doubt that these questions have a strong lapsarian sense. Man has fallen away from a better state and language, man's most potent tool in a hostile world, never tires of reminding him of this fall and its own resultant failure. Poets over three centuries from Faiẓī and 'Urfī to Ghālib do not seem to tire of telling us about man's unique and lonely station in the universe and the inadequacy of his language. Ironically enough, but quite properly too, they do so in some of the most hauntingly beautiful words that man ever put together. Note the bitter taste of irony in the following verses from Faiẓī:

Don't seek from the heavens the mysteries
Of beginningless eternity: the heavens are far,
Day and night there

Are but curtains strung by darkness and light.

Don't harbor the ambition of putting foot on the heights
For that station is at a great altitude;
Don't speak of coming close to him, for the Sovereign
Is jealous of all others.

(n.d., 29)

This is not the kind of poetry that can appeal to academics who want everything straight and uncomplicated, uncontaminated by metaphor or mystery. Ḥasan Husainī in his delightful little book on Bēdil and the modern Iranian poet Sohrab Sipihri, cites Dashtī on the following *she'r* of Kalīm Kāshānī's to the effect that it is devoid of meaning:

You came for a stroll in the garden, and the rose
Put its hands to its face out of modesty and shame
And became a floret again.

Husainī quotes Dashtī as follows:

> Although Kalīm has the best taste among poets of *sabk-e hindī*, and is superior to most of them in regard to artistry in composition, even he occasionally becomes aberrant due to hyperbole and desire for novelty. For example, the above-quoted verse will be eternally meaningless because the rose having bloomed once can never go back to the state of being a bud.

Husaini tartly comments that Dashtī

> does not know, or doesn't want to know that rules of poetry are different from rules of botany.… Surely this generation of literary people can never untie the knots for our younger generation of poets and would never lead that generation to new destinations.
>
> (1989, 86)

Husaini made a strong reply based on the general theory of poetry as metaphorical statement but didn't elaborate it. What Kalīm is doing here is *ḥusn-e ta'līl* ("excellence in attributing the cause") where the poet uses a metaphor as a true fact of the external world and employs the metaphor to explain another fact of the external world. The metaphor is thus a true fact on one level, and a fiction on another level.

Let me now conclude this discussion with Bēdil:

What was it that plucked at the strings of your heart

That you came here to divert yourself among such as me, and
us?
You are the springtime of another world, how is it that you
Are here, in this garden?

It wasn't anyone's lips that played upon a flute
It wasn't anyone's caged breath knocking at the confining
breast,
Nullity hurled the mirror against stone, so you became able to
speak.

What happened to your robe of skiey blue silk? Who ripped
away
That seraphic cloak so that you came to this transient grief
house
Of perdition looking for a yard or two of shroud?

(1997, II, 856)

It is impossible to determine one tone for these verses. The narrator seems to credit man with a will of his own—a will to self-destruct, or at least self-devaluate. Or perhaps by apparently blaming man, the narrator only emphasizes that the real blame lies elsewhere. Alternatively, it is neither man nor fate that is to blame; it is just the way the dice are cast in a universe that is essentially inimical to man. A somewhat tragic-ironic voice also can be heard in the *she'rs* when they are read together (in the actual ghazal the *she'rs* are numbers 1, 6, and 8). Read individually, as they should be, they evoke different responses. The opening verse, for instance, can be read as a love poem addressed to the beloved; the second verse seems more pertinent to a statement about language (all things are as if held captive in nullity (*'adam*), which is like a mirror because the figures in it are both real and unreal). When that mirror broke itself, speech was released. So man obtained the power of speech at great cost, he had to leave the security and duality of the mirror to become bound to speech, and thus to earth. The last *she'r* is both mocking and mournful. Loss and gain ultimately seem to have lost their commonplace meaning too, for it's by wearing the shroud that the subject can perhaps go back to the state of wearing the skiey blue silk seraphic robe.

Place this last *she'r* of Bēdil's alongside the following from 'Urfī:

He espied a garden, and pleasant air
And went into flight toward it;

The poor little pheasant didn't know
That there is a falcon there.

(2000, 250)

The *maẓmūn* is very similar, but 'Urfī's tone is slightly ironical, if detached. My translation fails to bring out the laconic power of the last two words of the *she'r*, for the text just says "there is a falcon" and doesn't specify time or place. The falcon (*shahbāz*) exists timelessly, not tied to any locale. Bēdil, on the contrary, is passionate, angry, sarcastic, mysterious.

6

The Indian Style poets have a reputation for reckless, irresponsible use of language and for their inability to adhere to the standard Iranian register of Persian, the implication being that they were non-native (and therefore incompetent) speakers of the language and that even the native-speaker poets had their language "corrupted" by their consorting with non-native speakers. Bēdil, whose imagery is often highly abstract and whose word-compounds often evince a creativity and unconventionality that is rare among other poets, except maybe Nāṣir 'Alī Sarhindī (d. 1696) and Ghālib, has come in for special disapproval among both Iranians and Indians. In fact, it can be said that most of the criticism of the Indian Style poets' use of Persian emanates from Bēdil's (dis)reputation as an undisciplined writer. Ḥusain Āhī blames Bēdil for having Persian only as his second language acquired in neither Iran nor Afghanistan. Āhī recognizes the Afghani register of Persian as legitimate and even occasionally superior to the Iranian one, but alleges that since Bēdil was born and brought up in India and was never in Afghanistan, "basically, Bēdil's language is different from the one current in Afghanistan." Further, since Bēdil, according to Āhī, did not have access to the native speaker's natural competence in the language, "part of Bēdil's vocabulary is inexpressive and unsuccessful" (Bēdil 1992, 14).[36]

[36]Āhī goes on to say that it is absurd and ridiculous to compare Bēdil with Ṣā'ib for the latter ranks so high in Persian literature and language that very few poets can be compared to him. It is noteworthy that Ṣā'ib himself is a major Indian Style poet and is in fact the only poet of that style who has lately received sympathetic attention from Iranian critics.

Now whether there is a standard Iranian (or even Shīrāzī or Isfahani) register is a moot question. In the natural course of things, there can only be a notional rather than actual register against which all other uses are testable. But this is not the occasion for me to go into that debate. I'll only notice in passing that according to Khusrau, the Persian spoken in India and Transoxiana was superior to all other registers. "God, the Opener of all doors, has opened the door of language and poetry upon us and our Persian is the [pristine] Dari Persian," and the Persian of India is the same "throughout these four thousand and odd *farsangs* in the written as well as the spoken mode" (1974, 28–9).[37] Nearly five centuries later, Sirāju'd-Dīn 'Alī Khān-e Ārzū held that so far as Persian was concerned the Persian spoken in the *urdū* ("royal city") was normative for all places. He also explained the term "Dari" (used by Khusrau) to mean the Persian language which is spoken in the royal city or the *urdū*. He doesn't make his rule specific to Delhi, but he must have had Delhi in the back of his mind (1991, 13).[38] More importantly, Khān-e Ārzū held that non-native speakers also could acquire the competence and authority to effect creative distortion in the standard register of a language (*ibid.*, 34–9).

There is an anecdote about Faiẓī and 'Urfī to the effect that once 'Urfī boasted of his native speaker's privileged position before Faiẓī and said, "I have learned my Persian on the knees of my mother and grandmother." Faiẓī replied, "Okay, but we have learned our Persian from the pages of masters like Khāqānī, Anvarī, and others." 'Urfī retorted, "But those venerable too learned their Persian on the knees of *their* mothers and grandmothers." Traditionally, this has been seen as a crushing reply, establishing forever the privilege of the native speaker over the non-native speaker.[39] Khān-e Ārzū, on the contrary, makes here a fine point in regard to the literary against the spoken idiom of a language:

> One of the learned men of India told one of the poets from Iran, "Learned Sir, you have learned Persian from the old ladies of your house, but we learned it from your masters of the standard lexicon like Khāqānī and Anvarī." From this, the above said Indian meant these very com-

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[37]A *farsang* is roughly three miles.

[38]I am grateful to C.M. Naim for making this text (Khān-e Ārzū, *Muṣmir*) available to me.

[39]Ghālib clearly believed this to be the case. See his undated letter (perhaps 1867) to Mirzā Raḥīm Bēg (1993, 1476). (Ghālib claimed the native speaker's privilege for himself too, on extremely tenuous grounds.)

> pounds that occur [in a literary text] on different occasions through a multitude of paths and ways. The common people have no awareness of their mysteries. Thus those who are trained and educated by [the intellectual] élites are better than those who are trained and educated by the common people.
>
> (*ibid.*, 33)

This says pretty much the most important thing that needs to be said in this context about the acquisition of literary language. Yet I know of no study which attempts to understand the theory and practice of language by poets of the Indian Style. For instance, Muḥammad Taqī Bahār said that these poets did not use unusual and exotic words, never employed archaic expressions and yet they have an abundance of new expressions that had not existed before. Apart from the obvious contradictions, what must strike the reader here is these poets' avoidance of archaisms and their predilection for new words, maybe even neologisms. The phrase *lafẓ-e pākīza* ("the bright/sophisticated/beautiful word") and occasionally *ma'nī-e pākīza* frequently occur in the poetry of *sabk-e hindī* in contexts where the merit of words in poetry happens to be the question.

The term *lafẓ-e pākīza* seems to have the force of theory, but I have seen no discussion of it in contemporary texts, or even dictionaries. Muḥammad Taqī Bahār doesn't apparently give any attention to the term. Yet it is clear that poets of the Indian Style placed some store by it. Ṣā'ib has used the phrase with his wonted elegance:

> Although subtle themes can fly without the aid of wings
> The *lafẓ-e pākīza* becomes wings and feathers for the theme.
>
> (Ṣā'ib 1982, 279)

That is to say, the *lafẓ-e pākīza* is an additional source of energy. Ghanī Kashmīrī's pupil Muslim Kashmiri makes a similar, or perhaps even more fundamental point in his preface to Ghanī's Divan. He has a *rubā'ī* there of which the second *she'r* is:

> Themes are like orphans by your side,
> You need words to rear and bring up the themes.
>
> (Ghanī 1964, 54)

As I said above, there is no discussion of the term, or phrase, *lafẓ-e pākīza* in the traditional texts, or even dictionaries. Ṭēk Čand Bahār gives two glosses on *pākīza*; one of them is relevant to literary theory.

According to Bahār, *pākīza* may have been formed by joining *pāk* and *zah*, giving the sense of "a thing which is born of or produced by purity or chastity, without pollution or contamination." This sense would therefore suggest that a *pākīza* word should be grammatically correct, but without the taint of common usage. Thus it would be the opposite of *mubtāżal* ("frequently used") (1865/66, 1, 225). 'Alī Akbar Dehkhodā in his *Lughat Nāma* gives quotes supporting the usages *sukhanhā-e pākīza* and *she'r-e* [a *she'r*, one *she'r*] *pākīza.* The definitions that Dehkhodā gives for *pākīza* include "sophisticated, free from defect, beautiful, pure, chaste." For the word *pāk* Dehkhodā has also the definition *raushan* ("bright") which is at least marginally relevant for us, because we also see frequent mention of *ma'nī-e raushan* ("brilliant theme") in the poetry of *sabk-e hindī*. Here is Shaukat Bukhārī using the phrase almost like a term in literary theory:

> It's not an easy task to depict a brilliant theme,
> My prose turns into poetry the same way
> As water turns into pearl.
>
> (Ikhlāṣ 1973, 2)

The point is that it is only the raindrops that are precipitated in the month of Naisan, and of those too only some can become pearls if the mother-of-pearl swallows them at the right moment. So for the poet's amorphous ideas, [that is, his prose], (=fluid, shapeless and of less value, like a drop of water) to become poetry (=hard, well-formed, bright and of much greater value like a pearl) is a process that depends on many factors over which the poetic temperament can have no control. Ghanī improves upon the image of pearl-water and in the process makes it clear that he is making a statement in literary theory:

> Ghanī, a brilliant theme is water,
> When set well in the poem,
> It is a pearl.
>
> (1964, 99)

Ghanī again uses the verb *bastan* whose meaning in the context of *maẕmūn* and poem we have discussed elsewhere above. I translate *basta shavad* as "set well," suggesting a different but quite relevant image. Of course the pearl's brightness is also *ab* ("water"), and this aspect of the *maẕmūn* remains untranslated here, like much else. But the general flow of the meaning is, I hope, clear.

It is difficult to say if the *lafẓ-e pākīza* is something like Flaubert's *mot juste*, but it's not necessary to go into this matter at present except to say that the Indian Style poets' constant concern with nuanced language gives the lie to their reputation for being verbal spendthrifts. If nothing else, the variety of epithets used by them and by the *tażkira* writers and critics about the quality of the words used in the poems should indicate to us that the use of words in poetry was indeed a serious matter for them. Another indicator of the value this literary culture placed upon words is the fact that beginning with *Mu'iyidu'l-Fuẓalā'* (1519) of Maulvī Muḥammad Lād, and ending with Muḥammad Pādshāh's *Farhang-e Ānandrāj* (1888–89), some of Persian's greatest and most authoritative dictionaries were composed during the heyday of the Indian Style poetry. A general, bird's-eye view of the poetry would suggest that the following qualities in words seem to have been valued above others:

1. New or unusual combinations and compounds (*tarākīb).* These are the glory of the Indian Style but unfortunately quite impossible to represent in English. Appreciation of the newness or excellence of the compounds can only come from adequate exposure to the poetry anyway, so I'll pass on to the next quality, particularly because it is generally a function of the first.

2. The compounds and combinations (*tarākīb)* become more and abstract (that is, based on abstract images or metaphors) with the passage of time. This seems to have annoyed Shiblī and also the Iranians, but is in fact the high-water mark of the Indian Style. Abstraction begins faintly with 'Urfī (d. 1590/92), becomes more discernible two or three decades later in Naẓīrī (d. 1612) and Ẓahūrī (d. 1616/7) who are almost exact contemporaries. It gains greater prominence in Jalāl Asīr (d. 1630) and with Ṣā'ib (d. 1669) it becomes the dominant mode. Nāṣir 'Alī Sarhindī (d. 1696), Shaukat Bukhārī (d. 1695/99), Bēdil (1644–1720), and finally Ghālib (1797–1869) provide the apogee (or the nadir, depending on who is reading them) of this manner. This list is by no means complete; I give only the most prominent names. It must also be noted that among the great names, Ṭālib Āmulī (d. 1626), Kalīm Kāshānī (d. 1651), and Ghanī Kashmīrī (d. 1666) are the least inclined toward abstraction.

3. Archaic or arcane words are rarely used, if at all. But there is general predilection for (a) using polysemic words, and using them in such a way that all or most meanings are germane, and (b) using familiar, commonplace words in their less familiar sense. This last quality works particularly against Nāṣir 'Alī, Bēdil, Ghālib, and others whose language use seems slipshod because the familiar sense of a word or expression used by

them doesn't apply in the context, and the reader often misses out on the fact that there is a less familiar but apposite meaning to the word in question.

4. Although ghazal is the genre where the Indian Style found its finest expression, it is by no means the case that this style is not apparent in other genres. The major genres of *qaṣīda* and *maṯnavī*, and the minor but extremely popular genres of *rubā'ī* and personal elegy all show the same effects, especially among the leading poets of the style. In other words, qualities and characteristics of language use are common through all the genres, given the internal and external structural differences that mark one genre from the other.

I'll cite a few translatable examples of abstract imagery and hope that I can convey some of the thrill that the originals have. I won't analyze or explicate because if the translation can't convey something of the original, the commentary will sound academic and pedagogical.

Just look, 'Urfī, what storms did my weeping raise!
I washed off from the eye of my fortune
All its friendship with sleep.

('Urfī, 2000, 509)

I remained deprived of comfort for the heart
And sympathy
From your black eyes,
Your eyelashes erected a paling around your glance.

(Naẓīrī n.d., 273)

Because of an abundance of the violet,
The garden looks like the face of Joseph
Turned blue due to harsh slaps from his brothers.

(Ṣā'ib 1875, 546)

Just one candle will suffice in the assembly for ages,
If it continues to lose its progress
And stand in wonder at your gait.

(Sarhindī quoted in Āzād Bilgrāmī 1871, 331)

Filled with the memory of someone's drunken eye
I sank away deep into myself so that
From my dust now arise the coquetries
Of her eyelashes, modest and asleep.

(Bēdil 1997, II, 770)

The sky stands in no risk from travelers in non-space,
The wine-carafe is not harmed
By the wine's color striking out of it.
(Shaukat Bukhārī as quoted in Āzād Bilgrāmī, 1913, 121)

My lamentation is busy working on me and I
Am dying for it still. I am
A moth circling around the lamp
That is lit on my own grave.

The dust of my being has been kneaded
With heart's blood. I am
The colorfulness of the patterns
Made by my own sward.
(Ghālib, 1872, 360)

Let me now give a couple of illustrations of the use by these poets of a familiar word in an unfamiliar but perfectly legitimate sense. I'll cite verses from those which I have quoted earlier to illustrate other points. The following is a *she'r* by Nāṣir 'Alī Sarhindī:

The '*anqā*'s reputation,
By virtue of his tracelessness, creates for him
Numerous camel-files of fame;
Silence, when it goes beyond all bounds
Has the clamor of caravan-bells.

The word that I translate here as "tracelessness" is *gumnāmī* which generally signifies "the state of being unknown." It is obvious that this sense is out of the context here. Actually, *gumnāmī* also means "the state of being traceless." The word that I translate here as "creates" is *tarāzad* (from the verb *tarāzīdan*) in the original. Its familiar meaning is "to decorate, to embroider, to beautify" and this meaning is obviously inapplicable here. A less familiar sense of *tarāzīdan,* however, is "to make, to organize, to lay on," and this meaning is perfectly in order here. Then, "camel-file" in the original is *kāravān* which is commonly used in the sense of "caravan." It is clear that this doesn't make good sense in the context. Yet actually, the word (originally *kārbān*) properly means a long file of pack animals like camels or mules. Now it is clear that the word *kāravān* is not only appropriate to the context, but is also extremely de-

lightful because the poet is speaking of the *'anqā*'s invisibility creating for him immense "loads" of reputation. A less than fully knowledgeable reader would be justified to dismiss the use of *gumnāmī, tarāzad,* and *kāravān* here as just another example of slipshod writing. But the Indian Style poets expected their reader to be knowledgeable.

The following *she'rs* are by Bēdil:

> It wasn't anyone's lips that played upon a flute
> It wasn't anyone's caged breath knocking at the confining breast,
> Nullity hurled the mirror against stone, so you became able to speak.

What I translate as "mirror" is *ābgīna* in the original whose most familiar meaning is "glass" as in "glass-pane." This doesn't apply to the context at all, but another meaning for *ābgīna* is "mirror." Taken in this sense, the word not only makes sense but also creates a brilliant image.

> I traveled: by flying or by the labor
> Of stumbles and leaps,
> I traveled everywhere until I
> Arrived at not arriving.

Here, I translate *tapīdan* as "stumbles and leaps," for the familiar meaning, "to be restless, to writhe and thrash about as in pain" makes nonsense of the poem. The less familiar meaning, "to leap, to move from one's place, to make involuntary movement" immediately pulls the poem together.[40]

7

I expect that my translations however weak do some justice to a poetry which was perhaps never meant by its makers to be dissected or translated into English, a language that shares almost nothing with the Indo-Persian literary and linguistic culture. But it is true that the poetry generally sounds difficult to Indian students as well. Some might frown in displeasure at a poetry that sends the reader back to dictionaries (funnily enough, I didn't find any native-speaker of English making this com-

[40]The definitions quoted here can all be found in Dehkhodā [1931/32–81].

plaint about Shakespeare, or even the lowly Gerard Manley Hopkins) and occasionally needs cogitation before meaning or beauty can be discerned in it. Such persons might put this poetry down as "élitist." Yet in fact, "élitist" was not always a term of disapproval, and certainly not in the Indo-Muslim literary tradition, and certainly the poetry of *sabk-e hindī* is élitist, as almost all good poetry always is. Ḥasan Ḥusainī admonishes:

> *Hindi* poetry is the poetry of sharp intelligence, colored by intellection, and one can't use it for ecstatic dancing (*ḥāl).* This poetry is not made use of in assemblies of Sufi singing and ecstatic dancing. It doesn't set the soul atremble and does not sink its claws in the mysterious corners of the inner self. For it is the theme-thinking Intellect and not the security destroying, pyrotechnic Love that organizes its engagements.
>
> (1989, 90–1)

One may not agree with the assertion about the poetry of *sabk-e hindī* not being popular material for singing or sending its hearer into raptures, but the main point is well taken. This poetry thrives best under rigorous and vigorous reading for its driving force is the intellectual, and not the emotional imagination. But we also have the testimony of Ṣadru'd-Dīn 'Ainī that Bēdil's poetry was sung by unlettered peasants in Central Asia. Drawing upon the Memoirs of 'Ainī (1958) who reported that in the early part of the twentieth century he found "laborers and peasants singing Bēdil's ghazals while they worked," Muḥammad Riẓā Shafī'ī Kadkanī asks:

> What understanding does the unlettered peasant in Transoxiana derive from the poems of Bēdil when he recites them aloud, or sings them during his long nights? Or even now what do the common people in Afghanistan get from reciting Bēdil aloud that we students [who live] in the other direction [West of Transoxiana and Afghanistan] are denied?
>
> (1998, 103, 105)

One answer could lie, of course in the sheer music of Bēdil's poetry, and the historical-cultural construction of his reputation in Afghanistan and most of Central Asia. But there could be something more to it, something to do with the nature of poetry in general, and especially with the poetry of *sabk-e hindī.*[41] Amīr Mīnā'ī (1828–1900), the well-known Urdu

[41]For a subtle and informative discussion on the tradition of the *mushā'ira* and the popular reception of poetry and an audience- and reader-participation in

poet and lexicographer, is reported to have once remarked that Bēdil's poetry had the quality of pleasing even when it couldn't be understood (1924, 16). Kadkanī says something quite similar (1998, 21),[42] and while Amīr Mīnā'ī's observation doesn't surprise me for he was an Urdu poet of distinction, I hold it to the great credit of Kadkanī for him to have arrived at such a conclusion for he stands in the shadow of a two-hundred-year-old tradition of hostility to *sabk-e hindī*.

As regards the Indian critics' attitude to *sabk-e hindī*, I have had occasion to observe elsewhere in this essay that we have done almost as badly as the Iranians. Urdu poets have very nearly always venerated *sabk-e hindī*, and at least the Iranian-origin poets of the Indian Style have been held as normative as far as language use was concerned. But there has been no real critical acclaim of this poetry. In fact, Indian critics have generally been either hostile, or patronizing, or both toward *sabk-e hindī*. And this attitude extends even to Khusrau. While Ghālib was unwilling to grant any Indian but Khusrau the status of undisputed master of standard, literary Persian, Shiblī Nu'mānī, in spite of claiming to be Khusrau's true admirer managed to be snide about Khusrau's Persian. In the midst of his long and admiring and perspicacious chapter on Khusrau, Shiblī suddenly says:

> The Amīr has used many idioms which are not found in the poetry of any native speaker … [here he gives four or five examples] ... This has encouraged the mistrustful to say that it is because of his being a resident of India that he lapses into Indian usages. Maybe such is the case. But since I don't have confidence in my own investigative and diligent searching, I cannot share this mistrust.
>
> (1947, 163–4)

As is well known, Khusrau composed (c. 1299–1301) probably at the request of Sulṭān Kaiqubād five long *maṣnavīs* in reply to, or in imitation of, or on the pattern of the great twelfth-century Persian poet Niẓāmī

---

the making of poetic texts in the Indo-Persian literary culture, see Pritchett (2003).

[42]The verse under discussion here is a particularly opaque sounding one from Bēdil. Kadkanī says that each part of this verse is delightful but the whole makes little sense. Interestingly enough, Ḥusainī devotes considerable ingenuity and space to elucidating this very *she'r*, which he regards as coherent and full of meaning (1989, 116–29).

(1140–1207) whose five *maṣnavīs* are known collectively as *Khamsa-e Niẓāmī* ("The Five of Niẓāmī"). In one of the *maṣnavīs* called *Maṭla'u'l-Anvār* (c. 1299) Khusrau targeted Niẓāmī in a few *she'rs* of boasting, particularly in the following verse:

> The star of my sovereignty has risen
> And hurled an earthquake in Niẓāmī's grave.
>
> (quoted in Shiblī 1947, 131)

There is nothing bad or objectionable in such boasting which is quite in the tradition and is known as *ta'allī* ("to exalt oneself"). In another, earlier *maṣnavī Qirānu 's-Sa'dain* (1289) he was also properly humble toward Niẓāmī and used a novel image to make his obeisance:

> It would be unripe of me to bake my raw obsession,
> For all themes ripened and matured with Niẓāmī.
>
> (*ibid.*)

Khusrau's close Iranian contemporary 'Ubaid Żākānī (1300–71) remembered today mostly as master of the pornographic satire was a ghazal poet of some note. His reputation as a ghazal poet may have suffered because of Khusrau's popularity. According to Vaḥīd Mirzā at least one ghazal of 'Ubaid Żākānī found a place in manuscripts of Khusrau's ghazals (1949, 199).[43] Anyway, he picked up Khusrau's culinary image to make a sharp rebuttal of Khusrau's achievement in his *Khamsa*:

> Because of rawness, Khusrau fell into error:

[43]Misattribution, especially from a less popular poet to a more popular one, was not unknown in premodern Arabo-Persian literary culture. We have seen one example above, involving 'Urfī and Faiẓī. Sanā'ī, in his compilation of the divan of his senior contemporary Mas'ūd Sa'd Salmān Lāhōrī, included many poems which were not Mas'ūd's but were popularly believed to be his. Sanā'ī made necessary deletions when Mas'ūd pointed out, not without displeasure, the interpolations (see Lewis 1996, 133, 224; Sharma 2000, 137). Sometimes the author himself would attribute his work to a more popular or prestigious author. Lewis suggests that Sanā'ī may have included some of his own poetry in the compilation. While one can't be positive in Sanā'ī's case, deliberate authorial misattribution was not unknown and may in fact have played quite a busy role in premodern Arab literary culture (see Kilito 2001).

He cooked his broth in Niẓāmī's pot.[44]

Shiblī has attributed 'Ubaid Żākānī's displeasure to "chauvinistic prejudice" (1947, 128) but Mirzā passes the matter over in silence, indicating that he is in general agreement, and goes on to say:

> The truth of the matter is that if [Khusrau's] *Khamsa* is viewed as a whole, then it can be described as a very good imitation of Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*. It is always difficult for the copy to excel the original, so the maximum possible praise of Khusrau, which wouldn't be too far from the truth either, could be to say that it is the best imitation possible of Niẓāmī's *Khamsa.* And some extremely competent appraisers, like ['Abdu 'r-Raḥmān] Jāmī [d. 1492] and ['Alī Shēr] Navā'ī [1440–1500] also agree with this assessment. Now this is another matter that in some places Khusrau has managed to depict situations and subjects whose height and excellence Niẓāmī was unable to attain.
>
> (1949, 269–70)[45]

This from a very erudite, sympathetic scholar who spent a lifetime studying Khusrau. I need not point out the contradictions in the above pronouncement, nor the feeble literary theory that is expected to hold it up. In the beginning of his text, Mirzā deplores the fact that European and Iranian critics alike hold a low opinion of Indian-Persian poetry (1949, 10–11). But he lets himself off the hook of decision in the matter of Iranian against Indian by saying:

> There can be no greater evidence of Khusrau's merit (*khūbī*) than the fact that even Iranian critics have acknowledged his greatness.… But if in spite of knowing all this [the alleged praise of Khusrau by Sa'dī, and an even weaker inference from a *she'r* of Ḥāfiẓ], one looks down upon classical Indian-Persian poetry, it can be nothing but perverse obstinacy.
>
> (*ibid.*, 16)

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[44]Both Mirzā (1949, 269) and Shiblī (1947, 128) cite Badāyūnī's (d. 1595–96) (1962) famous history *Muntakhabu 't-Tavārīkh* for this *she'r*.

[45]Mirzā was long-time professor of Persian at the University of Lucknow. As a sort of coda to him, listen to Nabī Hādī, lately professor of Persian at Aligarh Muslim University, "If native-speaker Iranian critics feel a touch diffident with this poetry, their attitude in this is not arbitrary or without reason. Thousands of *she'rs* can be cited from Mughal poetry which are no more than exhibitions of strained contrivance and gratuitous extravagance" (1978, 14).

I will leave without comment this sad evidence of several kinds of failure but must add that the "abounding grace" that Mirzā has vouchsafed to Khusrau does not touch the poets of *sabk-e hindī* whose "merit" has not been acknowledged by any Iranian critic since the late eighteenth century. Ṣā'ib and Bēdil are recent exceptions, and while their "merit" too has been acknowledged by just a few, there are "admirers" like Ḥusain Āhī who indignantly deny even the possibility of a comparison between Ṣā'ib and Bēdil.

8

The Indian Style in Persian poetry is no longer a living reality of literature. Persian studies began to decline in India with the rise and establishment of the colonial power. The Indo-Persian literary culture continued to command respect until about the last decade of the nineteenth century but its decline continued steadily until the independence of the country and its partition in 1947 applied a decisive blow, and not only in India, but also in the newly created state of Pakistan. The creation of Bangladesh in 1971 only helped emphasize the redundancy of a culture of whose two principal languages Persian was very much a thing of the past, an arcane discipline found only in specialized university departments. Its other language, Urdu, underwent a dark phase in India, flourished though under state patronage in Pakistan and became practically outlawed in Bangladesh.

The loss of the Indo-Persian literary culture is a great loss for the Subcontinent, and not in terms of literature alone. It was a political-cultural state of mind, an integrating power, and a big window to the past as well as to the outside world. English can fulfil the latter role to a certain extent (for English windows do not open on Central Asia and the Middle East), but English can't even begin to perform other roles which the Indo-Persian literary culture historically performed over three centuries. The only consolation for this culture in modern-day South Asia is that Persian commands some respect and prestige in its academic-literary environments. But absent the continuity and sympathetic understanding of the nuances of the past, Persian studies now lack the dynamism that characterized them until the middle of the nineteenth century. Small wonder, then, that the entire Persian scholarly community in South Asia has been

unable to provide a satisfactory or comprehensive theoretical or historical account of *sabk-e hindī*.

In Iran, the decline of *sabk-e hindī* began with the so-called "literary return" (*bāzgasht-e adabī*) in the late eighteenth century. This "return" seems to me to have been more a political than a literary matter. It was clearly a "rebellion" against *sabk-e hindī* though Laṅgrūdī tries to link the "return" to a historical perspective by saying that the style that became current at that time was the answer to a need felt by the poets to go back to their ancient forebears. The decline of the Safavids resulted in a state of chaos and uncertainty not suited to the cerebral, abstract manner of the Indian Style, hence the desire to go back to something more suited to the mood of the times (1993, 43–4, 48–9, 52). I have already pointed out that Laṅgrūdī's account is not consistent with the actual history of the poetry. There is no need for me here to examine this question further, except to say that like all efforts at trying to link literary events and trends to political-social history in a one-dimensional manner, Laṅgrūdī's effort too is simplistic and his argument circular. For our purposes, it is sufficient to say that by abandoning the Indian Style, Iran lost the creative energy that had informed her poetry for more than three centuries. The "return" poets so laboriously assembled by Laṅgrūdī in his book are insufferably uninteresting.

How would *sabk-e hindī* have answered or adjusted to the challenges of the twentieth century in South Asia? Could its practitioners have devised an effective defense against the Noah's flood of change that overtook everything in South Asia in a matter of just a few decades? It is an interesting but futile question. No one can turn the pages of history to start afresh from a given point. The Indian Style has so far clung to its flimsy but very real hold on the Indo-Muslim cultural consciousness. One can only hope that it continues to do so, and maybe even make it stronger over time.

The rose cannot know
To what far places its scent will travel;
Don't expect the lovers to know the final end
Of the frenzied heart.

(Ṣā'ib 1875, 511) ❐

Appendix
(Originals of Persian and Urdu Verses Quoted in the Text)

(Page 2)

بیاورید گر ایں جا بود زباں دانے
غریب شہرسخن ہا ے گفتنی دارد

(غالب دہلوی)

(Page 5)

صائب چہ خیالیست شود ہمچو نظیری
عرفی بہ نظیری نہ رسانید سخن را

(صائب تبریزی)

بطرز تازہ قسم یاد می کنم صائب
کہ جاے طالب آمل بہ اصفہاں پیداست

(صائب تبریزی)

(Page 18)

گر نقاب سخن شگافتہ ای
انچہ در وہم نیست یافتہ ای
جہل ہا علم شد بہ نور سخن
علم جہل است بے ظہور سخن
سخن است آنکہ کہ زیر تا بم ازوست
نہ ہمیں نالہ خامشی ہم ازوست

بہ تخیل اگر خطاب کنند
از سخن طورے انتخاب کنند
ور خموشی اشارتے دارد
سخن آنجا عبارتے دارد

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

(Page 24)

بے مہر رخت روز مرا نور نہ ماندہ است
وز عمر مرا جز شب دیجور نہ ماندہ است

(خواجہ حافظ شیرازی)

(Page 26)

خوشبو یہ پے ترے دہن غنچہ رنگ سے
شرمندہ پے گلاب کا نیچہ تفنگ سے
گوش رقیب تیر حسد کا نشانہ ہو
کر آج میرے کان میں باتیں تفنگ سے

(شیخ امام بخش ناسخ)

(Page 27)

نیست عینک کہ نہادیم ز پیری بر چشم
نگہ از شوق جمال تو زند سر بر سنگ

(غنی کاشمیری)

کام عاشق چو در آید بہ بغل می میرد
غنچہ بر شاخ دل ما گرہ طاعون است

(محمد قلی سلیم)

(Page 28)

نگذشت اگر ز سلسلۂ زلف او صبا
دیوانہ از کجا شد و زنجیر چوں شکست

(علی قلی میلی ہروی)

برگ گل را بکف باد صبا می بینم
باغ ہم جانب او نامہ برے پیدا کرد

(باقر ہروی)

دفتر حسن بہار است کہ در عہد تو شست
برگ گل نیست کہ از باد در آب افتاد ہ است

(کلیم کاشانی)

(Page 29)

دلیل خواہش خوباں ہمیں بس عشق بازاں را
که گل یک ساله راه از بہر بلبل باز می گردد

(صیدی طہرانی)

یک نفس واشدنی داشت دلم گل زد و برد
مصرع ناله ز من بود که بلبل زد و برد

(حکیم حسین شہرت)

پیاله رنگ دگر زد رخ فرنگ ترا
شراب روغن گل شد چراغ رنگ ترا

(شوکت بخاری)

در دشت ابر رنگ شبستان لاله ریخت
نقش و نگار خانه تماشا چه می کنی

(میرزا رضی دانش)

(Page 30)

ہمه اندرز من بتو این است
که تو طفلی و خانه رنگین است

(سنائی غزنوی)

دنیا به سخت گیری ہر گز به کس نه پاید
ہر چند بفشری مشت رنگ حنا نه ماند

(کلیم کاشانی)

(Page 30-1)

دل که بے عشق شد از رحمت حق دور شود
مرده را موج ز دریا بکنار اندازد

(میرزا رفیع واعظ)

(Page 31)

جدل از خصم ہنر باشد و ازمن عیب است

چوں رگ لعل ز دانا رگ گردن عیب است

(محمد قلی سلیم)

تا توانی عاشق معشوق ہر جائی مشو
می کند خورشید سر گرداں گل خورشید را

(غنی کاشمیری)

رفتیم سوے یار و ندیدیم روے یار
مانند رہروے کہ رو درو بہ آفتاب

(غنی کاشمیری)

(Page 32)

وہ کچھ شعر کے فن میں مشکل اچھے
کہ لفظ ہور معنی یو سب مل اچھے
اسی لفظ کو شعر میں لیائیں توں
کہ لیایا ہے استاد جس لفظ کوں
اگر فام ہے شعر کا تج کو چھند
چنے لفظ لیا ہور معنی بلند
رکھیا ایک معنی اگر زور ہے
ولے بھی مزا بات کا ہو رہے

(ملا وجہی)

(Page 33)

دگر شعر ہندی کے بعضے ہنر
نہ سکتے ہیں لیا فارسی میں سنور
میں اس دو ہنر کے خلاصے کوں پا
کیا شعر تازہ دونوں فن ملا

(ملا نصرتی بیجا پوری)

دکھادے مرے پردۂ فکر سوں
ہر اک تازہ مضمون کے بکر موں

(ملا نصرتی بیجا پوری)

حروفاں میں بھر یوں معانی کا رس
کہ ہوئے مہ کو امریت او پینے ہوس

(ملا نصرتی بیجا پوری)

نوا طرز خوش باف و خاطر پسند
مضامین رنگیں معانی بلند

(ملا نصرتی بیجا پوری)

دکن کا کیا شعر جیوں فارسی

(ملا نصرتی بیجا پوری)

(Page 36)

یاراں بردند شعر مارا
افسوس کہ نام ما نہ بردند

(غنی کاشمیری)

چگونہ معنی غیرے برم کہ معنی خویش
دو بارہ بستن دزدی ست در شریعت من

(کلیم کاشانی)

(Page 38)

اگرچہ تیغ نیم روزگار دریا دل
در آتشم فگند تا دمے دہد آبم

(کلیم کاشانی)

گذشتی از نظر و بے تو زندہ ایم ہنوز
ز شرم آب نہ گشتیم خاک بر سر ما

(آنند رام مخلص)

زیستم بے تو و زیں شرم نہ کشتم خود را
جاں فدائے تو میا از تو حیا می آید

(غالب دہلوی)

(Page 39)

چناں به تشنه لبی مائلم که گر آبے
ز جوے تیغ تو آرند در گلو نه رود

(طالب آملی)

حدیث تشنه لبی خواستم کنم اظهار
زبانم آب شد از شرم در گلویم رفت

(طالب آملی)

شراب کهنه می نوشم به بزم او چو بنشینم
به من تا نوبت آید دختر رز پیر می گردد

(کلیم کاشانی)

(Page 39-40)

مدتے شد که دریں مے کده خمیازه کشم
تا رسد دور به من دختر رز پیر شده است

(راہب اصفہانی)

(Page 40)

آفت ایجاد است طبع از دستگاه خود سری
دختر رز فتنه ها می زاید از بے شوہری

(میرزا بیدل)

از دختر رز شیخ به فرسنگ گریزد
ایں مرد به بینیدچه نا مرد بر آمد

(ہلاس رائے رنگین)

(Page 41)

دود از دل عاشقاں بر آرد
حسن تو ز آتش جوانی

(امیر خسرو دہلوی)

ہر که بیند در رہش گوید ہمی

قبلۂ آتش پرستاں می رود

(میرزا غالب دہلوی)

گویند که خسروا چه نالی
من فاختۂ بہار خویشم

(امیر خسرو دہلوی)

مگو که ناله به گوش که می زنی عرفی
که عندلیب گلستان ذوق خویشتنم

(عرفی شیرازی)

(Page 42)

با ہیچ کس حدیث نه گفتن نه گفته ام
بر گوش خویش گفته ام و من نه گفته ام

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

به بیں به ساز و مپرس از ترانۂ که ندارم
تواں به دیده شنیدن فسانۂ که ندارم

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

پر گز نه خوردم آب خوش خویش در جگر
تیغ است بے تو قطرۂ آبے که من خورم

(امیر خسرو دہلوی)

(Page 43)

عشرت ما معنی نازک بدست آوردن است
عید ما نازک خیالاں را ہلال اینست و بس

(میرزا صائب تبریزی)

صائب ز آشنائی عالم کناره کرد
ہر کس که شد ز معنی بیگانه آشنا

(میرزا صائب تبریزی)

بے تو گر جام مے به کف گیرم
آفتاب گرفته را ماند

(بندرا بن خوشگو)

(Page 44)

ریخت به خانهٔ خدا اشک ریاے زاهداں
قحبه به مسجد افگند طفل حرام زاده را

(اشرف ماژندرانی)

مدار جلوه دریغ از دلم که خرمن حسن
به خوشه چینی آئینه کم نمی گردد

(عرفی شیرازی)

اے با ہزار عشوهٔ حسنت چه کم شود
گر رخصتے ز بہر تماشا به من دہی

(فیضی فیاضی)

(Page 44-5)

حسن چندے سر به دل شوخی و رعنائی دہد
شه چو گیرد مملکت اول به یغمائی دہد

(نظیری نیشاپوری)

(Page 45-6)

اگر چه نیست قدر خاک شعر تازه را صائب
ہماں ارباب نظم از یک دگر دزدند مضموں را

(صائب تبریزی)

(Page 46)

ہر دم از گوشهٔ خاطر سر جستن دارد
معنی تازه غزالیست که بستن دارد

(غنی کاشمیری)

(Page 47)

دخلے که نه کردی به کلام الله است
بیتے که نه برده ای تو بیت الله است

(وارسته سیالکوٹی)

نیست آساں معنی پیچیدہ صائب یافتن
رہ نما از پیچ و تابست ایں رہ پیچیدہ را

(صائب تبریزی)

(Page 48)

بے فہم اگر چشم بدوزد بہ کتاب
نتواند دید روے معنی در خواب
کے غور کنند در سخن بے مغزاں
غواصی بحر نیست مقدور حباب

(غنی کاشمیری)

نقش حیراں را خبر از حالت نقاش نیست
معنی پوشیدہ را از صورت دیبا مپرس

(صائب تبریزی)

(Page 48-9)

خیال اگر ہوس آہنگ مشق آزادیست
چو بوے گل بہ صبا معنی نہ بستہ نویس

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

(Page 49)

خلقے طور صفات و اسما فہمید
از وحدت و کثرت انجمن ہا فہمید
آں مصطلحات مبتذل گشت کہن
اکنوں باید معانی ما فہمید

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

ہوشے کہ سفیدی و سیاہی فہمید
مپسند کہ سر حق کماہی فہمید
گفتم سخنے لیک پس از کسب کمال
خواہی فہمید چوں نہ خواہی فہمید

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

تو ادا سنج نه ای ورنه تغافل نگه است
تو سخن سنج نه ای ورنه خموشی سخن است

(ظہوری ترشیزی)

ز گمنامی طرازد کارواں پا شہرت عنقا
خموشی چوں ز حد بیروں شود شور جرس دارد

(ناصر علی سرہندی)

(Page 50)

ساز وحشت حقیقتے ساکن نیست
ظاہر پر چند پر زند باطن نیست
گو ہر دو جہاں به گفتگو خوں گردد
حرفے که به خامشی رسد ممکن نیست

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

(Page 50-1)

فیضی به حرف عشق تو کس پے نمی برد
سر بسته نکتۂ تو معمائے دیگراست

(فیضی فیاضی)

(Page 51)

من به راہے می روم کاں جا قدم نا محرم است
از مقامے حرف می گویم که دم نا محرم است

(فیضی فیاضی)

کاغذ و کلک چه از سوز دلم بر تابد
خس و خاشاک بکف دارم و آتش تیز است

(فیضی فیاضی)

(Page 52)

بد نامی ما شہرۂ عالم شده شادیم
کیں ملک غریب است کس از مردم ما نیست

(عرفی شیرازی)

ازاں تتبع حافظ رواست بر عرفی
که دل بکاود و درد سخنوری داند

(عرفی شیرازی)

چه جاے خامۂ عرفی که کلک حافظ نیز
به نقش خامۂ معنی نگار ما نه رسد

(عرفی شیرازی)

یک سخن نیست که خاموشی ازاں بہتر نیست
نیست علمے که فراموشی ازاں بہتر نیست

(عرفی شیرازی)

زباں ز نکته فرو ماند و راز من باقیست
بضاعت سخن آخر شد و سخن باقیست

(عرفی شیرازی)

(Page 52-3)

منکر مشو چو نقش نه بینی که اہل رمز
لوح و قلم گذاشته تحریر می کنند

(عرفی شیرازی)

(Page 53)

نباشدش سخنے کش تواں به کاغذ زد
برو که خواجه گہر ہاے معدنی دارد

(غالب دہلوی)

سخن ما ز لطافت نه پذیرد تحریر
نه شود گرد نمایاں ز رم توسن ما

(غالب دہلوی)

اے بسا معنی که از نا محرمی ہاے زباں
با ہمه شوخی مقیم پرده ہاے راز ماند

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

(Page 54)

سخن اگر ہمہ معنیست نیست بے کم و بیشے
عبارتیست خموشی کہ انتخاب نہ دارد

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

اگر معنی خامشی گل کند
لب غنچہ تعلیم بلبل کند

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

گر بہ پرواز و گراز سعی تپیدن رفتم
رفتم اما ہمہ جا تا نہ رسیدن رفتم

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

طول سفر شوق چہ پرسی کہ دریں راہ
چوں گرد فرو ریخت صدا از جرس ما

(غالب دہلوی)

(Page 55-6)

جوہر بینش من در تہ زنگار بماند
آں کہ آئینۂ من ساخت نہ پرداخت دریغ

(نظیری نیشاپوری)

(Page 56)

اے بسا آئینہ کز درد تغافل ہاے حسن
خاک شد در زیر زنگ و جوہرے پیدا نہ کرد

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

(Page 56-7)

سر ازل ا ز فلک مجوے کہ دوراست
روز و شب ایں جاحجاب ظلمت و نوراست
پاے بہ بالا منہ کہ پایہ بلند است
دم ز تقرب مزن کہ شاہ غیور است

(فیضی فیاضی)

(Page 57)

سیر گلشن کردی و گل غنچه شد بار دگر
بس که از شرم خجالت دست پیش رو گرفت

(کلیم کاشانی)

(Page 57-8)

که کشید دامن فطرتت که به سیرما و من آمدی
تو بہار عالم دیگری به کجا دریں چمن آمدی
نه لبے به زمزمه چنگ زد نه نفس در دل تنگ زد
عدم آبگینه به سنگ زد که تو قابل سخن آمدی
چه شد اطلس فلکی قبا که درید آں ملکی ردا
که تو در زیاں کدۂ فنا پئے یک دو گز کفن آمدی

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

(Page 58-9)

چمنے دید و ہوائے خوش و پرواز گرفت
کبک مسکیں چه خبر داشت که شہبازے ہست

(عرفی شیرازی)

(Page 61)

گر چه بے بال کند معنی نازک پرواز
لفظ پاکیزه پرو بال شود معنی را

(صائب تبریزی)

طفلے است یتیم در کنارت معنی
لفظے باید که پرورد معنی را

(مسلم کاشمیری)

(Page 62)

کار آساں نه شود معنی روشن بستن
نثر ما نظم شود آب گہر می گردد

(شوکت بخاری)

آب بود معنی روشن غنی

خوب اگر بسته شود گوپراست

(غنی کاشمیری)

(Page 64)

عرفی ببیں که گریه چه طوفاں نموده است
کز چشم بخت دوستی خواب شسته ایم

(عرفی شیرازی)

محروم ز دلجوئی آں چشم سیاہم
مژگان تو بر گرد نگه سور کشیده

(نظیری نیشا پوری)

باغ از بنفشه صفحهٔ رخسار یو سف است
گردیده از طپانچهء اخواں کبود رنگ

(صائب تبریزی)

عمر ہا یک شمع در محفل کفایت می کند
گر چنیں می بازد از حیرانیت رفتار را

(ناصر علی سرہندی)

(Page 64-5)

چناں در خود فرو رفتم به یاد چشم مخمورے
که جوشد از غبارم ناز مژگاں ہاے خوابیده

(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

(Page 65)

نباشد آسماں را آفتے از لا مکاں سیراں
خطر از رنگ مے بیروں زدن ہا نیست مینارا

(شوکت بخاری)

ناله در کار ماست و ما در ہواے او
پروانهٔ چراغ مزار خودیم ما
خاک وجود ماست به خون جگر خمیر

رنگینی قماش غبار خودیم ما

(غالب دہلوی)

(Page 69)

کوکبہء خسرویم شد بلند
زلزلہ در گور نظامی فگند

(امیر خسرو دہلوی)

پختہ ازو شد چو معانی تمام
خام بود پختن سودائے خام

(امیر خسرو دہلوی)

(Page 69-70)

غلط افتاد خسرو را ز خامی
کہ سکبا پخت در دیگ نظامی

(عبید زاکانی)

(Page 72)

گل چہ می داند کہ سیر نکہت او تا کجاست
عاشقاں را از سر انجام دل شیدا مپر س

(صائب تبریزی)

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