

Alireza Korangy

Classical Persian Poetry and Poets: The Timurid and Türkmen Periods

[Transcript of a]Talk Entitled: *Yayan: The Fifteenth Century, the Proto-Thematic and the Proto-Rhetorical 'Split Second' Before Maktab-i Vuqū'*

[As this is a transcript of my talk and not an article, per say, I do in advance ask for the dear reader's forgiveness for any shortcomings they might encounter in the text—AK]

First, I would like to thank Leonard Lewisohn for having put forth his kind invitation, thereby permitting me to have the honor of being amongst these esteemed scholars, some of whom I have admired for many years and some, by the token of my own ignorance, I have only begun to admire. Secondly, and this should be mentioned with the first, I would like to thank my dear friend and colleague Asghar Seyed-Gohrab for having facilitated this occasion by introducing me to Leonard. Thank you one and all and now please allow me to start with my forty five minutes of infamy.

Amīr Khusrau of Delhi, Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī of Delhi, Kh^wāja Nizāmuddīn ‘Ubaidullāh Zākānī of Qazvīn, Ruknuddīn Auḥadī, Abū al-‘Atā’ Kamāluddīn Maḥmūd Kh^wājū, ‘Imaduddīn Faqīh of Kirmān, Jamāluddīn Salmān Sāvajī, Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz, Shāh Ni‘matullāh Valī, Qāsim, Amīr Āq-Malik Shāhī, Ibn Ḥusām, Jāmī, Hilālī, and many many more are the crown jewels of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries; and yet these are the least articulately studied two whole centuries in the history of Persian verse, often criticized for a lack of creativity and a general state of lackluster. Let me add that one person did not fall into that traditional trap by shunning these centuries and has endeavored to be truly judicious in their regard by offering a discursive theater—that being Dr. Lewisohn: Thank you dear Leonard. There can be many reasons as to why there are such negative estimations of these centuries, which we will discuss briefly. Further to that, *Maktab-i Vuqū'*, is then a focus that can help better identify some of the many positive contributions of the 14th and the 15th centuries.

One of the main reasons for the bandwagon mentality, regarding these centuries, can be the existence of poets such as Ḥāfiẓ, Jāmī, and or Kh^wājū: Poets who are no longer categorized within an epoch and rather—especially so true in the case of Ḥāfiẓ—define poetry and all of its cognitive and nostalgic paradigms for many; specially so in Iran. This estimation of them is not limited merely to the ghazal as one might presume, and in fact includes any poem with ghazal-like motifs. These other ghazal-like poems can range from *tarkīb-bands* to quatrains, even if these content-forms were not part of these aforesaid poets' repertoire. I must add, today, there is only time to discuss some poems that are not ghazals—as ghazal was in fact the predominant form of expression in these two centuries and after—and due to the scarcity of time, they will be very few in number.

It is one of those things when one doesn't see the forest for the trees, when one speaks of the Persian poetry of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. Some of the assessments about them are true, however one has to ponder their [assessments] validity in relation to other centuries. We can not speak of every occasion where these two centuries have failed the expectations of scholars and the public, so through a temporally relevant engagement, a divergence can occur in viewing these centuries and bringing to purview their importance in relation to, and their contribution to, *Maktab-i Vuqū'* and maybe even *Sabk-i Hindī*. By doing so, I hope to thereby accentuate the positive within their poetic paradigm and refute the overly emulated estimation that these centuries were based on emulation and offered nothing else.

When I was asked to be a part of this workshop, I was immediately gravitated to talking about the ‘school of realists’, *Maktab-i Vuqu'*, because I feel that they, and the poets of the aforementioned periods share the same misfortune of having been coined epigones—more true of course with the former than the latter—with the exception of several foregone conclusions of excellence such as Jāmī, Ḥāfiẓ and a few others of course. Furthermore, I feel that even though *Maktab-i Vuqū'* finds its significance in the most cliché of Persian themes, love and the role of the lover and the beloved, it allows for some wiggle room in a scholarly sense and affords a very large theater of experimentation in hypothetical thought. This is due to the fact that for the first time in centuries we come across a brand new set of dynamics in the triangle of love, lover, and the beloved in the ‘school of realists’ and prior to that, for centuries, the dynamics were certainly different and redundant. Going back and forth between the poetry of those centuries, generally coined by some as overly dramatic and insincere, and the poetry of *Maktab-i Vuqū'*, known for lack-thereof, differences will be punctuated, which can also indicate a poetic morphology that has been as successful as any before; and secondly points to the aforesaid 14th-15th cc. as fruitful epochs, which were

Alireza Korangy

Classical Persian Poetry and Poets: The Timurid and Türkmen Periods

[Transcript of a]Talk Entitled: *Yayan: The Fifteenth Century, the Proto-Thematic and the Proto-Rhetorical 'Split Second' Before Maktab-i Vuqū'*

proper underpinnings, rhetorically and thematically, for their ensuing generations. Therefore, in our short time here today I will also point to a natural progression that can be highlighted throughout the history of Persian literature.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries' influence is also noteworthy because they are the manneristic inheritors of two very important centuries that are the 12th and the 13th, both in terms of rhetoric and theme. They were immensely influenced by true giants of Persian verse. Their work, furthermore, defines, through its treatment of topics such as love, lover, beloved, the divine, and all the rest of these nostalgic canons of Persian verse, an insight into a glorious past, an experimentally fabulous present, and a future with both an ironic penchant for the simple and a stubborn riddled [enigmatic] vagueness [in the Indian style]. Geopolitically speaking, these were tumultuous times in the Persian-speaking world as confusion persisted and violence roared in most places. The existence of this kind of geo-political upheaval can have immense effects on those who express in them; however, they are not the only reasons that must be deemed indicators of success or lack-thereof for the poets, if such a term should ever be used in terms of poetry at all. Although upheaval has always been a strong determinant in the poetical productions in the past—and present—not having upheaval and hovering chaos has not been detrimental to creativity either. As an example, it is true that Ḥāfiẓ did have less dealings with these upheavals and lived in a relatively peaceful environment, where he was doted on by his patron. Then how can we explain the 'truism' about the geo-political paradigms as facts. On the hindsight, many poets have been put through an immense grind in their environment and have been coined mediocre at best. Sometimes it is the poet who determines the 'facts' of their environment and creates a vision that is entirely antithetical to the mainstream's senses, yet true to his or her philosophical, ideal, and historical beliefs and urgencies, necessarily imbued with nostalgic cogencies to appease the poet himself: Not every poet is warranted to be called a universalist or a public voice, and consequentially can not be judged as such. This latter is yet another dubious post-facto rationalization employed by some literati in dealing with the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. All the elements present in these centuries, geopolitically, imply that these were times for thinking about matters, all sorts of matters, be it love, beloved, lover, the world, the Sufi life, etc. This was a soup with all kinds of vegetables and hence a great milieu for experiment and I dare say they did do exactly that, albeit having done so from a golden platform built by Ḥāfiẓ and a few others. However, that merely makes them the inheritors of an emulative protocol throughout Persian literary history and not 'emulators' as in finaglers.

Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries, did not have the opacities to be considered 'brilliant', which in itself is a subjective coinage for any period, nor did they have the capability to escape their 'Ḥāfiẓocentric'¹ kernel. The poets of these centuries are considered to have been part of a school of poetics not-so-appropriately termed—in their regard—*Sabk-i Irāqī*. That is yet another aspect of their assessment which has led to the many misjudgments in their regard. They fall into a category all their own, I dare to say *Sabk-i Ḥāfiẓ* and later maybe *Sabk-i Jāmī*, but certainly not *Sabk-i Irāqī*; and even though, most of the poets in these two centuries lack—and have been criticized for not having—the philosophical depth of both Ḥāfiẓ and Jāmī, no one else after them has been able to accomplish that feat. Therefore, this should not imply mediocracy and or failure as they should be analyzed in terms of their own merits, within each line of poetry, no matter how minor the poet. This should also be done with the understanding that Ḥāfiẓ, Jāmī, and others were in fact the paradigm for them, as has been the case for centuries after the 15th c. when many emulated them, and continue to do so. One might add this has been a protocol throughout Persian literary history: Do we not remember Sanāʿī's influence?

Considering the *Iraqī Style* as a litmus, the occasion is extremely scarce when one can compare Ḥāfiẓ to Jamāl al-Dīn Isfahānī and this would be no less a truism if Jāmī were to be compared with Kamāl al-Dīn, Jamāl al-Dīn and others in the twelfth century. As it is, Khāqānī, Falakī Shirvānī, and many others

1 I must thank Leonard Lewisohn for having come up with this brilliant term and in this cleaned-up transcript for the website I have chosen to use it instead of Ḥāfiẓ-motivated era.

Alireza Korangy

Classical Persian Poetry and Poets: The Timurid and Türkmen Periods

[Transcript of a]Talk Entitled: *Yayan: The Fifteenth Century, the Proto-Thematic and the Proto-Rhetorical 'Split Second' Before Maktab-i Vuqū'*

could not be compared with Kamāl al-Dīn, Jamāl al-Dīn, etc.—they lived within the same period and yet were composing in different styles and certainly employing different mannerisms. *Sabk-i Irāqī* is considered to have all the enigma that is present—and many say erroneously emulated—in *Sabk-i Hindī*,² with a touch of innovation and natural imagery; not to mention less artificiality. All said, one common theme, or better said attitude, is that of the lover's persistence on being subservient no matter what, in any genre and in any of these centuries up until the sixteenth century. Therefore, looking at some of the poets and poems of the these centuries, and even centuries before, we see that the new set of dynamics in the 'school of the Realists' is a renegade thematic derivation, while rhetorically, certain changes occurred over time as well. Although, philosophically, all poetry deals with the real, the poets of *Maktab-i Vuqū'* literally took it on as their poetic garb and they are certainly the inheritors of the style and the mannerisms of the 14th and 15th centuries, specially the 15th century. Their treatment of the triangle of love was already two centuries in the works. This is a good place to interject with a short allusion to sabk. It should be noted that sabk is not an instant in time whence some new mannerism comes into being sprouting explosively out of time and place. It is, however, a close regurgitation of what preceded and a far off remembrance of what a century or more prior did. Therefore, it is a poetically pedagogical extension of centuries. For example, that 'split second' before *Maktab-i Vuqū'* is attributed to Baba Fighānī after whom Lisānī Shīrāzī is said to have instituted it. I must say, I do love the matter of fact nominations of 'who started which' and 'who was indeed motivated by whom'. What is clear is that in time there comes a point when development, and or better said, a morphology, adds a twist to what it had for so long regurgitated. It must also be said that innovation, quite often in Persian literary studies, is a child of post-rationalization, very specially when sabk is concerned, making it all the same, a very joyous subject to work on, because it challenges the hypothetical nature of scholarship. The culmination of this talk should imply Türkmen and Timurid periods are important because they are part of a chain, not to mention an impressive chain of poetic thought. They are no doubt responsible for a movement like the 'school of realists'.

Gulchīn Ma'ānī speaks to this 'school of the realists' as one whose poets let their audience into their emotions without the many figurative complexities that can often hinder such insight. Are we to assume this has not been the case in the past? We can not simply accept the definitions given in the post-rationalized and the loosely defined impressions. Having seen the importance of the *qalandariyya* (bacchic) poetry of Ḥāfīz and many that followed him in these centuries, we see that they are a gaze into the future of the ghazal in terms of realism, existentialism, and propriety of Sufī style of existence. The *qalandariyya* poet utilizes the aristotelian nuances of his own societal pedagogy with an admix of insight, no doubt prompted by the poet's learnedness, and accentuated by attention to historicity to express his meanings. The difference is the language when we move from the poets of these centuries to those of the 'school of the Realists'; not to mention, the fruition of earnest and pure emotions in the form of succinct utterances.

A quick note on the inception of *Maktab-i Vuqū'*: Although Baba Fighānī has been attributed with having the poetical qualities that fall somewhere between Ḥāfīz and that of *Sabk-i Hindī*, he can not be categorized in either of the categories. This by no means implies that he is the founder of *Maktab-i Vuqū'* either—and as some say the founder of *Sabk-i Hindī*, by extension. Regardless of how influential he has been in creating some of the nuances present in them both, there are no definitive answers. Others speak of Shahīdī Qumī, Lisānī Shīrāzī, and Mīrẓā Sharaf Jahān. What is clear is that in all the poets above there are elements that are common denominators in the 'Realists' and their post-rationalized paradigm.

Maktab-i Vuqū' or the 'circle/school of the realists' serves as a crucial point in history for Persian literature not because it was an extraordinarily fruitful time poetically, but because it highlights the

2 This is a general belief, yet it is misunderstood as divisions of manneristic production have been ignored in this kind of estimation. What they mean when they imply this is *Sabk-i Fannī*, or the 'technical style'.

development of Persian verse for several centuries before and several centuries after through its thematic progression. It serves a lesser role for the first 50 or so years of its existence; however it does become a focal point in the study of *Sabk-i Hindī* and also the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries (and before), because of its timing, coming to its own, in the second half of the sixteenth century. *As Sabk-i Hindī* could be considered a mishmash of twelfth-century poetics and rhetoric, harsh in its tone due to its theater of geo-politics, and difficult, as far as its decipherment is concerned [That latter has been attributed to the second half or so of its history, because of the many who had to learn Persian to versify, pored through indigenous dictionaries to prove their worth and learnedness], *Maktab-i Vuqū'* with its simple utterance, although clever in its sense of observance, in terms of poetical historicity and rhetorical protocol, does offer creativity by the token of putting forth an extreme sense of anxiety, by in fact defying its thematic precedence, in my opinion, consequentially giving it more credence. *Maktab-i Vuqū'* was an instance when poets seem to have foregone their dealings with difficult mannerisms and enigmatic expressions to search for true human emotions and realistic human reactions. It took on the realities of existence without the buffer-zone of persistence on canonical methods of expression that in many instances lacked emotional intelligence and logic. It is essential to see that reality is almost consequentially so considered a train of thought founded on a versified expression of truth and fueled by annoyance and angst.

Maktab-i Vuqū', as Golchin Ma'ānī articulately states, is a purgatory between the Timurid period and *Sabk-i Hindī*. Having been coined as such, a purgatory, one cannot by extension fall into a trap of accepting that this period was hell and *Sabk-i Hindī* a paradise when it came to poetical expressions and the ideas and ideals that made up the parameters of dilectio. Looking at the corpora of these poets, it becomes clear that they are merely interconnected stages on a path to another typology of meaning and another estimation of rhetoric. Although, the one thing that can be ascertained is that it was a confused time for the dynamics of ideas that were immersed in the ideal love. So, I hope my long preamble helps in creating the stage for the analytical/chrestomathic part of this discussion. I am going to give some examples here, and this is always the best part of anything I do when discussing poetry, which is to read and ponder my own ignorance, again, and hope for your insight. I am going to start with a great *Maktab-i Vuqū'* poet Vahshī who says:

دود آتشکده از کلیه عاشق خیزد گر به کاشانه خود آتش موسی ببرد

The smoke of the fire worshiper's house rises from the cabin of the lover proud

If the lover chooses to take Moses' fire to his abode

می جهد برق جمالی که دید اجر فراق کیست تا مژده به یعقوب و زلیخا ببرد

A lightning upon the soul is the gratuity for your separation

To Joseph and Zulaykha, in whole, who will give the news of that mirror occasion

عشق چون بر سر کس حمله بیداد آرد اولش قوت بگریختن از پا ببرد

Once the army of love decides to rumble and plunder

It will first make you stationary by taking away your legs from your under

هر که را بر در نازک بدنان خواهد عشق دل و جانی که بود ز آهن و خارا ببرد

Whoever desires love upon the lane of the slender-bodied ones

Will be sure to annihilate his heart and soul even if they were made of stones

آنکه سود سر بازار محبت خواهد باید آنجا همه سرمایه سودا ببرد

That who wants to reap the benefits of the bazaar of love and the lovely

They must first leave collateral for their eternal debt with their miserly melancholy

در بر و باز ز نم بی رخ او رضوان را گر به گلزار بهشتم به تماشا ببرد

**If the beloved takes me in for a moment on that promenade of the garden in paradise
Even if I had God's heaven in embrace, without her face, God's garden deems demise**

ندهد طوف صنمخانه به صد حج قبول شیخ صنعان که دلش را بت ترسا ببرد

**Not once will Shaykh-i San'ān give a twirl around the house of idols
—even if it were counted as a pilgrimage plus ten**

**What use that, when his heart is somewhere with the Nestorian idol
—immersed in unholyest of sin**

با چنین درد که وحشی به دعا می طلبد بایدش کشت اگر نام مداوا ببرد

**With this pain that Vahshī seeks with a prayer to boot
He should be killed, if he asked for remedy, and even that [death] is minute**

—Hāfīz says:

گر مرید راه عشقی فکر بدنامی مکن

**If you are a man who has destined himself to fealty in the path of love
—don't think of the ill repute**

شیخ صنعان خرقة رهن خانه خمار داشت

The Shaykh of San'ān had pawned his pious cloth at the house of the drunkard en route

—Mullā Sālik Yazdī says:

بگسلانم سبچه و زنار بندم بر میان

I will abandon my garb of faith and wear instead the cincture of the Christian

عشق ترسا بچه ای خواهم که صنعانم کند

All just to gain the loving favor of a Christian youth to love me, that's my mission

Above, Vahshī, perhaps the symbolic epitome of *Maktab-i Vuqū'* is building an argument in the vertical axis of his poem, indicating one by one, and step by step, the hyperbolic images of the beloved, likening the pangs of his separation to that which is experienced by Joseph and Zulaykha, and then he speaks of a pilgrimage around the idol house, and so on and so forth. I find this to be a good poem in what it represents in the *maqta'* of its poetic tautology, because it disengages with the Persian fatalistic view of acceptance in the most facetious manner. It also serves as a good representative of how the poetry of 4 centuries were in cahoots somewhat rhetorically, and thematically—yet different in terms of the linguistic nuances of the theme. In the last line, it could be implied that Vahshī is abiding by the same traditional responsibilities of a lover by saying: “May it that I be killed if I ask for a remedy from the pain that you give.” Above, there is no reality, at least as far as the post-facto rationalization is concerned until the very end with what I consider to be a great un-burning (*vāsūkht*), coining this, in fact a *Maktab-i Vuqū'* poem. Of course, this is not a common occurrence in terms of poetic formatting. The expressions can come in a myriad of ways. It is often in an un-burning (*vāsūkht*) that we see this type of build-up. In the poetry of this school, although sentimentality still persists, sentiment takes the center stage, so we see that no matter how “dramatically void the first few lines are,” it is often the last line that defines it as real; all in all creating a thematic nom de plume. Superficially, we can see that the poet is still bound to a code of etiquette long preached by poets before him; and this is true with a melodious bacchanalian tone to boot when the poet says:

باید آنجا همه سرمایه سودا ببرد

آنکه سود سر بازار محبت خواهد

**He who wants the benefits of the Love's bazaar
Must invest with their madness—not with one but a thousand dinar**

Since the idea of the beloved has always been embedded in the idea of the patron in Persian verse, it is also interesting to see how some of the patrons were praised, using the language of the pre-Timurid and the early Timurid period. It is prudent to see what it is that is borne out of that praise, peaking eventually in a succinct and quick slander at a beloved and their non-responsive mechanism later in *Maktab-i Vuqū'*. Well, I say mechanism because shortly after the eleventh century, I believe, the beloved was already an immovable hulking entity in terms of his or her sublimity—he/she was part of the bigger picture for all intents and purposes (as was the patron), while having been already reiterated for centuries as a less than friendly and unabashedly raucous phenomenon, who was by now in the cahoots with the sphere. [Although] One must add that this celestuality ceases to be as important in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. Certainly, one must see that change as an early capacious step towards the realists' view of love, as it widens the scope of emotional syllogism.

This is because the attainment of the beloved, specially in the latter part of the eleventh century became analogous with any game of chance. Consequentially, the role of the suitor metamorphosed and diverged into two different directions. One role was that of a gambling fiend, who faithful to his passion, kept on losing and came back to lose even more. The other role was that of a pawn (foot soldier) whose fate was pre-determined by the whims of the player: the sphere and or the beloved. These elements of chance, fortune and fate were attributes of a celestial sphere that was not to be trusted from time immemorial and was slowly beginning to complement the role of the beloved, both philosophically and thematically:

I am sick due to the beloved's separation/And I am a plaything lost in the whims of time [sphere].

There was one unequivocal disparity in this established parallelism: the suitor, although fully aware of his eventual demise, chose to play this vicious game of love. This use of cosmology to describe the perversity of the beloved, produced a vast array of metaphors in which the stars, the heavens and the beloved are portrayed as coconspirators, whose single obsessive aim is to destroy the poet / suitor in a pre-destined pathetic game in which the lover has no chance. In the same way, the beloved's behavior, as that of the sphere (fate) is in many works compared to the game of dice as a logical consequence: He is unpredictable. This continued until the 14th century where these phenomena are a foregone conclusion, yet now the lover, the poet, is determined to express his state in lieu of what is already a canon. This was an immense step that does become even more of a step in the fifteenth century right before the fledglings of *Maktab-i Vuqū'*. It is the time of reluctance and rather than complaining of why the beloved is so vicious, viciousness, shunning, and his/her unwillingness become motivations. So logically there is a fundamental development in terms of heuristically based actions: Why fight and why nag? It is easy to pinpoint this development. For example this by Khāqānī:

من و صد جان ز پی عشوه خری زانکه پرورده به خون جگری که به هر دم جگر ما بخوری برو ای شوخ که بس مختصری کارم افتاد به آه سحری تا نگویم که مکن پرده دری چه کنم گر نکنم نوحه گری؟	یک زبان داری و صد عشوه گری از جگر خوردن توبه نکنی زهره داری تو ز بیم دل خویش گفته بودی که تمامم به وفا به دعای سحری خواستمت دست هجر تو دهانم بردوخت چند در چند همی بینم جور؟
---	--

You have a single tongue and a thousand seductive ways.

Alireza Korangy

Classical Persian Poetry and Poets: The Timurid and Türkmen Periods

[Transcript of a]Talk Entitled: *Yayan: The Fifteenth Century, the Proto-Thematic and the Proto-Rhetorical 'Split Second' Before Maktab-i Vuqū'*

**My soul and a thousand like it are hoping for one little wink.
 How, O how, will you ever stop killing our souls,
 When they are your God-given means of survival?
 You once said to me, "Think of me when you think of loyalty."
 Go away, you pitiful jester! You are scarcely worth my time.
 I called upon you this morning,
 And all I got was a stream of abuse.
 The hand of your absence has sewn up my mouth;
 I am not able to say how perverse you are.
 How long will this insolent attitude last?
 What am I to do if not moan and cry?**

—At the end of this ghazal he says in a sarcastic manner:

**You said, "I will drag your name through the mud, *Khāqānī!*"
 By God! You already have, and I'll bet you have not finished.**

—*Maktab-i Vuqū'* poet says:

یک جهان جان خواهم و چندان امان از روزگار
I want one world worth of soul and many a mercy from the times
 کان جهان جان بر آن جان جهان سازم نثار
So that I would sacrifice that whole world of soul [life] for the soul of my world, my beloved
 گر دهد دستم ثبات کوه بستانم به وام
If he allows, I would lease the steadfastness of a mountain
 بسکه پای بندگی خواهم به راحت استوار
That is how much I want to be bound by my feet to his service
 خاک چون گرداندم جذب سکون درگهت
Since this world made me gravitated to your threshold
 تندباد رستخیز از من نینگیزد غبار
Even the wind of resurrection can not force me [this dust] to leave your threshold
 حاش الله گر بشوید صدمه طوفان نوح
Don't even think that the storm of Noah could wash
 از جبین من غبار سجده آن رهگذار (وحشی)
Could wash from my forehead the dust that is stamped due to my prostration in his path

—Compare this with Āq Malik Shāhī's ghazal in the fifteenth century:

گر نمیسوزد دلم این آه دردآلود چیست؟
If I am not yearning then what is this smoke churning
 اگر نیست، در کاشانه چندین دود چیست؟
If there is no fire, can there be smoke without burning
 عاقبت چون روی در نابود دارد بود ما
Fate is determined to kill us and that is clear
 این همه اندیشه بود و غم نابود چیست؟
So why bite my fingers in sorrow and slap my hands a rear

ناوک آن غمزه هرکس راست ما را هم رسد چون مقرر گشته روزی فکر دیر و زود چیست؟

When the arrow of that eye kills one and kills all

When fate is set, what difference whether now or later I fall

یکدم ای آرام جان زان زلف سرکش باز پرس کز پریشانی دلها آخرت مقصود چیست؟

Just once for the sake of asking, ask that non-idyllic tress of hers— enquire

What is it in the our pain, breaking our hearts, you desire

محنت شاهی و تعظیم رقیبان تا به چند؟ بندگانیم، آن یکی مقبول و این مردود چیست؟

Shāhī's sorrow and the prostrations of my competitors to what avail

We are both slaves! What difference if this one's good and the other you assail

In the above panegyric for Vahshī is closely following the theme of his Vāsūkht poetry. In this genre, which can even be coined Vahshī style, he builds up the character of the beloved, 'the patron', and in the end, quite subtly so, gives the bite of sarcasm. Compare the above-said poem with perhaps the cliché of *Maktab-i Vuqū'* by Vahshī some of which Persian text I have included:

داستان غم پنهانی من گوش کنید
گفت و گوی من و حیرانی من گوش کنید
سوختم سوختم این سوز نهفتن تا کی
ساکن کوی بت عریده جویی بودیم
بسته سلسله سلسله مویی بودیم
یک گرفتار ازین جمله که هستند نبود
حرمت مدعی و حرمت من هر دو یکیست
نغمه بلبل و فریاد زغن هر دو یکیست
چند روزی پی دلدار دگر باشم به
مرغ خوش نغمه گزار دگر باشم به
سازم از تازه نهالان چمن ممتازش

دوستان شرح پریشانی من گوش کنید
قصه بی سروسامانی من گوش کنید
شرح این آتش جانسوز نهفتن تا کی
روزگاری من و دل ساکن کویی بودیم
عقل و دین باخته دیوانه رویی بودیم
کس در آن سلسله غیر از من دلیند نبود
پیش او یار نو و یار کهن هر دو یکیست
قول زاغ و غزل مرغ چمن هر دو یکیست
چون چنینست پی کار دگر باشم به
عندلیب گل رخسار دگر باشم به
نو گلی کو شوم بلبل داستان سازش

Friends listen as I tell the tale of my pain!

Listen to my hidden misery, cause of my bane!

Listen to this ditty of my ruin!

Listen to me! Listen to what inside me is brewing!

Until when must I conceal this heart-burning scorch?

I am burning, burning, how long must I carry alone this torch?

Once upon a time, the heart and I were dwellers upon a lane.

We were dwellers upon a lane of an idol that lived to make us insane.

Saving lost our sense and faith, we were crazy for her face

We were at the mercy of the chains of her hair—her tress's grace.

There was no one in the chains of those tresses but me.

I was the only one who was bound in her hair you see.

Her winking narcissus did not have these many perplexed as are now afflicted.

Her layered hyacinth did not have a soul entrapped as is now depicted

Alireza Korangy

Classical Persian Poetry and Poets: The Timurid and Türkmen Periods

]Transcript of a]Talk Entitled: *Yayan: The Fifteenth Century, the Proto-Thematic and the Proto-Rhetorical 'Split Second' Before Maktab-i Vuqū'*

**Her market was not as brisk at it is now.
She was a Joseph, but no buyers presented themselves somehow
I was the first to seek her favor and be enthused
I was the first to make her Bazaar brisk and fall bemused**

**My love highlighted her beauty and her way.
My crazy heart became proof for her coquettish play
I had so much told the tale of her teasing fashion
The whole city woke up to her beauty with untold passion
Now she has so many who would give life and limb
When would she notice me now, the future is dim**

**To make distinctions between an old and a new lover
Has been lost to her, they are both like insects that hover
The ugly quack of the crow and the ghazal of the nightingale
Are monotonous tunes that thru her eardrums sail
How foolish of her not to know what is what
How foolish of her to mistake pedigree for a mutt**

**Since it is such I best get busied with another loving task
And perhaps look for a beloved and take a chance
reprise!**

**Perhaps I shall become a nightingale to a new flower
Perhaps with my songs of passion a new beloved I should shower
Where is this new beloved so that I can become its lionizing tongue
And make her grass from fresh saplings, soft and strong**

**Even though Vahshī thinks of you no more
And his heart does not envision your lustrous galore
Even though his heart was broken and broken hearted he fared
Even though he cried from the tyranny of what you had dared
God forbid he might forgive all your 'tender care'
God forbid he might listen to his real friends: Would he dare!**

We see in this a conveyance of what is called *dhamm-i shabīh bi madh*, meaning a 'reviling in a panegyric skin'. This type of poetry for a patron, if they had gotten wise to it, would have had dire results. This leads me to believe that hypercerebrization of topos was required in creating what was in the poet's own mind, a didactic backlash as we see here; however, here, the poet is NOT scared and rather works his awakening into the vertical axis of the poem. I think a line by Anvarī is suggestive of this, and one may say, foreshadows the future of the beloved in the coming centuries. Here, the cognitively nuanced and culturally biased notion of the beloved is clearly defined. He says:

خاطری چون آتشم هست و زبانی همچو آب

I have a mind like fire and a discourse like water

فکرت تیز و ذکا نیک و طبعی بی خلل

Acute in response and a nature so pure

ای دریغا نیست ممدوحی خریدار مدیح

Unfortunately there is no worthy patron in need of lionizing

وی دریغا نیست معشوقی سزاوار غزل

As alas there is no beloved deserving of a ghazal

These lines are significant of a time when the would-be-panegyricized was no longer interested in the poet and his glorification of him. From the time of Anvarī to the periods in question, this situation worsens, of course with scarce exceptions as in some occasions some poets, for example Hāfīz in the court of Muẓaffarids, was held in high esteem for a short while before he too was shunned. This is quite essential in studies treating the mannerisms of the poets of 14th-16th cc. since, as mentioned, the language of love has always been inextricably entwined with the idea of the patron, undoubtedly presented to the reader as a kind of beloved, and certainly just like the beloved as infallible. An interesting geo-political point in the fledglings of *Maktab-i Vuqū'* is that the patrons were now the Safavids and they were not to be panegyricized. This makes for an interesting trajectory into the relationship of the lover and the beloved in *Maktab-i Vuqū'*.

—Salmān Sāvajī says:

در ازل عکس می لعل تو در جام افتاد

Your red ruby was seen on the day of creation on the surface of the cup

عاشق سوخته دل در طمع خام افتاد

The poor lover foolishly thought you would share your crop

جام را از شکر لعل لبث نقلی کرد

The cup was be-sweetened by your sweet ruby lip

راز سر بسته خم در دهن عام افتاد

The secret of the 'wine' was relinquished by every sip

خال مشکین تو در عارض گندمگون دید

Man saw your black mole upon the olive of your hay

آدم آمد ز پی دانه و در دام افتاد

He came to get a ration, but couldn't leave, no how, no way

باز ز نار سر زلف تو از هم بگشود

Again the cincture of your tress untied

صد شکست از طرف کفر بر اسلام افتاد

Would make a hundred pious ones their religion chide

عشق بر کشتن عشاق تهاول می کرد

Love was turning the wheel of fortune as to who must die

اولین قرعه که زد بر من بدنام افتاد

The first number hit was mine whom love appointed to cry

عشقم از روی طمع پرده تقوی برداشت

My love got greedy and lifted the veil of piety

طبل پنهان چه زخم؟ طشت من از بام افتاد

Why stay quiet since I have become known as one with no propriety

دوش سلمان بقلم شرح غم دل میداد

Last night Salmān was using his pen to convey the pain that overwhelms

آتش اندر ورق و دود در اقلام افتاد

The was fire upon the paper and smoke riding upon the realms

Looking at this poem by Salmān, we can see the *qalandariyya* poetry of the prior centuries in the poems of the *Maktab-i Vuqū's* poets, and we can attribute to those centuries much of the fervor coined real in *Maktab-i Vuqū*. Although Sufi language is abound, and that is no surprise, as it has been used by the Sufi and the non-Sufi alike for centuries, the intent was not to be wholly free of this world, but rather to give some thought to their surroundings in terms of their treatment, having been completely complacent most times—it is thematically a perfect idea to ponder considering their past. Therefore, we see a thickening of the narrative in *Maktab-i Vuqū'* due to its kierkegaardian anxiety of sin that doesn't occur in what can be called the 'inimitable facility' or other attributed mannerisms of the 13th-15th cc. bacchanalian poet. The topos is at times juxtaposed with simpler rhetoric expanded frivolously within the lines, as we have seen above with Vahshī.

—We see 'Urfī demonstrate this in a ghazal:

یک دم ای شوخ اگر با تو نشینم چه شود

O you jesting coquette what would happen if you were to be convivial

مصلحتهای فضولانه نبینم چه شود

What would happen if I am not to hear irreverent didactics

من بدین طبع گدا پیشه در یوزه پرست

True I am a beggar all-around

گر ملوکانه به مجلس بنشینم چه شود

But so what if I were to sit in the circle like a king

چند بر کنگره عرش بیندازم فرش

A bit too much I have set up tent upon the highest peak of the sphere

گر فرود آیم و کنجی بنشینم چه شود

What would happen if I were to come down and were afforded a corner

من بدین دست که از پای دلم بسته تر است

I, with this hand that is more tied up than the foot of my heart

گر ز بستان ازل میوه بچینم چه شود

What would happen if I pick [with this hand] a fruit from the garden of immemorial

عرفی این صورت آراسته خلقی بفریفت

Urfī this gussied-up face ruined all the masses

گر من از پرده برآیم که نه اینم چه شود

What if I come out from under the veil of this yoke and say I am not that who you thought

In *Maktab-i Vuqū'* we are seeing truly the reflection of what would have logically been expected;

although sporadically achieved before: Anti-encomium. In some ways, this comment might imply that *vāsūkht* is the end all and be all to this literary school, it isn't, but even if it was, considering the geopolitical situation of the times—and the poetical treatment of the beloved of the lover—it would have been well warranted to deem it so. It seemed like the natural moralistic progression of the lover or the poet; and simultaneously the digression of the stature the beloved. Some believed *Maktab-i Vuqū'* was an uprising against, as Losensky stated in quoting Ahmad Kasravī, “an undisciplined mysticism and excessive behavior,” example of which we see in poets such as Alī-Shēr Navā'ī when he reminds us:

گر پرده اندازد مهم آن روی آشناک را
If my beloved, my moon, takes the veil off that fiery face
 سوزم به آه آتشین نه پرده افلاک را
With a fiery sigh I will torch the nine spheres
 خواهی چو قتل ای کج کله، حاجت به تیغت نیست وه
If you want to assassinate me O my bacchanalian beauty, you won't need a blade
 این بس که بشکستی بنه، چاک کلاه چاک را
Isn't enough that you idle have made my reputé so ill-fated
 افتد به مردم صد خطر گوید ملایک الحذر
A hundred calamities affect the masses, so much so that the angels warn far and near
 هر سو که سازی جلوه گر آن قامت چالاک را
A hundred calamities in any direction you make visible that lascivious body
 با هرکس ای سیمین بدن منمای روی خویشتن
O my silvery bodied one do not let just let anyone near
 باید چو چشم پاک من زانسان جمال پاک را
For it is your real beauty that should be noticed, Like I do with you

This of course is far from the real. However, when first this divine idea was expressed everyone was amused. Later, I think there is more a sense of supererogative über-speculation than anything else:

ساقی ز بیداد جهان صد غم به دل دارم نهان
O cup-bearer from the oppression of the world I have hundred pains to ponder
 جامی بدار و وارهان ز آنها من غمناک را
Grab a cup and release me of those futile thoughts asunder
 باید که مستی فن کنی دیر مغان مسکن کنی
You have to make inebriation your trade and make the tavern your abode of plunder
 گر بایدت روشن کنی آینه ادراک را
That is, of course, if you wish to unveil the mirror of wonder
 فانی در این دیر الم چون مهلکت شد زهر غم
Khīyālī in this realm of pain, when the poison of sorrow is your key to yonder
 چون مرشد جان بخش دم زو نوش کن تریاک را

Although we see in this poem all that is Ḥāfīz, there is also present a myriad of figurative genius all its own. The idea of *Īhām-i Tanāsub* (amphibological congruity) in the first hemistich with the moon and the sun, and the simultaneous use of mimesis with the moon being the veil of the sun, implying the covering of the visage of the beloved and so on and so forth should be heeded. The issue then becomes theme: it is boringly redundant, although beautifully versified. Reading a poem like this prompts me to think of Ḥāfīz's influence as being a negative point for these poets, who had to abandon much of their own sense

creativity for a 'Hāfizocentric' perfection. One could counter that argument by saying that in doing so, they eternalized excellence: Why fix it if it isn't broken?

Another harbinger, Khiyālī, a poet who fits perfectly well not only in his own environment in the fifteenth century, but also in *Makab-i Vuqū'*, and even very much so in *Sabk-i Hindī* (specially in his surgical imagery portraying the theme 'maḍāmīn-i bārīk') says:

از سبزه خطت ورق گل رقمی یافت
From the dewy green of your mustache, flowers grew healthy
 وز سرو قدت فتنه به عالم علمی یافت
And from the cypress that is your slender body, sedition demanded fealty
 اکنون دل و نقش دهن تنگ تو کز وی
Now that your narrow mouth and your narrower heart
 بسیار طلب کرد نشانی و نمی یافت
That asked about me and sought my trace and couldn't find it
 دل پیش قدت سرو سرافراز چمن را
The heart in view of your long slender body
 از شیوه صاحب قدمی بی قدمی یافت
Thought of the long cypress tree as pointless and mean
 آزرده چنانم که ز حال دل ریشم
I am so torn up that from my state in shambles
 هرکس که شد آگه به حقیقت المی یافت
Whoever became aware they too were afflicted with this malady
 ای نی به تو گرم است دگر جان خیالی
O you to whom Khiyālī pays no mind
 کز ناله دلسوز تو بیچاره دمی یافت
Since now from not caring no more he can for a while unwind

This derivation from a canon is a form of *acusatio* specially once we see the change within the parameters of *Maktab-i Vuqū'*, a vituperation of sorts, enumerating pent up aggressions. Signs of this are certainly apparent in the mid- to late- fifteenth-century, but most importantly it should be noted that this new flaw that the 'Realists' find in the dynamics of a lover and a beloved began to find its footings in the early 12th century. Even in the works of those in the fifteenth century, in whose ghazal we can see the excessive nature of their sufi inclinations, one might say inclinations with a large touch of exaggeration, there are occasions when angst comes through as we see in the poem below by Kamāl Ghiyāth Shīrāzī. He is not only a pebble throw away from a *vāsūkht*, he is somewhat expressing in the language of the poets that came almost a hundred years after. He shows how frustrated he is and how real his pain is:

مرا نامهربان یاریست کو یاران نمی پرسد
I have a beloved who doesn't ask for me
 طلب کاران نمی جوید، وفاداران نمی پرسد
Of looking into the state of the wanting, and the ones with fealty
 تو پندری که در خوابست همچون بخت درویشان
You would think she is in a deep sleep, just like the luck of the dervish
 که حال دیده نمناک بیداران نمی پرسد
Since he doesn't enquire of the moist state of the 'conscious' ones
 شدم بیمار و یار ما طبیب حادثست، اما

∩ have been afflicted with a malady and our beloved a medicine man

ز شربت خانه الطاف بیماران نمی پرسد

∩ doesn't provide remedy from the potion of cure

از آن غم می خورم دایم من غمناک، کان دلیر

∩ am always sad, the poor me, that the beloved

چنان غرقست در شادی که غمخواران نمی پرسد

∩s so immersed in joy [self-appreciation] that it doesn't enquire of the friend

خمارم می کند هشیار و آن ساقی سرمستان

Completely sober, he intoxicates me and that cupbearer of the drunk

چنان از باده مست آمد که هشیاران نمی پرسد

∩s gotten so drunk from his own potion [literally drunk] that he doesn't enquire of the sober

شکایت ها بسی دارم که آن یار جفا پیشه

Many complaints ∩ have here as such how that calamity-ridden beloved

به کار خویش مشغولست و بیکاران نمی پرسد

'∩s busy with his nasty business and doesn't ask about the state of the 'unemployed

کمال فارسی هرگز نمی پرسد چه شد آخر

Kamal farsi will never ask why and how, who and what

به اغیاران گرفتارست، از آن یاران نمی پرسد

You know what: ∩ is now too busy with others to worry about that kind of thing

Above, a schizophrenic state, somewhere between a style and a mode, and or even a mood persists. This is because the figurative language and its devices therein, in the 14th and the 15th centuries, abided to many of the rules of embellishment from the earlier centuries as said earlier. Further, they were without a doubt reliant on the tenets that were perfected by Ḥāfīz; specially with Ḥāfīz's nonchalance in experimentation with emotional intelligence, imbued with bawdy epicureanism. This emulation was morphed into lollygagging in some situations as has been seen.

In conclusion, it should be noted that as much as *Maktab-i Vuqū'* can locate some of its history in the poetics of 14th and 15th centuries, it is also true that *Sabk-i Hindī* is also capable of doing just that. This is to say, it is absolutely not clear when and who is responsible for a style. The best we can do is to determine who has all the post-rationalized qualities attributed to an epoch. Take Khiyālī Bukhārāʾī for example, who is for all intents and purposes, chronologically, a preamble to the *Maktab-i Vuqū'* and yet writes as though he is sharing duties with Kalīm in the court of the Moghal Shāh Jahān; I am, of course, hinting that he wrote obscurely, opaquely, and in the Indian style; or much more appropriately put Isfahānī style.

As an example, Vahshī's style can be attributed to his loneliness and his helplessness, making it a more personal venturing, a more private one; on the other hand, the state of the milieu could be what prompted his style, and may I remind you I am only speaking of Vahshī as an estimative representative of *Maktab-i Vuqū'*, and hence his dealings with a beloved mirrors his frustration with the times. As far as we know, these frustrations could have been any ideological and poetic tendencies that used to try to make sense of the times— like anything that preached patience and anything that veiled words to mean this or imply that without actually saying 'this' or 'that'. This was a honest movement. They had had enough of purely bacchanalian notions that by a feverishly subservient attitude held all patronizing elements in their milieu in high esteem; and even went as far as calling them beneficent. They weren't anti-love. They were against a beloved who perpetrated love and wanted suffering for those who dared to love and respect. By speaking of their emotional realities, they were objecting and also implying that justice must be observed.

Of course they were right to fight against regurgitations—both thematically and rhetorically. Although thematically in their attempts to speak their true feelings, they were even then, influenced to a degree by

Alireza Korangy

Classical Persian Poetry and Poets: The Timurid and Türkmen Periods

[Transcript of a]Talk Entitled: *Yayan: The Fifteenth Century, the Proto-Thematic and the Proto-Rhetorical 'Split Second' Before Maktab-i Vuqū'*

their predecessors. This said, they were a product of their predecessors, no matter how we are to judge these predecessors.

Qabūlī Haravī writes:

شراب شوق می جویند از جام بقا دلها

They seek the wine of jubilation from the cup of forever, these hearts, it is true

الا یا ایها الساقی ادر کاسا و ناولها

Verily the cupbearer, make the rounds, and pour a gulp or two

ز من حل رموز نکته عشقش می پرس آخر

Don't ask me to figure the secrets of his love, don't jest

که عشق آسان نمود اول ولی افتاد مشکلها

For love seemed easy at first but then it was with trouble abreast

The last moment in question can be considered the longest last second or last moment one can imagine in relation to *Maktab-i Vuqū'*. However, it could also be a perpetuating second, resonated in time, considering its morphology—and still resonating.