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‘īb 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 *bait* rhyme; they follow a given rhyme structure that is determined at the beginning of the poem (ghazal, *qasida*). So most *bait*, except those occurring in a *mangōvi*, 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 *miΩra* (“the leaf of a door”). I have translated *miΩra* 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.

(Ghâlib 1872, 442; 1998, 184)

The phrase *sabk-e hindµ* (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 hindµ* was coined perhaps by the Iranian poet, critic, and politician Maliku’sh-Shu’ar≥’ MuΩhammad TaΩqµ Bah≥r (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).

²See *ibid.*, 4–5. Łańgrüdi believes the origin of the Indian Style to have been in Isfahan but effects a compromise by always using a conjoint appellative: *sabk-e hindi* (1993); also Kadkani 1998, 15. Amîrî Firûz Kohi is firmly of the belief that the Indian Style should justly be named *sabk-e isfâhânî* (see his preface in Şâ’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 hindũ 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 Fughãni Shirázi (d. 1519) being the originator of the style has been supported by many, including the great Shibli Nu‘mani (1837–1914) (1956, 24; 1957, 57) and more recently by Paul Losensky.⁴ A case has been made even for as early a poet as Khâqânî Sharvâni (1126–1198/99) who wrote very few ghazals and is recognized as a master of the qaṣīda while sabk-e hindũ 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 Shifâ‘i Mashhâdi (d. 1613), Mirzâ Jalâl Asîr (d. 1630/31), Shau-

³Khurâsan 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).

⁴Losensky describes Fughãni 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).

⁵Dashti (1977) argues at length in favor of Khâqânî as the paradigmatic “Indian Style” poet.
kat Bukhari (d. 1695/99) and Mir Tahir Vahid (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.

Amir Firuz Kohi 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, Firuz Kohi 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 Sа’ib and his Iranian imitators. It was these poets who, according to Firuz Kohi, found their imitators in the quintessential poets of the Indian Style, in Shaukat Bukhari, Mirza Bedil, Mullа Ghani Kashmiri, Nasir Ali Sarhindи, and others (Sа’ib 1957, 4–5).

Ghani Kashmiri (d. 1666) and Sа’ib Tabrizi (1601–1669) were almost exact contemporaries and according to the tradition in Kashmir, Sа’ib went all the way to Kashmir to make Ghani’s acquaintance. According to Shibli, Sа’ib mentions Ghani admiringly,6 so the influence, if any, should have worked the other way round. Bedil lived from 1644 to 1720 and Shaukat Bukhari died in 1695/99. They are poets of the Indian Style but are too remote in time for Sа’ib or any direct imitator of his to have influenced either of them directly. There had been poets before Sа’ib, for example ‘Urfi (d. 1590/92), Faizi (d. 1595), and Na'</i>ti (d. 1612) who are now recognized among the chief poets of sabk-e hindi and who were active in

6Shibli (1956, 73) quotes the following she’r from Sа’ib:

Sа’ib, this ghazal is in reply to the one from Ghani:

"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 Sа’ib’s Kulliyat, nor could I locate the ghazal of Ghani’s to which Sа’ib purportedly wrote this reply. It is possible that Shibli found the Sа’ib she’r in some manuscript, and the Ghani ghazal is now lost.
India well before Şā‘īb matured as a poet. In fact, Şā‘īb even said that he could not hope to emulate Naẓīrī because even ‘Urfī could not approach Naẓīrī in poetic excellence:

Şā‘īb 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 Şā‘īb when confronting Naẓīrī, Firūz Kohi would have us believe that Şā‘īb is the fountainhead of all sabk-e hindī poetry. Firūz Kohi apparently clinches his argument in favor of Isfahan and Şā‘īb by quoting a she‘r from Şā‘īb:

It was quite by chance that I found a maqta’ [concluding verse] in the poems of Şā‘īb 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, Şā‘īb,
The station of the Nightingale of Āmul is vacant in Isfahan.

It is clear that by the phrase “new manner” (tarz-e tāza) Şā‘īb means just the Isfahani style which he had brought to perfection.

(Şā‘īb 1957, 6)

“The Nightingale of” is Țālib of Āmul (d. 1626), poet-laureate to Jahangir and one the greatest of Persian poets, and not just of the Indian Style. By tarz-e tāza Şā‘īb certainly means Țālib’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 Şā‘īb 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, Şā‘īb is saying many things in this she‘r, but not those which Firūz Kohi seems keen to foist on it. More importantly, Firūz Kohi has misremembered the text. Where Firūz Kohi has “vacant” (khalī), Şā‘īb’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 Šā'ib’s Kulliyāt (and also Shibli) is paīdāt (is visible, has taken shape, made appearance, etc.) (Šā’ib 1875, 143; Shibli 1956, 175). So there is no way that the she’r could have khālī (vacant) as the penultimate word. Further, the true text has “Tālib of Āmul” and not “Nightingale of Āmul” as quoted by Firūz Kohi. 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 Tālib has moved from Āmul and has made its appearance at Isfahan [in the shape of Šā’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. 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’in 1965, 11).

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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7Both these sources also have “Tālib of Āmul,” and not “Nightingale of Āmul.”

8They are: Shamsu’l Lughat (1804–5), compiled by some scholars at the request of one Mr. Joseph Bretho Jenner and printed at Mumbai: Maḥba’-e Farḥu’-l-Karim, 1891/1892; Ghiāsu’d-Dīn Rāmpūr’s Ghiāsu’l-Lughat (1826), numerous printings in the nineteenth century, for example, Kānpūr: Maḥba’-e Iniẓāmī, 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 Dabiṣ Sīyāqī, ed. (Tehran: Kitāb Farōšh-e Khayyām, 1363 (=1984)).

9Ali 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’in (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 ʿĀṣif Na’im Siḍiqī 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 tarz, ravish, and shēvah were often present in the traditional discourse and we nowadays routinely translate them as “style.” Yet it is quite likely that tarz meant “manner,” ravish meant “mode,” “general deportment,” “behavior,” and shēvah signified “practice.” Amir Khusrau, in his seminal preface (Dībāqa) to his divan Ghurratu'l-Kamāl (1294) has some very interesting things to say about tarz. (He too doesn’t use sabk, or uslāb, 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 Dībāqa 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 tarz 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 [tarz] that is called ‘poetic’” (1974, 35).

Khusrau goes on to discuss the manifestation or evidence of “intellectual wisdom” [dānāʾi] 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 [tarz] of wisdom attains to the highest in this manner [tarz]” (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 (tarz) becomes available to him on his own, that no one ever had before. For example, the manner (tarz) of Majd-e Majdūd Sanāʾī or Anvari, or Zahir Fārābī, or Niẓāmī: a manner (tarz) 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 Mujir [Bailqānī], or Kamāl Ismāʿīl who is [an imitator] of Maulāna Rażu’l-Dīn Nishāpūrī, or Muʿīzzi [Nishāpūrī] who is [an imitator] of Maṣūd-e Saʿd. Or then, he [the poet] walks after the manner (tarz) of the Ancients and the Contemporaneous…. And if no special method or way (tarīq), 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 (tarz), 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‘i and Khāqānī … and whatever I have let flow in magnavi and ghazal, is by virtue of my following the temperaments of Niẓāmi and Sa’di … 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 tarz, 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 tarz, ravish, and mode, represented an ontological, and not an epistemological situation. Poems exist in certain modes, and each mode is a tarz, and each tarz 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 Chaudhri ‘Abdu’l-Ghaffūr Surūr, Ghālib wrote:

From Rūdaki and Ferdauši to Khāqānī, and Sanā’i, and Anvari, and some others, is one group. The poetry of these venerable ones is of one mould or make (va‘z) with small differences. Then the venerable Sa’di invented a special manner (tarz)…. Fughānī became the inventor of yet another special practice (shevah)…. This practice (shevah) was perfected by Zāhūrī, and Naẓīrī, and ‘Urﬁ…. Šā’īb, and Salīm, and Qudsi, and Ḥākim Shīfa’t in this category…. Thus there are now three manners (parzān) determined and established: Khāqānī, and those who are close to him;
Zhūrī, and those who are like him; Šā‘īb, and those for whom Šā‘īb provides the precept.¹⁰

(1985, 613–4)

Shibli 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 “vaqā’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 Shibli goes on to list “the comingling of philosophy in the ghazal” as another ṭarz which he credits especially to ‘Urﬁ Shīrāzī (1504–1590/2) (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.

Shibli 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 ‘Urﬁ and Naẓīrī.

(ibid., 61)

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

¹¹Throughout the discussion here Shibli uses the following words as interchangeable: ṭarz (manner), ra‘īg (hue, tint), and andāz (manner, conduct); once he employs ṭarz 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 rangint and lajfat 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 hind. Shibli wasn’t much in love with sabk-e hind and was particularly disdainful of its Indian practitioners save Faiyaz Faiyazi (1547–1595) but he had excellent taste and unerring intuition about what he perceived as the main strengths of sabk-e hind. 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 Mirzâ Vali (d. 1590/91) that his poetry reminded him of the Urdu poet Mir Muhammed Taqi Mir (1722/23–1810) (ibid., 64).

Shibli 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=tarz) that marked the poetry of the new age, Shibli Nu’mani identifies a tarz, which he names misaliya (=exemplifying). Better known as tansil (exemplification), it is one of the two most prominent characteristics of the ghazal in the Indian Style. This is all that Shibli says about it:

[Misaliya, that is,] to assert something and then state a poetic proof for it:
The founders of this manner (=tarz) are Kalim [Kashani-Hamadani, d.}
1651], ‘Ali [sic, actually Muḥammad] Qūlī Salīm [d. 1657], Mīrzā [Muḥammad ‘Alī] Șā‘īb [1601-1669], and [Muḥammad Ṭāhir] Ghanī [Kashmīrī, d. 1666]. This tarz became extremely popular, so that it continued [to be current] till the very end of [the new] poetry. 

(ībīd., 18–19)

Shibli offers no analysis, not even examples of how exemplification is effected. He doesn’t define his keyword “poetic proof” (shīrīnā dālib). 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 (iddi‘ā-e shīrīnā=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 Colecridge, one might say that acceptance of poetic axioms or proofs “constitutes true poetic faith.” But seeing as how exemplification (tansil) 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. Vālīh Dāghestānī (1724–56) devoted a large chapter of his tāzkīra Riyāzū’īb-Shū’ārā’(1749) to prosody and rhetoric. In it he gave just three lines to tansil 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. 


12To be distinguished from the “poet’s assertion” (iddi‘ā-e shā‘īr) 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 Şā'īb, and the other from Muḥammad Jān Qudsī (d. 1646), and neither of them a particularly arresting example of *tamšīl* 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 *tamšīl* in the poetics of the Indian Style.

Shibli 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 Shibli appends to his pronouncement here hardly makes the matter clearer.

I’ll return to Shibli’s points presently. Let me first make it clear that although Shibli is perhaps the most perceptive 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, Shibli 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 Ḥadi Hasan (1972) grudgingly allows a page and a half to Mirzā ‘Abdu’l-Qādir Bēdīl (1644–1720) and no space at all to Ghlīb, arguably the two greatest Indian-origin poets of the Indian Style. In addition to other major Indian Style poets of Indian origin like Munir Lāhōrī (1609–1643), Nisbatī Tībānīsārī (d. 1688), Naṣīr ‘Alī Sarhindī (d. 1696/97), Muḥammad Afzāl Sarḵush (1640–1714), Nūru’-l’Ain Vāqīf (d. 1781), Khvāja Mīr Dard (1722–85), all of whom he ignores, Ḥadi Hasan also doesn’t recognize the earliest Indian poets, however distinguished, who wrote in Persian.
The other anthology, edited by Zia Ahmad Badayuni (1968) ignores Bedil altogether, but admits Ghailib to its assembly of the greats. With one exception—a token presence of Mas'ud Sa'd Salmaan Lahori (1046–1121), quite like the token presence of Bedil in the earlier anthology—all the others mentioned by me above are missing from Badayuni’s opus as well. Needless to say, they are missing from Shibli’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. Mirza Mazhar Jân-e Jânâni’s (1699–1781) renowned Khariqa-e Javâhir (apparently put together c. 1756) is of medium length and is more a celebration of sabk-e hindî than of Persian poetry as a whole. Jân-e Jânâni, himself a notable Persian poet of his time, coolly allows more space individually to Jalâlu’d-Din Siyâdat Lahori (Indian, fl. 1690–1700), Nisbatî Tîânâsari (Indian), and Mirza Raqi Dânish (Indo-Iranian, d. 1665) than he allows to Sa’di, Ḥâfiz, or Rûmi (the latter doesn’t appear at all, but Bedil is also absent, and that’s an omission that I can’t account for, except by hazarding the guess that Jân-e Jânâni, though a Sufi and intellectual of note, didn’t somehow like the cerebral quality of Bedil’s poetry). Navâb Siddiq Hasan Khânî’s (1828–95) anthology al-Maghna’u’l-Bârid li’l-Vârid wa’Ω-Ω-dîr contains only rubâ’îs. The rubâ’î is a genre where the Iranians are generally believed to have done better, and more, than the Indians. Khan chose more than 4000 rubâ’îs from far and wide in time and space and included even minor Indo-Iranian poets or poets of Indian origin, poets in whose company Shibli would not have even liked to be seen dead. 13

The following summation from Shibli 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:

13Yet another anthology of Persian (specifically, Indo-Persian) poetry came out from Aligarh, apparently with the view of righting the injustice done to sabk-e hindî in the two earlier anthologies: Dreams Forgotten, edited by Waris Kirmani, an admirer of sabk-e hindî. 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 hindî 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 Shâhîd Qumi (d. 1626), Ḥakim Husain Shuhrat Shirâzi who spent a good part of his life in India and died here in 1736, Ḥakim Lâhörî (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 bandā], creation of [new] themes [magmūn āfirīnā], preference for difficulty and complexity [diqqat pasandī]. These things began with ‘Urfī. Zahūrī [d. 1616], Jalāl Asir, Ṭālib Āmulī [d. 1626], Kālim, 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 Nāṣīr ‘Ali [Sarhindī], Bēdīl, 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:

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

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

–Zahūrī, Jalāl Asir, Ṭālib Āmulī, Kālim, [all Iranian,]: Cousins, more or less distant, but recognizable as Fughānī’s progeny

–Nāṣīr ‘Ali Sarhindī (d. 1696/97), Bēdīl (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.

14I have examined some aspects of this matter in another essay (Faruqi 1998).
The first ninety pages of the fourth volume of Sh'eru'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 hindî poets. But Shiblî’s guardian angel remains a steadfast Victorian. Shiblî 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). Shiblî then cites some verses in the sabk-e hindî as examples of such “improper use of the imagination.”

Later Shiblî 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 hindî) poets whom he often calls muta‘akkîhirûn (the later ones, in Shiblî 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‘akkîhirûn), 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 Shiblî 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 *ihās* [the power to feel], *infāl* [to be affected], or *feeling*,\(^{15}\) is another name for poetry. That is, this very *ihās* becomes poetry when it puts on the clothing of words.

(\textit{ibid.}, 2)

Shibli 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 Shibli’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, Shibli 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 Shibli. Writing about Šā‘īb, whom he much admires, he notes that Šā‘īb 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, Šā‘īb praises even *Zahūrī* and Jalāl Asīr … [he quotes from Šā‘īb one verse each in praise of *Zahūrī* 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 Naṣīr ‘Alī, Bēdīl, 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 Āzar (d. 1780) who in his *tażkira Ṭabkaka* (1779) came out specifically against Ṭālib Āmulī and Šā‘īb. Āzar 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). Rīzā Quli Khān Hīdāyat was no bet-
ter (and was in fact almost abusive) in his Majma‘u‘l-Fuṣahā’ (1867/68).
The hostility of Āzar and Hīdāyat has also been attributed to the Iranian
literary “movement” of “Literary Return” (Bāzgash-e Adab). Shams Laṅ-
grūdi, however, disputes this and says that the decline of the Safavids
causèd 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 devast-
ation, 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 In-
dian Persian, like ʿAlī Ḥāzin and Vālij Dāḡhestānī, were themselves dis-
tinguished poets of the Indian Style and they were disdainful of the In-
dian register of Persian, and not of the Indian Style of Persian poetry.
Ḥāzin’s hostility seems to have been driven by pure malice. Vālij
Dāḡhestānī says with barely concealed sarcasm that Ḥāzin’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 Vālij, 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

[1]his servant attributes it to neither, for it is more than a hundred years
since the time of Faṭīḥ 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?

(ībīd., 602)

By the time of Shībī and Bahār, the world had changed for India and
Iran in many ways and the impact of “modernizing” (read Western) in-
fluences in Shībī and in his Iranian contemporaries must not be underes-
timated. Shībī’s disapproval of abstraction, complex metaphoricity, am-
bigness and high imaginativeness particularly recalls the prevalent Victorian literary bias against these things.

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

The gap between the Iranian and Indian views of sabk-e hindū 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 (ıblāgh) 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 Afgāl Sarkhush in his Kalimatuʾsh-Shuʿʿārāʾ (1682) and Kishan Čand Ikhlaṣ (d. 1748/54) in his taẓkira Hamēsha Bahār (1723) cannot conceal their delight in poets who are maʿni yāb (seekers and finders of new themes) and tāza gō (composers of the fresh and new). Ikhlaṣ 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 magnāti ʿIršān (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)

17Bēdil 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 ʿIršān, see Shukla 2003.
In his long philosophical prose work Čahār 'Unsur ("The Four Elements") Bēdil goes even further. "The word (sukhan)," he says, is

[1]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.

(1963–64, 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 hind as generally difficult to comprehend. Even Shams Laṅgūdī 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 hind], 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 Šaft’ī Kadkanī, whose admiration for Bēdil perhaps exceeds that of Laṅgūdī 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 Shibli, 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, Bèdil is extremely mellifluous, and to the Indian mind he is not more difficult than say, ‘Urfī or Nażīrī. Indeed this is as true of the Afghan and the Tajik as it is true of the Indian.

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 she’rs of his ghazal, or may change their order, or even add a few on the spur of the moment, or incorporate she’rs 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 she’rs. 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 she’rs 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-

\textsuperscript{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 features 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 Muhammad 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 Dastī 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 Dastī 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 Dastī 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 Hadā‘ī’u’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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19See 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. Faqir gives the name of majāz-e ʿaqīl (metaphor of intellect) to such metaphors and says that metaphors are different from false statements because metaphors are amenable to tāʾīl (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 tāʾīl (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 Ṣālāhu’d-Dīn Saljūqī was led into deception. In his admirable Naqd-e Bēḍil Saljūqī wrote:

Thus the thing which the fashioners of styles (sabkā) describe as sabk-e hindī (Indian Style) is largely sufistic ghazalness (tagḥazzul-e tāqavvuf), 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 Bēḍil 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 Ḥāfīz whose model Saljūqī doesn’t invoke. And in any case, Bēḍil’s language was much more unor-
thodox than that of Rūmī or Ḥāfiz and in fact invited criticism even from his Indian contemporaries.  

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. Ḥāfiz, 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.  

(Ḥāfiz 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 rāz (day), for it is a tautology at best. But rāz 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 figurative sense. The second mi’ra’ (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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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 Ḥāfiz and the rest of their great forebears. They knew that poems were made from, or on, a theme, (mazmūn) and each theme was a domain, a territory, and a ʿtarz. They also knew that while there was no ideal or necessary reason to exclude a mazmūn (theme, domain, territory, ontological entity, ʿtarz), there was something in the nature of things that precluded certain domains or ontological entities from becoming part of the notionally infinite fraternity of mazmūns. So the idea was to create new mazmūns (mazmūn afrīnī), or to look at old mazmūns with new eyes. But the problem wasn’t quite that simple. For what exactly is a mazmūn 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 mazmūn it can be for the purpose of poem-making, given of course a truly creative mind. Consider the following:

A favorite mazmūn is of course Love. Love unrequited, or love frustrated and unsuccessful are fine mazmūns too. But the nature of the mazmūn 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 mazmūn may be found blooming feebly or in strong colors. The greater the metaphoric or unusual content in the mazmūn, the better example of “mazmūn-creation” it will be. Yet Love, or Death, or Faith, or Fidelity are too great and too common as mazmūns 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” (mazmūn afrīnī) 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-mazmūn material from everyday life into mazmūn by means of plain
poetic assertion, exemplification (*tamil*), 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 Nā Sikh (1776–1838) because it’s easier in this case to “bare the device,” or reveal “the verbal contraption.” Nā Sikh’s *magmān* 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 *magmān* 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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21Nā Sikh 1846, 365–6. The modern text *Divān-e Nā Sikh* (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 magmān-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 magmān-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 Ghani combines the two images to make this striking yet strangely light-gossamer magmān:

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 Quli Śalim 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, 11, 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 šehr by ʻAli Quli Maili, the poet-narrator finds the magmân 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?

(Šiddiqi 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 hindî poets feeds. The following examples are doubly helpful because they deal with the same theme. The following is from Mullâ Bāqar Hiravî:

I see rose-petals floating on the morning breeze
So now the garden too has found
A messenger to send to her!

(quoted in Jân-e Jânâî 1855, 99)

Abū ʻṬālib Kalîm Kâshâî finds a gleefully callous, yet entirely appropriate magmân 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.

(Kalîm Kâshâî in Lâŋrûdî 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.

(Ṣaidi Tehrānī quoted in Jān-e Jānān 1855, 127)

Two of the most popular magmūns, 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 Muhammad Taqi Bahār and his followers (the sabk-e hind 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 Ḥakim 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 Jānān 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 Jānān 1855, 123)

And finally Mirzā Rażī Dānish (d. 1665) going off entirely elsewhere and pushing the magmān, 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 Šiddiqi n.d., 83)
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 Mirzâ Dânish’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 Sanâ’î Ghaznavî (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 Dânish has pulled into his *she‘r* I leave to the redoubtable Maliku’sh-Shu‘arâ’s progeny to figure out.

4

The strategies of *ma‘mûn*-creation are too numerous, in fact infinite, and what one really misses in the critics of *sabk-e hindî* 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 *ma‘mûn afîrîn* and *ma‘nî afîrîn* (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.
> (La‘îrûdî 1993, 162)

> The heart without love

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22From the *ma‘nawi Hâdisa*, quoted in Shâd (1984, 1, 454).
Is far from God’s grace,  
Dead bodies are washed ashore  
By the ocean.

(Mirzā Rafi’ Vā’iz quoted in Jān-e Jānān 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 “maġmūn” (=what is the poem about?), and “maʿni” (=what does the poem mean?) that made such stupendous advances possible in enlarging the range and scope of sabk-e hindī. Ghanī uses the maġmūn aṭṭāb (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 maʿni to indicate the theme or the content of the poem. Persian did have two distinct words maʿni and maġmūn to indicate two different things. But the concept was never developed and gradually the term maġmūn gave way entirely to maʿni 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 fihi) 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), seems to have joined somewhere in the Indo-Persian mind with the Sanskrit notion of sabiyya (appropriateness of word to theme) and thus given rise in the seventeenth century to the revival of the term magmān as a category distinct from ma’rī. 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 shīr. The Dakani Urdu poet Mullā Vajhi (d. 1669/1671?) wrote in his magnav Quṭb Mushtar (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 magmān (theme, subject, idea) need not be all the meaning that a poem may have, the foundation for ambiguity, obliqueness, metaphoricity, wordplay, verbal congruity (munā-

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23The 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 naqīm (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 *magnāvī Gulshan-e ʿIshq* (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, 1, 335)*

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

> Reveal, on the screen of my thought
> The virgin faces of all fresh *mazmūns*,
> * 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 ʿIshq* 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. 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. Amir Khusrau knew Sanskrit fairly well and it has always seemed to me that his designating the reader (and also the writer) as having the *ṣab‘-e vaggād* (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 Faiz Faizāzī (1547–95), Bēdil (1644–1720), Bupat Rā‘ē Bēgham Bairāgī (d. 1720), Sirāj ‘Alī خان ارژُ (1689–1756), and Ghulām ‘Alī Azād 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 Sibawaih (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-Baqillānī 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 hindí 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‘nt and magmán, they are extremely conscious of plagiarism. For as long as meaning (in the sense of magmán) was common property, there could be no real plagiarism. Using a subtle if somewhat tenuous argument, ‘Abdu’l-Qáhir Jurjáni 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 magmán could become an occasion for heated investigations and even accusations. On one occasion, even the reclusive and generally uncaring Ghání had to defend himself in writing against a charge of plagiarism (1964, 257–9). Ironically, it was Ghání 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., 169)

Kalím Káshání, perhaps the greatest of the magmán āfirín (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?  

(Kalím Káshání in Lańgrúdi 1993, 180)

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

28I am not familiar with any extended discussion in English of Jurjáni’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 Zarrínkúb 1982, 168–9.
showered on him by the Emperor Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1719–48), by ‘Umdatu’l-Mulk Amir Khān Anjām (d. 1746), and by everybody else everywhere. Anyway, a friend sent to him a she‘r by Muḥammad Aļfal Šābit Ilāhābādī, a leading Persian poet of the time and a protégé of ‘Umdatu’l-Mulk, Ḥāzīn’s own patron. In the words of Vālīh Dāghestānī:

Mir Muḥammad ‘Aẓīm Ṣābāt, who is the true son and successor to Mir Muhammad Aļfal Šābit, has brought up five hundred she‘rs from the divan of the Shaikh [‘Ali Ḥāzīn] where the magmāns 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 Aļfal Šābit. He [Shaikh ‘Ali Ḥāzīn] wrote back to say that apart from the fact that the magmān of this she‘r is quite lowly, the magmān itself is from such and such poet and Šābit has stolen it from him. Mir 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

Thus the separation of “theme” (magmān) from “meaning” (ma‘nī) had three far-reaching consequences for Indo-Persian poetics. First, poets began to look for new magmāns, or new ways to tackle old magmāns. This was given many names: magmān āfirīnī (“theme creation”), magmān yābī (“finding [new] themes”), magmān bandī (“depicting [new] themes”), khīyāl āfirīnī (“creating [new] thoughts”), and in the extreme case, khīyāl 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 Shibli is the only critic who appreciated this point (1956, 21). Shibli had more to say on this point in his discussion of Kalīm Kāshānī where he informs us somewhat disparagingly:

29Vālīh goes on to reproduce over the next ten or twelve pages a chunk of Šabat’s text.
The thing that people describe as magmān āfirīn, 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.

(ībīd., 194)

Shibli 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 ṣhudan (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.

(Kalim 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” (munāsībat) with each other is one of the glories of sabk-e hindī. Here’s another example of congruity and the magmān 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 ‘Abду’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. Ghalīb picked up this magmān 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 magmân of water-sword-thirst, we have Ṭālib Āmuli:

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 Jānān 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.

(Āmuli quoted in Qāṭī’ī Hiravi 1989, 138; Nabi Hadī 1978, 218)

The theme of wine as “Vine’s daughter” was centuries old by the time Kalim Kāshānī came to it in the early seventeenth century. It occurs extensively in the qaṣidas of Minūčihrī (d. 1040) and has been studied in depth by William Hanaway (1988). Kalim gives a new keenness to the magmân 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.

(Kalim Kāshānī in Laṅgūdī 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 Isfahānī almost duplicates Kalim’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.

(Naqshe Ali n.d., 73)

We now encounter Bedil 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-magmūn, 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[gah] (“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 Raṅgin (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.

(Khalil 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 Šā‘ib, or Bedil:
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. Ghalib 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 sher 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 hindi 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 Bādil whose special predilection was for making abstract themes manifest by abstract images. But before we go to Bādil, let’s hear ‘Urﬁ 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. ‘Urﬁ 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 Bêdil:

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

(1997, 11, 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 magmân (magmân ăfirinî) and meanings (ma’ni ăfirinî). That wordplay is also an essentially metaphorical device seems not to have been noted by critics and admirers alike of sabk-e hindî. 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 hindî.

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 subk-e hind poets had learned from him, and from the new search for ma’nt-e bégāna ("theme that is alien and unfamiliar"), ma’nt-e nāzuk ("subtle and delicate theme") whose successful realization gave greater happiness to the poet than ‘Id’s crescent moon. Şa’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:

 Şa’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: aštāb-e girifta is “the eclipsed sun.” Khushgō now adds two new metaphorical subtleties: a common metaphor for “wine” in Persian is aštāb (“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 Shibl 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 ‘Urﬁ’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.

(‘Urﬁ 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.)

Faiżi keeps ‘Urﬁ’s magmūn 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.

(Faiżi n.d., 89)

Still keeping close to the human world, I’ll conclude this part with a she’r from Naẓīrī Nishāpūrī (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.

(Nâzîri n.d., 127)

Nâzîri 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 Mîr Muḥammad Taqî Mîr (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 tâmsîl (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 maḏmūn and ma’nt 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 tâza gâ’i in the seventeenth century. Actually, there was no departure, far less rejection in the modern, Western sense. The istiqbâl30 (going forward, welcoming) ghazals written in conscious imitation and improvement of the ghazals of earlier ustâds only affirmed that poetry was a common territory made up of maḏmûns, except that now maḏmûns 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. Şâ’îb said:

Şâ’îb, though fresh poetry doesn’t
Even go for dirt, all masters of poetry

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30For a full discussion of istiqbâl 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 magmūnī could be found, and everybody saw that magmūnī 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 magmūn-e tāza; talāsh-e lafż-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.

(Ghani 1964, 132)

Where I have “capturing,” Ghani 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 Muṣṭawwal, 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 tawārud (“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 tavārūd. 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. Sialkōṭi 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 Šā‘īb 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. Šā‘īb said:

Šā‘īb, 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.

(Ghani 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 magmūns 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 Faižī and ‘Urfī, the first great poets of sabk-e hindū.

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 hindū. 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, Šā‘īb 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.

(Šā‘īb 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.

(Bédil 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. Bédil 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.

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

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.

(Nāṣir ‘Alī Sarhindī creates a moralizing magmān alongside the magmān of silence:

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.

(Āzād Bilgrāmī 1871, 332)
From Ẓahūrī and Nāṣīr ‘Ali to the following *rubā‘ī* 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 hind*, 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 Faiżī and ‘Urfī, the first truly great poets of *sabk-e hind*. 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.

Faiżī, none is able to get to the depth

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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.

(Faiżī n.d., 29)

Among the poets of sabk-e hind, ‘Urﬁ and Bēdil have been mythologized most, though for different reasons. ‘Urﬁ has been seen as the “superior other” of Faiżī: consumptive, resolute and arrogant, dying young33 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 Faiżī had labored so hard but failed to acquire. Ghālib, like Shiblī, an unashamed advocate of Iran against India, loved to posit Faiżī against ‘Urﬁ. Ghālib once famously said that as far as Persian language is concerned, none among the Indians except Amīr Khusrau is authoritative, and “even Miān Faiżī slips up on occasion.”34 On the contrary, ‘Urﬁ was for Ghālib “the obeyed one; we are his obeyers and followers.” Further, ‘Urﬁ’s casual observations even had the

32Faiżī 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 “Urﬁ” instead of “Faiżī”) in ‘Urﬁ 2000, 257. This is obviously an incorrect attribution and is based—as Valū’l-Haq Anṣārī, the editor of ‘Urﬁ’s Divān, himself informs us—on just one MS of ‘Urﬁ’s ghazals. The ghazal doesn’t appear in ‘Urﬁ 1915. Nābi Hādī (1978, 90) attributes the she’r to Faiżī but gives no source. Misattributions were not uncommon in the culture. Another example of this is discussed below with reference to Khusrau.

33‘Urﬁ died at the age of thirty-six. Most of us tend to forget that Faiżī too didn’t live to see fifty. He died of asthma, aged forty-eight.

34In a letter to Har Gōpāl Tafta, dated 14 May 1865 (Ghālib 1984, 352). “Miān” means “master” among other things. Here Ghālib has used it derisively.
force and authority of rules. Yet reading ‘Urfi’s poetry one hardly finds any disdain for India. What one is struck by is ‘Urfi’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.

(‘Urfi, 1915, 242)

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

* Well, what place can there be for ‘Urfi’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 hindi, 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 Bèdil’s *magmāns* of silence and failure of communication. When Bèdil 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 hind†* 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 *shèr* occurs just before the “stranger in the city” *shèr* which I have made the epigraph of this text. Just as ‘Urf† and Fai‖ seem to be anticipating Bèdil 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 *shèrs* from Bèdil 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 *magmūn* 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 hindi*.

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 un-translatable 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’lim-e bulbul kunad, which I translate as “become the bulbul’s teacher,” but there’s no way for me to suggest that ta’lim (“education; imparting instruction”) is also the term used by the dancing girls for formal music lessons. Then the words gul (“flower”), lab (“lip[s]”), ghanā (“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 mazmūn, 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”), rab (“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.
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.

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 uninti-
mateness of language. I translate jauhar, a term in philosophy, physics
and religion, as “essential luminance” because in the context of a (metal-
lic) 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 be-
come 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 per-
cipient enough to discern the mirror’s potential? And what is the role of
“torment” (darḍ) in this play of desire and failure? What if the mirror
were indifferent to beauty’s indifference? Could it then realize its poten-
tial still? And what do we learn about the creative self from this verse? Is
the poet’s heart (the mirror) just the recipient of magmāns (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 inspi-
ration 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 Faʻizī and ‘Urðī 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 haunt-
ingly beautiful words that man ever put together. Note the bitter taste of
irony in the following verses from Faʻizī:

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 Husaini in his delightful little book on Bēdil and the modern Iranian poet Sohrab Sipihri, cites Dashti on the following shēr of Kalim 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.

Husaini quotes Dashti as follows:

Although Kalim has the best taste among poets of sabk-e hindi, 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 Dashti

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 Kalim is doing here is ḥun-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 Bèdil’s alongside the following from ‘Urfi:

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 magmûn is very similar, but ‘Urﬁ’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 (shabhâz) exists timelessly, not tied to any locale. Bêdil, on the contrary, is passionate, angry, sarcastic, mysterious.

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. Bêdil, whose imagery is often highly abstract and whose word-compounds often evince a creativity and unconventionality that is rare among other poets, except maybe Nâsîr ‘Alî Sarhindî (d. 1696) and Ghâlib, 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 Bêdil’s (dis)reputation as an undisciplined writer. Ȟusain Āhî blames Bêdil for having Persian only as his second language acquired in neither Iran nor Afghanistan. Āhî recognizes the Afghani register of Persian as legitimate and even occasionally superior to the Iranian one, but alleges that since Bêdil was born and brought up in India and was never in Afghanistan, “basically, Bêdil’s language is different from the one current in Afghanistan.” Further, since Bêdil, according to Āhî, did not have access to the native speaker’s natural competence in the language, “part of Bêdil’s vocabulary is inexpressive and unsuccessful” (Bêdil 1992, 14).36

Ãhî goes on to say that it is absurd and ridiculous to compare Bêdil with Šâ’îb for the latter ranks so high in Persian literature and language that very few poets can be compared to him. It is noteworthy that Šâ’îb 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 Shirāzī 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). Nearly five centuries later, Sirājūd-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). 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 Faʿīlī and ‘Urffī to the effect that once ‘Urffī boasted of his native speaker’s privileged position before Faʿīlī and said, “I have learned my Persian on the knees of my mother and grandmother.” Faʿīlī replied, “Okay, but we have learned our Persian from the pages of masters like Khāqānī, Anvārī, and others.” ‘Urffī 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. 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 Anvārī.” 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, Muṣṭīr) 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 lafz-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 lafz-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. Sā‘īb has used the phrase with his wonted elegance:

Although subtle themes can fly without the aid of wings
The lafz-e pākīza becomes wings and feathers for the theme.
(Sā‘īb 1982, 279)

That is to say, the lafz-e pākīza is an additional source of energy. Ghanī Kashmiri’s pupil Muslim Kashmiri makes a similar, or perhaps even more fundamental point in his preface to Ghanī’s Divān. He has a rubāt 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, lafz-e pākīza in the traditional texts, or even dictionaries. Tēk Čand Bahār gives two glosses on pākīza; one of them is relevant to literary theory.
According to Bahār, ṭākīzā may have been formed by joining ṭāk and ṭah, 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 ṭākīzā word should be grammatically correct, but without the taint of common usage. Thus it would be the opposite of mujāţhal (“frequently used”) (1865/66, 3, 225). ‘Alī Akbar Dehkhođā in his Lughat Nāma gives quotes supporting the usages sukhanā-e ṭākīzā and she’r-e [a she’r, one she’r] ṭākīzā. The definitions that Dehkhođā gives for ṭākīzā include “sophisticated, free from defect, beautiful, pure, chaste.” For the word ṭāk Dehkhođā has also the definition raushan (“bright”) which is at least marginally relevant for us, because we also see frequent mention of ma’ni-e raushan (“brilliant theme”) in the poetry of sabk-e hindī. Here is Shaukat Buhārī 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.

(Ikhlās 1973, 2)

The point is that it is only the raindrops that are precipitated in the month of Naïsan, 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. Ghani improves upon the image of pearl-water and in the process makes it clear that he is making a statement in literary theory:

Ghani, a brilliant theme is water,
When set well in the poem,
It is a pearl.

(1964, 99)

Ghani again uses the verb bastān whose meaning in the context of maṃmān and poem we have discussed elsewhere above. I translate bastā shavād 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 maṃmān remains untranslated here, like much else. But the general flow of the meaning is, I hope, clear.
It is difficult to say if the lař-e pâktîsa 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 tažkîra 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’īyidu’l-Fuqâlā’ (1519) of Mâlvi Muhâmmad Lâd, and ending with Muhâmmad Pâdshâh’s Farhang-e Ānandrâj (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 (tarâkîb). 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 (tarâkîb) become more and abstract (that is, based on abstract images or metaphors) with the passage of time. This seems to have annoyed Shiibli and also the Iranians, but is in fact the high-water mark of the Indian Style. Abstraction begins faintly with ‘Urфî (d. 1590/92), becomes more discernible two or three decades later in Naẓîrî (d. 1612) and Zâhûrî (d. 1616/17) who are almost exact contemporaries. It gains greater prominence in Jalîl Aṣîr (d. 1630) and with Šâ’îb (d. 1669) it becomes the dominant mode. Nâṣîr ‘Alî Sarhindî (d. 1696), Shaukât Bukhârî (d. 1695/99), Bêdîl (1644–1720), and finally Ghâlib (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, Ţâlîb Âmulî (d. 1626), Kalîm Kâshâînî (d. 1651), and Ghanî Kashmirî (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 Nâṣîr ‘Alî, Bêdîl, Ghâlib, 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 qa'idah and maghnavi, and the minor but extremely popular genres of ruba'i 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, ‘Urfi, what storms did my weeping raise!
I washed off from the eye of my fortune
All its friendship with sleep.

(‘Urfi, 2000, 509)

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

(Naziri 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'īb 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.

(Sarhindi 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.
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 ‘Āli Sarhindi:

The ‘angāl’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 gumnāmi which generally signifies “the state of being unknown.” It is obvious that this sense is out of the context here. Actually, gumnāmi also means “the state of being traceless.” The word that I translate here as “creates” is tarāzad (from the verb tarāzidan) 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 tarāzidan, 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 gumnām, tarāz, 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

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-

40The 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 hindî is elitist, as almost all good poetry always is. Hasan Ḥusainî admonishes:

*Hindi* poetry is the poetry of sharp intelligence, colored by intellection, and one can’t use it for ecstatic dancing (*hāl*). This poetry is not made use of in assemblies of Sufi singing and ecstatic dancing. It doesn’t set the soul atremerle 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 hindî 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 Ṣadrud-Dîn ‘Āini that Bēdîl’s poetry was sung by unlettered peasants in Central Asia. Drawing upon the Memoirs of ‘Āini (1958) who reported that in the early part of the twentieth century he found “laborers and peasants singing Bēdîl’s ghazals while they worked,” Muḥammad Riḍâ Shafî Kadkanî asks:

What understanding does the unlettered peasant in Transoxiana derive from the poems of Bēdîl 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 Bēdîl 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 Bēdîl’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 hindî.\(^{41}\) Amir Minā’î (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). Kadkani says something quite similar (1998, 21), and while Amīr Minā’i’s observation doesn’t surprise me for he was an Urdu poet of distinction, I hold it to the great credit of Kadkani 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, Shiblū 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, Shiblū 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 Kaqūbād five long masnavīs 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).

42The verse under discussion here is a particularly opaque sounding one from Bēdil. Kadkani 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 maqānavīs are known collectively as Khamsa-e Niẓāmī (“The Five of Niẓāmī”). In one of the maqānavīs 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 Shibli 1947, 131)

There is nothing bad or objectionable in such boasting which is quite in the tradition and is known as ta’allū (”to exalt oneself”). In another, earlier maqānavī Qirānū ’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 ‘Ubayd Ūkānī (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 Vahid Mirzā at least one ghazal of ‘Ubayd Ūkānī found a place in manuscripts of Khusrau’s ghazals (1949, 199). 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:

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 Faqī. Sanā’ī, in his compilation of the divan of his senior contemporary Masʿūd Sa’d Salmān Lāhūrī, included many poems which were not Masʿūd’s but were popularly believed to be his. Sanā’ī made necessary deletions when Masʿūd 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 Niẓāmi’s pot.44

Shibli has attributed ‘Ubaid Žākānī’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 Niẓāmi’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 Niẓāmi’s Khamsa. And some extremely competent appraisers, like [‘Abdu ’r-Raḥmān] Jāmī [d. 1492] and [‘Alī Shēr] Nava‘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 Niẓāmi 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 (khūدب) 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 Ḥāfīz], one looks down upon classical Indian-Persian poetry, it can be nothing but perverse obstinacy.

( Ibid., 16)

44Both Mirzā (1949, 269) and Shibli (1947, 128) cite Badāyūnī’s (d. 1595–96) (1962) famous history Muntakhabu ‘t-Tavārikh for this she’r.

45Mirzā was long-time professor of Persian at the University of Lucknow. As a sort of coda to him, listen to Nāhḥādī, 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 hindē* whose “merit” has not been acknowledged by any Iranian critic since the late eighteenth century. Šā‘īb 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 Šā‘īb and Bēdil.

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 hindi*.

In Iran, the decline of *sabk-e hindi* began with the so-called “literary return” (*bāzgašt-e adab*) 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 hindi* though Laŋṛūdī 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 Laŋṛūdī’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, Laŋṛūdī’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 Laŋṛūdī in his book are insufferably uninteresting.

How would *sabk-e hindi* 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.

*(Ṣāʿīb 1875, 511)*

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

بابورید گر این جا بود زبان دانی
غرب شیرسخن با گفتگی دارد
(غالب نیلوا)

صفای چه خیالیست شدو بمحور نظری
عرفی به نظری ته رسانید سخن را
(صفای نیری)

بطرز داغه قسم یاد می کنم صائب
که جای طالب آمل به اصحاب پیداست
(صفای نیری)

گر نقاب سخن شگافته ای
انچه در ویم یتست یانه ای
جیل با علم شد به نور سخن
علم جیل است ب اظهور سخن
سخن است آنکه که زیرتا به اروست
ته بیم نائل خامشی ب اروست

بی تخلیگر خطاب کنتد
از سخن طویل انتخاب کنتد
ور خوشش اشارتی بارد
سخن آنجا عبارتی بارد
(میرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)
(Page 24)

بي مير رخت روز مرا نور نه مانده است
وز عمر مرا جز شب ديجور نه مانده است

(خواجه حافظ شیرازی)

(Page 26)

خوشبو به پی تی دین غنچه رنگ سی
ششمنده پی گلاب کا نیچه تفگن سی
گوش رقیب نیا حسند کا نشانه بو
کر آج میر کان من بانني نفتگن سی

(شیخ امام بخش ناسخ)

(Page 27)

نیست عينک که نیادیم ز پیری بر چشم
نگه از شوق جمال تو زند سر بر سنگ

(غیب کاشمری)

کام عاشق چو در آید به نگل مي میرد
غنچه بر شاخ دل ما گره طاعون است

(محمد قلی سلیم)

(Page 28)

نگذشت اگر ز سلسلة زلف او صبا
بیوهان از کچا شندو زنجری چون شکست

(علی قلی میلی بروی)

برگ گل را بکف باد صبا مي بينم
پاگ پم جانب او نامه پم پيما كرد

(باقتر بروی)

دفتر حسن پیار است که در عبد تو شست
برگ گل نیست که از باد در آب افتاده ه است

(کلیم کاشماری)
(Page 29)

دلیل خوابش خویان بیش بس عشق بازان را
که گل یک ساله راه از بیب بیلی بار می‌گردد
(صیدی طبرانی)

یک نفس واندندی داشت دلم گل زد و برد
مصرع ناله ز من بود که بیلی بار می‌گردد
(حکیم حسین شیرت)

پیام رنگ دگر رنگ رنگ درا
شراب رونگ گل شد چراغ رنگ درا
(شوشکت بخاری)

در دشت ابر رنگ، شیسته‌تان لاله ریخت
نفظ و نگار خانه تماس که کنی
(میرزا رضی‌نداش)

(Page 30)

پهم اندرز من بتو این است
که توان طلفی و خانه رنگین است
(ستنی غزنوی)

دنیا به سخت گیری بس گر گر به کسی نه پایید
بر چند بفضی۱ مشت رنگ حنا به ماند
(کلمی کاشانی)

(Page 30-1)

دل که یی عشق شد از سرود حق دور شدود
مرده را موج ز دریا بکنار ایجاد
(میرزا رفیع واعظ)

(Page 31)

جدل از خصم بنت باشند و ازمن عیب است
چون رگ لعل ز دنا رگ گردن عیب است

(محمد قلی سلیم)

تا توائي عاشق معشوق بر جانی مشو
می کند خورشید سر گران گل خورشید را

(غنی کاشمیری)

رفتیم سوء یار و ندیدیم یار یار
مانند رپوری که ردو به آفاق

(غنی کاشمیری)

وِه کچھ شعر کی فن مین مشکل اچھی
کہ لفظ پور معنی یو سب مل اچھی
اسی لفظ کو شعر مین لبائین توی
کہ لیپایا پی اسپاد جس لفظ کون
اگر قام پی شعر کا تچ کو جچند
جین لفظ لی پور معنی بلند
رکھنا ایک معنی اگر زور پی
ولی بھی مزای بات کا پو رپی

(مالا وحیبی)

نگر شعر بنگی کی بعضی پنر
نه سکتی بپی لیا فارسی مین سنور
مین اس دو پنگ کی خلاصی کون یا
کیا شعر تازه دونون فن ملا

(مالا نصرتی بیجا پوری)

دکھاں میں پرده فکر سون
بر اک تازه مضمون کا پکر مون

(مالا نصرتی بیجا پوری)
که پویه مه کو امریت او پی پوست
نوا طرز خوش باف و خاطر یستند
مضایین زنگی مغان بلند
(ملا نصرتی بیجا پوری)

دکن کا کیا شعر جیون فارسی
(ملا نصرتی بیجا پوری)

پاران بردن شعر مارا
افسس که نام ما نه بردن
(غنی کاشمری)

چگونه معنى غرب پرم که معنى خویش
دو باره بستن دزدی ست در شریعت من
(کلم كاشمنی)

گرچه تیغ دم روی گزار دربا دل
در آتششم فکند تا نی دید آدم
(کلم كاشمنی)

گنچشطی از نظر و ی تو زنده ایم به ظوز
ز شرم آب به گشتم حاک بر سر ما
(آندند رام مختصر)

زیستم ی تو زین شرم نه گشتم خودرا
جان فدای تو میا از تو حیا می آید
(غلام دلنوی)
چنانہ نے چننے لئے مائل ہے گر آمد
ز جو عادت تو آردند در گلو نے رود (طالب آمیزی)

حیدر نہ نہیں یک صاحب کم اظہار
زیادت اپ شد از شریم در گلو سے رفت (طالب آمیزی)

شراب کی ہنی میں نوشت کے ہی چو چو بنششم
بہ من تا نویبی ایک دختر رز پیر می گرد (کلمہ کاشائی)

مدتی شہد کہ دبی میں کہ حمایت کاشم
تا رسید دور ہیں من دختر رز پیر شدہ است (راپ اسپیشیال)

آف پیچھے ایک اصل طلب از دستگاہ خود سری
دختر رز فتح ہا می زاید از بہ شوپری (میرزا بیدل)

اعز دختر رز شیخ بہ فرنسک گریزد
ایہ مرد بہ بیند چہ نا مرد بر آمد (پلاس رائے رگنی)

نود از دل عاشقانہ بر آرد
حسن تو ز آتش جوانی (امیر خسرو دہلوی)

بر کہ بہت در ریش گویہ بھی
قبله آتش پرستان می رود
(میرزا غلام دیلوی)
گوید که خسروا چه نالن
من فاخته بیار خوشش
(امیر خسرو دیلوی)
مگوکه ناله به گوش که می زنی عرفی
که گنلبیل گلستان نوق خوششتم
(عرفی شیرازی)

با پیچ کس حديث نه گفتی نه گفتی ام
بر گوش خوشش گفتی ام و من نه گفتی ام
(میرزا بیژن عظیم آبادی)

به بین به ساز و میرس از زرناه که نثارم
توان به دیده شنیدن قسانه که نثارم
(میرزا بیژن عظیم آبادی)

بر گزنه خوردم آب خوشش در جگر
تیغ است یز تو قطره آیی که می خورم
(امیر خسرو دیلوی)

عشرت ما معنی نازک بست آوردند است
عیدما نازک خیالان را پلال ایست و بس
(میرزا صائب تبریزی)

صائب ز آشناهی عالم کناره کرد
بر کس که شد ز معنی بهگاهی آشنا
(میرزا صائب تبریزی)
پی ہوتے ہیں جام میں به کے گل میں
آفتاب گرفاہت را ماند
(بندرا بین خوشگلو)

ریختہ ہو خانہ خدا اشک ریو ظاہرہ
قحبہ ہو مسجد افکند طلہ حرام زادہ را
(امرف منندینی)

مدار جلہ دیو از دل مک حرم حسن
ہو خوشہ چهمی آبینہ کم نمی گردد
(عوفی شیرازی)

اے با پزار عشوا حسنہ چہ کم شوہ
کر رخصت ز بہر تماسی بہ من دبی
(فیضی فیاضی)

حسن چتی سربہ دل شبہ جو ورثائی دید
شہ چون گیر مملکہ اول بہ یغمائی دید
(نظیری نشابوری)

اگر چہ نہ ہے قدر خاک شعر تازہ را صائب
پھان ارباب نظم از یک دگر دزدید مضمون را
(صائب تیری)

پر دم از گوشہ خاطر سر جسمن دارد
معنی تازہ غزالیست کہ پستن دارد
(غنی کاشمیری)

دھلہ کہ نہ کردن بہ کلام اللہ است
بید کہ نہ برہے ای تو بیت اللہ است
(وارستہ سپالکوشه)
نيست آسان معنی پچیده صائب باقتن
ره نما از پیچ و تابست ایس ره پچیده را

(صائب تبریزی)

(Page 48)

پی فیم اگر چشم بودز به کتاب
نتواند دید رؤی معنی در خواب
کم غور کهند در سخن پی مغزان
غواصی بحر نیست مقدور حیاب

(غنو کاشمشی)

نتش حیران را خبر از حالات ننقش نیست
مختل پوشیده را از صورت دنبال میرس

(صائب تبریزی)

(Page 48-9)

خیال اگر بوس آهنتی مشاق آزادیست
چو بی گل به صبا مختل به نبید تاریس

(میرزا بیبدل عظیم آبادی)

خلقه طور صفات و اسمی فهمید
از وحدت و کثرت انجمن یا فهمید
آن مصطلاحات مبتکل گشت کیم
اکثر پاید معنا س ما فهمید

(میرزا بیبدل عظیم آبادی)

بوشید که سفیدی و سببی فهمید
متسد که سر حق کامپی فهمید
گلمم سخن لیک پس از کسب کمال
خوابی فهمید چون نه خوابی فهمید

(میرزا بیبدل عظیم آبادی)
تو ادا سنگ ته ای ورنه تفاغل نگه است
تو سخن سنگ ته ای ورنه خموشی سخن است

(ظیوری ترشیزی)
ز گنامی طرازد کاروان پا شیرت عنقا
خموشی چون ز حد بیرون شنوی شور جرس دارد
(ناصرعلی سریدی)

(Page 50)

ساز وحشت حقیقی ساکن نیست
طبار بر چند بر زند باطن نیست
گو پر دو جهان به گفتگو خون گردد
حرفم که به خامشی رسد ممکن نیست

(میرزا میبد عظیم آبادی)

(Page 50-1)

قیضیه به حرف عشق تو کس پپ نمی پردا
سر بسته دکش تو معمای دیگر است

(قیضیه قیاضی)

(Page 51)

من به راهم می روم کان جاقدم نا محروم است
از مقامی حرف می گوید که دم نا محروم است

(قیضیه قیاضی)

کاذف و کلک چه از سوز دلم بر تاود
حس و حاشاک بکف دارم و آتش نیز است

(قیضیه قیاضی)

(Page 52)

بد نامی ما شیرته عالم شده شادیم
کیم ملك غريب است کس از مردم ما نیست

(عفری شیازی)
اُزان تَبَع حافظ روست بر غرفی
که دل بکاود و دَرد سخنوری داتد

(ورفی شیرازی)

چه چاپ، خَامه غرفی که کلَک حافظ نیز
به نقش خامه معنی نگار مانه نه رسد

(ورفی شیرازی)

یک سخن نیست که جاموشی اُزان بیِتر نیست
نیست اعلی که فراموشی اُزان بیِتر نیست

(ورفی شیرازی)

زیان ز نکته فرو ماند و راز من باقیست
پُمی ات سخن آخر شد و سخن باقیست

(ورفی شیرازی)

منِکر مشو، چو نقش نه بَینی که ایبل رمز
لوح و قلم گناهکه تحریر می کند

(ورفی شیرازی)

(Page 52-3)

نباشدش، سخن کش توای به کاغذ زد
برو که خواجه گهر باه معدنی دارد

(غلبت دبیوی)

سخن ما ز لاطافتنا پرَبید تحریر
نه شوید گرد نمايان ز رم توسن ما

(غلبت دبیوی)

(Page 53)

ما بیسا معنی که از تا محرمی پای زیان
با په شموخی مقیم پرده پای راز ماند

(میرزا بیبل عظیم آبادی)
سخن اگر به معنیست نیست یا کم و بیش‌
عبارتیست خمشی که انتخاب نه دارد
(ميزرا بيدل عظیم آبادی)
اگر معنی خامشی گل کند
لبنغمه تعشیم بلبل کند
(ميزرا بيدل عظیم آبادی)
گر به پرواز و گرای سعی تبدیل رفتم
رفتم اما به جا تا نه رسیدن رفتم
(ميزرا بيدل عظیم آبادی)
طول سفر شوق چه پرنسی که درین راه
چون گرد فرو ریخت صدا از جرس ما
(غالب دیلونی)
(Page 55-6)
جوبر بیشش من درنیه زنگار بمانند
آن که آئینه من ساخته نه پرناخت دریغ
(نظریه نیشابوری)
(Page 56)
ای بسا آئینه کز درد تفکل پای حسن
خاک شد در زیر زنگ و چوپین پیدا نه کرد
(ميزرا بيدل عظیم آبادی)
(Page 56-7)
سر ازل از فلک موجو که دوراست
روز و شب این جاحجاب ظلمت و نوراست
پایه به بالا منه که پایه بلند است
دم ز تقرب مزن که شاه عیور است
(فیضی فیاضی)
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سری گلشین کرده و گل غنچه شد بار دگر
بس که از شریم خجلاحت دست پیش رو گرفت
(کلمه کاشانی)

که کشید دامن فطرهت گی به سرما و من آمذد
تو مبار عالیم دیگری به کجا دریا جن آمذد
نه لب به زمزمه که گذ ذه نفس در دل تنه ردن
عدم آبیکن به سبک زرد که تو قابل سخن آمذد
چه شد اطلاع فلکی قبا گه درید آن ملگی ردا
که تو در زبان کده فنا پیپ یک دو گر کف آمذد
(مرزا بیدل عظیم آبادی)

چمن دید و پوده خوش و پرواز گرفت
کیک مسکین چه خیر داشت که شبازه پست
(عوفی شیرازی)

گر چه ی به بال کن معنی دارک پرواز
لفظ یاپاپژپر بال شود معنی را
(صبات تبریزی)

طفئع است یتیم در کنارت معنی
لفظ یاپاپژپر به درود معنی را
(مسلم کاشمری)

کار آسان به شود معنی روشن بستن
نتر می نظم شود آپ گیر می گردد
(شوکت بخاری)

آب بود معنی روشن گنی
خوب اگر بسته شود گورابست
(غی کاوشپور)

عرفی ببین که گریه چچ طوفان تموده است
کر چشم بخت دوستی خواب شسته ایم
(عرفی شیرازی)

محروم ز دلجوئی آن چشم سپاهم
مزگان تو بر گرد نگه سورد کشیده
(نتیجه نیشما پوری)

باغ از بنفشه صفحه رخسار بی سرف است
گریده از طانچه اخوان کبود رنگ
(صائب تبریزی)

عمر با یک شمع در محاق کفایت می کند
گر چنین می بارد از حیرانیت رفتار را
(ناصرعلی سرپنده)

چنان در خود مرا رفتم به یاد چشم مخمور
که جوش از غبارم ناز مزگان پا به خوابیده
(میرزا بیدل عظم آبادی)

نباشد آسان را آقی از لا مکان سیران
خطر از رنگ می بیرون زدن پا نیست میترا
(شوشت بخاری)

ناله در کار ماست و ما در بویاء
پرواهچراغ مرز خویم ما
خاک وجود ماست به خون جگر خمیر
رنگینی قماش غبار خودیم ما

(غالب دیلوی)

کوکه، خسرویم شد یلدین
ززله در گور نظامی فگند

(امیر خسرو دبلوی)

پخته از شد چو معانی تمام
خام بود پختن سودا یا خام

(امیر خسرو دبلوی)

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

(عبد زکریا)

گل چه می داند که سپر نکیت ای تا کجاست
عاشیان را از سر انجام دل شیدا مهر س

(صاحب تبریزی)
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