Challenging Conventions

Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der Turkvölker

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Volume 36

Challenging Conventions

Love, Lovers, and Beloveds in Early Modern Ottoman Poetry

Edited by
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For
Victoria R. Holbrook and Edith G. Ambros

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Finally, we owe a debt of gratitude to the anonymous reviewers whose rigorous feedback and constructive suggestions have significantly improved this book.

Guideline for the transcription of the Ottoman script

Ottoman letter	transcription
آ	Ā, ā
ء	ʾ
ب	B, b
پ	P, p
ت	T, t
ث	Ṯ ṯ
ج	C, c
چ	Ç, ç
ح	Ḥ ḥ
خ	Ḫ ḫ
د	D, d
ذ	Ẕ ẕ
ر	R, r
ز	Z, z
ژ	J, j
س	S, s
ش	Ş, ş
ص	Ṣ, ṣ
ض	Ż, ż
ط	Ṭ, ṭ
ظ	Ẓ, ẓ
ع	ʿ
غ	Ġ, ġ
ف	F, f
ق	Ḳ, ḳ
ك	g / k / ñ / y
گ	G, g
ل	L, l
م	M, m
ن	N, n
ه	H, h
و	V, v, Ū, ū
ي	Y, Ī, ī

Christiane Czygan, Stephan Conermann (eds.), *An Iridescent Device. Premodern Ottoman Poetry.* (Göttingen: Bonn Univ. Press, 2018): 11 – 13; see İsmail Ünver, "Çevriyazıda Yazım Birliği Üzerine Öneriler," *Turkish Studies: International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish and Turkic* 3, no. 6 (2008): 1 – 46.

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Abbreviations and Illustrations

Abbreviations

EI[1]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, edited by Martijn Th. Houtsma, Thomas W. Arnold, René Basset, Richard Hartmann, first edition, 4 vols., Leiden: Brill, 1913 – 1938.
EI[2]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, edited by P. Baerman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Dozel and W. P. Heinrichs, new edition, 11 vols., Leiden: Brill, 1960 – 2009.
EI[3]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, edited by Gudrun Krämer, Kate Fleet, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett K. Rowson, third edition, Leiden: Brill, 2007–.
TDV Islâm Ansiklopedisi	*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Islâm Ansiklopedisi*, edited by Samuel Marinus, Akıf Aydın, Ali Bardakoğlu, Ibrahim Kafi Dönmez, Bekir Topaloğlu, 44 vols., Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Islam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1988 – 2013

Illustrations

Fig. 1:	Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, *Dīvān-ı Muḥibbī*, fol. 130a.
Fig. 2:	Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, *Dīvān-ı Muḥibbī*, fol. 5b–6a.
Fig. 3:	Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, *Dīvān-ı Muḥibbī*, fol. 149b–150a.

This book aims to maintain a consistent and concise style throughout, with the exception of the article *The Separation of Goodness and Beauty: Plato, Galib, and Lacan.* Accordingly, names, titles, and terms are provided in transcription. We utilized ChatGPT to ensure idiomatic accuracy.

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Christiane Czygan

Introduction

What is love? This perennial question has intrigued thinkers, artists, and humanity as a whole for centuries, producing a wealth of diverse and invaluable responses.

This book is dedicated to *ʿışḳ* (passionate love), a concept found in various Middle Eastern languages. The term originates from the Arabic word *ʿaşaḳa*, which refers to a clinging vine entwined so tightly around its host that the two become inseparable, merging into one. While this symbiotic meaning has been largely forgotten in modern Turkish—where *ʿışḳ* is remembered, if at all, as a parasitic plant—it has endured in Arabic and Persian, with at least one Ottoman-Turkish dictionary preserving this interpretation.[1] In modern Turkish, the metaphorical meaning of *ʿışḳ* as passionate love has supplanted its material sense. Nevertheless, the metaphor's ontological resonance has persisted, influencing mysticism, medicine, and poetry.

In Islamic thought, the distinction between comforting love (*ḥubb*) and passionate love (*ʿışḳ*) was articulated by the mystic Aḥmed al-Ġazālī (d. 1126).[2] Later scholars divided *ʿışḳ* into divine (*ilāhī*) and earthly (*mecāzī*) forms, favoring the former while disapproving of the latter.[3] Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240), however, transcended this dichotomy by introducing a spiritual dimension (*ruḥānī*) that bridged earthly and divine love.[4] His doctrine of the *oneness of being* (*vaḥdet ül-vücūd*) posited a unified vision of God and the world, asserting that existence is a manifestation of God, as revealed in the Quran.[5] Mystics often illustrated this unity through the allegory of light: just as light is singular yet illuminates all, creation emanates from God's being.[6] At the heart of this doctrine lies the mystic's ultimate goal—experiencing unity (*vaḥdet*).[7]

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1 Süleyman Uludağ, "Aşk," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ask#1 [accessed 14.02.2024]; Hans Wehr, *Arabisches Wörterbuch für die Schriftsprache der Gegenwart: Arabisch – Deutsch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1985), 842; E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society [reprint of 1863]), 2054; F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (London: Kegan Paul, 1930), 850; James W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon* (Constantinople: H. Matteosian, 1921), 1302.

2 Uludağ, "Aşk,"; Joseph E. B. Lumbard, "From Ḥubb to ʿIshq: The Development of Love in Early Sufism," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 3 (2007), 348–352.

3 Uludağ, "Aşk."

4 Uludağ, "Aşk."; Lumbard, "From Ḥubb to ʿIshq." 357.

5 Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 166; Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song. Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 99; see also Sadık Yazar in this volume, *The Tidal State of Love: Depiction and Representation of the State of Telvīn in Sufi Turkish Poetry*, 80.

6 Mukhtar H. Ali, *Philosophical Sufism: An Introduction to the School of Ibn al-ʿArabī* (London: Routledge, 2022), 44.

7 Sajjad H. Rızvı, "Mysticism and Philosophy: Ibn al-ʿArabī and Mullā Ṣadrā," In *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, edited by Peter Adamson, Richard C. Taylor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 233; M. Arkoun, "Iṣḥḳ" *EI*^{2}, vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 118–119.

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Ibn al-ʿArabī's reconciliatory approach to *ʿışḳ* responded to the earlier mystic Manṣūr al-Ḥallāc (d. 922), who equated the essence of God with *ʿışḳ*.[8] These perspectives shared a common goal: integrating *ʿışḳ* into a framework of spiritual progression.[9] During these theological debates, Persian poets such as Fārid ad-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. 1220) and Celāl ad-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273) forged a Sufi tradition that profoundly influenced Ottoman mysticism and poetry.[10]

In medicine, however, *ʿışḳ* was deemed a pathological state that disrupted mental equilibrium by increasing black bile, leading to melancholia and madness.[11] This association between *ʿışḳ* and insanity was reflected in poetry. Walter G. Andrews observed that while *ʿışḳ*-induced madness symbolized worldly derangement, it could also signify mystical enlightenment, allowing poets to achieve union with the beloved.[12] Ottoman poetry capitalized on the tension between *ʿışḳ* as a medical curse and a mystical blessing, making it a central lyrical theme.

This book is guided by three key assumptions:

1. We build upon Walter G. Andrews' argument that Ottoman poetry responded to and sometimes challenged sociopolitical norms,[13] such as poetesses navigating public visibility or poets transgressing boundaries with provocative depictions. We explore what fueled the vibrant poetic culture in 16th century Ottoman urban centers, where poetry became a ubiquitous social phenomenon.
2. *ʿIşḳ* permeated unexpected lyrical forms, such as *ḳaṣīdes* (panegyrics), while some *ġazels* (love poems) omitted *ʿışḳ* entirely. Ottoman poetry frequently defied structural conventions, fostering a creative richness beyond traditional boundaries.
3. Madness, central to *ʿışḳ*, offers a nuanced lens for understanding 16th century Ottoman love poetry, particularly through the *Leylā and Mecnūn* epic, which epitomized madness and deeply influenced lyrical expression.

Despite its prominence,[14] *ʿışḳ* in early modern Ottoman poetry remains underexplored internationally. Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı's *The Age of Beloveds* remains

8 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice*, 68; Lumbard, "From Ḥubb to ʿIshq," 363.

9 Lumbard, "From Ḥubb to ʿIshq," 364–384.

10 Lumbard, "From Ḥubb to ʿIshq," 347.

11 Sara Scalenghe, *Disability in the Ottoman Arab World: 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, Press, 2014), 91–97.

12 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice*, 68.

13 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice*, 5, 8, 11–18.

14 See Hatice Aynur et al (eds.), *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları XI, Gazelden Gazele: Dünün Şiirine Bugünden Bakışlar* (İstanbul: Klasik, 2016); Gülşah Taşkın, "Çorlulu Zarifi'nin Rahatu'l-Ervāh'da Aşk ve Āşık," *Turkish Studies: International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 5, 3 (Summer 2010), 526; Atilla Şentürk, "Osmanlı Şiirinde Aşk'a Dair," *Doğu ve Batı*, 26 (February, March, April 2004), 59; İskender Pala, *Āh, Mine'l-Aşk* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 1999); Mehmet Bayrakdar, "İbn Sinâ'da Varlık, Varoluşun Sebebi'ne Varlığın Delili Aşk," In *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* vol. 27 (1985), 299–306; Mehmet Aydın, "Hz. Mevlânâ'da ve Muhyiddin-i Arabî'de Aşk Kavramı,"

a seminal study,[15] contextualizing Ottoman *ġazel*s within their sociocultural milieu and arguing that love lyrics defined an era. The same year, Talat S. Halman published *Turkish Love Poems*, an anthology spanning over a millennium.[16] Selim S. Kuru later examined the explicit eroticism in 16th century Ottoman poetry, tracing its decline amid increased Sunnitization and Westernizing influences during the Tanẓīmāt era.[17] Meanwhile, Halil İnalcık explored the interplay between poetry and imperial rituals, highlighting its role in fostering bonds between rulers and poets.[18]

Recent studies, such as Atef Alshaer's published volume on Middle Eastern love poetry, have expanded the scope of *ʿışḳ*-related research.[19] Although the chosen timeframe —from antiquity to the present—may seem overly ambitious, potentially obscuring the conceptual evolution of love across ages and regions, certain chapters succeed in illustrating how poetry transcended sociopolitical boundaries and actively shaped realities. Particularly notable are the chapters on Leylā and Mecnūn, which highlight the shared cultural threads between various Middle Eastern languages and traditions, transcending religious divides.[20]

Atef Alshaer's edition adopts an epistemologically grounded approach, following the pioneering work of Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth from 15 years earlier.[21] Their study focused on *ġazel*s and brought together distinguished literary historians from Arabic, Ottoman-Turkish, and Persian traditions, also including Urdu love poetry. Bauer and Neuwirth critically examined the concept of genre, arguing that it held lim-

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In *3. Millī Mevlāna Kongresi, 12–14 Aralık 1988*, edited by Ahmet Sevgi et al. (Konya: Selçuk University, 1989), 157–161.

15 See Walter G. Andrews, Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

16 Talat S. Halman (ed. and trans.), *Nightingales & Pleasure Gardens: Turkish Love Poems*, associate ed. Jane L. Warner (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005).

17 See Selim S. Kuru, "Sex in the Text: Deli Birader's Dâfiʿü'l-Ġumūm ve Rāfiʿü'l-Humūm and the Ottoman Literary Canon," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 10, 2 (August 2007), 157–174; Layla Kayhan Elbirlik / Selim S. Kuru, "An Uncanny Discourse on Sex and Marriage from the Early Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire," In *Crafting History: Essays on the Ottoman World and Beyond in Honour of Cemal Kafadar*, edited by Rachel Goshgarian, İlham Khuri-Makdisi, Ali Yaycıoğlu (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2023), 193–216.

18 Halil İnalcık, *Has-bağçede ʿAyş u Tarab: Nedimler, Şairler Mutribler*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2011), 60, 64–67.

19 See Atef Alshaer, *Love and Poetry in the Middle East: Love and Literature from Antiquity to the Present*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2022).

20 Atef Alshaer, "An Arab and Islamic View of Love: The Poetry of the ʿUdhrī's," In *Love and Poetry in the Middle East: Love and Literature from Antiquity to the Present*, edited by Atef Ashaer (London: I.B. Tauris, 2022), 101–130; Mariwan Kanie, "Love, Beloved and Adorer: Kurdhish Ghazal Poetry in the Nineteenth Century as a Space for Moral Protest," In *Love and Poetry in the Middle East*, 169–187; Seyed Paniz Musawi Natanzi, "The Politics of Madness and Love in New Iranian Poetry in the 1950s–60s: The Legacy of Mahnūn in She're Now: Ahmad Shamlu and Forough Farrokhzad's Love Poetry," In *Love and Poetry in the Middle East*, 188–212.

21 Thomas Bauer, Angelika Neuwirth (eds.), *Ghazal as World Literature I: Transformations of a Literary Genre*, (Beirut: Ergon Verlag, 2005).

ited applicability to early modern Middle Eastern literary realities. They emphasized how the understanding of love evolved from medieval to modern times.[22]

Mystic poetry, while present in late medieval Ottoman literature, flourished in 16th century Ottoman lyrics. References to mysticism appear in Arabic poetry as early as the late Umayyad period (651–750 CE) and are also evident in Persian lyricists such as Saʿdī (d. 691/1292) and Cāmī (d. 898/1492), who inspired new mystical paradigms adopted by Ottoman poets.[23]

Persian, Ottoman, and Arabic poems that evoke *ʿışḳ* often share a central paradox: the lover's normative submission to the beloved—whether worldly or divine—culminates in their ultimate dissolution. Yet, the lyrical perspective remains singularly focused on the lover's gaze, emotions, and inner state. This results in what Johann Christoph Bürgel terms "self-apotheosis,"[24] where the lover becomes central to the poetic narrative. Nonetheless, the beloved wields ultimate power, often symbolically ending the lover's life. Bürgel identifies Ḥāfıẓ (d. 792/1390) as an exceptional figure for his nonviolent, Zoroastrian-inspired approach to this theme.[25]

This book examines *ʿışḳ* across various genres, poets, and contexts of early modern times to explore its multifaceted layers and how it intersected with broader sociocultural transformations within the Ottoman world. Critical gaps persist, particularly regarding non-Islamic Ottoman literature and its interactions with Islamic traditions.

Our analysis revealed thematic nodes linked to social, ontological, and spiritual dimensions, extending beyond lyrical conventions and integrating fresh sources.

* * *

Social Configurations

Mehmet Kalpaklı investigates the question of whether a distinct female voice is discernible in Ottoman poetry. Given the limited surviving works by poetesses, our knowledge is fragmentary at best. While male poets showcased their works in public gatherings, women were largely confined to the harem. Yet a few poetesses gained recognition for their exceptional talent, often supported by influential patrons or the sultan himself. Kalpaklı compares a poem by Mihrī Ḫatūn (d. 1506) with a similar work by her male peer Necātī (d. 1509), revealing Mihrī's composition as a direct response to Necātī's. Historical accounts suggest that Necātī was displeased by the comparison.

22 Thomas Bauer, Angelika Neuwirth, "Introduction," In *Ghazal as World Literature I*, 25–29.
23 Simon Kuntze, "The Influence of Ghazal on Mystic Poetry," In *Ghazal as World Literature I*, 160.
24 Bürgel, "The Mighty Beloved," in *Ghazal as World I*, 294.
25 Bürgel, "The Mighty Beloved," 296–297, 307–308.

Christiane Czygan examines how ruler-poets navigated themes of madness in an era when mental or physical impairments were seen as insurmountable obstacles to rulership. By exploring the early modern understanding of madness, Czygan demonstrates how poetry allowed rulers to engage with the archetype of the perfect lover—exemplified by the 'mad' Mecnūn—despite the political stigma associated with mental instability.

* * *

Ontological Configurations

Victoria Holbrook explores the ontological connections between beauty, love, and goodness, as well as the implications of their disjunction. Her analysis spans from Plato's Symposium to Şeyḫ Ġālib's *Ḥüsn ü ʿAşḳ* and 20th century thinkers such as Jacques Lacan. Holbrook highlights how Plato's intertwining of beauty and goodness, reflected in Islamic and Middle Eastern traditions, informs Ġālib's protagonist ʿAşḳ on his journey of purification. Her study delves into the metaphysical relationship between materiality and divinity, illuminating the enduring influence of figures like Ibn al-ʿArabī on modern philosophy.

Fatih Altuğ shifts the focus to prose, analyzing two non-lyrical narratives by 17th century Ottoman author Nergisī: *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān.* Altuğ traces the evolution of Nergisī's portrayal of love from individual experience to universal truths, using Alain Badiou's theory of love as a framework. Love, as an event, initiates profound change, and Altuğ finds these transformations reflected in the literary structure of Nergisī's works.

* * *

Spiritual Configurations

Sadık Yazar examines the mystical dimensions of love in the works of Yūnus Emre (d. 1320) and Eşrefoğlu Rūmī (d. 1469/70). Their poetry embodies the mystic state of *telvīn* (inconstancy) and evokes the ritual *ẕikr* in praise of God. Yazar reveals that for Yūnus Emre, love was central to achieving unity with the divine, positioning it as a transcendent path beyond reason and into spiritual wisdom.

Betül Nizam investigates mystic *ḳaṣīdes* (panegyrics) and their dual purpose of didacticism and material or spiritual recognition. She demonstrates how mystic poets reconciled worldly aspirations with ascetic ideals, portraying diverse yet interconnected facets of love in their works.

* * *

Beyond Lyrical Conventions

Gülşah Taşkın challenges the traditional depiction of the beloved as voiceless. She identifies a shift beginning in the 16th century, with poets increasingly crafting the beloved as a lyrical persona, culminating in the 18th century. By analyzing three poems, Taşkın uncovers how the beloved's portrayal began to mirror the dynamics of power and rulership, transgressing conventional structures and opening new avenues of poetic expression.

Benedek Péri highlights the nuanced interplay between Turkic and Persian influences in 16th century Ottoman *ġazels*. Drawing on biographical dictionaries and literary critiques, Péri challenges the notion that emotional resonance was the primary driver of Ottoman poetry. Instead, he argues for an intellectual and rhetorical mastery as the defining hallmark of poetic excellence.

* * *

New Sources

Hatice Aynur analyzes a newly discovered copy of Ṭaṭavlalı Maḥremī's (d. 1535) *dīvān*. She uncovers a clear distinction between earthly and divine love, often presented in juxtaposition. Aynur's meticulous study sheds light on the rhetorical and thematic strategies that situate Maḥremī within broader Middle Eastern poetic traditions.

Edith Ambros introduces an important 14th century folktale, *Ḳız Destānı*, made accessible through her translation. This didactic narrative reveals the socioreligious shifts in rural life as Islam supplanted older communal traditions. Through fear, persuasion, and reward, the tale advocates for Islam as the ultimate *raison d'être*, offering a window into its cultural and literary impact.

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Social Configurations

Mehmet Kalpaklı and Walter G. Andrews

Love, Gender, and Self-Presentation in the World of Early Modern Ottoman Court Poetry

Introduction

Ottoman court poetry of the 15th and 16th centuries was widely and intensely practiced and consumed by important social and political actors and was highly influential in its context. However, this poetry is today so little-known outside of a rather tiny circle of scholars and students that it is difficult to focus on a limited feature of Ottoman poetry and its poetic universe without resorting to a long litany of introductory remarks that often overwhelm the topic they are meant to introduce. Accordingly, we will keep our introductions to a bare minimum with the understanding that our reductions and generalizations are a painfully inadequate overlay on a panorama of great complexity and richness. Nonetheless, as we begin, there are a few points that must be kept in mind firmly: First and foremost, Ottoman court poetry is mostly love poetry. This is to say that, overwhelmingly, whatever the occasion or purpose of a poem may be, whoever it is addressed to, its theme, tropes, and emotional content will be grounded in the vocabulary, relationships, literary traditions, and conventions of love—love with what western scholars will recognize as neo-platonic overtones. For example, the following addressed by Bāḳī (1526–1699) to Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566): [1]

> *Ṭutdı cihānı pertev-i ḥüsnüñ güneş gibi*
> *Ṭoldı ṣadā-yı ʿışḳuñ ile kāḥ-ı "kün fe kān"*[2]
> Your beauty's rays illuminate the world like the sun
> Your love's echoes fill the sphere of "*Be and it was done.*"[3]

The gender of this beloved is absolutely fluid and for male poets is most often a younger male. Although the poets we know of are overwhelmingly male, except for a miniscule minority of visible women poets, the self-presentation of the 'lover' (speaker/poet) is of a weak, helpless, suffering supplicant who is self-sacrificing in devotion to a powerful, remote, generally silent and unmoved or unmovable beloved. No matter how powerful the lover may be, he is always helpless in the grip of love. For example,

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1 *Bâkî Dîvânı: Tenkitli Basım*, ed. Sabahattin Küçük, (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1994), 6.
2 "Kün fe kān" (kun fa-yakūnu) A phrase from *Ḳur'an* cited as "kun fa-yakūnu" in many suras.
3 All translations are ours.

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Sultan Mehmet II, the Conqueror (r. 1444 – 1446, 1451 – 1481) writing under the penname ʿAvnī:

Āhum felege irdi yaşum dutdı cihānı
Ḥālüme benüm şāhid olan ʿarż u semādur[4]
My sighs have reached to the sky, my tears cover all the earth
Both earth and sky have become witnesses to my plight.

If there is an identifiable over-arching theme to the vast majority of these 'love' poems, it is the combination of the desire for bonding with the beloved and the agony of separation from the desired object. As the poet Ḫalīlī writes (mid-15th-century) in his *Fürḳat-nāme* (Book of Separation):[5]

Cemālüñe olalı gözlerüm tūş
Yürürem vālih ü ḥayrān u medhūş
Since my eyes came face to face with your beauty
I go about confused, bewildered, and perplexed.

Ne suç itdüm ben iy serv-i revānum
Ki yanar fürḳatüñ nārında cānum
What crime did I commit, oh my swaying cypress
That my spirit burns in separation's flames.

Firāḳuñdan kül oldum yana yana
Bıçaḳ irişdi şāhum üstüḫāna
I've become ash, burning, wailing, separate from you
Oh my sovereign, the knife has reached the bone.

Lastly, the poetry is highly conventional on the surface. It generally depends on a limited vocabulary expressing an equally limited collection of settings—e. g. a party, a garden, night, early morning—of commonplace tropes, and of references to traditional legends, stories, and famous past poems and poets.

In such a context, it is very difficult to identify a poem as belonging to a specific poet by recognizing an individual style. Neither is it easy to differentiate the effective features of self-presentation in these poems from what belongs to a long tradition of conventional tropes. There is a misleading sameness to the surfaces of Ottoman court poems that conceals an immense complexity and emotional depth. However, when we begin taking into account the gender of poets, the significance of certain features leaps out at us.

4 *Fatih Divanı ve Şerhi*, edited by Muhammed Nur Doğan (İstanbul: Eminönü Belediyesi, 2002), 68.
5 *Halili and His Fürkat-Name: Introduction-Analysis-Critical Text-Facsimile*, edited by Orhan Kemal Tavukçu (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Publication, 2008), 151.

1 Gendered Poetry

Before we embark on a discussion of gendered self-presentation in Ottoman court poetry there are a few cautions that must be kept in mind. First, we must understand that we know very little about female poets in elite circles because elite women were customarily, secluded, invisible, and only extremely rarely the subject of public comment.

For example, in the period to which we are restricting ourselves (the late 15th to early 16th centuries), there are many hundreds of male poets well-known enough to appear in the 16th century biographies of poets' compilations and but three women, only one of whose *divāns* (collected poems) still exists. Extrapolating from such a tiny sample to a class of 'Ottoman elite women poets' seems questionable on the surface, but we are persuaded, nonetheless, that there are reasonable arguments in favour of doing just that. There are, we believe, good reasons for assuming that the 'visible' female poets are just the tip of a much larger iceberg.

The existence of *any* known female poets indicates that there were avenues by which women could learn both to appreciate poems in the elite tradition and to compose poetry in that tradition. It is quite understandable, given the extreme 'privacy' of elite women's lives and social interactions, that women—even large numbers of women—writing for audiences of women and close family members would be publicly invisible. In addition, there are off-hand contemporary references to an invisible multitude of female poets such as the phrase in the poet-biographer ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi's entry for the poetess ʿĀyişeʾ-Ḥubbī (d. 1590): "…although there are many of the female gender who have pretentions to composing poetry…" (…egerçi ṭāʾīfe-i zenāndan şiʿrden demzenān kimesne çoḳdur…).[6]

We must take into account that the dissemination of Ottoman poetry, for both men and women, was oral and not written—'compose' meant creating a poem in one's mind not writing it down. It was perfectly possible that a poet, especially an elite woman poet, would be functionally illiterate and would lack a literate audience or any listener inclined to write down her recitation of a poem. Thus, her poem would disappear with her memory and the memories of her audience.

The few women who show up in public documents are clearly unusual in some or many respects. The late 15th and early 16th century poets Mihrī (d. 1506) and Zeynep (n.d.) are from the provincial court in Amasya, which was traditionally governed by an Ottoman prince. Both were also unmarried during their poetic careers—Zeynep later married and was reported to have then stopped writing poetry. Mihrī and ʿĀyişe had fathers who supported their work. Mihrī's father even presented her work at the sultan's court in Istanbul.

Lastly, if we are ever going to develop an accurate and meaningful picture of women's participation in societies and cultures that restrict the public visibility of women

6 Âşık Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ: İnceleme-Metin*, edited by Filiz Kılıç, vol. 2 (İstanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 1136.

and their works, we will need to go beyond accepting the accounts of male chroniclers of various kinds as the only reliable evidence. We will need to give credence to the evidence of faint traces and the effects of activities for which there are no direct or unbiased accounts.

Modern literature scholars in Turkey and elsewhere have been cognizant of Ottoman female poets, often taking them as a trace of the liberality of Turkish Islam's social practices. However, the general critical consensus has also been that as poets they do not measure up to the standard of their male counterparts. Only very recently, in the work[7] of our former student and present colleague Didem Havlioğlu and a few others, has this consensus come into question. Havlioğlu's work suggests to us that we should ask: Is this poetry 'bad' poetry, poetry attempting unsuccessfully to write according to the dominant male aesthetic or is it really poetry conforming to a different aesthetic, written for other audiences, poetry that speaks in a 'woman's voice'? The whole issue of a 'woman's voice' in Ottoman poetry is a vexed one, plagued by a lack of direct evidence and perhaps by a lack of interest in pursuing what evidence might be available.

Although Havlioğlu's book and our own experience indicate that early modern elite female poets self-presented to different audiences, with different purposes, in a somewhat different language and style than their male counterparts, assembling proof of such a claim would be a major undertaking. However, we believe it is possible to demonstrate, with a few specific examples that such evidence can be found if we look at readily available poems in a 'gendered' interpretive context.

1.1 Necātī

As our first example, we begin with two *ġazel*s, by Mihrī's famous male contemporary, Necātī (d. 1509):[8]

Gözüñ aç itdi Ḫudā dilberi hem-dem bu gice
Baḫt uyandı uyudı fitne-i ʿālem bu gice
Open your eyes! God has made the heart-holder a companion tonight
Luck awoke, and the disruptions of this world are asleep tonight.

Şemʿ-i ḫōrşīd-i cihān-tāb biraz diñlensün
Sen de ey bād-ı ṣabā eyleme ses sem bu gice
Let the candle of Sol, the world-illuminating, rest itself a bit
And you, o east wind, make no hubbub tonight.

ʿĀşıḳuñ yeli yigindür şükür ol Allāha kim
Egdi sen gül budaġın āh-ı dem-ā-dem bu gice

7 Didem Havlioğlu, *Mihri Hatun: Performance, Gender-Bending, and Subversion in Ottoman Intellectual History*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2017).

8 *Necatî Beg Divanı*, edited by Ali Nihad Tarlan (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1963), 475.

Let the lover's wind rise up, thank God that
The constant sighs bent you down, rose-stem, tonight.

Meclisi cennete döndürdi cemāl-i sāḳī
Bir nefesde ṣanemā biñ yaşar ādem bu gice
The saki's loveliness turned the gathering into paradise
At one breath, o idol, a man lives a thousand years tonight.

Bu ḳarañu gice bu ṣoḥbet-i cān-baḫş nedür
Yire mi indi ʿaceb ʿĪsī-i Meryem bu gice
What is this life-giving converse on this dark night
I wonder, did Jesus, son of Mary descend to earth tonight.

Ne revādur bu ki yıllarla cefādan ṣoñra
Hem geçen gice vefā itmeyesin hem bu gice
After many years of torment, how is it permissible that
You should not keep your promise both last night and tonight.

Mest olub yār ayaġına ḳodum başumı çün
Şeref-i meclis-i Cem oldı müsellem bu gice
I became drunk and laid my head at the beloved's feet
The honor of the gathering of Cem is undeniable tonight.

Dem bu demdür didügüñ demlere irdüñ şükr it
Elüñe girdi Necātī senüñ ol dem bu gice
The moment is this moment; you've attained the moments you spoke of
O Necātī, that moment has come into your grasp tonight.

The next poem, also by Necātī has the same occasional setting with the refrain *last night:*[9]

Bizi müşerref eyledi cānān geçen gice
Nūr ile ṭoldı külbe-i aḥzān geçen gice
The beloved did us honor last night
Filled the hut of woe with light last night.

Ẓulmet gice ḳarañluġı sāḳī-i bezm Ḫıżr
Cām-ı mey idi Çeşme-i Ḥayvān geçen gice
The Darkland was the gloom of night, the wine-server, Ḫıżır
The wine cup was the Fountain of Eternal Life last night.

Ben bī-dil ü ġarīb ile aḫşamlamaġ içün
Bedr olmış idi ol meh-i tābān geçen gice
To spend the evening with me, down-hearted and needy
That glowing moon waxed full last night.

Çoġ aġlasam ʿaceb mi ki gözümdedür daḫi
Şol mey ki ṣundı sāḳī-i devrān geçen gice
Any wonder that should I weep aplenty, in my eye
Is that drink the wine-server of fate proffered last night.

9 *Necatî Beg Divanı*, 425.

Ḳanı dehān-ı dōst yüzük gizledükleri
Avcumda idi Möhr-i Süleymān geçen gice
When the mouth of the beloved concealed a ring
I had in my palm the Seal of Solomon last night.

Mihr-i sipihre kellesi ḳızduḳca germ olub
Dil uzadırdı şemʿ-i şebistān geçen gice
As the head of the sun in the sky reddened, the bedroom candle
Grew warm and stuck out its tongue at it last night.

Ben şol Necātīyem ki kelāmum leṭā'ifi
Sen pādişāhı eyledi ʿuryān geçen gice
I am that Necati, the delicacy of whose speech
Stripped you, the Monarch, naked last night.

The most immediately striking element of these poems is the obvious gestures toward 'occasional-ness' made by the repeated post-rhyme elements or refrains "bu gice" (*tonight*) and "geçen gice" (last night). [The rhyme is in "em" in the first *ġazel* (as in "…hem-d**em** bu gice") and in "ān" in the second (as in "…cān**ān** geçen gice")]. The reference to specific times (*tonight* and *last night*) appears, on the surface, to be giving the message that these are poems intended to be presented to a specific guest on a specific occasion. For example, we might imagine the first poem, the *tonight* poem, as being composed for recitation to the 'beloved guest' on the occasion of his visit to the 'lover's' home or to a gathering in which the lover and beloved guest are present.

In summary, the lover's plaint in the first poem goes something like this:

Stop nodding off at the party, wake up! Your beloved is here now! It's your lucky night so forget what a messed-up world this is. Let the sun take a break; let the breeze be still; let the beloved attend to my (windy) sighs instead, for they have finally swayed you toward coming here. You are so attractive that I feel reborn in Paradise where just your breath in my face as we talk makes me live again for a thousand years. It seems as if Jesus had come back to earth to bring the dead to life with a breath. I've suffered so long hoping for this meeting that it would be wrong for you to break your promise tonight, as you have done in the past. O Necātī, you've talked of this meeting for so long and now it's here. So, make the best of it!

The second poem, *the last night* poem, evokes a different relation to an occasion. The first speaks in the voice of a lover addressing the beloved directly with passionate immediacy, simple metaphors, and vivid images. The second poem is reflective on something that happened in the past. We might perhaps imagine this poem inscribed on paper and sent by the hand of a servant to a guest of the previous night. It begins by setting the scene: the beloved came to my house (the 'hut of woe' where the lover/poet waits suffering from desire).

It then launches into a complex (but entirely commonplace) set of comparisons in one couplet based on the well-known legend of the hero İskender's (*Alexander's*) search for the Fountain of Eternal Life "Çeşme-i Ḥayvān". In the story, the Fountain is concealed in a land of eternal and impenetrable darkness "the ẓulmet" which is rendered as *Darkland* in our translation. İskender and his vizier-companion Ḫıżır enter the

Darkland and immediately are separated and lost. İskender never finds the Fountain and is doomed to die but Ḫıżır stumbles across it, drinks from it and achieves eternal life and ultimately the legendary ability to bring others back to life.

In this one image, Necātī sums up most of the themes of the *tonight ġazel:* the life-giving beloved, the darkness of night, the lover's hopeless groping in the dark, the wine of the party as life restoring…

Another example of the more extravagant imagery of the *last night* poem is the reference to the beloved's mouth as the signet ring of Solomon, which was a ring of great power, which, among other things, allowed the wearer to speak the languages not only of all humans but of animals, monsters, and djinns.

The poem ends with the poet's speech stripping the beloved—the monarch of love—naked, which is unlikely to refer to an actual sexual act but to the power of poetry to cause the beloved to abandon all modesty, all shyness and reveal the affectionate, loving heart which he conceals in public. The sense of this couplet is that when the beloved kissed the lover's hand with his attractively small ring-like mouth it enabled to lover-poet to speak beautifully in the tongues of all creatures, material and spiritual.

At this point, there are a few things that we would like to emphasize about these two poems: It is important to understand that, despite the passion and sometimes very explicit eroticism of these poems, the beloved addressed can be anyone—a close friend, a potential patron, a highly-placed dignitary, even the ruler—and not necessarily or even usually someone with whom one would remotely imagine having a sexual relationship. The lover presents him or herself as a master of the self-sacrificial emotional requirements of service.

In addition, despite the aura of occasional-ness that surrounds these poems, the actual texts of Necātī's poems are very generic or universalizing. That is to say that these poems could be recited to any 'beloved' in any gathering (or after any gathering) over the whole lifetime of the Ottoman poetic tradition. This is a significant aspect of self-presentation in the dominant aesthetic. The poet presents himself as someone whose words, enshrined in verse, will be eternal. They will have the power to make an event, or a friend or a patron's name live in glory, magnifying them forever after. The patron not only gets an adherent with a cultural talent for service but one who can make a patron look good as well.

Furthermore, we must take into account that the *tonight ġazel* persists in the tradition in some respects as a genre. Necatī's (and Mihrī's) famous contemporaries have examples [Caʿfer Çelebi (2), Sultan Cem (2), Aḥmed Paşa (1)] and although these *ġazel*s are not as popular in the 'high' 16th century, a cursory survey shows examples by Fużūlī (d. 1556), Nefʿī (d. 1635), Ḥayretī (d. 1534), Nevʿī (d. 1599) and İsḥāḳ Çelebi (d. 1537). These are not strictly *parallel poems* (*naẓīre*s), which by rule should have the same rhyme and rhythm. In each case the rhythm is the same (remel II: feʿilātun…feʿilün) but the rhyme varies rather widely. The *last night* "geçen gice" *ġazel* does not seem to have persisted as obviously in the tradition but we do see some cases of a variant *ġazel* with the refrain "dün gice" (*yesterday night*).

Lastly, from the perspective of the male poetic tradition, all the examples of *tonight ġazel*s share with Necātī's the abovementioned 'generic' quality that resists occasional specificity and emphasizes a universal quality that implies an a-historical elite audience.

1.2 Mihrī

Turning to Mihrī's *tonight ġazel*s, the first displays a stark surface contrast with Necātī's. For an Ottoman *ġazel*, it is quite straight-forward without the clever and somewhat arcane references to traditional literary themes that we saw in Necātī. It reads as follows in English translation but, in the cases of both poets and their poetry, one must understand that Turkish pronouns are not gendered, and the hearer or reader cannot know for sure if the beloved is male or female, a male lover or a 'best female friend'. In our translations every *him* could be a *her*, every *her* a *him.* In every image male and female figures are interchangeable.

Mihrī:[10]

Eyledük yār ile ṣaḥrāları seyrān bu gice
Vācib oldur baña şükrāne virem cān bu gice
The beloved and I roamed the wilds tonight
It is incumbent on me to be thankful and give my soul tonight.

Devlet atına süvār olmış idük bir nice yār
Bizüm olmış idi başdan başa meydān bu gice
As lovers we were riders on the horse of fortune
End to end the arena was ours tonight.

Tīġ-i ḳahr ile raḳībüñ iki çalduḳ başın
Elümüzdeydi belī ṭop ile çevgān bu gice
With the sword of wrath we soundly rapped the rival's head
Oh yes! In our hands were both ball and mallet tonight.

Ẓāhir itdi ruḫını zülfi seḥābın götürüp
Yārlıḳ itdi bizümle meh-i tābān bu gice
He carried off the cloud of his locks, let show his cheek
The glowing moon befriended us tonight.

Mest idüm ʿışḳı meyinden daḥi bir bāde ṣunup
Curʿa-i laʾli beni eyledi ḥayrān bu gice
I was drunk on the wine of his love and he offered more wine
One sip of his ruby befuddled me tonight.

Müddeʿī yārümi menʿ itmege cehd itdi velī
Azdurımadı ne dirsin anı şeyṭān bu gice
The adversary strove to prevent my beloved but
No matter what, Satan could not lead him astray tonight.

10 *Mihrî Hâtun Divânı*, edited by Mehmet Arslan (Amasya: Amasya Valiliği, 2007), 288.

Aramızdan şükür Allāh'a ki eksildi raḳīb
Hele ser vaḳtümüze iremedi hicrān bu gice
Thanks be to God, the rival was absent from among us
Separation could not visit our private gathering tonight.

Ka'be-i ḥüsnini çünkim bize itdürdi ṭavāf
Eyledüm biñ dil ile cānumı ḳurbān bu gice
Because she/he made the Ka'ba of his beauty our axis
With a thousand hearts, I sacrificed my life tonight.

Māh-ı ẕi'l-ḥiccenüñ on beş gicesi ḫoş şeb idi
K'eyledi yār ile Mihrī bile seyrān bu gice
The fifteenth eve of Ẕi'l-Ḥicce month was a pleasant night
Because the beloved roamed about with Mihri tonight.

Beyond the relative directness and clarity of the description, there is a definite narrative thread to the story. The poet and a dear friend—the word for *beloved* is also used for dear friends—go out for a walk (or horseback ride) in the country one evening. They are alone, with no one to bother them or to intrude on their conversation. They gossip—verbally abusing a jealous friend or vigilant guardian who tries to keep them apart. The dear friend/beloved grows less shy and stops hiding her (or his?) face behind dark locks of hair. The poet becomes intoxicated by affection and sneaks an even more intoxicating kiss. She (the poetess) then muses on how pleased she is that the person who would separate her from her beloved is not there and conflates this human *rival* with the *Great Rival*, Satan, who attempts to separate humankind from God. As she nears the end of the poem, she describes herself as overcome by affection to the point of being willing to sacrifice her life to circling about the friend like Muslim pilgrims circumambulating the Kaba in Mecca. And the poem closes with mention of the event and its date (the 15th of the Islamic month of *Ẕi'l-Ḥicce*—the pilgrimage month).

There are no Alexanders, no Ḫıżırs, no Fountains of Youth, no Solomon's magic ring here, only a few references to Muslim beliefs and practices that any believer would recognize. Although the emotional content of the lover-beloved situation appears to be the same as in the Necātī poems, the rhetorical context is openly occasional—signalled by giving a specific date—and thus it resists reduction to a universalizing template. The occasion is just that: an occasion.

The next *tonight ġazel* raises even more intriguing issues. Where Necātī's poems and those with the *tonight/last night* theme by the other male poets speak of a refined, spiritualized love, Mihrī's *ġazel* is a world apart.

Mihrī:[11]

Ben umardum gele bir zülf-i perīşān bu gice
Şem'-i ruḫsārına pervāne ḳılam cān bu gice

11 *Mihrî Hâtun Divânı*, 290.

I was expecting that one with tousled locks would come tonight
That I might make my life a moth to his cheek's flame tonight.

Nā-gehān gird'içeri bir nice bed-rūy didüm
Bunda mı saldı Süleymān dīvi yek-sān bu gice
Suddenly a bunch of ugly-faced fellows entered and I said
Has Solomon released the like of his monster here tonight?

Bir bölük aşmalular geldi bir araya bu dem
Ḳanda bulına ʿaceb bunlara urġan bu gice
A flock of gallows birds assembled at this moment
I wonder where one might find rope for all of them tonight.

Kimi keldür kimi kördür kimi sāḳıt bularuñ
Kimlere ḳıldı muṣāḥib bizi devrān bu gice
Some were bald, some were blind and some of them were lame
With whom did the turning heavens make us conversant tonight.

Şeb-i yeldā gicesi Mihrī'ye gör nitdi felek
Görmez idi getürüp eyledi mihmān bu gice
Look what fate did to Mihrī, on the eve of the year's longest night
It was blind, brought them and made them our guests tonight.

The poem opens, like most others, with the speaker expecting an amorous evening spent with an attractive friend…but this is not to be. Suddenly, in come a troop of quite unattractive and unexpected guests, inspiring a couplet that recalls the following from Necātī's *last night ġazel:*

When the mouth of the beloved concealed a ring
I had in my palm the Seal of Solomon last night.

Necātī takes possession of Solomon's magical ring in the form of the beloved's mouth. Mihrī, disappointed, recalls the rest of the story, in which an evil monster—a "dīv"—steals the ring, depriving Solomon of the greater part of his power.

Her private heart-to-heart has been invaded by a band of low lives who ought to be hanged were there but rope enough. Not only are they morally depraved but they are physically deformed as well and Mihrī bemoans the sorry fate that made her spend the longest night of the year (or what seemed like the longest night) in such company.

We must note that in early-modern times, the Ottoman poet saw her or himself in relation to both a particular audience—the audience before whom the poem will be recited—and to a broader audience of other poets with whom one is in conversation and competition carried out in parallel and 'almost-parallel' poems. The biographer of poets, Laṭīfī, mentions that Mihrī wrote parallels to poems by Necātī and suggests that Necātī was a bit miffed by this and cites some verses that would seem to indicate that the male poet was offended by being paralleled by the 'bad' poetry of a woman.[12]

12 *Latîfî, Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ ve Tabsıratü'n-Nuzamâ: İnceleme-Metin*, edited by Rıdvan Canım (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2000), 511–512.

However, a nuanced look at these almost-parallel *tonight/last night ġazel*s, reveals a few points linked to issues of audience and self-presentation that have been generally overlooked when the male biographers' accounts are uncritically accepted as evidence.

The general practice of writing any kind of parallel poem involves using the precursor poem's material—some combination of rhyme, rhythm, and tropes—to compose a better, more meaningful, more complex, more beautiful poem. In the case of the *tonight ġazel*s Mihrī is not really doing this nor is she trying—and failing—to do this. Her almost-parallels respond to Necātī's originals by deviating from them strikingly rather than by taking up the same themes directly.

The first *ġazel* (*The beloved and I roamed…*) flaunts its occasional character by rejecting traditional tropes (e.g. the Alexander legend, the stories of Solomon, etc.) and rhetorical flamboyance for a rather straightforward story of the poet on a countryside outing gossiping with a beloved friend on a certain day of the year. Everything in the rest of Mihrī's collected works indicates that she could have skilfully employed the commonplace tropes but chose to do something else – the something else being, by itself, a commentary on Necātī's poem.

The second *ġazel* (*I was expecting…*) is even less like a traditional parallel. In fact, it more resembles *hicv* (*lampooning*). It takes the setting of Necātī's *last night ġazel* and a key trope—the story of Solomon's Ring—and turns all the male poet's tender emotion, rhetorical mastery, and prettiness on its head. The spiritual magic ring of the beloved's pretty little mouth is traded for a very mundane invasion of ugly, deformed monsters. The lucky moment of the woebegone lover's success is exchanged for the bitter complaints of a forthrightly angry and disappointed woman.

In these examples, we can see Mihrī's very occasional poetic stance contrasting starkly with Necātī's universalizing or even 'pretend-occasional' verses. We might even conclude that she is mocking or making fun of the 'great poet'—which could account for his reported anger at her attempts to reference his work. Although a Mihrī (or Zeynep, or ʿĀyişe) may present herself as in competition with male court poets, the 'court' or the audience to which she is presenting herself is quite different and the 'rewards' of that presentation are different as well. She is not able to participate in the entertainment activities of male social life—from the parties of royal and highly placed personages to public ceremonies—which are the venues in which Ottoman poems were usually performed. Her 'court' is the shadow court of the harem, the site of the most intimate, private life of potential patrons.

Considering the following occasional poem and its setting: The prince—who is actually well—is ill in the poem. The women of his court are gathered by his bed, and the poet Mihrī recites the following poem with the refrain *it is fitting* "yaraşur" in order to wish him well:[13]

Ol mübārek ẕātuña her demde ṣıḥḥat yaraşur
Ol muṭahhar cismüñe her anda rāḥat yaraşur

13 *Mihrî Hâtun Divânı*, 266.

At every moment good health befits your blessed person
It is fitting that your pure body be ever comfortable.

Dār-ı rif'atde ṣafā vü ẕevḳ ile leyl ü nehār
Ṣaḥn-ı ṣıḥḥatde güzel ḫānumla ṣoḥbet yaraşur
Day and night, in the dwelling of eminence, with pleasure and joy
Conversing in the courtyard of good health with my beautiful lord is fitting.

Ol vücūd-ı nāzenīnüñden ırag̱ olsun elem
Düşmenüñe ḫāne-i g̱am içre miḥnet yaraşur
May agony be distant from your delicate body
Suffering in the dwelling of grief befits only your enemies.

Teb niçün ṭutar seni ṭutsun raḳīb-i kāfiri
Saña ṣıḥḥatler 'adūña renc ü ẕillet yaraşur
Why should a fever afflict you, let it afflict the infidel rival
To you good health is fitting, to your enemy suffering and abasement.

Tīg̱-i ḳahr ile 'adūñuñ başını ḳaṭ' itmege
Ẕatuña cür'et ü hem bāzūña ḳuvvet yaraşur
In order to cut off the enemy's head with the overpowering sword
To your person valor is fitting and to your arm strength.

Nāy gibi iñleyen her dem ḥasūd olsun müdām
Çeng ü ḳānūn ile her dem saña 'işret yaraşur
May the envier ever be the one who cries like a reed flute
To you always merriment with harp and dulcimer is fitting.

Ḥaḳ bag̱ışlasun İlāhī seni ol vālīdeñe
Kim anuñ bir dānesisin saña rif'at yaraşur
May the Divine spare you, o God, for your mother
Whose precious pearl you are, to you exaltation is fitting.

Ḥamdü-lillāh kim mülāḳāt oldı Mihrī dā'iye
Dir görenler ẕātuña erkān-ı devlet yaraşur
Praise God that Mihri (your) Well-Wisher was in attendance
Those who saw it said, that for you the pillars of fortune are fitting.

Here, in what is really a mini-panegyric, Mihrī bewails the suffering of the prince, wishes his suffering on his enemies, and prays that he be returned to the comforts of the harem: pleasant conversation, musical entertainments, his mother's love. Tellingly, she ends by presenting herself as one of the *pillars of fortune* "erkān-ı devlet", which is the common term for the ruler's most powerful courtiers: his viziers, his statesmen, scholars, and generals who support his 'fortune-aided' accession to power. These are the visible pillars of the Ottoman state, paraded about in public, showered with royal favor and public poems of love and praise. But also, as Mihrī seems to demonstrate, there are invisible, closer, and more intimate pillars and powers that support the state perhaps every bit as much.

Conclusion

Both Necātī and Mihrī spent much of their adult lives in the courts of Ottoman princes in the company of the closest companions of rulers and possible rulers-to-be. Necātī hoped that his poetic talents would help him to patronage and ever more remunerative positions. Mihrī could not look for a public job or patronage position in the bureaucratic or educational system. What she could look for or compete for was a stipend and a position as a trusted and intimate visitor in the harem of a prince or ruler – a place where the language of poetry could be more direct and occasional, where teasing the 'great male poets' would be more amusing than exaggerated respect, where entertainment was valued above everlasting public glory.

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Christiane Czygan

The Dual Impact of Madness in Sultan Süleymān's *Third Dīvān* (1554)

Introduction

While in early modern Islamic societies madness was regarded as the ultimate articulation of love, it was incompatible with legitimate—and, in all probability, efficient—rulership. How did this duality come into play when a ruler emulated love in his poems? Where there distinct spheres between poetry and rule? It is relevant to take a closer look at the meaning of madness in the early modern era because the difference between madness in early modern and modern times is so essential for the understanding of madness. Today, we predominantly use the term in a medical context, denoting a mental illness. Below, I scrutinize the multilayered perspective, considering that our modern understanding differs significantly from that of earlier times.

In early modern Middle East poetry, one symbol for madness was the protagonist Mecnūn from the *meṣnevī* (epic poem in distiches) Leylā ve Mecnūn (Layla and Majnun). Multiple poets have shaped and reshaped this epos, transgressing language and regional borders in the Middle East over time. At the core of Leylā and Mecnūn are three intertwined forces: poetry, love, and madness. The ultimate dilemma was their inextricable entanglement: While love was uttered through poetry, and poetry was fuelled by madness, in one way or another, they prevented union with the beloved and brought about the loss of all social bonds. The finesse of this epos lay in masterfully intertwining love, madness, and poetry. The constellation of these forces and the despair they brought about channelled the universal question of human *raison d'être*, and Mecnūn became the prototype of the perfect lover. In this contribution, I give an outline of the genesis of this epos in the Middle East up to the 16th century and explore its repercussions in one of Muḥibbī's poem collections, labelled as the *Third Dīvān* (poetry collection).[1]

The quest of madness divides the ruler poet Muḥibbī from Sultan Süleymān (r. 1520–1566). It reveals the otherwise often unclear borders between this imperial *Dīvān*'s lyrical and political realms. I would argue that the repercussions of promoting

Note: I would like to thank Christoph K. Neumann and Miri Shefer-Mossensohn for their valuable comments and Fatma S. Şen for her help with the poems.

1 The designation *Dīvān-ı Ṣāliṣ* (Third poetry collection) may be found in the incipit (the introductory part of the manuscript). We know of a First *Dīvān* and a Fifth *Dīvān* as well. See Christiane Czygan, "Was Sultan Süleymān Colour-Blind? Sensuality, Power and the Unpublished Poems in the Third Dīvān (1554) of Sultan Süleymān I," In *An İridescent Device: Premodern Ottoman Poetry*, (eds.) Christiane Czygan, Stephan Conermann. Göttingen: Bonn Univ. Press, 2018, 185.

 https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111341729-006

madness in Muḥibbī's poetry also bore a political significance, as they contributed to shaping the image of the *insān-ı kāmil*—(the Perfect Man)—attributed to Sultan Süleymān. Thus, I ask: Did specific contexts and images trigger Muḥibbī's use of the *mecnūn* topos, and if so, what did this mean?

1 Madness in Early Modern Ottoman and Middle East Society

In early modern Ottoman times, insanity was perceived as a social phenomenon, asserted by society and not necessarily by doctors, who were occasionally consulted for healing.[2] The assessment of the impairment of someone's mind was, however, committed to judges who decided on the legal consequences.[3] In this respect, behaviour that deviated significantly from the social norms was perceived as insane. Insanity was divided into different forms in idiocy as a permanent state, madmen or madwomen whose ailment was considered intermittent, and holy fools, whose status, once acclaimed, allowed a wider latitude of social behaviour.[4] Holy fools attained the status of saints and were venerated by the people.[5]

Medicine had a strong bearing on healing, inspired by Galen's model, according to which the harmony between the four elements of black bile (for earth), yellow bile (for fire), phlegm (for water), and blood (for air) is essential to health. He proposed that an imbalance among these four parts causes diseases, equally elicited by bodily or mental disturbances.[6]

Despite the variety of terms for madness, the most frequent are *deli* (Turk. relentless insane or out of control), *dīvāne* (P. possessed by a devil, a lunatic, mad), and *mecnūn* (Ar. insane, lunatic, passion). Because the latter is of pivotal interest for this survey, I focus on *mecnūn* (*majnūn* in Arabic), which means possessed by a djinn—a spirit with supernatural power. Thus, the cure of insanity was connected with exorcism, which could be realized by magic, medicine, or religion.[7]

Both *mecnūn* and *deli* are disposed to an ambiguous meaning, at least from a modern perspective, where uncontrolled behaviours are not necessarily perceived as insanity. Assuming that social deviation signified *mecnūn* in early modern times would seem

2 Michael W. Dols, *Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, edited by Diana E. Immisch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 4; Shoshan Boaz, "The State and Madness in Medieval Islam," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 35 (2003), 330; Miri Shefer-Mossensohn, "Ottoman Madness Between Society and Medicine," *TUBA = Journal of Turkish Studies* 56 (2021), 317–321.

3 Sara Scalenghe, *Disability in the Ottoman Arab World, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 117 f.

4 Scalenghe, *Disability*, 118, 119–122.

5 Scalenghe, *Disability*, 102–117.

6 Shefer-Mossensohn, "Ottoman Madness," 319; Dols, *Majnūn*, 23–25; Scalenghe, *Disability*, 91–92.

7 Dols, *Majnūn*, 3–7; Alford T. Welch, "Madjnūn," *EI²*, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=&s.q=Madjnun [accessed 25 October 2023]; Rüya Kılıç, *Erken Modern Osmanlı'da Deliler ve Delilik* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2023), 87–92.

to partly fill the gap between uncontrolled behaviour and insanity. How can we understand *mecnūn* in this period? Miniatures and the literature occasionally reveal madmen in chains. There is also evidence that some afflicted remained enchained in *tīmārḫāne*s (hospitals for the insane).[8] Thus, the trope of the chain denoted *mecnūn* and pointed to insanity.

A person designated as insane lost their right to be *sui juris* and was thus excluded from inheritance as well as all other forms of material and immaterial responsibilities. In a precarious environment, such a person was inevitably doomed to poverty and immense asymmetrical dependency. The family assumed their care—and was sometimes unwilling or unable to fulfill this social and also legal duty. Recent research has criticized Dols' idealizing depiction of the afflicted, which highlighted the 'social tolerance' shown to lunatics, bringing the lunatics' enchainment to the fore.[9] Nevertheless, we should acknowledge that the individual cases might have differed significantly according to wealth, social networks, local practises, and the severity of the ailment.

A prerequisite to becoming a ruler was mental and physical stability, so a verdict of madness could lead to the disposal of a ruler. Here, too, the assessment of madness was sometimes equivocal, as Miri Shefer-Mossensohn meticulously showed in the case of Sultan Muṣṭafā I (r. 1617–1618, 1622–1623). It seems that socially unacceptable behaviour was not the only reason to declare someone insane; political reasons also came into play, as in the case of Muṣṭafā I, whose 'malfunctioning' was rather inconspicuous.[10] Dols, perhaps unintentionally, introduced another example of the politically motivated verdict of madness by referring to the Prophet Muhammad, who is said to have been accused of insanity by his enemies.[11]

Although insanity was sometimes presented as a backdoor to subversive behaviour or a shield against sanctioning,[12] this must have been a hazardous undertaking as it might result in the loss of autonomy and rights.

2 The Triadic System of Poetry, Love, and Madness

Diametrically opposed to the negative sociopolitical implications of madness, in poetry and mystical movements, madness was the ultimate feature of excessive love (*'işḳ*) and an allegorical or ontological goal.

8 Scalenghe, *Disability;* Shefer-Mossensohn, "Ottoman Madness," 316; Boaz, "The State of Madness," 335–336.

9 Shoshan, "The State of Madness," 334.

10 Shefer-Mossensohn, "Ottoman Madness," 311–313.

11 Dols, *Majnūn,* 10.

12 Scalenghe, *Disability*, 119–121.

Love (aimed at union), poetry, and the intensity of madness form a triadic relationship,[13] illustrated at best in the Mecnūn legend.

The emergence of the Mecnūn legend has to be understood against the background of the spiritual changes Islam had brought about. Where and when the poet and madman had been associated with magical and spiritual power remains at least in Khairallah's somewhat idealizing study unanswered.[14] According to him, poetry had at least a twofold function: on the occult level through its incantations and sacred oracles, and on the profane level as collective memory by the singing of glorious battles. Poetry bridged the sacred and the profane and was thus essential to social life. Through the "desacralization of poetry" by Islam, as Khairallah puts it, the ultimate truth henceforth became assigned to the Quran and the Hadith: Poetry lost its function as the ultimate revelation.[15]

First fragments of the Mecnūn legend first appeared in 9th century poetry. The Arabic poets Ibn Ḳutaybā (828–889)[16] and al-Rāġib al-İṣfāhanī (d. 11th century)[17] were both decisive in enhancing the Mecnūn epic. Around the 12th century, the Arabic poet Wālibī (n.d.) first brought together the different strands of the narrative and completed a *dīvān* (the collections of a poet's poems).[18] The Persian poets Niẓāmī (1141–1209)[19] and Cāmī (1414–1492),[20] both highly revered by the Ottomans, brought the legend to new heights by recasting it as a *mes̲nevī* and by enhancing the imagery. By shifting the emphasis to Mecnūn's interior world and Leylā's depiction as a symbol of divine beauty, Cāmī fostered the mystical alignment.[21] In many ways, he carefully developed Leylā's role as a character in her own right with her own actions.[22] Moreover, he changed the narrative such that Mecnūn followed Leylā and her tribe on their way to Mecca, where both lovers met and committed the ritual circling of the Kaʿba before

13 As'ad E. Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry: An Interpretation of the Magnun Legend* (Wiesbaden: Beirut, 1980), 23.

14 Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*, 34.

15 Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*, 43.

16 Gérard Lecomte, "Ibn Kutayba," *EI²*, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ibn-kutayba-COM-0333 [accessed 17.01.2024].

17 Everett .K. Rowson, "al-Rāghib al-Iṣfāhanī," *EI²*, ttps://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-raghib-al-isfahani-SIM_6188?s.num=2&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=al-isfahani [accessed 1 February 2024].

18 Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*, 49–58.

19 Paola Orsatti, "Nizami Ganjavi," *EI³*, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/nizami-ganjavi-COM_40824?s.num=1&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=Nizami [accessed 17 January 2024].

20 Ömer Okumuş, "Câmî, Abdurrahman," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/cami-abdurrahman [accessed 17 January 2024].

21 Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*, 103–115.

22 Agâh Sırrı Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında Leylâ ve Mecnun Hikâyesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1959), 56.

parting ways again.[23] Thus, Cāmī brought their state of purity to the fore and enhanced Leylā's function as a partner in front of the divine.

In 15th and 16th century, several Ottoman poets adapted the Mecnūn epos into a full-length piece for the Ottoman audience.[24] One of the first who emulated the Leylā and Mecnūn epos was Şāhidī (d. 1550),[25] who crafted this *meṣnevī* for Prince Cem (1459–1495). He also emulated the chain trope and alluded to self-inflicted injury in several distiches, thus emphasizing Mecnūn's severe lunatic state.[26] Şāhidī followed the path paved by Cāmī by including features of spiritual love.[27]

While Şāhidī was held in high esteem by Levend in the 1950s,[28] he has gained little attention in late 20th and 21st century literary research, and the focus shifted to the Turkic poet Fużūlī (d. 1556) as the figurehead for the Ottoman Leylā and Mecnūn epos.[29] Nevertheless, occasionally research was also conducted on other poets' creations, i. e., Günay Tekin explored Ḥamdullāh Ḥamdī's (d. 1503) Leylā and Mecnūn.[30]

Fużūlī implemented Cāmī's semantic of innocence by placing the first encounter of the beloveds in their childhood. Fużūlī, moreover, elaborated on female characters, i. e., Leylā's mother, and thus diversified the protagonists.[31] Moreover, Fużūlī provided the epos with several new dramatic twists, e. g., by emphasizing Mecnūn's state of insanity as the predicament for the union and Mecnūn's consultations with doctors to overcome his mental disturbance.[32] Another dramatic twist occurred through Fużūlī's implementation of a war scene provoked by Mecnūn's longing for Leylā.[33] In this regard, Mehmet Kalpaklı and Walter G. Andrews emphasized Fużūlī's adaptation of the epos for the Ottoman audience by adding some significant scenes that reminded of the challenges that imbued this love and its ultimate exclusiveness, which tends to the divine.[34]

Beyond all the multiple elaborations and various layers of the epos, Mecnūn has multiple, inextricable links to poetry, as a lover, narrator, and protagonist. Since the first compilations excellence was attributed to the poet,[35] the narrator prioritized poetry as the ultimate bliss, and the protagonist won Leylā's affection through the beauty

23 Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında,* 52.
24 Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında*, 103–383.
25 Mustafa Çıpan, "Şâhidî, İbrâhim," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/sahidi-ibrahim, accessed 19 January 2024.
26 Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında*, 114, 116.
27 Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında,* 125–132.
28 Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında,* 132.
29 Gönül Alpay Tekin, *Leylâ ve Mecnûn: Makaleler,* 2nd edition (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2021), 19.
30 Tekin, *Leylâ ve Mecnûn,* 20–93.
31 Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında*, 240–241.
32 Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında*, 244–245.
33 Alpay Tekin, *Leylâ ve Mecnûn,* 20.
34 Mehmed Kalpaklı, Walter G. Andrews, "Layla Grows Up: Nizami's Layla and Majnun in Turkish Manner," In *The Poetry of Nizami Ganjavi: Knowledge, Love, and Rhetoric*, eds. Kamran Talattof, Jerome W. Clinton (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 41–49.
35 Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*, 62.

of his verses. However, poetry was a curse and blessing at the same time and thus formed the ultimate predicament at the core of this epos. Although, according to one strand, Mecnūn won Leylā's affection, her parents refused the marriage and thus the union because, in his poetry, Mecnūn had exposed Leylā to shameful public attention.[36] Thus, poetry destroyed his option for a mundane union. Poetry became his emotional relief, and madness didn't prevent him from continuing to sing and create his beautiful verses, even when he left the community to live in the desert.[37]

Mecnūn was possessed by the vision of Leylā, and her power was absolute. By losing the concrete Leylā through his poetry, his suffering worsened and led to more madness and more poetry. Finally, Mecnūn had internalized Leylā in such a way that he no longer recognized her when she stood in front of him. This spiralling from the concrete to the absolute alludes to the Sufi path delineated by Ibn al-ʿArabī as well as Mecnūn's increasing bewilderment, which corresponds to the mystical hierarchy with the different states (ḥāl).[38]

Finally, Mecnūn found the bliss of union in nature. The wind, insects, and wild animals became in his lunatic state the incarnation of Leylā.[39]

This epos unites poetry, love, and madness and thus parallels Mecnūn's character and fate with the human desire for union and establishes the epos within this triadic system.

3 Mecnūn in the *Third Dīvān*

In the *Third Dīvān* by Sultan Süleyman, completed in 1554, the ruler poet Muḥibbī frequently evokes Mecnūn and displays his predilection for this protagonist. We can assume that, at the time of Muḥibbī's composition in the first half of the 16th century, the entanglement of the physical and spiritual had already imbued the Leylā and Mecnūn epos, and both approaches seem to have been inextricably connected, shaping each other. The question, however, of who was decisive for this development in Ottoman poetry in the first half of the 16th century has not been explored yet. Was it the Persian poet Cāmī, or had the Ottoman or Turkic poets Şāhidī and Fużūlī already succeeded in reaching a wider influence? When precisely did Fużūlī's epos begin to become a model for other poets? These questions are a desideratum for further research.

Though chains evoke the real state of madness, this trope denotes mundane and divine love and unites both.

36 Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*, 63–65.
37 Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*, 65–68.
38 On *ḥāl* see also Sadık
39 Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*, 74–87.

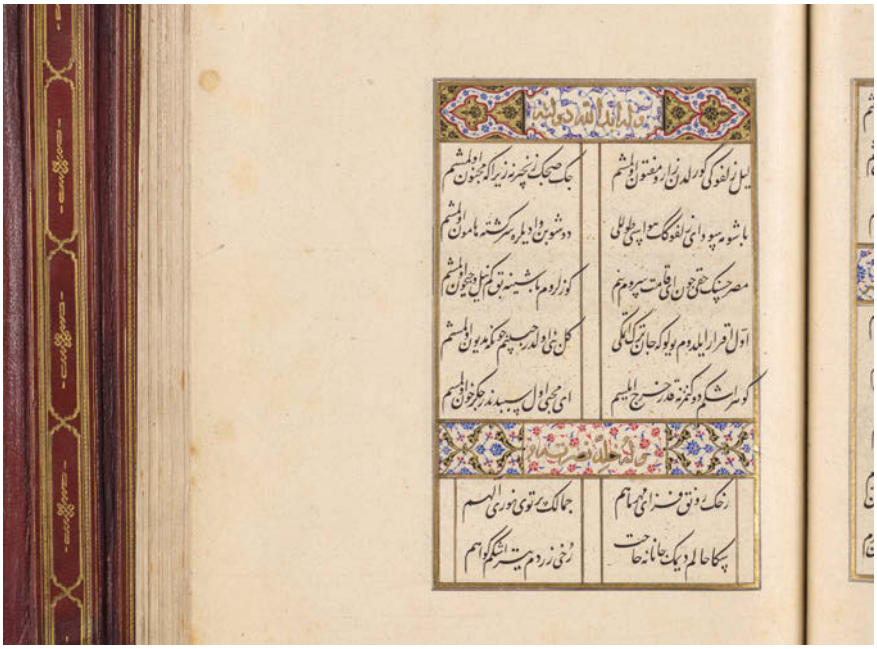

Fig. 1: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, *Dīvān-ı Muḥibbī*, fol. 130a.

The following poem appears in several dīvāns by Muḥibbī; we can assume that it pleased the different editors who chose it for the calligraphers over decades.[40]

[remel – . – - / – . – - / – . – - / – . –]

Leyl-i zülfüñi görelden zār u meftūn olmışam
Cek ṣacuñ zincīrine zīrā ki Mecnūn olmışam
Başuma sevdā-yı zülfüñüñ hevāsı ṭolalı
Düşüben vādīlere ser-geşte hāmūn olmışam
Mışr-ı ḥüsnüñ ḥaḳḳı cūn ey ḳāmet-i servüm benüm
Gözlerüm yaşına baḳ kim Nīl u Ceyḥūn olmışam
Evvel iḳrār eyledüm yoluña cān terk itmegi
Gel beni öldür ḥabībüm cünki medyūn olmışam
Gevher-i eşküm dükenmez ne ḳadar ḥarc eylesem
Ey Muḥibbī ol sebebdendür ciger-ḫūn olmışam
Miserable and undone am I since first I beheld your raven locks
Bound by the chain of your hair, I became Mecnūn, enslaved.
Since the longing for your tresses took hold of my soul
Bewildered, I wandered through desolate valleys and endless plains.

40 *Dīvān-ı Muḥibbī*, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, 1886.168, fol. 130a; Millet Manuscript Library, Ali Emiri no. 392, fol. 165a–b; Istanbul University Library no. 5467, fol. 216b; Coşkun Ak, *Muhibbî Divanı: İzahlı Metin Kanuni Sultan Süleyman*, vol. 1, 2nd edition (Trabzon: Trabzon Valiliği Yayınları, 2006), 584, 1968; *Muhibbī Dīvānı: Bütün Şiirleri, İnceleme – Tenkitli Metin*, ed. Kemal Yavuz, Orhan Yavuz, vol. 2 (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2016), 1079 f, 2072.

O my supple cypress, to earn the city of your beauty
Gaze upon the rivers of my tears, flowing as Nile and Oxus.
I have sworn to leave behind all else and follow your path
Come, my heart's sovereign, and claim your due—my very life.
No multitude of diamond tears can see their end
And each one pierces my heart anew. This sorrow, O Muḥibbī, is my doom.

The opening distich, the *maṭla'*, evokes the protagonists Leylā and Mecnūn, their qualities, and alludes to the Leylā and Mecnūn epos. This intertextual reference is called *telmīh* in rhetoric.[41] The pitch-dark of the beloved's curl as well as *sevdā* (blackness) in the second distich allude to Galen's black bile represented by earth within the four elements. A disequilibrium of the black bile caused melancholia, which signified a broad spectrum between milder and more deteriorated forms of delusional ailing.[42] In the context of madness, it might not be too far-fetched that black also points to Muḥibbī's impairment of mind and thus amplifies his expressions of delusion. The curl depicts the chain trope, which clearly points to his insanity, which he parallels with that of Mecnūn. Though the epos underwent multiple modifications and connotations through the ages, in the 16th century, the Ottomans designated Mecnūn as the prototype of the lover, meshing the spiritual and earthly.[43] So, Muḥibbī eagerly shows his state of insanity through love.

In this verse, as in the following ones, the beloved remains rather opaque, and a human beloved or the divine beloved is conceivable and thus underpins Cāmī-Şāhidī-Fużūlī's mystical approach.

In the second distich, Muḥibbī resumes the chain trope and emphasizes his lunatic state by alluding to the steppe he is wandering through. Interestingly, the image of the desert used in the Arabic and Persian epos is adapted to the Anatolian landscapes with its vast steppes.

Muḥibbī also directly addresses the beloved in the third and central distich. Here, Mışr means the city and evokes the Prophet Joseph, who was perceived as the incarnation of beauty. Thus, it implicitly aligns the beloved's beauty with the Prophet Joseph's. Oxus and Nile were among the largest rivers in the Middle East and thus form a rhetorical hyperbole (*mübālaġa*) for the quantity of tears he shed. The slender shape of the cypress attracts him most and makes him cry so intensely that his eyes become Oxus and Nile. The massive and steady water pouring from his eyes comes first, but he adds another level by expressing it in the imperative form. Oxus and Nile were fertile plains and thus extraordinarily beautiful. Accordingly, what Muḥibbī says on the second level is, "Look at my eyes. I, too, am extraordinarily beautiful."

In the fourth distich, Muḥibbī evokes his self-sacrifice for the beloved and his vow never to leave the beloved. The vow and the self-sacrifice point to the mystic realm and,

41 M.A. Yekta Saraç, *Klâsik Edebiyat Bilgisi: Belâgat ve Biçim-Ölçü-Kâfiye,* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2019), 291–295.

42 Scalenghe, *Disability*, 91–95, 99–102.

43 Levend, *Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatında*, 103–324.

thus, the beloved, directly addressed in the second hemistich with *ḥabībüm*, which appears less as a male than the divine beloved.

In the fifth and last distich, the *maḳṭaʿ*, Muḥibbī again varies the topos of tears using the metaphor of the diamonds, in rhetoric called *ḳapalı istiʿāre.* His tears are like diamonds from an unlimited treasure. This version leaves an unclear causality between the diamond-like tears and the bleeding heart. It appears to be a circular thought: Because I'm crying, my heart is bleeding (and vice versa). This might have struck later editors as well, who changed the last hemistich such that love,*ʿışḳ*, made him cry endlessly.[44] In this later version, the extraordinary value of the diamonds is transferred to his love and singles him out. Moreover, the poem is framed more elegantly, with madness in the first verse and love in the last.

In addition to its different layers, this poem highlights that the love sung about in these verses must be understood as distinct from the poet's position as a ruler and as an allegory of the poet's mystical and emotional inclination. Only by decoupling poetry from political functions could Sultan Süleymān elaborate and indulge a state of mind in which nothing else besides love existed. However, using this bifurcated approach—although poetry offered him an exit from politics—also affected his depiction as a pious man devoted to love in politics. This dual benefit might explain Sultan Süleyman's inclination to poetry and his tremendous productivity, which made him—with more than 4,000 poems—the most prolific Ottoman ruler poet.

Regarding my introductory question about the potential triggers in the context of insanity, the curl (*zülf*) image coincided with *mecnūn* and *ʿışḳ*. The curl stands for the chain, and it seems that the chain trope evoked insanity precisely. Though not all lunatics were enchained in art and poetry it was recognized as the symbol of insanity.

The following poem is a 'new' poem, not found in Muḥibbī's other *dīvān* editions. It is crafted in the meter *mużāriʿ*, which caused Muḥibbī some hardships and, thus, like its peers, is slightly defective.[45]

Mużāriʿ [– - . / – . – . / . – - . / – . –]

Şol deñlü urdı cevr oḳın ol bī-vefā bańa[46]
Raḥm ider oldı ḥālüme bay u gedā bańa
Sevdā-yı zülf başa getürdi belāları
Her ne getürse başuma oldı sezā bańa
Ferhād u Ḳays eylese reşk ḥālüme ne ṭañ
İḳlīm-i derdi virdi bugün cūn Ḫudā bańa
ʿIşḳuñla ʿadm mülkine gitdükde ey perī
Olur ġamuñla miḥnet ü derdüñ ġıdā bańa
Cānuma bedel bula meger derd-i dilberi
İtdükce ḳaçan dest-i ecel merḥabā bańa

44 Ali Emiri no. 392, fol. 165b; IÜK 5467, fol. 216b.

45 In the fifth distich "*bedel bula*" and "*ḳaçan dest-i*" does not fit into the meter. In the maḳṭāʿ "*Taḥṣīnler*" has to be shortened (*zihāf*) into "*Taḥṣinler*" and then it fits.

46 MKG, 1886. 168, fol. 5b–6a.

Bu naẓm-ı dürr-bār-i Muḥibbī'nüñ işidüp
Taḥsī[i]nler ide cān ile ehl-i ṣafā bańa
That faithless one struck the arrow of torment upon me with such force
That lords and beggars alike showed their pity for my plight.
The desire for a single curl brought me untold sorrow
Whatever fortune brings, I am deserving of it still.
It is no wonder if Ferhād and Ḳays covet me lot
For today, the Lord has granted me the wilderness of pain.
O celestial sprite, for love of you I enter the realm of nothingness,
The sorrow, the anguish you have caused, is my daily fare.
When death's cold hand does greet me at last,
It shall find the one who seized my heart, the keeper of my soul's affliction.
Listening to this gem-laden verse from Muḥibbī's mouth,
Let those of glad countenance cry "Well done!" from the heart.[47]

Fig. 2: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, *Dīvān-ı Muḥibbī*, fol. 4b_5a.

In contrast to the former poem, in this *maṭla'* (introductory verse), the beloved is characterized as cruel. Though this belongs to the conventional character of the beloved, it appeals to compassion for a Muḥibbī suffering more than everyone else.

The idea of being the ultimate lover is developed further by evoking Ferhād and Ḳays, the contemporary symbols of love who envied Muḥibbī. Ferhād was the lover in the epos Ferhād and Şīrīn who tried to overcome the separation from Şīrīn by attempting to hammer a tunnel into the mountains. Ḳays was Mecnūn's genuine

47 Translated by the author.

name. Though the suffering or pain of love was conventionally connected with love, Muḥibbī amplifies his pain to the ultimate verge, which leads to death. Thus, Muḥibbī constructs a duality between himself and the faithless beloved and highlights himself as the ultimate lover who finds solace in the pain of love and sacrifices all for the beloved. The beloved appears here more concretely, and we may assume a female beloved, perhaps Ḥürrem Sultan as the addressee.

It is striking that, in the last distich, the *maḳṭaʿ*, Muḥibbī returns to the world around and anticipates the applause of the connoisseurs who sincerely praise him. In doing so, he connects the last distich to the first distich, in which he also refers to the complete spectrum of the male society beyond social hierarchies.

This poem too, does not evoke an explicit reference to rule, though the multiple meanings of *iklīm* (tropic, continent) initially felt like a glimpse of evoking rulership.

This poem may have been excluded from later collections perhaps because of its slightly defective meter, but other reasons, e.g. the editor's predilections or simple fortuity are also conceivable. Nevertheless, we see how eagerly Muḥibbī promoted himself as the ultimate lover. Though madness belongs to the core qualities of a lover to which Muḥibbī also refers to, it is the ontological challenge of death at the pinnacle of this poem. As in the former poem, Muḥibbī's eagerness to display the utmost form of madness divides the lyrical persona, along with Muḥibbī from the ruler, Sultan Süleymān. So, the dichotomy of madness and rule seems to have been irrelevant, and there was a strict division between the realm of poetry and politics.

Fig. 3: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, *Dīvān-ı Muḥibbī*, fol. 149b–150a.

Among the 'new' poems, the following is surprising:

[hezec . – - – / . – - – / . – -]

Göñül olsa ʿaceb mi zār u maḥzūn[48]
Olubdur ʿışḳ ile ḥāl[i] diger gūn
Şifā bulmaz bu dil ʿışḳ ḫastasıdur
Ṭabībā böyle yazdı belki Ḳānūn
Naẓar ḳılmazsa çeşmüm gevherine
Ḳo gecsün yire genc-i hem çü Ḳārūn
Ḫaṭuñla baş ḳoşaldan zülf-i Şebdīz
İder baş ḳatıluġın eşk-i Gül-gūn
Muḥibbī ṭaġlara düşse ʿaceb mi
Olubdur bir gözi āhūya mecnūn
Is it a wonder that the heart is laden with sorrow and grief
When love casts it into a realm most unsteady?
This heart finds no cure, for it ails with love's malady
O physician, did you not read in [Ibn Sīnā's] Ḳānūn the nature of such afflictions?
When my beloved denies the jewels of my eyes his gaze
Let them be buried, like the riches of Croesus, [lost to the earth].
I swoon, for his pitch-dark lock dances beside his beard
As Şebdīz[49] gallops alongside the tear-streaked Gül-gūn.[50]
It is no marvel if Muḥibbī sought the solace of mountains
For his heart is ensnared by the beauty of gazelle-like eyes.

This extraordinarily well-crafted poem is, in two ways, very unusual for Muḥibbī. First, it opens an imagined world full of hues. Second, it uses several double meanings and thus contains the rhetorical device *īhām* or *tevrīye*, which was highly appreciated in Ottoman poetry but usually did not belong to Muḥibbī's rhetorical devices.

This poem contains references to the important works by Ibn Sīnā's medical treatise *Ḳānūn fī'l Ṭıbb* (Canon of Medicine)[51] and the manifold emulated epos of *Ḫusrev ve Şīrīn* (Khosrow and Shirin) penned among others by the famous Persian poets Firdevsī (940 – ca. 1020) and Niẓāmī (1141–1209). Furthermore, this poem evokes the allegory of Croesus' treasure buried deep in the earth, and the tears trickling into the ground correspond to this image. Love culminates in the *maḳṭaʿ*, in madness, the ultimate state of love. Both love and madness are elegantly framing this poem in the first and last distich.

I wonder whether Muḥibbī really produced this masterly crafted poem. In Muḥibbī early *dīvān* copies, to which the Hamburg manuscript belongs, the rhetorical device

48 MKG, 1886.168, fol. 149b–150a.

49 Şebdīz is a horse of supernatural power that plays an important role in the epos Ḫusrev ve Şīrīn epos. Nizami: *Chosrou und Schirin*, trans. by J. Christoph Bürgel (München: Manesse Verl., 1993), 26, 29, 44.

50 Gül-gūn is one of Şebdīz' offsprings and thus provided with similar qualities. It is also an important carrier of Ḫusrev and Şīrīn. Nizami: *Chosrou und Schirin*, 69, 126.

51 See also Amélie Marie Goichon, "Ibn Sīnā," *EI*^{2}, https://referenceworks.brill.com/display/entries/EIEO/corr0342.xnl?rskey=Od+QS12result=1, [accessed 21.11.2024]

īhām or *tevrīye* (ambiguous meaning) is missing. But precisely this rhetorical device signified lyrical mastership. What further deviates from Muḥibbī individual style are two other aspects:

1. Muḥibbī's poems are generally static, and movement or dynamic scenes do not belong to his general lyrical repertoire.
2. Hues are not completely absent, but compared to the works of his lyrical peers, they are relatively rare.[52]

The cultural background against which Muḥibbī created his verses coincides with his usual intertextual repertoire and points to Muḥibbī's choice to emulate this poem as a *naẓīre* (parallel poem). Benedek Péri pointed out that the rhyming word *-ūn* belongs to a larger *naẓīre* network based on Aḥmedī's (d. after 1410) base poem.[53] The beloved in this poem appears to be a man. Though homoerotic poems were not unusual, the elaborate composition, the colourful setting, the dynamic scene, and the beloved male all point to another poet.

This poem alludes to the state of insanity achieved through excessive love. That the author did not distinguish between passion and madness is indicated by the fact that he evoked medical treatment by Ibn Sīnā, so, in this poem too, passion and madness did conflate.

Although Muḥibbī was not skilled or ambitious enough to create such a brilliant poem, as a connoisseur of poetry, he was apt to indulge in excellent poems and to imitate them.

Conclusion

Insanity bore different implications in early modern life and poetry. Although society treated abnormal behaviour in various ways, it usually implied the loss of responsibility, as determined by a judge. In poetry, however, madness was the ultimate symbol of love, imbued with spiritual and earthly meaning. This suggests a quest for madness, which Muḥibbī eagerly pursues in his verses. The state of love makes Muḥibbī compete with Mecnūn and, thus, with the prototype of the perfect lover. In this way, he constructs an image of himself as the most superior lover. However, his claim to madness remains a bit bloodless as it is substantiated only with evidence when he describes himself as a wanderer through the steppe, secluded from humans like Mecnūn. Muḥibbī's target is the perfect lover, and, entirely in line with lyrical conventions, he aligns this state with madness—at least in the 37 verses of the Hamburg manuscript.[54] *ʿIşḳ*

52 Czygan, "Was Sultan Süleymān Colour-Blind?," 190–193.

53 I thank Benedek Péri for this hint. Ahmedî Edirneli Nazmî, *Mecmaʿu'n-Nezâ'ir*, edited by M. Fatih Köksal (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), 1262/3819, https://ekitap.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/56057,mecmaun-nezair-edirneli-nazmi-pdf.pdf?0, [accessed 4 March 2024].

54 MKG 1886.168, fol. 2b–fol. 174b.

became a keyword in Muḥibbī's Hamburg manuscript and needed a trigger to refer to madness. This trigger was the beloved's curl, a physical feature of beauty and a trope for the chain that controlled the inflicted.

These poems exemplify the intense entanglement of love, madness, and poetry that lay at the core of the Mecnūn epos, a predilection Muḥibbī shared with his peers. Thus, when Muḥibbī sings about himself as a lover, all political responsibilities seem to vanish, and his role as ruler of a tremendous empire seems to disappear in favour of poet lover.

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Ontological Configurations

Victoria Rowe Holbrook

The Separation of Goodness and Beauty: Plato, Galip, Lacan

Introduction

In the long history of Western thought there is a highly significant state of affairs: This is the fact that the range of meaning in Plato's usage of the Greek term *to kalon*, which in his dialogue *Symposium* names the beauty that is goodness as the ultimate object of love, was apportioned across different terms in Latin translation, separating the good from the beautiful. Yet in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (Ottoman and modern), beauty has been understood in the full Platonic range from at least the time of the *Quran* to the present day. I will give the example of the 18th century philosophical romance in verse, *Beauty and Love* (*Ḥüsn ü Aşḳ*) by the Ottoman poet Şeyḫ Galip (1757–1799),[1] who became Director of the Galata convent of Mevlana Rumi's dervish order after writing his work. I will discuss what is at stake in the separation of goodness and beauty, and briefly give a sample from Jacques Lacan's usages.

I begin by saying that the reason for the separation in Latin was not that Latin had no word capable of rendering *kalon.*[2] Translation is not an automatic process. It is almost never the case that a word in one language is simply equivalent to a word in another. Nor are the meanings of words limited to pre-determination by etymology. Words gain and lose meaning through usage and translation in context. Translation choices are the fruit of the personal experience and philosophical, or ideological, commitments of everyday individuals as well as translators, and their choices are always interpretive. The historical trail of meaning in intellectual history is more often formed not in the philologically traceable way of relationships between texts, or by the remarkably undefined modern notion of 'influence,' but through deep structures of thought transposed anonymously, in a kind of filial relation.

What are the consequences of separating goodness and beauty? How has the separation determined the fate of love? I am drawing an outline for a project too large for one scholar, and I have more questions than answers, but I hope to convince you that there is a great deal at stake. Is Islam more rooted in Plato than Latin/European thought has been? Was the centuries'-long struggle over the Christian Trinity partly an effort to work this problem out? How does the issue of presence and absence fit in? Could Roman poets have so often celebrated rape if they had not assumed a divide

1 I have not transliterated proper names.

2 A century ago, Dean P. Lockwood said the same thing for different reasons in "Two Thousand Years of Latin Translation from the Greek," In *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 49 (1918), 117–118.

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between goodness and beauty?[3] Are we burning up our planet because we think beauty is disposable appearance rather than the ultimate good?

1 Plato's Definition of Beauty and Intelligible Form

In Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates defined *eros* as love of good things, saying all good things are beautiful.[4] Socrates narrates what he learned from the priestess Diotima, who convinced him that what people want is for good things to be theirs forever; they seek "to give birth in beauty" because reproduction is what mortals have in place of immortality.[5] As the text goes on, we find that what is good (*agathon*) has been conflated with what is beautiful (*kalon, kalas*). The term 'good' is not mentioned again; it is held within 'beauty' like a child in the womb. Diotima explains that some people are pregnant in body, and some are pregnant in soul; and what is fitting for a soul to bear and bring to birth is wisdom and the rest of virtue. When a person pregnant in soul finds another "soul that is beautiful and noble and well-formed… it instantly makes him teem with ideas and arguments about virtue,"[6] to which he gives birth in the beautiful soul of the other.

Diotima goes on to describe "the rites of love" with the famous allegory of the Staircase of Love. The lover must first find bodies beautiful, and the beauty he finds there leads him to love of souls and things that will "make young men better." Thus, he is moved to love of social forms such as laws and customs, then to love of learning and knowledge, and ultimately to beauty itself, the intelligible form in which all that is beautiful 'participates.' Only then, "when he looks at Beauty in the only way that Beauty can be seen—only then will it become possible for him to give birth not to images [εϊδωλα] of virtue … but to true virtue."[7]

Intelligible form is what does not change although the things of the world, subject to generation and corruption, change constantly. Luc Brisson observed that Plato responded to the main feature of Greek religion before his time: the distinction between immortal (unchanging) and mortal (changing). If intelligible forms are to contribute a solution to the problem of how a thing can be both changing and unchanging—how it is, for example, that I was once a babe in the womb and now am 170 centimetres tall, yet all along and still Victoria—"*the separation between the intelligible and the sensible*

3 See for example Ellen Greene, *The Erotics of Domination: Male Desire and the Mistress in Latin Love Poetry,* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

4 Plato, *Complete Works*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, edited by John M. Cooper with D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997). 201c et fol.

5 Plato, *Complete Works*, 206–207.

6 Plato, *Complete Works*, 208e–209c.

7 Plato, *Complete Works*, 212a.

can never be complete."[8] Plato is customarily credited, and blamed, for establishing a body-mind dualism; early and late, modern European philosophy has disparaged Plato for exalting a transcendent realm, and applauded Aristotle for insisting on the material. But mortal/immortal dualism, if one can call it that, obtained in Greek culture when Plato's Socrates was born; what he established is the continuity of the two. Desire and knowledge, sensible and intelligible, are a continuum, not a divide.

Diotima explains that the intelligible form of beauty is so much more attractive, so much better than anything else, that once having grasped it, people can no longer find anything else desirable and so are freed from pursuits that make them unhappy and corrupt political life. In Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*, lovers follow a similar progression in understanding, and the dialogue includes a satirical description warning of the tawdry and violent attachment that results when love remains immediate gratification of sexual desire alone. A related definition of beauty is found in Plato's dialogue *Philebus.*[9] There Socrates seeks the proper mixture of knowledge and pleasure to constitute the good in life, and he says: "If we cannot capture the good [*agathon*] in *one* form, we will have to take hold of it in a conjunction of three: beauty [*kalon*], proportion [*symmetria*], and truth [*aletheia*]. Let us affirm that these three should by right be treated as a unity."[10] Yet when we look at the Latin usage inherited by European vernaculars, we find that it divided *kalon* and its related forms into moral and sensible parts, and this separation of goodness and beauty survives in European languages today.

2 Greek to Arabic, Persian, and Turkish

The Glossarium Græco-Arabicum corpus lists translations of Greek terms into Arabic in works of the massive Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement 750–1000. It shows us that Arabic *ʿishq* was most often used to translate Greek *eros*, and *ḥusn* and its cognates to translate *kalon*/*kalos.*[11] The Late Antique Quran (610–632) and hadith (reports of what Muhammad said and did) show that Plato's understanding of beauty was present in Arabic more than two centuries before the Translation Movement. Kazuyo Murata has pointed out that *ḥusn* and its cognates, interchangeably with *jamāl/jamīl*, appear as beauty that is goodness hundreds of times in Quran and hadith.[12] *Ḥubb* was the Arabic

8 Luc Brisson, "What is a god According to Plato?" In *Platonisms: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern*, edited by Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 41–*42.*

9 Plato, *Philebus*, trans. Dorathea Frede, In *Plato: Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper with D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

10 Plato, *Philebus*, 65a.

11 Eros: https://glossga.bbaw.de/results.php?gr_lexeme=ερως&ar_lexeme=&ar_root_1=&ar_root_2=&ar_root_3=&ar_root_4=&ar_root_5=&submit-button=, Kalon: https://glossga.bbaw.de/results.php?gr_lexeme=καλον&ar_lexeme=&ar_root_1=&ar_root_2=&ar_root_3=&ar_root_4=&ar_root_5=&submit-button=.

12 Kazuyo Murata, *Beauty in Sufism: The Teachings of Ruzbihan Baqli*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2017), 29–34.

term for love at this stage; Arabic *ʿishq* (Turkish transliteration: *ʿışḳ*, modern spelling: *aşk*) came into usage later, the date yet to be determined. Murata gives the decisive example of a hadith in which Muhammad says, "No one who has a dust mote's weight of arrogance in his heart will enter paradise." His interlocutor rejoins, "A man likes his garment and sandals to be beautiful [*ḥasan*]." Muhammad reassures him: "Indeed, God is beautiful [*jamīl*] and He loves beauty [*yuḥibbu al-jamāl*]. Arrogance is to be insolent toward God and to despise people."[13] Muhammad pointed to the meaning of beauty by saying that God is beautiful, and to the Platonic continuity between the changing mortal and unchanging divine by implying that God loves even the beauty of a sandal. The source of all beauty is the same.[14]

There have always been Muslim authors who understood Plato well, whether they read him or not.[15] In Mevlana Rumi's (1207–1273) reference to the story of the famous lovers Leyla and Mecnun, the Caliph met with Leyla and remarked that she was no more beautiful than many others. Leyla replied, "You are not Mecnun."[16] We might take her to mean that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," as David Hume's opinion is now expressed; but Mevlana makes it clear that the point he is illustrating is that the beauty a person is able to see depends on the state of that person's soul. Plato's overriding concern was the cultivation of the soul so that young men could recognize and desire truth and the right proportion that is justice, and therefore contribute to political life. As Panos Eliopoulos said in a 2020 talk at our Istanbul "Goodness and Beauty" philosophy conversation series,[17] one of Plato's enduring aims was to direct *eros*, as the most powerful of desires, to the good of the polis, the city.

By the time the word *ḥusn* came into Turkish as *hüsün*, it was the long-established translation of *kalon* in the full range of Plato's meaning. Persian *nīkūʿī* and Turkish *güzellik* also, along with their adjectival forms, inherit the Platonic range of *kalon*. The fact that the antonyms of both *kalon* and all three Arabic, Persian, and Turkish terms signify shamefulness, repulsiveness, and evil as well as ugliness indicates steppingstones in the transposition of concepts from Greek to the three languages.[18] In Turkish today the body of a woman or man can be called *güzel*, but so can a noble action, an appropriate choice of date to meet for coffee, a well-made toothbrush or effective cholesterol medication, a just decision in court, and a truthful statement about the

13 Murata, *Beauty in Sufism*, 29–34.

14 Murata, *Beauty in Sufism*, 29–34.

15 I have cited Murata's study of Ruzbihan Baqli (1128–1209); examples from other authors can be found in William C. Chittick, *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), and a more general account in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2007).

16 Kenan Rifai, *Listen: Commentary on the Spiritual Couplets of Mevlana Rumi*, translated by Victoria Holbrook, (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2011), 71, 73.

17 22 September 2020. *Goodness and Beauty* is a continuing online philosophy conversation series by invitation founded at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic by myself, Veysi T. Kondu, and Gökhan Duman.

18 Murata, *Beauty in Sufism*, 29.

way things really are. We find Socrates using the term *kalon* with reference to nobility and utility also. What is good, is beautiful.

3 The Separation

Who first separated goodness from beauty in Latin, and why? What needs might have this choice fulfilled? We do not have a corpus like the Glossarium for Roman translation of Greek to Latin, which was largely paraphrase, or for the Arabic to Latin translations beginning in the 12th century. We cannot yet scrupulously trace how Arabic terms were interpreted in Latin. Nor is there a corpus for Renaissance and other Latin translations of newly obtained Greek exemplars. Recently an "Arabic and Latin Corpus" has appeared online, established in December 2020 by Dag Nikolaus Hasse.[19] But although at the time of this writing we could search for an Arabic term in the Arabic works digitalized there, and for a Latin term in the Latin works, the corpus glossary does not yet show how the terms were translated. I would like to know why specific translation choices are made at specific times.

Of course, not all Greek thinkers agreed that love can traverse the distance from desire to knowledge; nor did all who wrote in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. I point to a specific stream of thought, not a generality obtaining in all cases. Aristotle rejected his teacher Plato's understanding of form; in *Nichomachean Ethics*, we find him saying that Plato was "wrong to assume that goodness is something universal, common to all good things, and single. Rather, goodness is different in different cases."[20] In *Metaphysics*, he says that "the good and the beautiful are different (for the former always implies conduct as its subject, while the beautiful is found also in motionless things."[21] Although Islamic philosophy is routinely assumed by non-specialists to be Aristotelian, I hope to convince you that this is not at all the way Islamic philosophers saw beauty.

Cicero (106 – 43 B.C.E.) is among Roman authors the one most known for his knowledge of Plato and translations or paraphrases of him. In a 2010 special issue of the journal *Classical Philology* devoted to "Beauty, Harmony, and the Good," Terrence Irwin explained that "when Cicero renders Stoic claims about the *kalon*, he uses *honestum* rather than *pulchrum* in moral contexts. Ambrose [d. 397 C.E.] does the same. By contrast, the translators of the Latin Vulgate Bible [also late 4th century] normally prefer *bonum* as a general equivalent of *kalon.* Mediaeval Latin translators of Aristotle's *Ethics* normally follow them. In the sixteenth century, however, Lambimus reverts to the practice of Ambrose and Cicero and uses *honestum* and *pulchrum* as he thinks appro-

19 https://www.arabic-latin-corpus.philosophie.uni-wuerzburg.de, [accessed 07.03.2024].

20 Christopher Shields, "Aristotle," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/aristotle/, [accessed 07.03.2024].

21 Shields, "Aristotle," Book XIII, 1078a.

priate. Similarly, some English translators use 'beautiful,' 'noble,' and 'fine' in different places."[22]

When *kalon* was divided into *honestum* (honorable) and *pulchrum* (beautiful), or reduced to *bonum* (a moral good), did the status of beauty suffer thereby? In the same special issue of *Classical Philology*, Aryeh Kosman agreed with other contributors that "there is a deep history of uncertainty about how properly to translate *kalon.*"[23] It leaves "me with the urge," he wrote, "an urge that I will of course resist, to say that the Greeks had no concept of beauty."[24] This seems to put the cart before the horse. Is it not akin to the urge a tourist feels when dismayed that things are not the way they are at home? Gabriel Richardson Lear, in his response to Kosman in the same issue, praised him for explaining this as the result of a particular intellectual history: "Whereas for us an appearance is, above all, a mere surface appearance, for the Greeks an appearance is, in the first instance, the manifestation or presence to immediate awareness of the thing's being. Thus, whereas our beauty is superficial, sensible, and possibly deceitful, the Greek kalon reveals a thing's goodness and is not limited to the sensible surfaces of things."[25] The "intellectual history" to which Lear refers is the separation of goodness and beauty I am examining. When Kosman speaks of "our beauty," he likely means our inheritance of Kantian aesthetics; here we see two possible consequences of projecting upon Greek thought modern notions that developed along with the social/political emergence of autonomous art. One, the Greek concept may seem to mean nothing at all. Two, the Greeks may be incorrectly assumed to have divided beauty into absence and presence, when what they saw was the continuity between the two.

4 Galip's Beauty and Love

Although Plato's *Symposium* was never directly translated into Arabic before the modern era, the Staircase of Love described by Diotima shines in the structure of countless works written wherever Islamic culture has spread; this is a very interesting fact. An early modern Ottoman example is Şeyh Galip's 1782/3 philosophical romance, *Beauty*

22 T.H. Irwin, "The Sense and Reference of *Kalon* in Aristotle," *Classical Philology*, special issue on "Beauty, Harmony, and the Good," edited by Elizabeth Asmis, 105, 4 (2010), 381–382.

23 Asmis (ed.), "Beauty, Harmony, and the Good," 346.

24 Asmis, "Beauty," 351. Umberto Eco also, 'in his book *History of Beauty* [later republished as *On Beauty: A History*], states unequivocally: "In fact, Beauty had no autonomous stature in ancient Greece" (Eco 2004, 37), and he adds: "The very word *Kalón*, which only improperly may be translated by the term 'beautiful,' ought to put us on our guard (39). That a specific term was lacking is not in itself evidence, of course, that the Greeks lacked a notion of the beautiful; but it clearly does make it more difficult to isolate just what they thought it was."' David Konstan, "Beauty," In *A Companion to Ancient Aesthetics*, edited by Pierre Destrée and Penelope Murray (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 367.

25 Asmis, "Beauty," 358.

and Love (*Ḥüsn ü ʿAşk*).[26] At first glance, the journey of Galip's hero Love appears to be over land and sea; but when one notices that he passes successively through landscapes of earth, (frozen) water, fire, and air, one sees that he ascends through the cosmic hierarchy of the four elements. At the same time, it is a journey upward through the soul as understood in Islamic philosophy's Platonic, Aristotelian, Neoplatonic and Quranic affinities combined, reworked, and expanded in various ways. But where Galip's tale most resembles Plato's Staircase of Love is in describing a progress in comprehension of what Beauty is.

Galip's hero Love is also a poet, and the lyrics he composes show how his inner life changes over the course of his journey. His grandiose sense of self is evident in his first lyric, where he sees Beauty as a cruel tyrant. 'Purification of the soul' (Ar. *tazkiyat al-nafs*, Tr. *nefis tezkiyesi*) is an ubiquitous Islamic doctrine that refers to the Quran. The parts of our hero Love's immature soul appear on his journey as enemies blocking his path.

The Glossarium shows that Greek *psuche* was rendered by Arabic *nafs*, (Tr. *nefis*), and *nous* by *ʿaql* (Tr. *akıl*). The three parts of Plato's psyche are known in English as appetitive (*epithumetikon*), spirited[27] (*thumoeides*), and logical/intellect (*logistikon* or *nous*), located respectively in the stomach, heart and head. For Aristotle, the soul had three faculties: nutritive, sensitive, and intellective (often translated as 'reason'); he later added desire. Plants have nutritive souls, animals have nutritive and sensitive (capable of sensation) souls, and humans have all three; desire is the faculty that initiates animal and therefore human locomotion/action.[28] In the common parlance of Islamic ethics, we find three parts with Aristotelian-sounding names: the vegetal soul (*al-nafs al-nabātiyah*), animal soul (*al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyah*), and intellectual soul (*al-nafs*

26 Şeyh Galip, *Beauty and Love* / *Hüsn-ü Aşk*, edited and trans. by Victoria Rowe Holbrook, 2 vols. (New York: Modern Language Association, 2005). My translation and edition, and thus verse numbering, are based on Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Hüsn-ü Aşk: Önsöz, Metin, Bugünkü Dile Çevirisi, Açıklama, Galip'in Elyazısı ile Hüsn ü Aşk'ın Tıbkı Basımı,* (Istanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 1968). Gölpınarlı's is a critical edition based on Galip's autograph, while other editions are simply copies of an early 19th-century Cairo printing whose source is unknown and which differs significantly from the autograph.

27 The translation "spirited" is problematic once spirit is thought of as descending into the human body from a divine above, the combination of the two bringing about the soul. Ahmet Arslan's Turkish translation *irade* ("will") may be a better approximation for the "spirited" part Plato also called "the ally of reason," but Arslan's choice of *ruh* for "soul" is problematic also; Ahmet Arslan, *İlkçağ Felsefe Tarihi 2: Sofistlerden Platon'a,* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Yayınları, 2006). Throughout the centuries of Islamic writing, Arabic *rūḥ* has most often been used in its Quranic meaning of "spirit" (for example, 15:29) as opposed to *nafs*/soul' (for example, 12:53). While it is true that *nafs* is sometimes used interchangeably with *rūḥ*, in the Quran and after, this is usually because *nafs* is also a reflexive pronoun in Arabic. In other words, it refers to the self, the person as an entity, and in a specialized discourse of Islamic thought, entities pre-exist in God's knowledge before He gives them created existence. Furthermore, during their existence, they remain in God's knowledge as pre-existent, "immutable" entities.

28 Christopher Shields, "Aristotle's Psychology," In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2020 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/aristotle-psychology/

al-nāṭıḳah)[29] which, taken literally, means the speaking soul. Galip's hero Love begins his journey by falling into a well deep in the earth, where he is imprisoned by a demon representing his vegetal soul: this gluttonous demon intends to fatten Love up and eat him. Love escapes, and after other adventures, encounters a fiery witch who tries to force him to marry her, and crucifies him when he resists; she represents animal desire as lust and aggression. Most spectacular is an ethereal Chinese Princess who looks exactly like Beauty in every respect but one, and traps Love in a Fortress of Forms (*Ḳal'e-i ẕāt üş-şuver*).

The Princess holds a riotous drinking party, where she and Love have sex described discreetly by Galip as "moon merged in moonbeam and moonbeam in moon."[30] Love wakes up in the morning to find himself alone, and his sword gone. The Fortress is filled with images painted by the Princess, and the heady imagery of the episode may suggest intellect. But the tell-tale clue that the Princess is not Beauty is the one respect in which she does not resemble her: the Princess has no mouth. She cannot speak. Thus, she cannot be intellect, 'the speaking soul.' The Chinese Princess represents Love's imagination, and the fortress, the Imaginal Realm.

The question of how one gets from the sensible to the intelligible has in the history of philosophy made for what Galip would have called 'a tale of many branches' (*ḥadīṯ-i zū şücūn)*,[31] multiplied by inconsistent translation of terms.[32] The briefest answer for our context is: by way of imagination.

Until the 12th century, Islamic philosophers focused on developing the various ancient understandings of the soul. Imagination was called a sense, one of the senses belonging to the sensitive soul shared by animals and humans. Avicenna clarified the workings of imagination in alliance with intellect by elaborating, after the Brethren of Purity and al-Farabi (d. 950), five internal senses beyond the Aristotelian five external senses.[33] Suhrawardi Maqtul (d. 1191), and Ibn al-Arabi (d. 1240), both born in the 12th century, expanded and generalized imagination so that it stood both for the soul as a whole, mediating between spirit and body, and the Imaginal Realm, which mediates between God and the corporeal world as 'a degree of being' in the *Degrees of Being* schema (Ar. *marātib al-wujūd*, Tr. *varlık dereceleri*).[34] The schema is a cosmographic on-

29 Nasir al-Din Tusi, *The Nasirean Ethics,* trans. G.M. Wickens (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 42 et passim. Tusi's (1201–1274) Persian-language *Ethics* is "the most widely read work of political thought and social ethics in the history of societies of Muslims." Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 40.

30 Galip, *Beauty and Love*, vs. 1779.

31 Galip, *Beauty and Love*, vs. 1302.

32 Christopher Shields, "Aristotle's Psychology," and Alfred Ivry, "Arabic and Islamic Psychology and Philosophy of Mind," In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2012 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/arabic-islamic-mind/>.

33 Harry Austryn Wolfson, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophic Texts," *The Harvard Theological Review,* 28, 2 (April 1935), 69–133.

34 I have compared the Degrees of Being schema to the Divided Line expounded by Socrates in Plato's *Republic* (509d–510a). Goodness and Beauty Philosophy Conversation Series, Istanbul, April 6, 2023.

tology explaining how we, and everything that God will create, begin as entities in God's knowledge, and when He creates us, we 'descend' through the cosmos, acquiring imaginal, and finally corporeal form. When we die, we return the way we came, through the Imaginal Realm. However, it is possible to return while still living; it is possible to reunite with God and 'die before you die.' This is Love's journey described in Galip's work, and Love must get past the Chinese Princess, get past imagination, to accomplish it.

Galip's Fortress of Forms is a reference to another fortress with the same name in the story of the three princes at the end of Mevlana Rumi's 6-volume Persian *Spiritual Couplets.*[35] Galip's hero Love is the third prince whose story Mevlana did not tell.[36] Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı remarked long ago that the ancestor of Mevlana's fortress full of images is Plato's theory of forms.[37] Mevlana wrote that the ten gates of the fortress, five facing land and five facing the sea, were like the human body's faculties of perception, having five exterior and five interior senses.[38] The word *ṣuver* in the name of both fortresses is the plural of *ṣūret* (Ar. *ṣūra*), which the Glossarium shows was used in the Translation Movement to render *eidos.*[39] *Ṣūret* can mean image as well as form, and is not necessarily Plato's intelligible form; it may be an Aristotelian hylomorphic-type form of a material body or, as in both fortresses, imaginal form.

Long before all this, in Late Antique Arabic, we have the hadith: "I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form" (*raʾaytu rabbī fī aḥsan-i ṣūra*). We have seen that for Socrates, the vision of Beauty in itself, the most beautiful form, moves a person to propagate virtues in political life, the life of the polis. Galip's heroine Beauty is not in the fortress, and Love burns it down; he travels through an increasingly abstract (intellectual) landscape until the Holy Spirit *rūḥ al-ḳudūs*, whom Avicenna identified with the Agent In-

35 Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi,* vol. 6 (London: Luzac, 1971).

36 Victoria Rowe Holbrook, *The Unreadable Shores of Love: Turkish Modernity and Mystic Romance,* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), chapter 2.

37 More precisely, what Gölpınarlı said is that the Fortress represents "the immutable entities" (Ar. *'ayān-i thābita*), which are derived from Plato's "theory of ideas." Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, "Galip Dede, Şeyh," *Aylık Ansiklopedisi*, 50 (June 1948), 1440–1445. Four decades later, discussing the unsuitability of the term "archetypes" to translate *'ayān*, Chittick remarked: "If many translators have rendered *'ayn* as "archetype," this is because God creates the cosmos in accordance with His eternal knowledge of it. Thereby He gives each thing known by Him—each entity "immutably fixed" *(thābit)* within His knowledge—existence in the universe. However, the term "archetype'" may suggest that what is being discussed becomes the model for many individuals in the manner of a Platonic idea. In fact, what corresponds to the Platonic ideas in Ibn al-Arabi's teachings is the divine names, while the immutable entities are the things themselves "before" they are given existence in the world." William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 84. Gölpınarlı may be correct in terms of the historical development of Plato's understanding of form within Islamic philosophy.

38 Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi,* vol. 6, 3704–3705.

39 Eidos: https://glossga.bbaw.de/results.php?gr_lexeme=&ar_lexeme=εἶδος&ar_root_1=&ar_root_2=&ar_root_3=&ar_root_4=&ar_root_5=&submit-button=

tellect,[40] guides him to the City of the Heart where the alchemy that is Beauty's bride-price is found. As it turns out, Beauty is the ruler of that city, and that city is Love's own heart. Although it seemed to him that he went on a journey, he has never left home.[41]

The allegory here is complex. It is not simply that the beauty of God inspires love in His creatures, and the character Beauty represents that divine quality. Nor is it simply that Beauty represents "my Lord in the most beautiful form," radical as Galip's move here, representing that form as a female character, was and is. In Love's union with Beauty there is also an Aristotelian echo. Love's comprehension of Beauty has been purified through trial until he has taken on her form. Aristotle believed that for intellect to think of something is for intellect to be 'enformed' by the object of thought, to become isomorphic with it; the thinker's intellectual faculty takes on the form of the object of thought.[42] This is similar to what is allegorically portrayed by the Staircase of Love allegory, where the lover is 'impregnated' by the form of beauty and gives birth to virtue. Contra Aristotle, for Galip, as for Avicenna, this 'enforming' is union with a mode of the divine: *for Love is but Beauty and Beauty, Love.*[43]

Once Love's intellect, 'the speaking soul,' has recognized what Beauty really is, he goes beyond his guide to be united with her; only Love can reach Beauty;[44] intellect is insufficient. There the story ends:

> At this point the story comes to a close
> What lies beyond this is not to be shown

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40 Avicenna believed that certain individuals can "grasp intelligible concepts and propositions immediately." He designated "the intellects of such intuitively endowed persons 'holy' (*aql qudsi*), and called the Agent Intellect the 'Holy Spirit' (*al-rûh al-qudsî*)." Ivry, "Arabic and Islamic." In Islamic texts generally, the relationship between intellect and spirit is various and often ambiguous, but the widespread acceptance in later thought of Suhrawardi's and Ibn al-Arabi's expansion of imagination does not mean that elements of Avicenna's psychology did not survive.

41 I have purposely left out discussion of the character Suhan here. It is a complex issue, and the way Galip treats it seems to be unique. I have dealt with this before; see Holbrook, idem, chapters 3–5, and especially footnote 7, 166–167.

42 Shields, "Aristotle's Psychology": "Just as perception involves the reception of a sensible form by a suitably qualified sensory faculty, so thinking involves the reception of an intelligible form by a suitably qualified intellectual faculty (*De Anima* iii 4, 429a13–18). According to this model, thinking consists in a mind's becoming enformed by some object of thought, so that actual thinking occurs whenever some suitably prepared mind is 'made like' its object by being affected by it. … [The subject's] relevant capacity becomes isomorphic with that form." For Avicenna, this enforming becomes the conjoining of the individual intellect with the Agent intellect: "The efforts of the internal senses are seen in some of his major compositions as having but a propaedeutic effect on the soul, preparing it to receive the universal intelligible notions that are its ultimate goal and, ultimately, its sole concern. These intelligible ideas are not abstracted from the imagination, as Aristotle would have it, but come from the universal Agent Intellect, transforming the purely potential and passive intellect into an acquired intellect (*'aql mustafâd*). This is an active state of cognition, when the intellect is actively conjoined to its intelligible object. Ultimately, this conjunction is with the Agent Intellect." Ivry, "Arabic and Islamic."

43 Galip, *Beauty and Love*, vs. 2059.

44 Galip, *Beauty and Love*, vs. vs. 2063.

Praised be God the Living who never dies
Speech has to the realm of silence arrived.[45]

Love has purified his soul of appetite, lust, and all manner of representation; speech has to the realm of silence arrived because although words, like images, represent what is absent, God cannot be represented; God in Himself has no form, and because God is beyond form, He is beyond what intellect can grasp. Love and Beauty return to the ultimate Reality they can only indicate, not represent: "What lies beyond this is not to be shown."

5 Neoplatonic?

It is customary to note that Islamic philosophy received Aristotle in Neoplatonic revision. Plotinus (204/5–270 C.E.), known as the founder of Neoplatonism, posited beauty as the first emanation of "the good," which he also called "the one," as Plato did in his *Parmenides*, and Islamic philosophers did take on the celestial intelligences and emanation. But for Plotinus, "matter is to be identified with evil and privation of all form or intelligibility."[46] This accomplishes a radical break between the sensible and the intelligible.[47] Here something momentous has happened to form as Plato understood it. If matter is evil, and evil is privation of form and intelligibility, the sensible cannot participate in intelligible form. This *separation between the intelligible and the sensible* indicates a sea change in understanding of what beauty is, adumbrating the modern separation of goodness (as intelligible) and beauty (as sensible). If Plato had thought it impossible to reach the one by way of the world, he would not have written of 'assimilation to god,'[48] expressed in Arabic as *fanā b'illāh*/*baqā b'illāh*, which the hero Love undergoes in the realm of abstraction.[49] In Islamic thought the separation is never complete; the only way we can know God is through the material world, by way of imagination, and it is love that moves us to know; love traverses the continuum from the sensible to the intelligible *and* makes the leap beyond what intellect can grasp.

45 Galip, *Beauty and Love*, vs. 2067–2068.

46 Lloyd Gerson, "Plotinus," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2018 Edition)*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/plotinus/>.

47 However, Gerson went on to say: "Plotinus holds this in conscious opposition to Aristotle, who distinguished matter from privation. [...] Matter is what accounts for the diminished reality of the sensible world, for all natural things are composed of forms in matter. The fact that matter is in principle deprived of all intelligibility and is still ultimately dependent on the One is an important clue as to how the causality of the latter operates." Gerson, "Plotinus," II 4,16, 3–8.

48 Suzanne Obdrzalek, "Next to Godliness: Pleasure and Assimilation to God in the *Philebus*," *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science*, 45 (2012), 1–31.

49 Galip, *Beauty and Love*, vs. 1919.

6 Modern Euro-American Reception: Corbin and Lacan

My overarching concern has been to show that from at least the time of the Quran to the present day, the Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages have maintained the full range of meaning in Plato's usage of *to kalon.* I have suggested that a particular understanding of how imagination is the conduit between sensible and intelligible made that possible. Although the ontological role of imagination is ubiquitous in Islamic works, it is now most widely known through writings of Ibn al-Arabi referred to by Euro-American academics including Harold Bloom (b. 1930),[50] Giorgio Agamben (b. 1942),[51] Joan Copjek (b. 1946),[52] and Chiara Bottici (b. 1975).[53] They seem to have come to Ibn al-Arabi by way of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (b. 1901), and they pass imagination through a committed materialist lens. Lacan became to some degree aware of Ibn al-Arabi through his friend Henry Corbin (b. 1903), who was one of the greatest interpreters of Ibn al-Arabi in the 20th century, among other things.

Both Lacan and Corbin attended the lectures on Hegel that Alexandre Kojevé (b. 1902) gave in Paris from 1933 to 1939, as did Jean-Paul Sartre (b. 1905) and the Surrealist André Breton (b. 1896). We can see that 1930s Paris was the site where Orientalism, German philosophy—after Hegel, particularly that of Heidegger—Marxism, psychoanalysis, and Surrealism came together, and that the next generation of French philosophers who came to worldwide attention in the 1970s—including Deleuze (b. 1925), Foucault (b. 1926), Baudrillard (b. 1929), and Derrida (b. 1930)—grew up in that matrix. Corbin was an important intermediary. His translation of Heidegger, the first to be done of Heidegger's work in any language, was published in 1938.

In a 1976 interview, Corbin corrected the mistaken assumption that he turned to Sufism because he was disappointed in Heidegger. On the contrary, his Oriental studies (1920s) preceded his work on Heidegger (1930s) by a decade. Corbin's first publication on Suhrawardi was in 1933 and his first on Ibn al-Arabi in 1934; he met with Heidegger in 1934, shortly after Kojevé's lectures began, but long before that, he had been encouraged to study Arabic by his professor, the peerless medievalist Etienne Gilson. Corbin had completed a diploma in Arabic, Persian and Turkish in 1929 while working as a librarian of Oriental manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale. He recalled that his destiny was sealed in the academic year 1927–1928 when his second remarkable pro-

50 Here I give the birth dates of the Euro-American academics in order to show the continuity of their generations. Bloom was a key figure in this development; he wrote the introduction to the Princeton University Press's 1997 reissue of Corbin's *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi in the Sufism of Ibn ʿArabi*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) with the title *Alone with the Alone.*

51 Giorgio Agamben, "Bartleby, or On Consistency," In *Potentialities*, edited and trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

52 For example, Joan Copjec, "The Censorship of Interiority," *Umbr(a): A Journal of the Unconscious* (2009), 165–186.

53 Chiara Bottici, *Imaginal Politics: Images Beyond Imagination and the Imaginary*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

fessor, the great Orientalist Louis Massignon, gave him a book Massignon had brought back from Iran by a 12th century Persian philosopher, the self-avowed Platonist Suhrawardi, known as 'the son of Plato.'

As Corbin put it in the same interview, "A philosopher's campaign must be led simultaneously on many fronts, so to speak, especially if the philosophy in question is not limited to the narrow rationalist definition that certain thinkers of our days have inherited from the philosophers of the 'enlightenment.'"[54] Ethan Kleinberg has investigated the ways in which Corbin's choices in his translation of Heidegger shaped French Existentialism, particularly the work of Sartre.[55] How Corbin's Islamic Platonism contributed to these choices and that shaping remains to be investigated.

The name by which God is most often identified in Galip's work, as in common Turkish, Persian, and Arabic speech, and the Persian and Arabic texts Corbin worked on, is *Hakk/el-Hakk* (Ar. and Per. *al-ḥaqq*), translated as the Truth or the Real. Lacan first used the French adjective *réel* as a substantive, not normal usage in French, in a 1936 paper, while attending Kojevé's lectures with Corbin. In that paper, he referred to a 1925 work by Emile Meyerson, a Polish philosopher of science and religion who defined the substantive as an ontological absolute, a true being-in-itself. The term did not reappear in Lacan's writings until the 1950s, when he began to place *le réel*, rendered as 'the real' in English translation of his work, in a matrix of three psychic functions including 'the imaginary' and 'the symbolic.' Unlike the symbolic, which is constituted in terms of oppositions such as that between presence and absence, there is no absence in the real … It is the symbolic that introduces "a cut in the real" in the process of signification that occurs when an infant acquires language. "The real is 'the impossible,' "traumatic" because impossible to imagine, impossible to integrate into the symbolic order, impossible to attain in any way." Yet it "has connotations of matter, implying a material," though inaccessible, "substrate underlying the imaginary and the symbolic."[56] One of the few citable instances of Lacan's awareness of Ibn al-Arabi dates also from the 50s, although it must have begun much earlier. In his 1959–1960 seminar, Lacan mentioned Corbin's 1958 *L'Imagination créatrice dans le Soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabî*[57] in a list of books he urged his attendees to read.[58] Another instance is Lacan's reference to the meeting between Ibn Arabi and Ibn Rushd, known to Latin scholastics as Averroes. This reference is found in the transcript of La-

54 Corbin's biographical and bibliographic details mentioned here are from Henry Corbin, "From Heidegger to Suhravardi: An Interview with Philippe Nemo" trans. by Matthew Evans-Cockle, https://www.amiscorbin.com/en/biography/from-heidegger-to-suhravardi/ and https://www.amiscorbin.com/en/bibliography/#, [accessed 07.03.2024].

55 Ethan Kleinberg, *Generation Existential*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), passim.

56 Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis,* (London: Routledge, 1996), 162–163.

57 Henry Corbin, *L'Imagination créatrice dans le soufism d'Ibn ʿArabi*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1958).

58 *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, trans. Dennis Porter Jacques, edited by Alain Miller (New York: Norton & Co, 1992), 148.

can's "Discourse to Catholics,'"a public lecture he gave in 1960. He apologized to his audience for being out of place, and likened himself to Ibn Arabi, saying, "Thus let not the philosopher stand up, as happened to Ibn Arabi, to greet me overflowing with signs of his consideration and friendship, to end up embracing me and saying, 'Yes.' Of course, like Ibn Arabi, I would respond by saying 'Yes' to him. And his joy would be heightened when he observed that I had understood him. But, realizing what incited his joy, I would have to add, 'No.'"[59]

> He had expressed the desire to meet me personally, because he had heard of the revelations that God had accorded me in the course of my spiritual retirement, and he had made no secret of his astonishment at what he had been told. For this reason my father, who was one of his intimate friends, sent me to his house one day, pretexting some sort of errand, in reality to enable Averroes to have a talk with me. At that time I was still a beardless youth. When I entered, the master arose from his place, received me with signal marks of friendship and consideration, and finally embraced me. Then he said: 'Yes.' and I in turn said: 'Yes.' His joy was great at noting that I had understood. But then taking cognizance of what had called forth his joy, I added: 'No.' Immediately Averroes winced, the color went out of his cheeks, he seemed to doubt his own thought. He asked me this question: 'What manner of solution have you found through divine illumination and inspiration? Is it identical with that which we obtain from speculative reflection?' I replied: 'Yes and no. Between the yes and the no, spirits take their flight from their matter, and heads are separated from their bodies.' Averroes turned pale, I saw him tremble; he murmured the ritual phrase 'There is no power save in God'—for he had understood my allusion.[60]

Lacan reworked Freud's version of the tripartite soul as a series of 'orders' which inherit something of Islamic philosophy's three realms. But Galip and the many thousands of Muslim authors who wrote of union with God would be surprised to hear that love is autoerotic. Lacan defined love as "an illusory fantasy of fusion with the beloved which makes up for the absence of any sexual relationship. [It] arises in analytic treatment as an effect of transference."[61] There is much to be filled in, but even this sketch suggests what the fate of love may become when goodness is separated from beauty.

Istanbul, 2023

59 In Jacques Lacan, *The Triumph of Religion*, trans. Bruce Fink (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 52.
60 Corbin, *Creative Imagination*, 41–42. Averroes is known for his fidelity to Aristotle. If I am not wrong, the point of the anecdote is that Ibn al-Arabi and Averroes differed in their knowledge of the soul's capacities; "the yes and the no" are the two parts of the profession of faith, "There is no god but God," the "no" being "There is no god," and the "yes" being "but God." The "between" to which Ibn al-Arabi refers is imagination, and his implication is that Averroes knows little about it.
61 "Love is autoerotic, and has a fundamentally narcissistic structure…" Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary*, 105.

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Fatih Altuğ

Narratives of Devotion and Transformation: Procedural Dynamics of Love, Truth, and Subjectivity in Nergisī's *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān*

Introduction

Composed in the second quarter of the 17th century, Nergisī's *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān* provide a profound exploration into the intricate nuances of amorous conceptualizations within classical Ottoman literature. Nergisī's (d. 1635) articulation of love, disseminated through the prose genre, holds significant implications, both in thematic depth and stylistic intricacy. The discernible evolutions in both discourse and stylistic nuances from *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* to *Nihālistān* serve as pivotal indicators in comprehending Nergisī's unique interpretation of love. The initial segment of this chapter elucidates Nergisī's iterative process of re-crafting his love narratives, highlighting the subsequent shifts in expression and stylistic choices. Furthermore, Nergisī's narratives contribute to the construction of a distinctive form of subjectivity. Employing the theoretical frameworks posited by Alain Badiou, the chapter delves into Nergisī's representation of pivotal constructs such as the event of love, fidelity, truth procedures, and the amorous subject, all the while delineating the divergences from Badiou's postulations. The final segment encapsulates a comprehensive analysis, elucidating the manner in which Nergisī's narratives curate a sophisticated discourse on love.

1 The Act of Recomposition: The Author as an Amorous Artisan

Nergisī's seminal work, *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* (The Troubles of Love), penned in Elbasan in 1625 and subsequently presented to the eminent sheikh ul-islam Yaḥyā Efendi, stands as his inaugural original composition. Prior to this, Nergisī was predominantly recognized for his translation endeavors. Within this book, seven out of the ten amorous narratives are rooted in firsthand events, either directly experienced, recounted, or observed by Nergisī. Interestingly, a duo of these narratives are sophisticated reiterations of stories ascribed to a poet named Ferdī (d. 1555), as documented in ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi's *Meşāʿir uş-Şuʿarā.* Additionally, the account concerning the Persian poet Riyāzī (d. 1644) is derived from an unspecified source.[1]

1 Süleyman Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, (İstanbul: Kesit, 2010), 123.

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Nihālistān, regarded as Nergisī's magnum opus, exists in two distinct versions. The first version, dated 1626, encompasses four segments, with the primary segment dedicated to love stories. Remarkably, six out of the ten stories from *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* underwent a transformation and were incorporated into this section. As Nergisī's literary trajectory matured, he gradually distanced himself from narratives adapted from external sources, instead accentuating compositions rooted in his personal encounters and observations. By the time the subsequent version of *Nihālistān* emerged in 1633, the total number of segments had expanded to five, with amorous stories being relocated to the second segment. In this refined version, Nergisī not only explores amorous themes but also delves into broader subjects such as generosity, the inevitable retribution faced by cruel people for their malevolent actions, the transient nature of material possessions, and the spiritual elevation attained through genuine repentance. It is noteworthy that the love stories from the preceding version underwent another metamorphosis in their presentation within this version.

A pivotal component of Nergisī's literary oeuvre is the act of revisitation and reinterpretation. A significant portion of *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* can be discerned as refined versions of narratives found in *Meşāʾir uş-Şuʿarāʾ* and other literary sources. Furthermore, narratives stemming from Nergisī's direct encounters and observations pertaining to love undergo continuous metamorphoses, thereby adopting diverse forms and subtleties within varied contexts. Thus, Nergisī's articulation of love embodies both an intersubjective and intertextual character. Whether they be discourses on love documented in written form, orally transmitted stories, or direct experiences—either observed or lived—Nergisī adeptly integrates them into his works.

Throughout his literary trajectory, Nergisī perpetually revisits and refashions narratives and experiences related to love. As he crafts novel compositions, there is an evident augmentation in his emphasis on originality. He perceives the rendition of conventional plots in a distinctive manner, coupled with the introduction of innovative lexical choices, as the epitome of his creative originality. A comparative analysis between *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān* reveals that the latter is characterized by more intricate sentence structures, a heightened employment of metaphoric expressions, a diminished reference to colloquial language, and a more multifaceted discourse. *Nihālistān* emerges as a sophisticated tapestry weaving together diverse experiences, texts, and discursive elements.

Within *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ*, love narratives are meticulously situated within a distinct historical milieu, often marked by Nergisī's provision of specific chronological markers. The geographical canvas, too, is delineated with precision, with descriptions vividly evoking the sociocultural vibrancy of select Ottoman cities and the intricate conditions encapsulating love liaisons therein. A palpable verisimilitude is achieved through the detailed invocation of urban landmarks—neighborhoods, marketplaces, and scenic routes. This meticulous representation of quotidian life is seamlessly integrated with a stylized narrative framework. Conversely, *Nihālistān* exhibits a marked reduction in its allusions to specific historical and geographical contexts. While *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* offers a rich tapestry of urban references, encompassing cities

such as Istanbul, Sarajevo, Ankara, and Edirne, and landmarks like Edirnekapı bridge and Āb-ı Ḥayāt promenade, *Nihālistān* often opts for more abstract references, such as a generic Balkan city as a stand-in for Sarajevo.[2]

This abstraction extends to character nomenclature as well. While *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* features specific monikers such as "Hʸōca Himmet" and "Merdāne Ḫalīfe," *Nihālistān* employs broader descriptors like "one of the lovers" or "a renowned hodja."[3] This shift suggests Nergisī's intent to transcend the parochial and to render the narrative more universally resonant. The distinct dedicatees for the two works—sheikh ul-islam Yaḥyā Efendi for *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and Sultan Murād IV (r. 1612-1640) for *Nihālistān*—might have influenced this transition. The elevation of the intended recipient to royal stature seems to correlate with a shift from granular details to more universal themes. Such relegation of specific sociocultural contexts potentially broadens the universality of the love themes articulated in *Nihālistān.*

However, it is imperative to emphasize that the relative shifts between these texts do not imply a complete detachment of *Nihālistān* from its sociocultural roots. Love in *Nihālistān* remains inextricably intertwined with societal dynamics. Lovers occupying esteemed social positions, such as merchants and scholars, frequently form attachments with their social inferiors. The societal milieu, more often than not, facilitates rather than obstructs these connections. Notably, Nergisī's narratives seldom introduce a third entity, or a "rival" (*raḳib*), in these love equations. Instead, the relational dynamics between the two primary characters, rather than overarching societal conventions, dominate the narrative trajectory. Though external societal forces might modulate this core relationship, Nergisī's primary narrative focus remains resolutely on the dyadic interplay.

In delineating the dynamics between the lover and the beloved, the narrative predominantly adopts the vantage point of the lover. An exception is observed in the stories of the poet Ferdī from *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ*, sourced from ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi, where the focalization centers on Ferdī—a character so captivating that he becomes an object of instant affection for all who encounter him. Transitioning from *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* to *Nihālistān*, this narrative emphasis on the lover's perspective intensifies. In the vast majority of stories, descriptions pertaining to the physical or psychological attributes of the beloved are conspicuously sparse. While the lover's encounter with the beloved often manifests with a profound, almost revelatory impact, the lover's ascriptions of meaning, desire, and value to the beloved often appear to be independent of the latter's intrinsic qualities. The narratives primarily spotlight the protagonist's enactment of love.

Of particular significance is Nergisī's self-portrayal as the quintessential embodiment of the lover archetype. As both the compiler and the raconteur of these stories of love, Nergisī is consistently characterized by a profound engagement with love

2 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 123.

3 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 123.

and its associated tribulations. Preliminary chapters in both *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān* offer detailed expositions of his identity as a lover[4]—a trait that also fundamentally shapes the textual architecture. The narratives gain authenticity through the mediation of an enamored writer. Within *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ*, Nergisī even intimates that one of the stories is autobiographical, a declaration conspicuously absent in *Nihālistān* where the lover's identity is rendered more nebulous.

The prefatory remarks in *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ*, elucidating Nergisī's inspirations behind the work, find echoes in *Nihālistān*, albeit with nuanced alterations. Nergisī foregrounds his identity as a lover, with his literary endeavors emerging as a corollary of this persona. Despite advancing age and the onset of physical signs of aging, his predisposition leans more towards love than conventional paths of religiosity and piety. Nergisī portrays himself as a perennial lover, seamlessly transitioning from one object of affection to another, thereby establishing himself as a connoisseur of love. This reputation renders him a confidante for fellow lovers, allowing him to immerse in their stories of affection and longing. Such accumulated narratives eventually culminated in the creation of *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān*—works that are testimonies to lived experiences of love and shared narratives of fellow lovers.

Yet, Nergisī's conceptualization of love and his authorial identity transcend the tangible experiences and amorous liaisons of 17th century Ottoman urban landscapes. Nergisī also posits his experiences of love within a more universal, transhistorical paradigm: the profound encounter with the Divine. Within the metaphorical marketplace of love established at the *bezm-i elest*—a primordial, eternal encounter signifying a covenant between the Divine and His subjects—Nergisī is depicted as trading his spiritual essence for the tumultuous throes of passion. This pre-worldly spiritual transaction profoundly shapes Nergisī's earthly experiences, rendering him perpetually tormented by the specter of love. His life is so imbued with affection, turmoil, and suffering that these emotions appear to be indelibly inscribed upon his very being.

Nergisī's epiphany to chronicle the love stories, both heard and personally experienced, materialized during his tenure as a *kadi* in Elbasan. What is initially conceived as an eternal and spiritual concept finds tangible expression within specific geographical, societal, and professional contexts. The transition is marked—from the ethereal *bezm-i elest* to the tangible reality of Elbasan, and from an archetype of the eternal lover to the professional role of a *kadi.* Yet, across both dimensions, Nergisī's primary identity remains unaltered: he is, above all, a lover. This fervor to articulate his experiences and testimonies with eloquence is intricately tied to an aspiration to exhibit his rhetorical prowess. His ambition extends beyond merely chronicling stories of love; he endeavors to validate his erudition in both love and linguistic artistry.

The endeavor to amalgamate personal and shared experiences of love is concomitant with an aspiration to pioneer a novel and invigorating literary style. Nergisī seeks

4 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 302–311; Bahir Selçuk, *Nergisî: Meşâkku'l-Uşşâk: İnceleme – Metin,* (Erzurum: Salkımsöğüt, 2009), 118–135.

to enrich linguistic expressions, adding layers of depth to both lexicon and semantics, thereby challenging and potentially surpassing his rhetorical contemporaries. Through crafting narratives of unprecedented stories of love in a distinctive manner, one that intricately mirrors the complex tapestry of emotions and meanings, he essentially aspires to create art with words. This effort is not just about literary innovation; it is a quest to birth a groundbreaking stylistic approach that might eclipse even the most esteemed orators of his time. While he perceives himself as the Avicenna or Plato in the realm of love's philosophy,[5] the intricate concepts and depictions within his stories vie for distinction alongside the masterpieces of renowned artists such as Mānī (d. ca. 277) and Behzād (d. 1535/36).[6]

The dual roles that Nergisī assumes, both as a lover and a writer, fundamentally inform and shape the literary undertakings of *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān.* It seems evident that Nergisī initially intended to position his own story of love as the inaugural narrative within this anthology of love stories. Yet, apprehensions regarding potential misinterpretations, especially by those he terms individuals of corrupted disposition[7], deterred him from this course. His insistence that his own narrative of love remains untainted by the contamination of metaphor[8] culminates in its placement as the seventh story within *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ.* In the subsequent rendition of *Nihālistān*, not only is this narrative brought to a culmination, but a pronounced chasm emerges between the authorial and narrative voices. Herein, Nergisī recounts his personal journey of love as if it were a story belonging to another.

To counter potential censures that might dismiss his experience of love as mere physical attraction or triviality, Nergisī employs a two-pronged defensive strategy: Firstly, he underscores the genuineness of his love by juxtaposing the metaphorical with the abject. Secondly, he employs a tactic of deflection by distancing himself from the central character of the narrative. In *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ*, Nergisī occupies a dual role, manifesting as both the scribe and the central figure in the throes of love. Conversely, within the pages of *Nihālistān*, the narrative voice ascribes the aforementioned tale of love to an unnamed individual. This deliberate obfuscation of references to Nergisī paves the way for the protagonist's identity to be rendered anonymous and, by extension, universal. Consequently, Nergisī's presence within the text becomes considerably attenuated, signaling a strategic retreat from personal embodiment to a more abstract, collective representation. Although the latter strategy aligns with Nergisī's broader thematic shift in *Nihālistān*, where he gravitates towards a more universalizing abstraction, it engenders a paradox. This paradox emerges as the narrative witnesses an amplification of metaphorical expressions, even as metaphors are simultaneously relegated to a subordinate status. However, it is crucial to discern that Nergisī's critique is directed against a specific interpretation of metaphor—one that is divorced

5 Selçuk, *Nergisî: Meşâkku'l-Uşşâk*, 126.
6 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 129; Selçuk, *Nergisî: Meşâkku'l-Uşşâk*, 129.
7 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 130; Selçuk, *Nergisî: Meşâkku'l-Uşşâk*, 147.
8 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 130; Selçuk, *Nergisî: Meşâkku'l-Uşşâk*, 146.

from truth and remains ensnared within the worldly and the corporeal. Contrarily, he embraces a conception of metaphor as a conduit to truth, guiding both the reader and the protagonists towards a profound realization.

Indeed, Nergisī's articulations, especially where he elucidates his motivations for authorship, are replete with metaphorical constructs. As previously highlighted, his introductory remarks in *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* shed light on his aspirations to chronicle and amalgamate diverse testimonies of love. While these sentiments persist in the initial rendition of *Nihālistān*, the subsequent version introduces fresh metaphorical contexts. Nergisī likens his written lines and crafted prose to pearls, envisioning himself as a merchant adept at fashioning jewelry from these pearls for the metaphorical cultural marketplace.[9] The following lines are emblematic, as they encapsulate both Nargisī's intellectual concepts and stylistic approach.

> *Bu leʾālī-i menṣūreyi keşīde-i rişte-i süṭūr idüp cidde-i maʿmūre-i maḥalle-i mesṭūrede deste deste āvīḫte-i dükkān-ı şaḥāyıf ve nümūde-i cevher-ṭalebān-ı çār-sūy-ı maʿārif iden güher-fürūş-ı kempāye Nergisī-i endek-māye heyūlā-yı müddeʿānuñ bu heyʾet-i maḥṣūṣada ṣūret-peẕīr-i ẓuhūr olması bābında bu vechile maʿẕeret-ḫᵛāh u kerem-cūy-ı munṣıf-naẕarān-ı mekārim-penāh olur ki cānib-i üstād-ı istiʿdāddan ser-i bāzār-ı hünerveride ruḥṣat-yāfte-i tek ü pū olup simsārān-ı tuḥaf u tefārīḳ-i maʿārif-i gün-ā-gün ile kesb-i āşināyī iderek kitāb-şāgird-i destgāh-ı süḫan-sencī vü nükte-peymāyī olalı bu ārzū-yı nihān sūdāger-i cāna ser-māye-i ḫalecān olmuş idi ki rüsūḫ-ı dād u sited-i ifāde vü istifāde içün ḫācegīyān-ı bisyār-māye-i bendergāh-ı ʿulūm, evvelā cüzʾiyyāt-ı menṣūr u manẓūm ile āzmāyiş-i başīret-i nev-hevesān-ı ticāret-i rābiha-i manṭūḳ u mefhūm idüp ibtidā kitābı sencīde-ḫitāb-ı gülistān-ı ʿārif-i Şīrāzī ve ol ḳālıba mesbūk olan nüsaḫ-ı ber-güzīde-i mollāyān-ı ḫaḳāyıḳ-perdāz ile istiftāḥ-ı ṣabāḥuʾl-ḫayr-ı şebāb ide gelmişlerdür.*[10]
>
> Weaving these pearls of prose into a string of lines, arranging them in tiers upon the shelves of the booksellers in the thriving harbor of the literary quarter, and displaying them to the seekers of knowledge in the bazaar of enlightenment, the unworthy jeweler, the inadequate Nergisī, humbly begs pardon and grace from those endowed with eyes of mercy and the refuge of generosity for this particular unveiling of his endeavor. This secret yearning had long become a source of unease for the merchant of souls, ever since he had been granted, by his master of talent, permission to traverse the marketplace of skills, to converse with the antique and trinket dealers of diverse knowledge, and to apprentice at the bench where words are weighed, and wit is measured. In the quest to master the art of discourse and comprehension, the affluent merchants of the port of sciences traditionally commenced the auspicious dawn of youth with the measured recitations of the *Gülistan* of the sage of Shiraz, alongside the refined copies of the learned scholars who shaped truths within that framework, in order to test the understanding of novices aspiring to the profitable trade of interpreting the intricate details of prose and poetry.

His pen's vibrant strokes across paper are analogized to the fluttering movement of a pigeon amidst groves, its coos resonating amidst foliage. This envisioned pigeon-pen possesses wings constituted of both truth and metaphor. Through its animated motions, this allegorical text/grove resonates with divine invocations while simultaneously addressing its human audience with eloquence and rhythm.

9 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 302.

10 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 302.

Nergisī perceives the Turkish language as a linguistic marvel, enriched by the lexical blossoms borrowed from diverse tongues. With a fervent aspiration to demonstrate its potential for fostering a distinct and innovative stylistic paradigm, he endeavors to assert that masterpieces akin to Saʿdī's *Gülistān* (Rose Garden) are equally feasible in Turkish. He ambitiously seeks to amplify the linguistic prowess of Turkish by harnessing the expressive and semantic potentials of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic.[11] This ambition is manifest in his choice of the title *Nihālistān*, positioning it as a worthy contender to *Gülistān* and Cāmī's *Bahāristān* (Spring Garden). He conceptualizes his oeuvre as a nursery, populated with topics metaphorically represented as diverse fruit-bearing trees. To distinguish these thematic trees, he clusters each thematic genus within distinct *nihāl*s.

Much like the dual-winged dove-pen, symbolizing metaphor and truth, Nergisī's discourse exhibits a bifurcated nature. While one facet delves into universal verities and dimensions of love transcending the tangible and the corporeal, the other is enmeshed in cultural entrepreneurship, linguistic rivalries, and economic metaphorical constructs. The book's thematic movements are envisaged as being inextricably intertwined with natural cadences, further emphasizing the confluence of divine invocations, the portrayal of ideal servitude, and the act of addressing humanity, steering them towards a designated subjectivity.

2 Eventuality of Love: Navigating Truth Procedures and Subject Formation

Within *Nihālistān*, love emerges as a multifaceted tapestry interweaving elements of truth and metaphor, spirituality and cultural economy, devotion and individual subjectivity. These diverse facets superimpose and intersect through narratives of love, orchestrating the genesis of a unique loving subject. The book's second segment comprises six stories. In the inaugural narrative, an eminent merchant, during his travels, succumbs to the allure of a young man, culminating in the realization of genuine affection.[12] The subsequent story delineates the journey of a lover who trails his beloved for an arduous month amidst severe winter, only to depart without entering the city upon reaching Istanbul.[13] The third narrative portrays a lover's desperate leap off a bridge, spurred by the anguish of witnessing his beloved with another, ironically facilitating their reunion.[14] The fourth story offers a cautionary narrative of a superficially pious individual who, captivated by a young man, transitions from affection to avarice, ultimately demanding the return of his gifted token of affection.[15] The penultimate nar-

11 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 302–303.
12 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 362–374.
13 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 375–380.
14 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 380–383.
15 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 383–390.

rative unfolds the story of a benevolent sheikh, whose genuine affection for a young man results in a harmonious union, without compromising his spiritual stature.[16] The concluding story narrates the journey of a discreet lover, initially tormented by concealed affections, but eventually winning his beloved's heart.[17]

Excluding the fourth narrative, which serves as a counterexample, the stories predominantly underscore attributes of the paradigmatic lover. Through these crafted stories, which amalgamate Nergisī's personal experiences and observations with the profound imprints of love upon him, he beckons readers towards an idealized conception of love, urging them to perceive the world through this prism of authenticity. Prior to their amorous awakenings, the protagonists are portrayed as typical individuals, regardless of whether they are merchants or sheikhs. It is the transformative power of love that catalyzes their metamorphosis, initiating a journey from nondescript existence to profound subjectivity.

The pivotal moment in this trajectory of subjectivation is the encounter with love. In the inaugural narrative, set in the 1610s within a Balkan trade town proximate to European harbors (identified as Sarajevo[18] in *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ*), a devout wool merchant, typically indifferent to the notions of love, finds himself smitten with a young man. This unexpected infatuation prompts him to abandon his trade and remain in the town, dedicating himself wholly to this newfound affection.[19] The ensuing two narratives underscore not the inception of love but the aftermath of such an amorous encounter.[20] The fourth story illustrates the commencement of transformation, albeit temporarily, when a deceitful, pseudo-devout charlatan crosses paths with an acrobat's aide.[21] In the fifth account, we delve into the tumultuous and metamorphic ramifications of a *Melāmī* sheikh's liaison with a coffeehouse apprentice.[22] In the concluding narrative, a contented *müderris* (a professor), who perceives his life as whole and fulfilling, encounters a merchant's son, introducing him to sentiments of incompleteness and love.[23]

These unforeseen encounters and transformative shocks in quotidian life profoundly influence Nergisī's protagonists. They dissolve their erstwhile identities, sculpting a novel subjectivity centered around the amorous event. Yet, the emphasis remains on the event's primacy and essence. The nature of these encounters evokes Alain Badiou's conceptualization of the event. Badiou perceives an event as an infrequent, disruptive juncture, empowering both individuals and collectives to radically transcend their extant circumstances. It embodies a rupture, transcending specific contexts,

16 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 390 – 400.
17 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 401 – 430.
18 Selçuk, *Nergisî: Meşâkku'l-Uşşâk*, 148.
19 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 362 – 374.
20 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 375 – 383.
21 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 383 – 390.
22 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 390 – 400.
23 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 401 – 430.

and forging novel possibilities. Within Badiou's philosophical paradigm, events are pivotal instances laden with the capacity for profound transformation and introspection. Badiou postulates that events germinate within distinct contexts and can unveil a new truth. Such events hold the power to redefine individual and collective self-perception and worldview. Consequently, Badiou places events at the core of philosophical discourse and societal action, frequently challenging the essence of existence and the transformative potential intrinsic to human experiences.[24]

For Badiou, love epitomizes an event, a disturbance in the conventional continuum of existence, necessitating an unwavering fidelity. He contends that love is born from a serendipitous confluence between two entities, an intersection unanticipated and uninformed by preceding events. Such an encounter destabilizes the *status quo*, demarcating a clear bifurcation between the pre- and post-amorous phases. Love, rather than merging two identities, emphasizes the preservation of the chasm between them, potentially leading to an infinite trajectory, as it commits to viewing the universe from the Two's perspective. The lovers are compelled to endorse love, recognizing it as an event and pledging fidelity to its essence. This conscious choice transmutes love from a transient sentiment to a defining event. Inherent to love's nature is its unpredictability, as it invariably involves venturing into the unknown.[25]

Within Nergisī's narratives, merchants, *müderris*es, and sheikhs are subjected to the transformative event of love. After this exposure, resuming their erstwhile lives becomes an impossibility. Typically, a societal hierarchical advantage favors the lover over the beloved. Yet, the event of love subverts this hierarchy, inverting societal norms and values. Nonetheless, for those subjected to the love event, these societal constructs become inconsequential. The event severs their connection to conventional realities, bestowing a renewed perspective on relationships and entities. The dichotomy between the phases preceding and succeeding the event is stark and characterized by radical alterity.

In Badiou's framework, the emphasis on the two-ness forged by lovers is paramount, offering an analysis of love from the vantage point of the couple enthralled in mutual affection. Conversely, in Nergisī's stories, this two-ness often culminates toward the narrative's end. Notably, the lover and the beloved do not concurrently undergo the event of love. Thus, the dynamic is not about two mutual lovers, but rather pivots around the dichotomy of the lover and the beloved. The narrative chronicles the lover, transformed by the event of love, endeavoring to entice the beloved into this metamorphic journey.

For instance, in the first narrative of *Nihālistān*, the wool merchant's relentless pursuit culminates in the beloved seeking him out in his reclusive abode, establishing their union.[26] In the third story, the lover's intense passion, to the brink of self-annihi-

24 Christopher Norris, "Event," In *The Badiou Dictionary*, edited by Stephen Corcoran (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 115–120.

25 Louise Burchill, "Love," In *The Badiou Dictionary*, 185–189.

26 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 362–374.

lation, eventually draws the beloved into reciprocating the affection.[27] The fifth narrative showcases the Melāmī sheikh's affections being reciprocated midway, with subsequent events narrating their shared journey, undeterred by societal marginalization, ultimately finding solace in a newly established *dargāh*.[28] The sixth story delineates the protagonist's internal turmoil about confessing his feelings. While the initial confession does not garner a favorable response, it plants the seed of affection. At the narrative's climax, when despair almost drives the lover to the brink, the beloved reciprocates the affection, even offering servitude. Nevertheless, within the transformative realm of love, such societal constructs of servant and master dissipate.[29]

Nergisī accentuates the fidelity of the individual subjected to the event of love, irrespective of its reciprocation or the eventual formation of the couple. Drawing parallels with Badiou's philosophy, fidelity to the event alludes to an individual's unwavering allegiance to the truth unveiled by said event. It signifies an unwavering commitment to the myriad possibilities and repercussions heralded by the event, even when faced with adversities or the allure of reverting to conventional norms. For Badiou, fidelity is not a passive acceptance; it necessitates proactive endeavors to discern and assimilate the event's truths into one's existence. This fidelity facilitates liberation from conventional constraints, ushering in genuine novelty. By exhibiting fidelity to the event, individuals possess the potential to sculpt a novel reality, anchored in the event's truth. Navigating this path of fidelity, albeit challenging, remains the solitary conduit to instigate genuine transformation.[30]

The second narrative[31] in *Nihālistān* epitomizes the essence of fidelity to the event of love. In this story, the lover's proclamation of his affection initially emerges as intrusive and unsettling. Rather than ushering the beloved into a mutual union, the lover subjects the beloved to the intense ardor of his feelings. When the beloved departs the city, the lover, undeterred by hunger, thirst, or the frigid climate, relentlessly tails the beloved's caravan to Istanbul. Yet, paradoxically, upon the beloved's entry into the city, the lover halts his pursuit and retreats to his hometown. The narrative no longer portrays a lover asserting his passion but instead emphasizes a subject unwavering in his fidelity to the act of love, regardless of external circumstances.

Contrastingly, in the fourth story,[32] the narrative unfolds differently. An ostensibly pious individual, notorious for his duplicity and transgressions, undergoes a transformative experience upon falling in love with an acrobat's aide. This newfound ardor, where he becomes a regular at the acrobat's performances and remains unfazed by societal derision, culminates in a cherished intimacy with his beloved. However,

27 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 380–383.
28 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 390–400.
29 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 401–430.
30 Christopher Norris, "Fidelity," In *The Badiou Dictionary*, 132–136.
31 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 375–380.
32 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 383–391.

when the troupe departs the city, his transient affection wanes as he bids his beloved farewell and reclaims a previously gifted headscarf. He reverts to his erstwhile superficial existence, nonchalantly overlooking societal judgment, thereby betraying the very essence of love. Unlike Nergisī's other stories in *Nihālistān*, this character emerges as the antithesis of the quintessential lover, highlighting the pitfalls of fleeting fidelity.

Nergisī's love narratives, rather than merely elucidating happy conclusions or delineating societal norms, illuminate the intricate mechanics—or, in certain instances, the shortcomings—of the processes essential to transmute the event of love into tangible reality. Drawing parallels with Alain Badiou's philosophy, the initiation of a truth procedure is precipitated by an event, signifying a deviation or departure from the established norms of a situation. Such events are unforeseen, transcending the known parameters and regulations of a given circumstance. Post-event, individuals are entrusted with the task of demonstrating fidelity to this newfound reality. Fidelity, as Badiou posits, entails a commitment to unearth, validate, and embody the truths unveiled by the event. For Badiou, truth is not merely an assertion or declaration, but encompasses a gamut of actions, beliefs, and commitments that metamorphose a situation. Though birthed from specific, localized occurrences, its ramifications resonate universally. As time elapses, this fidelity facilitates the incorporation of truth into the prevailing scenario, ensuring its continual manifestation and realization in the broader world. Truth procedures are often in tension with the status quo as they challenge and transform its established configurations.[33]

The truth procedures followed by the merchant in the first story of *Nihālistān*, who normally has nothing to do with love, after falling in love, after being exposed to the event of love, are as follows: He hides from his coworkers, does not continue his commercial journey with them and stays in the city of the beloved. He walks around the city naked, saying the name of his beloved. The beloved's family beats him, but he is content with this. He even feels a strong desire to be beaten. When he meets Nergisī on the road, he tells him that he can have a conversation with him only after he has received today's beating. A sheikh gives him advice based on customs and traditions, but this does not destroy his love because, according to him, the fire of love can only be quenched by the fan of Azrael's wing, that is, by death. The elegant merchant is not only persecuted but also abusive to the point of disturbing the beloved while expressing his love. Tired of this, the beloved leaves the city under the pretext of trade. The lover searches for his beloved from city to city and village to village, but eventually gives up hope. He settles in a city, Ankara in *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ*,[34] but does not speak to anyone here. Here he has reached maturity, he has passed from matter to spirit, his personality has changed radically. One day he breaks his silence and shouts "the sultan is coming". It turns out that the beloved has gone after the lover to make him forgive

33 Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love*, with Nicolas Truong, trans. Peter Bush (New York: The New Press, 2012), 38.

34 Selçuk, *Nergisî: Meşâkku'l-Uşşâk*, 158.

himself and has finally found him.[35] The procedures here do not point to the necessary stages of the truth of love. The lover is not praised for his abuse or for being content to be violated. What matters here is fidelity to the event and the process. By being faithful to the amorous encounter, the merchant both transformed into another person and made the beloved fall in love.

The procedures followed by the lover in the third story are also partly similar to the first story. In this story, where rivals play the most prominent role, the lover sees the beloved in conversation with others who admire him. Faced with this scene, the lover, in a fit of jealousy and rage, throws himself off the bridge into the stream after a friend tells him that the only cure for this kind of love trouble is to jump off the bridge. The lover does not die, he is rescued and regains consciousness a few hours later. Since his beloved considers this suicide attempt a genuine sign of love, love is proven and the two lovers are reunited.[36] Despite the predominance of abuse and jealous possessiveness in the first half of the story, the story transforms self-abnegation, the ability to sacrifice one's physical existence for the eternity that love offers, into a virtue. The transformation from an ordinary person to a subject in love and the establishment of a two-ness is realized when an ordinary person risks getting rid of his ordinary body.

Nihālistān, as illustrated by the stories, presents love not just as an emotional experience, but as a transformative force, a disruption that brings forth a newfound consciousness and subjectivity. The narratives of Nergisī revolve around the dynamic process of subject formation, where the individual moves from a state of perceived completeness to one of profound incompleteness, propelled by the experience of love. This aligns with Badiou's philosophical framework, where an event, in this case, the amorous encounter, acts as the catalyst for this transition, revealing inherent voids or lacks within established structures of meaning.

The concept of the void, as posited by Badiou, serves as an essential aspect of understanding subjectivity. When confronted with this void, the ensuing quest to fill it becomes the driving force behind subject formation. It is a process that is in perpetual motion, constantly shaped by the interplay between external events and internal realizations.[37]

The sixth story[38] stands out in its depiction of this journey from completeness to incompleteness. The *müderris*, whose life seemingly follows a predictable trajectory, finds himself plunged into profound emotional turmoil after his encounter with the merchant's son. This experience unveils a hitherto unacknowledged void in his life, compelling him to confront and address it. The process is tumultuous, marked by moments of despair, longing, and eventual reconciliation. The culmination of the story,

35 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 362–375.
36 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 380–383.
37 Olivia Lucca Fraser, "Void," in *The Badiou Dictionary*, 377–380.
38 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 401–430.

where the beloved presents himself at the lover's doorstep, symbolizes the realization and acceptance of love as the ultimate truth.

However, as Badiou would argue, the completion of this journey does not mark the end. The subject remains in a state of flux, ever evolving in its relationship with the void. The lover and the beloved, even as they unite, are not static entities but are continually shaped by their interactions, experiences, and the intrinsic incompleteness that love brings forth. The narratives in *Nihālistān* do not merely celebrate the euphoria of love but delve deeper into its intricacies, highlighting the transformative journey of the subject in love.

In the fifth narrative of *Nihālistān*,[39] the amorous subjectivation of the Melāmī sheikh towards a coffee shop apprentice offers a distinct exploration of subjecthood. Prior to his amorous encounter, the sheikh's sense of self was already fragmented. Influenced by Melamism, he associated himself with societal outcasts and those who are typically shunned. Embracing acts of self-humiliation, the sheikh deliberately undertook degrading actions to dismantle his own pride and ego. He did not shy away from interacting with individuals deemed repulsive by society due to their malodorous presence, with the bodies of the executed, or with those mutilated. Furthermore, he provided care to individuals afflicted by sexually transmitted diseases that rendered their bodies putrescent.

The sheikh's predisposition can be elucidated using Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject. This concept refers to the indeterminate state that exists between subject and object, neither fully self nor fully other. It occupies an ambiguous, liminal realm that destabilizes conventional identity constructs and societal order. The abject encapsulates elements that incite feelings of horror, disgust, or revulsion, often tethered to bodily functions or the inevitability of death. Such elements challenge the demarcations between life and its cessation, or between the self and the external world. A paramount manifestation of the abject, according to Kristeva, is our profound dread of mortality. Death not only symbolizes the ultimate dissolution of selfhood, but it also confronts individuals with the transient nature of human existence. This confrontation disrupts our illusory perceptions of continuity. The corpse, once a living entity, epitomizes the abject in its most unadulterated form. Decomposition and the accompanying malodorous emanations signify the devolution into a state that predates subjectivity. Such scents, especially those stemming from decay, elicit visceral reactions, compelling feelings of profound disgust. These facets—death, the deceased, decomposition, and the inherent scents—all challenge societal boundaries, questioning our conceptualization of a pristine, distinct self, detached from the material world's vulnerabilities.[40]

The sheikh's profound association with death, decomposition, and their accompanying odors underscores his divergence from established societal norms and the arche-

39 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 390–400.

40 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 1–17.

typal societal subject. Unlike the *müderris* from the aforementioned narrative, the sheikh never sought to craft a pristine, complete sense of self by wholly rejecting the abject. His pre-amorous stance towards those engaging in relations with young boys offers an insight into his closest approach to conventional subjectivity. However, post his amorous encounter, the very act he once deemed debasing becomes integrated into his being. By reconciling with this previously scorned desire, the sheikh forges a rejuvenated, holistic subjectivity.[41]

3 Deciphering Love: Unraveling Insights from Nergisī's Conception

Upon juxtaposing Badiou's conceptual frameworks of the event and subject with Nergisī's narratives, we can delineate the salient characteristics embedded within Nergisī's articulation of love: Notably absent from these stories is any overt allusion to physical intimacy. Nergisī constructs the ardor of the lover entities, predominantly young men, as emblematic of amorous affection. Yet, such emblematic representation should not be misconstrued as indicative of fleeting sentimentality. Although the beloved frequently emerges as callous or aloof, there is a recurrent theme of reconciliation between the lover and the beloved. This rapprochement mirrors an engagement with an essence emancipated from corporeal constraints. In Nergisī's sophisticated portrayal, physical entities become evanescent. The physical form becomes an elusive referential in narratives that leverage metaphoric discourse to communicate emblematic amours.

However, the embodiment of Nergisī's lover is not entirely devoid of corporeal connotations, but it predominantly resonates with symbolic undertones. Bodily manifestations are enveloped within rhetorical constructs. Concurrently, the lover is not depicted as elusive. Narratives typically culminate with the lover and beloved's reunion. Yet, the beloved's primary role remains largely symbolic, allowing readers to discern the ramifications, remnants, and emotional resonances emanating from this symbolic presence. For esteemed societal members, their encounter with the beloved is both a miraculous and traumatic revelation. Such individuals undergo a profound metamorphosis post this encounter. Amour ushers in endearment, abjection, and marginalization. Through the lens of societal conventions, lovers often experience a decline in their societal stature, accompanied by self-degradation. Their state makes them susceptible to manifold criticisms and persecutions. Yet, this diminishment in societal standing often paves the way for a more genuine, elevated experience. At times, those marginalized—be they deranged or inebriated—find their stature elevated post their amorous interactions. Within the realm of amour, the chasm between the profane and the profound significantly narrows.

41 Çaldak, *Nergisî ve Nihâlistânı*, 391–401.

Initially, the beloved casts an indelible impression upon the lover, triggering an ordinary individual's amorous endeavors. As the narratives unfold, the lover's amorous expressions start influencing the beloved, transitioning them from apathy to affection. Consequently, love is not merely an introspective sentiment; it is expansive in its influence. The object of desire, once symbolic, starts experiencing desire itself. The expressions of love encapsulated within elegiac narratives beckon the beloved into the realm of amorous affection.

For Nergisī's protagonists, terms such as misery, anguish, persecution, and censure are anchored within societal conventions. After their transformative encounter with the beloved, they informally embark on a journey aligned with a newfound truth. If they exhibit resilience during this phase, adhering to the dictates of this emergent truth—that is, love—the birth of an amorous subject ensues. The conditions outlined by love's truth and societal norms are inherently discordant. The lover does not oscillate between these realms but embraces the world through the lens of this newfound truth. Faithfulness to this truth and desire culminates in the generation of desire rooted in this very truth. Consequently, the lover can beckon the beloved into the domains of love and subjectivity. Herein, the corporeal attributes of both the lover and beloved become peripheral; paramount is their allegiance to the truth fostered by love.

The narratives within Nergisī's *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān* primarily chronicle the subjectivizations engendered by love. Predominantly, Nergisī elucidates the metamorphosis of mundane individuals into amorous subjects. Sporadically, narratives might center around those failing to uphold love's truth or those regressing into ordinariness. As Nergisī's literary trajectory evolves, the emphasis on quotidian life, historical, and geographical contexts in his texts attenuates. Nergisī's primary concern pivots towards elucidating the universal dynamics of love, rather than delineating specific amorous liaisons. Societal conditions are primarily portrayed as representative of the mundane individual's *status quo.* The palpable friction between societal conditions and the dynamics of love is not accentuated. The overarching objective revolves around detailing the subject's transformative journey, catalyzed by love as an event, and their endeavors to uphold love's truth. Yet, such articulations are not embedded within an overt, lucid discourse. Analogous to how love stands distinct from societal conventions, Nergisī's intricate discourse possesses an ontology that diverges from colloquial language.

Conclusion

The literary journey through Nergisī's 17th century works, *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* and *Nihālistān*, reveals a transformative approach to the narrative of love that intersects the personal with the universal. Nergisī's evolving portrayal of love transcends mere amorous encounters, delving into a sophisticated exploration of subjectivity within the socio-cultural fabric of the Ottoman era. His narratives, which begin rooted in personal experience and observation, gradually metamorphose into emblematic stories that,

while distanced from their initial contexts, retain a profound engagement with the essence of love.

As an amorous artisan, Nergisī's creative process is marked by a continuous act of recompositing, where love is both a personal affliction and a metaphorical conduit to a higher truth. His works demonstrate an intricate interplay between the lived experiences of love and the stylistic expression of its transformative power. His narratives shift from detailed accounts of specific locales and individuals in *Meşāḳḳ ul-ʿUşşāḳ* to more abstracted, universal representations in *Nihālistān*, reflecting a conscious choice to elevate the discourse of love to a broader, more timeless realm.

Nergisī's contribution lies not only in his narratives but in the way he crafts his literary identity: as both the curator of these love stories and their principal protagonist. This dual role lends authenticity and depth to his works, positioning him as an enduring figure within the canon of Ottoman literature. The personal becomes interwoven with the spiritual, as Nergisī's portrayal of love extends beyond the earthly plane to the Divine, suggesting a perpetual quest for union that parallels the human search for meaning and connection.

In the realm of subjectivity, Nergisī's characters are transformed by love, emerging as subjects who embody both the pain and ecstasy of love's trials. Their journeys underscore the eventuality of love as an existential truth that shapes their being and perception. The narratives resist a reductionist view of love as a predictable or societal phenomenon, instead presenting it as a complex, often paradoxical force that challenges and redefines the self.

Nergisī's work is a testament to the enduring power of love to inspire, challenge, and transform. His narratives do not merely recount amorous unions but illustrate the intricate process of subject formation, where love serves as the crucible for self-discovery and truth. Through his innovative linguistic style and thematic depth, Nergisī establishes himself as a pioneering figure whose interpretation of love continues to resonate, offering insights into the universal human condition.

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Spiritual Configurations

Sadık Yazar

On the Tidal State of Love: The Representation of *Telvīn* in Turkish Sufi Poetry

Introduction

Classical Turkish literature, particularly poetry, is centered on the theme of love (*ʿışḳ*). William C. Chittick has noted that love has been a central focus for numerous Muslim scholars and sages, so much so that if one were to encapsulate Islamic spirituality in a single word, it would undeniably be love.[1] A. Atilla Şentürk echoes this view, emphasizing that love in classical Turkish literature has a well-defined self-conception and boundaries that have evolved over time.[2]

Ottoman literature is rich with varying opinions and theories regarding the origins of this understanding of love. For example, Berat Açıl traces its roots back to the ideas of Plotinus (205–270 C.E.) and Zarathustra (2nd millennium B.C.E.),[3] both of whom profoundly influenced poetry and mystical thought.[4] On the other hand, Sadık Armutlu contends that the concept of *ʿışḳ* is grounded in a traditional understanding of love that emerged during the Umayyad period and was further developed among different nations—particularly the Persians and Turks—during the Abbasid era.[5]

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1 William Chittick, *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God*, Foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), XI.

2 A. Atilla Şentürk, "Klasik Şiir Estetiği Oluşumu: Sınırları, Fikrî ve Felsefî Temelleri," In *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi,* edited by Talat Sait Halman et al., vol. 1 (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2006), 359.

3 The *Şudūr* (emanation) theory is one of the responses to the question of how God created the universe. In contrast to the thesis that God created the universe out of nothing, the emanationist (*sudūrist*) theory posits that God created the universe by an overflow from His own essence. See, Berat Açıl, "Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Aşk, Failleri ve Öteki," In *Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Öteki*, edited by Adnan Oktay (Ankara: Çizgi, 2022), 87–115.

4 See Berat Açıl, "Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Aşk, Failleri ve Öteki," 85–113.

5 Armutlu argues that the concept of udhrī love serves as the primary inspiration for classical Turkish poetry. He supports this assertion by examining various types of lover and beloved archetypes in classical Arabic literature. See Sadık Armutlu, *Klasik Arap, Fars ve Türk Edebiyatı İncelemeleri: Şahsiyetler, Türler*, (Istanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2021), II/13, 46; see for udhrī love, Louis Massignon, "ʿUdhrî," In *EI*[1], 13–1936), ed. M. Th. Houtsma et al. [accessed 14.10.2023], [https://doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_5872]; Renate Jacobi, "'Udhrī Poetry," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature,* ed. J. S. Meisami – P. Starkey, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1998), 789–791; see also, Ahmad Thnaybat / Hussein Zeidanin "Convergence and Divergence Between the Arabic ʿUdhrî (Chaste) Love and Platonic Love: A Comparative Study," *International Journal of Comparative Literature & Translation Studies* 5, no. 3 (2017), 44–54; Jokha Alharthi, *The Body in Arabic Love Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

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The Sufi tradition and teachings have been instrumental in shaping the concept of love in classical Turkish literature, regardless of its origins. The widespread acceptance of this theory highlights its profound influence and significance within the literary tradition, emphasizing the central role Sufism has played in the development of poetic themes and expressions of love. The theory of *vaḥdet al-vucūd* (the unity of being), systematically articulated by Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240), gained considerable prominence in classical Turkish poetry, influencing both Sufi and non-Sufi poets alike.[6] This metaphysical concept posits that all other forms of existence are contingent and derive their reality from God, who is the sole and absolute being. Sufi mystics often elucidate this idea through the metaphor of light: God is analogous to light in that He is both singular and self-illuminating, and all creation emanates from His being, much like the way iridescence radiates from light. Creation, in this sense, is a reflection or manifestation of God's essence rather than a separate, independent reality.[7] The various Sufi states (*ḥāl*) and stations (*maḳam*) were used to create a rich and intricate world of meaning. To fully appreciate classical Turkish poetry, it is essential to understand the mystical states, modes, and elements that poets skillfully weave through Sufi terminology, symbolism, metaphor, and connotation.[8]

Telvīn (the state of inconstancy), the foundation of this study, is one of the key Sufi states and stations, derived from the Arabic root *levn* (لون), meaning colour. It refers to the act of giving color, coloring it, or making it colorful. In the same semantic field, *televvun*, also derived from *levn*, implies the process of becoming coloured or becoming colorful in a reflexive sense (*muṭāvaʿat*), signifying the shifting spiritual and emotional states a Sufi experiences on his/her path. Beyond its Sufi implications, *telvīn* is also defined as a rhetorical device, indicating a change in a word's style or form. Additionally, the term appears in Arabic culture in the context of presenting a variety of foods at the table, symbolizing diversity and variety.[9]

Al-Ḳuşayrī (d. 1072),[10] one of the early Sufi theorists, describes *telvīn* as a state encountered by the *sālik* (Sufi, mystic)[11] during his *seyr u sulūk* (the Sufi path or journey

6 Açıl, "Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Aşk, Failleri ve Öteki," 92–93.

7 In this volume, Christiane Czygan, "Introduction." 1.

8 To fully understand the concept of *malāmat* (blame), see. Şentürk, "Klasik Şiir Estetiği Oluşumu," 349–390; Atilla Şentürk, "Manzum Metinler Işığında Bir Kalender Dervişinin Profili," *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 8 (2015), 141–220, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.8457

9 See "Talwîn," *Almaany Dictionary*, https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/تلوين/, [accessed 19.10.2023].

10 See Abu'l-Qasim Qushayri, *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism Al-Risala = al-Qushayriyya fi 'İlm al-Tasawwuf,* trans. by Alexander D. Knysh, reviewed by Dr. Muhammad Eissa (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2007), 100–103.

11 In sources that provide theoretical insights into Sufism, the term *sālik*—used in the sense of the traveler on a spiritual journey—is often paralleled by the word *ʿāşıḳ* in the literary tradition, where divine love in the practice of Sufism is articulated. Throughout this article, I use the term *sālik* with this dual meaning in mind.

of self-searching and self-knowledge).[12] This concept corresponds to the Sufi's phase of inner exploration, signifying the turbulent, fluctuating, restless, and unstable emotional states experienced along this spiritual journey.[13]

In the context of Sufism, the concept of *telvīn* represents a state of spiritual mobility. Upon experiencing the transformative power of divine love, the Sufi is driven toward v*uṣlat* (union with the divine) through a process of continual spiritual striving. This relentless pursuit of union prevents any form of spiritual complacency, ensuring that the Sufi remains in a state of perpetual motion, constantly journeying toward the divine without settling into stillness. The state of movement in *telvīn* symbolizes the entirety of the Sufi's spiritual journey, mirroring the physical travels often undertaken by mystics.

After completing the stage of self-knowledge and detaching from the ego, the Sufi attains union with the divine, thus concluding *telvīn* and entering the state of *temkīn* (spiritual stability). The poetry of Sufi figures such as Eşrefoğlu Rūmī (d. 1469–70) and Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī (d. 1694) vividly portrays the journey of overcoming *telvīn* and reaching the state of *temkīn.* In his work *Mevāʿid al-ʿİrfān* (Pledges of Wisdom), Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī recounts that, after years of wandering through the lands of Arabia and Rūm (Anatolia), he eventually entered the service of his master, Elmalılı Ümmī Sinān (d. 1657), and finally achieved the state of *temkīn.*[14]

Al-Ḳuşayrī asserts that the heart can generate a state known as *ḥāl* without any conscious effort or intention from the individual. These states encompass a broad spectrum of emotions, such as joy and sadness, comfort and distress, enthusiasm and hardship, as well as awe and excitement, often shifting rapidly and unpredictably.[15] The Sufi term *telvīn* is aptly applied to this concept of *ḥāl*, as it reflects the rapid and involuntary fluctuations in emotional states experienced by the Sufi or the lover, emphasizing the instability and constant change inherent in the spiritual journey.

The metaphor of sea waves is commonly employed in classical Persian and Turkish poetry to illustrate the contrasting Sufi states of *telvīn* and *temkīn. Telvīn* is associated with the restless, turbulent sea, while *temkīn* symbolizes the calm and tranquil sea. The related terms *sukūn* (tranquility) and *teskīn* (soothing) emerge from this imagery, further emphasizing the dichotomy between spiritual turmoil and tranquillity. Ultimately,

12 Apart from Qushayr's *Epistle,* for the meaning of the state of *telvīn* as a Sufi term, see Suhrawardi, *The First Complete Translation of Awarif al-Ma'arif (The Gifts of Gnoses)*, trans. by Syed Ahmad Saeed Hamadani (Lahore: Oriental Publications, 2011), 541; al-Qashani, *A Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms*, trans. by Nabil Safwat, edited by David Pendlebury (London: The Octagon Press, 1991), 107–108; Zafer Erginli, *Metinlerle Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (Trabzon: Kalem Publications, 2006), 1048–1050; Suad al-Hakîm, *İbnü'l-Arabî Sözlüğü*, trans. by Ekrem Demirli (Istanbul: Kabalcı, 2005), 614–615; Selami Şimşek, *Tasavvuf Edebiyatı Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (Istanbul: Litera, 2017), 351; Süleyman Uludağ, *Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Istanbul: Kabalcı, 2002), 346.

13 Semih Ceyhan, "Telvîn," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 40 (Ankara: TDV Publications, 2011), 409–410.

14 Niyazi-i Mısri, *Mevâidu'l-İrfân ve Avâidu'l-İhsân: İrfan sofraları*, trans. by Süleyman Ateş (Malatya: İnönü University, Niyazi-i Mısri Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi, 2014), 49.

15 Qushayri, *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism*, 78.

telvīn reflects a being that manifests multiple colours simultaneously, showcasing its inherent complexity and fluidity in the spiritual journey. This concept is further affirmed by Seyyid Muṣṭafā Rāsim (d. after 1824) in his work *İstılāḥāt-ı İnsān-ı Kāmil* (The Concepts of the Perfect Human), where he compares *telvīn* to the chameleon, emphasizing the transformative and adaptive qualities.[16]

In classical Sufi doctrine prior to Ibn al-ʿArabī, *telvīn* was considered as a necessary phase for Sufis to pass through on their spiritual journey. However, it was typically viewed as a negative state, characterized by instability, which had to be transcended to reach the more stable state of *temkīn.* Ibn al-ʿArabī significantly shifted this perception, redefining *telvīn* as a blessed and valuable state, integral to the Sufi path. His new interpretation highlighted the dynamic and transformative nature of *telvīn*, emphasizing its importance in Sufi journey. Ibn al-ʿArabī based this reinterpretation on the Quranic verse "*kulla yavmin huva fī şaʾn*"[17] (Every day He exercises the universal power), assigning a positive connotation to *telvīn* by linking it to the constant renewal and divine activity in the cosmos. In doing so, he elevated the fluctuating experiences of the Sufi to reflections of God's ongoing creative power.

Ottoman Sufi literature preserved the interpretation from the classical period through the spiral progression of *telvīn-temkīn-telvīn*, highlighting the continued relevance of this approach. The spiritual journey begins with a negative state (*maẕmūm*) during the initial *telvīn*, but after *teskīn* (soothing), the mystic enters a positive second *telvīn* state. Seyyid Muṣṭafā Rāsim emphasizes that the occurrence of *telvīn* after *temkīn* clearly reflects the multiplicity of divine manifestations.[18]

Telvīn is a frequently discussed concept in Ottoman-period Turkish Sufi literature. It is explained in various Sufi treatises, including those by Anḳaravī Ismāʿīl Rusūḫī (d. 1631) and Ismāʿīl Ḥaḳḳī Bursevī (d. 1725). Turkish commentaries on canonical texts of Sufi literature, such as Mevlānā Celāl ad-Dīn Rūmī's (d. 1273) *Meṯnevī-yi Maʿnevī* (The Spiritual Verses), also provide insight into the concept. Dede ʿOmar Rūşenī, a renowned 15th century Sufi poet, extensively discusses the concept of *telvīn* in couplets 938–969 of his verse work *Ney-nāme* (The Book of Ney). His explanation is based on Ibn al-ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikem* (Seals of Wisdom), where Rūşenī asserts that the praiseworthy state of *telvīn* is not the one experienced before *temkīn.* One who drinks the wine of love and sheds the garment of ego (*anāniyyat*) should aim for the positive effects of *telvīn.*[19]

Muḥyī-i Gülşenī (d. after 1606/07), the grandson of the renowned Sufi Ibrāhīm Gülşenī (d. 1540), also refers to *telvīn* in his Turkish translation of

16 İhsan Kara, "Tasavvuf Istılâhları Literatürü ve Seyyid Mustafa Râsim Efendi'nin Istılâhât-ı İnsân-ı Kâmil'i" (PhD diss., Marmara University, 2003), 130.

17 *Quran:* al-Rahman 55/29.

18 Kara, "Tasavvuf Istılâhları Literatürü," 272.

19 Necip Fazıl Şenarslan, "Rûşenî Dede Ömer Aydınî Külliyâtı (Miskin-nâme, Şobân-nâme, Der Kasemiyât ve Münâcât, Der Medh-i Mesnevî-i Maʾnevî-i Mevleviyyet, Ney-nâme, Kalem-nâme, Divan): Dil İncelemesi-Metin-Dizin," (PhD diss., Atatürk University, 2020), 443–444.

Raşaḥāt ʿAyn al-Ḥayāt (Tricklings from the Fountain of Life). In reference to Celāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, he describes the state of *telvīn* that he occasionally experienced.[20] According to Rusūhī (d. 1631) in his *Minhāc al-Fuḳarā* (The Path of the Poor), *telvīn* can be categorized into both praiseworthy and condemned forms, as interpreted from Ibn al-ʿArabī's perspective.[21]

Classical Turkish poetry incorporates the concepts of *telvīn* and *televvun.* However, unlike *temkīn*, couplets containing these concepts often carry negative connotations. Poems exploring both figurative and literal divine love engage with the semantic field of *telvīn* through connotation, imagery, and representation. In these contexts, poets emphasize the instability, coloration, and impermanence associated with *telvīn*, and they strive to depict this state in various ways. The emotional characteristics of *telvīn* frequently appear in the *ġazel* genre, as well as in standalone poems. One notable example is the 16th century poet Livāyī's (*d.* after 974/1566–67) *mütekerrir müseddes*,[22] which can be interpreted as a portrayal of this state.

According to some poets, such as Bāḳī (d. 1008/1600), once love and longing for the beloved take root in the heart, they can never lead to stability, patience, rest, peace, or tranquility. However, other poets suggest that specific features of the beloved, such as beauty marks, trigger this indecisiveness in the lover. The beloved's curly hair or gaze can cause distress and emotional wavering, a condition often referred to as lovesickness. Certain couplets not only reflect the state of *telvīn*, but also depict its instability or indecision through constructions such as "*gāh/geh/gehī … gāh/geh/gehī*" (at times… at times) or "*ne … ne*" (neither… nor), effectively portraying the emotional turbulence and inner conflict characteristic of this state.

In the *meṣnevī* (epic poem in distichs) tradition, *telvīn* typically arises after the lover becomes suddenly infatuated with the beloved upon seeing them. This inconstancy in the lover's heart is expressed either directly, as in the *ġazel* tradition, or through symbolic representation. Additionally, the lover's pursuit of the beloved in *meṣnevī* is itself a form of *telvīn.* The state of longing persists until the lover attains reunion (*vuṣlat*) with the beloved, but with each subsequent separation, the state of *telvīn* reemerges, repeating the cycle of emotional fluctuation and instability.

Ahmet Kabaklı defined the state of *telvīn* in his short articletitled *Telvīn* referencing al-Ḳuşayrī's *Epistle* and illustrating it with poems by Yūnus Emre (d. 1320), [23] Eşrefoğlu Rūmī (d. 1469–79 [?]), and Şeyḫ Ġālib (d. 1799). Additionally, Semih Ceyhan discussed *telvīn* in the *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi.*[24] Ceyhan outlines this state by drawing on early classical Sufi texts, particularly al-Ḳuşayrī's

20 Mustafa Koç and Eyyup Tanrıverdi, *Reşehât-ı Muhyî*, (Istanbul: YEK, 2014), 243.

21 İsmail Rusūhī Ankaravī, *Minhâcü'l-Fukarâ*, ed. Safi Arpaguş (Istanbul: Vefa Yayınları, 2008), 447.

22 In this poem the last line is repeated at the end of each stanza consisting of six lines.

23 Ahmet Kabaklı, "Telvin" In *Yunus Emre: Makalelerden Seçmeler*, edited by Hüseyin Özbay ve Mustafa Tatcı (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1994), 4–6.

24 Ceyhan, "Telvîn," 409–410.

al-Risāle al-Ḳuşayriyye, and offers insights into how Ibn al-ʿArabī reconceptualized it. Furthermore, the concept is indirectly addressed in certain studies of divine love.[25]

This article will exclusively examine the manifestation of *telvīn* within Sufi poetry, with a particular focus on its influence on Yūnus Emre and Eşrefoğlu Rūmī. Through this exploration, the reflection of the state of *telvīn* in Turkish Sufi poetry along with the linguistic structures and thematic elements that contributed to this reflection will be analyzed. Verses from Yūnus Emre, Eşrefoğlu Rūmī, and other notable poets such as Dede ʿÖmer Rūşenī, İbrāhīm Gülşenī, Muḥyī of Konya (16th century), Şems ed-dīn-i Sivasī (d. 1597), and ʿAzīz Maḥmūd Hüdāyī (d. 1628) will be included in the analysis.

1 Depiction and Representation of the State of *Telvīn*

To understand the reflections of the state of *telvīn* in the poetry of Yūnus Emre and Eşrefoğlu Rūmī, two important points must be considered. First, classical sources regard the *telvīn* as a necessary aspect of divine love. Second, it is crucial to maintain objectivity and avoid subjective interpretations unless explicitly stated. Helmut Ritter (1892–1971) in his analysis of Farīd ad-Dīn ʿAṭṭār's *Teẕkire al-Evliyā* (The Collection of Lives of Saints), draws from a classical source known as "*Blue Anonymous*" to outline the signs of love, including states of indecision and unrest, which align with the concept of *telvīn.*[26]

In his *Ġarībnāme*, ʿĀşıḳ Paşa (d. 1333) devotes an entire chapter to the subject of love. Within this chapter, in the fifth *dāsitān* (subsection) of the eighth *bāb* (main section), he posits that individuals experiencing love exhibit eight distinct signs, categorized as either external or internal manifestations. The third of these signs is the state of *telvīn*, which is the primary focus of this study. ʿĀşıḳ Paşa expresses this as the absence of patience and decision (*ṣabr u ḳarār*), and the reflection of the state of *telvīn* in Ottoman poetry is generally characterized by these expressions.

As described in this section, the lover lacks patience and stability, finding peace and tranquility only in the beloved. In the lover's world, material possessions and worldly constraints hold no value. Bound by the rope of love, his heart is scorched by the flames of passion. He follows love wherever it leads, and thus, tranquility, peace, patience, and stability cannot exist in a heart where love dwells.[27]

As a second point, it is essential to recognize that the concept of love in Classical Turkish poetry and the qualities of the lover are not fixed but rather variable. The portrayal of the lover can be differ depending on the context. However, when reading a *ġhazal*, it can be difficult to discern whether the mad lover is driven to madness by

25 For example, the section titled "States of the Traveler" in William C. Chittick's *Divine Love*, 238–276.
26 See Helmut Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul: Man, the World and God in the Stories of Farid al-Din Attar,* trans. by John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 389–394.
27 Âşık Paşa, *Garib-nâme*, edited by Kemal Yavuz, vol. 2/1 (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2000), 115–116.

metaphorical or divine love, as the poet deliberately constructs a polysemous structure. In contrast, in Turkish Sufi poetry, the lover is clearly depicted as intoxicated with divine love, leaving no ambiguity regarding the nature of the love, the lover, and the beloved.

2 "Your love has taken me away from me": Depiction or Representation of the State of *Telvīn* by Yūnus Emre

Yūnus Emre's poems encompass a range of themes, with the motif of divine love standing out as the dominant subject.[28] He conveys this sentiment with unique lyricism and sincerity, particularly in his portrayal of the state of *telvīn* within the heart of the Sufi/lover, in relation to the divine beloved. Among the analyzed Sufi poets, Yūnus Emre and his close disciple Eşrefoğlu Rūmī show the most significant attention to depicting and representing the state of *telvīn.* Yūnus not only pioneered the description of this state in both structure and content but also set a precedent for subsequent poets by giving special emphasis to its portrayal.

Yūnus Emre depicts the state of *telvīn* as a form of *sekr* (intoxication or ecstasy), in line with expressions found in the works of other Sufi poets. Sufi teachings assert that pure divine love requires the recognition of reason's limitations on the path of love. In contrast to Cunayd al-Baġdādī (d. 909), who advocated for *ṣahv* (sobriety) as a means to reach God, the esteemed sheikh of Horasan, Bāyezīd al-Bistāmī (d. 848), emphasized the importance of *sekr.* Bāyezīd argued that relying solely on sobriety or intellect would only sustain human limitations and attributes. He contended that sobriety and intellectual guidance actually obstruct the path to God by reinforcing these human characteristics. To draw closer to the Divine, one must relinquish reason, purify human traits, and embrace the path of *sekr*, marked by madness and ecstasy. He often compares love to wine when discussing the spiritual states along this path, likening the Sufi's condition—intoxicated by this 'wine'—to that of a drunkard.[29] According to Aḥmed al-Ġazālī (d. 1126), the nature and truth of love transcend intellectual comprehension.[30]

Telvīn is a state of ecstasy in which rational faculties are impaired, making it difficult to assess one's turbulent emotional state as a voluntary experience. Yūnus Emre's poems clearly articulate this prerequisite of love with the phrase "taking me from me"

28 The first comprehensive information and evaluations on Yūnus Emre appeared in M. Fuat Köprülü's *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature.* Although there have been many studies on Yūnus since then, no serious additions have been made to this information; see also Edith G. Ambros, "Yūnus Emre," In *EI*^{2}, edited by P. Bearman et al., vol. 2, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_80342023, [accessed 14 October 2023].

29 Atilla Şentürk, "Klasik Şiir Estetiği Oluşum," 360.

30 Ahmad Ghazzali, *Sawanih: Inspirations from the World of Pure Spirits,* trans. by Nasrollah Pourjavady (London: Routledge, 1986), 66; for the intellect-love dichotomy, see William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 220–226.

(*beni benden almak*), a recurring expression throughout his works. The use of "me" in this context represents the material attachments or ego that hinder the poet's focus on love and compromise its purity, which arises from the mind (*ʿaḳl*). Yūnus frequently refers to "ego" (*benlik*)[31] and "self" (*kendöz*) in his teachings, emphasizing that surrendering oneself to love and relinquishing rational thought are essential prerequisites for experiencing true love.

This understanding is evident in many of Yūnus' works, as exemplified by the line "Your love took me from me," as well as in various Turkish expressions and idioms that convey a meaning similar to *ḥayrān*, which denotes intoxication, including from substances like cannabis. Through these expressions, Yūnus conveys the intoxicating effect of love and its intertwining with a disabled mind on the path to divine love.

As observed in the works of many Sufi poets, Yūnus Emre's poems contain verses that articulate this theme more explicitly. He reflects on the state of being in love, asserting that the lover is often 'ruined' and oblivious to faith and religion. He suggests that a lover united with love transcends even these fundamental aspects, despite their significance in a rational person's self-definition:

> *Dīn ü millet ṣorarısañ ʿāşıḳlara dīn ne ḥācet*
> *ʿĀşıḳ kişi ḥarāb olur ʿāşıḳ bilmez dīn diyānet*[32]
> When inquired about their religion and people, lovers declare that they have no need for such distinctions. A lover becomes so wholly absorbed in love that he loses all awareness of what religion or religiosity truly means.

Yūnus describes the state *telvīn* and *teşvīş* (confusion) that he experienced in his heart under the profound influence of love. He expresses that during this time, patience, stability, intellect, and *bili* (knowledge, wisdom) all deserted him:

> *Ḳanı bana ṣabr u ḳarār senüñ sözüñi diñleyem*
> *Ḳanı bañа ʿaḳl u bili ṭuydurmadın seni sevem*[33]
> Where is my patience and constancy, that I may obey you?
> Where is my wisdom and knowledge, that I may love you without announcing it?

Yūnus Emre asserts that his intellect has abandoned him the moment he fell in love with his beloved (*dōst*). Boldly, he forsakes the springs and fearlessly plunges into the seas, where even a mere spark of love can cause the waters to boil. The lover immerses himself in this sea, ignited and consumed by its fire. In these couplets, Yūnus encapsulates his Sufi journey, expressing that he has attained the station of *cemʿ* (uni-

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31 For the language of selfhood in Yūnus Emre, see Zeynep Oktay, "Selfhood and Mystical Language in the Poetry of Yunus Emre," In *Routledge Handbook on Turkish Literature*, edited by Didem Havlioğlu and Zeynep Uysal (London: Routledge, 2023), 40–55.

32 Mustafa Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı: Tenkitli Metin,* edited by İbrahim Akkuş (Istanbul: H Yayınları, 2008), 38.

33 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 235.

fication) through the act of burning. To reach the state, the lover must submerge himself in a sea of passionate love. While his intellect had provided safety until this point, he now finds himself trapped in the springs, bereft of it. Ultimately, by relinquishing his intellect, the lover achieves union with the beloved.[34]

The poet articulates this feeling more clearly in the following couplet:

> *Her kim ʿışḳ ḳadeḥinden içdiyise bir cürʿa*
> *Aña ne ʿaḳl u ne uṣ ne esrük ü ne ḫumār* [35]
> Whoever has drunk a sip from the chalice of love needs neither reason nor intellect nor intoxication nor hangover remain in him.

Yūnus Emre, a poet who frequently underscores the significance of true love in his works, firmly believes that one must dedicate his entire being, including intellect, to the pursuit of genuine love. He conveys this conviction through impactful phrases such as "*Girçek ʿāşıḳ olan kişi añmaya dünyā-āḫiret*"[36] (The true lover does not mention this world or hereafter) and "*Her kimde kim ʿışḳ varısa ayruḳ ne ṣıġar ol yire*"[37] (Whoever has a trace of love no longer fits in where he is).

Yūnus Emre undoubtedly embodies the most beautiful and succinct expression of *telvīn*, a state of rapture, enthusiasm, and ecstasy, whether it occurs before or after *temkīn* (stability).[38] His poems not only describe but also vividly depict the state of *telvīn.* Rather than engaging in theoretical discourse, Yūnus offers a concrete representation of this state, as elaborated in the earlier sections of this study. Yūnus conveys the fluctuating condition of an individual experiencing *telvīn*, illustrating a spectrum of emotions throughout his text. One of his most confident poems begins with the phrase, "*Ḥaḳḳ bir göñül virdi bāña*" (God gave me a heart…). The text of the poem is as follows:

***Beyt* (Couplet)**	**Translation**
Ḥaḳḳ bir göñül virdi bāña hā dimedin ḥayrān olur	God gave me a heart; if you say "Ah," it becomes bewildered.
Bir dem gelür şādī olur bir dem gelür giryān olur	At one moment, it is filled with joy; at another, it is weeping.

34 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 298.

35 Orhan Kemal Tavukçu, *Yunus Emre ve Divan*, (Istanbul: Vakıfbank Kültür Yayınları, 2022), 25.

36 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 190.

37 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 23.

38 While it is true that Yūnus Emre was not the first to describe the state of *telvīn*, it is important to recognize that he offered a unique perspective on the subject. Prior to Yūnus, many Sufi poets had already articulated this state in both Arabic and Persian. However, Yūnus distinguishes himself through his ability to explain and describe Sufi states and maqams in their theoretical dimensions, rather than merely expressing his personal experiences of these states through poetry. As noted by William Chittick, this is precisely what sets Yūnus apart from his predecessors, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi,* 5–6.

Continued

***Beyt* (Couplet)**	**Translation**
Bir dem ṣañasın ḳış gibi şol zemherī olmış gibi ***Bir dem beşāretden ṭoġar ḫōş bāġ-ıla bostān olur***	At one moment, you think it is like winter, as if the bitter cold has arrived. At another, it springs forth with glad tidings, becoming a delightful garden.
Bir dem gelür söyleyemez bir sözi şerḥ eyleyemez ***Bir dem dilinden dür döker dertlülere dermān olur***	At one moment, it cannot speak, unable to explain a single word. At another, it pours pearls from the tongue, becoming a remedy for the afflicted.
Bir dem çıḳar ʿarş üzere bir dem iñer taḥte üs̱-s̱erā ***Bir dem ṣanasın ḳaṭredür bir dem ṭaşar ʿummān olur***	At one moment, it rises to the heavens, at another, it descends beneath the earth. At one moment, you think it is a drop; at another, it overflows like the ocean.
Bir dem cehāletde ḳalur hīç nesneyi bilmez olur ***Bir dem ṭalar ḥikmetlere Cālinūs u Loḳmān olur***	At one moment, it remains in ignorance, knowing nothing at all. At another, it rises to wisdom, becoming like Galen or Loḳmān
Bir dem dīv olur ya perī vīräneler olur yiri ***Bir dem uçar Belḳīsile sulṭān-ı ins ü cān olur***	At one moment, it becomes like a demon or fairy, dwelling in desolation. At another, it flies with Belḳīs, becoming the ruler of humanity and spirits.
Bir dem görür olmış gedā yalın tene geymiş ʿabā ***Bir dem ġanī himmet ile faġfūr u hem ḫāḳān olur***	At one moment, it sees itself as a beggar, wearing only a simple cloak. At another, it becomes rich with generosity, a mighty emperor or khan.
Bir dem gelür ʿāṣī olur Ḥaḳḳ ẕihnini yavı ḳılur ***Bir dem gelür kim yoldaşı hem zühd ü hem īmān olur***	At one moment, it becomes rebellious, and God confounds its mind. At another, its companions are piety and faith.
Bir dem günāhın fikr ider ṭos-ṭoġru Ṭamuya gider ***Bir dem görür Ḥaḳḳ raḥmetin uçmaḳlara Rıḍvān olur***	At one moment, it contemplates sin and heads straight to Hell. At another, it sees God's mercy and becomes Rıḍvān, the gatekeeper of Paradise.
Bir dem varur mescidlere yüzin sürer anda yire ***Bir dem varur deyre girer İncīl oḳur ruhbān olur***	At one moment, it goes to the mosque, humbly pressing its face to the ground. At another, it enters a monastery, reading the Gospel and becoming a monk.
Bir dem gelür Mūsā olur yüz biñ münācātlar ḳılur ***Bir dem girer kibr evine Firʿavn'ıla Hāmān olur***	At one moment, it becomes Moses, making a hundred thousand supplications. At another, it enters the house of arrogance, becoming like Pharaoh and Haman.
Bir dem gelür ʿĪsā gibi ölmişleri diri ḳılur ***Bir dem gelür güm-rāhleyin yolında ser-gerdān olur***	At one moment, it becomes like Jesus, reviving the dead. At another, it wanders lost, aimlessly in error.

Continued

***Beyt* (Couplet)**	**Translation**
Bir dem döner Cebrāʾīl'e raḥmet ṣaçar her maḥfile Bir dem gelür güm-rāh olur miskīn Yūnus ḥayrān olur[39]	At one moment, it turns into Gabriel, scattering mercy in every gathering. At another, it becomes lost in error, and poor Yūnus is left bewildered.

Yūnus Emre's famous poem exists in various copies, each differing in the number of couplets. However, Tatcı's edition features 13 couplets that primarily describe the states of the heart (*göñül*). It is worth noting that *ḳalb* is another Turkified Arabic term for *göñül.* This word holds significant importance in Sufi interpretations, as it conveys meanings such as to transform and not being fixed in a place or object.

As a verb, *ḳalb* conveys the idea of fluctuation or change from one state to another. In certain hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad addresses God (*Allāh*) as *muḳallib al-ḳulūb*, meaning "the One who changes hearts from one state to another," utilizing the verb form of the word for heart.

Sufi texts place special emphasis on two key themes related to the heart: first, the heart's transformation from one state to another; and second, the inner struggle within heart between the soul and the spirit. As a result, the heart is often pulled in opposing directions—negatively toward bodily desires, while the soul turns towards its divine origin.[40] Ismāʿīl Ḥaḳḳī Bursevī also connects this concept of the heart with *telvīn*, referring to the state of continual change and transformation.[41]

Yūnus describes the varying states of the heart through the use of vivid color imagery, portraying it as easily captivated, often without any discernible cause. This state of bewilderment is reminiscent of the intoxication and ecstasy experienced by individuals who use substances like cannabis.[42] Metonymically designated as a spiritual seeker or a lover, the heart is posited as the epicenter of love—the place where love's fiery impact is realized. Consequently, love serves as the catalyst that leads the heart to become enraptured and ecstatic, effectively overshadowing the intellect.

This experience may arise at the onset of the Sufi path or during the state of acceptable *telvīn*, which is entered with an intense longing to return to the station of ce*mʿ* (unification with God) after having previously attained it. At this stage, the Sufi is far from tranquility, stability, constancy, and peace of mind, and remaining in a state of flux. The Sufi adapts to each situation, experiencing different emotions moment by moment. While over a longer period, the Sufi may display a wide range of emotions, it is more accurate to liken his/her adaptability to that of a chameleon, con-

39 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 73–74.

40 Chittick, *Divine Love*, 118.

41 See İsmail Hakkı Bursevî, *Kitâbü'n-Netîce*, edited by Ali Namlı (Istanbul: YEK, 2019), 727.

42 See Atilla Şentürk, "Hâb-Hindî,"In *Osmanlı Şiiri Kılavuzu*, vol. 6 (Istanbul: OSEDAM-Osmanlı Edebiyatı Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2022), 403–407.

stantly adjusting to each new moment. Like a chameleon, the Sufi or lover is colored by the influence he/she under at any given time, with their spiritual state is in constant flux, shifting from one color to another.

The second line of the poem accurately captures the concept being depicted. Yūnus accomplishes this by employing the unique phrase structure "*Bir dem gelür […]*" (for a moment) to describe the state of *telvīn.* This structure is not used by any of the other Sufi poets examined. It is widely accepted that *dem* refers to breath, symbolizing the briefest measure of time. The poem repeatedly uses the phrase "*Bir dem gelür*" at the beginning of each verse, skillfully marking moments of state changes and emotional transformations. Each couplet juxtaposes two opposing states with remarkable clarity.

The poem integrates a spectrum of colors—metaphorically through meaning, sound, harmony, and visually through calligraphy or writing—to effectively communicate its message. While the phrase "*Bir dem gelür […]*" denotes moments, it also conveys a sense of instability and variability. The word *bir* in Turkish introduces a sense of ambiguity, and the verb "*gelür*" suggests a broader, more uncertain timeframe rather than a fixed interval. Consequently, from the outset, the poet constructs a space marked by unpredictability and fluidity, emphasizing the unstable nature of the states described.

In this poem, Yūnus employs the rhetorical device of oxymoron (*teżād*) to reconcile opposing states or characterizations. The poem embodies a tidal movement, skillfully portraying the image of a wavy sea. To further emphasize the clarity and structure of the poem, a table of opposites could be used to illustrate the contrasting states as they are constructed throughout the text.

The poem effectively captures the rhythmic ebb and flow of opposing states, constructing the image of a wavy sea through the juxtaposition of 14 distinct pairs of contrasting conditions. Due to variations in the order and number of couplets across different manuscript versions, establishing a fixed linear progression of these states within the poem is challenging. The first three couplets establish a foundation of relatively positive states, which then shift toward more negative ones, as illustrated by the contrast between *ḥayrān* (bewildered) and *giryān* (weeping). The poem's irregular sequencing reinforces the concept of *telvīn.* Although the first line of the fourth couplet disrupts this pattern by reversing the order, it quickly returns to the initial sequence in the second line. In couplets 5–9, negative states are presented first, followed by their positive counterparts. The final four couplets reflect the reverse order of the opening couplets. While there is no definitive evidence to suggest that this sequence was intentionally crafted, it can be argued that the irregular arrangement highlights the role of *telvīn* within the poem.

Certain opposing states exemplify the spiritual experiences encountered along the mystical path, such as *sekr-ṣaḥv* (drunkenness-sobriety), *ḳabż-basṭ* (contraction-expansion), *tefrīḳa–cemʿ* (separation–unification), *fenāʾ–beḳāʾ* (annihilation–subsistence), and *ġaybet-ḥużūr* (absence–presence). The heart's fluctuations between states of joy and sorrow can be analyzed within the framework of *sekr-ṣaḥv,* where the individual un-

dergoes drastic shifts, such as moving from a state of incommunicability to offering profound insights. This volatility can also be understood within the *ḳabż-basṭ* paradigm, reflecting sudden and extreme changes in behavior. It is important to note that these states represent extreme opposites and may signify the inherent nature of human existence.

Human beings have the potential to reach the stage of *aḥsen-i taḳvīm* (the most beautiful of creation), surpassing even angels in excellence. However, they also possess the capacity to descend into *esfel al-sāfilīn* (the lowest of the low), falling beneath even the level of devils. Recognizing and harnessing this dual potential for greatness, while avoiding moral degradation, is crucial. The poem's depiction of the heart's movement between opposing states serves to illuminate this profound truth. This transformation is further accentuated through allusions (*telmīḥ*) to the lives of the prophets.

Oxymorons are prominently utilized to portray the state of *telvīn* across various dimensions. Additionally, the poet skillfully employs allusion as a rhetorical device, extending the poem's thematic diversity beyond the inherent instability and contradictions of *telvīn.* This technique, also present in Yūnus' other poems reflecting this state (*ḥāl*), creates strong associations and lends the poem an intense and concise structure. The poem reflects Yūnus' profound grasp of *vaḥdet al-vucūd* and the Sufi tradition's concept of *tecellī* (divine manifestation). According to this concept, God manifests to all beings in the universe through His names and attributes. The shifting states of the heart depicted throughout the poem can also be understood within this framework.

Classical Turkish poetry, particularly within the Sufi tradition, frequently employs the structural pattern of "*gāh/gah/gahī … gāh/gah/gahī …*" to articulate and represent the state of *telvīn.* This structural motif is notably utilized by Yūnus Emre in his love poetry, where he asserts that love serves as the fundamental reason for existence and the primary catalyst for its continuity, representing the very *cān* (soul or essence) of being.

The phrase "*Bu ʿışḳ elinde ʿāciz cümle eşyā*"[43] (Everything is helpless in the hand of this love) encapsulates a *telvīn* that manifests as a vivid riot of colors, reflecting the multifaceted effects of love through various allusions. Within this framework, love is likened to Leylā, as revered by Mecnūn, while Leylā herself is conceptualized as an embodiment of love's admiration. At times, love is metaphorically represented by the bloody tears shed by the Prophet Jacob, and at other moments, it takes on the form of the Prophet Yūsuf. Moreover, love is depicted as having the power to revive the deceased, reminiscent of the breath of Jesus, while simultaneously evoking the figure of Moses. It occasionally articulates the profound declaration "Ana al-Ḥaḳḳ" (I am Allah) through the voice of Manṣūr al-Hallāc (d. 922) and manifests as a symbolic robe and the wisdom necessary for comprehending divine secrets, as illustrated by Junaid.

43 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 113.

Yūnus Emre concludes this exploration of the diverse states of love with a poignant couplet that encapsulates these complex interactions and the transformative essence of love:

Bu ʿışḳuñ dürlü dürlü rengi çoḳdur
Kimi giryān kimi ḫandān-ı ʿışḳdur [44]
The hues of love in myriad forms do show,
Some steeped in sorrow, others joy bestow.

The poet utilizes the phrase "*Dürlü dürlü reng*" (literally, various colours) to convey the diverse and ambiguous effects of love, thereby highlighting the concept of *telvīn.*

Yūnus' *dīvān* (poetry collections) includes an extensive poem consisting of 45 couplets, listed as number 201 in Tatcı's edition,[45] dedicated entirely to depicting the state of *telvīn.* In this poem, Yūnus primarily employs the Persian conjunction "*gāh … gāh*" to articulate the nuances of *telvīn.* Additionally, he uses phrases such as "*niçe bir…*" (until when) and "*bir demī*" (a moment) to signify temporal moments.

The poem's *redif* conveys a sense of reproach through the construction "*niçe bir,*" while simultaneously expressing longing and desire through the "*gāh … gāh*" structure. Furthermore, the use of verbs conjugated in the subjunctive mood throughout the poem enhances the thematic framework, deepening the emotional complexity and richness of the expression.

The poem's lack of structural unity and the inconsistent ordering of states and qualifications impede a complete expression of the vibrant state of *telvīn.* Although the poet attempts to introduce diversity through the use of various qualifiers in certain couplets, this effort is not consistently maintained, resulting in a failure to establish meaningful contrasts. Some couplets use symmetrical opposites to reinforce this diversity. Yūnus' poem constructs a vivid and allusive world that reflects the Sufi's indecisive and unstable condition within the realm of *telvīn.* The poet frequently references a range of events, actions, and concepts, alongside notable individuals, enriching the tapestry of his exploration while illustrating the complexities inherent in the experience of love and its myriad manifestations.

The poem provides a suitable foundation for interpretation within the context of the concept of *tecellī* (divine manifestation).[46] If we consider the speaking subject in the poem to be a lover or seeker who has reached the state of *cemʿ* and annihilated his existence in the existence of the Beloved (God), then it is possible to suggest that one aspect of the entity desiring to enter various states throughout the poem could be God Himself. In this interpretation, the poet explores God's names and attributes and their manifestations in the universe.

44 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 113.

45 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 222–228.

46 Some of Yūnus' poems in *şaṭḥiyye* genre are recorded in his *Dīvān.* For an evaluation of these, see Zeynep Oktay-Uslu, "The Şaṭḥiyye of Yūnus Emre and Ḳayġusuz Abdāl," *Turcica* 5, 50 (2019), 9–52.

Yūnus Emre depicts the lover's unstable and colorful mood through the use of the conjunction structure "*ne … ne …*" (neither … nor …). In the lines "*Ne varlıġa sevinürem / Ne yoḳluġa yirinürem*"[47] (I am neither happy because of existence nor sad because of nonexistence), the poet emphasizes a rejection of emotional stability, highlighting the lover's disavowal of fixed feelings.

In constructions such as "*Bir dem gelür or gāh … gāh …*" Yūnus articulates the state of mind by diversifying and describing the actions in which he is, or aspires to be, engaged. Conversely, in the "*ne … ne …*" structure, he delineates the state of *telvīn* by enumerating the actions he rejects, does not accept, or finds unsatisfactory.

The poet's renowned poem features the *redīf* (repitition after the rhyme), "*Bañа seni gerek seni*" (I need you, you), which is believed to be a *naẓīre* (parallel poem) to a verse by Aḥmed Yesevī (d. 1166). The poem begins with the poet boldly asserting that his 'self,' which facilitates the experience of *telvīn*, has been relinquished. He confidently states, "*Işḳuñ beni benden aldı, bana seni gerek seni*" (Your love has taken me away from me, I need you). In the second stanza, Yūnus articulates the paradoxical emotions characteristic of the state of *telvīn*, oscillating between existence and non-existence without celebrating or resenting this condition.[48]

3 Reflection of *Telvīn* in Eşrefoğlu Rūmī's Poems

Eşrefoğlu Rūmī,[49] a 15th century Sufi poet and disciple of Yūnus Emre, prominently incorporates the state of *telvīn* in his poetry. As the founder (*pīr*) of the Ḳādiriyye order in Anatolia, Eşrefoğlu devotes two entire poems in his *Dīvān* to *telvīn*, referencing it in numerous couplets. Both poems follow the "gāh … gāh…" structure, echoing the expressive style of Yūnus Emre.

The first poem consists of 27 couplets with the *redīf* "*… olmuşam*" (I have been …). Each line, except for the first and last, begins with the conjunction "*gāh*" or "*gāhī*," and in some couplets, these expressions are repeated both at the beginning and within the lines. Through this structure, the poet adeptly conveys the instability and vibrancy of the *telvīn* state, marking moments of uncertainty with poetic imagery. The poem unfolds as a narrative, beginning with the first couplet where the poet describes ecstasy,

47 Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 403.

48 In Yūnus' famous poem with the refrain "*Gel gör beni ʿışḳ neyledi*" (Tatcı, *Yunus Emre Divanı*, 423–425), which, despite serious doubts about its attribution, is widely accepted as his in popular culture, the state of *telvīn* is expressed not only through the "*ne … ne …*" structure but also with the conjunctions "*gāh … gāh …*" and "*yā … yā …*" (either … or …).

49 For the life of Eşrefoğlu Rumī, see Melek Dikmen, "Eşrefoğlu Rumî" in *EI*^{3}, ed. Kate Fleet et al., vol. 3, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_26232, [accessed 14 October 2023]. For more detailed information, see Mustafa Kara, *Osmanlı'nın Kandili Eşrefoğlu Rumî,* (Istanbul: Bilge Yayın Habercilik ve Danışmanlık, 2006).

the abandonment of reason, and a form of intoxication, thereby setting the stage for the portrayal of *telvīn:*

Şöyle kim bī-dil ü bī-cān olmışam
Kendü aḥvālüme ḥayrān olmışam[50]
In such a state that I have become heartless and soulless,
I am astonished by my own condition.

In the first couplet, the poet employs the expression "*şöyle kim …*" (who is like this …) to set up a broad description that is elaborated upon throughout the poem. This phrase invites the reader to reflect on the unique qualities of the experience being depicted. The poet articulates a profound sense of isolation from both the heart and the soul, resulting in an intensified state of consciousness.

The second couplet provides a detailed and vivid representation of the state of *telvīn*, showcasing the poet's expertise and authoritative grasp of the subject.

Gāh beni ben bilmezem kim ḳandeyem
Gāh cemʿ ü gāh perīşān olmışam[51]
At times, I myself do not know who I am,
At times, I have become united and at other times, scattered.

The poet encapsulates the Sufi mystical journey of self-knowledge and fulfillment through the line referencing *telvīn-temkīn-telvīn.* The initial state of *telvīn* is articulated with the phrase "*Ben beni bilmezem*" (I do not know myself), indicating a profound self-uncertainty. The poet signifies the conclusion of this state and the successful attainment of *temkīn* (stability) through the term *cemʿ*. The speaker then transitions to a second, more favorable state of *telvīn* as recognized in Sufi literature, expressed through the phrase "*gāh perīşān olmışam*" (At times, I have become scattered).

The subsequent section of the poem is characterized by a rich tapestry of colors and is marked by the use of oxymorons and *tenāsüb* (the use of words with related meanings), and occasionally *iştiḳāḳ* (a rhetorical device that uses words derived from the same root). The allusions (*telmīḥ*) in Eşrefoğlu's poem are comparatively weaker than those found in Yūnus' similarly themed works.

The poem effectively illustrates the persistence and diversity of the state of *telvīn* through the poet's use of the preposition "*gāhī*" to signify temporal markers within the verses. Additionally, the poet's shift across various fields of knowledge in nearly every couplet contributes to the poem's overall depth and success. The table below outlines the predominant fields of knowledge and literary arts present in the couplets, along with their corresponding poem lines.

50 Mustafa Güneş, *Eşrefoğlu Rûmî'nin Hayatı-Eserleri ve Dîvânı,* (Istanbul: Sahhaflar Kitap Sarayı, 2006), 302.

51 Güneş, *Eşrefoğlu Rûmî'nin Hayatı-Eserleri ve Dîvânı,* 302.

The text of couplet	The translation of the couplet	Field of knowledge	Dominant rhetorical device
Gāh beni ben bilmezem kim ḳandayam ***Gāh cemʿ ü gāh perīşān olmışam***	At times, I do not know myself, not knowing who I am. At times, I have become united, and at other times, I have been scattered.	Sufi terms	oxymoron
Gāh oldum bī-nişān ü gāh bā-nişān ***Gāh nişānsız mülke sulṭān olmışam***	At times, I have become without a mark, and at other times, with a mark. At times, I have become a ruler in a realm without signs.	Reign	oxymoron
Gāh ferişte olmışam gāhī perī ***Gāh dīv ü geh Süleymān olmışam***	At times, I have become an angel, at other times, a fairy. At times, I have become a demon or even Solomon.	Creatures	oxymoron, *tenāsüb,* allusion
Gāh oldum Şeyḫ Ṣanʿān-ı zamān ***Gāh tersā geh müslümān olmışam***	At times, I have become Sheikh Sanʿān of the age, At other times, I have been a non-Muslim or even a Muslim.	Story of sheikh Abd al-Razzāḳ al-Ṣan'ānī	oxymoron, allusion
Gāh bulut olup hevāya aġmışam ***Gāh ḳaṭre gāh ʿummān olmışam***	At times, I have become a cloud, drifting in the air, At other times, I have been a drop or even the ocean.	Nature and creation	allusion, *tenāsüb*
Gāh hevādan yaġmur olup yaġmışam ***Gāh nebāt u gāh ḥayvān olmışam***	At times, I have become rain falling from the sky, At other times, I have been a plant or even an animal.	Nature and creation	*tenāsüb*
Gāh od u ṣu yel ü ṭoprak ferd ferd ***Gāh ṭīn gāh ṭīnde pinhān olmışam***	At times, I have become fire and water, wind and earth, each in its own way. At other times, I have been dust or hidden in the earth.	Four elements and creation	*tenāsüb*
Gāh ışṣı geh ṣovuḳ gāhī iʿtidāl ***Gāh damarlarda girip ḳan olmışam***	At times, I am hot, at other times, cold; at times, I am moderate. At times, I have entered the veins and become blood.	Medicine	*tenāsüb,* oxymoron
Gāh mescid gāh sācid gāh sücūd ***Gāh deyr ü gāh ruhbān olmışam***	At times, I am in the mosque, at other times in prostration, at other times in bowing. At times, I am in the monastery, and at other times, I have become a monk.	Religions (temples)	*iştiḳāḳ, tenāsüb,* oxymoron

Continued

The text of couplet	The translation of the couplet	Field of knowledge	Dominant rhetorical device
Gāh sāḳī gāh ṣāġar gāh mey ***Gāh esrük gāh mestān olmışam***	At times, I am a cupbearer, at other times a goblet, at times wine. At times, I am sober, at other times, I am intoxicated.	Wine and tavern concepts	*tenāsüb*
Gāh Türk ü gāh ʿArab gāhī ʿAcem ***Gāh Hindū gāh Yūnān olmışam***	At times, I am a Turk, at other times an Arab, at times Persian. At times, I am Indian, at other times Greek.	Nation names	*tenāsüb,* oxymoron
Gāh ḳış u gāh yaz u gāhī bahār ***Gāh bülbül gāh gülistān olmışam***	At times, I am winter; at other times, spring; at times, autumn. At times, I am the nightingale; at other times, the rose garden.	Seasons and nature	*tenāsüb,* oxymoron
Gāh cism ü gāh cevher geh ʿaraż ***Gāh maʿādine girip kān olmışam***	At times, I am a body; at other times, a substance or accident. At times, I have entered the mines and become gold.	Essence of existence	*tenāsüb*
Gāh berr ü gāh baḥr ü geh serāb ***Gāh ʿimāret gāh vīrān olmışam***	At times, I am land; at other times, the sea; at times, a mirage. At times, I am a thriving building; at other times, a ruin.	Geographic information	oxymoron, *tenāsüb*
Gāh zemīn ü geh zamān gāh āsümān ***Geh zamānı döndüren ben olmışam***	At times, I am the earth; at other times, time itself; at times, the heavens. At times, I am the one who turns time around.	Geography	oxymoron, *tenāsüb*
Gāh Ṭūr u gāh münācāt gāh Mūsā ***Gāh Firʿavn gāhī Hāmān olmışam***	At times, I am the Ṭūr (the mountain), at other times, in supplication; at times, I am Moses. At other times, I am Pharaoh, and sometimes Haman.	History of prophets	allusion, *tenāsüb,* oxymoron
Gāh irād gāh mürīd ü gāhī murād ***Gāh küfr ü gāh īmān olmışam***	At times, I am will or intention; at other times, a disciple; at times, the desired goal. At times, I am disbelief; at other times, faith.	The terms of Islamic mysticism and Kalām (Islamic scholastic theology or speculative theology)	*iştiḳāḳ,* oxymoron

Continued

The text of couplet	The translation of the couplet	Field of knowledge	Dominant rhetorical device
Gāh dūzeh gāh muʿaẕẕeb geh ʿaẕāb ***Gāh cennet gāh Rıḍvān olmışam***	At times, I am in Hell; at other times, I am tortured; at times, I am in torment. At times, I am in Paradise; at other times, I have become Rıḍvān.	Knowledge of the afterlife	*iştiḳāḳ*, oxymoron, *tenāsüb*
Gāh renc ü gāh renclü geh ṭabīb ***Gāh nāle gāh efgān olmışam***	At times, I am an afflicted one; at other times, a healer; at times, I am a physician. At times, I am lamenting; at other times, I am in sorrow.	Patient pain	tenāsüb, iştiḳāḳ
Gāh bu cümlesinden oluram berī ***Ne melek ne cin ne insān olmışam***	At times, I become beyond all of this, Neither an angel, nor a cin, nor a human.	Existence types	oxymoron

Table 2: Fields of Knowledge and Rhetorical Devices in Eşrefoğlu Rūmī's Poetry

Another poem by Eşrefoğlu, numbered 69 in his *Dīvān,* employs the structure "gāh ... gāh ..." and fully encapsulates the state of *telvīn.* Comprising 15 couplets, this poem is as comprehensive as the preceding one, featuring a greater number of syllables. In this work, Eşrefoğlu Rūmī utilizes the preposition "*gāh*" not only at the beginning of lines but also within them, clearly conveying his oscillation between the states of *temkīn* and *telvīn.* The two expressions placed diagonally in both verses assertively represent the states of *temkīn* and *telvīn,* which can also be understood in terms of opposing states such as *ḳabż-basṭ, sekr-ṣahv,* and *cemʿ-farḳ.* The phrases "*Kendüme gelürem*" (I pull myself together) and "*varlıḳda bulunuram*" (I am found in existence) denote the state of *temkīn.* In this state, both mind and consciousness are activated, and the Sufi perceives themselves as present in the material world. In contrast, the phrases "*yavı ḳılınuram*" (I get lost) and "*Yoḳ ile yoḳ olıram*" (I disappear with nonexistence) refer to the state of *telvīn,* which the Sufi experiences following the attainment of *temkīn:*

> *Gāh kendüme gelürem gāh gāh yavı ḳılınuram*
> *Gāh yoḳ ile yoḳ oluram gāh varlıḳda bulunuram*[52]
> At times, I return to myself; at other times, I am made into a form.
> At times, I vanish into nothingness; at other times, I exist in being.

Eşrefoğlu Rūmī employs oxymorons and allusions to historical events and concepts throughout this extensive poem. The use of the preposition "*gāh*" aligns with the rhet-

52 Güneş, *Eşrefoğlu Rûmî'nin Hayatı-Eserleri ve Dîvânı,* 302.

orical device of *tensīḳ-i ṣıfāt*, infusing the text with color and diversity as it enumerates the qualities associated with various fields of knowledge. The poem attributes a rich array of experiences to the first-person narrator, vividly illustrating the emotional states of a being over time through both diction and meaning.

The protagonist, represented by the pronoun 'I', undergoes a multitude of transformative experiences. At times, he plunges into the seas and emerges with the waves. He may find himself in the hands of an ignorant person, sold for a meager price, echoing the parable of Prophet Joseph. On other occasions, he ascends to the heavens, performing the Mevlevī turning dance, or becomes full like the moon, setting with the sun. He occasionally flies beyond the arch, traversing various realms, only to land on Earth, wandering among people.

He is sometimes a plant that flourishes, at other times mere soil that perishes. He transforms into flesh, blood, or bone, unable to find stillness. He ascends to ʿArafāt, reciting *lebbeyk* (a prayer signifying obedience to God's command), and at other moments, approaches the altar to be sacrificed like a ram. He alternates between being a Sufi in a *tekke* (dervish lodge) and a sinner in a tavern; he dances, turns, and is played like a *saz* (a traditional stringed instrument). At times, he deviates from the path, wandering among people; other times, he embodies a sultan or a hawk, becoming prey to hunters.

He may grasp a *cevġān* (hooked stick) and venture into the field of love or roll like a ball from East to West before his beloved. His identities fluctuate—sometimes he is the sea, at other times the lake—occasionally a sultan, or a servant; he can be the spring or the rose, passed from hand to hand. He oscillates between being a student and a teacher, a school and knowledge itself; he embodies *Şīrīn* or Ferhād, relishing the act of cutting stones. He can be the prey or the hunter, the road or the traveler. He walks, deviates from the path, and finds rest in mansion after mansion. At times he obeys, and at other times, he rebels; he shifts between being a scholar and one who is ignorant. Ultimately, he is Eşrefoğlu Rūmī, circulating on the lips of many, embodying the complex interplay of identities and experiences inherent in the Sufi journey.

Eşrefoğlu employs the "*ne … ne …*" structure to succinctly convey the state of *telvīn* in a single couplet, showcasing his mastery of poetic language:

> *Gāh ne menzil var ne maḳām u ne vücūd var ne ʿadem*
> *Ḥaḳḳ'dan ġayrı yoḳ ve's-selām ya ben ḳande dulunuram*[53]
> At times, there is neither a place nor a station, neither existence nor non-existence
> Except for the Truth, there is nothing; peace be upon me, whether I am in that state or not.

Another expression of the state of *telvīn* in Eşrefoğlu's *Dīvān* is articulated through the "*ne … ne …*" structure. The 18-couplet poem, numbered 83 in Güneş' edition, is entirely devoted to the theme of love. The initial three couplets depict the lover entering a state

53 Güneş, *Eşrefoğlu Rûmî'nin Hayatı-Eserleri ve Dîvânı,* 301.

of *telvīn* under the profound influence of love. Rather than highlighting the qualities possessed by the lover, the poem emphasizes the attributes they relinquish through the "*ne … ne …*" construction.

The poet asserts that the experience of love results from its overpowering influence, as indicated by the phrase "*senüñ ʿışḳuñ kime düşdi ise*" (to whom your love has fallen). In the perspective of such an individual, distinctions between sect, religion, and faith lose their significance or are perceived as equally valid. Concepts such as knowledge, the fulfillment of religious obligations, intellect, caution, fear, hope, sharia, and *erkān* (fundamentals of religion) diminish in importance when contrasted with the overwhelming love for the beloved.[54]

Conclusion

Sufi doctrine has profoundly influenced the evolution of the concept of love in classical Turkish literature. The works of Sufi poets exemplify the manifestation of *telvīn*, a significant Sufi state. This term, which has undergone various interpretations over time, is frequently referenced within the Ottoman literary tradition as a Sufi concept. Generally, it is framed according to the meanings ascribed to it by Ibn al-ʿArabī in Turkish texts of the Ottoman period.

Many Sufi poets, notably Yūnus Emre, have depicted and represented *telvīn* using structures such as "*bir dem gelür…*" (for a moment …), "*gāh/geh/gehī … gāh/geh/gehī …*" (sometimes … sometimes …), and "*ne … ne …*" (neither … nor …). The poets examined in this study employ a range of rhetorical devices, including oxymorons, *tansīḳ-i ṣıfāt*, *tenasüb*, allusion, and *iştiḳāḳ*.

Their treatment of *telvīn* encapsulates themes of inconstancy, lack of persistence, restlessness, and instability. The poems showcase a diverse and vibrant structure and content, reflecting the distinct circles from which they arise. The analysis concludes that these works utilize color to convey meaning and employ specific language to evoke the emotional states associated with *telvīn*, ultimately creating a vivid imagery that enriches the reader's understanding of this complex state.

The scope of this study is limited to examining the reflection of the state of *telvīn* in classical Turkish literature, with a specific focus on Turkish Sufi poetry from the classical period, particularly the works of Yūnus Emre and Eşrefoğlu Rūmī. While there are numerous couplets in the poetry of Dede ʿÖmer Rūşenī and his devoted successor, İbrāhīm Gülşenī, indicate the emotional state associated with *telvīn*, they have are included in this analysis. Rūşenī's independent poems are particularly well-suited for articulating this state.

Additionally, the 16th century poet Muḥyī, a son of a Ḳādirī sheikh from Konya, who had a deep interest in the Mevlevī order, translated the hagiographies (*menḳibe*)

54 Güneş, *Eşrefoğlu Rûmî'nin Hayatı-Eserleri ve Dîvânı*, 322.

of Abd al-Ḳādir al-Cīlānī (d. 1166) in his work *Kanz al-Menāḳib ve Remz al-Mevāhib* (The Treasure of Hagiographies and the Implication of Donations)[55] with notable confidence and authority. Further research is warranted on the spiritual pleasures and ecstasy experienced by the author during Jilani's journey, especially as described in verse 1166 in relation to the state of *telvīn.*

Şems ed-dīn al-Sivasī (d. 1597) and ʿAzīz Maḥmūd Hüdāyī (d. 1628) emphasize themes of *ẕikr* (remembrance) and worship in their didactic poetry, and their works exhibit a lesser reflection of the state of *telvīn* compared to renowned Sufi poets such as Yūnus Emre, Eşrefoğlu Rūmī, and Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī (d. 1694).

To derive more conclusive results, it is essential to undertake more extensive research on the influence of Sufi doctrine and tradition within Classical Turkish literature. While this study focused on a single Sufi state as a case study, incorporating diverse texts and periods from classical Turkish literature—particularly within the *ġazel* and *meṣnevī*s traditions—would provide a more comprehensive analysis.

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Betül Sinan Nizam

Displaying Competence through Love: A Typology of Lovers in *Ḳaṣīde*s with the *Redīf ʿIşḳ*

ʿĀlem kitāb-ı naʿtına Esrār bir varaḳ
Sıġmaz ḳaṣīde vü ġazele dāstān-ı ʿışḳ[1]
Esrār, the universe is a folio for the book of praise for love,
The epic of love transcends the confines of *ḳaṣīde*s and *ġazel*s

Introduction

When it comes to Ottoman poetry, love (*ʿışḳ*) is often associated with *ġazel*s (love poems) and *meṣnevī*s (epic poem in distiches), and it is understandable why. The rich collection of *ġazel*s and *meṣnevī*s by Ottoman poets allows for diverse expressions of profound love for the beloved, depicting the various states and stages experienced by the lovers themselves or their heroic counterparts. However, modern researchers rarely intertwine the words love and *ḳaṣīde* (panegyric), even Akün suggests removing love would render most *dīvān*s (poetry collections) empty, leaving only a handful of *ḳaṣīde*s, *tercīʿ-bend*s (returning stanzas, refrain poems), *terkīb-bend*s (compounded stanzas), and chronograms.[2] This implies that the *ḳaṣīde* stands alone, detached from the realm of love. Hence, *ḳaṣīde*s are not extensively studied within the context of the love-lover-beloved axis. This is because they are not commonly perceived as a sufficiently lyrical genre, although it is possible that other factors may also contribute. In Ottoman poetry studies, researchers often prioritize the examination of the praise element in *ḳaṣīde*s, which, originating from Arab literature and widely employed in Islamic literary traditions, holds a prominent position in the introductory sections of *dīvān*s.[3] In fact *ḳaṣīde*s, expressing the desire to unite with God or the sultan or any

1 The couplet is taken from *Esrār Dede Dīvānı* (G145/6). Esrâr Dede, *Esrâr Dede Dîvânı*, edited by Osman Horata (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler ve Yayımlar Genel Müdürlüğü, 2019), 269; https://ekitap.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/64058,esrar-dede-divanipdf.pdf?0. The first number after the letter(s) indicating the poem form denotes the poem number, and the second number (if any) represents the couplet or stanza number. All translations of the verses in the article were done by the author of this article.

2 Ömer Faruk Akün, "Divan Edebiyatı," In *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 9 (Istanbul: TDV, 1994), 414.

3 The word *ḳaṣīde* originates from the Arabic word *ḳaṣada* which means 'to aim for'. It is defined as 'poems written for an aim'. Researchers say that the primary aim of *ḳaṣīde*s is to praise someone. The subject of that praise could be God, the Prophet Muhammad, the four caliphs, sheihs, the sultan, paşas, or bureaucrats. The rhyming of *ḳaṣīde*, composed of sections such as *nesīb* (or *teşbīb*), *teġazzül*, *medḥiye*, *faḫriye*, *duʿā*, is similar to *ġazel*s. Its size, however, is open to discussion, but it is generally said to be 31–99 couplets. For further details about *ḳaṣīde*s see Akün, "Divan Edebiyatı," 407–408; F. Kren-

 https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111341729-010

patron, can also be seen as a kind of love poem, as Andrews and Kalpaklı stated.[4] The researchers, who view all love poems within the Ottoman geography as poems of attachment, say that this makes a *ġazel* written to praise a ruler or a patron; or a *ḳaṣīde* containing a *ġazel* written for the beloved (*teġazzül*) more meaningful.[5] It should be noted that among all the *nesīb*s, which are *ġazel*s found at the beginning of the *ḳaṣīde*, those containing the depiction of love and lover, as well as the beloved, are more meaningful and functional in this context. This is because, in many *ḳaṣīde*s, the poets begin to praise their patron after mentioning the feeling of love, the state of being in love and the beloved.[6] Hence, it can be posited that the poets imply their patron as their beloved, expressing their desire to meet with him, particularly to encounter his favour and *meclis* (gathering).[7] With this perspective, it becomes apparent that *ḳaṣīde*s can be examined within the context of the love-lover-beloved axis, similar to *meṣnevī*s and *ġazel*s, despite the fact that explicit declarations of love are not commonly found.[8] This opens the possibility of seeking answers to various questions such as the dimensions and types of love depicted in *ḳaṣīde*s, and whether social, cultural, historical, political, or biographical contexts, as well as the motivations behind writing *ḳaṣīde*s, influence the portrayal of love. We can also seek to learn, whether only one or many different types of lovers exist in *ḳaṣīde*s, what messages they seek to convey to their addressees, what expectations they have, whether the identity of the addressee/beloved has an impact on the discourse of love, and if so, how this influence manifests.

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kow et al. "Ḳaṣīda," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/kasida-COM_0461?s.num=0 [accessed 01 June 2023].

4 Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, "Kasîdenin Ekonomisi: Vuslat, İntisab, Pazarlık," In *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları VIII-Kasîdeye Medhiye: Biçime, İşleve ve Muhtevaya Dair Tespitler*, edited by Hatice Aynur et al. (Istanbul: Klasik, 2013), 32–43. To explore the parallelism of subject-sovereign and lover-beloved in *ġazel*s see Walter G. Andrews, *Şiirin Sesi, Toplumun Şarkısı: Osmanlı Gazelinde Anlam ve Gelenek*, trans. by Tansel Güney (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000), 115–121.

5 Andrews and Kalpaklı, "Kasîdenin Ekonomisi," 33.

6 For a list of *ḳaṣīde*s that mention love, lover and beloved in the section *nesīb* in various ways see Kamile Çetin, "Divan Şiirinde Kaside Nesiblerinin Yansımaları ve Anlatım Teknikleri," (PhD diss., Gazi University, 2014), 104–108, 687–690, 695–716, 854–871, 904–905. On the other hand, Andrews and Kalpaklı draw attention to *nesīb*s that revolve around the themes of beloved, garden and *meclis*. See Andrews and Kalpaklı, "Kasîdenin Ekonomisi," 39.

7 Andrews and Kalpaklı place the *meclis* in the heart of Ottoman love/attachment poems, asserting that it symbolizes a network of collaboration among individuals within a framework of connection. They suggest that in *ḳaṣīde*s, the social and emotional bondings between these individuals are expressed and brought to life within the context of *meclis*. This dynamic not only carries social implications but also holds economic relevance. See Andrews and Kalpaklı, "Kasîdenin Ekonomisi," 34, 43.

8 The performance (*inşād*) of *ḳaṣīde*s (at least some of them), in various types of gatherings such as drinking assemblies, weddings, feasts, and occasions like the sultan's return from a campaign or entrance into a city, reveals the presence of a third actor, namely the audience. However, at present, we lack knowledge regarding the position or potential influence of the audience within this love affair depicted in *ḳaṣīde*s. Deeper studies on *ḳaṣīde* texts or primary sources like *teẕkire*s may potentially provide answers to these questions.

Considering that even in *ġazel*s and *meṣnevī*s the essence of love is not thoroughly and explicitly explored, it becomes evident that a comprehensive study on *ḳaṣīde*s would require extensive research. Therefore, to narrow down the scope of this study, only *ḳaṣīde*s written with the *redīf* (the repeated element after the rhyme) *ʿışḳ* in the classical period are examined.[9] However, it should be noted that while numerous *ġazel*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ* have been found in *dīvān*s,[10] *ḳaṣīde*s with the same *redīf* are relatively scarce. The underlying reasons for this disparity are worth contemplating. Primarily, the question arises as to whether the poets hesitated to create a direct lover-beloved relationship with the sultan or patron in their *ḳaṣīde*s, except for the religious genres. In the praise section of the *ḳaṣīde*s, after the description of the beloved in the *nesīb*, the qualities of the beloved and the passionate love of the lover are not directly expressed, although there may be some exceptions to this. The poet describes the beauty elements of the beloved in the *nesīb* and then highlights the sultan's or patron's features such as power, greatness, bravery, justice and generosity in the praise section. This can be attributed to a distinct emphasis on yearning for a different type of beloved in *ḳaṣīde*s compared with the one in *ġazel*s. In *ġazel*s, the beloved is mostly referenced in regard to negative aspects such as cruelty, oppression and torment which are seen as blessings for the lover. The lover gives up on himself and everything in this world, such as money, position and fame for the beloved who is capricious and does not want union. On the other hand, there is an implicit bargain (union bargain) in the *ḳaṣīde*s, wherein the lover-poet is required to be rewarded in return for his devotion to the beloved, as Andrews and Kalpaklı asserted.[11] The poet expects protection, favour and material reward such as *cāʾize* (gifts), *ḳaftan*, *manṣıb* (official position) from his addressee and often states this explicitly. Hence, it is anticipated that the poet would emphasize not the cruelty, but rather the generosity and mercy of the beloved ruler. In contrast to the *ġazel*, the lover-poet cannot say that he gives up on everything as he does in the *ġazel.* He also cannot present only a one-sided lover and beloved relationship, which is contrary to the tradition. Consequently, the typical lover-beloved relationship between the poet and the patron is not seen in the praise section of the *ḳaṣīde*s. Hence, the desire or necessity to adhere to the limits of classical aesthetics restricts the poets.

Another reason relates to the gender and identity of the beloved. In *ġazel*s, poets freely express, through the use of some metaphors, their intense love for the beloved, who is known to be male but whose gender is left ambiguous. On the other hand, the identity and gender of the addressee of the *ḳaṣīde*s is obvious, as it is usually a power-

9 Andrews and Kalpaklı, in their aforementioned article analyze a *murabbaʿ* by Nevʿī (d. 1599) to illustrate the expression of union bargain and the implicit emotional investments within the *ḳaṣīde*s. Their research represents a pioneering effort in studying the Ottoman *ḳaṣīde* in this context.

10 While this is not an exhaustive list of the *ġazel*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ*, see Ayşe Nacar, "Divan Edebiyatında Aşk Redifli Gazeller ve Şerhleri," (MA thesis, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, 2011). In Nacar's study, a total of 348 *ġazel*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ* have been identified.

11 Andrews and Kalpaklı, "Kasîdenin Ekonomisi," 34–35.

ful male patron.[12] Therefore when the identity and gender of the beloved are obvious, in other words when the ambiguity is removed, the love relationship between the lover-poet and the beloved-ruler is not clearly revealed in the praise section of the *ḳaṣīde*s. At least this is the case in the classical period.[13] The poet only implies this relationship in *nesīb*s or *teġazzül*s.[14] Hence, considering these two reasons, it is likely that poets did not wish to depict this relationship throughout the *ḳaṣīde*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ*.

In the classical period, there are three *ḳaṣīde*s written with the *redīf ʿışḳ*. These are a *murabbaʿ* (quatrain) which overlaps thematically with the *ḳaṣīde* genre by ʿAşḳī of Üsküdar (d. 1576–77) and two *ḳaṣīde*s by ʿAskerī (d. 1604) and Ḥayretī (d. 1534).[15] I would like to show why and how poets express their passion for different beloveds in different social, cultural and political environments. This analysis will elucidate that the manifestation of love and being in love in the *ḳaṣīde*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ* depends on the conditions of the poets and also their reasons for writing these poems. It will also demonstrate how these conditions and reasons give rise to different

12 Certainly, *ḳaṣīde*s or poems which overlap thematically with the *ḳaṣīde* genre were also presented to female patrons, although their numbers were relatively small. For more detailed information about these poems, their poets, addressees, and the motivations behind their writing, see Hatice Aynur and Didem Havlioğlu, "Medhiyenin Cinsiyeti: Kadınlara Yazılmış Kasideler (1566–1603)," In *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları VIII-Kasîdeye Medhiye: Biçime, İşleve ve Muhtevaya Dair Tespitler*, 76–120; Betül Sinan Nizam, "'Sana Mahsûs Yazdım Nazm ile İşbu Tesellâyı': Osmanlı Edebiyatında Hamiyi Teselli İçin Yazılan Manzumeler," In *Es-Seyf ve'l-Kalem: Şiir ve Kültürel İktidar*, edited by M. Esat Harmancı et al. (Ankara: İKSAD Global Yayıncılık, 2021), 117–118. Aynur and Havlioğlu argue that, just as with male patrons, *ḳaṣīde*s are also composed for female patrons in order to acknowledge their status and power. Consequently, in this respect, the function of the *ḳaṣīde* remains unchanged. However, there has been a shift in the language of poetry. Traditional patterns of praise have been disrupted, giving rise to a new aesthetic order. See Aynur and Havlioğlu, "Medhiyenin Cinsiyeti," 84, 93. Examining these *ḳaṣīde*s from the perspective of the discourse of love could be interesting.

13 It should be noted that certain exceptions to this situation may be observed, particularly in *murabbaʿ*s, which bear thematic similarities to *ḳaṣīde*s. Further focused studies can reveal whether other genres that overlap thematically with the *ḳaṣīde* genre express this relationship more freely, as seen in *ġazel*s.

14 This does not imply that elements related to the lover or beloved are exclusively confined to the sections of *nesīb* or *teġazzül* in *ḳaṣīde*s. Poets may make references to this relationship by employing the words and expressions they have chosen in various other sections as well. What is meant here is that the lover-beloved relationship in *ḳaṣīde*s is not expressed with the same level of explicitness as seen in *ġazel*s. It is important to note that there may be exceptions to this observation, as mentioned earlier.

15 In this period, Ravzī (died after 1600) composed a verse letter (K13) in the *ḳaṣīde* form, with the *redīf* "*ʿışḳ eyle*". See, Edincikli Ravzî, *Ravzî Dîvânı*, edited by Yaşar Aydemir (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler ve Yayımlar Genel Müdürlüğü, 2017), 76–85. https://ekitap.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/56190,ravzi-divanipdf.pdf?0. However, since *ʿışḳ eylemek* means "to send regards" in this context, it is not specifically examined in this article. For that expression see Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: MEB, 1993), 101. Also, a poet named Şâkir (died in the 19th century) composed a *ḳaṣīde* with the *redīf ʿışḳ* (K1). See Cihat Erol, "Muhammet Şâkir Efendi-Hayatı, Eserleri ve Enîsü'l-Uşşâk Adlı Dîvanı," (MA thesis, Gazi University, 1995), 21–25. In this *ḳaṣīde* titled "*Ḳaṣīde-i ʿIşḳ-ı Ḥūbān ve Zeynü'l-Lisān ve Feraḥü'l-Cinān*" (The *ḳaṣīde* that is the love of beautifuls, the ornament of tongue, the peace of paradise), the poet includes a *ġazel* dedicated to the Prophet Muḥammad.

types of lovers. Ultimately, it is argued that poets aim to display their competence as lovers to their addressees through *ḳaṣīde*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ*, and thereby wish their expectations to be fulfilled.

1 The Dervish-Lover: ʿAşḳī of Üsküdar and his Sacred Love for Sultan Süleymān

ʿAşḳī of Üsküdar, a renowned poet with an extensive *dīvān*, was a janissary who actively participated in military expeditions to Belgrade and Vienna alongside Sultan Süleymān (r. 1520–1566).[16] His *ḳaṣīde*s and *murabbaʿ*s, which appear to have been written during the wars he partook in or witnessed, reflect his support for the Ottoman Empire's world dominion and his enthusiastic encouragement of the army to engage in war. In such poems, addressed to Sultan Süleymān, ʿAşḳī portrays himself as a ghazi-lover who is deeply attached to the sultan and longing for his favour.[17] However, ʿAşḳī chose to depart from military service in 1534 and embarked on a spiritual path towards Sufism by joining the *Bayramiyye* order. In the poems that seem to have been composed within this period, he emphasizes the transient nature of the world and expresses his profound devotion to his sheikh. ʿAşḳī is now a dervish-lover who has withdrawn from this world, is abstinent and faces towards divine love.[18] The *murabbaʿ-i mütekerrir* (KM65)[19] in the *dīvān*, composed of 7 stanzas with the refrain "*Cān u ser vir Ḥażret-i Sulṭān Süleymān ʿışḳına*" (Sacrifice your life and your head for the sake of the exalted Sultan Süleymān's love), must also have been written in the dervish period of the poet because the poem contains not war, but Sufi terminology.[20] In this poem, while the poet appears to be addressing his own heart and giving it advice, in fact, he describes his own characteristics as a lover using some comparisons like pure person vs. impure person (*merd-i pāk – ālūde-dāmān*), gnostic vs. ignorant (*maʿrifet ehli – nā-dān*), loyal ʿAşḳī vs. zealot (*pāk-bāz ʿAşḳī – zāhid*) etc. Thus, ʿAşḳī is a pure lover who is ready to give up his life for his beloved, who is loyal and not taken with the love of the impure in his own terms. He has devoted himself to the love of God, not

16 For more information about 'Aşḳī's life see Süreyya Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı-Tenkitli Metin, Nesre Çeviri ve 16. yy. Osmanlı Hayatının Divandaki Yansımaları," (MA thesis, Istanbul University, 2011), 9–24.

17 For some examples, see Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı," 160–163, 164–168, 168–171, 198–199, 259–261, 261, 262 (KM17, KM19, KM20, KM31, KM67, KM68, KM69). Since these poems are not written with the *redīf ʿışḳ* they are not specifically examined in this article.

18 For example see Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı," 199–202, 203–205, 235–237, 239–240, 271–272 (KM32, KM35, KM48, KM50, KM77).

19 See Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı," 257–258. ʿAşḳī also has three *ġazel*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ* and "*ehl-i ʿışḳ*"; see Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı," 440–441, 445–446, 447 (G217, G225, G229).

20 Since ʿAşḳī is known to have initiated into the *Bayramiyye* order in 1534, it can be inferred that this poem was written after this date.

to worldly ornaments, and cleansed his heart from other loves, struggles and anything other than God:

İy göñül terk-i ser ü cān eyle cānān ʿışḳına
Ehl-i ʿışḳuñ şıdḳ ile varduġı meydān ʿışḳına
Merd-i pāk ol düşme her ālūde-dāmān ʿışḳına
Cān u ser vir Ḥażret-i Sulṭān Süleymān ʿışḳına
Ehl-i ıṭlāḳ ol yüri ġavġāya virme kendüñi
Ḥubb-ı Ḥaḳḳ'dan ġayrı bir sevdāya virme kendüñi
Zen gibi ārāyiş-i dünyāya virme kendüñi
Cān u ser vir Ḥażret-i Sulṭān Süleymān ʿışḳına[21]
Oh heart, give up your head and your life for the sake of the beloved's love
In the name of the battlefield, the people of love have reached with loyalty.
Be a pure man, do not fall in love with every impure one
Sacrifice your life and your head for the sake of the exalted Sultan Süleymān's love.
Become free from all worldly attachments, do not get entangled in struggles
Devote yourself solely to God's love, not to any other affection.
Do not be captivated by worldly ornaments like a woman
Sacrifice your life and your head for the sake of the exalted Sultan Süleymān's love.

In the continuation of the *murabbaʿ*, the poet, again employing mystical terminology and contrasts, advises his heart on various matters. These include avoiding self-satisfaction resembling that of a zealot, seeking companionship with knowledgeable individuals, refraining from associating with the ignorant, aspiring to be pure like a mirror, relinquishing worldly attachments, and dedicating oneself solely to God. At first glance, the poem could be thought of as describing the divine love for God, under the guise of advice to the heart. However, the refrain shows the poet's expression of a sacred love towards Sultan Süleymān. ʿAşḳī's frequent emphasis on pure love and lover, and the use of Sufi terminology is an indication of the sublime love for the sultan. The use of the expression "*Ḥażret*" for the sultan is also functional in this sense. In this way, this love is distinguished from sensual and human love. ʿAşḳī, who expresses his devotion to Sultan Süleymān as a ghazi-lover in many of his poems, mentions his sacred love for him as a dervish-lover in this poem. The choice of the *murabbaʿ* form by the poet is likely related to the tradition of love and being in love often being addressed in *murabbaʿ*s. It also should be noted that ʿAşḳī is one of the poets who has written the largest number of *murabbaʿ*s on various subjects in Ottoman poetry.

So, what was the motivation behind ʿAşḳī's composition of this *murabbaʿ*? The answer to this question lies in the significant change that happens in his life. The poet, who took the risk of sacrificing his life for the sultan by fighting in many battles as a soldier, wanted to inform the sultan that there was no change in his devotion after he became a dervish. He is still ready to die for the sake of the sultan as he expresses in the refrain. Thus, he shows that he keeps his oath of loyalty and commitment to him, even though he is no longer a soldier. This is why he describes himself

21 Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı," 257–258 (KM65/I–II).

as "*pāk-bāz*", which means loyal lover. This qualification, which implies that the poet, with his new persona, still possesses the qualities of a skilled and competent lover, combined with ʿAşḳī's positioning of himself in contrast to the zealot type, are significant in implying that he possesses the qualities he enumerated throughout the *murabbaʿ*:

Cān u dilden her nefes ol bī-niyāza ḳıl niyāz
Kim iki ʿālemde oldur kār-dān u kār-sāz
Zāhidā ʿAşḳī gibi olmaḳ dilerseñ pāk-bāz
Cān u ser vir Ḥażret-i Sulṭān Süleymān ʿışḳına[22]
Pray sincerely to the One who needs nothing, in every moment
Who knows and does things in both worlds beyond any depth.
Oh zealot, if you aspire to be a loyal lover like ʿAşḳī
Sacrifice your life and your head for the sake of the exalted Sultan Süleymān's love.

In short, the new social and cultural environment of the lover-poet determines how he deals with the states of love and being in love in this *murabbaʿ*. In other words, when the poet's experience of being a soldier in the army is replaced by his new identity as a Sufi, he adopts a different terminology and assumes a new persona as a lover. Through this transformation, he conveys to his addressee, namely the sultan, that his love, attachment and loyalty to him, as well as his material expectations, still persist. ʿAşḳī did not explicitly express any request for favour in this *murabbaʿ*, contrary to what he wrote as a ghazi-poet. However, the fact that the poet, claiming to have withdrawn from the world, submits a poem that confirms his devotion to the sultan, implies his expectations. It should be noted that in his *dīvān*, the poet's expectations during the dervish period are not always expressed implicitly:[23] ʿAşḳī expresses his dedication to the sultan and his expectations directly without using military or Sufi terminology in his poems that were written for his discontinued allowance (*ʿulūfe*) after he left the army and became a dervish. These were written to the sultan to request the *ʿulūfe*, with the hope that it would be reinstated.[24] Although the order in which these poems were written remains unknown, it can be assumed that the poet after leaving the army, first expressed his loyalty to the sultan through the *murabbaʿ* and then conveyed his explicit expectations in the aforementioned poems. Based on information provided in primary sources and some poems in his *dīvān*, it is evident that the poet's expectations were fulfilled, at least during the reign of Sultan Süleymān. This demonstrates that the poet, with his new persona, successfully convinced his addressee of his competence

22 Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı," 258 (KM65/VII).

23 For some examples about ʿAşḳī's explicit expressions of expectations for favour from his patrons in his dervish period refer to Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı," 213–215, 651–652 (KM39, Kt1).

24 In one of these poems, the poet articulates his sentiments in the following manner: *Şāh-ı ʿālem-penāh ṣaġ olsun / Çākeriyem ezel de çāker idüm* (Long live the sultan, the protector of the world / For I am his servant, as I have always been a servant.) see Uzun, "Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı," 653 (Kt2/8). This particular expression resonates with the ideas advocated in the article.

as a lover. Thus, lover-beloved relationship, in other words the agreement and negotiating, between the lover-poet and the beloved-ruler continued in his dervish period.

2 The *Mürşid*-Lover: Şāh Velī ʿAyıntābī and his Journey to Mystical Love

One of the poets who wrote a *ḳaṣīde* with the *redīf ʿışḳ* in the 16th century is Şāh Velī ʿAyıntābī, known by his pen name (*maḫlaṣ*) ʿAskerī.[25] He is affiliated with the *Cemāliyye* branch of the *Ḫalvetiyye* order. *Ḫalvetiyye* is an order where the purification of the self (*nefs*) from vices and sins forms the foundation, and the Sufi journey (*seyr ü sülūk*) is undertaken through the seven names of God (*esmā-i sebʿa*). Each of these names corresponds to specific attributes of the self. The self progresses through seven levels during the Sufi journey, known as seven attributes (*eṭvār-ı sebʿa*). In other words, to attain perfection in the *Ḫalvetiyye* order, one must complete seven levels. To achieve this, dervishes enter seclusion (*ḫalvet*), adhering to certain etiquette and practices. Speaking less, sleeping less, practicing solitude (*inzivā*), wholehearted attachment to the sheikh, seeking permission from him before acting, and engaging in remembrance (*ẕikr*) are of utmost importance in the *Ḫalvetiyye.*[26] ʿAyıntābī, one of the sheikhs of this order, wrote a *meṣnevī* titled *Risālet ül-Bedriyye* (The book of full moon) to elucidate these fundamental aspects of the *Ḫalvetiyye.* This work explores the concept of the seven attributes and discusses the essential characteristics of disciples (*mürīd*s) and *mürşid*s (spiritual instructor) in various sections. The last part of the *meṣnevī* includes a *ḳaṣīde* with the *redīf* "*ʿışḳ elinden*".[27] In that particular *ḳaṣīde*, the poet shares his personal experience of Sufi love from the perspective of the understanding of love in his order. This personal account is described in 87 couplets. ʿAskerī firstly dwells in detail on the manifestation of God's wrath, which is one of the fundamentals of the *Ḫalvetiyye*,[28] and states that it precedes the manifestation of grace. According to him, all the prophets were tested and suffered various tribulations, and despite everything they surrendered with love. The poet reminds the addressee in successive couplets about the hardships

25 For detailed information regarding ʿAyıntābī's life refer to Raşit Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntâbî'nin Risâletü'l-Bedriyye'si (Metin-Muhtevâ-Tahlil)," (MA thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, 2007), 8–20.

26 For *Ḫalvetiyye*, see Süleyman Uludağ, "Halvetiyye," In *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol 15 (Istanbul: TDV, 1997), 393–395. Semih Ceyhan, "Halvetiyye," In *Türkiye'de Tarikatlar: Tarih ve Kültür*, edited by Semih Ceyhan (Istanbul: İSAM, 2015), 695–778.

27 For the text, see Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntâbî'nin," 281–286 or Raşit Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntabî ve 'Işk Elinden' Redifli Kasîdesi," *Journal of Intercultural and Religious Studies* 6 (2014), 75–81. The author composed *Risālet ül-Bedriyye* during the month of Ramażān in 1582 while observing *iʿtikāf* (a period of seclusion and devotion). Hence, the *ḳaṣīde* can be attributed to that specific date.

28 Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntabî ve," 70–71. One of the seven names of God used within the *Ḫalvetiyye* order during mystical journey is *el-Ḳahhār* (the Subduer or the Dominant). Consequently, this name holds great significance in this order.

faced by the prophets and saints such as Adam, Noah, Job, Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Zechariah, John, St. George, Jonah, Solomon, Moses, Jesus, and Mary:

Olup ḳahruñ baña yār ʿışḳ elinden
Enīs ü hem-çü dil-dār ʿışḳ elinden
Ḳadīmdür baña ḳahruñ lutfa nisbet
Ezelden oldı çün kār ʿışḳ elinden
Nitekim ḳahr-ıla Ḥażret-i Ādem
Cinândan ṭaşra hem zār ʿışḳ elinden
Nice ṭuş oldı gör hem derd-i ḳahra
Daḥı Eyyūb-ı bīmār ʿışḳ elinden[29]
Through love, your wrath has become beloved for me
It has been a companion and a heart-taker, through love.
Your wrath is older to me than your grace
For it has been the endeavour from all eternity, due to love.
Just as Adam, through your wrath
Stayed outside paradise and lamented, due to love.
Behold, even the ailing Job was afflicted
By the sickness of sorrow, due to love.

In fact, the manifestation of wrath is God's blessing to the lover because it raises his rank. In couplet 45, the sheikh/*mürşid*-lover begins to talk about himself and says that he is drunk with the wine of love and unity thanks to his sheikh Mollā Aḥmad (d. 1579), who gave him the book of love *(kitāb-ı ʿışḳ)*. ʿAskerī, emphasizing particularly that Mollā Aḥmad also suffered tribulation and spent his entire life with *tecerrüd* (complete detachment from the material world), then proceeds to mention the chapters of this book. In other words, he lists the states of love he acquired and the stages he went through thanks to his sheikh by using metaphors. He says that he gave up on the world, suffered, self inflicted hardships, attained the inner knowledge (*ʿilm-i ledün*), perceived the unity amidst duality and opposites, surrendered blindly, became a sultan by being a slave to the people of love, and attained divine love and unity:

Zen-i dünyāya virdüm çün ṭalāḳı
Kim oldum merd-i yarar ʿışḳ elinden[30]
Olup bir ṭıfl-ı ebced-ḫᵛān gibi hem
Sürinüp nice yıllar ʿışḳ elinden[31]
Ḳul olup ehl-i ʿışḳa yaʿnī oldum
Bütün dünyāya ḫünkār ʿışḳ elinden
Çü ḫāk-i pāyi olup ehl-i ṣıdḳuñ
Pes oldum tāc-ı zer-kār ʿışḳ elinden[32]
For I have divorced the deceitful world
Love has made me a man of purpose.

29 Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntabî ve," 75 (couplet no. 1–3, 5).
30 Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntabî ve," 79 (couplet no. 55).
31 Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntabî ve," 79 (couplet no. 58).
32 Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntabî ve," 80 (couplet no. 70–71).

I have become like a child, just learning to read
Enduring years of suffering, due to love.
I have become a devoted servant to the people of love
Through this, I have become the sultan of the entire world, due to love.
For I have become the humble soil beneath the feet of the people of sincerity
Transformed into a golden crown, due to love.

In short, the *ḳaṣīde* summarises the long journey of the Sufi love of a *Ḫalvetī* sheikh.[33] He shares his personal experiences and the ranks he attained since he became a dervish until he became a sheikh from his own perspective, or more accurately, from the perspective of his order.

Undoubtedly, this *ḳaṣīde*, which deals with the way of reaching and experiencing divine love, is functional like ʿAṣḳī's. The poet's sharing of his own experience is important in terms of training his disciples who follow the same path, while simultaneously reinforcing his own legitimacy. First of all, ʿAskerī, in this relatively short poem, tells his dervishes the order's basic principles, the steps they will take on the path of divine love, its difficulties, what they have to do and finally what they will achieve, based on his own experience. In other words, this *ḳaṣīde* is very functional in terms of teaching love and being in love in the example of the *mürşid*-lover and in the manners of order. In this respect, this poem is like a summary of the whole book, *Risālet ül-Bedriyye.* Because ʿAskerī, addresses similar themes in the preceding 1200 couplets, highlighting the trials encountered by the prophets, the necessity of relinquishing worldly attachments, the significance of surrendering oneself, the crucial role of obtaining the sheikh's approval, and the indispensable nature of enduring hardships. Secondly, the *ḳaṣīde* gives the poet the opportunity to express his own maturity as a *mürşid*—and of course as a lover—as he has all the features that must be achieved in this way. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the poet commemorates his sheikh, whom he served for twenty-two years and called "*ol yār*" (that beloved), as the means of this love. Thus, emphasizing the importance of having a sheikh on the way to divine love, he presents himself as a perfect *mürşid*-lover before his followers and expects the loyalty he showed to his sheikh from them.[34] This *ḳaṣīde* can be interpreted as implying the aspiration or requi-

33 In the article about the *ḳaṣīde*, the emphasis is not on the sheikh's personal account of his Sufi love experience, but rather on the evaluation of the text in terms of the exemplary behaviours of the prophets and saints during times of tribulation and hardship. The presence of information in the Arabic title, possibly added by a scribe at a later date, indicating that the *ḳaṣīde* is about the state of love of the prophets and saints, probably influences this approach.

34 In the *meṣnevī* where the *ḳaṣīde* is found (*Risālet ül-Bedriyye*), the poet emphasizes the importance of seeking a competent *mürşid* who acts in accordance with shariah. This is a significant aspect within the *Ḫalvetiyye* tradition. Furthermore, the information the poet provides about himself (the steps he has taken) in the *ḳaṣīde* aligns with the guidance he offers to his disciples in the *meṣnevī*. The author's work titled *Rıḥlet es-Seniyye*, written in 1593, deserves mention in this context. This work serves as a personal account of the author's Sufi journey and provides valuable advice to his disciples. In this concise and prose-style work (*risāle*), ʿAyıntābī mentions about various aspects of his life, including his Sufi experiences, family, teachers and *mürşid*s, the stages of the self, the desirable qualities of *mürşid*s, and his

site for a *mürşid*-lover (where love encompasses both the love for God and the sheikh) to embody the role of a *mürşid*-beloved for his disciples. The fact that the *meṣnevī*, along with the *ḳaṣīde*, was written shortly after Şāh Velī assumed the role of a sheikh further supports this notion.

3 The *Abdāl*-Poet-Lover: Ḥayretī and his *Dīvān* of Unity

The third text under consideration is Ḥayretī's *ḳaṣīde* (K7) titled "*Der beyān-ı Eṭvār-ı ʿIşḳ ve Aḥvāl-i Maḥabbet Güyed*" (on the attributes and the states of love).[35] This poem consists of 39 couplets and has the *redīf* "*-ı ʿışḳ*". The poet in this *ḳaṣīde* expresses his personal experience of being in love, and his understanding of love. Before going into the details of the *ḳaṣīde*, it is pertinent to provide some information about Ḥayretī. Ḥayretī is a Rumelian *Caʿferī* poet and a sipahi who belonged to the *abdāl* groups. Researchers describe him as a person with a dervish-spirited or *Melāmī* character.[36] In fact, the poet introduces himself as a "*dervīş*" (dervish), "*miskīn*" (miserable dervish), "*abdāl*" (wandering dervish) or "*Rūm(ili) abdālı*" (Rumelian *abdāl*) in many couplets in his *dīvān.*[37] He also emphasizes the importance of *melāmet* and the fact that he is a *Melāmī.*[38] *Melāmiyye* is a disposition that considers hypocrisy (*riyā*) as a form of polytheism (*şirk*) and seeks ways to purify oneself from it. *Melāmī*s refrain from displaying ostentatious re-

final testament (*vaṣiyyet*). In this work, Şāh Velī expands on the themes mentioned or implied in this *ḳaṣīde.* He draws parallels between his devotion to his sheikh and the submission of Ishmael to Abraham. This work can be considered as an extended and concrete form that provides autobiographical information in relation to the mentioned *ḳaṣīde.* For more detailed information, please refer to Çavuşoğlu, "Şâh Velî Ayıntâbî'nin," 20–21; Ali Öztürk, "Bir Sûfî Otobiyografisi: Şâh Velî Ayıntâbî'nin (v. 1013/1605[?] *er-Rıhletü's-Seniyye*'si," *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 20, 2 (2020), 689–726. Also for a broad overview of Ottoman Sufi first-person narratives and for an evaluation of the diary of Niyāzī-i Mışrī (d. 1694) who was also a *Ḫalvetī* sheikh see Derin Terzioğlu, "Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyāzī-i Mışrī (1618–94)," *Studia Islamica* 94 (2002), 139–165.

35 For the text, see Ferhat Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı (Tenkitli Metin – Dil İçi Çeviri)," (PhD diss., Marmara University, 2021), 72–76. The poet also includes four *ġazel*s (G248–G251) with the same *redīf* in his *dīvān.* Additionally, there are other *ġazel*s in the *dīvān* with the *redīf*s *"ışḳ-ı pāk"* (G266–G268) and "*-ı ʿışḳuñ*" (G269). See Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 312–315, 325–326, 327.

36 See Ahmet Atillâ Şentürk, *Osmanlı Şiiri Antolojisi* (Istanbul: YKY, 2014), 184, 186; Mustafa Tatcı, *Hayretî'nin Dinî-Tasavvufî Dünyası* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998), 177. For detailed information about Ḥayretī's life please refer to Selim Gök, "Hayretî Divanı Sözlüğü (Bağlamlı Dizin ve İşlevsel Sözlük)," (PhD diss., Gazi University, 2017), 7–31.

37 For some examples see Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 76, 226, 262, 269, 290, 469, 481, 511 (K7/38, G107/5, G163/5, G175/5, G211/3 and 5, G497/6, G516/5, G564/7); regarding the fact that the distinctions between the groups such as *abdāl*s, dervishes, and *Ḳalender*s became blurred over time and that these concepts are often used interchangeably see Ahmet Atillâ Şentürk, "Manzum Metinler Işığında Bir Kalender Dervişinin Profili," *Turkish Studies: International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 10, 8 (2015), 150–151.

38 See Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 114, 139, 269, 278, 327 (K16/36, M25/V, G175/5, G176/1, G191/1, G269/5).

ligiosity, as they believe it can lead to arrogance, and in turn, distance them from God. Consequently, they conceal their acts of worship from the public eye and may even desire to be criticized or reproached for their apparent flaws, rather than risk this separation. Unlike many other Sufi groups, they reject distinctive attire and rituals, preferring to blend in with the general population.[39] The discourse found in Ḥayretī's poems aligns with these principles of the *Melāmiyye.* Based on an analysis of his poems, it becomes evident that he also adopts the idea of unity of being, choosing to reach divine love through human love for his beloved.[40] It is important to note that the environment in which he was raised was influential on his personality and his understanding of love and poetry. There are studies examining the common traits seen in the poems of Rumelian poets, such as vocabulary, formal and stylistic features, cultural and geographical elements, and how the character and work of these poets was influenced by Sufi groups in Rumeli.[41] Ḥayretī who belongs to these groups is a typical Rumelian poet with his understanding of poetry and style.

Regarding the *ḳaṣīde*, Ḥayretī, who combines the "*-ı ʿışḳ*" *redīf* with words such as "*gülzār*" (rose garden), "*dīdār*" (face), "*bāzār*" (bazaar), "*zünnār*" (monk's belt), "*gār*" (cave) within compounds (*iżāfet* constructions), shapes the couplets around these rhyme words. Through the use of literary devices such as *tenāsüb* (the use of words with related meanings), *teżād* (using contrasting words or concepts) and *telmīḥ* (referring to a person or event; allusion), he vividly expresses his love and the state of being in love. As love becomes a rose garden, the poet describes his soul as a nightingale; when love is likened to a "*zünnār*", he metaphorically wears it in the church of despair; and when love takes the form of a cave, he prefers it over the gardens of paradise. In the 38th couplet, Ḥayretī describes himself as "*kör bengī yek-reng abdāl*" (a blind, addict and honest *abdāl*). He is an *abdāl*-lover who is totally burned by the fire of love, sees love in the mirror of his beloved's face in accordance with the idea of unity, has love on his head instead of a turban and blood on his body instead of a robe. He renounced piety (*taḳvā*), asceticism (*zühd*), knowledge (*ʿilm*), and deeds (*ʿamel*). According to him, the reason for the creation of the world is love. Love is the art of vagabonds, of those who give their lives like Manṣūr al-Ḥallāc (d. 922), those who abandon the dervish cap, cloak and stick,[42] those who give up on themselves, those who pursue suffering, and those who are aggrieved. Not everyone possesses the ability to become a lover.

39 See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Tanrının Kuraltanımaz Kulları: İslâm Dünyasında Derviş Toplulukları (1200–1550)*, trans. by Ruşen Sezer (Istanbul: YKY, 2016), 47; Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler* (Istanbul: Kapı, 2022).

40 Şentürk, *Osmanlı Şiiri*, 188; Tatcı, *Hayretî'nin Dinî-Tasavvufî Dünyası*, 126. For examples from his poems see Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 69, 71, 74, 154, 278, 294 (K5/1, K6/2, K7/21, M33/IV, G191/3, G218/5).

41 See Halil Çeltik, "Divan Sahibi Rumeli Şairlerinin Şiir Dünyası," (PhD diss., Gazi University, 2004); Mustafa İsen, *Varayım Gideyim Urumeli'ne: Türk Edebiyatının Balkan Boyutu (Araştırma-İnceleme)* (Istanbul: Kapı, 2009).

42 In his *Risālet ül-Bedriyye*, ʿAskerī, as a *mürşid*-lover, mentions various objects such as a stick, a cloak, a shawl (*ridā*), and others that are considered essential for a perfect *mürşid.* Therefore, it can be said that ʿAskerī and Ḥayretī differ at this point due to their socio-cultural conditions.

Men of reason, cap and cloak holders and zealots have no place in the gathering of love. Hence, Ḥayretī positions himself as a lover in contrast to these other types:

Tācı terk it ḫurḳayı ḥark it ʿaşāyı oda ur
Zāhidā bilmek dilerseñ n'idügin eṭvār-ı ʿışḳ[43]
Oñmaduḳ başum ṭolu sevdā vü cismüm ġarḳ-ı ḫūn
ʿĀşıḳam yitmez mi baña cübbe vü destār-ı ʿışḳ
Gelmesün ʿāḳiller eydüñ bezmine ʿāşıḳlaruñ
Yārdan ġayrı bu meclisde olur aġyār-ı ʿışḳ[44]
Abandon your dervish cap, set ablaze your cloak and your stick
Oh zealot, if you wish to comprehend what the attributes of love are.
My unfortunate head brims with black passion, my body is blood-soaked
I am immersed in love, isn't this enough for me, as the robe and turban of love.
Tell the men of reason to stay away from the gathering of lovers
For anyone other than the beloved will be foreign to love.

Ḥayretī's understanding of love overlaps with the general understanding of love in Ottoman poetry. In fact, the lover type in the Ottoman *ġazel* has the characteristics of Ḥayretī. In Ottoman *ġazel*s, we see *Melāmī* lovers, who like to suffer and prefer love over fame and position, as in Ḥayretī's *ḳaṣīde.* Moreover, Ḥayretī wrote his *ḳaṣīde* with images that are widely used in *ġazel*s, and we find the same lyricism that is found in *ġazel*s in his *ḳaṣīde.* In this sense, the *ḳaṣīde* transforms into an extended *ġazel*, and renders Ḥayretī, a genuine Rumelian *abdāl*, as a real-life representative and perhaps an ideal example of the lover depicted in the Ottoman poetry tradition. This also implies that Ḥayretī is an ideal poet, as it is known that the way to be a good poet in Ottoman poetry is to be a good lover. In fact, the last couplet of his artistic *ḳaṣīde* supports this idea. Here, Ḥayretī describes himself as the eloquent and melodious nightingale of love and his *dīvān* as the rose of the garden of unity. In this way, he points out that his beautiful and precious *dīvān*, which is like a rose, is intertwined with love and unity:

Elde mecmūʿañ gül-i gülzār-ı vaḥdetdür senüñ
Söyle iy murġ-ı laṭīf-elḥān-ı ḫoş-güftār-ı ʿışḳ[45]
Oh eloquent, melodious nightingale of love, sing
Your miscellany in hand is the rose of the garden of unity.

Thus Ḥayretī, who appears as an *abdāl*-lover throughout the *ḳaṣīde*, also wants to position himself as a poet-lover. The fact that, unlike many poets, he does this with a *ḳaṣīde* instead of a *ġazel*, shows his artistic assertion as a poet. He most likely wanted to show his artistic power to a particular (or any) protector by doing this. In this sense, this *ḳaṣīde*, which reveals his understanding of love and his skill in expressing it, be-

43 Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 73 (K7/13).
44 Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 74 (K7/15, 23).
45 Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 76 (K7/39).

comes a tool for his effort to establish a political connection. While it is true that the poet's *dīvān* contains numerous couplets where he renounces worldly desires and extols the virtues of poverty, it is also noteworthy that he composed *ḳaṣīde*s for Ibrāhīm Paşa (d. 1536) and for raider leaders, seeking their support and favour, while praising his own poems and poetic abilities.[46] He frequently expresses his anger and discontentment, lamenting his poverty and not receiving favours.[47] Although it may appear paradoxical from a modern perspective, it is normal when examined within the conditions of that time. As previously seen in the example of ʿAşḳī, in Ottoman literature, poets may embrace the beliefs and discourses of dervishes and *Melāmī*s, yet they often seek protection and favour by submitting *ḳaṣīde*s to patrons in accordance with the prevailing conditions of their time. This practice not only provides them with economic stability and sustenance, but also helps establish their reputation as skilled poets. In essence, being under the protection or gaining the grace of a patron, particularly the sultan, signifies the poet's proficiency and status. This elevates his status above other poets, and his fame spreads. Considering that the value of a poet and his art is determined by the appreciation of a patron, submitting *ḳaṣīde*s becomes the most important and direct way to gain such recognition. Therefore, Ḥayretī's efforts in this regard are understandable. When we consider Ḥayretī's life and his challenges in attaining favour and protection in Istanbul,[48] it can be inferred that he sought to present himself on the stage of poetry through this artistic *ḳaṣīde* as an ideal representative of the *abdāl* and poet-lover in Ottoman literature. Implicitly, he conveys his worthiness of favour, protection, and prestige.

Conclusion

When it comes to Ottoman poetry, it has been reiterated that the primary purpose of *ḳaṣīde*s, which are defined as 'poems written for a specific purpose', is to praise the addressee. However, the fact that the poets also intended to convey their love for the addressee, whom they metaphorically depicted as beloveds, and their longing to meet with them, has rarely been mentioned. In other words, this aspect of the *ḳaṣīde*s,

46 For a few examples, see Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 87–91, 91–94, 94–98, 106–110 (K10, K11, K12, K15).

47 See Musluoğlu, "Hayretî Divanı," 117–118, 118–120, 144–145, 145–146 (K18, K19, M28, M29).

48 According to Ottoman biographical dictionaries of poets (*teẕkire*s), when Ibrāhīm Paşa intended to bestow favour upon Ḥayretī in response to the *ḳaṣīde* he presented, he sought information about him from Ḥayālī (d. 1556/57), who was from the same region as Ḥayretī and a fellow poet. Ḥayālī conveyed that Ḥayretī's love and dedication were not directed towards holding a position or serving the sultan, which he expressed through a couplet of Ḥayretī that could be interpreted negatively by the palace. As a result, İbrāhīm Paşa abandoned his intention to grant Ḥayretī favour. The biography authors criticized Ḥayālī for preventing Ḥayretī to gain prestige at the palace. Subsequently, Ḥayretī left Istanbul and returned to his hometown, where he entered the service of raider leaders and composed *ḳaṣīde*s for them. See Gök, "Hayretî Divanı Sözlüğü," 12–13.

which articulates the yearning to unite with God or the sultan/protector can be interpreted as a form of love poetry, which has not received adequate attention so far. Nevertheless, within the *ḳaṣīde*s, akin to *ġazel*s and *meṣnevī*s, one can discover a diverse range of states of love and the lover. In this study, which examines these states, the focus has been narrowed down to a small number of *ḳaṣīde*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ* in the classical period. Through this analysis, it has been observed that the social, cultural, historical, political, and biographical contexts, as well as the underlying motivations behind the composition of the *ḳaṣīde*s, have a direct influence on the portrayal of love and the state of being in love. In essence, the poets, within the *ḳaṣīde*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ*, position themselves as lovers in accordance with their specific circumstances, their addressee, and their expectations. Consequently, this gives rise to the emergence of various types of lovers. Therefore, it is more accurate to discuss the state of love and being in love in these *ḳaṣīde*s by textual analysis.

After his inclination towards Sufism, ʿAşḳī, who had previously expressed his devotion to Sultan Süleymān as a ghazi-lover, underwent a transformation in the terminology and persona he employed in his poems, addressing the sultan as a different kind of lover. Now, he presents himself as a dervish-lover, attached to the sultan through a pure and sacred love. Thus, he affirms that his attachment and loyalty to the sultan still persist in the *murabbaʿ* under examination in this study. Şāh Velī ʿAyıntābī, having completed his profound Sufi journey driven by his divine love for God, shares his experiences with his aspiring disciples who strive for the same spiritual goal. He assumes the role of a *mürşid*-lover, standing before his addressees. Through his *ḳaṣīde*, which reflects the Sufi perspective of the *Ḫalvetiyye* order and its terminology, he guides the disciples and underscores the importance of a *mürşid* (including himself). Ḥayretī, a Rumelian *abdāl*, who has been unable to attain the desired grace and protection, positions himself in his *ḳaṣīde*, which takes the form of a lengthy *ġazel*, as an *Abdāl*-lover—an idealized lover type in Ottoman poetry—and as a skilled poet-lover.

As we can observe, three different types of lovers are encountered in three distinct *ḳaṣīde*s with the *redīf ʿışḳ* written within the Classical period. Regardless of the differences in their addressees, the type of love they express and the terminologies they employ, the objective remains the same for the lovers: they all aim to display their competence as lovers. The purpose of writing these *ḳaṣīde*s is not solely to praise the addressees directly, but to demonstrate their proficiency as lovers. ʿAşḳī proves himself to be a skilled and competent dervish-lover as much as a ghazi-lover. He possesses a profound attachment to the sultan and is willing to sacrifice his life for him. Şāh Velī ʿAyıntābī, having completed his Sufi journey under the guidance of his sheikh, presents himself as a complete *mürşid*-lover. Ḥayretī embodies the idealized figure of a *Melāmī*-natured lover, which makes him not only an adept lover, but also a proficient poet. These poets anticipate that their desires will be fulfilled by their addressees in response to their competence. ʿAşḳī desires allowance from the sultan, Şāh Velī ʿAyıntābī expects acceptance of his authority and unconditional devotion from his disciples, and Ḥayretī seeks recognition as a talented poet and the bestowal of favour from

his patron. As further *ḳaṣīde*s in the *dīvān*s are examined from this perspective, new models of lovers will be encountered.

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Beyond Lyrical Conventions

Gülşah Taşkın

Power is Speaking: What Does The Beloved Tell about Love?

Introduction

Love (*ʿışḳ*) has been the central theme of Ottoman lyric poetry throughout the centuries. In Ottoman tradition, the love story revolves around the lover's (*ʿāşıḳ*) separation from the beloved (*maʿşūḳ*) and his hope of being reunited. Whether mundane, spiritual, or divine love is told, the roles and the representations of the lover and the beloved in the Ottoman tradition are predefined and do not change: The lover is powerless and suffers from the separation, his ultimate goal is to reunite with the beloved. The beloved, on the other hand, symbolizes all sorts of power and authority over the lover. Since the narrator of this story in the Ottoman tradition is the lover, the reader tends to perceive the dynamics of power-love and lover-beloved relationships predominantly from the lover's perspective. However, the existing scholarly research on Ottoman lyric poetry reveals that there are a limited number of *ġazel*s (love poems) written from the beloved's perspective. A comprehensive study on these *ġazel*s will offer an insight into the complexity and dynamic nature of the power-love and the lover-beloved relationships in Ottoman tradition.

In this paper, I will first provide an overview of *ġazel*s written from the beloved's perspective. Then, mainly with references to Walter G. Andrews' works on Ottoman lyric poetry and John L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, I will discuss how love, power, and the roles of the lover and the beloved are defined and performed by the beloved in these *ġazel*s.[1]

1 Let's Speak

In Ottoman lyric poetry, the narrator is typically the lover. In Ottoman *ġazel*s, the beauty of the beloved, as well as the suffering experienced by the lover due to the separation, are almost always narrated by the lover. However, especially in *meṯnevī*s (epic poem in distiches), one may come across *ġazel*s in which the beloved serves as the narrator.[2] The 16th century Turkic poet Fużūlī's (d. 1556) *Leylā and Mecnūn* is one of the

1 I am deeply thankful to Prof. Selim S. Kuru for his generous help with the English translations of the *ġazel*s.

2 Walter G. Andrews, Najaat Black, and Mehmet Kalpaklı, edited by *Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology* (Austin: University of Texas, 1997), 16; Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham and London:

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most well-known romances including *ġazel*s written from the beloved's perspective.[3] In addition, within the Ottoman tradition, there are conversational *ġazel*s (*mürāca'a ġazel*) characterized by a dialogue between the lover and the beloved conveyed through the repetition of "*didüm*" (I said) – "*didi*" (s/he said).[4] The most significant characteristics that distinguish the *ġazel*s in question from the two types of *ġazel*s I mentioned above are: firstly, they are not included in a romance, and secondly, they are not based on the mutual conversations between the lover and the beloved.

The studies examining the *ġazel*s written from the beloved's perspective in Ottoman tradition are quite limited in number. Kayahan Özgül and Günay Kut are the first scholars to draw attention to these *ġazel*s. In his scholarly work, Kayahan Özgül mentions the *ġazel*s in which the narrator is the beloved, categorizing them as poems written in either a female identity or feminine identity.[5] Additionally, he provides brief information on these *ġazel*s and their poets. According to Özgül, the first *ġazel* in which the beloved is the narrator was written by Çeşmī-zāde Muṣṭafā Reşīd (d. 1770), an 18th century poet.[6] In the same century, Özgül notes that Sünbül-zāde Vehbī (d. 1809) "reverses the theme without changing it by speaking through the voice of the beloved."[7] Özgül states that there was an increase in the number of *ġazel*s written from the beloved's perspective during the 19th century, particularly amongst *Mevlevī* poets.[8]

Günay Kut, on the other hand, provides evidence that examples of this type of *ġazel*s can also be found in the 17th century, thereby tracing the history of them a century earlier than the date cited by Özgül. In her article, Kut draws attention to two *ġazel*s by the 17th century poet Nābī (d. 1712), as well as two parallel poems (*naẓīre*) written by Dürrī (d. 1722), another 17th-century poet, in response to these two *ġazel*s.[9] Kut asserts that, apart from having the beloved as the narrator, the aforementioned four *ġazel*s by Nābī and Dürrī do not differ from the Ottoman *ġazel* tradition in terms of motifs and

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Duke University Press, 2005), 196; M. Kayahan Özgül, *Dîvan Yolu'ndan Pera'ya Selâmetle: Modern Türk Şiirine Doğru* (Ankara: Hece Yayınları, 2006), 310.

3 Andrews, *Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology*, 16; Özgül, *Dîvan Yolu'ndan Pera'ya Selâmetle*, 310.

4 Günay Kut, "Nâbî'nin 'Dilber Dilinden' Yazdığı İki Gazel ve Dürrî'nin Nazîreleri," In *Gündağ Kayaoğlu Hatıra Kitabı: Makaleler*, edited by Oktay Belli, Yücel Dağlı, M. Sinan Genim (İstanbul: Taç Vakfı, 2005), 341. For more information on *mürāca'a ġazel*s see Lokman Taşkesenlioğlu, "Divan Şiirinde "Dedim-Dedi" Söyleyişi," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 41 (2019): 103–126.

5 Özgül, *Dîvan Yolu'ndan Pera'ya Selâmetle*, 310.

6 Ibid, 310. For Çeşmī-zāde Muṣṭafā Reşīd's life and works, see Mustafa Uluocak, "Çeşmî-zâde Reşîd Dîvanı (İnceleme ve Tenkitli Metin)," (MA thesis, Uludağ Üniversity, 1998).

7 Özgül, *Dîvan Yolu'ndan Pera'ya Selâmetle*, 311. For Sünbül-zāde Vehbī, see Selim Sırrı Kuru, "Sünbülzâde Vehbî," In *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 38 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010), 140–141.

8 Özgül, *Dîvan Yolu'ndan Pera'ya Selâmetle*, 313.

9 Kut, "Nâbî'nin 'Dilber Dilinden' Yazdığı İki Gazel ve Dürrî'nin Nazîreleri," 338–342. For Nābī and Dürrī's life and works, see Abdülkadir Karahan, "Nâbî," in *TDV Islâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 32 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006), 258–260 and Aydın Talay, "Dürrî Ahmed Efendi," In *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 10 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994), 34–35.

images employed.[10] Kut defines these *ġazel*s as a "new style" and suggests that further investigation may reveal other *ġazel*s written from the beloved's perspective.[11] Indeed, Günay Kut's article formed the basis for my initial investigation into the 15th and 16th century *dīvān*s (poetry collections), and this research resulted in a remarkable finding. In one of the 15th century poets Ṣerāyī's (d. after 1512) *Dīvān*, I discovered a *ġazel* written from the beloved's perspective.[12] This finding is valuable in demonstrating that as early as 15th century, Ottoman poets were producing *ġazel*s in which the narrator is the beloved.[13]

A notable feature which becomes apparent in the *ġazel*s written from the beloved's perspective, is that the poets other than Ṣerāyī and Dürrī tend to describe these *ġazel*s as a new style, a fresh ground (*tāze zemīn*), or a gift from the beloved to the lovers. Based on these descriptions, one might assume that these *ġazel*s do not carry a deeper meaning beyond the poets' quest for originality. These *ġazel*s that revolve around the beauty and power of the beloved, in the broadest sense, do not tell us anything different from what the lover, traditionally assumed to be the narrator in *ġazel*s, has previously told. Yet, precisely at this point, the point where they do not say anything different, these *ġazel*s begin to tell us a story about the relationship between the lover and the beloved as it is shaped by power and language. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will pursue the traces of this story through a close reading of three *ġazel*s by Ṣerāyī, Nābī, and Çeşmī-zāde Muṣṭafā Reşīd.

2 Let's Play

In his pioneering book titled *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song*, Walter G. Andrews, points out that there are fundamental structural similarities between the ruler-subject relationship in Ottoman society and the lover-beloved relationship in Ottoman lyric poetry:

> [T]he relation of subject to state *cum* monarch is openly one of love, or affection or, at least, of an intense emotional attachment closely resembling love. Likewise, the identification, one with the others, of the lover-beloved, master-slave, and subject-ruler relations has significant ramifications for the production of meaning in the poetic tradition as well as for the extension of meaning from the poetry to the area of social behavior.[14]

The similarities in the dynamics of the ruler-subject and the lover-beloved relationships transform the poetry into a symbolic narrative containing clues about the struc-

10 Kut, "Nâbî'nin 'Dilber Dilinden' Yazdığı İki Gazel ve Dürrî'nin Nazîreleri," 341.
11 Kut, "Nâbî'nin 'Dilber Dilinden' Yazdığı İki Gazel ve Dürrî'nin Nazîreleri," 342.
12 For Ṣerāyī's life and works, see İbrahim Kolunsağ, *Serâyî, Divan (Notlandırılmış Metin-İnceleme)*, (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2019).
13 Based on my preliminary research, I have not yet come across an example from the 16th century.
14 Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1985), 91.

ture of Ottoman society. Andrews describes this narrative, namely the *ġazel*, as a "play script."[15] According to Andrews, in the Ottoman tradition, as a "play script" the *ġazel* "defines and interprets the role of the love object/monarch, so the poetic context also helps to establish the psychological and behavioural role of the individual in relation to the ruler."[16]

Based on Andrews's approach, I will read the *ġazel*s written from the beloved's perspective as a "play script", and I will attempt to illustrate how love is constructed in these narratives, and the roles the lover and beloved play within this relationship.

Ṣerāyī's *ġazel* is as follows:[17]

[Fāʿilātün Fāʿilātün Fāʿilātün Fāʿilün]

Her ḳaçan kim ʿanberīn ebrūlarumı yā ḳılam
Sīne-i ʿuşşāḳı ġamzem tīrine meʾvā ḳılam
Whenever I bend my amber-scented eyebrows like a bow
I turn the chests of lovers into a refuge for the arrows of my side-glances.

Nuṭḳa gelsem depredüp şīrīn lebümi bir nefes
Nefḫ-i ʿĪsī-veş hezārān mürdeyi iḥyā ḳılam
[Whenever] I move my sweet lips for a moment to speak,
like the breath of Jesus, I resurrect thousands of the dead [lovers].

Ṭaġıdup gül yüzüm üzre sünbül-i reyḥānumı
Ḥālini bī-dillerüñ ḥayrān idüp şeydā ḳılam
If I let my hyacinth-scented black locks cascade over my rose-like face
I shall bewilder the lovers, driving them to madness.

Ḥoḳḳa-i laʾlīnüm içre dür dişümi görenüñ
Çeşmini miṣl-i ṣadef pür-lüʾlüʿ-i lālā ḳılam
I fill the eyes of those who behold my pearl-like teeth
within my ruby-red lips like a shell brimming with luminous pearls.

Leylī-i zülfüm hevāsın idenüñ dilden revān
ʿAḳlını Mecnūn-ṣıfat alup ḳamu yaġmā ḳılam
I seize the minds of those who, like Mecnūn, pour the desire of my night-like dark hair
from their hearts, and plunder their minds.

Ṣalınup bāġ içre seyr itsem bu ḳadd ü ḫadd-ile
Bāġı pür-serv-i sehī vü lāle-i ḥamrā ḳılam
As I stroll through the garden with my [graceful] stature and [rosy] cheeks
I fill the garden with swaying cypresses and crimson tulips.

Ġamzem oḳına Ṣerāyī-veş ola ḳurbān hezār
Her ḳaçan kim ʿanberīn ebrūlarumı yā ḳılam
Thousands of [lovers], like Ṣerāyī, sacrifice [themselves] to the arrows of my side-glances
Whenever I bend my amber-scented eyebrows like a bow.

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15 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song*, 145, 147; Andrews, Walter G., "Osmanlı Divan Şiirinin Toplumsal Ekolojisi," In *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, edited by Talât Sait Halman et al., vol. 1 (Istanbul: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2007), 331.

16 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song*, 95.

17 For this *ġazel*, see Kolunsağ, *Serâyî, Divan*, 382.

The primary emphasis of Serāyī's *ġazel* revolves around the aesthetic qualities possessed by the beloved and the effects these have on the lovers. After reading the entire *ġazel*, the first image that probably comes to the reader's mind is that of a sultan addressing his subjects from a high place or a representative proclaiming the sultan's decisions and judgments to the public. The use of the singular first-person pronoun I, which surrenders all will to the beloved, the repeated word (*redīf*) of "*ḳılam*" (I do) that consolidates all power in the beloved, and the repetition of the same line (*redd-i mışrāʿ*) in the first (*maṭlaʿ*) and the last (*maḳṭaʿ*) couplets of the *ġazel*, reinforce the authority/power of the beloved and play an effective role in forming an image of a sultan in the readers' mind.

Although we do not see the word *ṭuġrā* throughout the *ġazel*, in Ottoman lyric poetry, there is a very common analogy drawn between the beloved's eyebrow (*ebrū*) and the imperial signature (*ṭuġra*) often found at the top of imperial decrees (*fermān*). Considering this analogy, the *ġazel* beginning with the beloved's eyebrow creates a metaphor of an imperial decree with the imperial signature (*ṭuġra*), thereby contributing to the reinforcement of the sultan's image. However, in Serāyī's *ġazel*, it is not only the beloved's eyebrow that evokes the image of an imperial decree. The structure of the *ġazel*, while not identical, shares similarities with the structural features of decrees. The sections of a decree are as follows:

> It opens with an *invocatio (daʿwet, taḥmīd)* of God, [...] there follows the *tughra* [...]. The text begins with the address *(inscriptio)* which mentions the office, and often also the name and rank, of the addressee preceded by his honorific titles [...]. Following an introductory formula, [...] most *fermāns* then relate the facts that caused the order to be issued *(narratio, iblāgh)* [...]. Thereupon follows the main part of the fermān, the dispositio *(ḥükm, emr)* [...]. Numerous fermāns add a *sanctio or comminatio (teʾkīd),* which emphasizes the importance of the order, [...]. Neither a signature nor, [...], a seal is affixed.[18]

In this *ġazel*, the beloved's eyebrow (*ebrū*) represents the imperial signature (*ṭuġra*), and the addressees of the decree are the lovers (*ʿuşşāḳ*) referred to by titles such as *mürde* (dead) or *bī-dil* (heartless, desperate or lover). Everything the beloved is capable of doing symbolizes the reasons for issuing the decree. The line that is repeated in the first and last couplets, evoking the beloved's authority to have the first and last word, forms the seal of this decree. All these features symbolically place Serāyī's *ġazel* within the structure of an imperial decree that must be obeyed without question. In this *ġazel*, as Andrews states, "the poetic formulation [...] create[s] a meaningful set of attitudes toward the authority figure."[19] As a result, the role assigned to the beloved in this *ġazel* is that of a ruler with the power to command, admonish, make decisions, and enforce them without any form of negotiation. Throughout the *ġazel*, the beloved speaks of

18 Uriel Heyd, "Farmān (Ottoman Empire Section)," In *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 804–805.

19 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song*, 92.

himself and the things he is capable of. He explains his role to the lovers, along with the requirements and responsibilities that come with this role. In doing so, he teaches the lovers how love should be performed by the beloved.

In Ottoman lyric poetry, in many *ġazel*s, we can observe the lovers' journey of love, how they evolve and change from one state to another because it is the story of the imperfect lover to achieve the perfect and ideal. However, in this *ġazel*, as in other *ġazel*s written from the beloved's perspective, we do not witness the development or change of the absolute entity that represents the beloved. On the contrary, in the *ġazel*, we are confronted with the unchanging existence of the beloved. In other words, the beloved is "an unmoving, polar entity, which is effective by virtue of its nature, not its actions."[20] On the other hand, in this *ġazel*, we do not see just a beloved who sanctifies his own existence. Although the beloved does not engage in direct dialogue with the lovers, he does not completely ignore them. Submitting to absolute authority involves both real and symbolic rewards, as a system relying solely on 'selfless devotion' may not survive. [21] In Serāyī's *ġazel*, we see that in some couplets, the beloved emphasizes his own power in the first lines to create fear in his lovers, and in the second lines, he provides hope and promises.

Indeed, the role of the beloved involves not only ruling or tormenting but also rewarding his lovers. The beloved has the power to kill the lovers and to resurrect them, or the beloved can also show all kinds of beauty to his lovers to the extent that it can captivate their minds, as he is capable of all these actions.

While defining his role and its requirements, the beloved implies the consequences, both good and bad, of the lovers' actions, thus revealing how love should be performed by the lover. In this relationship, the lovers' role is to obey the beloved psychologically and behaviourally. Furthermore, he is to surrender his will and life to the beloved, be willing to die with the hope of resurrection, exercise patience, and remain loyal to the beloved under all circumstances.

Nābī's *ġazel* also revolves around the beauty and power of the beloved. Additionally, the *ġazel* contains information about how lovers will experience separation (*fürḳat*), reunion (*vuṣlat*), and love (*maḥabbet*). Nābī's *ġazel* reads:[22]

[Mef'ūlü Fā'ilātü Mefā'īlü Fā'ilün]

Ġāretger-i şekībdür ümmīd-i vuṣlatum
Sermāye-sūz-i ṣabr u sükūndur maḥabbetüm
The hope for my reunion is the plunderer of patience,
[While] loving me consumes and annihilates the capital of patience and tranquility

Mānende-i sütūn ise de mū ḳadar ḳalur
Bāzū-yı saḫt u zūr-ı kemān-gīr-i fürḳatüm

20 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song*, 92.
21 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song*, 96.
22 For this *ġazel*, see Kut, "Nâbî'nin 'Dilber Dilinden' Yazdığı İki Gazel ve Dürrî'nin Nazîreleri," 339.

Although the arm of the one who bends the bow of separation from me may be as sturdy as a column, it remains as fragile as a strand of hair [under the torment of my separation].

Ol nüsḫa-i mufaṣṣal-ı ḫüsnüm ki ḥarf ḥarf
Nā-ḫ̆āndedür tamām-ı kitāb-ı leṭāfetüm
I am that detailed book of beauty letter by letter
Yet the entire book of my beauty has yet to be read from cover to cover.

Nev-şehryār-ı kişver-i nāzum ki arturur
Dil-dādeler müzāḥamesi şān u şevketüm
I am the new sovereign of the realm of beauty
The throngs of lovers [only] enhance my fame and glory.

Ol pādişāh-ı ḫuṭṭa-i ḫüsn ü leṭāfetüm
Kim rūz u şeb çalınmadadur kūs-ı devletüm
I am the sultan of the realm of beauty and grace
Whose drum of sovereignty resounds day and night.

Dil-ber dilinden açdı yine tāze bir zemīn
Nābī bu şiʿr ile ḳalem-i ṭurfa ṣanʿatum
Oh Nābī! The fresh pen of my art has crafted, with this poem
A new ground that [speaks] in the tongue of the beloved.

Nābī's *ġazel* also creates an image of a sultan addressing his subjects. The beloved, who describes himself as "*the new sovereign of the realm of beauty*" and "*[the] the sultan of the realm of beauty and grace*," clearly performs the role of a ruler. The use of words such as "*ġāret*" (pillage), "*kişver*" (country), "*şān*" (fame), "*şevket*" (power), "*devlet*" (government, power, good luck), etc., which are directly related to a ruler, further reinforces the role of the ruler. The use of the *redīf* (the repeated element after the rhyme) formed by the Turkish possessive suffix "*-um/-üm*" (my), also embeds in the readers' mind the perception of an absolute ruler who possesses everything.

While S̱erāyī's *ġazel* illustrates the actions expected from the beloved as a ruler, Nābī's *ġazel* portrays some of the essential qualities of the beloved. In both cases, the beloved is depicted as the ultimate owner of love, reunion, separation, etc.

In Nābī's *ġazel*, the role assigned to the lover, if he desires to reunite with the beloved, is to surrender his material and spiritual being; that is, his physical health, patience, peace, etc., to the beloved. He is expected to sacrifice everything for the beloved except his love.

Çeşmī-zāde Reşīd's *ġazel* also revolves around the beloved's beauty, uniqueness, and power. However, in contrast to S̱erāyī and Nābī's *ġazel*s examined above, in this *ġazel*, the beloved's power and authority are conveyed through associations with nature and gardens. Çeşmī-zāde Reşīd's *ġazel* reads:[23]

[Mefʿūlü Mefāʿīlü Mefāʿīlü Faʿūlün]

Şermende şeker leẕẕet-i şīrīn süḫanumdan
Ḥacletde benefşe ḫaṭ-ı ʿanber-şikenümden

23 Uluocak, "Çeşmî-zâde Reşîd Dîvanı (İnceleme ve Tenkitli Metin)," 209–210.

Sugar stands ashamed before the taste of my sweet words
[And] the violet remains in shame before the curls of my amber-scented beard.

Çün şemʿ-i seḥer mihr ola bī-fer eger itsem
Vāreste niḳābı ruḫ-ı pertev-fikenümden
If I were to lift the veil from my luminous cheek, the sun,
the dawn's radiant candle, would lose all its radiance.

Biñ ʿāḳılı mecnūn iderüm bir naẓarumla
Ṣad el-ḥaẓer ʿāṣıḳ nigeh-i pür-fitenümden
With a single glance, I drive a thousand wise men mad
Oh lover! Beware a hundredfold of my glance filled with sedition.

Heb ḫaṭṭuma göz dikdi benüm cümle güzeller
Āhūları seyr olmadı kendi çemenümden
All beauties constantly gaze upon my beard
[Therefore] their gazelle-like [beautiful eyes] remain unseen from my meadow.

Elḥaḳ benüm ol Yūsuf-ı Kenʿān-ı melāḥat
Ser-mest cihān būy-ı gül-i pirehenümden
God knows! I am the Joseph of Canaan of beauty!
The world is intoxicated by the fragrance of my rose-scented shirt.

Ṣad-pāre olur olsa da āyīne-i fūlād
Germiyyet-i yek-naẓra-i vech-i ḥasenümden
Even if the mirror is made of steel, it fractures into a hundred pieces
from the heat of a single glance at my beauty.

Vaʿd eyledi pür-būse lebinden didi cānān
Bir tāze ġazel söyle Reşīdā dehenümden
The beloved promised a full kiss from their lips and said:
"Oh Reşīd! Sing a fresh *ġazel* from my mouth."

The 'garden symbolism' constitutes a fundamental and intricate element of Ottoman lyric poetry.[24] According to Andrews, the garden symbolism enriches and adds layers of meaning to the emotional content of the poems. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, garden symbolism is employed to illustrate a complex ecosystem wherein emotions are intricately interwoven with various facets of existence. It serves as potent metaphor, encapsulating the intensity of emotions, and represents an ecosystem where love interconnects with both the material and spiritual realms, bridging the gap between the earthly and divine.[25]

When we consider Reşīd's *ġazel* in the 'garden symbolism' context, we uncover the emotional and psychological dimensions of the roles the beloved and the lover will perform in the 'play script' of love. In this scenario, the role of the beloved is to rule over the emotional world of the lovers with his heaven-like beauty, to "*inspire love*" and to

24 Walter G. Andrews, "Ottoman Love: Preface to Theory of Emotional Ecology," In *A History of Emotions 1200–1800*, edited by Jonas Lilequist (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 32.
25 Andrews, "Ottoman Love: Preface to Theory of Emotional Ecology," 33.

"*serve as the directional locus of love.*"[26] In this context, the expected performance from the lover is to be utterly captivated, intoxicated, and enthralled by the beauty of the beloved, and to set aside reason in favour of emotions when faced with the beauty and allure of the beloved.

In the *ġazel*s mentioned above, the beloved defines love revealing the psychological, behavioural, and emotional framework of the roles expected both from the lover and the beloved: Love is not merely a simple ruler-subject relationship based on one-sided obedience; rather, love entails a complex and dynamic structure where the lover and the beloved mutually perform their designated roles.

So far in the *ġazel*s in question, as well as in those I have not mentioned here, we see that the main focus is on the absolute power of the beloved. This is one of the fundamental characteristics we are accustomed to seeing in *ġazel*s written from the lover's perspective, as all researchers engaged with Ottoman lyric poetry know. At this point, the question we should be asking is how the beloved establishes this absolute power and authority through language. This question will lead us to John L. Austin's philosophy of language based on speech acts.

3 The Language of Power or The Power of Language

In his philosophy of language, John L. Austin challenges the conventional understanding in which speech is perceived as passive and action as active by abolishing this binary opposition. According to Austin, who highlights the performative nature of language and active nature of speech, "*to say something is to do something, or in saying something we do something, or even by saying something we do something.*"[27] In other words, uttering words is equivalent to performing an action, or when we speak, we are performing an action, or even the act of speaking itself is an action. Austin's perspective emphasizes that language is not merely a means of conveying information but can also be used to perform various actions.

Austin categorizes speech acts into three main groups that cannot be sharply separated but rather often overlap: "*locutionary acts*" that involve true-false statements (saying something), "illocutionary acts" that can be explained as "taking action while saying something," which have a direct action quality, and "*perlocutionary acts*" that can be described as "influencing something by taking action through saying something" and have an impact on behaviours.[28] According to Austin, performing an action while saying something, in other words, "*illocutionary acts*," undoubtedly involves a power or authority.[29] However, for power to produce an effect or result, it must be recognized, that is, both parties must have reached a consensus on the power and author-

26 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song*, 92.
27 John L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 108.
28 Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 94–107.
29 Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 147–163.

ity held by the authoritative position. Otherwise, "*illocutionary acts*" cannot have any impact on the behaviours.[30] Austin categorizes "*illocutionary acts*" into five classes that indicate an acknowledged or recognized power/authority: "*verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, expositives.*"[31] Austin explains the functions of these five categories as follows:

> The verdictive is an exercise of judgment, the exercitive is an assertion of influence, or exercising of power, the commissive is an assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention, the behabitive is the adopting of an attitude, and the expositive is the clarifying of reasons, arguments, and communications.[32]

These kinds of "*illocutionary acts*" create an effect on the behaviour of the addressees, directing them towards a certain action. When the addressee takes this action "*illocutionary acts*" turn into "*perlocutionary acts.*"

Using examples from the three *ġazel*s previously discussed and Austin's theory of language, particularly his notions of "illocutionary acts" and "*perlocutionary acts,*" I will now explore how the roles of lover and beloved are defined in this relationship in Ottoman lyric poetry.

In the mentioned *ġazel*s, the owner of the absolute power and authority is the beloved, and the addressees are the lovers. The consensus between both sides regarding the authority of the beloved is rooted in the established form of the lover-beloved relationship within the tradition. Just as there is a silent consensus on the rules of the ruler-subject relationship in Ottoman society, and the roles of the parties involved,[33] there is also an agreement on the roles of the parties in the story of love reflected in poetry within the lover-beloved relationship. The unquestionable power of the beloved is approved by society and tradition. The ruler/beloved is the source of everything, and his power and decisions are unquestionable; the subjects/lovers must obediently follow these decisions without question and surrender to the ruler/beloved's will. In Serāyī, Nābī and Çeşmī-zāde Reşīd's *ġazel*s, we can see some examples of "illocutionary acts" that imply the approved power of the beloved. The following couplets are from Serāyī's *ġazel:*

> Whenever I bend my amber-scented eyebrows like a bow,
> I turn the chests of lovers into a refuge for the arrows of my side-glances. (c/1)
> If I let my hyacinth-scented black locks cascade over my rose-like face,
> I shall bewilder the lovers, driving them to madness. (c/3)
> I fill the eyes of those who behold my pearl-like teeth within my ruby-red lips like a shell brimming with luminous pearls. (c/4)

30 Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 120.
31 Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 150–163.
32 Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 162.
33 Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song*, 202.

In Serāyī's *ġazel*, the beloved passes judgment on the lovers by uttering these words. The beloved assigns to the lovers the role of being a lover and the responsibility of holding the arrow-like glances from the beloved's eyes in their chest (suffering). Indeed, as one of the requirements of this role, thus, the beloved directs the lovers towards this behaviour. In other words, the beloved performs an action while saying something.

In the second couplet, the beloved emphasizes both his own power and assigns the responsibility of admiration and madness, another requirement of the lover's role, to the lovers. In doing so, the beloved once again performs an action. In the last couplet quoted above, the beloved implies that those who want to reach him must shed tears, in other words, suffer, and directs the lovers towards the act of suffering. In Nābī's *ġazel*, we can also find similar examples:

> The hope for my reunion is the plunderer of patience, [while] loving me consumes and annihilates the capital of patience and tranquillity. (c/1)
> Although the arm of the one who bends the bow of separation from me may be as sturdy as a column, it remains as fragile as a strand of hair [under the torment of my separation]. (c/2)
> I am the new sovereign of the realm of beauty;
> the throngs of lovers [only] enhance my fame and glory. (c/4)
> I am the sultan of the realm of beauty and grace, whose drum of sovereignty resounds day and night. (c/5)

In the first and second couplets above, the beloved warns the lover about the desire for reunion with the beloved and the consequences of separation. The beloved reminds the lovers who are willing to endure these consequences to be patient and to exhibit behaviours such as losing their physical and emotional strength, directing them towards these behaviours. In the third and fourth couplets, the beloved emphasizes his authority. Thus, the beloved guides the lovers on how to behave in the presence of a ruler, expecting the lovers to compete among rivals to become an ideal servant and to attain the beloved. In other words, the beloved once again performs an action.

In Reşīd's *ġazel*, the beloved says the following words:

> With a single glance, I drive a thousand wise men mad.
> Oh lover! Beware a hundredfold of my glance filled with sedition. (c/3)

In this couplet, the beloved establishes his influence over the lovers through warning or threat. The beloved implies how the lover should behave, loading them with the responsibilities of the lovers' role and directing them towards these behaviours; the beloved once again performs an action.

In all these roles, there is an initial agreement between the parties, which means that everything the beloved says or does has an impact on the lovers. Accepting all these influences, the lovers perform their role in front of the beloved, knowing how love should be experienced. As a result, the lover's performance of love takes place in the manner demanded by the beloved. The lover performances we see in *ġazel*s written from the perspective of the lovers, or in everyday life, an Ottoman poet who is one

of the members of the ruler's subjects and has accepted and internalized the rules and roles of the ruler-subject relationship composing a *ġazel* from the beloved's perspective, can be read as a result of "*illocutionary acts*" turning into "*perlocutionary acts,*" that is, into actions.

At this point, one might argue that even though the mentioned *ġazel*s are written from the perspective of the beloved, the speaker is not the beloved but rather the lover or the poet in the lover's role. While this perspective has some validity, it is necessary to reconsider it within the context of the language-power relationship.

Power/authority cannot exist without the subjects and their language. For language to be valid, understood, and turned into action, power/authority needs to be spoken with the language of its subjects.[34] This language, as it is used, becomes entrenched, spreads throughout the society or subjects, finds its place in poetry. From poetry, it circulates back to society, and as it circulates, it strengthens. As it strengthens, the voice of the subjects fades away, and they internalize the language of power. The subjects lose their own language, identity, actions, etc., and begin to exist with the language of power. Thus, the language of power and the language of the subjects become intertwined and blended. In this situation, it becomes blurred and uncertain whether the speaker is the beloved or the lover. At this point, what the speaker is telling us becomes more important than who the speaker is.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *ġazel*s written from the perspective of the beloved may have been driven by the poets' desire to experiment with a new style or seek originality in poetry. However, these *ġazel*s carry meanings beyond just a new style for us. These *ġazel*s demonstrate the intertwined dynamics of the ruler-subject relationship in Ottoman society with the dynamics of the lover-beloved relationship in poetry, revealing the complex and dynamic nature of love in Ottoman lyric poetry.

We know that there were political, social, and cultural changes in the Ottoman Empire from the 17th-century onwards. These changes were reflected in poetry, leading to changes in the perception of love and the roles of lovers and the beloved. Further analysis of these perceptions of *ġazel*s written from the perspective of either the beloved alongside that of the lover, or vice-versa would provide us with a clearer understanding of the nature of love. It would also further our understanding of the roles of the lover and the beloved in Ottoman lyric poetry throughout the centuries, and the function of poetry within the Ottoman society.

34 For a study discussing this topic through the Quranic language, see, Hasan Er, "Dinî Sözcelerin Edimselliği," (PhD diss., Uludağ Üniversity, 2019), 115–122.

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Benedek Péri

Love Poetry with or without Love? Classical Ottoman Amorous *Ġazel*s in the Early 16th Century

Introduction

The imperial classical Ottoman literary tradition is a derived literature, and as such, it shares many common features with other branches (Persian, Chaghatay, Türkī ʿAcemī) of the classical literary tradition. One of these is the importance of the *ġazel*, a significant and dominant verse form in Ottoman poetry in the early 16th century. Contemporary Ottoman literary critics, saw *ġazel*s as touchstones of poetic talent and skills. Though *ġazel* as a verse form had strict formal requirements, contentwise it was quite flexible and could convey various messages. However, *ġazel*s were mainly used for amorous poetry. Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ Kāşifī (d. 1505), a prolific author of the late Timurid period, which served as a cultural model for Ottoman authors, characterized *ġazel*s as amorous poems on flirting with women (*ʿişḳ-bāzī … bā zanān*) that describe the physical appearance of the beloved. Muṣliḥ ad-Dīn Muṣṭafā Sürūrī (d. 1562) the author of an important Ottoman reference work on prosody titled *Baḥr al-maʿārif* (The ocean of gnostic knowledge) gave a very similar description when he wrote that *ġazel*s consist of "five or seven couplets that depict the beloved." Based on the writings of early 16th century Ottoman poets and literary critics the present paper tries two answer two basic questions: 1. What were the essential ingredients of a successful and acknowledged *ġazel* on love? 2. Do all amorous *ġazel*s reflect the passion and feelings of its author?

1 Persian and Turkic Critics' and Poets' Views on the Criteria of an Elegant *Ġazel*

Ġazel as a poetic form and genre was present in classical Turkish/Turkic literature from the very beginning, and in the 15th and 16th centuries it was without doubt an important and fashionable poetic form in the Chaghatay, the Ottoman and *Turkī-yi ʿAcemī* classical traditions, the touchstone of poetic prowess, as it is quite clear from Necātī's introduction to his *Dīvān:*

> *Necātī*
> *…ekser-i ẓurafā ve aġleb-i büleġā āzmāyiş-i tabʿ-i selīm ve ārāyiş-i ẕihn-i müstaḳīm ṭarz-i ġazel…*[1]

1 Tahir Üzgör, *Türkçe Dîvân Dîbâceleri,* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990), 102.

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> The majority of eloquent speakers and most of the outstanding rhetors' majority believe that the test of true poetic talent, the ornament of the brilliant mind, is the *ġazel.*[2]

Muḥammed Fużūlī (d. 1556), considered one of the most prominent writers of Ottoman and *Turkī-yi ʿAcemī* classical poetry of the 16th century, explains in the preface to his collection of poems what he thinks of the *ġazel* form in the following way:

> *Ġazeldür ṣafā-baḫş-ı ehl-i naẓar*
> *Ġazeldür gül-i būstān-ı hüner*
> *Ġazāl-ı ġazel ṣaydı āsān degül*
> *Ġazel münkiri ehl-i ʿirfān degül*
> *Ġazel bildürür şāʿirüñ ḳudretin*
> *Ġazel arturur nāẓımuñ şöhretin*
> *Göñül gerçi eşʿāra çoḳ resm var*
> *Ġazel resmin it cümleden iḫtiyār*
> *Ki her maḥfilüñ zīnetidür ġazel*
> *Ḫıredmendler ṣanʿatıdur ġazel*
> *Ġazel di ki meşhūr-ı devrān ola*
> *Oḳumaḳda yazmaḳda āsān ola.*[3]
> A ġazel gives [intellectual] pleasure to people who are initiated,
> A ġazel is the rose in the garden of artistic merits.
> It is difficult to hunt ġazel's gazelle,
> People who possess [gnostic] knowledge don't despise *ġazels.*
> Ġazels make known the skills of a poet,
> Ġazels boost the fame of versifiers.
> Though there are many forms of verse, my heart,
> You should opt for the ġazel form.
> Ġazels embellish every [poetic] congregation,
> The ġazel is the art form of wise people.
> Compose ġazels if you want to be famous,
> [Ġazels] that are easy to recite and copy.

Practitioners of classical poetry in the late 15th to early 16th centuries seem to have agreed that a well-written, elegant *ġazel* was proof of its author's talent and skill in poetry, and thus greatly contributed to his literary reputation. The above texts, however, only record this fact, but they do not give any clear guidance as to what is needed for a classical *ġazel* to be appreciated by its audience.

An early 13th century Persian theoretician of classical literature, Şems ed-Dīn Muḥammed Ḳays ar-Rāzī (n.d.),[4] wrote the following about the components of a good *ġazel:* "Since the purpose of the *ġazel* is to soothe the mind and relax the soul, it

2 All the translations of Turkish/Turkic texts quoted in the paper were done by the author.

3 Abdulhakim Kılınç, "Fuzûlî'nin Türkçe Divanı: Edisyon Kritik ve Konularına Göre Fuzûlî Divanı," (PhD diss., Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2017), 596.

4 Persian. Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad Qays ar-Rāżī

must be built on a pleasing metre, on words that are easy to string and on original and clear poetic thought[s]". [5]

Although public literary taste changed constantly during the centuries following the Mongol period, Turkic literary criticism in the 15th and 16th centuries had very similar expectations of good *ġazel*s.

The earliest Turkish formulation of the criteria for a good *ġazel* does not contain much tangible data, for Şeyḫ Aḥmed Tarāzī (d. 15th c.) describes how he thinks a good poem should look like, using a metaphor wrapped in a Persian couplet (Turk. *beyt*), in the preface of his manual on Turkic prosody, titled *Funūn al-balāġa* (The Sciences of Prosody):

> *Naẓm ṭā'ūsī-st der bāġ-i belāġat cilveger*
> *Ki-z kemāl-i cilve-yi ū ʿaḳl-i kul şeydā şeved*[6]
> The poem is a peacock in the garden of rhetoric,
> Its shining perfection drives all minds mad.

It is perhaps not incorrect to interpret the above quote as meaning that Ṭarāzī believed that a *ġazel* is not so much an appeal to the emotions as to the imagination and intellect of its audience or its readers. A *ġazel* is like a peacock spreading its colourful tail feathers, it impresses the audience or the reader with its spectacle, who must also use their intellect to interpret the poem. The poet thus uses poetic imagery in the poem to create a spectacular poetic world, which requires the reader's mind to understand and decipher the text. In contrast to Ṭarāzī's cryptic formulation, biographical anthologies (Turk. *teẕkire*) that are the main forums for literary criticism in the classical literary tradition, also contain more tangible descriptions. The authors of *teẕkire*s often accompany the biographies of poets they consider worthy to be included in their anthologies, with critical comments evaluating the work of the author. From these comments it is more or less clear what the poetry-reading public of the time considered important in a poetical text.

In the foreword to the first Turkic-language anthology, *Mecālis an-nefā'is* (Congregations of Refined People), Mīr ʿAlī-şīr Nevāyī (d. 1501) seems to have been following ar-Rāzī's expectations when he wrote of the poets of Herat of his time that "in the various genres of poetry, especially in *ġazel* poetry, they soothe the heart and enhance the merriment more than ever before. And as for the refinement and uniqueness of poetic thought, they meet the expectations."[7]

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5 Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Qays ar-Rāzī, *Al-Muʿjam fī Meʿāyiri Ashʿāri' l-ʿAjam*, edited by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Vahhāb Qazvīnī (Tehran: Maṭbaʿ-yi Şams, 1314 [1935]), 306.

6 Persian. *Naẓm ṭā'ūsī-st dar bāġ-i balāġat jilvagar/Ki-z kamāl-i jilva-yi ū ʿaql-i kul shaydā shavad:* Şeyḫ Aḥmed Ṭarāzī, *Funūn al-Balāġa*, Oxford: Bodleian Library, Ms. Elliott 127, fol. 2b.

7 Alisher Navoiy, "*Majolis un-Nafois*," In *Alisher Navoiy Mukammal Asarlar To'plami, Yigirma to'mlik*, edited by Suyima G'anieva, vol. 13 (Toshkent: Fan, 1997), 3.

ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi (d. 1572) records his views on the characteristics of a good lyric *ġazel* in a poem. Since it is quite long, it is sufficient to quote the most important lines here:

Yaḫud söz şāhid-i raʿnāya beñzer
Ki naẓm olmış añа bir cāme-i zer.
An utterance is like a young beloved,
And versification is a golden robe he/she wears.

İki ebrūdur añа iki mıṣrāʿ
Başında maṭlaʿ iklīl-i muraṣṣaʿ.
The two eyebrows are two hemistiches,
At its beginning the opening couplet is like a crown of jewels.
.....

Ġazel olmış yāḫūd bir beyt-i maʿmūr
İçinde maʿnā Kevs̱erdür edā ḥūr
It became a ġazel or a well-constructed couplet/house,
The poetic thought in it is the river of Paradise, the phrasing is a houri.

The Ottoman intellectual Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī (d. 1600), known primarily for his work as a historian, in the biographical anthology chapter of his chronicle titled *Künh ül-Aḫbār* (The Summits of the News) tells us exactly what is needed in a poem:

... şiʿre evvel mertebede lāzım olan bikr-i maʿnā baʿd ez ān libās-ı edā andan sonra tevriye ve istiʿāre ve īhām muḥassenātı...[8]
... a [good] poem requires first the virgin of poetic thought, then the cloak of phrasing, and finally the jewels of ambiguity, metaphor and wordplay...

Many similar descriptions could be quoted from contemporary sources. What these texts have in common is that they stress the importance of the quality of three concepts. These are 'poetic thought' or 'poetic idea' (Turk. *maʿnā*), 'poetic imagination' (Turk. *ḫayāl*), which is difficult to separate from *maʿnā*, and finally 'formulating' or 'wording' (Turk. *edā*, *elfāẓ*).[9]

It is thought-provoking that Turkish critical texts only rarely mention rhythm, one of the most important elements of poetry. Perhaps this is because one of the self-evident requirements of a good poem was that the poet should adhere precisely to the rules of quantitative versification and that the text should follow the rhythm of the chosen meter.

8 Mustafa İsen, *Künhü'l-Ahbâr'ın Tezkire Kısmı,* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 1994), 36.
9 The word *elfāẓ* is the Arabic plural of the noun *lafẓ* "word." In contemporary sources it often used as a synonym for *edā*. From time to time the two nouns occur together as *elfāẓ u edā* or *edā u elfāẓ*. For an example see e. g. Kınalızâde, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ*, 190

2 The Basic Ingredients of a Classical *Ġazel*

2.1 The Contents: *Maʿnā* and *Ḫayāl*

Of the three terms (*maʿnā*, *ḫayāl*, *edā*), the meaning of the term *maʿnā* is illustrated by Nevāyī through an example, in a story related to Mevlānā Luṭfī (d. 1462).

> *Mīr Ḫusrev – ʿalayhi raḥma – hindūça eṣʿārıda bir ʿacīb ġarīb maʿnā aytıpdur ve ol budur kim maḥbūb bahār eyyāmıda bir yan baradurmış bolġay ve yaġın cihetidin yer balçıḳ bolmış bolġay ve anıng ayaġı balçıḳdın tayıp yıḳılur çaġıda ġāyet nāzüklügidin yaġın riştesin mededi bile tutup ḳopmış bolġay.*[10]
> Emīr Ḫusrev—may the mercy of Allah be upon him—has formulated an exceptionally unique poetic idea in his Hindi poems. It is this: the beloved went for a walk one spring day, but the rain turned everything into a sea of mud. When his feet slipped and crumbled in the mud, he gently took hold of the thread of the rain [drops] and used it to free himself.

In the rest of the story, Nevāyī—interestingly enough—refers to the above 'poetic idea' with the term *ḫayāl*, suggesting that the two terms either meant the same concept or their meanings were very close.

> *Bir kün hem meẕkūr bolġan taḳrīb bile Sulṭān ṣāḥib-ḳirān ʿālī meclisleride bende bu sözni ʿarż ḳıldım kim bir kün Mevlānā Luṭfī Mīr Ḫusrevdin bu navʿġarīb maʿnā naḳl ḳıldı dep. Ḫayālımda bu kim ol ḥażratnıng hem laṭīf tabʿlarıġa ḫuş kelip taʿrīfda mubālaġa ḳılġusılardur. Bende köp ṣaʿaf bile aytḳan üçün fi'l-cümle tebessüm ḳılıp inbisāṭ iẓhār ḳıldılar. Ammā köp iltifāt vāḳiʿ bolmadı. Songġı kün andaḳ maʿlūm boldı kim ol ḥażratnıng mubārek tabʿlarıġa Mīr Ḫusrevning bu ḫayālıda iʿtirāẕ yüzlengen ermiş bolġay yana ḫayret dast berdi kim Mīr Ḫusrevning bu ḫayālıġa cāmiʿ tabʿ ehli taʿrīf ve taḥsīndin özge hīç nime ẓāhir ḳılmadılar ayā ol ḥażrat ne iʿtirāẕ ḳılıp erkinler.*[11]
> In connection with the above approach, I said at the exalted gathering of the auspicious Sultan that I had heard this particular poetic idea of Mīr Ḫusrev from Mevlānā Luṭfī. I thought that it would appeal to His Majesty's refined poetic talent and that he would praise it thoroughly. As I spoke of it with rapture, he smiled and feigned mirth. Otherwise, he took little notice. The next day, it turned out that His Majesty's blessed poetic talent did not like this 'poetic image' of Mīr Ḫusrev, but to his utter surprise, all the poets only mentioned and praised Mīr Ḫusrev's 'poetic image' with appreciation. So, His Majesty also gave up speaking against it.

Following the practice of their Persian and Chaghatay colleagues, Ottoman critics praise a poetic idea if it is unique and specific to the poet (Turk. *ḫāṣṣa*).[12] Sehī beg, the author of the first Ottoman *teẕkire*, praises several poets for this. He writes, for example, of Sultan Süleymān's favourite Ḫayālī (d. 1557) that "in his *ġazel*s many special

10 Navoiy, *Majolis un-Nafois*, 202.

11 Navoiy, *Majolis un-Nafois*, 202.

12 Among other things, ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Cāmī (d. 1492) praises Salmān Sāvacī's (d. 1376) poetry for his "many unique poetic ideas." (*vay-rā maʿnā-yi ḫāṣṣa bisyār ast*). ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Cāmī, *Bahāristān va Rasā'il-i Cāmī*, edited by ʿAlāḫān Afṣaḥzād (Tehran: Mīrāṯ-i Maktūb, 1379 [2001]), 146. Kātibī is praised almost word for word in the same way (*vay-rā maʿnā-yi ḫāṣṣ bisyār ast*). Cāmī, *Bahāristān*, 151.

poetic ideas are to be found" (*...dedügi ġazeliyyātda niçe ḫāṣṣa maʿnālar bulup...*).[13] ʿĀṣıḳ Çelebi describes Misālī Çelebi in very similar terms when he writes that "he is capable of extraordinary poetic ideas." (*niçe maʿnā-yı ḫāṣṣa ḳādir*).[14] ʿAhdī (d. 1594) considered it important to note the following, among other things, about the poetry of Nevālī Çelebi (d. 1595), the teacher of the later Meḥmed III (1595–1603):

> *... iki zebān ile naẓma ḳādir ve her birinde sözleri nādir zīrā ki maʿnā-yı ġarīb ve elfāẓ-ı ʿacīb bulmada māhir geçinür.*[15]
> He can write poetry in two languages and his texts are exceptional in both, because he has a flair for finding exceptional poetic ideas and special words.

The notion of 'novelty' or 'originality' in relation to the poetic idea is often expressed by critics with the phrase *bikr-i maʿnā* (the virgin of poetic thought), as Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī does in the above quotation. Sometimes, authors of the poems themselves boast of their own poetic ideas, which they consider unique. Ḥadīdī (d. 1533), in the last couplet of one of his *ġazel*s, says no less than that other poets, upon realising and understanding the exceptionality and unsurpassability of the *maʿnā* in his poem, abandoned the writing of poetry.

> *Şiʿrüñi ehl-i maʿnā gūş eyleyüp Ḥadīdī*
> *Bī-iḫtiyār eder şiʿre nihāyet ancaḳ*[16]
> Ḥadīdī! When your poem is heard by the people of poetic ideas,
> They have no choice but to put an end to writing poetry.

However, over-originality could make the poems unenjoyable. Laṭīfī (d. 1582) says that this was the case with Mesīḥī's (d. 1512) *ġazel*s: the use of overly unique poetic ideas meant that neither the average poetry reader nor the poetry expert could enjoy them.

> *Ammā taḫayyül-i ṭabʿı ġāyetde daḳīḳ olup ṭarḥ-ı ṭarz-ı kelāmı ḫavāṣṣa menāṭ u maḫṣūṣ olmaġın naẓm-ı belāġat-niẓāmından ṭıbāʿ-ı ʿavām an-nās belki degme bir şāʿir-i şiʿr-şināsa çendān ẕevḳ u telezẕüẕ edemez.*[17]
> But since his talent for poetic imagery was so refined that the style of his writing was characterised by eccentricity and uniqueness, it did not offer pleasure and enjoyment to the intellect of the common man or to poets versed in poetry.

The assessment of Laṭīfī is interesting from several points of view. On the one hand, it shows that classical poetical texts were not meant to appeal to emotions but to the in-

13 Sehî Beg, *Heşt Bihişt*, edited by Haluk İpekten–Günay Kut (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), 164.
14 Âṣıḳ Çelebi, *Meşâʾirü'ş-Şuʿarâ*, 332.
15 Bağdatlı Ahdî, *Gülşen-i Şuʿarâ*, edited by Süleyman Solmaz (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018), 81.
16 Edirneli Nazmî, *Mecmaʿu'n-Nezâʾir*, 1329.
17 Latîfî, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuʿarâ*, 483.

tellect, since they require brainwork to be enjoyed. On the other hand, his words suggest that, depending on the reader's familiarity with classical poetry, a text can be interpreted on several levels. As for specific poetic ideas and images, it suggests that the notion of 'uniqueness' in contemporary literary criticism was rather limited, and that overly individual solutions fell in the category of 'unintelligible'. In other words, poets were expected to create something new within the framework of the poetic tradition in accordance with its unwritten rules.

As it has already been referred to, Ottoman literary critics of the time, following in the footsteps of their Persian colleagues, often compared the poetic idea to a beautiful person. Ḳınalızāde Ḥasan Çelebi's (d. 1604) poetic anthology also features a beautiful person (*şāhid-i zībā*) as the metaphor for the poetic idea, whom poets wrap in the velvet of text and adorn with the jewels of words:

> *Cevāhir-i zevāhir-i kelām ve dībā-yı süḫan-ı fesāḥat-niẓāmdur ki şāhid-i zībā-yı maʿnānuñ ḳāmet ü serine ḫilʿat u efser andan ḳılunur ve ʿurūsān-ı şebistān-ı kemālüñ gerden ü gūşına zer ü zīver anuñla olınur.*[18]
> It is the jewels of the ornaments of words, and the velvet of eloquent utterances, that make the body of poetic thought a robe and the head a diadem, the neck of the bride of the night of perfection a necklace of gold, and the ears a jewel.

2.2 Wording: *Edā*, *Elfāẓ*

Thus, according to 16th century literary critics, in addition to a particular poetic idea, carefully chosen words were essential to an effective poem. The terms *edā* and *elfāẓ*, which denote 'formulating' 'wording', are often used in biographical anthologies to describe the author's opinion of poetic texts. In the evaluation of Ottoman literary critics, great emphasis is often placed on the quality of the wording, which is equivalent in importance to the poetic idea.

ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi for example, gives the following description of Emīr:

> *Ṭālib-i ʿilm-i nefīs ve ḫūb-ḫaṭṭ u taʿlīḳ-nüvīs ʿulemā vü eşrāf ile hemcelīs şāʿir-i bādir laṭīf maʿnālar bulmaḳda māhir ve eyü edālar ile edāya ḳādir elfāẓı rengīn ve ebyātı selīsdür.*[19]
> He seeks sophisticated knowledge. His handwriting is beautiful, he knows the ṭaʿlīḳ script. He keeps company with scholars and distinguished people. He is a lively poet, capable of elegant poetic thought and good diction. His words are colourful, his couplets are easy to understand.

The quality of wording is described by critics in relatively narrow terms, mostly in a positive context. The most frequently occurring adjectives are good (*ḫūb*), pleasant (*ḫoş*), colourful (*rengīn*), refined (*nāzük*).

Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī, in his statement quoted earlier, mentions one more thing, in addition to rhetorical thought and phrasing of the text, as an indispensable requisite of a good

18 Kınalızâde, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuʿarâ*, 92.
19 Âşıḳ Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şuʿarâ*, 162.

ġazel, rhetorical diversity. The three terms in the text, *tevriye*, *istiʿāre*, *īhām*, are the names of rhetorical devices (Turk. *ṣanʿat*). The rhetorical figures *tevriye* and *īhām* are difficult to distinguish from each other, being rhetorical figures based on multiple meanings, while *istiʿāre* is a technical term denoting metaphor.

The importance of exploiting the possibilities offered by the classical rhetorical toolkit was shared by other critics. ʿĀṣıḳ Çelebi, for example, supported his view that Ottoman poetry had undergone a significant development throughout its history by noting the positive changes in the use of rhetorical figures, in addition to the increasing prominence of poetic ideas and sophisticated formulations in Ottoman poetic texts:

> *…şāʿirlerümüz ġarīb maʿnālar ve laṭīf edālar, selīs ʿibāretler, tevriye vü istiḫdām ve tecnīs ü īhām ṭarīḳinde nefīs ẓarāfetler etmekle gitdükçe teraḳḳīde ve lāḥiḳı sābıḳından teḳaddüm ḳaṣdına himmet-i ʿālīde olmışdur.*[20]
> …our poets have created an elegant style through their unique poetic ideas, refined expressions, smooth use of words, and the application of tevriye, istiḫdām, tecnīs and īhām, and have striven in a respectable manner to achieve the goals of progress and to surpass the past.

The exceptional talent of the poet in the use of rhetorical figures is also prominent in Laṭīfī's praise of Ẕātī's poetry:

> *Ṣanāyiʿ-i ṣiʿriyyeden ne ṣanʿat u ṣīve ol ki anı etmemiş ola ve ḫayālāt u maʿānādan ne bikr-i fikr ola ki anuñ ṭabʿ-ı pāk-ı derrāki aña yetmemiş ola.*[21]
> Among the rhetorical figures, there was no figure, no play of words which he did not use; among the poetic images, among the poetic ideas, there was no maiden of thought to which his pure and all-embracing talent did not reach.

So, it seems clear from the descriptions of the critics, most of whom were also active as poets, that one of the most important requirements of good poetry in the 16th century was the inventive and skilful use of rhetorical devices. One of Mesīḥī's couplets shows that not only the critics but also the wider public, that is the poetry-consuming public of the time, demanded that a poet should cram as many rhetorical figures as possible into his poem.

> *Ger ṣanāʿī ṣatmazam şiʿr içre olmazdum diri*
> *Lā-cerem ṣanʿat gerekdür ḳılmaġa kesb-i maʿāş*[22]
> If I had not sold rhetoric in my poems, I would not have survived.
> There is no doubt. To get paid, you have to use rhetorical devices.

It is generally accepted that in the Timurid period, which served as a cultural model for the Ottomans, there was a significant change in the evaluation of poetic achievement, with the emphasis shifting from the search for new poetic ideas to technical sophisti-

20 Âşıḳ Çelebi, *Meşâʾirü'ş-şuʿarâ*, 666.
21 Latîfî, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuaʿarâ*, 233.
22 *Mesîhî Dîvânı*, edited by Mine Mengi, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 1995), 186.

cation. [23] The changes may be explained by the prevailing economic and social processes that resulted in an increase in the number of patrons willing and able to spend money on the consumption of cultural products during the Timurid period. Cultural centres around wealthy literary patrons proliferated, where literary gatherings of the cultural elite, accompanied by music and feasting, were a regular feature. But perhaps an even more important change was that literature was transformed from a court to an urban art, and in fact became a public art, involving people of all backgrounds and education, from simple craftsmen to educated intellectuals and monarchs. These processes were accompanied by a widening of the circle of literary consumers, a sharp increase in their numbers, and as a result by an increase in the number of people actively engaged in literature, as amateur poets appeared more and more alongside those who practised literature as a profession.

In such a situation, it is natural that the place of discovery, of genuine invention, was taken by the study and analysis of past texts because the tradition represented by the texts of the canon represented a virtual safe space even for amateur versifiers. This led to a constant discourse with the literary past and to the recycling of elements of the tradition, which inevitably turned the attention of poets and their audiences towards the pursuit of poetic meticulousness, imitation as a creative strategy and towards seeking rhetorical perfection. From the late 15th century rhetoric prowess became an essential quality of poets and many poets sought to demonstrate their mastery in this art by using as many and as complex rhetorical devices and rhetorical figures as possible. [24]

Some Ottoman poets in the 16th century went to the extremes to demonstrate their skills with couplets that could be perceived as puzzles. Their poems that were difficult even for readers initiated into the intricacies of classical poetry to decipher, did not meet with the enthusiasm of literary critics. Laṭīfī writes of Emrī (d. 1575) that intense emotions (*sūz u gudāz* burning and melting) are replaced in his poems by a riddle-like quality. Among the examples cited is the following couplet:

> *Gösterürsüñ eyle şol çeşm ü ḳad ü rā ḳaşuñı*
> *ʿĀşıḳa ʿarż-ı cemāl eylemege ʿār eylersüñ*[25]
> You show us your eyes, your stature and your eyebrows resembling the letter rā,
> But you are ashamed to reveal your [full] beauty to a lover.

23 Maria Eva Subtelny, "A Taste for the Intricate: The Persian Poetry of the Late Timurid Period," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 136, 1 (1986), 56–60.

24 Maria Eva Subtelny in her article on late Timurid poetry refers to a story from Vāṣifī's (d. sometime between 1551 and 1556) *Badāyiʿ al-Vaḳāyiʿ* ('Rarities of Events'), in which the author boasts of his poetic prowess demonstrated at a gathering. In response to a challenge, he composed five ghazals, each of which contained only such couplets that included the nouns *āb* 'water' and *tīġ* "sword." Subtelny, "A Taste for the Intricate," 70.

25 Latîfî, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuaʿarâ*, 136–137.

Even on first reading, the couplet makes sense and is easy to understand. However, Emrī hid a riddle in the couplet. Without discovering and solving it, the reader cannot fully enjoy the lines, and the couplet does not provide real intellectual pleasure. The path to the solution of the riddle is very reminiscent of a peculiar and very difficult poetic genre, the poetic riddle or poetic alphabet puzzle (*muʿammā*).

The first half of the couplet highlights three characteristics of the beloved, all of which are components of her beauty: his/her eyes, his/her stature and his/her eyebrows. This last item gives the clue to the puzzle. By comparing the beloved's eyebrows to the letter *rā* (ر), the poet uses a poetic topos to hint that in order to decipher it, the recipient must look for letters that form the answer of the riddle. Since there are three key words in the hemistich, the letters are hidden in them. To denote 'eye', the poet uses the Persian word *çeşm*, for which the Arabic synonym is *ʿayn*, and the first Arabic character in the spelling of the word is the letter *ʿayn* (ع). Since the classical beauty ideal holds that the stature of a beautiful person is that of a tall, slender cypress (Turk. *serv*), in poetry the stature of the beloved is often compared to the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, *alif* (ا), which resembles this tree in shape. The letters associated with the signs of beauty, read together in the order of their occurrence, give the word ʿār (عار) shame, the key word that is an important element both of the second *miṣrāʿ* and of the message of the couplet.

It is obvious from the above examples that the texts of Classical *ġazel* poetry, at a certain level, required not only the author but also the audience or the reader to have a thorough knowledge of the system and functioning of Classical poetry. Without this understanding, these texts cannot be comprehended in their full depth, and thus cannot achieve their purpose, which is to provide the audience or the reader with an intellectual challenge, and through the pleasure of discovering its minutest details, intellectual delight. Despite the fact that many amateur versifiers tried their hand at writing poetry, Classical *ġazel* poetry, in the form it evolved into in the second half of the 15th century, is thus the domain of a relatively narrow literary elite, whose members are educated enough to create and/or understand classical literary texts. Classical *ġazel* poetry, by becoming a kind of rhetorical fireworks display and as such a means of flaunting craftsmanship and talent, has become completely detached from everyday realities. The very possibility of depicting love in a schematic way, based on poetic topoi, meant that one did not actually have to be in love to write an amorous *ġazel* and writing good poetry has actually become a technical matter. This also means that Ottoman amorous poetry in the 16th century didn't "serve as a script for the acting out and interpretation of actual Ottoman love" in most cases,[26] but it was a means for demonstrating a poet's professional skill and prowess. Though love poems were seemingly addressed to beloveds in reality they targeted fellow poets whom the author wished to dazzle with his unique talent and his mastery of the poetic art.

26 Walter G. Andrews / Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*, (London: Duke University Press, 2005), 85.

A deep analysis of a large number of classical style *ġazel*s, especially poems that were written as poetic replies to earlier models quite clearly indicate that talented poets, simply by using the tools available in the *mundus significans* (singnifying universe) of Classical poetry and combining traditional elements in a creative way, could produce original texts, many of which did not even lack the searing passion (*sūz u güdāz* 'burning and melting') that critics have referred to as an important element of the *ʿāşıḳāne ġazel*s.[27]

The result of all this was that by the end of the 15th century, the products of Classical *ġazel* poetry were in many cases completely detached from reality. Texts became artificial constructs through which poets could demonstrate their mastery of their craft and their audience could enjoy intellectual pleasure, but as has already been said, this kind of high literature, which required prior knowledge to cultivate and to appreciate, was a 'parlour game' for a narrow circle of intellectual elites.

3 *Mekteb-i Vuḳūʿ*, a New Approach to Love

Although some scholars believe that the *ġazel*, as opposed to the *ḳaṣīde*, was originally an urban art form,[28] its true integration into the cultural life of cities can only be dated to the Timurid period.[29] What seems certain is that the need for more easily comprehensible poetic texts, written in simpler language and free from extravagant rhetorical figures, was created in the urban environment of the second half of the 15th century and is most probably linked to the 'democratisation' of poetry.

Ottoman poetry anthologies from the first half of the 16th century show that urban consumers of Classical literature, receptive to the cultivation of Classical literature and the consumption of its products, were a rather heterogeneous group, including both simple craftsmen and top intellectuals. The same phenomenon was noticeable in Safavid Iran, as is illustrated by the fact that Sām Mīrzā (d. 1566) devoted the seventh chapter of his biographical anthology (*Tuḥfe-i Sāmī*) to the presentation of poets turned commoners. All indications are that this process had already begun under the Timurid and Turkmen dynasties (Ḳara ḳoyunlu, Aḳ ḳoyunlu) in the second half of the 15th century.[30] Suffice it to point out here that Bābā Fiġānī (d. 1519), considered by literary historians to be one of the pioneers of a new *ġazel* style often referred to as the *mekteb-i vuḳūʿ* or *vuḳūʿ-gūyī* (incidentalism),[31] was the son of a knife-maker and

27 For the term *sūz u güdāz* see Edith Gülçin Ambros, "Emotivity as a Stylistic Marker in Ottoman Lyric Poetry of the 15th and 16th Centuries," In *An Iridescent Device: Premodern Ottoman Poetry*, edited by Christiane Czygan, Stephan Connermann, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 33–48.

28 Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968), 95.

29 Julie Scott Meisami, "Genres of Court Literature," In *General Introduction to Persian Literature*, edited by J. T. P. de Bruijn (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 245.

30 Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī*, 137.

31 Pers. *maktab-i vuqūʿ*; *vuqūʿ-gūyī*

came from a simple family. In addition to social processes, the emergence of new trends may also have been helped by the fact that in Classical poetry, through improvisation, which was an important skill of good poets, there was always a creative process based on topicality, which reflected a particular moment, and, by the very nature of improvisation, it did not produce texts that were meticulously elaborated and presented rhetorical masterpieces.

The poems of the *vuḳūʿ-gūyī* movement are closer to improvised verse than to the rhetorically elaborate, complex texts of the Timurid period, since the poet is usually inspired to write a poem by an ordinary event (*vuḳūʿ*). The credo of the followers of this movement was summarized by Şhafīʿī Kadkanī as follows:

"We must once more draw poetry close to the experiences of daily life and turn our faces away from 'universal love', 'universal beloved' and everything that is absolute."[32]

Accordingly, *vuḳūʿ-gūyī* amorous *ġazel*s are closely connected to reality, their characters are flesh and blood. The love portrayed in these poems remains the hopeless longing for the beloved, but the poet portrays his feelings or his beautiful beloved in easily understandable language and with simple rhetorical devices, as Bābā Fiġānī does in his poem describing the passion of hopeless love, which begins with the following couplet, and whose starting point and framework is provided by a real event: the feast of the breaking of the fast (*ʿīd al-fiṭr*) has come:

ʿĪd şud her kes meh-i nev-rā mubārek-bād kerd
Her giriftārī bi-ṭāḳ-i ebruyī dil şād kerd[33]
The holiday came, and everyone welcomed the new moon,
Every captivated [lover's] heart was brightened by the arch of an eyebrow.

Incidentalism, which became a fashionable and popular trend in Safavid Iran in the first half of the 16th century, perhaps thanks to Iranian intellectuals who had emigrated to the Ottoman Empire, also appeared in Istanbul, the centre of Ottoman literature. Contemporary literary sources preserved a large number of poems that show characteristics of the *mekteb-i vuḳūʿ*. They were inspired by everyday occurrences such as a visit to the public bath or at a barber's shop, the beloved appearing in them as an ordinary human being, they are written in a simple and easily understandable language, and they are free of circumstantiality (*tekellüf*), like the following couplet by Rāżī:

32 Shafīʿī Kadkanī, "Persian Literature (Belles Lettres) from the Time of Jāmī to the Present Day," In *History of Persian Literature from the Beginning of the Islamic Period to the Present Day*, edited by George Morrison, (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 146.

33 Persian. *ʿĪd shud har kas mah-i nau-rā mubārak-bād kard/Har giriftārī bi-ṭāḳ-i abruyī dil shād kard*; Bābā Fiġānī Shīrāzī, *Dīvān-i Ashʿār*, edited by Aḥmad Suhaylī Ḫᵛānsārī, (Tehran: Iḳbāl, 1340 [1960]), 232.

Bugün bir nev-terāş āfet güzel gördüm sanavber-ḳad
Dedüm bir ʿāşıḳa adı nedür dedi ki Pīr Aḥmed[34]
Today I have seen a freshly shaved, pine-bodied, dangerous beauty,
I have asked a lover: What is his name? He said: Pīr Aḥmed.

Nihālī (d. 1542) was one of the acknowledged masters of *ġazel*s praising ordinary beloveds who appears in almost all biographical anthologies, earned his fame with poems about craftsmen beloveds, young tailors, cooks, and silver thread-makers. Though a manuscript of his divan hasn't surfaced yet, a handful of his poems were preserved in Āşıḳ Çelebi's *teẕkire* and Pervāne bey's *naẓīre* anthology.[35] Contemporary sources from the 16th century preserved a large number of *ġazel* written in the same style as Nihālī's poems, which praise the beauty of ordinary craftsmen beloveds and describe their everyday activities and their surroundings. Young barbers (*ser-tırāş*) or beautiful *maʿcūncı*s, specialists in producing various designer drugs popular in urban culture more often inspired poets to write about them than representatives of other professions.[36]

The shared characteristic of these *ġazel*s is that they are closely related to everyday Ottoman realities, on the one hand because they are addressed to flesh and blood human beings, and on the other hand because the poems describe life situations familiar to their contemporaries. Their poetic strategy of mixing the signifying universe of the classical tradition with words and concepts specific to their time and the given situation often while respecting the written and unwritten rules of classical poetry results in poems that are both very up to date and humorous. This creative method can be illustrated very well with a poem by Ṣadrī, a poet from the 16th century, whose *ġazel* depicts a barber beloved working at a public bath.[37]

Ṣadrī I.

Tīġi o ser-terāşuñ egdürdi ḫalḳa başı
Ḫancer çeküp dem-ā-dem ḳan eylemekde ḳaşı
The blade of that barber forced people to bow their heads,
His eyebrows drew its dagger and wants to shed blood.

34 Edirneli Nazmî, *Mecmaʿu'n-Nezâ'ir*, edited by M. Fatih Köksal (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), 332; Online available https://ekitap.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/56057,mecmaun-nezair-edirneli-nazmi-pdf.pdf?0, [accessed 02. 07 2022].
35 Âşık Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şuʿarâ*, 392–396; Pervâne b. Abdullah, *Pervâne Bey Mecmuası*, edited by Kamil Ali Gıynaş, (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), 241/1435–1436.
36 Péri Benedek, "Places Full of Secrets in 16th Century Istanbul: the Shops of the *Maʿcūncı*s," In *Ottomans – Crimea – Jochids: Studies in Honour of Mária Ivanics*, edited by István Zimonyi (Szeged: University of Szeged, Department of Altaic Studies, 2020), 257–270.
37 *Mecmū'atü'l-Leṭā'if ve Ṣandūḳatü'l-Maʿārif: İnceleme-Tenkitli Metin-Şair ve Şiir Dizini*, edited by İncinur Atik Gürbüz, (Ankara: T. C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 2018), 783, https://ekitap.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/57123,mecmuatul-letaif-ve-sandukatul-maarifpdf.pdf?0, [accessed 12.07.2022].

The first hemistich of the first couplet is built on the ambiguity of the key elements of the line, as the word *tīġ* can both refer to the blade of the barber and a sword used on the battlefield, the same way as the verbal expression "*baş egdürmek*" (to force someone to bow her/his head) can also describe both the activities of a conqueror forcing to submit his enemies and that of a barber shaving the head of his clients.

The poetic backbone of the second *miṣrāʿ* is provided by a combination of two poetic topoi selected from the signifying universe of classical poetry. In classical *ġazel*s the coquettish look or the eyelashes of the beloved are often compared to sharp and pointed weapons, such as a lance, a lancet, a dagger or an arrow and the beloved of the poet is often depicted as a young and blood-thirsty Turkish warrior. In Ṣadrī's lines the sharp weapon is a "*ḫancer*," a short and slightly curved dagger resembling the shape of the beloved's eyebrows. Beside the *tenāsüb* (the use of words with related meanings) formed by the semantic bonding of the words "*tīġ*" sword and "*ḫancer*" dagger the poetic force binding the two hemistiches together is provided by the link between the two poetic images showing the barber beloved both as a cruel conqueror and a bloodthirsty youth.

Ṣadrī II.

Aġyār-ı nā-terāşı aldı ele terāşa
Çeşmüm siṭili mānend aḳıtmasun mı yaşı
He took unshaven strangers in his hands to shave them,
How could my eyes resembling his water container not shed tears?

One of the basic premises of the classical love *ġazel*s is that while the beloved ignores the suffering poet lover, he gives strangers (Ottoman *aġyār*) his attention. Ṣadrī's second couplet adapts this poetic topos to everyday Ottoman life in the 16th century: the barber beloved serves strangers, and the poet's eyes well up with tears the same way water pours from the barber's water container.

Ṣadrī III.

Farrāş āh-ı ʿāşıḳ müjgān-ı dīde cā-rūb
Ḳo ṣulasun dükānuñ bu çeşm-i eşk-pāşı
The sigh of the lover is servant responsible for the carpets, his eyelashes are the broom,
Let these water sprinkling eyes to pour water to [clean] your shop.

In classic amorous *ġazel*s, the lover who longs in vain for the beloved not only sobs, but also sighs in sorrow. In the third couplet, a version of this poetic topos appears, updated in the spirit of tradition, and adapted to the situation in a very creative manner. The metaphors describing the sighing and weeping of the lover express the magnitude and gravity of grief. His deep sighs spread thick carpets in the shop, the lashes of the poet, stricken to the ground with grief, sweep the floor, his abundant tears are enough to mop the barber's shop floor.

Ṣadrī IV.

Kīse gibi sürinsem meyzer gibi ṣarılsam
Ḥammāma girse görsem ol ḫūb ser-terāşı
If I were used for rubbing [customers] like a cloth glove, or rolled up like a towel,
I would [at least] see that beautiful barber entering the bath.

A recurring motif in amorous *ġazel*s is that the poet would sacrifice his life and soul to at least catch a glimpse of his beloved. The sacrifice that Ṣadrī would make for this purpose fits the theme, as the rubbing glove and the towel evoke the bath where the beloved works as a barber. In the closing couplet the poet following the trend present in 16th century Ottoman poetry boasts with his literary accomplishments and praises his own poem. He terms it "*bī-naẓīr*" without a paralell, suggesting that it is so good that it is impossible to imitate it and write a poetic reply, *naẓīre* to it.

Ṣadrī V.

Bu şiʿr-i bī-naẓīrüñ gördüm geçindi ʿaynın
Dirsem ʿaceb mi Ṣadrī ʿayn-ı ʿadūya nāşī
I have witnessed it, your poem, which doesn't have a parallel, made his eyes widen,
Does it strange Ṣadrī, if I say, that it will make [your enemy] cast an evil eye.[38]

Conclusion

Nihālī's craftsmen poems and Ṣadrī's *ġazel*s would suggest that with the advent of the *mekteb-i vuḳūʿ*, the stylistic changes brought with them a significant change in the perspective on love and as the inspiration for love poems came from everyday incidents connected to contemporary realities, it became impossible to compose an amorous *ġazel* without being actually in love with a flesh and blood human being. However, it seems that it was not the case.

A network of imitation poems in a collection *naẓīre* networks from the mid-16th century suggests that composing poems in the 'incidentalist' style became trendy in the urban centres of the Empire and especially among poets of the second or third line. The collection titled *Mecmūʿat al-Leṭāʾif ve Ṣandūḳat el-Meʿārif* (A Collection of Witty Texts and the Chest of Gnostic Knowledge) preserved a network of poetic replies addressed to barber beloveds,[39] which also includes Ṣadrī's poem analysed above. Another very similar network is preserved in Pervāne Bey's (d. after 1561) collection.[40] It is of course possible that in 'the age of beloveds' it became a fashion to fall in love with barbers, however, it is more plausible to assume that the poetic style and the topic of these amorous *ġazel*s became fashionable in a wide circle of poets by the 1560s.

38 I express my gratitude to Prof. M. Fatih Köksal and Ms. Damla Saygılı for helping me to decipher the couplet.

39 *Mecmûʿatü'l-Letâif*, 779–789.

40 Pervâne b. Abdullah, *Pervâne Bey Mecmuası*, 1255–1258.

All this means that like earlier, when amorous *ġazel*s composed in the classical style also served as means to demonstrate one's poetic creativity and prowess in using rhetorical figures, after the incidentalist style became firmly established on the Ottoman literary scene and was accepted into the literary canon, it also became a tool for poets to showcase their talent and skills in the art of poetry.

Love, the topic of amorous *ġazel*s, let them be composed either in the classical or the incidentalist style was thus simply part of the poetic package, an essential element of the poetic tradition, one of many poetic choices available in the signifying universe of classical poetry and this means that love poetry could be written without poets experiencing the burning passion of love.

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New Sources

Hatice Aynur

In the Quest for a Lyrical Persona: Love in Ṭaṭavlalı Maḥremī's *Ġazel*s

Introduction

The theme of love held a central place in Ottoman poetry, finding expression in various poetic forms and genres, including *ġazel*s (lyrical poems), *ḳasīde*s (panegyric, praise poetry), *rubāʿī*s (quatrains), and *meṣnevī*s (epic poem in distiches). Of these, the *ġazel* form, was particularly favored for conveying different facets of love. The vast repository of extant *ġazel*s highlights the lasting significance of this theme in shaping Ottoman literary culture and its crucial role in the genre's continued popularity.

The conceptualization of love in Ottoman poetry draws on two primary sources. The first source is the corpus of Islamic philosophical, theological, and literary thought, preserved and transmitted over centuries through various languages, faith traditions, civilizations, and schools of thought. The second source is personal experience, whether drawn from the poets themselves or individuals within their close social circles. Unrequited love often served as a principal theme, enabling poets to give voice to their deepest emotional states and intellectual reflections. A notable example is Tācīzāde Caʿfer Çelebi (d. 1515), a poet and statesman, who recounts a personal love story in his *meṣnevī Hevesnāme* (The Book of Desire), composed in 1493–94.[1] Ottoman poets explored multiple interpretations of love, shaped by these distinct sources, and such interpretations have been categorized in various ways. The two most widely recognized classifications are those of true, divine, sacred, or mystical love (*ḥaḳīḳī* / *ilāhī* / *taṣavvufī*) and metaphorical, profane, or secular love (*mecāzī* / *beşerī* / *māddī).* These categories are further subdivided into numerous subgenres. Divine love is typically associated with devotion to God, but also includes love for the prophets, particularly the prophet Muhammad. Conversely, the metaphorical or profane category encompasses both platonic love between individuals and love driven by physical desire.

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1 See Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi, *Heves-nâme: İnceleme – Tenkitli Metin*, edited by Necati Sungur (Ankara: TDK, 2006). Selim S. Kuru examined the portrayal of love in the *meṣnevī*s *Hevesnāme* and *Fürḳatnāme*, both of which narrate true love stories and were composed during the same period (1471); see "Mesnevî Biçiminde Aşk Hali: Birinci Tekil Şahıs Anlatılar Olarak Fürkat-nâme, Heves-nâme Üzerinden Bir Değerlendirme," In *Nazımdan Nesire Edebî Türler, 25 Nisan 2008, Bildiriler*, edited by Hatice Aynur et al. (Istanbul: Turkuaz, 2009), 168–183.

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Ottoman poets' conceptions of love were shaped by a combination of written sources and oral traditions. Muslim philosophers such as Avicenna (d. 1037) and Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240) were particularly influential.[2] Their treatises on love, including Avicenna's *al-Risāle fī'l-ʿIşḳ* (Treatise on Love) and Ibn al-ʿArabī's *Fusūs al-Ḥikem* (Seals of Wisdom), circulated widely among Ottoman intellectuals and remain accessible in the libraries of Istanbul, attesting to their enduring significance.[3] Ibn al-ʿArabī's philosophical concept of *vaḥdet al-vücūd* (unity of being) gained further prominence in Anatolia through the writings of mystics such as Ṣadreddīn-i Ḳonevī (d. 1274), Mevlānā Rūmī (d. 1273), and Dāvūd-ı Ḳayserī (d. 1350), whose ideas significantly shaped Ottoman poetic views on love.[4] The influence of Persian poets, including Farīd al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 1221?), Niẓāmī of Ganja (d. 1201–14), and Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz (d. 1390?), also had a profound impact on the Ottoman literary treatment of love. Their diverse interpretations and vivid imagery enriched Ottoman portrayals of love, adding layers of complexity to its expression in Ottoman poetry.[5]

Two significant aspects of oral culture also shaped Ottoman poets' understanding of love. The first involved the circulation and sharing of both personal and third-party love stories, which informed the content of their poetry. The second was the tradition of memorizing poetry without reliance on written texts, alongside occasional reflections on the language and imagery used. These practices embedded love-related themes and imagery deeply into popular consciousness, ensuring the transmission of love poetry through both oral and written forms.

The *teẕkire*s (biographical dictionaries) that record the lives of poets from the first half of the 16th century offer numerous accounts of their love affairs. Ferdī (b. 1555), renowned for his physical beauty, is a notable example, with several accounts detailing his amorous relationships. One account even suggests his involvement in the tragic death of a lover.[6] The oral performance of poetry, especially in gatherings centered

2 For an overview of the theme of love in Islamic thought, see William C. Chittick, "Love in Islamic Thought," *Religion Compass* 8, 7 (2014), 229–238.

3 For copies and the Turkish translation of Avicenna's *al-Risāle fī al-ʿIşḳ*, see Ibn Sina, *Risâle fî Mâhiyeti'l-Işk = Aşkın Mahiyeti Hakkında Risale*, edited and translated by Ahmet Ateş (Istanbul: İÜ Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1953); for the English translation of Avicenna's *al-Risāle fī al-ʿIşḳ*, see Ibn Sina, "A Treatise on Love by Ibn Sina," trans. by Emil L. Fackenheim, *Medieval Studies* 7 (1945), 208–228. On Ibn al-ʿArabī's life, thought, and works, see https://ibnarabisociety.org, [accessed 02.02 2024].

4 For insights into how literary works facilitated the spread of Ibn al-ʿArabī's Akbari thought in the Ottoman realm, see Abdullah Uğur, "Ekberî Düşüncenin Yaygınlaşmasında Bir Araç Olarak Edebiyat: Mevlid, Muhammediye ve Envârü'l-Âşıkîn," In *Osmanlı'da İlm-i Tasavvuf*, edited by Ercan Alkan, Osman Sacid Arı (Istanbul: İSAR, 2018), 83–102.

5 For the relationship between Ottoman and Persian poetry, see Murat Umut İnan, "Rethinking the Ottoman Imitation of Persian Poetry," *Iranian Studies* 50, 5 (2017), 671–689. For an article examining the influence of Persian poetry, particularly Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz, on Ottoman poetry, see idem, "Osmanlı Edebî Hafızasında İran Şiirinin İzdüşümleri," In *Sanatta Hafızanın Biçimleri*, edited by Meryem Babacan Bursalı (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2017), 17–201.

6 For an account of Ferdī's life and love stories, see Âşık Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ: İnceleme-Metin*, edited by Filiz Kılıç, vol. 3, (Istanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 1159–1175. For the evidence regard-

on poetry and music, played a major role in disseminating and shaping the understanding of love.[7] A couplet by Behiştī (d. 1511/1520?) is particularly relevant to this discussion in two respects. First, the Turkish verb *demek* (to tell) emphasizes the oral transmission of knowledge, particularly the memory and meaning associated with love. Secondly, Ottoman poets considered Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz as the pioneer of the 'School of Love' (*Mekteb-i ʿışḳ)*, which influenced Ottoman love poetry by incorporating elements from Persian poets and poetry.[8]

> *Ġayrdan geçsün Behiştī şāʿirān-ı Rūm'a* ***di***
> ***Mekteb-i ʿışḳ****a muʿallim Ḥāfiẓ-ı Şirāzī'dür*
> O Behiştī! Tell the poets of Anatolia to cease their search for other guides.
> For the true master of love's school is none but Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz.[9]

Ottoman poets engaged with both divine and human love, often intertwining the two in their poetic compositions. The linguistic and thematic conventions in Ottoman poetry—including idioms, imagery, and vocabulary—were common to both forms of love, making it difficult to distinguish between them in individual works. This ambiguity was often intentional, serving various poetic and intellectual purposes. Determining whether a poem addresses divine or human love frequently depends on the poet's biography, the cultural and historical context of the poem's composition and reception, or the interpretive lens of its readers. While Yūnus Emre's 14th-century poetry is widely regarded as reflecting divine love, there remains considerable debate regarding whether Bāḳī's (d. 1600) *ġazel*s focus primarily on human or divine love, despite his prominence as a scholar and candidate for the office of sheikh ul-islam (chief jurisconsult).[10]

Ṭaṭavlalı Maḥremī (d. 1535) was another poet who explored the multifaceted nature of love in the *ġazel* form and genre. These works are preserved in a recently discovered manuscript copy of his *Dīvān*, housed in the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Zagreb), cataloged as OZJA 411. Although it is uncertain whether this is an autograph manuscript, the disordered structure of the text, particularly the uneven ar-

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ing Ferdī's role in the murder of his lover, see Bahir Selçuk, "Gerçeklik ve Kurgu Bağlamında Şair Ferdî'nin Âşığını Öldürmesi," *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 23 (April 2009), 139–146.

7 For details on the spaces of poetic production and consumption in 16th-century Istanbul, see Hatice Aynur, "Representations of Istanbul as a Literary and Cultural Space in Ottoman Texts (1520–1560)," In *Iridescent Device: Premodern Ottoman Poetry*, edited by Christiane Czygan, Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2018), 245–256; For insights into poetry *meclise*s and the tradition of meclisled recitations of Ottoman *ġazel*s, see Walter G. Andrews, Mehmet Kalpaklı, "Toward a Meclis-Centered Reading of Ottoman Poetry," *Journal of Turkish Studies = Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları [Cem Dilçin Armağanı I = Festchrift in Honor of Cem Dilçin I]* 33, 1 (2009), 309–318.

8 Murat Umut İnan emphasizes this aspect of the couplet, see İnan, "Osmanlı Edebî Hafızasında," 191.

9 All translations of the poems in this essay are the author's own. I have chosen to prioritise contextual meaning over literal word-for-word translation to ensure clarity.

10 For a study that challenges the prevailing view of the love depicted in Bāḳī's poems as profane, see Kenan Bozkurt, "Bâkî'nin Şiirlerinde Tasavvuf, Aşkın Ezeli Boyutu ve Güzellik," *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 10, 54 (2017), 22–35.

rangement at the beginning and end, suggests that it may have been a working draft used by the poet during the composition process.[11] The manuscript is distinguished by its arrangement of *ġazel*s under two distinct headings, *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* and [*Ġazeliyāt-ı*] *Ḥüsniyyāt*, a structure uncommon in the *dīvān*s of other poets. It is uncertain whether this classification originated with Maḥremī or was introduced by the copyist. However, both headings correspond to contemporary scholarly views that love in Ottoman *ġazel*s was expressed through two perspectives: divine and human.

This article seeks to explore the theme of love as expressed in Maḥremī's *ġazel* poetry.[12] The analysis focuses on three key areas: the division of the *ġazel*s, possibly established by either the poet or the copyist, the conceptual and sensory portrayals of love, and the representation of the poet as both lover and narrator. Maḥremī's biography, along with the literary categories of *İlāhī* and *Ḥüsniyyāt*, are briefly examined in the first two sections. The third section conducts an analytical reading of selected *ġazel*s to provide deeper insights into Maḥremī's understanding of love and the multi-layered identities of the lover, narrator, and poet in his work.

1 Highlights in Ṭaṭavlalı Maḥremī's life

Maḥremī, the son of Ṭaṭavlalı Meḥmed ʿAlī Bey, a known companion of Bāyezīd II (r. 1481–1512), remains a figure about whom limited biographical information is available, particularly concerning his birth and educational background.[13] However, it is documented that he served as an assistant judge at the Galata Court, one of the four principal courts in Istanbul, and later held a similar position in Thessaloniki. This suggests that Maḥremī likely received a *medrese* education and was part of the *ʿulemā* class (the learned religious establishment).[14]

By the time of his death in July 1535, Maḥremī had written six works, though only five survived.[15] His *Basīṭnāme* is no longer extant, but his other major work, the *Şeh-*

11 Further details on the specific features of this copy will be included in my forthcoming book, *Dīvān-ı Maḥremī: Introduction and Textual Analysis*.

12 On the perception of love within Ottoman poetry, see Ahmet Atilla Şentürk, "Osmanlı Şiirinde Aşka Dair," *Doğu Batı Dergisi* 7, 26 (2004), 55–68. For a recent assessment of the concept of love in Ottoman poetry, see Berat Açıl, "Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Aşk: Kökenleri, Failleri ve Öteki," In *Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Öteki*, edited by Adnan Oktay (Istanbul: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2022), 85–113.

13 For more information about Maḥremī's life, see Hatice Aynur, "Mahremi," *EI*^{3}, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021), 80–82, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_36034.

14 While the precise timing of his roles remains uncertain, he continued his duties as the regent of the *Galata ḳāḍīsı* until 1528. In that year, he relocated to Thessaloniki, maintaining the same position, alongside Beyşehirli Ḥasan Çelebi (d. 1552), who was appointed as the *ḳāḍī* of Thessaloniki, see Ercan Alan, "934 (1528) Tarihli Bir Belgeye Göre Rumeli'de Kadılık Müessesi," *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 9, 46 (October 2016), 169; as described in ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi, *Meşāʿir üş-Şuʿarā*, 785; he departed Thessaloniki in 1533 to return to Istanbul.

15 For his works, see Aynur, "Mahremi," *EI*^{3}.

nāme, along with the *Şütürnāme*, *Mecmaʿ ül-Leṭāyif*, and *Ṭarab ül-Mecālis*—the latter three being largely adaptations or compilations from Persian sources—remain available. The presence of Persian poems in his *Dīvān* further highlights his deep familiarity with Persian literary traditions. Although his works were well-regarded during his lifetime, as reflected in their inclusion in 16th century *teẕkire*s (biographical dictionaries) and *mecmūʿa*s (anthologies), his literary prominence diminished in later anthologies, suggesting that his reputation was largely confined to his own era.[16]

In modern literary history, Maḥremī is acknowledged as an important figure. Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (d. 1966) placed him, along with Edirneli Naẓmī (d. 1585?), at the forefront of the *Türkī-i Basīṭ* (Simple Turkish) movement, though the movement's existence and relevance continue to be topics of scholarly debate.[17]

It is worth noting that Maḥremī's use of themes, literary techniques, and imagery largely reflected those of his predecessors and contemporaries, shaped by shared literary, religious, and cultural frameworks. However, like other poets, he emphasized particular themes and sought to distinguish himself through a distinct vocabulary, nuanced word connotations, and specific rhetorical strategies.

2 On Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī and Ġazeliyāt-ı Ḥüsniyyāt

The Arabic terms *ilāhī*/*ilāhiyye* (plural *ilāhiyyāt*) and *ḥüsniyyāt (plural of ḥüsnī*) have distinct meanings: *ilāhī*/*ilāhiyye* relates to divine knowledge and God, while *ḥüsniyyāt* pertains to beauty and aesthetic matters.[18] In the context of Maḥremī's *Dīvān*, *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* and *Ġazeliyāt-ı Ḥüsniyyāt* serve not only as labels for *ġazel* forms but also reveal the thematic structure of the poems. *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* comprises poems engaging with spiritual and divine concerns, whereas *Ġazeliyāt-ı Ḥüsniyyāt* focuses on *ġazel*s dealing with physical beauty, earthly love, and the beloved's alluring traits, such as facial features and other captivating characteristics. Apart from Maḥremī's *Dīvān*, which is the only known example within *divan* collections, these terms also appear in works by poets and scholars of the same period, where they were used to classify the *ġazel* form. For instance, in the preface to his *Mecmūʿa* titled *Cāmiʿ ün-Neẓāʾir* (compiled in 1512), Ḥacı Kemāl of Eğridir categorized *ġazel*s into genres such as *muvaşşaḥ* (a strophic poem), *müfettaḥ*,[19] *mülemmā* (verses alternating between Arabic, Persian, or

16 Maḥremī has four parallel poems in Edirneli Naẓmī's *Cāmiʿ ün-Neẓāʾir* and seven parallel poems in Pervāne Bey's *Mecmūʿa*, both of which are significant 16th century poetry anthologies.

17 See Hatice Aynur, "Rethinking the Türkî-i Basît Movement in Turkish Literature," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 25 (2008), 79–97.

18 http://lugatim.com/s/ilahiyat

19 Since this term has yet to be found in other sources, it is presently unclear what specific genre of poetry is being referred to.

Turkish), *muʿammā* (riddles), *ilāhiyyāt*, *ḥüsniyyāt*, and *hezliyyāt* (humorous poems).[20] Ḥacı Kemāl appears to regard *ḥüsniyyāt* and *ilāhiyyāt* as distinct *ġazel* genres. The 16th century biographer Laṭīfī (d. 1582) similarly engages with these classifications in his evaluations of poets. He critiques the *ḥüsniyyāt* poems of the renowned Sufi poet Nesīmī (d. 1417?) for lacking vibrancy, while praising his religious and *naʿt* poems (the praise the Prophet) for their mystical depth.[21] Laṭīfī also notes Saġārī's (d. 1523–24) relatively small output of *ḥüsniyyāt* compared to his numerous humorous poems (*hezliyyāt*), suggesting that, for Laṭīfī, the thematic focus of *ḥüsniyyāt* held greater importance than genre alone.[22] Merdümī (d. 1563) offers a notable example of the thematic division in poetic works. In the preface to his *Tuḥfet ül-İslām* (The Gift of Islam), he explains that while he initially concentrated on *ḥüsniyyāt* (beauty-themed poetry), embarking on his verse translation of forty hadiths, *Tuḥfet ül-İslām*, to explore divine subjects. As shown below, Merdümī's four couplets exemplify how Ottoman poets approached *ḥüsniyyāt* poetry.[23]

Nice şiʿrüŋ var ol da ḥüsniyyāt
Ḳanı yā Taŋrı'ya yarar kelimāt
All your poems are mere *ḥüsniyyāt*, despite their great number.
Where are the poems worthy of God's approval?

Nice bir vaṣf-ı ʿārıż u ḫaṭ-ı yār
Ola her dem dilünde leyl ü nehār
How long will the image of your beloved's soft, quince-like down and
the praise of their cheek remain in your heart?

Nice bir fikr ü kākül-i ḥubān
Olısar gerdenünde bār-ı girān
How long will you bear the weight of thoughts and
locks of beautiful people around your neck?

Seni fikr-i leb ü ḫaṭ-ı cānān
Gāh ser-mest ide gehī ḫayrān
The thought of your beloved's soft down and
lips leaves you either intoxicated or bewildered.

These examples highlight the widespread use of terms such as *ilāhī*, *ilāhiyyāt*, *ḥüsn*, *ḥüsniyyāt* to classify poems based on their thematic content within the Ottoman literary tradition.

20 See, Yasemin Ertek Morkoç, "Eğridirli Hacı Kemal'in Câmiü'n-Nezâir'i: Metin ve Mecmua Geleneği Üzerine Bir İnceleme," (PhD diss., Ege University, 2003), XLVIII–XLIX.
21 See, Latîfî, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ ve Tabsıratü'n-Nuzamâ: İnceleme-Metin*, edited by Rıdvan Canım (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2000), 514.
22 Latîfî, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arâ ve Tabsıratü'n-Nuzamâ*, 260.
23 Ahmet Sevgi, "Merdümî ve Tuhfetü'l-İslâm'ı," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Edebiyat Dergisi*, no. 6 (1991), 106.

2.1 On the Theme of Love in Maḥremī's *Ġazel*s

Maḥremī's *Dīvān* contains a total of 122 *ġazel*s, with 10 located in the *İlāhī* section and 112 in the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section, one of which is composed in Persian.[24] Of the six *ġazels* in the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section, three are parallel compositions to *ġazel*s by Aḥmed Paşa (d. 1496–97), while the other three correspond to *ġazels* by Ḫafī (d. 15th century), Caʿfer Çelebi (d. 1515), and Mesīḥī (d. 1512). It is noteworthy that the poets with whom Maḥremī engaged through these parallel compositions were pivotal figures in the development of Ottoman poetry, significantly shaping its content, imagery, and vocabulary. A common feature of these poets' work is their focus on earthly love rather than divine love, a theme that also characterizes the *ġazel*s in the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section of Maḥremī's *Dīvān.*

In the *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* section, Maḥremī addresses themes such as the impermanence of worldly existence, detachment from material pleasures, asceticism, the importance of worship, the Day of Judgment, and the punishment of hellfire. Throughout these ten poems, Maḥremī consistently employs the term *ḥubb* to express the concept of love, rather than the more commonly used *ʿışḳ*. It is noteworthy that, *şehvet*[25] (lust), with its negative connotations, appears only once. His deliberate avoidance of *ʿışḳ*, which connotes excessive or passionate love, may be due to its absence from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Instead, Maḥremī adopts the term *ḥubb*, meaning "to love" or "to cherish" which appears in the Quran, alongside *maḥbūb* (beloved), derived from the same root.[26] While the exact motivations behind Maḥremī's choice of words are unclear, it can be inferred that he had a deep understanding of the nuanced meanings of both *ḥubb* and *ʿışḳ*. Maḥremī's proficiency in Persian, evident in his ability to compose and translate poetry in the language, suggests his familiarity with the concept of *ʿışḳ*—a theme that gained prominence through Sufi theories of love and became central to Sufi literature, particularly in the works of poets

24 Two *ġazel*s were discovered in *Mecmūʿa*s and subsequently added to the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section in my ongoing work on Maḥremī's *Dīvān.*

25 In *Ġazel* 1, the poet introduces *şehvet* in the third couplet. This *ġazel* serves as a guiding voice, urging listeners to listen to wisdom and prepare for the Hereafter. The poet cautions that one must strive in this world and fulfill the obligations of being a Muslim to avoid the repercussions in the afterlife. The term *şehvet* refers not only to an intense desire for the opposite sex, but also to the allure of worldly pleasures. The couplet highlights the critical choice between the path of lust and the path of righteousness, with those choosing lust unable to find the path of virtue: *Rāh-ı şehvet sāliki hīç ola mı ehl-i sülūk / Ṣaʿba düşer varduġunca kim ki ḳor yolın düzin.*

26 For an in-depth semantic exploration of *ḥubb* see A. Z. Obiedat, "The Semantic Field of Love in Classical Arabic: Understanding the Subconscious Meaning Preserved in the Ḥubb Synonyms and Antonyms through Their Etymologies," In *The Beloved in Middle Eastern Literatures: The Culture of Love and Languishing*, edited by Alireza Korangy, Hanadi Al-Samman, Michael C. Beard (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 300–323.

like Farīd al-ʿAṭṭār and Mevlānā Rūmī.[27] However, despite his awareness of *ʿışḳ* and its religious associations, Maḥremī, who is not linked to Sufi tendencies, seems to have deliberately excluded *ʿışḳ* and its connotations from the poems in the *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* section.

In two of the ten *ġazel*s in the *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* section, *ḥubb* is used in three couplets. As will be discussed below, these couplets illustrate some of the semantic dimensions attributed to *ḥubb* in Ottoman poetic discourse. In the fifth and sixth couplets of the fifth *ġazel*, *ḥubb* is used twice, metaphorically symbolizing a fondness for, and love of, the temporal world. In both couplets, the poet engages in self-admonition, drawing attention to the potential hazards and moral implications of being enamoured with worldly pleasures and attractions.

> *Ḥubb-ı ḥūbāndur ki maḥbūb-ı ezelden devr idüp*
> *ʿĀlem içre ser-nigūn itmiş seni kākül gibi* (*ġazel* 5/couplet 5)
> The love you feel for the beautiful ones is a reflection of true love, which is God's eternal love that has existed since eternity. Thus, the love you have experienced in this world has humbled you, bending your neck like a lock of hair.

Maḥremī's couplet reflects a Sufi understanding of the creation of the world and humanity, as derived from the well-known *Hadith:* "I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known. Thus, I created creation so that they might know Me."[28] This interpretation underscores God's desire to be recognized and His love for His own beauty. Within this framework, the souls of lovers, who are mirrors of divine beauty, were created and exposed to the absolute perfection of God's countenance. These souls convened in the divine presence at the Assembly of Pre-Eternity (*elest bezmi*), where, captivated by His beauty, they pledged their eternal love. In this context, worldly love emerges as an extension of the soul's primordial covenant with God at the Eternal Assembly.[29] Yet, worldly love is frequently bound to the sensory, considered lesser in nature. Lovers, overwhelmed by their emotions, may be perceived negatively. In this couplet, the poet intricately connects the loose strand of hair to the lover's inner turmoil.

In Ottoman poetic tradition, the color black (*siyāh*) symbolizes the worldly, base, and impure, whereas its counterpart, *nūr* (light), represents the divine and transcen-

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27 See, Joseph E. B. Lumbard, "Ḥubb to ʿIshq: The Development of Love in Early Sufism," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, 3 (2007), 345–385, [doi:10.1093/jis/etm030].

28 This *hadith* is not included in the canonical collections of *hadith*, see Ebū al-Fidā İsmāʿīl b. Muḥammad ʿAclūnī, *Keşf al-Ḫafā ve Müzīl al-Libās: ammā İştehere min al-Eḥādīs ʿalā Elsine al-Nās*), edited by Ahmed Hindavi (Beyrut: al-Mektebe al ʿAsriyye, 1420/2000).

29 In a mystical commentary on the Eternal Assembly, based on the verse from the Quran, Araf 7:172: "And recall (O Prophet) when your Lord brought forth descendants from the loins of the sons of Adam, and made them witnesses against their own selves, asking them: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes, we do testify. We did so lest you claim on the Day of Resurrection: "We were unaware of this". https://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php/s17_old.xml?sura=7&verse=172&to=174, [accessed 10.02.2024]. For an analysis of three different mystical commentaries on the Eternal Assembly, see also Gürbüz Deniz, "Elest Bezmi ya da Hangi Söz," *Eskiyeni* 26 (Spring 2013), 151–161.

dent. In the following couplet, Maḥremī suggests that metaphorical love has the potential to lead one toward divine love, while also warning against its entanglement with the temporal and sensory.

> ***Ḥubb***-ı *sevdādur çıkar dilden ḫayāl-i ḫāli kim*
> *Rū-siyāh olmayasın tā dāne-i fülfül gibi* (*ġazel* 5/couplet 6)
> Release from your heart the dream of your beloved's black mole, for it may bring you illness. In doing so, you will spare yourself the fate of bearing a blackened face, like a grain of black pepper.

This couplet refers to the Turkish expressing about having a "black" or "white" face after completing a task, which reflects either shame or success.

The third appearance of *ḥubb* is in the second couplet of the ninth *Ġazel:*

> ***Ḥubb***-ı *dünyādan muḥaṣṣal yüz ḳarasıdur hemin*
> *ʿĀḳil-iseŋ olma Mecnūn'ı bu sevdādan geçe* (*Ġazel* 9/ couplet 2)
> The love of the world inevitably leads to shame and disgrace. If you are wise, do not become like *Mecnūn*—abandon your attachment to worldly desires.

Throughout the ninth *Ġazel*, Maḥremī calls for detachment from the material world in preparation for the Hereafter. In the second couplet, he contrasts divine love with human, earthly love, using the terms *ḥubb*, *sevdā*, and *Mecnūn.* The Arabic word *sevdā* (blind love or overwhelming passion) is used to describe human love, with *Mecnūn* portrayed as a figure consumed by it. It is also worth noting that Maḥremī depicts *Mecnūn* as someone who does not renounce worldly love, in contrast to his typical portrayal in Turkish literature, where he symbolizes the abandonment of all in the pursuit of God.[30] In the third couplet, Maḥremī emphasizes that attachment to physical beauty (the beloved's cheek) is a hindrance on the spiritual path toward heaven.

The *Ḥüsniyyāt* section of the *ġazel*s focuses primarily on themes of metaphorical and human love. These poems explore the roles of the lover and the beloved, as well as the expression of love itself. Additionally, various terms associated with or suggestive of worldly love are employed throughout. It is notable that the absence of the word *ḥubb* in this section reflects a deliberate choice by Maḥremī. However, *maḥbūb*, derived from *ḥubb* and meaning "beloved," appears in three instances. One such example can be found in *Ġazel* 97/ couplet 5:

> *Ẕevḳ-ı cihān-ı fānī* ***maḥbūb*** *u meydür ancaḳ*
> *Böyle görindi baŋa cām-ı cihān-nümāda*
> As it appeared to me through the glass that shows the world,
> the only pleasures in this temporal life are the beloved and wine.

30 See Christiane Czygan's article in this volume on *Mecnūn:* "The Dual Impact of Madness in Sultan Süleyman's Hamburg Manuscript (1554)." 30 – 37.

As previously noted, Maḥremī's *ġazels* present a nuanced portrayal of perceptual love, depicting lovers and rivals within the framework of profane love, using the ideas, concepts, words, and imagery familiar to his time. *Ġazel* 47 offers valuable insight into Maḥremī's conception of love, with the repetition of the refrain (*redīf*) *ʿışḳ* underscoring his understanding of it.

In the first two couplets, Maḥremī delves into the essence of love and the attributes of the genuine lover: love is hardship, and the true lover does not escape from these hardships even for a moment. The lover finds solace in suffering and perseveres through the pains of love without complaint. The word *müşkül* (difficult, hard), appearing in the first line of Maḥremī's opening couplet, is particularly significant. It carries considerable weight in Persian poetry and has been carefully chosen for its resonance. This choice of terminology, deliberate and nuanced, evokes a direct connection to the celebrated *ġazel* of Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz (d. 1389).[31]

[Mużāriʿ: Mefʿūlü Fāʿilātü Mefāʿīlü Fāʿilün]

*Yā Rab ne derd-**i müşkül** imiş bu belā-yı ʿışḳ*
Bilmez bu derdi ol ki degül mübtelā-yı ʿışḳ
Oh my God! The difficulty of love is incredibly insurmountable.
Those who have not been consumed by love are unaware of its challenges.

Zaḥmet ṣanur bu derdi cefā çekmeyen velī
Rāḥat gelür belā-keşe derd ü veġā-yı ʿışḳ
Those untouched by love often view it as burdensome, yet those who are enamored with the trials and tribulations of love remain undisturbed by them.

Ābād olan o ḫāne-i dildür ki dāyimā
Zīr ü zeber ide iy ḫayl-i cefā-yı ʿışḳ
Oh, you who understand the hardships of love!
Your heart remains a joyful abode, even when love brings you sorrow.

This couplet portrays lovers as a community, suggesting that, though outwardly burdened by misery, their hearts are inwardly prosperous—like a house that, though weathered on the outside, is well cared for within, thanks to love's presence.

Bünyād-ı cism hergiz olur mıydı pāyidār
Āhūn-ı dilde olmasa memlū hevā-yı ʿışḳ
If the wounded heart were not sustained by the desire to love you, how could the body even stand?

31 In Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz's couplet, translated by A.Z. Foreman: "Come, wine boy, bring the cup around and pour out the spirit freely / At first sight, love seemed to be easy. But it soon became difficult for me", see https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2016/03/30/ghazal-1-of-hafezs-divan/, [accessed 5.02.2024]. For the impact of Ḥāfiẓ' opening couplet on Ottoman poets, see İ. Hakkı Aksoyak, "Hafız Divanındaki İlk Beytin Osmanlı Edebiyatına Etkisi," *bilig* 8 (Winter 1999), 99–104.

The term *hevā* here carries two meanings: "breath," the essence of life, and "empty desire." The poet implies that love, though it may seem an empty longing, is as vital to life as the breath we take.

Pür-sūz u sāz seyr ider iken hevāyile
Niʿmet degül mi ʿāşıḳa gūş-ı nevā-yı ʿışḳ
Is it not a blessing for the lover, wandering with burning passion and desire, to hear the melodies of love?

This couplet connects the experience of love with the playing of musical instruments, particularly the *sāz*, or reed flute (*ney*). It evokes the imagery of the *Meṣnevī* by Mevlānā Rūmī, particularly its opening lines. Commentaries suggest that listeners become captivated by the *ney* because, like them, it mourns separation.

Sen bir gedā-yı müflis iken Maḥremī saŋa
Olmaḳ neden bu mertebede pādişā-yı ʿışḳ
O Maḥremī! What force has raised you, a penniless beggar,
to the exalted rank of the Sultan of Love?

In this closing couplet, the poet addresses himself as a lover, highlighting the transformative power of love, which transcends social hierarchies, enabling even the lowliest beggar (*gedā*) to ascend to the stature of a ruler (*pādişāh*) within the realm of love.

The third *ġazel*, consisting of seven couplets in the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section, delves into the hardships of love, emphasizing themes of pain, isolation, and vulnerability. In this poem, Maḥremī, in the role of the poet-lover, invokes the rhyme and refrain "O God, isn't that there no" (*-emi + yoḳ mı yā Rab*) to express his suffering as a lover. The rhetorical nature of the question, which implies a negative response, deepens the portrayal of the lover's anguish. The recurrence of this refrain throughout the *ġazel* reinforces the intensity of the lover's pain and his profound sense of helplessness in each couplet.

[remel: feʿilātün feʿilātün feʿilātün feʿilün]

Dil ü cān ḫastesinüŋ emsemi yoḳ mı yā Rab
Ġamzeler yāresinüŋ merhemi yoḳ mı yā Rab
O God, is there no remedy for the soul's affliction, no balm for the wound inflicted upon the heart by the beloved's gaze?

*Ol perī ʿışḳiyle düşdüm **ayaḳ**dan yaŋa*
Destgīr olmaġa bir ādemī yoḳ mı yā Rab
I collapsed to the ground, weakened by the love of this fairy-tale beauty.
O God, is there no one to extend a hand and lift me up?

In this couplet, the Turkish word *ayaḳ* holds a dual meaning: while it commonly means "stand" or "foot," it also refers to a "goblet," alluding to the connection between love and wine, and how love has led him to drink.

Seyr ḳıldum niçe biŋ cevr ü cefā ʿālemini
Bu cihān içre ṣafā ʿālemi yoḳ mı yā Rab
I have passed through this world of pain and sorrow countless times:
O God, is there no peaceful and joyful gathering here?

Meclis-i ʿıyş u feraḥda bulınur çün hem-dem
Bezm-i endūh u ġamuŋ hem-demi yoḳ mı yā Rab
There is a companion in the assembly of pleasure and amusement:
O God! why is there no friend in the assembly of grief and sorrow?

ʿIşḳ baḥrine düşen bī-ser ü pā miskīni
Ṣalmaġa sāḥil-i baḥre gemi yoḳ mı yā Rab
The wretched one, lost in the sea of love:
O God, is there no ship to carry him safely to the shore?

Ehl-i ġamem ḥālümi bilmez naẓar itmez hergiz
Ḥüsn ili beglerinüŋ hīç ġamı yoḳ mı yā Rab
I am among those burdened with sorrow, yet no one looks back to those in grief or shows concern for their plight: O God, will the rulers of the realm of beauty never know sorrow themselves?

***Maḥremī** gibi cihān ġam u endūh içre*
*Ḥalūḳ-ı derd ü belā **maḥrem**i yoḳ mı yā Rab*
O my God, in this world filled with grief and sorrow, is there no friend like Maḥremī, a confidant (*maḥrem*) in times of distress?

In this couplet, the poet plays on the word *maḥrem*, which signifies both a close, trusted friend who shares one's secrets and his own pen name, *Maḥremī*.

In this *ġazel*, the poet Maḥremī reflects on his own circumstances and the world around him, repeatedly invoking the refrain "O God" (*yā Rab*) as he seeks divine intervention. While the rhyme and theme suggest that this *ġazel* could be categorized under the *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* section, its subject matter is centered on profane love. Feeling a deep sense of isolation and alienation from any community, the poet turns to God as the only authority capable of understanding his plight and the challenges he faces. The underlying message of the *ġazel* implies that falling in love with the material world and people is the first step toward attaining divine love. As mentioned earlier, according to Ibn al-ʿArabī's philosophy of *vaḥdet al-vücūd* (unity of being), widely accepted in Anatolia, profane love is a necessary step toward divine union.[32] Thus, the poet-lover's expressions of helplessness can be interpreted as a plea for assistance in transcending metaphorical love and progressing toward the divine.

32 For Ibn al-ʿArabī's perspective on love, see Hany T.A. İbrahim, "Ibn 'Arabī's Metaphysics of Love," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society* 63 (2018), 4–70.

3 Maḥremī's Lyrical Persona as a Poet-lover

As noted above, the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section consists of 112 *ġazel*s, all of which revolve around the theme of love, with particular attention given to the anguish of love, especially unrequited love. These poems exhibit the characteristics of *ʿudhrī* love, a concept rooted in Arabic poetry and dominant in Persian literary tradition. The poet-lover is depicted as enduring unrequited love, separation from the beloved, and a despairing sense of futility regarding any potential reunion. Despite these hardships, he refrains from reproaching the beloved for neglecting his love, nor does he seek explanation or demand the affection he feels he deserves. A key question is whether the lover or speaker in these poems represents Maḥremī himself or a constructed poetic persona. In her seminal work, Edith Gülçin Ambros examines the tension between the traditional collective "I" and the individual "I" in Ottoman poetry, focusing on the *ġazel*s of the famous Gelibolulu ʿĀlī (d. 1600).[33] Ambros argues that while lyric poems may contain autobiographical elements, they serve as historical sources only to a limited extent.[34] Poets, especially in the context of lyric poetry, are not expected to be faithful chroniclers of their own experiences.[35] Although poets might integrate historical events into their works, they are expected to depict such events accurately, but they are not bound to express their personal thoughts and emotions truthfully. However, when external biographical information about the poet is available, it may provide additional context for interpreting the emotional content of the poetry.

Given this context, Maḥremī's *ġazel*s cannot be seen as self-reflective. The absence of biographical evidence from contemporary sources about his personal feelings and experiences complicates our understanding of the "lover" figure in his poetry. Thus, it would be mistaken to assume that this figure directly represents Maḥremī or reflects his own emotions.[36] Nevertheless, through the lyrical persona he constructs, his poems reveal the cultural and poetic conventions surrounding love, the lover, and the beloved. The following two *ġazel*s exemplify Maḥremī's lyrical persona as a poet-lover. In both, the Turkish refrain repeats throughout each couplet, and the poems conclude in the possessive first-person singular form. This recurring rhyme and refrain pattern highlights the lover's emotional state, inviting the reader or listener to empathize with his plight.

The first example is *Ġazel* 61, composed of seven couplets, where the refrain *benüm*—carrying the dual meaning of "my" and "I am"—combined with the suffix *-ārı-dur*, serves as the rhyme. It is worth noting that in the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section, five *ġazel*s use

33 Edith Gülçin Ambros, "Geleneksel "Ben" ile Bireysel "Ben" Çelişkisi ve Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî," In *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî Çalıştayı Bildirileri, 28–29 Nisan 2011*, edited by İ. Hakkı Aksoyak, (Ankara: TDK, 2014), 66.

34 Ambros, "Geleneksel "Ben" ile," 66.

35 Ambros, "Geleneksel "Ben" ile," 66.

36 In contrast to Maḥremī, several *ġazel*s by Meʾālī (d. 1535–36), İsḥāḳ Çelebi (d. 1537), and Ḫayālī Bey (d. 1556–57) can be interpreted as ego-documents, as recorded in the *teẕkire*s by Laṭīfī and ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi.

benüm as a refrain, with many other couplets incorporating this word to express the poet-lover's experience of love. The recurring use of *benüm* in each couplet allows the poet to fully articulate his emotional state and the complexities of his situation. As the poem progresses, the poet enumerates the various facets of the lover's suffering in separation from the beloved. This repetition of *benüm* intensifies the effect on the reader or listener, amplifying the poet-lover's sense of pain and anguish.

[remel: fāʿilātün fāʿilātün fāʿilātün fāʿilün]

Yārsuz her dem işüm feryād ü zārīdür benüm
Yareler sīnemde yārüŋ yādigārıdur benüm
Every time I am separated from my beloved, all I can do is weep and lament; the wounds on my chest are the cherished heirlooms left by my beloved.

Ḫaṭṭı sevdāsında tīġ-ı hicrle oldum şehīd
Şimdi ḳabrüm bāġ-ı cennet sebzezārıdur benüm
In my longing for the (black) beard of my beloved, I was martyred by the sword of separation. Now, my grave has become a green garden in paradise.

This couplet also alludes to the belief that lovers who die are regarded as martyrs.

Görmek-içün ben marīż-i ʿışḳı her gün dostlar
Sūz u derdüm yanıma gelmeŋ ki sārīdür benüm
O friends! Do not visit me daily, for I am stricken with the illness of love.
My sickness and fever are contagious.

Eşk-i çeşmüm baḥrı pāyān olaldan ḫuşk-ı leb
Cāygāhum her dem ol baḥrüŋ kenārıdur benüm
I have been standing on the edge of the sea, my lips parched with thirst, ever since the sea of my tears dried up.

Şīşe-i ʿahdüm şıdı seng-i cefā ẓāhir olan
Şimdi ḳalbüm içre anuŋ inkisārıdur benüm
It has become clear that the stone of torment has shattered the bottle of my promise, and now its shards pierce my heart.

This couplet reflects the lover's mental anguish over a broken promise.

Ḫāletümdür ıżṭırārı ṣanmaŋuz kim dostlar
Āh u feryād u fiġānum iḫtiyārīdür benüm
O friends! Do not think that I am in this state against my will,
for my weeping, groaning, and cries are the result of my own desire.

Maḥremī dilber mi yoḳ iʿtiyādında ṭutar
Varlıġum bildüm ki emr-i iʿtiyādīdür benüm
Maḥremī! There is no beauty who takes you into account.
I have come to realize that my existence in this world holds no meaning.

The second example is *Ġazel* 69, consisting of five couplets, where the refrain *görmedüm* (I have not seen) and a rhyme ending with the suffix *-endi* are used. The primary theme of the poem explores the lover's emotional turmoil caused by separa-

tion from the beloved. In the third couplet, the poet metaphorically presents his heart as a *levend*, a figure often used in Ottoman poetry to signify a strong and courageous naval soldier, symbolizing both physical beauty and bravery. The poet remarks with surprise that he has not seen his heart in the guise of a mariner for years, leaving him unsure of its current condition.

[remel: fāʿilātün fāʿilātün fāʿilātün fāʿilün]

Niçe günlerdür ki ol serv-i bülendi görmedüm
Niçe demlerdür şeh-i gülgūn-semendi görmedüm
I have not seen my tall, cypress-like beloved in a long time.
t has been ages since I saw the *şeh* (beloved) riding the rose-colored horse.

The word *gülgūn* refers to Ḫüsrev's horse, famed for its speed in the well-known love story of *Ḫüsrev and Şīrīn.*

ʿĀşıḳa meyl eylemez ol ḫᵘāce-i ḥüsn ü cemāl
Aŋa beŋzer hīc ḳulın sevmez efendi görmedüm
He who profits from his beauty does not care for his beloved, and
I have never known a master who did not love his servants as much as he loves himself.

Gönlümi kūyına şaldum gitdi ayruḳ gelmedi
Yıllar oldı noldı bilmen ol levendi görmedüm
I left my heart with my beloved and went away, never to return (like a sailor).
It has been years, and I still do not know what has become of it.

Bir ḳıl ile bende çekdi gönlümi zülf-i nigār
Bend çoḳ gördüm cihānda hīc bu bendi görmedüm
A single strand of my beloved's hair has bound my heart to him.
I have seen many bonds on earth, but none like this.

Dūr olalı Maḥremī dildārdan bir gün daḫi
Dimedi kim bunca gündür derdmendi görmedüm
Since Maḥremī has been parted from his beloved, not a single day has the beloved remarked, "I haven't seen heartbroken Maḥremī in a while."

This couplet underscores the beloved's indifference, lack of care, and unfaithfulness.

It is evident that neither *ġazel* contains explicit biographical details or a defined social context. Instead, Maḥremī's lyrical persona embodies the emotions and experiences of the 'lover' archetype typical of his era. In both poems, the dominant themes of separation and suffering are reinforced by the recurring refrains *benüm* and *görmedüm* at the end of each couplet, further accentuated by the rhythmic structure of the *ʿarūż* meter, which adds a musical quality.[37]

37 On the other hand, many 16th century *ġazel*s contain biographical material. This material serves as a crucial source for Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı's *Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham and Londan: Duke University, 2005), as well as Selim S. Kuru's article, "Naming the Beloved in Ottoman Turkish Gazel: The Case of İshak Çelebi

Conclusion

This article represents the first in-depth study of Maḥremī's *Dīvān*, with a particular focus on his *ġazel*s and the theme of love. The findings of this study are as follows:

The *Dīvān* contains *ġazel*s that are divided into two distinct categories: *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* and *Ġazeliyāt-ı Ḥüsniyyāt.* This classification is unique and, to our knowledge, has not been observed in any other *Dīvān.* Thus, this study marks the initial exploration of the significance of *ilāhī* and *ḥüsniyyāt* within the context of Ottoman poetic culture. Future research may further illuminate the specific meanings and nuances of these terms in relation to Ottoman, Arabic, and Persian literary traditions.

The ten *ġazel*s within the *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* section notably avoid the word *ʿışḳ*, opting instead for *ḥubb*, a term frequently found in the *Quran* and in the sayings of the prophet Muḥammad. In contrast, in the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section, Maḥremī employs *ʿışḳ* and related terms to explore the various dimensions of profane love. While *ḥubb* is absent in these poems, its derivative *maḥbūb* (beloved) appears three times. This study has proposed possible explanations for Maḥremī's deliberate lexical choices, suggesting that the exclusion of *ʿışḳ* in the *Ġazeliyāt-ı İlāhī* section may be motivated by its specific connotations, an area deserving further scholarly investigation.

The majority of the 112 *ġazel*s in the *Ḥüsniyyāt* section reflect Maḥremī's conceptualization of love, along with the dynamics between lovers and rivals. A selection of four *ġazel*s was analyzed to provide a closer examination of Maḥremī's perspective on love and his role as a poet-lover. The love depicted in these *ġazel*s remains firmly within the domain of profane love, without any overt focus on physical union. Instead, the lover-poet remains in a perpetual state of longing and despair, endlessly lamenting his separation from the indifferent beloved. One exception appears in *Ġazel* 38, which briefly alludes to physical intimacy, though it remains uncertain whether this reference derives from Maḥremī's personal experiences or reflects a broader literary convention of the period.

The portrayal of the suffering lover in Maḥremī's *ġazel*s raises the question of whether these poems should be read autobiographically or as the construction of a distinct lyrical persona. Given the limited biographical information available, it is challenging to ascertain whether Maḥremī's poetic persona is rooted in personal experience. However, his depiction aligns closely with the archetypal figure of the lover as established in his era. While we may not have a definitive answer regarding the autobiographical nature of his poetry, we can still appreciate the artistic expression and emotional resonance that his work evokes.

Further comparative studies of Maḥremī's *ġazel*s alongside those of other contemporary poets will offer deeper insights into 16th century Ottoman poetry and its treatment of love.

(d. 1537/8))," In *Ghazal as World Literature II: From a Literary Genre to a Great Tradition The Ottoman Gazel in Context*, edited by Angelika Neuwirth et al., (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2006), 163 – 173.

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Edith Gülçin Ambros

Ottoman Catechism (*ʿİlm-i Ḥāl*) Goes Popular: Love, the Girl, and the Jew

1 A Maze of Manuscripts

We owe thanks to Halil Ersoylu for his conscientious edition and linguistic commentary of a Turkish folk epic that presumably dates from the 14th century.[1]

This didactic religious epic in verse must have been quite popular, as Ahmet İçli mentions that there are over a hundred manuscripts and printed copies of it in libraries.[2] The poem is titled variously *Hāẕā ḥikāyet-i ḳız maʿa cühūd* (This is the story of the girl and the Jew) or *Hāẕā ḥikāye-i ġarāʾib* (This is the story of strange things), and is also known as *Ḳız destānı* (The legend of the girl) and *Ḳız mevlidi* [3] (The girl's *mevlid*).[4] Halil Ersoylu's edition of this poem in *meṣnevī* form[5] consists of 288 couplets and his work includes a facsimile each of the two undated manuscripts he used for his edition. These are the manuscript titled *Hāẕā ḥikāyet-i ḳız maʿa cühūd* in a collective volume in the Topkapı Serail Library, Y. 520, 19v–39r (the basis of his edition), and the manuscript titled *Hāẕā ḥikāye-i ġarāʾib* in a collective volume in the Süleymaniye Library, section Mahmud Efendi, no. 4339, 64r–74v (used by him for comparison).

This verse story is thought to have been written or narrated by Yūsuf-ı Meddāḥ (Yūsuf, the Story-teller).[6] It is not known when and where Yūsuf-ı Meddāḥ was born and died, but it is conjectured that he lived in the beginning of the 14th century.[7] Hulusi Eren remarks that, as indicated by his title *meddāḥ* "story-teller," he was a poet who travelled from town to town and recited poems to a popular audience.[8]

There is another poem that is very similar to *Ḳız Destānı* and bears the title *Dāstān-ı duḫter ḥikāye-i yahūdī* (The legend of the girl, the story of the Jew), while two other manuscripts of it are titled *Dāstān-ı Duḫterī* (The legend of virginity) and

1 Halil Ersoylu, ed. *Kız Destanı* (*Haẕā Ḥikāyet-i Ḳız maʿa Cühūd*), (Ankara, 1996). My translation of this epic in verse is given at the end of this article.

2 Ahmet İçli, "Hikayet-i Kız u Cühûd/Kız Mevlidi/Kız Destanı (Yûsuf-ı Meddâh)," *Türk Edebiyatı Eserler Sözlüğü*, https://tees.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/hikayet-i-kiz-u-cuhud-kiz-mevlidi-kiz-destani-yusuf-i-meddah.

3 Ersoylu, ed., *Kız Destanı* (*Haẕā Ḥikāyet-i Ḳız maʿa Cühūd*), III; İçli, "Hikayet-i Kız u Cühûd/Kız Mevlidi/Kız Destanı (Yûsuf-ı Meddâh)."

4 A eulogy, in verse or prose, commemorating the prophet Muhammad's birth; see Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1983), 521–524.

5 A poem made up of couplets with an individual rhyme.

6 See İçli, "Hikayet-i Kız u Cühûd/Kız Mevlidi/Kız Destanı (Yûsuf-ı Meddâh)."

7 See Hulusi Eren, "Yûsuf-ı Meddâh, Yûsufî, Şâzî," *Türk Edebiyatı Eserler Sözlüğü*, https://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/yusufi-meddah-yusufi.

8 Eren, "Yûsuf-ı Meddâh, Yûsufî, Şâzî."

 https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111341729-014

Ḥikāye-i Duḫter ile Yigit (The story of the girl and the young man) respectively.[9] This poem is attributed to Īsā of Kırşehir, who is surmised to have lived in the 14th century like Yūsuf-ı Meddāḥ,[10] or possibly at the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th centuries.[11] Īsā of Kırşehir's poem is somewhat longer than Yūsuf-ı Meddāḥ's, as it consists of 350 couplets, but the plot and the characters are the same.[12] As a matter of fact, Īsā of Kırşehir mentions his intention to comment on Yūsuf-ı Meddāḥ's *Ḳız Destānı:*

Dāsitān-ı duḫteri şerḥ idelüm
Ġayrı sözi aradan ṭarḥ idelüm.[13]
Let us comment on "The Legend of the Girl"
Let us throw out the other words.

2 Yūsuf-ı Meddāḥ's *Ḳız Destānı*

The epic poem *Ḳız Destānı* illustrates the principle of unconditional love of Islam and absolute rejection of apostasy, as well as passionate love (*ʿışḳ* >*ʿaşḳ*) of the prophet Muhammad. Two couplets as illustration: [14]

56 *Sen Muḥammed dīnini elden ḳoma*
Ṣaḳlaġıl īmānıñı ʿahduñ şıma
Do not give up the religion of Muhammad.
Be true to your religion, do not break your oath.

10 Müslimānuñ eli yavlaḳ ṭar idi
Muṣṭafā'yı ʿışḳ-ıla sever idi
The Muslim was very poor.
He loved Mustafa passionately.

In this folk epic, the beautiful young Muslim heroine prefers to be sold as a slave rather than convert to Judaism. Her passionate love (*ʿışḳ*) of Islam is her strength and protection against the offer of the Jew who represents 'the disliked Other' in this tale. The epic is a lesson in popular language of the absolute prohibition of apostasy and the supremacy of Islam, thereby illustrating the most fundamental religious tenets found in

9 See Musa Tılfarlıoğlu, "Dâstân-ı Duhter Hikâye-i Yahudî (Kırşehirli Îsâ)," *Türk Edebiyatı Eserler Sözlüğü*, http://tees.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/dastan-i-duhter-hikaye-i-yahudi-kirsehirli-isa.
10 See Tılfarlıoğlu, "Dâstân-ı Duhter Hikâye-i Yahudî (Kırşehirli Îsâ)."
11 See İsmail Hakkı Aksoyak, "Îsâ, Kırşehirli/Kayserili Îsâ," *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü*, https://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/isa-kirsehirli-isa.
12 See Tılfarlıoğlu, "Dâstân-ı Duhter Hikâye-i Yahudî (Kırşehirli Îsâ)."
13 See Tılfarlıoğlu, "Dâstân-ı Duhter Hikâye-i Yahudî (Kırşehirli Îsâ)." All translations are my own.
14 The sequence numbers are those in Ersoylu, ed., *Kız Destanı* (*Haz̲ā Ḥikāyet-i Ḳız maʿa Cühūd*). The transcription of the quotations from this edition will be adhered to.

the Islamic catechisms called *ʿilm-i ḥāl* (knowledge of method). As Derin Terzioğlu succinctly states, the term *ʿilm-i ḥāl* "denoted, on the one hand, the basic knowledge of Islamic faith and practice that was incumbent on all Muslims and, on the other, a genre designed to impart that knowledge."[15] This epic was, of course, not an *ʿilm-i ḥāl* in the strict sense, but it had a religious didactic function. It was also exemplary in its proclamation of love for Muhammad that is likewise incumbent on the believers. The pivotal point of this narrative is the miracle performed by Muhammad, so it might be classified among the works eulogizing his miracles. Although the instruction of the rules and obligations of religious life found in regular Muslim catechisms is missing in this folk epic, it is didactically especially valuable because it is written in a popular language and has a straightforward plot that is all the more effective because it is so simple. Derin Terzioğlu notes that "the Turkish *ʿilm-i ḥāl*s seem to have been written from the start for a lay audience unfamiliar with and unlikely to advance far in the world of religious scholarship".[16] This is a characteristic that early *ʿilm-i ḥāl*s[17] seem to have shared with popular epics like *Ḳız Destānı.* Such epics gained greatly in popularity through being told by travelling story-tellers (*meddāḥ*), which must have been the case with Yūsuf-ı Meddāḥ. Indeed, *Ḳız Destānı* has traits that would suit a one-person act, which is the *meddāḥ*'s way of telling a story, mimicking voices and using a few simple props for emphasis. A great deal of direct speech in the epic reminds one of a play. Extensive enjambement provides fluidity of narration, monologues are rhetorically effective due to parallelism of structure, and unexpected tense-switching gives a sense of immediacy and provides relief from monotony. A further characteristic of this folk epic is that its language contains only a very few mystical terms and concepts and its plot just one miracle.

2.1 The Story

As already mentioned, the young and beautiful Muslim heroine of *Ḳız Destānı* would rather become a slave than commit apostasy. This is a tale of piety characterized by an extraordinary act of sacrifice. The plot in resumé: A Muslim couple and their daughter who live in Damascus and are extremely poor have gone hungry for three days on end. Their neighbour, a very rich Jew, offers them riches in return for their converting to Judaism and his marrying the daughter. The girl's father asks his wife about her opinion. She is against them committing apostasy as the Jew requests. The girl who overhears her parents vehemently refuses to convert to Judaism and suggests that her parents sell her as a slave instead in order to alleviate their desperate living con-

15 See Derin Terzioğlu, "Where *ʿİlm-i Ḥāl* Meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization," *Past and Present* 220 (2013), 79.
16 Terzioğlu, "Where *ʿİlm-i Ḥāl* Meets Catechism," 83.
17 Terzioğlu, "Where *ʿİlm-i Ḥāl* Meets Catechism," 83: "The earliest known Turkish *ʿilm-i ḥāl*s issued from the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries […]".

ditions. She prefers being sold as a slave to apostasy. After initial rejection of the idea, her parents are forced to agree because they are practically starving. The girl is taken to the market by her father and handed over to a slave broker. A young merchant with a blind eye, who is a stranger in the city, buys her and takes her away. Her parents, and especially the mother, are devastated. The moment the girl and the merchant arrive at his home, a neighbour who likes the young merchant very much greets him and, after conversing with him, invites him to his house. The young man complies and spends the night there and so does not go near the girl that night. Instead, he dreams that the Prophet Muhammad appears to him and asks him to free her. The young man agrees to do this but asks the Prophet for a sign to make his neighbours believe that he really has seen him, upon which the Prophet restores the sight of his blind eye by touching it. The next day the young man frees the girl, although he had fallen in love with her upon seeing her and had bought her for a thousand gold coins. He gives her a hundred gold pieces as a gift and sends her home. There follow a few verses of general admonition and advice.

2.2 The Style

Enjambement is used to separate the narrative in passages of various lengths so that the monotony of an endless string of couplets that are complete individual entities is broken up. This also produces fluid storytelling. Parallelism of structure reinforces the rhetorical aspect of some passages. A further peculiarity is that the narrator switches back and forth between the past and present tenses. These switches are mostly unexpected and surprise the reader, occurring as they do outside direct speech. They produce a feeling of immediacy of action and hinder a monotony of narration. Some examples as illustration:

2.2.1 Enjambement

Six couplets (nos. 238–243) joined together by enjambement bring fluidity to the narration.

238 *Ol aña **didi** pes ol dem ḥālini*
Atasıla ol cühūd aḥvālini
239 *Ata ana gey faḳīr olduġını*
Cühūd anlaruñ ḥālin bildügini
240 *Cühūd anı çaġırup diledügin*
Gel dīniñden dön deyüp söyledügin
241 *Dön o dīnden bu dīne gel didügin*
Ḳızını vir bunca māl al didügin
238 She **told** him at once her situation,
the affair of her father and that Jew,

239 that her father and mother were very poor,
that the Jew knew their situation,
240 that the Jew called him and had a request,
that he said and said, 'Come forsake your religion',
241 that he said, 'Forsake that religion and convert to this religion',
that he said, 'Give your daughter and take so much property".

2.2.2 Rhetorical Parallelism

Rhetorical parallelism in consecutive couplets (nos. 121–129) increases the declamatory effect of monologues. An example:

121 *Ol baña eylik ṣanan benüm anam*
Mehribānum sevdügim cānum anam
122 *Faḳır odına göynüp bişmiş anam*
Firḳatümüñ odına yanmış anam
123 *Gözleri yaşına ġarḳ olmış anam*
Ḳuzıcaġını yavı ḳılmış anam
124 *Ḥasretimden yüregin yaḳan anam*
Çevre yañ illere baḳan anam
125 *Beni ṣatdırmaġa göndüren anam*
Derdime baġrını deldüren anam
126 *Beni yavı ḳılup bulmayan anam*
Ḳanda gitdügümi bilmeyen anam
127 *Firḳatimüñ aġusın içen anam*
Beni düşde görmege geçen anam
128 *Beni ġurbet iline ṣalan anam*
Kendi ardımdan baḳa ḳalan anam
129 *Yatduġım yirleri gözleyen anam*
Gitdügim yolları izleyen anam
121 My mother, who thinks that is good for me,
my affectionate, my beloved, my adored mother,
122 my mother who has burned for a long time in the fire of poverty,
my mother who has burned in the fire of separation from me,
123 my mother who has drowned in her tears,
my mother who has lost her wee lamb,
124 my mother who burns her heart with longing for me,
my mother who is looking at the surrounding lands,
125 my mother who sent me to be sold,
my mother who let her breast be pierced in sorrow for me.
126 my mother who lost me and did not find me,
my mother who does not know where I went,
127 my mother who drank the poison of separation from me,
my mother who has turned to seeing me in dreams,
128 my mother who sent me to a foreign land,
my mother who stood looking after me,
129 my mother who watched the places where I slept,
my mother who eyed the roads on which I went!

2.2.3 Tense-switching

Arguably, the most original stylistic characteristic of the epic is a certain switch from the past tense to the present tense outside direct speech. It reminds one of everyday speech in its informality. A few examples:

18 *Üç gice bunlar yiyecek* ***bulmadı***
Aclıġından göze uyḳu ***gelmedi***
19 *Üçi daḥı üç gice ac* ***yatdılar***
ʿĀciz olup niçe ḳanlar ***yuddılar***
20 *Ḳonşısı cühūd anuñ ḥālin* ***bilür***
Bir gün cühūd anuñ evine ***gelür***
21 ***Geldi*** *eve* ***oḳur*** *anı ol cühūd*
18 For three nights these **found** no food.
They **could** not sleep because of hunger.
19 For three nights all three of them **lay** hungry.
They became helpless and **endured** much agony.
20 His neighbour, the Jew, **knows** his situation.
One day the Jew **comes** to his house.
21 That Jew **came** to the house. He **calls** him.
109 *Ḥōca* ***aldı*** *ol ḳızı tā kim gide*
Ṣatun aldı diler *eve ilete*
The merchant **took** that girl to go away.
He **bought** her. He **wishes** to take her home.
111 ***Döndi*** *aña* ***eydür*** *ey māh-ı münīr*
He **turned.** He **says** to her, "O shining moon!"
181 *Ḳudret-ile çün ḥoca* ***irdi*** *eve*
Daḥı ḳapuyı ***açar*** *ive ive*
When, full of energy, the merchant **got** home...
and he **opens** the door quickly...
183 *Yigidüñ ḳatına* ***geldi irişdi***
Anuñ ile ḳocuşuban ***görişdi***
184 *Ḥōca yigidi evine* ***çaġırur***
Ol daḥı sözin ṣımayup ***varur***
He **came** and **me**t the young man.
He **embraced** him and **talked** with him.
The effendi **calls** the young man to his home
and that one complies and **goes** there.

3 *ʿIşḳ* "Passionate Love"

The Arabic root *ʿ-ş-ḳ* does not occur in the Quran in any form. The first or ground verbal form of this root is *ʿaşiḳa* "to love passionately (someone/something)" and some of the related nouns are *ʿışḳ* "passionate love", *ʿāşıḳ* "lover", and *maʿşūḳ* "beloved". In the Quran, 'love' is represented by other terms derived from four roots:[18]

18 See Arne A. Ambros and Stephan Procházka, *The Nouns of Koranic Arabic Arranged by Topics: A*

(*ḥ-b-b*) *ḥubb* "love", *maḥabbat* "love", *ʾaḥibbā* "beloved, dear", *ʾaḥabb* "dearer/dearest";
(*r-ḥ-m*) *ruḥm* "tender love" (other nouns derived from this root are centred on the quality of mercy);
(*ʿ-r-b*) *ʿurub* pl. "showing passionate love";
(*w-d-d*) *wudd* "love", *wadūd* "loving, filled with love", and *mawadda(t)* "love, friendship".

While the Arabic noun *ʿışḳ* "passionate love" does not occur in the Quran, it is frequently used both in high-culture and popular Ottoman poetry of a religious, mystical, or lyrical nature. In lyrical poems—mostly *ġazel*s—the traditional use of mystical terms makes it often difficult, if not impossible, to judge whether the love in question is worldly or mystical. There is no such difficulty in the present study as it is about a popular tale on passionate love of Islam. The plot is uncomplicated, and the language is simple, so that the story is easy to follow. This is important as the epic obviously has a didactic aim. There are nevertheless some mystical traits in this epic. For one thing, there is a dream episode in which the prophet Muhammad works a wonder. For another, there are some terms that this epic has in common with mystical poetry. One of these is the term "Friend" (*dōst*, modern Turkish *dost*) for God, who for Sufis is the true friend (*gerçek dost*).[19] Another is the sacrifice of body and soul for one's religion in order to ultimately reach the "contemplation of God". Couplet no. 60 of the epic:

60 *Ol Muḥammed dīni üzre kim öle*
Yarın anuñ manṣubı dīdār ola
Whoever dies for Muhammad's religion
will be occupied in contemplating
the Divine tomorrow.

Dīdār, meaning among other things 'contemplation', has the Sufi meaning of contemplating the Divine beauty.[20]

In contradistinction to the frequent use of the noun *ʿışḳ*, the Turkish term for "love" *sevgü* (*sevgi* in standard Modern Turkish) occurs just once (in couplet 120). According to Sir Gerard Clauson, *sevig* (> *sevüg*) was "displaced in the medieval period by words like sevgü"; and Ottoman of the 14th and 15th centuries used *sevi/sevü/sevüg* "love."[21] The Turkish term (in all its variants) has a wider spectrum of meanings than *ʿışḳ* because it can mean "love", "passionate love" (*ʿışḳ*), or "affection" (*maḥabbet*; in vulgar

Companion Volume to the "Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic," (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2006), 82, under the heading "27.1 Love, mercy and gentleness".

19 Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Tasavvuf'tan Dilimize Geçen Deyimler ve Atasözleri,* (Istanbul: İnkılâp ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1977), 100–101 under "Dost"; Ethem Cebecioğlu, *Tasavvuf Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Rehber, 1997), 227, under "Dost".

20 Ethem Cebecioğlu, *Tasavvuf Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü*, 224, under "Dîdâr".

21 Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1972), 787.

Ottoman and Modern Turkish *muḥabbet*).[22] In the folk epic, the love mentioned with the word *sevgü* is that felt by a father for his daughter. In the following couplet the girl is speaking to her father:

120 *Sen benüm sevgümi göñliñden çıḳar*
Ḳıl Muḥammed dīnine sen iʿtibār.
Drive your love for me out of your heart.
Honour the religion of Muhammad.

There is no example of *sevü/sevi* in the folk story, though the examples given for the use of *sevü* in *Tarama Sözlüğü* all date from the 13th to the 15th centuries.

The dominant theme in this folk epic is the girl's consummate love of the Islamic faith. Her parents are pious, too, but not as passionately and unconditionally as the girl. The piety of the man who buys the girl crystalizes when confronted with a miracle. The treatment of the Prophet Muhammad is non-mystical where it concerns the girl, the father, and the mother. But the treatment of the prophet is mystical in connection with the young man who buys the girl: the prophet appears to him in a dream, asks him for a favour, and creates a miracle. As to the love between relatives, it is represented by the father, the mother, and the girl. Finally, worldly love is represented by the young merchant who falls in love with the girl and buys her.

This folk epic does not contain any ideas or concepts on religion that would need an explanation.

4 The Jew

The role of the Jew in this epic is that of 'the oppositional Other'. The choice of the Jew for this position incites to thought. Hakan T. Karateke posits that "some Ottoman Muslims nurtured a discernible dislike for Jews that was more directed and elevated than the run-of-the-mill contempt felt toward other religions or ethnic groups."[23] Leaving aside the question of whether there was a run-of-the-mill contempt toward other religions than Judaism -- this epic offers no answer to this --, the role of 'the very rich tempter to apostasy and disliker of Islam' given the Jew in this folk epic suggests overt dislike and criticism of the Jews. In other words, a folk epic that has traits of a popular catechism overtly proclaims a sentiment that may have been latent with some Ottoman Muslims for religious reasons. This is how the Jew is introduced (couplets 6–9):

22 See *XIII. Yüzyıldan Beri Türkiye Türkçesiyle Yazılmış Kitaplardan Toplanan Tanıklarıyle Tarama Sözlüğü*, vol. 5, (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1971), 3398–3399: "sevü, (sevi): sevgi, aşk, muhabbet".
23 Hakan T. Karateke, "An Ottoman Anti-Judaism," In *Disliking Others: Loathing, Hostility, and Distrust in Pre-modern Ottoman Lands*, edited by Hakan T. Karateke, H. Erdem Çıpa, and Helga Anetshofer (Boston, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2018), 107.

6 *Şehr-i Şām'da var-ıdı dir bir cühūd*
Mālı milki çoġ-ıdı kendi ḥasūd
7 *Hiç ḥisābı yoġ-ıdı altununuñ*
Dünyālıġı çoġ-ıdı ġāyet anuñ
8 *İllā içi ṭolı-y-ıdı kibr i*[24] *kīn*
Muṣṭafā'ya düşmān-ıdı ol laʿīn
9 *Bir müslimān ḳonşı-y-ıdı ol ite*
Ol yahūdī melʿūnı ol laʿnete

6 He says[25] there was a Jew in the city of Damascus.
His goods and riches were numerous, he himself was envious.
7 His gold coins were countless.
His worldly goods were boundless.
8 But he was full of arrogance and malice.
That cursed one was Mustafa's[26] enemy.
9 A Muslim was a neighbour of that cur,
of that cursed Jew, of that accursed.

Conclusion

In this study, a folk epic in verse by Yūsuf-ı Meddāḥ, presumably dating from the 14th century and called *Hāẕā ḥikāyet-i ḳız maʿa cühūd* or *Hāẕā ḥikāye-i ġarāʾib*, aka *Ḳız destānı* and *Ḳız mevlidi*, is introduced and translated. This religious didactic epic has characteristics of narration that are rather similar to those found in the one-man act of the *meddāḥ* (story-teller). These are a) the very frequent use of direct speech, b) lengthy enjambement for monologues and increased fluidity of narration, c) parallelism of construction in monologues for greater rhetorical effect, and d) tense-switching from the past to the present tense outside direct speech, without apparent cause but providing a feeling of immediacy.

This *meşnevī* of 288 couplets shares the popularisation of religious knowledge with catechisms, although it is not a catechism itself, being restricted to the supreme obligations of loving Islam unconditionally and prohibiting apostasy absolutely. Love for the prophet Muhammad as the *sine qua non* religious condition is omnipresent, with Islam repeatedly called *Muḥammed dīni* (the religion of Muhammad; e. g., in couplets no. 56 and 60). The epic is mainly but not totally non-mystical, as illustrated by two details: For one thing, God is "the Friend" (*dōst*, see couplets no. 204–205), for another, there is mention of the aim to reach "the contemplation of God" (couplet no. 60). This is an appellation and a striving that are common to popular mystical poetry. There is also a dream and miracle episode that may be regarded as mystical. Finally, the character cast as the tempter to apostasy and enemy of Muhammad is the very

24 Here i < u "and".
25 The voice of the narrator is referred to in the third person.
26 *Muṣṭafā* "chosen, elect" is a title of the prophet Muhammad, as the elect of God.

rich Jew, not a Christian. Dislike and criticism of the Jew, that may have been latent among some Ottoman Muslims, becomes overt through this personification.

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Translation[27]

Hāẕā ḥikāyet-i ḳız maʿa cühūd
This is the story of the girl and the Jew

In the name of God, the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful, and from Him do we seek help!

1 Whoever has endured poverty in this world
has become worthy of serving [God].
2 If you are a servant, endure what comes from God.
Or else depart from His dominion, don't stop, go!
3 He[28] is that prophet whose domain
you, helpless servant, may not attain.
4 O poor servant! Understand these words.
Be patient in pain, give thanks for blessings.
5 Listen now! Let me tell you about a wonder
worked by Mustafa, that prophet of the universe.
6 He[29] says there was a Jew in the city of Damascus.
His goods and riches were numerous, he himself was envious.
7 His gold coins were countless.
His worldly goods were boundless.
8 But he was full of arrogance and malice.
That cursed one was Mustafa's enemy.
9 A Muslim was a neighbour of that cur,
of that cursed Jew, of that accursed.
10 The Muslim was very poor.
He loved Mustafa passionately.
11 God had bestowed on him a daughter.[30]
Her beauty was great, she full of perfection.
12 The heart and soul couldn't get enough of her sight.
Come now and have a look at the world's plight.
13 God – may He be exalted! – gave them sorrow.
What remedy is there to what comes from God?!
14 Her father was very poor, a pauper.
The riches of that Jew were huge in number.
15 They lost all their worldly goods.
See now what became of them.
16 The man and the woman...with that girl, three people...
See what God – may He be exalted! – made of this affair.
17 No morsel was left for them to eat,
and they tried hard not to tell anyone about it.

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27 I have made no attempt to imitate the poem's formal aspects such as length of couplet and rhyme scheme, as this would be impossible without some divergence from the original meaning and nuancing.
28 The prophet Muhammad.
29 Text: *dir* "says".
30 Text: *ʿayāl*, actually "a wife; a man's household".

18 For three nights these found no food.
They could not sleep because of hunger.
19 For three nights all three of them lay hungry.
They became helpless and endured much agony.
20 His neighbour, the Jew, knows his situation.
One day the Jew comes to his house.
21 That Jew came to the house. He calls him.
Listen now to what that envious one will do.
22 He put food in front of the Muslim,[31] said, "Eat!"
He said, "O Muslim, tell me about your situation."
23 He keeps talking while the Muslim[32] eats the food.
He says, "O neighbour, I like you."
24 That Jew says, "See what I am telling you.
O Muslim, give me your answer."
25 The Jew says, "What are your means of livelihood?
Are you in a state of joy or sorrow?"
26 As that Jew asked about his means,
that Muslim confessed how poor he is.
27 That Muslim sighed in distress.
He says, "What can we do, since God made it so.
28 We have become so very weak from hunger.
Our hearts are bleeding in the fire of need.
29 For three days now we have had no morsel to eat.
There's no-one whom we can tell the state we're in.
30 My wife and my daughter will die of hunger.
This is my situation. I've given you my answer."
31 He informed that Jew about his situation.
His eyes filled with tears, his heart was afire.
32 That Jew says to him, "Don't you worry.
God will make you reach days that are happy.
33 I'll give you a word of advice. If you follow this,
sorrow will depart and you will attain bliss."
34 That Muslim says to him, "What must one do?
How must one put this matter in order?"
35 That Jew says, "It is an easy matter, O friend!
If you wish, I will bring you good fortune.
36 Renounce your religion, convert to our religion.
Come adore idols, don't turn towards the Kaaba.
37 Turn away from the wizards' religion and get absolved.
Convert to Moses' religion and become our companion.
38 And I will give you half of all my property
if you listen to me.
39 Take half of my property, do as I say.
You will become rich if you listen to advice.
40 And also give me that daughter of yours for a wife.
These are my words and I have told them to you.

31 Text: him.
32 Text: he.

41 If you agree to what I say and give me the girl for a wife,
I shall hold you and your daughter dearer than life.
42 Consent to my offer and give me your daughter for a wife.
If you say no, say so. Let us know your decision.
43 Do these two things with me
or else die of hunger, all three!"
44 That Muslim said, "Give me some time.
Let me see what my wife says to this."
45 That Muslim reached his home. Listen!
He told all that the envious one had said.
46 He told his wife fluently and detailed,
told at once all that accursed had said.
47 Whatever that accursed had said, he said.
He informed his wife about all of that.
48 When she heard this, the woman said, "Ah!".
She fell, fainted, cried "O God!"
49 She pulled herself together again and got up.
Her eyes filled with bitter tears, she came forward.
50 The woman says, "Beware! Do not agree, my intimate,[33]
O my beloved, my dear, my companion!
51 We have been living together for many years.
Come close, do not complain of these things.
52 Take great care that the accursed devil does not
deceive you with riches. Do not forsake your faith!
53 Do not sell the hereafter for this world.
Do not forsake your faith for this world.
54 We have accepted this poverty.
We are content and grateful for this moment.
55 Where are days like the days of the poor?
Or where is a religion like that of the prophet Muhammad?
56 Do not give up the religion of Muhammad.
Be true to your religion, do not break your oath.
57 And let it not be that you do what he [the Jew] says,
that you go and sell religion for earthly chattels.
58 Don't listen to the words of that accursed again.
Let life be sacrificed for Muhammad's religion.
59 Let us sacrifice ourselves for our religion.
Leave us to die of hunger.
60 Whoever dies for Muhammad's religion
will be occupied in contemplating the Divine tomorrow."
61 That man says to his wife, "You speak well.
Good words, but what will become of the girl?
62 Can she bear hunger like we do?
Does she say, 'Let me die on this path, too?'
63 That moon-faced, hazel-eyed stout heart
will not easily endure hunger."

33 *Maḥrem*, meant is the husband, who is on intimate terms with the woman.

64 And that Beauty was listening to these words,
moaning in her heart with sorrow.
65 She saw that their words had gone too far.
The girl herself spoke to her father.
66 The girl says, “O father, what if I die?
I am ready to die on this path.
67 Would Muslims forsake their religion?
Would anyone sacrifice religion because of death?
68 Is it I who am not conforming to you,
who do not stay true to Muhammad’s religion?
69 Let me not get to part from this religion.
Let me die but not destroy my religion.
70 Do as I say father, listen to my words.
May my life be sacrificed for you.
71 Let me tell you something – do it by God!
Take me to the market tomorrow, sell me.
72 Don’t say, ‘She’s my daughter’, [so] they won’t gape at me.
No-one should get wise to this undertaking.
73 Say, ‘She is a slave. I am selling her.’
Take my price, pay for grain with it, and eat.
74 Desert me, do not desert your religion.
Keep your religion, do not deceive your religion.
75 Do not renounce your religion, preserve your religion.
Do not with your own hands set your heart afire.
76 You will hand me over to one person.
Say I am a slave, sell me, keep your religion.
77 O father, come take me to the market.
Hand me over to the broker, so he sells me.
78 Listen to me, this is the thing to do.
Cut that Jew’s head off, for this is the proper course.”
79 When her mother heard these words,
she said, “O the beloved of my soul!
80 Lovely creature, who are the pleasure of my heart,
how can the heart bear selling you?
81 With what heart, how could I sell you?
Don’t say this, don’t burn me in the fire of longing.
82 Can a person cut off her breast, bring and sell it,
and then go, lie down and sleep?”
83 That girl says, “O mother, what shall we do?
For how long can we remain hungry?
84 We are three hungry people. Where is a morsel? Nowhere.
Our flesh cannot be calm if its needs are not cared for.
85 Religion should not be sold for worldly property.
[But] the heart and soul suffer much from poverty.
86 Since we are left with such hunger, let us die
in cold blood rather than turn into unbelievers.
87 Whoever intends doing this to himself
should know that one’s own self is cruel.
88 Faith goes, he thus doubtless remains,
ceaselessly stays in hell till eternity.

89 Do not sell faith for the world and become faithless.
Do not see the fires of hell tomorrow.
90 Sell me for religion's sake, keep your religion.
I am ready to sacrifice myself on this path.
91 You, too, leave me to go on the road of religion.
Religion is not to be had by caring for sons and daughters."
92 Her mother became helpless and gave her consent.
She said, "It is better for us to sell the maid."
93 She said, "At least don't sell her to a strange land.
We shall feel bad if you sell her to a stranger.
94 If you sell my daughter, sell her to a townsman.
Don't pay any attention to a purchase by a stranger.
95 Sell her to a townsman so we may see her face,
so I might at least hear her sweet words sometimes."
96 They put off that day's work—his taking his daughter
to the marketplace—till the next day.
97 To sell his daughter like a slave,
he took her to the market – see how.
98 He put his daughter into the broker's hands.
O God, may one's daughter
99 never endure such a situation!
And may no-one be this poor.
100 When the man put his daughter up for sale,
he said, "O broker, listen to my words.
101 Sell her to a townsman, don't sell her to anyone else.
Be very careful not to sell her to foreign lands."
102 The broker took over, arranged an auction.
None of the townsmen spoke of this.
103 He got no news from the townspeople.
A townsman did not buy that houri.
104 Though these thoughtlessly took measures,
no-one save God did all the preordaining.
105 A stranger became a customer for his daughter,
and he was one-eyed, very strange.
106 That stranger had only one eye.
He had been born like that.
107 That stranger wanted to buy her so much.
He pleaded and bought her from her father.
108 The girl's father took the girl's price in gold.
His life was deprived of his daughter.
109 The merchant took that girl to go away.
He bought her. He wishes to take her home.
110 The father[34] put the girl into the stranger's hands.
He bought her. He wishes to go to his homeland.
111 He turned. He says to her, "O shining moon!"
-- "O merchant! Give me leave for one hour

34 Text: He.

112 so I may go and ask for the blessing
of that person who sold me to you.
113 This is because I had come to his house,
to his side when I was very young.
114 I owe him very much. Give permission
out of charity, don't say no."
115 He gave permission. "Go, don't loiter,
come quickly here so we can go on our way.
116 Whatever you have to say to your master, go, say it.
Come back quickly to me, leave him."
117 The girl came and bid her father farewell.
She said, "Give my greetings to my mother.
118 Be happy all the time for me.
Don't be distressed, be free of worry.
119 I have been sold for the love of Mustafa.
Had I a thousand lives, they would also be sacrificed.
120 Drive your love for me out of your heart.
Honour the religion of Muhammad.

The girl's poem
121 My mother, who thinks that is good for me,
my affectionate, my beloved, my adored mother,
122 my mother who has burned for a long time in the fire of poverty,
my mother who has burned in the fire of separation from me,
123 my mother who has drowned in her tears,
my mother who has lost her wee lamb,
124 my mother who burns her heart with longing for me,
my mother who is looking at the surrounding lands,
125 my mother who sent me to be sold,
my mother who let her breast be pierced in sorrow for me,
126 my mother who lost me and did not find me,
my mother who does not know where I went,
127 my mother who drank the poison of separation from me,
my mother who has turned to seeing me in dreams,
128 my mother who sent me to a foreign land,
my mother who stood looking after me,
129 my mother who watched the places where I slept,
my mother who eyed the roads on which I went!

The following topic is diffuse[35]
130 Should she ask you how I am,
tell her that my circumstances are fine.
131 Say, 'A young townsman has bought her.
He wishes to make her his wife.'
132 Beware, O father! If she should ask you,
say, 'They make her wear lovely clothes.'

35 In the text misspelled as *mensürün* instead of *mens̲ürün.*

133 Say, 'The clothes she wears are all of silk',
so that her days are not spent worrying.
134 Tell her that she must never go out of the house,
that she must pay no attention to daughters.
135 For if she sees girls like me,
her heart will burn with the fire of longing.
136 When she doesn't see me among them,
she will faint, she will not collect her wits.
137 She will look around, at the roads,
the sorrow of longing will set her afire.
138 Should she yearn to see me and ask for me,
should she say, 'To whom did you sell her, show me,'
139 take care, don't shout at her,
don't push her, swear at her, hit her.
140 Sons are what fathers love.
Daughters are the hearts of mothers.
141 When lambs part from their mothers,
the teats of the mothers ache.
142 And see what things happen in this world.
She who is separated from her lamb bleats.
143 She bleats the moment she parts from the lamb.
She looks all around, yearning.
144 Let her be your trust dear as your life.
For my sake, don't break her heart.
145 As my name has become 'slave',
I don't know what will befall this sad head.
146 As parting has come between us, father,
what kind of balm is there for this wound?
147 Will I see your faces again
or will I go and die in a strange land,
148 longing for father and mother in a strange land,
looking ceaselessly at the roads in all directions.
149 When the winds blow from this side, saying,
asking for the odour of father and mother.
150 May the wind but bring your odour to me!
Now father, I wish you farewell.
151 When the body is parted from the sweet soul by the All-Wise,[36]
judge for yourself what its condition will be."
152 That Beauty spoke thus to her father.
She wept bitterly for a long time.
153 She bade farewell to her father and stood up.
She came back to the side of her master.
154 As the girl started on the road with her master,
her father stayed there, pulling out his beard...
155 The soul went away, the worthless body remained.
His arrow-straight body turned into an archery bow.

36 *El-ḥakīm* is one of the names of Allah.

156 With dried out lips and tears in his eyes,
he went and came to his wife's side.
157 He put that gold in front of the woman.
When the woman looked and saw it…
158 saw the gold, did not see her daughter…
she fainted, fell, didn't collect her wits.
159 As she couldn't see her friend beside her,
she suddenly let out a fiery sigh.
160 She was powerless, wept and moaned.
She said, "Alas, where is my companion?
161 Light of my eyes, where can I find you?
With my own hands have I sold you.
162 My darling daughter, if you won't appear to us,
this is a dark day, not one of peace for us.
163 Can a mother sell her daughter?
And, what's more, send her to a foreign land?

Poem of the girl's mother
164 O lamb, who made them call her 'slave',
lamb who fed us with her worth,
165 lamb who parted from mother and father,
lamb who always stayed on the road of religion,
166 lamb who left and came to a foreign land,
lamb whose heart is burning with longing,
167 O lamb, whose odour I smell,
lamb who is burning me with yearning!

The following topic is diffuse[37]
168 What then did they do to you in town?
They sold you as a slave.
169 I've not been a mother but an enemy to you.
I have destroyed my heart with sorrow.
170 May this gold and silver be fire and embers to me.
Is there a mother who sold her daughter and ate?"
171 Speaking thus, she loses her senses.
That poor man looks at her.
172 Seeing his wife so, he sighed.
He said, "O moon, my wife is destroyed.
173 I've lost my daughter together with my wife.
Alas! I have let my wife go with the wind."
174 He said, "O Creator of the sun and the moon,
who knows His servants' deeds both good and bad!
175 You, finally, are there and see the matter.
Send me help that will strive for me.
176 After all, it is You who made us sell our dear daughter,
and made us turn her into a slave, too.

37 In the text misspelled as *mensürün* instead of *mens̲ürün.*

177 I wish You would help my wretched self,
would inform Muhammad about this matter.
178 My daughter was sold for the love of Mustafa.
I, myself, have even lost my wife."
179 The girl's father turned towards His Majesty.[38]
Hear now the girl's and the merchant's words.
180 Her master took that girl and led her away.
He bought her. Let me say how she was.
181 When, full of energy, the merchant got home...
and he opens the door quickly...
182 This was a merchant who had a dear neighbour
who loved that young man very much.
183 He came and met the young man.
He embraced him and talked with him.
184 The effendi calls the young man to his home
and that one complies and goes there.
185 That night, the young man sleeps
where he went...hear this well!
186 He did not come near the girl that night.
He did not get to enjoy that houri's company.
187 The young man puts his head on the pillow there.
He sees a strange dream when he falls asleep.
188 He saw in his dream that Muhammad is coming,
Ahmed,[39] the Head of the two worlds,[40] is coming.
189 In that night, the Glory of the universe[41] came to him,
he for whom existence and space have been created.[42]
190 That Mustafa came to his side,
the chosen and admired, the pure.
191 He saw Muhammad's[43] beauty that is like the full moon,
and the black eyebrows on his forehead are like bows.
192 The sun and moon are put to shame by his fair face.
Sugar has become tasty through his grace.
193 When that Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman, Ali[44] –
Mustafa with his four friends –
194 came to the side of that young man,
Mustafa looked at his figure.
195 And that young man knew perfectly who they were.
Mustafa greeted him with kindness.
196 The young man saw the Glory of the two worlds.[45]
The young man met him through bountiful luck.

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38 That is, God.
39 *Aḥmed* "most laudable", another title of the prophet Muhammad.
40 That is, the present world and the future world (the hereafter).
41 That is, the prophet Muhammad.
42 That is, the prophet Muhammad, a belief based on Muhammadan tradition (*ḥadīth*).
43 Text: he.
44 The first four khalifs after the death of the prophet Muhammad.
45 That is, the prophet Muhammad.

197 Mustafa says, “Young man, do you know who I am?”
The young man says, “How can I not know you!
198 After all, you are doubtless that Muhammad
for whose friendship this universe was created.”
199 The prophet said to him in that very hour,
“O young man, I have come to ask you for something.
200 Don’t say no to that requirement of mine.
And may God give you houris and palaces.
201 Give me as a gift or sell me her whom
you thought was a slave and bought yesterday.
202 May you find houris and palaces in paradise!
Give that girl her freedom, give her up.
203 This slave who was sold is of my community.
She sacrifices her life for the sake of religion.
204 She sacrificed her life, she did not sacrifice her faith.
She did not forsake the Friend[46] and comply with the[47] foe.
205 Those who kill themselves for the Friend rejoice.
While slaves, they are freed for the sake of the Friend.
206 She sacrificed herself for me,
making them call her ‘slave’.
207 I have come to you to make a request.
This person, who became a slave for the sake of faith...
208 I desire that you give her to me.
May any wish you have come true!”
209 That young man says, “Yes, I accept.
The heart may not refuse this to you , O Messenger![48]
210 Since you have come to me with a request,
what is a slave that I should refuse to give her to you!”
211 That young man says, “O head of the prophets!
I, weak one, wish something from you.
212 Messenger of God! If tomorrow I say to the people
that I have seen the head of the prophets,
213 I know that the people will not believe me.
What if you would give me a token?”
214 That young man’s eye that was blind,
that had carried on thus for many years...
215 Mustafa touched it with his blessed hand...
his eyes came alight, they found delight.
216 Suddenly, that blind eye of his opened.
He stood up, prostrated himself that very moment.
217 He says, “O Messenger of God,
now I’ve freed the girl, she can go now.
218 Let me sacrifice my life with love, too.
Let me sacrifice my body and soul for you.”

46 An appellation of God that is common in mystical poetry.
47 In the text: *düşmenine* which can be translated as “God’s foe” or “her foe”; a choice between the two could not be made.
48 *Resūl*, “a messenger; a prophet sent by God”, especially Muhammad.

219 Then, while speaking with the Messenger,
that generous one woke up.
220 When he woke up from his sleep,
he looked and saw that his eye really sees.
221 He became happy, his heart rejoiced so.
What magic the Sultan of the universe[49] had worked!
222 He got up, performed his ablutions, sat down.
He prayed to Muhammad till dawn.
223 Morning came and that man got up.
Quickly he came back to that girl.
224 When he had seen her, he had fallen in love.
He had paid a high price for her.
225 He had paid a thousand gold pieces as the price.
He had lost his heart and soul to that monarch.
226 He came and saw again her moon-like face.
Listen now to what the young man told her.

The poem of the youth.
227 He says, "Beloved, loving whom burns the heart,
beloved, who caused my eye to see,
228 beloved, who stays true to Muhammad's religion,
beloved, who abandons secrets for religion's sake,
229 beloved, who left father and mother,
beloved, who was sold and went to a foreign land,
230 beloved, who made me call her 'slave',
beloved who made me regret calling her so,
231 beloved—the neighbour came and took me away—,
beloved, whom Muhammad Mustafa requested,
232 beloved, who made my unseeing eye see,
beloved, who made me reach the Glory of the universe!

The following topic is more diffuse[50] than what preceded it
233 Finally, who are you, for whose sake Mustafa,
that Messenger of joy, came to me?
234 I have seen his beauty in a dream.
Who are you? What is your situation?
235 The Glory of the universe came this night,
opened my eye and wished to have you.
236 Are you a houri or an angel, O beloved?
What kind of person are you? Tell me the truth.
237 By God! O you who have a face like the Irem Garden rose,
come to me, solve this difficulty."
238 She told him at once her situation,
the affair of her father and that Jew,
239 that her father and mother were very poor,
that the Jew knew their situation,

49 That is, the Prophet Muhammad.

50 In the text misspelled as *mensūrün* instead of *mensūrün.*

240 that the Jew called him and had a request,
that he said and said, ‘Come forsake your religion’,
241 that he said, ‘Forsake that religion and convert to this religion’,
that he said, ‘Give your daughter and take so much property’,
242 that hearing these words her poor mother
fell on the ground, frightened out of her wits,
243 and said, ‘Leave me to burn in this fire of poverty.
God forbid! Why should I forsake my great religion!
244 Let our lives be sacrificed for religion’s sake,
for religion is unconditionally Muhammad’s religion.
245 If you are my true friend, do not say this.
Do not forsake the religion of Muhammad.’
246 As these wretched ones became helpless,
as they found no answers to their worries,
247 I said, ‘O father and mother, do as I say.
Take my hand, bring me to the market, and sell me.
248 Say I am a slave, sell me in the marketplace.
Eat my worth for religion’s sake, stay true to the religion.’
249 When the young man heard that girl’s words,
he wept so much he couldn’t collect himself.
250 He says, “O my idol, forgive me
for having called you a slave.
251 I made a mistake, did not know what to do,
did not prostrate myself and serve you.
252 Be my sister, O idol!
Now your mother and father are awaiting you.
253 Take these hundred gold pieces as thanks to you.
Now go once more in your home’s direction.”
254 The girl stood up, then took the gold in her hands.
She paid her respects to the young man and started on her way.
255 She straightened up, laughing, rejoicing…goes thus.
She goes so fast the wind can’t catch up with her dust.
256 When she arrived and her mother saw her,
she thanked God, her heart rejoiced.
257 She said, “My daughter, how come you have been saved?
What is the reason you have come to this house?”
258 The girl told her situation to her mother.
She explained that the young man saw a dream.
259 “That person of good character saw the sayyid [51] in a dream,
He set me free and made me happy.
260 See, he also gave me a gift of a hundred gold coins.
God has granted me kindness and benevolence.”
261 Her father, too, came and saw his daughter.
He gave thanks and prostrated himself.
262 He said, “O You who aid those who are helpless,
You who give Your servants their hearts’ desire,

51 *Sayyid*, literally “a master, lord”, here the prophet Muhammad.

263 You have shown me the person I longed for, be thanked!
You have erased the worries of my heart, be thanked!"
264 As they saw that Beauty at home,
her father and mother rejoiced at their granted desire.
265 If you, too, wish it, O friend,
God will rejoice you with His benevolence.
266 Give up your life and buy the [true] religion with love,
whether you are old or young or a woman.
267 Be very careful not to hate because of worldliness.
The person who loves the world does not have faith.
268 Because they lay hungry for three nights,
were helpless and suffering great pain,
269 were unable to find food for three days and nights,
were never sad on the right path to God,
270 they thus went on the road of Islam,
and that prophet also interceded for them with God.
271 At present this population forsakes religion
for the world, and works for riches.
272 It doesn't call any random world "world".
These people do not eat any random morsel.
273 The Glory of the universe ate barley flour.
He said, "In the end, a perverted community arises.
274 They make and eat wheat bread. They say,
'This can't be eaten like this, it needs a garnish!'
275 Those who have money do not lend it.
They hide it and don't go to the Kaaba.
276 Nor do they say, 'Let us give alms.'
They don't feed or eat on the right road to God.
277 The rich have no more love of generosity.
They don't respect the men of science."
278 The Messenger says, "These are not my people,
because bad morals were born from them.
279 Know that they do not follow my example,
and, therefore, are not my community.
280 I am tired of the people with such affairs.
He who hears should know they can't be my community.
281 Is it tolerable that you burn yourselves
and shame me in God's presence?
282 Since Allah knows your affairs,
how can I dare plead for your errors?
283 You have not been my community or God's servants.
You totally neglected the right practice and obligations.
284 O friend! Those who do not follow God's commandments
will be covered with shame in God's presence.
285 O friend! The story is finished here.
Pray to the prophet with love.

286 O All-Sufficient![52]Forgive with Your mercy
the reader, the listener, and the writer.
287 Whoever wishes to earn a lot of God's mercy
should pray a Fatiha[53] for him who wrote this.
288 May God show mercy to that servant of His
who prays for me, His servant.

52 *Ġanī*, one of the names of Allah.
53 The first *sūra* of the Quran which is prayed most frequently at various occasions.

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Poets, Philosophers, Authors and Rulers

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