Continuity of Thought in the Poems of Ḥāfīz

A synopsis of the study.

Apart from the difficulties of textual criticism and biographical documentation, Ḥāfīz' poetry poses the controversial problems of poetic structure and meaning. My study proposes to concentrate on these last two problems.

The first complaint about the incoherence of Ḥāfīz' poems came from his patron. The disconnected style of Ḥāfīz later became popular in the 'Indian' school. Today it is criticized by many Orientals (e.g. A. Kasravī, H. Ajni, S. A' Vahid), who consider incoherence to be the wrong road for Persian poetry.

Some other scholars,1 having considered the loose associative ties that link the poems of Ḥāfīz, explain that this poetry does contain a logic of its own, and is therefore not difficult. I believe that Ḥāfīz' patron was in the right in complaining of the obscurity of his protégé's poems. Ḥāfīz' poetry must be classified as difficult poetry, and here I should like to note two concepts which in Persian poetry must be clearly distinguished:

a) Logical continuity, which very often means plot continuity.2

b) Continuity achieved solely by means of psychological association.3

1 R. Lescot, Essai d'une chronologie de l'oeuvre de Ḥāfīz, Bulletin d'études orientales, T. 10, Damas 1944, p. 61. «Tout poème de Ḥāfīz comporte donc un fil directeur qui commande le sens, . . . qu'il convient d'accorder à chacun des vers qui le composent.» See also H. R. Roemer, Probleme der Hāfizforschung und der Stand ihrer Lösung. Pp. 109–110.

2 New critics would call this (in their own special sense) the structure of the poem. See W. Elton, A Glossary of the New Criticism, Poetry 73: 5, p. 302.

3 Poems of this category exist, and are, to use Valéry's words, 'absolument vides d'idées'. See pp. 20–21 of this study.
Poems from Ḥāfīz’ different periods afford a striking example of these two polarities. In Europe, the boundary between these two types of continuity may be drawn between the early work of Arthur Rimbaud and his *Illuminations*. In the latter he adopts an ambiguous technique, based solely on psychological associations.

I think that it is fruitful for discussion about the structure of Ḥāfīz poems to adopt the idea of an analogy between the stylistic innovations of Ḥāfīz and the innovations of the 'modern movement' in Europe, now a hundred years old. The modernism of today is a facet of a literary phenomenon which seems to recur time and again in different periods. I shall here consider the modernism introduced in Persian literature of the 14th century by Ḥāfīz, a modernism whose stylistic features survived well into the 19th century. I propose to point out an analogy between this and European modernism of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is not unjust to say that the most typical exponents of this last are the supporters of *poésie pure*, Mallarmé and Valéry.¹

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What does Hāfiz say? This is the title of an interesting book by Aḥmad Kasravī. If we are looking for original philosophical thinking, modern Persian literature will offer us little unless we go beyond the geographical boundaries of Persia, say to Pakistan and one of the moderns, Iqbal. Ahmad Kasravī, born in 1888 and murdered in 1945 by the Royalists, was one of the few to have made an attempt at a new mode of thought. He was a pupil of E. Herzfeld, and translated several books from Pehlevi into Neo-Persian and wrote scholarly works on Persian history. In the speeches and writings which were meant for a wider public, he attempted to restore the damaged national consciousness of Persians.

In the second chapter of this book Kasravī inquires into how poets really construct their ghazals. He takes as an example Hāfiz’ ghazal:

Dar Ḟamūr-e mā namīgūnād beghār az dūst kā

Kasravī claims that it is futile to seek any plot or purpose in this poem. Each couplet is separate, and no continuity of thought links them. He considers this ghazal typical of Hāfiz’ purposeless poetry made for the sake of making poetry. The train of thought is chiefly dictated by the rhyme. Kasravī then turns to a study of the sources of Hāfiz’ philosophy. He finds eight:

1) The Koran and its exegetes
2) Greek philosophy
3) The Sufis and their ‘baseless dogmas’
4) The praisers of the pleasures of wine or drinking companions, harābarīgar
5) The battle between the praisers of the pleasures of wine and the Sufis
6) The history of Iran and its ancient tales
7) Astrology
8) Fatalism and ‘the bad teachings of fatalists’

1 Teherān 1957, 4th ed.
2 B. Alavi, Geschichte und Entwicklung der modernen persischen Literatur, Berlin 1964, pp. 177–178.
Kasravî is one of the Persian scholars who ascribe the decay of Persian culture, intellectual and material, to the Mongol raids of 1219—1336. Anyone who has travelled in Persia is familiar with this tendency among intellectuals to put the blame for practically everything on the Mongols. In reply, it might be said that in 1300, Persian-Arabic culture had already had five hundred years of supremacy in Iran. The declining dynamisms of this development provide ample explanation for a certain exhaustion. Kasravî studies various phenomena from the point of view of Persian political history, trying to define their effects on Persia’s political power as good or bad. He introduces Ḥāfīz as a writer with a negative historical effect. According to him, Ḥāfīz was at once the victim and the expression of the cultural decadence which followed the Mongol attacks.

At the end of the tenth chapter of his book, Kasravî asks why Sa’dî and Ḥāfīz are so widely praised in both East and West. Of the orientals, Kasravî comments that they only ‘want to cry up their own wares’, of the Western admirers of Ḥāfīz he says that, as they wish to keep the East in the state of lassitude expressed by him, they have imperialistic motives for wanting his outlook to survive.

This view of the European attitude towards Ḥāfīz seems unlikely and grotesque. One need only think of Goethe’s great efforts to understand the poetry of Ḥāfīz and of the East in general, a task with which it seems impossible to link even the mere mention of imperialism. There is little truth in Kasravî’s sentence: ‘The Divan of Ḥāfīz is more useful to them [the Europeans] than an army of a million men.’

In this study we are mainly interested in Kasravî’s first chapter, where he treats the discontinuity of Ḥāfīz’ thought at great length, and those parts of the book in which he scorns Ḥāfīz as ‘Ḥāfīz the Idle Talker’, Ḥāfīz-e ẓaranda-gū, and ‘Ḥāfīz the Nonsense-Talker’, Ḥāfīz-e ẓāve-gū.

Kasravî is far from being original in accusing Ḥāfīz’ poems of incoherence, even though he does not seem to know of earlier discussions on the question. As Roemer ¹ notes in his excellent synopsis of

the results of Ḥāfiz studies, Ḥāfiz' patron himself, Ṣāḥib Ṣuğa', accuses him of incoherent poetry. This is told us by Ḥōndamīr, the literary historian. This concept of incoherence is familiar to modern scholars, who are interested in the Indian poet Iqbal, and give him the credit for restoring unity of thought to the ghazal. A reading of Iqbal's ghazals will convince us of the truth of this, vigorous as they are and reflecting a unified thought in which a European philosophical training is clearly mirrored.

Some modern European scholars, too, have been disturbed by the discontinuity of thought in the poetry of Ḥāfiz. In The Persian Language, Reuben Levy quotes Ḥāfiz' ghazal Dar azal partow-e ḥusnāt zi ṭaqfāli ādam zad, and remarks that it is one of the few of Ḥāfiz' poems enjoyable because of its continuity of thought. It is true that this poem is exceptional among Ḥāfiz' works. Its span ranges from the beginning of Eternity to a realistically described present beside the beloved; the thought is logically developed from line to line. It would be impossible to change the order of the couplets.

Ḥāfiz' scholars of today have otherwise been clearly influenced by the structural methods of the modern literary criticism and in many cases have sought to prove the existence of a clearly thematic logic in Ḥāfiz' poems. Thus Roger Lescot says: "... pour ne s'attacher qu'au sens logique du texte, la plupart des pieces du Divan apparaissent comme admirablement construites. Tout s'y enchaîne avec une perfection rarement égale... Tout poème de Ḥāfiz comporte donc un fil directeur qui commande le sens, amoureux, mystique ou bacchique, qu'il convient d'accorder à chacun des vers qui le composent. Lorsqu'on éprouve des difficultés à dégager cette idée maitresse, c'est, presque toujours, que l'ordonnance de la pièce a été dérangée par un copiste négligent, ou encore que l'on commet quelque faute d'interprétation." Thus, Lescot lays the blame for the discontinuity in

1 Roemer, p. 5.
2 Hōndamīr, Ḥābīb as-siyār 114: 2 p. 37, see H. R. Roemer, Probleme der Ḥāfizforschung und der Stand ihrer Lösung, p. 108.
3 S. A. Vahid, Iqbal, his art and thought, Hyderabad-Deccan 1948.
4 P. 86.
5 We return to this poem and Professor Levy's opinions of it later on p. 23.
Haфиз' poems on negligent copyists, who have changed the order of the couplets and thus caused the impression of incoherence.

But let us try an experiment, taking, for example, the poem quoted by Kasravi in Haфиз ē mig Yad:

1. dar ǰumīr-e mā namīgunād begār az āst kās
   har do ālam-rā be duštān deh ke mārā āst bās
2. yār-e gandum ġun-e mā gar meil kardī nīn ġou
   har do ālam pīs-e ġašm-e mā namūdī yek 'adas
3. yād mīdārī ke būdī har zamān bā ġīgarān
   ey ke biyād-e to hargīz bar nayāvardam nafas
4. mīravī ġūn 'amī ġamī āz pās ā pīs ā ravaū
   nēy, ġalāt guftūm nābāsād 'amī-rā ġod pīs ā pās
5. ġafīl āst ġūnō ā beige ġamī āz to mīpēd 'inīn
   qand-rā laddat magar nīkū namīdānad magas
6. ġālīram vaqtī ġavās kardī ke bīnām ġīzhā
   tā to-rā ġīdām nakārdām ġūz be ġīdarat ġavās
7. mardumān-rā az 'asas ġab bar ġiyālī dar sar ġast
   mān ġenānām ġas ġiyālām bāz ġaśnāsād 'asas
8. ġiyāt az āškām ġī ġarī ġatī ġītarām ke bāz
   bar sar āyand ān raqībān-e sabūkbarāt ātīhās
9. Haфиз ā ārī ġe-pā-yē ġašē-yē ġan-e ġe ġī)
   ba'd az ān ġenīn ke ġardī bar nāğiżād zīrī ġaras

1. Nobody can be contained in our mind but the Friend,
   Give the Two Worlds to the foe: the Friend is enough for us.
2. If you take our wheat-coloured Friend for half a groat,
   The Two Worlds to our eyes seem one pulse-seed.
3. Do you remember how all the time you were with others?
   Ah but I never drew a breath without remembering you.
4. You proceed like a candle and behind and in front of you
   a crowd is going —
   No, I made a slip: a candle has no in front and behind!
5. He is headless who twists away from you the reins with a sword:
   Does not the fly well know that sugar has sweetness?
6. Once my mind was agog for me to see things:
   Seeing you, I desired nought but the sight of you.
7. If people have in their heads a vision of the watchman at night,
I am such that the watchman cannot distinguish me from my vision.

8. Your street through my tears has turned into a sea; I fear that these light-headed companions of yours will grow up like weeds.

9. Oh, Ḥāfiz, this taking this road is not for your lame carcass, after this sit down so that no dust will be put up by this horse.1

(Translation by Peter Avery)

The poem gains nothing in continuity of thought from any arrangement of these couplets; it acquires no plot, such as is shown in, e.g., the poem Dar azāl partow-e ḥusnač zi taḡallī dam zad, or most of the poems of Ġalāl ed-Din Rūmī. Thus, a copyist cannot remove from a poem a continuity which it proves impossible to restore. Here, in my opinion, we have one of Ḥāfiz' reforms, his movement away from continuity of thought to thematic coherence, from a 'plot-poem' to one with an artistic form, but no plot.

One modern scholar who defends the coherence of Ḥāfiz' poems is A. J. Arberry, one of the foremost modern experts on Persian literature. In Fifty Poems of Ḥāfiz,2 one of his themes is that the young Ḥāfiz faithfully follows in the footsteps of Sa'di's clear ghazals. The old Ḥāfiz, by contrast, has forsaken plotting and forms 'thematic patterns'. Every poem is constructed contrapuntally. First the themes, the 'thematic patterns', are put forward, later to be returned to, and finally culminating at the end of the poem. I feel that the remark about contrapuntal technique is valid, although Arberry does not quote any poems to prove the strength of his argument.3 On the other hand, it is more difficult to believe that Ḥāfiz' contrapuntal technique is not already evident in his early poems. I believe that the

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1 H. Pezmān in his edition of Ḥāfiz' poems (Tehrān a.H. 1318) attributes this ghazal to Aḥṣadi of Marāḡe (a.D. 1271/72—1337/38). If Pezmān is right, this poem shows that the reform of which Ḥāfiz was the leading exponent was not abrupt, but gradual (see p. 19 of this study). In the preface to his edition (p. 103) Pezmān says: 'The style of Ḥwāḡe is, in its use of vocables, very near to that of Aḥṣadi...'.


3 At the end of this essay I shall try to analyse an incoherent but artistically superb poem and show how this contrapuntal technique works.
general characteristics of the poetry of Ḥāfīz were there while he was still young. This can be verified from a chronological anthology of Ḥāfīz’ poems. In his famous book Bahdar aṣār va aṣkār va aḵvāl-e Ḥāfīz, Qāsem Ğanī quotes 108 of Ḥāfīz’ poems, roughly a quarter of his whole output. Most of them can be confidently dated, as the Shah, Vizier, or other important person to whom they are dedicated are mentioned in them. Nothing can be found in these poems to support Arberry’s argument that it is only in later life that Ḥāfīz breaks the continuity of thought in the ghazal. I feel, for example, that the lament commemorating Ḥāfīz’ first patron Abū Īsḥāq:

Yād bād ān-ke sar-e kū-ye to-am manzil būd

... (Ḡanī, p. 133)

is an example of how the young Ḥāfīz could write poems containing a variety of material and surprising couplets. On the other hand, as an old man Ḥāfīz wrote many poems as clear in thought as his characteristic style permits. Examples of this type are the poems dedicated to Šāh Yahyā:

Yak do ḏāmam dī saḥargah ittifāq uftāde būd

... (Ḡanī, p. 371)

and

Ḡouzā saḥar nihād ḥamāyīl barābaram

... (Ḡanī, p. 403)

Although Arberry’s theory is not quite acceptable in its entirety, his description of the development of Ḥāfīz’ poetry shows deep insight. He compares the style of the ageing Ḥāfīz to that of the ageing Beethoven. Both of them tried, as they grew older, to free themselves from their own style. ‘It is as though the poet was growing weary, or perhaps feeling a distaste for the display of virtuosity; and having established his philosophy and perfected his technique, he was now experimenting in a sort of surrealistic treatment of the ghazal. The
poems of this period are comparatively few in number, but they are in many ways the poet's most interesting productions; they will repay extended study, for they are quite unique in Persian literature, and have perhaps never been fully understood and appreciated; certainly no later poet seems to have attempted to continue these final experiments of the master craftsman.\textsuperscript{1}

There could hardly be a better description of some of the late poems of Hāfiz. A comparison between them and the opera of Beethoven numbered over one hundred is proper: they display a powerful urge to reach beyond the boundaries of their maker's art. We might say the same about the later works of Goethe. He too was growing weary or perhaps feeling a distaste for the display of virtuosity. This can be seen in the West-östlicher Divan, which the critics of his time found difficult to place and understand. We shall return to the relationship of Goethe and Hāfiz later. When thinking of Arberry's last quoted sentence, \textit{\ldots certainly no later poet seems to have attempted to continue these final experiments \ldots}, we should take a closer look at the later poets. To trace the followers of Hāfiz' incoherence in Persian poetry would require a separate study, but some poets can be mentioned here. Ambiguity of style was especially popular in the 'Indian' school of Persian poetry (about 1500–1800 A.D.). H. Ajni in his monograph \textit{Bedil' i ego poema 'Irfon'} gives names of later poets for whom, as for Bīdil, \textquote[Arberry, Fifty Poems of Hāfiz, p. 32-33.]{[the terminology of sufism] served as a veil behind which they could hide their thoughts from the tyrannical reactions} (p. 40).

Hāfiz was in the same position. That he had something to fear and to hide is shown by the fact that his grave was threatened with demolition in the 16th century because of his alleged heresy. Some of the poets of Bīdil's time whom Ajni mentions are Qāsem beg Dīvāne, who \textquote{excelled in changeability of mood and incoherence of thought}, Nāser 'Ali Sirhindī and Moḩammad Eḩād, Sultānhwāge Adā\textsuperscript{2} \ldots was a follower of Bīdil in respect of complexity and difficulty of style.\textsuperscript{2}

About Indian style Ajni says: \textquote{but the difficulties of style were massed on top of each other, and in this manner the clarity of thought was disrupted.} (P. 38).

\textsuperscript{1} A. J. Arberry, Fifty Poems of Hāfiz, pp. 32–33.
\textsuperscript{2} P. 40
A style which partly expels the thought out of the poem, and replaces it with stylistic devices cannot be called popular. (P. 39).

Friedrich Rosen maintains that the Indian poet Gálib (died 1869) who wrote both in Persian and Urdu... has successfully studied the style of poets like Ḥáfiz.¹

Let us return to consideration of why Aḥmad Kasraví and Muhammad Iqbal forsook Ḥáfiz. For Aḥmad Kasraví, this was probably because his sense of the aesthetic values was less developed than his sociological tendencies. He was annoyed by Ḥáfiz’ unsocial attitude, the lā ubātiyye of his philosophy, its indifference. These two critics of Ḥáfiz were also possessed of well-developed meditative powers, Kasraví’s development being social and that of Iqbal philosophical. Kasraví considered Ḥáfiz a very poor teacher of the people, as he approved both of Sufic fatalism and the wine of the praiser of intoxication, ‘ḥarābaṭīgar’.

We have already noted that Kasraví ascribes Ḥáfiz’ defective teaching in large part to the Mongol attacks which caused the decline in the morals of the Persians, formerly so heroic and virtuous. The voices of the praisers of wine, claiming that only in wine are the solutions of problems to be found, grew stronger. The Sufis, too, using the symbolism of the wine-drinker, also declared that consolation is to be found only in wine, i.e., according to their interpretation, in spiritual ecstasy, which Kasraví despised.

Kasraví’s attitude is straightforwardly chauvinistic and didactic, but it has one feature in common with Iqbal’s views. Both of them write slightly of Ḥáfiz’ lack of capacity for logical thought. Their attitudes reveal this charge: Ḥáfiz cannot be grasped, all his poems end in a chaos of intangible concepts. Kasraví pursues a defined end: social reform and the improvement of the position of the poor. There is nothing in Ḥáfiz’ poetry to support such a programme.

Why, then, has Muhammad Iqbal written:

'Do not drink the wine of Ḥáfiz,
for poison flows in it'?

¹ H. v. Glasenapp, Die Literaturen Indiens, Potsdam 1929, p. 223.

"An einzelnen Wendungen merkt man bei Ghâlib das erfolgreiche Studium des Stils von Dichtern wie Ḥáfiz, z.B. wenn er sagt: Frag’ mich nicht nach dem Rezept der Salbe für das gebrochene Herz, denn sie enthält als Hauptbestandteil Diamantenstaub."
This is quite a different question from that asked by Kasravi. Iqbal’s relation to Ḥāfiz had many sides. He understood Ḥāfiz’ importance as a lyrical poet. His Ḥāfiz criticism is very different from Kasravi’s. What, then, is the poison in the wine? It is probably Ḥāfiz’ limitations in ethics and philosophy, fields highly esteemed by Iqbal. If the intellectual activities of man are divided, according to the old philosophic trichotomy,¹ into cognition, feeling and willing, it may be said that cognition and willing are, in Ḥāfiz, the lesser parts, while in Iqbal they are highly developed.

Most people today consider that Ḥāfiz’ philosophy of life is basically optimistic.² But is this optimism, this faith in life, thinking? Is it not, rather, an aesthetic sensation marked by optimism? In A History of Urdu Literature³ Ram Babu Saksena mentions Gālib as a great philosopher. Again, in Studier over Ḥāfiz,⁴ H. Rasmussen introduces Ḥāfiz as a kind of nature philosopher, a pantheist.

Gālib can no more be called a philosopher than can Ḥāfiz. The proffering of separate, emotion-flavoured meditations is not philosophy in the sense of Rūmi’s Maṭnawī or Iqbal’s Asrār-e Ḥudūd.

All this is intended, not to define values, but to map the hazy boundary between thought and aesthetic emotion in Ḥāfiz’ poetry.

According to classical philosophy, the will-power of man manifests itself in ethics. Let us then look at the ethics of Ḥāfiz.

Ḥāfiz was certainly no moralist.⁵ He seems to have a high regard for intoxicated beggar-philosophers, while not presenting his ideas systematically, as a doctrine of salvation. It was a fragment of a programme.

To illustrate this, we may compare the morals of Ḥāfiz with those of his great admirer, Goethe. If we use the word ‘morals’ of Goethe

³ Allahabad 1940.
⁴ Diss., København 1892, p. 138. »Ḥāfiz’ poesie bliver derfor vaesentligt naturmystik, naturromantik.«
⁵ J. Rypka, Iranische Literaturgeschichte, Leipzig 1959, pp. 262—263.
and of Ḥāfīz, we find that we do not mean the same thing. The homosexuality of Ḥāfīz (which Goethe remarks on in West-östlicher Divan) becomes, in Goethe, the friendship of a wise old man and the desire to teach a green and inexperienced youth. Goethe’s praise of wine is less reckless than that of Ḥāfīz. Kasravi’s book described Ḥāfīz’ other ‘immoralities’.

Muhammad Iqbal’s poetry also displays his thought and ethics.¹ His Āsrār-e ḥodí and Rumūz-e bihodí form a complete handbook for the meditative and ethical development of a modern Moslem. It is clear that a body of work such as this is ethically hardly in the same position as Ḥāfīz’ work.

A comparison with the period of Modernism in European literature, which began with Rimbaud and Mallarmé between the 1860s and the 1880s, will be useful to our thesis. There are many similarities between development in Europe after this period and development in Persian literature after Ḥāfīz. In drawing this parallel between the innovations of Mallarmé and Valéry and those of Ḥāfīz and his successors, I hope to bring the force of Ḥāfīz’ innovations nearer home.²

Let us take two poems. First, Je n’ai pas oublié, voisine de la ville, No 109 in Tableaux Parisiens by Baudelaire (1821—1867); second, a poem representing the next generation, more advanced, the sonnet Le Vierge, le vivace by Mallarmé (1842—1898).

Baudelaire’s poem shows a thought that can be followed throughout the line, a plot capable of expression by concept. This plot may be less than perfectly clear, but it is there.

In Mallarmé’s poem, on the other hand, we find no continuous train of thought taking us to a predetermined goal. It seems deliberately obscure, in defiance of earlier literary generations.³

² Michael I. Zand too, in his Six Centuries of Glory, Moscow 1967, has found affinity between the style of Ḥāfīz and the poetic styles of the present century: . . . in these ghazals Ḥāfīz applied quite consciously and consistently a method of revealing his hero’s inner condition at which European literature first arrived only in the XX century. P. 136.
³ Francis Scarfe, The Art of Paul Valéry, London 1954, p. 61: ‘The term ‘poésie pure’ has a history and can be traced back through Mallarmé to Baudelaire. . . ’

Pp. 62—63: ‘Valéry went on to describe how, influenced by Wagner, the Symbolist poets found in music all the means and effects they desired to import
Mallarmé and his pupil Valéry are attempting to attain their ideal of reformed poetry, poésie pure. We might define this poésie pure as the result of abolishing all but the aesthetically effective from the poem. This includes the abolition of continuity of thought.

A similar tendency is distinguishable in Persian poetry. Before Ḥāfiz, a poet would seldom express himself obscurely. There are, of course, pre-Ḥāfizian poets whose work is obscure, but the reason does not lie in their stylistic aspirations. Ḥāfiz was the great watershed. After Ḥāfiz we still find continuity of thought, for example in Ġamî's poems, but it has been noticed earlier on pages 15—16 that the shadow of Ḥāfiz reaches at least to the 19th century, and possibly even further.

In Ḥāfiz' work we have the first expression of a characteristic that was later to become common. In one of his studies W. Lentz seeks to prove that a style which commences by introducing the theme lightly is typical of modern Persian prose texts. This introduction is followed by a phase in which the original themes are ignored. Then the original themes are again brought up and arguments presented. Again there follow sections where nothing is definite, the treatment of the subject is circuitous, with no defined order. Thus the argumentation proceeds gradually, continually retracing its steps.

This extravagantly tortuous style must have been a thorn in the flesh of those, like Kasravi and Iqbal, who knew their countrymen well and were enthusiastic about European education.

into poetry. But they were discouraged by all the resources at the disposal of the orchestra, 'ils sortaient accablés des concerts'. He then restated an idea of Mallarmé's: 'Ce qui fut baptisé le Symbolisme se résume très simplement dans l'intention commune à plusieurs familles de poètes (d'ailleurs ennemies entre elles) de reprendre à la Musique leur bien.' It is not explained how or when 'leur bien' had ever been taken from them by music, though it might be implied that previous poets in their emphasis on thought (Vigny), rhetoric (Hugo) and vision (Gautier and the Parnassians) were responsible, or, as Julien Benda argues in a highly suggestive note on Mallarmé and Wagner, that the Symbolists were dimly aware that Wagner relegated words to a very inferior place in his operatic synthesis of the arts.¹

¹ H. R. Roemer, Probleme der Hafizforschung und der Stand ihrer Lösung, p. 108.
We have already mentioned that modern European literature bears signs of a process leading to similar results. The phenomena are undoubtedly analagous, although there is no direct influence of the Persians on the European moderns except in Russia.¹

In The Art of Paul Valéry ² Francis Scarfe mentions that in Valéry's own opinion the aspiration towards pure poetry is most successfully expressed in the last eight lines of the poem Fragments du Narcisse. Scarfe says (p. 65):

'We are fortunate in having an actual example of what Valéry considered to be this 'perfection of union', this state of 'pure' poetry sustained for only a few lines, in which the 'Paradise of Language' (an idea taken from Leonardo's view of mechanics as the 'paradise of the mathematical sciences') was achieved, as he thought, by Valéry himself. With regard to eight lines from the Fragments du Narcisse which were quoted by M. Jean de Latour, Valéry remarked: 'Les huit derniers vers que vous citez là sont très précisément ceux qui m'ont coûté le plus de travail, et que je considère comme les plus parfaits de tous ceux que j'ai écrits, je veux dire les plus conformes à ce que j'avais voulu qu'ils fussent, assouplis à toutes les contraintes que je leur avais assignées. Notez qu'ils sont, par ailleurs, absolument vides d'idées, et atteignent ainsi à ce degré de pureté qui constitue justement ce que je nomme poésie pure.'

The eight lines are as follows:

O douceur de survivre à la force du jour,
Quand elle se retire enfin rose d'amour,
Encore un peu brûlante, et lasse, mais comblée,
Et de tant de trésors tendrement accablée

¹ M. Zand, Six Centuries of Glory: "The nineteenth century Russian poet Fet was infatuated with Hafiz which resulted in many subtly conceived renderings and imitations of Hafiz's poems, and similar feelings flared up once more in early XX century Russian poetry, when M. Kuzmin, Vyacheslav Ivanov, V. Bryussov and others created ghazals inspired by motifs from Hafiz. This early century Russian 'Hafiziana' actually links up with Yesenin's 'Persian motifs', ..." P. 141. It may be mentioned that Fet was regarded by the Russian symbolists as a precursor to their way of writing. On pp. 90—91, 104—105 I shall show how the stylistic ideals of Hafiz, Goethe and Eliot link up with each other.

We could hardly have a clearer expression of the programme of lack of clarity of thought in poetry.

Other poems could be quoted, even from the works of Mallarmé, Valéry's predecessor and spiritual father, which show the same purity as the incomparable eight final lines of Fragments du Narcisse quoted above. To take only one example:

**Petit air**

*Quelconque une solitude*
*Sans le cygne, ni le quai*
*Mire sa désuétude*
*Au regard que j’abdiquai*

*Ici de la gloviole*
*Haute à ne la pas toucher*
*Dont maint ciel se bariole*
*Avec les ors de coucher*

*Mais langoureusement longe*
*Comme de blanc linge ôté*
*Tel fugace oiseau si plonge*
*Exultatrice à côté*

*Dans l’onde toi devenue*
*Ta jubilation nue,¹*

It is hardly possible to paraphrase the eight lines from the Fragments du Narcisse. As Valéry notes they are 'absolument vides d'idées'. The structure of a poem², according to John Crowe Ransom, is »... the framework of meaning, the prose argument within the

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¹ The Poems of Mallarmé, London 1956, p. 98.
poem... If we consider only this definition, Valéry's poem has no structure. In this respect it differs from the poem of Ḥāfiz, Ḥū-ye vahšī, which we shall try to analyse later. Ḥāfiz' poem has no plot but a kind of relationship among episodes\(^1\) can be established. As regards the Petit air which I have quoted R. G. Cohn has\(^2\) given a paraphrase which seems a bit arbitrary. In my view this poem of Mallarmé could as well depict the birth of Venus as a promenade of Mallarmé with his mistress.

Iqbal would probably have also condemned this form of Westernism, of Occidental modernism. In him the cogitative function is exceedingly well developed for one whose main occupation was that of the poet. In his usual terse manner, Iqbal would probably have condemned modernism as a cancer of Europe, poetry that excites the aesthetic curiosity with its poison but paralyzes all other intellectual functions.

Iqbal died in 1938, so it is strange that he never really noticed Occidental modernism. It is, on the whole, a matter for wonder how little mention he makes of poets in his own numerous poems which deal with Hegel, Nietzsche, Kitchener, Lenin, Bergson, the learned men of Punjab, etc. He did, it is true, publish a book dedicated to Goethe, Payām-e Mašriq. We must admit that Rückert's Östliche Rosen, Bodenstedt's Lieder des Mirza Schaffy and many others are less interesting imitations of West-östlicher Divan than this new Eastern appraisal. Still, Iqbal's over-simplifying, philosophic mode of observation in Payām-e Mašriq is — if compared with the sensibility of the original — often as blunt as Kasravi's.

This brings us to Iqbal's limitation. He could never truly understand Goethe's spontaneous delight in the poetry of Ḥāfiz, the ambiguous, elusive mysticism of West-östlicher Divan, nor the significance of his ponderings on the problems of Persian poetry in his collection of maxims Noten und Abhandlungen zu bessarem Verständnis des West-östlichen Dirans. Iqbal saw in Goethe a propagandist of that Eastern sphere of culture of which he himself was a part.

A poet of whom Iqbal spontaneously approved was Rūmī, whom he took with him on a trip to the Secres of the Self, and who is his

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2 Toward the poems of Mallarmé, Berkeley 1965, pp. 117–118.
guide in the book Ġāvid nāme. But Rūmī was a poet-philosopher, like Iqbal himself. Iqbal could spare no unambiguous admiration for lyric poets.

It is already in a sense established that Ḥāfiz’ poems display discontinuity of thought. According to tradition, his most important patron Sāh Šuğā’ considered his poems disjointed. Ḥāfiz’ technical reforms were continued by the representatives of the ‘Indian style’, such as Bīdīl and Ġālib, both of them poets born in India. In the 16th century the centre of Persian poetry moved to India, remaining there into the 19th century.

Indian critics give Muhammad Iqbal, the great Persian poet of our century, the credit for restoring continuity of thought to the ghazal. Despite his importance, he is very little known to modern Iranians. This means that they have never become aware of the discontinuity of the post-Ḥāfizian ghazal by drawing the comparison with the taut ghazals of Iqbal. Aḥmad Kasravi stands alone in Iran proper as having noticed the discontinuity of Ḥāfiz’ poems.

The enthusiastic attempts of R. Lescot and M. Wickens to prove that Ḥāfiz’ poems are clear constitute an indirect indication that they must be of less than perfect clarity.

None, however, has ever tried to prove the relative obscurity of Ḥāfiz’ poems by comparing them with the traditional poetic style of Persia. It may be useful to attempt such a comparison.

Let us begin with one of Ḥāfiz’ poems, showing a continuity of thought. Reuben Levy criticizes Ḥāfiz for his lack of speculative profundity, clearly meaning that Ḥāfiz’ poems never offer such brilliant (and continuous) passages of thought as those of Rūmī and ʿAttār. Levy approves of the following poem, however, for its philosophical speculations.

1. dar azal partov-e ḥusnat ze taḡallī dam zad
   ‘eṣq paīdā šud o āteš bāhama ‘ālam zad
2. ǧālvāf kard ruḥat diḏ malak ‘eṣq nadāšt
   ‘ein-e ātaš šud azīn ḡeirat o bar ādam zad
3. ‘aql miḥāšt keze ān šo’le ārāḵ afrūzad
   barq-e ḡeirat bederaḵšid o ġahān barham zad

1. In eternity past the ray of your beauty breathed of its unveiling; 
   Thus was love revealed and the world set ablaze.
2. Your visage created glory; the Angel saw but conceived no love; 
   Thereby incensed he became the essence of fire and struck down at Man.
3. Reason desired to kindle a torch at the flame; 
   There flashed forth the lightning of jealousy so that the world was destroyed.
4. The Adversary desired then to visit the place where secret things are visible; 
   The hand of the Mysterious came and pierced the breast of that uninitiated one.
5. Others threw the die of Fate desiring only joy; 
   'Twas my grief-stricken heart alone which threw for grief again.
6. From on high the soul held a passion for the dimple in your chin; 
   Its hand dallied with those curling tresses of yours.
7. Ḥāfiz wrote the happy scroll of his love for you that day 
   When he proscribed all things else which make the heart rejoice.¹

This poem proceeds clearly from the dawn of eternity to the curls of the beloved. Its progress is not, perhaps, in an absolutely straight line. The continuity here is that of a philosophic continuity of thought, and does not depend on associations.

We must now turn to a very different kind of poem. The logical coherence of the previous example is overthrown and instead we have an entity consisting of disconnected couplets, even of disconnected episodes. The following poem, in fact, consists of several poems linked by a loose chain of associations. I have used A. J. Arberry’s

version, from his *Fifty Poems of Ḥāfīz*,\(^1\) which differs considerably from the version of Rosenzweig-Schwannau. For example, Arberry’s version lacks a whole poem within the poem. This is the part in the Hammer translation\(^2\) dealing with the horn sounding in the valley. The sound of this horn indicates that again a man is killed for the sake of a single grain of corn. Arberry has a good division of the different parts of the poem into individual pieces.\(^3\)

1. alâ ey āhû-ye vahšî kuğâî
   marâ bâ tüst bisyâr âsnaî
2. do tanhâ rou do sargardân-e bîkas
   do râh ast ə kamîn az piş o az pas
3. be-yâ tâ ḡâl-e yekdîgar bedânîm
   murâd ham begûîm ar tavânîm
4. ke miâbînam ke în dašt-e mušavaś
   čarâgâhî nadârad ciman 5 ġwaś
5. ke ḡâhad şud begûîd ey ḡabîbân
   rafiq-e bîkasân yâr-e ġarîbân
6. magar ġedr-e mubârak pey dar āyad
   ze yumn-e himmataš în rah sar āyad
7. nakard ān hamdam-e dîrin mudârâ
   musalmânân musalmânân hudârâ
8. čenîn bîraḥm zad zaḥm-e ġudâî
   ke ġûî ḡod nabûdast âsnaî
9. beraft ū āb-e ḡosbâšam ḥazîn kard
   berâdâr bâ berâdâr key čenîn kard
10. magar ġedr-e mubârak pey tavânad
    ke în tanhâ bêdân tanhâ rasânâd

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\(^3\) Even other parts of the poem as given in Arberry’s anthology are in a very different order in Rosenzweig-Schwannau’s edition. This is a typical situation which we come across while reading different editions. It does not make studies on Ḥāfīz’ poems any easier.
11. مگر وقت‌الی پاروباران آمد
که فلام لاغزدارنی فاردان آمد
12. که رُزی راهرویی در سرزمینی
به لعفاش گفت گرد‌الراحی‌شینی
13. که ی‌الی ساک از در انبدن داری
به‌یا دامی بنهل گار دانه داری
14. گاوبارش داده گفت دانه داره
فالی سیمرغ مبیاد شکار
15. به‌غفتا چنین به داست اری نیشانه
که آز مان بینیسان است یشیاس
16. نیازه مان چه واقع آراد لهدین ساز
که هورشیده گنی سود کیسه پارد

17. چن سارف به شد کاروانه
که الب سارف میکن دیدبان
18. لاب سرقصی ی او حرف‌ی گئی
نام‌الی اکی ها هو گفتگویی
19. که یاده‌ال رفتگانی ی دوستداران
موفیق جارد با بر ابیه کاران
20. چن نالن یادادی اب‌ال‌رمان پیک
مرداد به‌داسه زه آب‌ال دیده‌یه حمزه
21. ماده گه‌می ی او پی‌یه گول آز داست
فالی گئیل مه‌سی آز داره‌ال باهمت
22. رافیان قدرتی ی یادیگار بدن‌ند
че ما للوم است سوره ال بر به‌هند
23. مقال‌الیتی نشیتگوی هامین است
که همکوردی‌الی به‌گران دار کمین است

24. چن ماهی‌یی کلال ارام به تاریک
که آز نون و ۱۷۳ کلام میپرس تفسیر
25. رمان‌الی باه‌براد دارهم سیرشام
که ی‌الی توهمی که هشیل بود کیستم
26. فربه‌بهاشی در ان تارکیب پیاده‌ست
که مقیزه سیره‌نگاشف گن‌یه اچ‌گاست
27. به‌یا واب نیکه‌تی این تی‌یه عمید
مهام‌یه گن موتار ساز اقیوید
28. که ان نا‌سیزه این‌یه یی‌ه‌ر است
ناز وان اهلک که از ماردوم نافر است
1. Oh wild deer, where are you?  
   Well known are you to me.
2. Two people, walking, alone, two lost ones, solitary,  
   there are two paths but ambush lies in front and behind.
3. Come, let us know each other's condition  
   and let us seek what we desire, if we can.
4. For I see that in this restless desert  
   there is no safe and pleasant pasture
5. Who will be, tell me my friends,  
   the companion of the lonely, the helper of the stranger.
6. If only the holy ħedr should appear,  
   this journey would come to an end by his auspicious care.
7. That long-time bosom friend was ungentle,  
   O Moslems, O Moslems, my God.
8. He struck me so cruelly by the separation,  
   that one should say there never was any acquaintance.
9. He went, making my glad mind heavy,  
   when did a brother behave so to a brother?
10. May the holy ħedr enable  
    this lonely one to meet that lonely one.
11. The time may have come when I receive the mercy  
    that the prayer 'don't leave me solitary' has been heard.
12. One day, the wayfarer in a far country  
    was kindly told by a wise man who sat by the wayside.
13. O wayfarer, what is in your bag?  
    Come, lay down your trap if you have seeds.
14. His answer was, I have seeds  
    but I must hunt the simurg.
15. He said, how can you learn its whereabouts  
    for we have no knowledge of its nest.
16. What is the use of our begging any more  
    when the rich sun has become a purser.
17. When that straight cypress became a mark for caravans,  
    by the cypress bough you must be guided.
18. On the edge of a spring, nearby a stream,
    with a tear, with soliloquy,
19. In the memory of the dead and friends
    be like a springtime cloud.
20. When water bursts forth before you, lamenting,
    help it with the water of your eyes.
21. Do not abandon the glass of wine, the nearness of flowers,
    do not neglect the drunken world.
22. O friends, recognize each other's worth
    when the explanation is clear then learn it by heart.
23. This is the essay of the counsellor
    but the one who commands separation lies in ambush.
24. When I make the fish speak and intrigue
    ask from the fish and the pen the explanation.
25. The soul and the intellect I kneaded
    and sowed the seed for that mixture.
26. Pleasant things sprang from that mixture,
    the pith of its sweet poem is the soul of the limbs.
27. Come for the scent of good hope,
    let the soul be eternally perfumed.
28. This musk is from the fold of a houri's pocket
    not from that deer which shuns men.

In the first part the poet complains that his wild deer is lost and
now he is alone. There are ambushes before and behind, and the
disconsolate poet has no safe place of repose.

In the second sequence the poet complains that his bosom friend
has treated him badly, causing them to part.

The third part of the poem is surprising, and in fact forms a separate
story. Here the poet tells how the wayfarer has travelled to a strange
country, where he meets a wise freethinker. This wise one tells him to
settle down in the strange country and trap game. The wayfarer
answers that his quarry is the simurğ bird, seen only by mystics,
which leads the mystics, the Sufis, on their road towards nirvana
(fanā in Persian).

Here the poem which began as a lament for the lost beloved aspires
to new height. The beloved is elliptically compared with the simurğ
bird of the mystical tales. Now that the object of love is thus given a new form, it becomes linked with a platonistic conception of love displaying itself on several levels.

Yet this sudden, unexpected tale of the wayfarer and the sage puzzles the reader. He may wonder where this poem within a poem has come from, this section that could in fact be presented as a separate matnawi.

Here we are reminded of an idea expressed by the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovski. Shklovski is one of the main critics of the Russian formalist school of the period from 1915 to the end of the 1920s. This school was completely destroyed in Russia in the 1930s, and later was held in very bad repute. Shklovski expresses his idea mainly to defend modern Russian poetry. He thinks that the more the images and sequences of a poem astound, the greater the effect of a poem. The effect of the poem is directly related to the power of its parts to startle. However, this startling quality must not be completely separate from the rest of the poem. A poem is not good without something binding the parts accurately together. To Shklovski, the associations of the images provide sufficient ties.

The different parts of the poem āhū-ye vaḥṣī are a good proof of Shklovski’s theories. The line: Magar vaqt-e ‘atā parvordan āmad starts a sequence which appears to have no connection with the rest of the poem. And yet it is this very sequence and its strangeness that gives the poem its point of elevation. The whole tale of the wayfarer is separate from the general course of the poem. It is connected by the first couplet:

Magar vaqt-e ‘atā parvordan āmad  
ke fālam lā tadarnī fardan āmad

[The time may have come when I receive the mercy that the prayer ‘don’t leave me solitary’ has been heard.]

This couplet has the theme of solitude that is repeated in the poem. Thus it ties the sequence to the rest of the poem.

The next sequence describes a theme quite common in Persian lyric poetry, but here it seems to be rather detached from the rest. The poet is in a garden by a river. There are blooming trees and flowing water, so precious in Persia. It is spring. Now there comes a break in the idyllic nem-e askī o bā hūd gūftogūī.

In a joyous Persian spring poem the poet seldom soliloquizes. There are always merry companions to share the wine-bowl with him.

Here we find a new aspect in Ḥāfīz’ poetry. In the 1940s, Qāsem Ġānī published his epoch-making work Bahīt dar ʾašūr va ʾaksīr va ḍuʾūl-e Ḥāfīz, 1 to be followed by Roger Lescot’s study based on it. 2
In this, the foundations laid by Ġānī enabled him to date many of Ḥāfīz’ poems. This dating had never been done before.

Lescot noted that maʾšūq and mamdūh were often mixed in Ḥāfīz’ poems, that is, Ḥāfīz united two different experiences into one conception.

I here refer to Q. Ġānī’s section on Ḥāfīz’ hegān period. This is marked by a plaintive tone which is otherwise rather rare in Ḥāfīz. He can on occasion be heart-breakingly tragic, but he is rarely sorrowful. Q. Ġānī has dated some of the poems which undoubtedly belong to Ḥāfīz’ middle period. The mention of Abūʾl-favāris Śāh Śūgār or his alias Śāh Sūvār, proves that the poems quoted by Ġānī and Lescot do indeed belong to this period. They are marked by a unique sorrowful tone, a plaintive sadness. 3

The maṭnāvī now under discussion does not mention the name of Abūʾl-favāris or of Śāh Suvār. Nevertheless, the sad tone dominating the poem is related to the poems of Ḥāfīz’ hegān period. Never before has Ḥāfīz been so melancholic. It is possible that ʾāḥū-ye vaḥšī be-

1 Tehrān 1953.
3 H. Roemer, Probleme der Ḥāfizforschung und der Stand ihrer Lösung, p. 112. Ḥāfīz ist in Ungnade gefallen und führt darüber bewegte Klage. Seine Freunde haben ihn verlassen, Feinde intrigieren gegen ihn ... Als er aber schliesslich doch nach Jazd gereist war, ergriff ihn das Heimweh nach Sirāz, wobei nichterfüllte Hoffnungen auf Fürstengunst eine Rolle spielen mögen.
longs to the *hejran* period\(^1\) during which Ḥāfiz, conscious of his greatness, wrote for the whole continent. This is shown by his poem in which he tells how his one-night-old child (the poem) made the year-long trip from Persia to Bengal.\(^2\)

If we assume that our *matnavī* ʿāhū-*ye vahšī*, reflects the happenings of the *hejran* period then the basic thought of the sequence in question fits into our theme well. The poet is alone in his garden because his friend and, more importantly, patron ʿSāh ʿSuḡāʾ is not present. This garden sequence, again, is connected with the rest of the poem by association. For the sake of logical continuity the scene in the garden has nothing to do with the rest of the poem. The associative link is in the theme of the loss of the beloved recurring in different parts of the poem.

How can we connect with the whole the sequence beginning with the couplet, «When I make the fish to speak and to intrigue»?

There is no connection here with what has gone before. The only image providing a link with the rest of the poem is the last couplet:

\[
\text{ke īn nāfe ze ēīn-ē ǧīb-ē hūr ast}
\text{na zān ēhū ke az mardum nafūr ast}
\]

[This musk is from the fold of a hurī’s pocket,
not from that deer which shuns men.]

In the last line we have another mention of the gazelle who hates people. This thus connects the whole poem in its link with the first line, *Atā ʿey ēhū-ye vahšī kūjāt*.

In many ways, this last couplet is typical of Ḥāfiz. It is especially typical of his final lines because here, as in so many of his poems, the whole is raised to a new peak. The culmination creates its effect because the poem comes full circle, returning to the theme of the opening lines, and because Ḥāfiz here returns to one of his favourite themes, mysticism. He returns to paradise from whence the musk

\(^1\) All the elements of the mood of this period are there. There is the sbe-wegte Klage, in the poem we see in many passages that his friend has left him, already in the beginning of the poem we read that his foes intrigue against him, there is even «das Heimweh nach Širāz» to be felt, even if the name of Širāz is not mentioned.

\(^2\) Kīn ṣefl-*e yakšābā rah-*e yaksāle miravad.
of poetry has been brought, and thereby once again heightens the power of the poem. Yet again, Ḥāfīz leaves us wondering how seriously to take his mysticism. Ḥāfīz' last līres often reflect rhythmic — or perhaps we should say phonetic — talent as well. The eloquent rhythm gives a new meaning to plain words. This is true of the whole poem and of Ḥāfīz' poetry in general. It is impossible to analyze without awareness of his rhythmic magnetism that completely changes the tone of lines borrowed from older poets.