"From its editors' statement of its aim "to rekindle the lost harmonious ties among Middle Eastern peoples" to a concluding essay on meanings of Arabic words exhibiting an h-b-b root system and on hubb synonyms and antonyms, *The Beloved in Middle Eastern Literatures* is a rich, variegated, must-read study of its important subject. Through plot summaries and analyses of a handful of recent novels, analyses of Arabic love poems by Jamîl (early 7th century CE), Abu Nuwâs (d.c. 814 CE), and Ibn al-Rumi (d. 896 CE) and of Persian love poems by leading Persian woman poets Jahân Malek Khâtun (14th century) and Forugh Farrokhzâd (1934–67), along with treatments of several treatises and anthologies, *The Beloved in Middle Eastern Literatures* delivers on its promise 'to offer an alternative intervention – one that affirms subjectivity and the universality of love affects across time and geography.' For students of Persian love poetry, such as this blurb writer, the book sheds needed light on 'the unresolved nature of the beloved in Persian love poetry' (which, after all, traces its origins to Arabic poetry)."

Michael Craig Hillmann, Professor of Persian,
The University of Texas at Austin

"This magnificent collection on love and the beloved in Middle Eastern literatures is groundbreaking for its comparative, interdisciplinary, and trans-regional approach. It is sure to become the standard work on the subject."

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"*The Beloved in Middle Eastern Literatures* is a welcome contribution to gender, love and sexuality studies on the Middle East. The essays provide cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives to the concept of the beloved as it appears in distinct yet connected literary cultures of the pre-modern and modern Middle East. Through an innovative organization of essays that focus on thematic and linguistic nuances and unifying affects rather than a chronological approach, editors achieve to weave a story about the revolutions of the concept of beloved in Middle Eastern literary traditions. Love is analyzed in chapters organized after dangerous, divine, erotic, and dialectical forms of it as well as its relation to gender."

Selim S. Kuru, Associate Professor and Department Chair,
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization,
University of Washington

The Beloved in Middle Eastern Literatures

The Culture of Love and Languishing

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1

Writing to the End of Love: Waḥīd and the Motif Extremes of Ibn al-Rūmī

Sarah R. bin Tyeer

> If you have never been in love and don't know what love is,
> Be a stone, from the hardest rock there is, a boulder.
> Al-Aḥwaṣ al-Anṣārī (Umayyad poet, d. 723 CE)

Abstract

This chapter seeks to analyze how the stylistic aspects of one of Ibn al-Rūmī's (d. 896 CE) most famous poems, *Waḥīd*, serve its motif of unrequited love. The poem (no. 593 in his dīwān) is an expression of unreciprocated love to a singing girl set in ninth-century Baghdad. The poet's careful utilization of vocabulary, poetic meter, grammar, and phonetics conveys the expression of unrequited love on the levels of both word and sound. I seek to situate Ibn al-Rūmī's poem in its traditional genre, *ghazal*, and read it against the backdrops of the Arab-Islamic literary tradition of *adab* writings on love as well as philology and grammar. It is necessary to begin by discussing the literary aspects of the *qaṣīda* in the context of the theorization of love in premodern Arabic treatises on love by Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064 CE) as well as medieval medical humoral etiology. The chapter shows how the poet's choice of the vocabulary of love, as discussed by early Arab philologists

and grammarians, corresponds to the notions and symptoms of unreciprocated love, as highlighted by the treatises on love and Arabic philology (*fiqh al-lugha*). I then discuss Ibn al-Rūmī's utilization of the *radīf* (long vowel) that precedes the monorhyme or the poem's rhyme letter (*rawī*), the choice of the monorhyme itself, and the properties of Arabic letters as explained by grammarians. These elements, as used by Ibn al-Rūmī, simulate the melancholic symptoms induced by love, specifically unrequited love. The poem's content and form therefore express the suffering of the poet on both the written and the aural or performance levels. Thus not only is it a poetic expression of unrequited love, it is also true to Ibn al-Rūmī's personal style in 'exhausting motifs' (*istinfād al-ma'ānī*), 'giving motifs their full due' (*istīfā' al-ma'ānī*), 'killing motifs' (*imātat al-ma'ānī*).

Introduction

With recent advances in biotechnology offering some medical assistance in "curing love," one wonders if classical Arab poets would opt for biotechnological solutions to end the pain – but deprive the world of the genre of ghazal – or heroically endure the heartache and reap the creative rewards?[1] Ghazal, or love poetry, is "certainly one of the most successful genres in world literatures."[2] Its success is proved by its globetrotting progress from its birthplace in the Arabian Peninsula to Persia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritania, Turkey, and as far as Germany and Sweden.[3] While the theme of "lost love" in the *nasīb* (the introductory section) is a significant trope in pre-Islamic poetry, the poem itself is not devoted to love alone. Ghazal could be argued as a progressive expansion of the *nasīb* – though it never replaced the latter, it helped to develop it.[4] The image of a powerful beloved who holds tremendous power over her lover – which dominates the world of ghazal – appears after the advent of Islam.[5] It was not until the ninth and tenth centuries that ghazal was fully developed, and so it continued for more than a millennium afterwards.[6] A ninth-century love poem is still relevant for discussion in the twenty-first century and for us today. But why does ghazal survive?

For the Abbasid poet Ibn al-Rūmī, love is a malady, and he revels in its description. Born in Balkh to parents of both Persian and Byzantine origins, he was close to many powerful figures and patrons throughout his life,

as the panegyrics he composed attest.[7] In one of his most famous poems, *Waḥīd*, Ibn al-Rūmī describes the pains of unrequited love to a singing girl, Waḥīd. He depicts the paradoxical relationship between the heart that thinks of the beloved as a blessing and the mind that deems her a curse:[8]

> فهْيَ نُعْمى يميدُ منها كبيرٌ * وهيَ بلوى يشيب منها وليدُ[9]
>
> A blessing that causes mature men to sway,
> And a curse that turns the hair of newborns white.

The distinctive feature of Abbasid love poetry is paradox.[10] In the eponymous poem, Ibn al-Rūmī speaks about the nature of the lover's rejected advances towards Waḥīd as she sends him mixed messages. He watches her being affectionate towards others while he is left to sorrow and melancholy. Yet the lover cannot cease describing her effect on him. The "lover's choice of pain over indifference," Andras Hamori tells us, is the principal paradox that lends ghazal its dramatic quality.[11] As Ibn al-Rūmī says elsewhere in his dīwān,

> أملي فيه ليأسي قاهرٌ * فلذا قلبي عليه صابرُ
>
> My longing for him defeats my despair,
> And so my heart remains patient with him.[12]

Robert McKinney contends that the poem is believed to have been composed as a challenge to the poet to describe the songstress as the prompt "Describe her" (*ṣifhā*) indicates.[13] This was not uncommon. Such requests were part of literary salons; they were motivated by challenges from the poets' patrons or their audience, to prove the poet's own talent and craft, naturally.[14] This is cleverly declared by Ibn al-Rūmī as he responds to the challenge by saying:

> يسهل القول إنها أحسن الأشياءِ طرّاً *ويعسرُ التحديدُ
>
> It is easy to say that she is invariably the most beautiful of all creatures,
> But difficult to say precisely how.

Having declared the paradox of what McKinney calls "the impossibility of the task" and his own undertaking of that task, the poet created a

favorite conceit of his to celebrate his skills.[15] But it may be truly a paradoxical expression indicating the "impossibility" of highlighting the ethereal nature of experiencing beauty, as Īliyā Ḥāwī suggests. Beauty has an overwhelming effect that is difficult to articulate, and what is left of this experience and that moment, if one were to describe it, are only the vestiges of it.[16] Ḥāwī suggests a feeling akin to an "aesthetic arrest," especially as Ibn al-Rūmī combines the aesthetics of Waḥīd's physical beauty with her artistic and musical talents.

I. The Philological Measures of Love

In their scholarship on poetic craft and techniques, premodern rhetoricians and literary critics stressed the importance of the poem's opening line (*barā'at al-istihlāl*, "the excellence of the opening line"). They argue that part of its importance is defining the poem's genre (ghazal, panegyric, invective, etc.), thereby indicating the purpose (*gharaḍ*) of the poem's composition.[17] The rhetorician al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī (d. 1338) posits that the best opening is that which fits the purpose (*mā nāsab al-maqṣūd*).[18] Defining the purpose of the poem becomes a condition for "an excellent opening." Indeed, this should not be stated explicitly (*min ghayr taṣrīḥ*) but with a subtle hint (*ishāra laṭīfa*) that finds delicate reception in those with good taste (*dhawī al-dhawq al-salīm*).[19] Ibn al-Rūmī's first line addresses his speech to two friends:

> يا خليليَّ تَيَّمَتني وحيدُ*ففؤادي بها معنًّى عميدُ
>
> O my [two] friends, Waḥīd has enslaved me.
> My heart is besieged, ruined by her love.

The reader is tempted by this unintentional eavesdropping into an intimate conversation and cannot turn away. The poet, Northrop Frye maintains, "so to speak, turns his back on his listeners, though he may speak for them, and though they may repeat some of his words after him."[20] The poem becomes a public confession of the poet's love by virtue of its mere existence and our ability to read it. Yet it is also an illusion of peeking into this private world. Ibn al-Rūmī is at once with the tradition in calling out for the two friends, as per the pre-Islamic Arabic *qaṣīda*, but his novelty lies in

going to extremes in the pursuit of the motif of pain and grief. The intimate universe of love and suffering is one that is certainly not for public sharing. However, the fantasy of being in that universe with the poet, his friends, and the object of his affection creates a sense of an emotional communion that satisfies his audience and the readers equally. The poet's honesty, propelled by the intimacy of sharing his suffering with his two friends, is obvious in his diction. There is an openness that is at once disarming and engaging. In the first line, he introduces a single verb, *tayyamatnī* ("she enslaved me"). This identifies the genre as ghazal and philologically situates the degree of love felt towards the beloved as it introduces her.

Arab philologists seeking a deeper understanding of language went to painstaking lengths analyzing the semantic capacities of words. Words related to love were no exception. Philologists filled volumes ascribing meaning to words according to the emotions to which they corresponded. In other words, "love" words were not synonymous. Rather, they indicated different levels of emotion and affection. In a chapter devoted solely to the degrees of love, al-Tha'ālibī (d. 1038) lists 11 degrees (*marātib*), which start with *hawā* ("to like/to love").[21] When al-Tha'ālibī reaches grade ten (*al-tadlīh*, "to lose reason") and beyond, it is love that strips the lover of all reason. Ibn al-Rūmī's poem, in fact, is on grade eight (*tatayyum*, "enslavement"), which comes right before becoming ill from love (*saqam*) and losing all reason (*dalah* and *huyām*).[22]

But is it realistic or even possible to measure love, even philologically? Or are philologists being silly and pedantic? How does one measure that which is by its very nature subjective? Who is to judge what degree is appropriate for a certain emotion? The consensus is usually that these degrees were established for emotions that surpassed what is considered the "norm" between two people.[23] Relativists may argue for the nonexistence of norms, but focusing on what is not the norm usually highlights the "norm". If Majnūn and Laylā and their universal likes were the "norm," they would not have kept littérateurs busy nor would they have acquired their eponyms in world literary history and idiomatic phrases. Philologists operated from the same paradigm of extreme emotion. The Damascene poet and littérateur Ibn Abī Ḥajala (d. 1374) maintains that only subjects of either great importance (*'aẓīman*) or danger (*khaṭarahu jasīman*) have more lexical units in language for Arabs. He gives examples of the lion, the

spear, the sword, disasters, wine, and love.[24] There are more than a hundred lexical entries for the 'sword', for instance, each with a different property, shape, and quality; the same holds true for the 'lion', boasting with more than two hundred entries, as another example, thereby occupying more lexical units than other words. Philologists, then, were not silly; they were merely documenting people's fears and topics of great importance in the manner relevant to their area of expertise.

Love was not a philological obsession only. Arab physicians wrote about love as a malady when they reported several cases with the physical symptoms of lovesickness.[25] The conception of love as both dangerous and important according to Ibn Abī Ḥajala's explication of certain semantic preoccupations in Arab philology is also articulated medically.

Should a union with the beloved be impossible, love is deemed both incurable and fatal, as both *adab* and medical treatises tell us. It is not surprising to see physicians also preoccupied with one of the incurable and often life-threatening maladies. *Adab* combined the literary discussions of love with its somatic side. In his treatise on love, *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma* (*The Ring of the Dove*), the Andalusian theologian and philosopher of Cordoba Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) maintains that love is a meeting of souls and temperaments. It happens despite oneself and regardless of the beloved's appearance, and it is very difficult to cure.[26] His discussion of love is not concerned with the religio-ethical aspects only, as his training in jurisprudence and comparative religion might suggest, but also with the spiritual, social, somatic, and literary. In his chapter on the signs of love, Ibn Ḥazm highlights the involuntary behavior and mannerisms associated with being in love. Regardless of the degree of love, he says that the major giveaway is an inability to take one's eyes off the beloved and a need to focus one's attention with all one's senses on the beloved.[27] There is also a desire to be constantly with the object of one's affection and a certain anxiety and confusion if the lover sees someone who looks like the beloved[28] – a consequence of the unremitting longing to see the beloved that suddenly fills the world with their lookalikes. Ibn al-Rūmī turns these legitimate wishes that unite lovers around the world into a poetic banquet. As the poet "describes her," the poem is turned into a scene with a gathering where Waḥīd is performing a song. That Waḥīd becomes the focus of the poet-lover's attention

comes naturally, in a nonthreatening manner. A beautiful songstress capable of melting the most stubborn of hearts, she is the focus of everyone's attention,

> وتذيبُ القلوبَ وهيَ حديدُ[29]
>
> Though she has melted hearts as hard as iron.

Neither he nor anyone else would want to take their eyes off her. She dominates the *mise-en-scène* of the poem. Ibn al-Rūmī allows the lover to enact what Ibn Ḥazm describes as the first and essential symptom of love: the addictive gaze (*idmān al-naẓar*).[30] This is also reminiscent of poem 795 in his dīwān, which begins, *hal yantahī naẓarun illā ilā naẓarin* ("Would gazing end in anything but more gazing").[31] Gazing in typical circumstances requires discretion, especially if the feeling is not reciprocated. The poet cleverly replaces discretion with intense gazing – as dictated by love of the eighth degree (*tayyamatnī*) – under the pretext of watching the beloved perform a song. Ibn al-Rūmī, therefore, validates the philological degree of love concomitant with *tayyamatnī* with the intensity of the gaze. The persona of the lover expresses this in a dynamic intensity. He is lost in the beloved; he repeats the act of falling in love with every glance. Every glance becomes an affirmation of this love despite the inner dialogue expressing the paradox between heart (blessing) and mind (curse), her rejection and his helplessness. In line 32, Ibn al-Rūmī begins to resolve this conflict by telling us about Waḥīd's incomparable beauty as a pretext for the love he feels for her:

> حسنها في العيون حسنٌ وحيد*فلها في القلوب حبٌ وحيد
>
> Her beauty is incomparable;
> And the love felt for her is exclusive.

In the subsequent lines, he ventures to relate the paradox between heart and mind by relating Waḥīd as a blessing and a curse and he also informs us about the blame he receives for this love. Ibn al-Rūmī categorizes those who blame him as "lacking sound judgment" (*ḍalla 'anhu al-tawfīqu wa al-tasdīdu*). He therefore rationalizes this love by describing those who do not understand it in the semantics of reason. After doing so, he presents

his evidence that resolves this paradox. In lines 42 and 43, Ibn al-Rūmī describes Waḥīd within the parameters of a perplexing puzzle:

> ليت شعري إذا أدام إليها*كرّةَ الطّرْف مبدىءٌ ومعيدُ
> أهي شيءٌ لاتسأم العين منه ؟*أم لها كلّ ساعة تجديدُ
>
> I wish I knew when someone looks at her repeatedly,
> Once, and then again.
> Does the eye not tire of her?
> Or does it always discover something new?

He then offers a solution to this puzzle thereby resolving the conflict between the heart and mind as the answer becomes a factor of equilibrium that balances this contradiction. Using the same phraseology of the line that invited blame, he emphasizes it as a reply to the context of the riddle. Ibn al-Rūmī substitutes the two occurrences of *waḥīd* (used in the capacity of incomparable and exclusive, respectively, as it is also a play on her name) in line 32 with *jadīd* (renewable and new, respectively).

> حسنها في العيون حسنٌ جديد*فلها في القلوب حبٌ جديد
>
> Her beauty renews itself every time,
> So every time, there is new love for her.

This "renewed beauty" becomes another pretext for the addictive gaze. In other words, the "renewed beauty" elevates the beloved's face from ordinary (non-renewable) beauty to the extraordinary (renewable) beauty that mystifies the lover and demands an answer to a puzzling situation. This also becomes a plausible reason against indifference, which leads Ibn al-Rūmī to further characterize Waḥīd's beauty as something otherworldly and therefore impossible to capture. Waḥīd's perplexing beauty, so "difficult to describe" that it is an "impossible task," is expressed by Ibn al-Rūmī as a riddle in itself. The intellectualization of the effect of her beauty advances the lover's argument that his feelings are not reducible to the jejune zero-sum heart-mind dichotomy in which one cancels out the other. Rather, the poetic reasoning of her beauty presents a nuanced view that embraces the inexplicable aspect of the beloved, which is a reflection of the unfathomable aspect of love itself and of the lover's feelings. The poet-lover is cognizant of this, which reaffirms his initial declaration that

Waḥīd, like love, is both a "blessing" and a "curse." Ibn al-Rūmī furthers this dichotomy with thermal metaphors that portray the nature of Waḥīd and her many admirers as under her control: she is both "fire" and "ice."[32] The use of fire imagery to describe Waḥīd's beauty and its effect appears to resort to the usual poetic description of the beloved's beauty that sparked its "fire" (*nāra*) from Waḥīd, and the fire that her beauty "kindled" (*taṣṭalīhi*) and "melted" (*tudhīb*) people and their hearts. Waḥīd's beauty and its effect derive their semantics from "fire," which could only be extinguished by a kiss – a rather expected but unattainable wish. Naturally, the fire imagery aims to highlight several things: the dazzling beauty of the beloved, its compelling effect, and consequently the pain felt by the lover because of this unrequited love. Yet, despite this agony in the fire, she is described as "coolness" (*bardun*) and "peace" (*salāmun*). Both the style and imagery are inspired by the Qur'an's account of the story of Abraham's fire as "coolness and peace."[33] Ibn al-Rūmī obviously borrows only the Qur'anic expression and the imagery but not the context. The metaphor is not unique and has been frequently used in Arabic poetry.[34] It has become idiomatic in Arabic parlance and subsequently *adab* for entities that are a source of pain but are regarded affectionately as a "blessing," as Ibn al-Rūmī contends.[35] Although the image is overused, its contextualization reiterates Ibn al-Rūmī's intellectualization of the unfathomable aspects of love.

Ghazal has always put metaphors into the service of courtship and cruel beloveds. *Waḥīd* is not an exception. As Hamori maintains, the cruel beauty who commands the hearts of poets is "a persona that rules the love poetry of the Abbasid age."[36] But Ibn al-Rūmī goes beyond the usual, albeit obligatory, tropes to elaborate on both the effect and meaning of beauty and love. He concludes the poem with what appears on the surface to be a mystifying couplet but upon closer examination it summarizes the extended binaries developed in the poem:

> هو في القلب وهو أبعد من نجم الثريا*فهو القريب البعيد
>
> It is in the heart, and yet is farther than the Pleiades;
> It is at once both near and far.

Not only does this poetic conclusion invoke the dichotomies of presence and absence or near and far that characterize his treatment of both beauty

and love, it also highlights the experience of beauty and love as something real but elusive. Describing this experience remains the "most difficult of things," as the poet tells us. The dual nature of the aesthetic experience is also reflected in its emotional effect. Waḥīd's description in a register of extremes is a metaphorization of the ideas of love and beauty as both a curse and a blessing.

Philosopher and physician Ibn Sīna (Avicenna) (d. 1037) described pain (*waja'*) as an "incongruous stimulus."[37] Ghazal's paradox expresses this incongruity or pain on the philological level. The pain felt by the lover is expressed in the register of his experience as an incongruous one (near-far, fire-ice, etc.) with contrasting dichotomies. This contributes not only to the suppressed emotional tension that fuels the poem but also to the paradoxical idea that love will always be exalted despite the pain.

II. The Painful Grammar of a World That Rhymes with Her Name

Ibn al-Rūmī expresses the lover's need to constantly evoke Waḥīd. He frequently repeats her name, four times explicitly and twice as homonyms meaning "incomparable" and "exclusive," respectively. According to classical literary theorists, repetition of names in Arabic poetry should not occur except for indicating love – a rather legitimate reason to break some poetry rules.[38] The need to recall the name of the beloved is concomitant with love as Ibn Ḥazm assures us:

> And further to the signs is that you find the lover evokes hearing the name of the beloved, and takes pleasure in talking about their news, turning this news into consolation. Nothing comforts the lover more than this. Nothing sways her/him from this; s/he is fearless and oblivious to the consequences of others finding out. Being in love blinds and turns one deaf. If it were possible that the lover does not engage in conversations except those where the beloved is mentioned, s/he would.[39]

The name-evoking symptoms of love are translated stylistically into the monorhyme of the poem. The entire poem is made to rhyme with her name, with some words that take derivatives of her name, or *jinās*, as well. The world of the lover, as expressed poetically, takes on a semantic capacity

as large as the love felt for the beloved. The poem's assonance conveys and exhausts the compulsive quality of love that led to Ibn al-Rūmī's initial declaration: "She enslaved me."

Evoking the name of the beloved bespeaks an inability to communicate directly with her. This need to communicate with the beloved, which Ibn Ḥazm maintains is one of the pressing needs of the lover, is constantly thwarted because of the beloved's evasiveness. Waḥīd is not making life easier for the poet-lover; she appears to be sending him mixed messages, or perhaps he is reading too much into what he sees:

> نتلاقى فلحظةٌ منك وعدٌ *بوصالٍ ولحظةٌ تهديدُ
>
> When we meet, one glance from you is a promise of union,
> While another is forbidding.

In the lines above, the lover describes his relationship with Waḥīd using a paradox. There is at once 'a promise of union' but also a sense of 'forbidding' rejection. The promise of union, though unlikely, is certainly the hope that fuels the intensity of ghazal. Yet both the lover and the reader understand that it is always rejection that is shown from the beloved's side, otherwise there will not be a reason to 'hope for a union.' Constantly rejected, Ibn al-Rūmī tells us how the lover is "left to tears and sleeplessness." He sheds light on the history of this love, where the literary representation of love reflects its somatic symptoms. Weeping, another major symptom of love, is dependent on its intensity.[40] The reader is further invited to observe private moments that are outside both the setting of the poem itself and the temporality of Waḥīd's performance.

It is fairly accurate to deduce that Ibn al-Rūmī excelled in depicting love as a phenomenon that progresses over time, not a passing feeling of infatuation or lust and an inflated use of words sparked by the sensual atmosphere of the moment. In this respect, introducing history to this love supports the poet's stylistics of going to the end of "love expression." In its portrayal of extreme emotions, it relies on a rational progression of events in linear time rather than ahistorical emotional outbursts. The poem, therefore, expresses a love that has had time to reach this stage, thereby validating the assertion "she enslaved me." The articulated intensity of emotions as well as his references to "sleeplessness" and "tears" refer to a length of time

that could be estimated by the reader as older than the master chronotope of the poem. This in turn acts as a temporal background for this intensity. The lack of success with the beloved and her persona as an emotionally and socially distant femme fatale are pithily yet cleverly presented by the poet as a source of despair. The lover's melancholia is translated poetically in the poem. On despair (*ḥasra*), Ibn Ḥazm tells us that its somatic symptoms are sighing (*al-zafīr*), lack of movement or lethargy (*qillat al-ḥaraka*), moaning (*taʾawwuh*), and deep sigh (*tanaffus al-ṣu ʿādā ʾ*).[41] The somatic symptoms of despair are expressed by Ibn al-Rūmī as an outcome suffered by all those who appear to be in love with Waḥīd:

> من هدُوٌ وليس فيه انقطاع*وسجوٌ وما به تبليد
> مدٌ في شأو صوتها نفَسٌ كاف*كأنفاس عاشقيها مديد
>
> There is a gentleness in her voice that is not disrupted,
> And a calm that is not dulled.
> When she sings, her breath always reaches the end of the phrase;
> It is long, like the sighs of her lovers.

Ibn al-Rūmī praises Waḥīd's voice and excellent singing techniques as he simultaneously embeds her effect on the many hopeless lovers using the same category of praise: breath. He describes her breath as "long," a delicately sensual word of praise for the beauty of her performance. It parallels the aforementioned intense gaze in signaling the extreme attentiveness of a lover who is focused on the phonetic details and breath of the beloved. It evokes what Hamori calls the "permanent obsession" as a feature of Abbasid ghazal.[42] Ibn al-Rūmī concurrently plays on the word *anfās* to mean both the sighs and breaths of her lovers. In other words, it is a double praise for both her beauty and singing. Their enchanting qualities cause people to fall desperately in love with her, hence the drawn-out sighs of her lovers. The wordplay also hints at a shared history and an imagined community with the many rejected lovers, including himself, and his and their – relentless pursuits of Waḥīd.

Ibn al-Rūmī's focus on the soundscape of the poem extends to the description of Waḥīd's singing as a speaking silence.[43] In juxtaposition similar to that of her long breath technique to "the sighs of her lovers," Waḥīd's gentle technique also parallels the gentle expressions of the sighs

of her many admirers and lovers. Her almost-silent technique is emblematic of an excellent performance as according to Ibn al-Rūmī she "sings so effortlessly, it seems as though she's not singing." The poet contrasts her technique to the image of the lovers' silence expressed as "sighs." The lover's silence is part of the etiquette of love, unrequited or otherwise, which presupposes keeping this love a secret.[44] This is also expressed grammatically as the poet-lover shifts from speaking about Waḥīd in the third person throughout the poem to using the second person towards the end. This grammatical shift at the end is preceded by a long emotional build-up that intimates the unfulfilled wish to reveal the secret he is tired of hiding. This is what Ruqayya Khan terms the "dialectic of secrecy and revelation" characteristic of Arabic romances and poetry,[45] and which Ibn al-Rūmī deploys in the poem:

> قد مللنا من ستر شيْ مليح نشتهيه،*فهلْ له تجريد
>
> Tired of hiding the lovely object of desire,
> Will it ever be disclosed?

Sadly for the poet-lover, it will never be disclosed. Hiding this secret is a necessary element of the decorum of love. On the poetic level, it fuels the tension and intensity of the poem and makes "suffering" believable. Both unrequited love and its concealment grant the license of an "extreme motif." With a burden like this, it is not surprising that the poet-lover is still not comforted by the convention of a conversation with two friends, generously handed down by the Arabic poetic tradition to all grieving poets and lovers.

At this juncture, it is instructive to ask if the poem lives up to the expectations Ibn al-Rūmī sets up for readers with the opening line "she enslaved me." How does Ibn al-Rūmī craft his poem in a manner that makes the intensity of this love truly credible? What other stylistic clues does he give to convince us of a love of the eighth degree beyond a description of the lover's inconsolable state?

It is useful at this point to look at the music or the meter of the poem as a facilitator of the ghazal's intent. *ʿArūḍ* (prosody) is the study of poetic meter and the musicality of Arabic poetry.[46] It is "based on the succession of a group of long and short specific syllables."[47] It sets the musical

tone – and stress (*nabr*) – of the poem. The prosodic meter *khafīf* ("light"), one of the 16 meters of Arabic poetry, reflects its name.[48] Often used in Arabic poetry for dialogues that convey a reflexive sharing of emotions with the poet, it has been an apt choice for ghazals and elegies.[49] At this juncture, it is imperative to emphasize the importance of Arabic phonetics in the classical Arabic sciences (*'ulūm al-'arabiyya*) and rhetoric (*balāgha*). The study of sounds (phonetics) in the Arabic language began with al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 791). Al-Farāhīdī, trained in mathematics, cryptology, and music in addition to linguistics established prosody and is also responsible for the first Arabic lexicon, *Kitāb al-'Ayn* (*The Book of the Letter 'ayn*).[50] His arrangement of the lexicon – considered odd initially – reflects his attention to the study of sounds and the pronunciation of letters in the vocal tract (*makhārij al-alfāẓ*). He arranges his lexicon beginning with the farthest sound produced in the middle place in the throat, the voiced pharyngeal fricative, the letter *'ayn*. Phonology in Arabic is one of the branches of *fiqh al-lugha* ("the deeper understanding of language" or, more dynamically, "the secrets of language").[51] The Arabic language, like any other, is dependent on phonemes. These phonemes correspond to 29 letters. Each letter in Arabic has its own aural characteristic, sound grouping, and pronunciation rubrics in the vocal tract.[52] Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad divided the 29 letters into two groups according to where they are pronounced in the vocal tract – lip letters, gum letters, and throat letters – each named according to where pronunciation starts.[53] There are 25 letters that have a definite place of pronunciation and four letters that are hollow (*jawf*), the vowels, so called because they are pronounced from the trachea or windpipe (*wāw*, *yā'*, *alif layyīna*, and *hamza*). As far as the properties of Arabic letters are concerned, rhetoricians and grammarians divided them into two main groups: the inherent properties of letters that are characteristic of their sounds, and the acquired properties that depend on their location in a given word, the types of letters which precede or follow them, and the grammatical movements (*ḥarakāt i'rābiyya*) and their corresponding endings (A, U, and I cases). The assonance of Ibn al-Rūmī's poem follows the long vowel *ī* (*radīf*), which is not uncommon in a ghazal. There is an elongated *e* sound before the final letter of each word in every line of the poem. This sound aurally mimics the universal sounds of pain and intense emotion such as moaning or a wail

due to anguish. The sound performance of each line in the poem therefore enacts the articulated pain of unrequited love expressed as an overall mood of despair (*ḥasra*).

The long vowel is then followed by the letter *dāl* (*d* sound), which is the poem's rhyme letter (*rawī*). The monorhyme of the poem, the letter *dāl*, enjoys the inherent phonetic quality of strength (*shidda*) and being sonorous (*jahr*).[54] Another inherent quality of the letter is echo or timbre (*qalqala*, "moving something" or "causing it to move").[55] Grammarians and rhetoricians explain this last quality as a byproduct of the strength of the letter itself, which causes it to be pronounced emphatically. In other words, the strong sound qualities of the letter *dāl* need to be diffused as pronunciation takes place. The timbre sound is a reflection of this strength; it expresses this quality. If the *dāl* comes at the end of the word with a *sukūn* (no grammatical movement by virtue of grammatical case ending), it produces a strong timbre, that is, the timbre is observed (performed in correct pronunciations and sometimes involuntarily). If the *dāl* is in the middle of the word, it produces a weak timbre. In Ibn al-Rūmī's poem, the *dāl*, which comes at the end of the monorhyme's words, does not have a *sukūn* at the end (case ending) and therefore does not produce a timbre in pronunciation to reflect and diffuse its inherent strength.

Ibn al-Rūmī's poem begins with a conversation with the poet's two friends who address his need to evoke her name in consolation. This is done in the manner of *nasīb*. It also suggests how the lover is compelled to speak about the beloved to someone else, hence the conversational tone. The *khafīf* meter matches the soundscape of the poem, echoing Waḥīd's singing and delicate swaying with the music, though it is uncertain if the meter evolved to match the musical trends of the times.[56] The stylistics of the poem therefore reinforce its theme and motif and fit with its subject and setting. The monoryhme (*qāfiya*) of the entire *qaṣīda* rhymes with *Waḥīd*, the name of the beloved, which adds to the musicality of the poem and so to its meaning.[57] Grammatically, it is in the nominative or U-case (*marfū'*). The syntax of a hopeless romance is grammatically expressed in the U case of the monorhyme as it phonetically supports the melancholic mood of the poem. The strength of the letter *dāl* is diffused through the inevitability of pushing air out (deep sigh) in pronouncing the *u* sound after the strong and deep previous *e* sound. This is done in a phonetic mirroring

of pain and sighing, another somatic symptom of love. The grammar of the line ensures that every monoryhme ends with a sigh.

It is neither an exaggeration nor an overemphasis to further explain the sound qualities of the poem and how they perform their meanings. Arab poets as early as al-A'shā (d. 625) used to play with sounds to convey and sometimes exaggerate certain meanings to demonstrate their talent and entertain their audience. In reference to a rather full-figured and curvaceous lady, al-A'shā describes her as follows:

هِرْكَوْلَةٌ فُنُقٌ دُرْمٌ مَرَافِقُهَا*كَأَنَّ أَخْمَصَهَا بِالشَّوْكِ مُنْتَعِلُ

Large-thighed, beautiful and opulent,
She walks slowly as if her sole's arch is covered with thorns.[58]

The deliberate use of sonorous and strong letters draws a clear picture of the physical mass the poet wishes to convey. Onomatopoeia (*al-tamthīl al-ṣawtī li al-ma'ānī*) was known to premodern Arab literary critics and poets for its aesthetic effects. It is worth mentioning that the Qur'an is rich in these stylistic features as well.

I have so far discussed the articulation of the somatic symptoms of love and their aesthetic relationship to the stylistics of the poem as part of Ibn al-Rūmī's style of "exhausting motifs." It is equally imperative at this point to discuss the poem's utilization of grammar and word form to further advance the motif of desperate love and enrich the overall meaning of the poem.

III. Grammatically in Love

Beside their logical properties of making speech grammatically intelligible, Arabic letters' movements (*ḥarakāt i'rābiyya*) do have an aesthetic dimension as well in their emotive effect. These movements operate on logical, emotional, and moral levels, since they do affect the meaning conveyed.[59]

Grammatically, the U case (nominative case/*marfū'*) is used for subjects and predicates of nonverbal sentences. Subjects of verbal sentences as well as adverbs keep the nominative markers as well but not necessarily in the nominative case. Verbs in the present tense (*muḍāri'*) always take the nominative case except in certain circumstances. The words forming the

monorhyme of the poem, despite their different constructions, are all predicates (*khabar*). By its very grammatical nature, the *khabar* is the part of the sentence that supplies information about the subject. As love necessitates a constant feedback and flow of information to comfort the lover and evoke the beloved, subsequently – and grammatically – each line functions as a source of renewed message leading to some emotional relief. This emphasizes the emotional urgency that matches the setting of the poem. While the assonance of the poem rhymes with the beloved's name, it varies grammatically. The monorhyme words vary between verbal nouns (*maṣādir*, sing. *maṣdar*), present-tense verbs (*muḍāri'*), and one instance of a future-tense verb. The poet's description of Waḥīd relies on verbal nouns. Verbal nouns transcend time, as their grammatical functions imply. In other words, the effect of Waḥīd's beauty is presented as transcendental. The inability to perceive Waḥīd as an entity functioning, like all others, in time is part of this transcendence. Her depiction as someone who is not governed by the laws of nature gives her an otherworldly quality. The worldview of the lover is ultimately affected by these altered perceptions and is expressed in his own sense of time and mortality, which is typical of a ghazal:

ما تزالين نظرةٌ منك مَوتٌ لي مميتٌ،*ونظرة تخليد

I still find that one glance from you is deadly,
While another makes me immortal.

The immense power of the beloved becomes intelligible and quantifiable as it is articulated through the parameters of life and death. That the poet has been in love with her for a period of time indicates that the passage of time has not affected the way she looks or the way he perceives her, as understood from his description. Waḥīd's timeless beauty alters the perception of time itself. This is why it is expressed as perpetually occurring in the present tense as part of its "renewable" nature. This transcendence is further intensified as Ibn al-Rūmī uses the word *tatajallā* (manifest herself or reveal herself as though she was previously hidden) to describe her appearance.

تتجلّى للناظرين إليها*فشقيٌ بحسنها وسعيد

When she appears before her audience,
Her beauty torments some and leave others in delight.

Transcendent beauty matches the master chronotope of the poem. It enforces the present tense as it relates to the situation (the description of Waḥīd's performance, her "renewable" beauty, and the pangs of love). Yet it has a connection to the past and is also tied to a future. Waḥīd's time-defying transcendence is described as follows:

شمسُ دَجْنٍ كِلا المنيرَيْن من شمسٍ*وبدْرٍ من نُورِها يستفيدُ

She is the sunshine on a cloudy day; the sun and moon:
Both draw their light from hers.

Waḥīd's essence is thus compared to those of these celestial bodies. The use of the present tense (*min nūriha yastafīdu),* in order to point to the sun and moon benefiting from her luminosity to enhance their own is telling. Another alternative to turning the present tense verb *yastafīdu* (benefit from/draw from) into the passive *mustafīd* (beneficiary) would have been possible without harming either the meaning or the assonance. How does *yastafīdu* convey a better understanding of the degree of love over *mustafīd* grammatically? The present tense of the verb in reference to the sun and moon, drawing their luminosity from hers, indicates a perpetual action, timeless refulgence from the beloved to the sun and moon. This metaphor implies that their luminosity is a result of an implicit appeal to Waḥīd: the source of light that gives them their own light. If both the sun and moon turn into passive recipients of Waḥīd's luminosity, it implies that her luminosity is not sought after but rather involuntary and even unsolicited.

Waḥīd's timeless beauty and transcendence naturally extends to the future tense as the poet describes her effect:

وَتَرَ الزَّحْف فيهِ سهمٌ شَديد*وَتَرُ العَزْفِ في يَدَيْها مُضَاهٍ
وإذا أنبضَتْهُ للشَّرْبِ يوما*أيقن القومُ أنها ستصيد

A lute-string in her hands is as deadly as the bowstring in a battle –
With a sharp arrow ready and set.
If one day she draws it, aiming at the drinkers,
Everybody is certain that she will hit her mark.

"She will hit her mark" or "she will hunt" – *sa-taṣīd* continues to ascribe to her otherworldly powers that are decidedly lethal regardless of time.

The threefold meaning of the hunting motif skillfully points to her seductive and distinctly irresistible beauty, which makes her a huntress despite herself. It also captures the emotional distance felt by the lover, which Ibn al-Rūmī clearly conveys in the poem. He visualizes Waḥīd as a distant, detached, and impersonal hunter oblivious to her many victims. The hunting motif also reaffirms the lover's vulnerability and his wounds – he has become her "prey" – following the convention of the beautiful and destructive beloveds of ghazal. The somatic symptoms of love then take on an extended meaning as the emotional wounds of love and rejection are expressed through the physical wounds of the imagery of hunting with the prey's bleeding lacerations and flesh perforations. The image suggests a parallel between being emotionally hunted, devoured, and consumed by the beloved and its material counterpart in hunting. And because it is unrequited, these images mirror the pain of the lover and bolster the conception of his enslavement by her (*tayyamatnī*) introduced in the first line.

IV. Ghazal: The Mode Immortal

A poem about unrequited love, or love in general, is perhaps the most recycled theme not just in Arabic literature but also in World literatures. Its originality then stems from the poet's utilization of all available tools (grammatical, philological, phonetic, literary) to write to the end of a certain motif or a theme in an original manner. As Ebrahim Moosa observes, "While the content, themes, and plots of the poetry were known to the poet's audience, his individuality manifested itself in the manner of his expression; the more inventive he was, the more he was admired for his originality."[60] Ibn al-Rūmī's structure and stylistics expressed love not just on the level of the word (description and philology) but also on the level of performance (grammar and sound). This is an element of his poetics, which has been rendered as *istiqṣā' al-ma'ānī*, "going to extremes in the pursuit of a motif" or "pursuing it to the utmost length."[61] G. J. van Gelder describes it as a desire to "extract every possible conceit from a given motif and not to abandon it before he has exhausted it."[62] This is also known as *istinfād al-ma'ānī* (exhausting motifs), *istīfā' al-ma'ānī* (giving motifs their full due), and *imātat al-ma'ānī* (killing motifs), which eventually lead to the long-windedness (*ṭūl al-nafas*) noticed in many of

his poems and his dīwān in general.[63] Indeed, the sighing effect of the monorhyme may not have been deliberate. But it is Ibn al-Rūmī's craft that reflexively and unconsciously conveyed the somatic aspects of love through technique. Some studies on Arabic poetry maintain that part of our satisfaction from any work of art is its ability to regulate our own emotions, perhaps by articulating and connecting them.[64] Some arguments go further and link the beat of poetic meter in prosody (*wazn*) to the pace of the human heart. Beside the literary rewards, this generates a "feel good" emotional state from listening to and reading poetry.[65] By extension, the other side of "feel good" is "pain control," which explains the effect induced by various aural and visual artistic activities, poetry reading included, as a method of pain management and regulation of the emotions. Majnūn Laylā (Qays b. al-Mulawwaḥ) – one of the most famous lovers and poets in the history of Arabic literature, who lost his mind, and eventually life, because of his love for Laylā – told us about the therapeutic power of art in general and poetry in specific: "And I only recite poetry to soothe myself" (*wa mā unshidu al-ashʿāra illā tadāwiya*).[66] Majnūn understood that time is not really a healer and it does not cure love, but poetry soothes it: ("May God curse those who say, 'we found time to be a cure for love'" [*laḥḥā Allāhu aqwāman yaqūlūna innanā wajadnā ṭawāla al-dahri li al-ḥubbi shāfiyā*]).[67]

Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth argue for the consideration of ghazal as World literature. When confronted with the phenomenon of love, it gradually appears that ghazal, the most emotionally charged genre, is "accessible to all members of the literary community and can thus provide an emotionalized atmosphere with a cathartic function."[68] Aside from students and scholars of Arabic, what makes an Arabic Abbasid ghazal, written in the ninth century, relevant to us today is precisely its ability to transcend linguistic, cultural, and temporal boundaries. One may also argue that the transcendence and timelessness of ghazal reflect the transcendent qualities of its subject matter. Love and the genre it engenders are indefatigable. A ninth-century Abbasid ghazal may be read anywhere in the world today by specialists and non-specialists alike, and still be understood and appreciated for what it is: a poem about a universal emotion (and its universal complications and joys) uniting people in its acknowledgement of both human vulnerability and the strength to write about it.

Notes

1. Brian D. Earp, Olga A. Wudarczyk, Anders Sandberg, and Julian Savulescu, "If I Could Just Stop Loving You: Anti-Love Biotechnology and the Ethics of a Chemical Breakup," *American Journal of Bioethics* 13, no. 11 (2013): 3–17.
2. Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth, "Ghazal as World Literature," in *Ghazal as World Literature I: Transformations of a Literary Genre*, ed. Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2005), 9. For more on ghazal see, A. Hamori, "Love Poetry (*Ghazal*)," in *ʿAbbasid Belles-Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 202–18; Thomas Bauer, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts: Eine literatur- und mentalitatsgeschichtliche Studie des arabischen Gazal* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998); A. Bausani, "Ghazal," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs (Brill Online, 2012), accessed 20 October, 2014.
3. Bauer and Neuwirth, "Ghazal as World Literature," 14–16.
4. Simon Kuntze, "Love and God: The Influence of Ghazal on Mystic Poetry," in Bauer and Neuwirth, *Ghazal as World Literature*, 159.
5. J. Christoph Bürgel, "The Mighty Beloved: Images and Structures of Power in the Ghazal from Arabic to Urdu," in Bauer and Neuwirth, *Ghazal as World Literature*, 283–4. Bürgel specifically mentions that powerful beloveds began with ʿUdhrī Ummayad poets. The ʿUdhrī poets of the ʿUdhra tribe are known to have been reputably star-crossed lovers and have all suffered from tragic, albeit platonic, romances. The most famous is the Umayyad poet Jamīl b. Maʿmar, also known as Jamīl Buthayna (Buthayna is his beloved).
6. Bauer and Neuwirth, "Ghazal as World Literature," 18.
7. For more on his life and work, see M. M. Badawi, "Abbasid Poetry and Its Antecedents," in Ashtiany et al., *ʿAbbasid Belles-Lettres*, 164–66; Beatrice Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry: Ibn al-Rūmī and the Patron's Redemption* (London: Routledge, 2003); Rhuvon Guest, *Life and Works of Ibn Er Rûmî* (London: Luzac, 1944); Robert C. McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason: Ibn al-Rūmī and His Poetics in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Waṣf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 122–54. For more on his life and controversial death, see al-ʿĀmilī as he mentions Ibn al-Rūmī's last lines when he was dying of poison in *al-Kashkūl*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Nimarī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-an ʿIlmiyya, 1998), 2:125. See also Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1968) 3:359–62 for the story of his murder, which he attributes to a certain vizier who was scared of his invective poetry. Ibn al-Rūmī's death is reputed to have been caused by his invective (*hijāʾ*) poetry that created its own Arabic idiom: *ahjā min Ibn al-Rūmī* (More

caustic in invective than Ibn al-Rūmī). For a counterargument against this story of the vizier's accusation of murder and alternative insights into his mysterious death, see S. Boustany, "Ibn al-Rūmī" in Bearman et al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed November 12, 2013.

8. Īliyā Salīm Ḥāwī, *Ibn al-Rūmī: Fannahu wa Nafsiyyatuhu min Khilāl Shiʿrihi*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Maktabat al-Madrasa wa Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1980), 195.
9. I rely on Ḥusayn Naṣṣār's edition. *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kutub wa al-Wathāʿq al-Qawmiyya, 2003), 2:762–5.
10. Hamori, "Love Poetry (*Ghazal*)," 212.
11. Ibid.
12. Ghazal no. 872, *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, 3:1119. The use of the masculine pronoun here does not necessarily point to the gender of the beloved. It is not uncommon to use masculine pronouns even if the poem is indeed about a woman. The choice was sometimes made because of the meter and the intended musicality of the poem.
13. McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason*, 171.
14. Ibid., 168.
15. Ibid., 433.
16. Ḥāwī, *Ibn al-Rūmī*, 185.
17. See, for instance, Abī Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar al-Baghdādī, *Qānūn al-Balāgha fī Naqd al-Shiʿr wa al-Nathr*, ed. Muḥsin Ghayyāḍ ʿUjayl (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1981), 116ff.
18. Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī, *al-Īḍāḥ fī ʿUlūm al-Balāgha*, ed. Bahīj Ghazzāwī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm, 1998), 392.
19. Abū Bakr b. ʿAlī b. Ḥijja, *Khizānat al-Adab wa Ghāyat al-Arab*, ed. ʿIṣām Shiqyū (Beirut: Dār wa Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1988), 1:30. See also Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, ed. Mufīd Qamḥiyya et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2004), 7:110ff.
20. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 250. Cf. Bauer and Neuwirth, "Ghazal as World Literature," 10.
21. Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī, *Fiqh al-Lugha* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938), 171. Cf. al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 12:227, where he explains this in the context of the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife's feelings for him.
22. Al-Thaʿālibī, *Fiqh al-Lugha*, 171.
23. See Ioana Feodorov, "Is Love Gradable?" *Romano-Arabica Journal* no. 1 (2002): 48–54.
24. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Dīwān al-Ṣabāba*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Dusūqī (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Sīnā li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 1994), 21.
25. See Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt and Dimitri Gutas, "The Malady of Love," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104, no. 1 (1984): 21–55.

26. Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-ʿArabīyya li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr, 1987), 90–102.
27. Ibid., 103–14.
28. Ibid., 104.
29. Another way of reading this line is reading *hya* in *"tudhību al-qulūba wa hya ḥadīdu"* in reference to Waḥīd and so the line would read, "Though she has melted hearts, hers is as hard as iron." This matches the icy persona of Waḥīd portrayed throughout the poem. Both readings are grammatically correct. But it is more polite and appropriate to ghazal as a genre that "she would melt hearts." It appears that Ibn al-Rūmī might have played on the ambiguity of *hya* referring to both hearts and Waḥīd, and the double entendre would certainly be noted by the reader.
30. Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*, 103.
31. *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, 3:1041.
32. Cf. Ḥāwī, *Ibn al-Rūmī*, 185.
33. "But We said, 'Fire, be cool and safe for Abraham.'" Q. 21:69.
34. For several uses of the metaphor in Arabic poetry as well as prose, see also Muḥammad b. Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad b. Yuʿawiḍ Allāh and ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2000), 2:338; Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shantarīnī, *al-Dhakhīra fī Maḥāsin Ahl al-Jazīra*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1997), 3:211 and 7:217; al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Udabā'* (Beriut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1991), 4:446; ʿAlī b. Ẓāfir al-Azdī, *Badā'iʿal-Badā'ih*, ed. Muḥammad Qaṭṭah al-ʿAdawī (Cairo: Dār al-Ṭibāʿa al-Mīriyya, n.d.), 153.
35. Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-Qulūb fī al-Muḍāf wa al-Mansūb* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d), 43.
36. Hamori, "Love Poetry (*Ghazal*)," 204.
37. Osama A. Tashani and Mark I. Johnson, "Avicenna's Concept of Pain," *Libyan Journal of Medicine* 5 (2010): 5253.
38. Ibn Rashīq, *al-ʿUmda fī Maḥāsin al-Shiʿr wa Ādābihi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1981), 2:74.
39. Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*, 107 (my translation).
40. Ibid., 111.
41. Ibid.
42. Hamori, "Love Poetry (*Ghazal*)," 205.
43. ʿAlī Shalaq, *Ibn al-Rūmī: fī al-Ṣūra wa al-Wujūd* (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-Jāmiʿiyya li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 1982), 343.
44. See Ruqayya Yasmine Khan, "On the Significance of Secrecy in the Medieval Arabic Romances," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 31 no. 3 (2000): 238–53. For more on secrecy, see also Khan, *Self and Secrecy in Early Islam* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).
45. Khan, "On the Significance of Secrecy," 238.

46. ʿAbd al-ʿAbd ʿAtīq, *ʿIlm al-ʿArūḍ wa al-Qāfiya* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya, 1987), 12.
47. Ibid.
48. The meter *al-khafīf* is the fifth most popular meter after *al-ṭawīl, al-basīṭ, al-wāfir*, and *al-kāmil*. It was rarely used in pre-Islamic times but became popular since the Abbasid period. See Muṣṭafā Ḥarakāt, *Awzān al-Shiʿr* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Thaqāfiyya li al-Nashr, 1998), 131.
49. For more on the *khafīf* structure, see Ibn Jinnī, *al-ʿArūḍ*, ed. Aḥmad Fawzī al-Hayyib (Kuwait: Dār al-Qalam, 1987), 127ff; see also Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, *Dīwān Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī*, ed. Karam al-Bustānī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 618ff.
50. ʿAlī Shalaq, *al-ʿAql al-Ramzī fī al-Islām* (Beirut: Dār al-Ijtihād, 1995), 141.
51. This term was first introduced and coined into Arabic by the Arab grammarian Aḥmad b. Fāris (d. 1004 CE) in his *al-Ṣāḥibī fī Fiqh al-Lugha*. Ibn Fāris stressed the distinctive features of Arabic and its importance in the preservation of Arab-Islamic values and culture.
52. See Kamāl al-Dīn Maytham al-Baḥrānī, *Uṣūl al-Balāgha*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Ḥusayn (Cairo: Dār el-Shurūk, 1981), 37–44 and Fakhry Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, *al-Lugha al-ʿArabiyya: Adāʾ wa Nuṭq wa Imlāʾ wa Kitāba* (Cairo: Dār al-Wafāʾ li al-Ṭibāʿa wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 1987), 21.
53. For more on this, see Ṣāliḥ, *al-Lugha ʿArabiyya*, 22ff, for example of gum letters (*thāʾ, dhāl, ẓāʾ*).
54. Ṣāliḥ, *al-Lugha al-ʿArabiyya Adāʾ waNuṭq*, 35–9.
55. Ibid., 38.
56. Hamori, "Love Poetry (*Ghazal*)," 205.
57. For more on the *qāfiya*, see ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿAtīq, *ʿIlm al-ʿArūḍ wa al-Qāfiya* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya, 1987), 133–96. See also Ḥusnī ʿAbd al-Jalīl Yūsuf, *Mūsīqa al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī* (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li al-Kitāb, 1989), 139–60.
58. Muḥammad al-Nuwayhī, *al-Shiʿr al-Jāhilī*, quoted in Ḥusnī ʿAbd al-Jalīl Yūsuf, *Mūsīqa al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī* (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li al-Kitāb, 1989), 184.
59. This is the highlight in one of the anecdotes of Abū al-Aswad al-Duʾalī (d. 688 CE), who is reputed to have been the first to put the letters' movements (movement and case endings) to the Qurʾan. It was not until he heard a man reciting/reading Q. 9:3 (al-Tawba [Repentance]) with incorrect case endings in a loud voice and read the following verse, "wa adhānun mina Allāhi wa rasūlihi ila an-nāsi yawma al-ḥajji al-akbari inna Allāha bariʾun mina al-mushrikīna wa rasūlih." The last word in the *āya* should not be in the I case (*rasūlihi*) because if it is in the I case, then the meaning would be "God disowns the disbelievers and the prophet," as it conjoins the prophet with the disbelievers grammatically when in reality the word is in the U case (*rasūluhu*) because it is a delayed disjunctive of a conjunction – "God disowns the disbelievers and [so does] his Prophet" – but the mentioning of the prophet was delayed in the sentence, which is a normal rhetorical strategy in the stylistics of the Qurʾan. Al-Duʾalī was clearly disturbed by the ramifications of this meaning and the illogical reading – because of poor grammar – so he decided to put movements on the letters. See Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), 4:129–30. The story of al-Duʾalī and the letter movements – whether he did it himself or was assigned to do it – vary in most sources but they almost all agree on the mentioning of this verse and the errors in reading and al-Duʾalī's reaction to it.

60. Ebrahim Moosa, "Textuality in Muslim Imagination," *Acta Academia Supplementum* 1 (1995): 58. Moosa refers to pre-Islamic poets, but this could also be extended to later poets as well.
61. McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason*, 226.
62. Geert Jan van Gelder, "The Terrified Traveller: Ibn al-Rūmī's Anti-Raḥīl," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 27, no. 1 (1996): 37. Cf. McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason*, 226.
63. McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason*, 24.
64. ʿIzz al-Dīn Ismāʿīl, *al-Tafsīr al-Nafsī li al-Adab*, quoted in Ḥusnī ʿAbd al-Jalīl Yūsuf, *Mūsīqa al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī* (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li al-Kitāb, 1989), 24; see also Bauer and Neuwirth, "Ghazal as World Literature," 9–31.
65. ʿIzz al-Dīn Ismāʿīl, *al-Tafsīr al-Nafsī li al-Adab*, quoted in Ḥusnī ʿAbd al-Jalīl Yūsuf, *Mūsīqa al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī*, 25.
66. Qays b. al-Mulawwaḥ, *Dīwān Qays b. al-Mulawwaḥ*, ed. Yusrī ʿAbd al-Ghanī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), 122; cf. *Dīwān Majnūn Layla*, ed. ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāg (Cairo: Maktabat Miṣr, 1963), 227.
67. Ibid.
68. Bauer and Neuwirth, "Ghazal as World Literature," 27.

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2

Sexual Displacement in *Season of Migration to the North*

Asaad Alsaleh

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing, there is a field.
I'll meet you there.

Rumi

Abstract

In this chapter, I analyze the sexual relationships between Mustafa Sa'eed and his English mistresses in *Season of Migration to the North* (1966), a novel by the acclaimed Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih (1928–2009). This novel pairs up a Middle Eastern beloved with European subjects, connecting them through intriguing sexual experiences that take place during the colonization of Sudan. The text also demonstrates what I call "displaced sexuality," by which I mean the presence of complex sexual relations that shift from the body of the sex partner to what he or she symbolizes: a highly sexualized Orient. The Oriental identity of the protagonist, Mustafa Sa'eed, creates disruptive relationships in which subjects reveal a desire to fulfill fantasies that go beyond the desired body. Such desires are rooted in the dynamics of power that motivate control over and possession of the *other*, and the reaction against such dynamics. The chapter re-examines the

Appendix I[1]

يا خليلَيَّ تَيَّمَتني وحيدُ … ففؤادي بها معنّى عميدُ
غادةٌ زانها من الغصن قدٌّ … ومن الظّبي مقلتان وجيدُ
وز هاها من فرعها ومن الخد … ين ذاك السواد والتوريد
أوقد الحسنُ ناره من وحيدٍ … فوق خدٍّ ما شانَهُ تخْديدُ
فَهْيَ بردٌ بخدِّها وسلامٌ … وهي للعاشقين جهْدٌ جهيدُ
لم تضِرْ قطُّ وجهها وهو ماءٌ … وتذيبُ القلوبَ وهيَ حديدُ
ما لماءٍ تصطليه من وجنتيْها … غيرُ ترشاف ريقها تبريد
مثلُ ذاك الرضاب أطفأ ذاك الو … جدَ لولا الإباء والتصريد
وغريرٍ بحسنها قال : صِفْها … قلت : أمران : هيِّنٌ وشديدُ
يسهل القول إنها أحسن الأشْ … ياءِ طرّاً ، ويعسرُ التحديدُ
شمسُ دَجْنٍ كِلا المنيرَيْن من شم … سٍ وبدْرٍ من نُورها يستفيدُ
تتجلّى للناظرين إليها … فشقيّ بحسنها وسعيد
ظبية تسكن القلوب وترعا … ها ، وقمْريَّةٌ لها تغريدُ
تتغنّى ، كأنها لاتغنّى … من سكونِ الأوصالِ وهي تجيدِ
لا تراها هناك تَجحَظُ عينٌ … لك منها ولا يَدرُّ وريدُ
من هدُوٌ وليس فيه انقطاع … وسجوٌ وما به تبليد
مدَّ في شأو صوتها نفَسٌ كا … ف كأنفاس عاشقيها مديد
وأرقَّ الدلالُ والغُنْجُ منه … وبَراهُ الشّجا فكاد يبيدُ
فتراه يموت طَوراً ويحيا … مستلذٌّ بسيطه والنشيد
فيه وَشْيٌ وفيه حَلْيٌ من النَّغ … مِ مَصوغٌ يختال فيه القصيدُ
طاب فُوها وما تُرَجِّعُ فيه … كلُّ شَيْءٍ لها بذاك شهيدُ
ثغبٌ ينقع الصدى وغناءٌ … عنده يوجد السرورُ الفقيد
فلها الدَّهرَ لاثمٌ مستَزيدٌ … ولها الدهر سامع مستَعيدُ
في هوى مثْلها يخفُّ حليمٌ … راجحٌ حلْمه ، ويَغوى رشيدُ
ماتعاطى القلوب الا أصابت … بهواها منهنَّ حيثُ تُريدُ
وَتَرُ العَزْفِ في يَدَيْها مُضَناهٍ … وَتَرَ الزَّحْف فِيهِ سهمٌ شَديدُ
وإذا أنْبضَتْهُ للشَّرْبِ يوماً … أيقن القومُ أنها ستصيد
معْبَدٌ في الغناء ، وابنُ سُرَيْجٍ … وهي في الضرب زلزلٌ وعقيد
عيْبُها أنّها إذا غنّتِ الأحْـ … رار ظلّوا وهمْ لديها عبيد
واستزادت قلوبهم من هواها … بِرقاها ، وما لَدَيهمْ مزيدُ

وحسان عرضن لي ، قلت : مهلاً … عن وحيدٍ فحقّها التوحيد
حسنها في العيون حسنٌ وحيد … فلها في القلوب حبٌّ وحيد
ونصيح يلومني في هواها … ضلّ عنه التوفيق والتسديد
لو رأى من يلوم فيه لأضحى … وهو المستريثُ والمستزيد
ضلة للفؤاد يحنو عليها … وهي تزْهُو حياتَه وتكيدُ
سحرته بمقلتيها فأضحت … عنده والذميمُ منها حميد
خُلِقتْ فتْنةً : غناءً وحسْناً … مالها فيهما جميعاً نديد
فهْيَ نُعْمى يميدُ منها كبيرٌ … وهيَ بلوى يشيب منها وليدُ
لِيَ حيْث انصرَفتُ عنها رفيقٌ … من هواها وحيث حَلّتْ قَعِيدُ
عن يميني وعن شمالي وقُدّا … مي وخلفي، فأين عنه أحيدُ
سدَّ شيطانُ حبّها كلَّ فجٍّ … إنَّ شيطان حبّها لمَريدُ
ليت شعري إذا أدام إليها … كرَّةَ الطّرْف مبدىءٌ ومعيدُ
أهي شئٌ لاتسأم العين منه ؟ … أم لها كلَّ ساعة تجديدُ
بل هي العيش لا يزال متى استعْـرض يملي غرائباً ويفيدُ
منْظَرٌ ، مَسمَعٌ ، معانٌ ، من اللهـ … ـو عتادٌ لما يحَبُّ عتيد
لا يدبُّ الملالُ فيها ولا ينْـ … ـقص من عَقد سحْرها توكيدُ
حسنها في العيون حسنٌ جديد … فلها في القلوب حبٌّ جديد
أخذ الله يا وحيدُ لقلبي … منكِ ما يأخذ المديلُ المقيد
حَظُّ غيري من وصلكُمْ قُرَّةُ العيْـن وحظيِّ البكاءُ والتَّسْهيدُ
غير أني معَلّلٌ منك نفسي … بعداتٍ خلا لهنّ وعيد
ما تزالينَ نظرةٌ منك مَوتٌ … لي مميتٌ ، ونظرة تخليد
نتلاقى فلحْظَةٌ منك وعْدٌ … بوصال ولحظةٌ تهديدُ
قد تركْتِ الصِّحاح مرْضى يميدُو ن نُحولاً وأنت خُوطٌ يميدُ
والهوى لا يزال فيه ضعيفٌ … بين ألحاظِهِ صريعٌ جليدُ
ضافَنِي حُبُّك الغريبُ فألوى … بالرقاد النسيب فهو طريد
عجباً لي ، إنَّ الغريبَ مقيمٌ … بين جنبيَّ ، والنسيب شريد
قد مللنا من ستر شيْ مليح … نشتهيه، فهلْ له تجريدُ
هو في القلب وهو أبعد من نجـ … ـم الثريا فهو القريب البعيد

1. O my [two] friends, Waḥīd has enslaved me.
   My heart is besieged, ruined by her love.
2. Lithe. She is adorned with the grace of a soft bough,
   And the neck and eyes of a gazelle.
3. Her hair glimmers with blackness
   And her cheeks, in redness.
4. Beauty sparked its fire from Waḥīd
   Over a cheek unblemished by hollowness.
5. Coolness and peace, her cheek are,
   Though for her lovers she is a difficult challenge.
6. Like tranquil soft water, her features are never disturbed,
   Though she has melted hearts as hard as iron.
7. The fire that her beauty has kindled
   Can only be cooled by the savoring of her kisses
8. Such kisses would have soothed this passion of mine,
   Were it not for her blowing hot and cold.
9. Another one mesmerized by her beauty has said: 'Describe her!'
   I said: 'that is easy and difficult, at the same time.'
10. It is easy to say she is invariably the most beautiful of creatures,
    But difficult to say precisely how.
11. She is the sunshine on a cloudy day; the sun and moon
    Both draw their light from hers.
12. When she appears before her audience,
    Her beauty torments some and leaves others in delight.
13. A gazelle that lives in men's hearts, she grazes in them,
    A twittering turtledove.
14. She sings so effortlessly, it seems as though she is not singing,
    And she sings so beautifully.
15. You do not see her eyes bulge there to you
    Or her neck-veins gush from strain.
16. There is a gentleness in her voice that is not disrupted,
    And a calm that is not dulled.
17. When she sings, her breath always reaches the end of the phrase;
    It is long, like the sighs of her lovers.
18. Coquetry makes her voice even more delicate,
    And emotions thin it till it almost disappears.

19. You see, her voice seems to die at times, and comes to life at others,
    It is delightful whether soft or raised.
20. Her voice is embroidered jewelry crafted from the melody,
    Where the verses strut across.
21. What a sweet mouth! With everything in it!
    Everything bears witness to this.
22. Her kisses, like fresh clear water, quench thirst,
    A song from her brings back long-lost joy.
23. An eternity of her kisses is not enough;
    An eternity of her songs is not enough!
24. Her love would make poised men
    lose their composure; the virtuous are seduced.
25. She does not stretch a hand at hearts with her love
    Without having victims wherever she wishes.
26. A lute-string in her hands is as deadly
    as the bowstring in a battle, with a sharp arrow ready and set.
27. If one day she draws it, aiming at the drinkers,
    Everybody is certain that she will hit her mark.
28. When she sings, it is as if Maʿbad and Ibn Surayj were singing,
    As if Zalzal and 'Aqīd were playing.[2]
29. Her only flaw is that when she sings
    The freeborn become her slaves.
30. She casts a spell that increases the love felt for her,
    Though hearts cannot take it anymore.
31. Beautiful women offered themselves to me, but I said:
    'There is no one except Waḥīd.'
32. Her beauty is incomparable;
    And the love felt for her is exclusive.
33. Many an earnest advisor, lacking sound judgment,
    Has reproached me for loving her.
34. Yet if one of those who reproach me were to see her,
    He would patiently listen and ask me to tell him more.
35. She lays waste the heart that is unwavering in loving her,
    A waste beyond recompense, and she deceives it
36. Her eyes bewitched him, until for him
    Her blameworthy traits became admirable.

37. A living temptation: her singing, her beauty
    She is entirely without a rival.
38. A blessing that causes mature men to sway,
    And a curse that turns the hair of newborns white.
39. Wherever I leave her, I find an associate in love for her,
    Wherever she goes, a companion sitting by.
40. To my right, to my left, in front of me and behind,
    How do I get around him?
41. The devil of her love blocked every path!
    The devil of her love is vicious!
42. I wish I knew when someone looks at her repeatedly,
    Once, and then again.
43. Does the eye not tire of her?
    Or does it always discover something new?
44. In fact, she is life, critically examined
    Still providing more marvels, more benefits.
45. What a vision she is! Her song! And the atmosphere and setting!
    A reservoir of lovely entertainment
46. Boredom never creeps in with her,
    Nor do her magical spells cease to work.
47. Her beauty renews itself every time,
    So every time, there is new love for her.
48. Waḥīd, May God recompense my heart from you
    A recompense similar to that of the avenging victor!
49. Others rejoice in delight by a union with you,
    And I am left to tears and sleeplessness.
50. Still I divert myself with your promises,
    That hide among them a warning.
51. I still find that once glance from you is deadly,
    While another makes me immortal.
52. When we meet, one glance from you is a promise of union,
    While another is forbidding.
53. You leave healthy men love-sick, trembling from emaciation,
    While you are as graceful as a swaying bough.
54. Love still looks at those who cannot handle it,
    There a defeated one, there someone strong and steadfast.

55. I played host to your love, an unfamiliar stranger,
    It kicked out and banished my sleep.
56. How odd it is that the stranger dwells in my heart,
    While the familiar one is displaced.
57. Tired of hiding the lovely object of desire,
    Will it ever be disclosed?
58. It is in the heart, and yet is farther than the Pleiades;
    It is at once both near and far.

Notes

1. I thank Professor Muhammad A.S. Abdel-Haleem for his valuable insights and translation suggestions on some parts of the poem.
2. I could not get hold of this edition, but according to Faruq Aslim's explanation in his edition of the *Dīwān*, Ma ʿbad and Ibn Surayj were famous singers in the Ummayad period. Zalzal and ʿAqīd were also famous entertainers known for their excellent instrument playing skills. Cited in Akiko Motoyoshi, "Sensibility and Synaesthesia: Ibn al-Rūmī's Singing Slave-Girl" *Journal of Arabic Literature* 32, no. 1 (2001): 6, fn.18.