UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MACERATA

DIPARTIMENTO di Studi umanistici – lingue, mediazione, storia, lettere, filosofia

CORSO DI DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN

Scienze linguistiche, filologiche, letterarie e storico-archeologiche –

Modern and Comparative Languages and Literatures

CICLO XXVI

Adrienne Rich's Ghazals and the Persian Poetic Tradition:

A Study of Ambiguity and the Quest for a Common Language

RELATRICE   DOTTORANDA

Prof.ssa Marina Camboni   Dott.ssa Neda Ali Zadeh Kashani

COORDINATRICE

Prof.ssa Marina Camboni

ANNO 2014

Contents

Note on transliteration:

The system of transliteration used here for Persian words generally follows that of *Corso di lingua persiana*, edited by Daniela Meneghini and Paola Orsatti.

In the case of personal and family names of Persian authors, I retained the mainstream and established transliteration, while I transliterated those unknown in English according to the above mentioned system.

Table of correspondences is as follows:

ا	ā	خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ک	k
ب	b	د	d	ض	ż	گ	g
پ	p	ذ	ḏ	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	ʿ	ن	n
ج	j	ژ	ž	غ	gh	و	v, u, w
چ	ch	س	s	ف	f	ه	h, -e
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ق	q	ى	y, i, ey

Table of vowels and diphthongs:

Low vowels	a	e	o
High vowels	ā	i	u
Diphthongs	ey	ow	

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to study the influence of the Persian classical poetic form the *ghazal* on the poems of the feminist North American poet Adrienne Rich (1929-2012), and particularly those written in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This research addresses the feature of ambiguity in the *ghazal* and its effectiveness in the development of Rich's feminist language. It argues that this ambiguity served the North American poet to create a hybrid or border-crossing poetic language or, in her own words, 'a common language.' This new mode of writing allowed her to speak of women and to connect gender issues to socio-political matters in her society. In other words, it created new spaces for her to connect the private to the public sphere, to speak of women on an equal level with men and to empower them. This poetic language not only went against the patriarchal norms of writing, but against all forms of oppression by asking for equality and empowerment of all marginal groups such as the African-Americans.

In addition, this research insists on the role played by translation in helping Rich to create a hybrid text, to interpolate new words, images, themes, and forms into her poetry from other literary traditions. It argues that Rich's collaboration in the translation project of Aijaz Ahmad, the Pakistani Marxist literary theorist, in 1968-9, had far reaching effects on her own poetry. Her involvement in the translation of the *ghazal*s of the 19th century Indian poet Mirza Ghalib, indeed influenced the development of her poetic language and offered her new modes of writing.

This research project is based on a text-centered approach, drawing on largely poetic material, from classical Persian and Urdu poems and their translations into English, to poems and the *ghazal*s written by Adrienne Rich and other post World War II North American poets.

Additionally, by adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this study draws on a vast number of critical works on feminism, as well as gender studies and translation studies. It takes into account a wide range of critical works on Persian and Urdu poems, North American poetry and Rich's poetry and prose.

Its focus is the analysis of *Ghazals of Ghalib* (1971), the book edited by Aijaz Ahmad. This is a selected number of Ghalib's *ghazal*s, accompanied by Ahmad's literal translations, and by the poetic re-writings of Adrienne Rich and other poets like W.S. Merwin, and William Stafford. This research also examines the collections of *ghazal*s in English composed by Rich, respectively entitled "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib" in *Leaflets* (1969) and "The Blue Ghazals" in *The Will to Change* (1971).

The influence of Ghalib's *ghazal*s on Rich's poetry has been partly studied by the scholars Marina Camboni and Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti. With their essays, respectively "Come pagine di un diario: i ghazals di Adrienne Rich" (1982) and "Per fate Morgane da Ghalib a Adrienne Rich" (1983), they point out the influence of Ghalib's *ghazal*s on the words, images, and themes in Rich's poems. They argue that Rich utilized the ambiguity or the masculine homosexuality present in Ghalib's *ghazal*s to produce an androgynous identity or a feminine homophile in her poems. The presence of an ambiguity or duality in Rich's poems, particularly, in the volumes *Leaflets* and *The Will to Change,* has also been mentioned by several other scholars such as Sonali Barua, Albert Gelpi, Claire Keyes, Alice Templeton, and Paul Wadden.

However, to the best of my knowledge a detailed study of the influence of Ghalib's *ghazal*s on Adrienne Rich's poetry has not been undertaken. This is most probably due to the lack of knowledge or competency in the Persian and Urdu languages, since to understand Ghalib's *ghazal*s one should inevitably be familiar both with the long tradition of Persian and Islamic poetry and with the Urdu language in which Ghalib's *ghazal*s and many other *ghazal*s

of the Indian style of poetry are written. Moreover, in order to study the influence of the *ghazal* on Rich's poetry and to be able to distinguish its features in her poems, one should have a specialized knowledge of the particular codes, symbols and formal aspects of the Persian poetic tradition. In other words, without having the knowledge of both the English and Persian languages and their cultural and literary traditions, the study of their intertextual relations must necessarily be limited.

Therefore, it should be underscored that the literary and cultural knowledge of the researcher in recognizing the presence of one text in another has been a decisive factor in formulating the significance of the intertextual relations between Ghalib's poetry with the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry, between Ghalib's poetry with Ahmad's literal translation, Adrienne Rich's poetical adaptation and finally her original *ghazal*s.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. It is a collection of distinct but conceptually linked chapters with a common project and interlocking themes. As it is a comparative study, on the one hand it contributes specifically to demonstrating the influence of feminism and translation on Rich's poetic language, while, on the other, it introduces the poetic form the *ghazal* and particularly its ambiguity which is the focus of this study. Furthermore, it highlights the role of Aijaz Ahmad and the Indian poet of Diaspora Agha Shahid Ali in introducing the *ghazal* into North America. Finally, it reveals the essence of this comparative and interdisciplinary study by bringing together the diverse and seemingly separate aspects of these poetic traditions. It deals with Aijaz Ahmad's translation project and analyses in detail his literal translations and explanations. At the same time it examines the poetical adaptations made by Rich based on Ahmad's work. It also studies Rich's *ghazal*s, demonstrating the influence of those written by Ghalib and Ahmad's interpretive mediation on her poetic language.

Chapter one focuses on the influence of feminist theories and translation on Rich's poetic language. It briefly discusses the feminists' approach in the 1960s and 1970s to cultural transmission through translation and points out that one of the most important elements for Europeans and North American feminist poets and critics was the transference of concrete images. They considered the use of corporeal imagery in women's writing and art as a site of resistance and revolutionary power and insisted on the importance of combining gender issues with socio-political matters. For this reason, this chapter draws on the ideas of such feminist scholars as Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldùa, Helen Cixous, Luise von Flotow, Susan Stanford Friedman, Sherry Simon, and gives examples of both white and black feminism. It goes on to refer to the role of Adrienne Rich as a pioneer of North American feminism and her insistence on the use and transfer of concrete and material images in women's writing and on writing of women's bodies. Moreover, it argues that Rich in her attempts to create a new poetic language turned towards translation of foreign poetry. It finally mentions the importance of translating Ghalib's *ghazal*s in familiarizing her with new poetic techniques for the development of her feminist language.

The second chapter deals with the feature of ambiguity in the *ghazal*. It firstly provides a brief historical account of the *ghazal* in the Persian poetic tradition by drawing on the studies of such eminent scholars of Persian and Islamic literature as Alessandro Bausani and T.J. de Bruijn. It demonstrates that the *ghazal* developed from the songs of minstrels in the Persian pre-Islamic period and at the same time from Arabic love poetry. It goes on to point out that it flourished in the thirteenth century when the ideas of Sufism were disseminated throughout Persia; a feature that added a Sufi tinge to its love poetry, the *ghazal*. Further, it argues how the use of love poetry for addressing divine love and other Sufi concepts led to the creation of an erotic-mystic ambiguity in the *ghazal* and identifies three main factors that create ambiguity. It shows that the use of disunited couplets whose unity is

formed by the association of images, the grammatical feature of Persian and Urdu languages that have genderless pronouns, and the fragmented description of the beloved's body, are the factors that cause ambiguity in general and gender ambiguity in particular in the *ghazal*. As for the feature of disunity, it draws on the ideas of such scholars as Frances Pritchett, Agha Shahid Ali, Gianroberto Scarcia Amoretti, and Riccardo Zipoli. However, for the more specific issue of gender ambiguity, the ideas of the scholars T.J. de Bruijn and Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti are taken into account. Moreover, by referring to the ambiguity in the Persian art of miniature painting, it illustrates that this ambiguity is cultural and derives from the tradition of Islamic art and poetry.

Furthermore, it demonstrates the different aspects of the *ghazal*, specifically its ambiguity, by providing a few examples from the poems by the masters of Persian and Urdu poetry Mowlānā Jalālleddin Moḥammad Rumi (1207-1273), Khawje Shams al-Din Moḥammad Ḥāfeẓ Shirāzi (1315-1390) and Mirza Ghalib. It argues that in the tradition of Persian poetry no text belongs solely to a single author or era, but each text is the development of the preceding ones. Therefore the stylistic features that can be found in Ghalib's *ghazal*s are the result of their intertextual relations with other poems of the tradition written prior to them. In this manner, it also indicates that Mirza Ghalib's *ghazal*s written in the Indian style of poetry belong to the Persian tradition of *ghazal* that flourished in the thirteenth century with its definitive form, which can be found in the works of the masters of Persian poetry Rumi and Ḥāfeẓ. Finally, it deals with the feature of ambiguity in the Indian style of poetry and eventually in the poems written by Mirza Ghalib. It shows how the Indian style or Ghalib's style developed from the classical Persian *ghazal*.

The third Chapter focuses on the roles and contributions of Aijaz Ahmad and Agha Shahid Ali to introducing the *ghazal* into North America. It firstly, provides a brief account of how the North American poets were familiarized with Persian poetry, particularly through

the Transcendentalist movement and specifically through Ralph Waldo Emerson's work. It then, deals with the roles of the two cultural mediators, Aijaz Ahmad and Agha Shahid Ali, as fundamental promoters of the *ghazal* in the North American literary system in the last thirty years of the twentieth century. It compares their role and influence and argues how their efforts resulted in the extensive translation and adoption of the *ghazal* as a new genre or poetic form by poets in the United States and Canada.

Further, it explains that in the last decade of the twentieth century, Agha Shahid Ali, as a bilingual Indian American poet tried to establish the *ghazal* as a new genre in English poetry by emphasising its formal features. He taught the *ghazal* to the North American poets and invited them to write it observing its form. His insistence on the *ghazal*'s form allowed the North American poets to experience the same border crossing that he had experienced while writing in English forms. He aimed at combining the elements of both countries in his *ghazal*s by using it as a border or bridge between two cultures and civilizations. In the late nineteen sixties however, Aijaz Ahmad, witnessing the socio-political upheavals in North America and the interest of a number of poets in translation as a subversive force, had proposed the translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s. He believed that the historical context of Ghalib's life was in many ways analogous to the situation in the North America of the 1960s. As an outsider to the North American literary system, he stressed the political and cultural role the *ghazal* could play. Overall, with his literal translations, explanations, and his socio-political ideology, as a cultural mediator he played a significant role in the North American poets' perception of Ghalib's poetry.

The second part of this chapter deals with the translation strategies adopted in the twentieth century by the North American poets, including some of those involved in Ahmad's translation project. It argues that their attempts at translating the *ghazal* were not fruitful for its cultural transmission mainly due to domesticating the original text in their translations. In

contrast, it discusses such poet-translators as Ezra Pound and later Robert Bly and Adrienne Rich who strived to create what Venuti calls "stylistic analogue" (Venuti 2009, 166) in their renderings. They did so by proliferating the linguistic and cultural differences or, in other words, by going against the invisible role of the translator. They used translation as a means to cross borders and exchange cultures in order to bring new images, forms and ideas into their poetry. In addition, the creation of a stylistic analogue in their translations led to the formation of an "interrogative power" (Venuti 2009, 166) which questioned their literary system and culture.

Chapter four offers an analysis of Ahmad's literal translations and Rich's poetical adaptations published in the book, *Ghazals of Ghalib*. It first discusses the challenges that Ahmad and the North American poets faced in this project. Then, it highlights the role of Ahmad in communicating the cultural elements of the *ghazal* to the poet-translators in his group by providing diverse layers of meaning and giving the intertextual relations that exist between the *ghazal*s with other literary, historical, and cultural texts and events in the Persian and Islamic poetic traditions. Further, it points out that to understand Ghalib's *ghazal*s, one should be familiar with the long tradition of Persian poetry, since the style and language of Persian and Urdu poets are deeply rooted in this tradition. Following this, it discusses the way in which the *ghazal*'s ambiguity was conducive to the development of a feminist language in Rich's works in the 1960s when she was looking for new modes of writing to express her gender identity and the bewilderment she witnessed in her society.

The main body of this chapter is the detailed analysis of the techniques and strategies borrowed or adopted by Rich from Ghalib's poetry in producing her English versions. It argues that Rich created the same intertextual relations present in Ghalib's poetry and moreover, maintains that Rich's poetical adaptations can be considered as hybrid or border-crossing texts, making possible cultural transmission between two texts that were distant in

time and place. Finally, it asserts that Rich's border position in life was a significant factor in understanding the ambiguity that lies in the *ghazal* and that by performing as a feminist translator she went against the invisible practice of translation and kept the foreign aspects of the *ghazal* in her poetic adaptations.

The fifth chapter focuses on Rich's *ghazal*s: "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib" and "The Blue Ghazals" in the collections *Leaflets* and *The Will to Change*. Firstly, it focuses on the two poetry collections *Leaflets* and *The Will to Change.* It points out that the poems in these volumes are political but at the same time deal with women and gender issues. It also draws attention to their use of radical forms and mentions that they are full of images and can be read as symbolist poems or visionary works of art. It refers to Rich's belief as a feminist in the power of images, particularly, the image of the body that was considered a source of women's empowerment by the feminists in the 1960s. It argues that one of the most important factors in familiarizing Rich with new images and forms was working on the translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s.

The main body of this chapter, like the previous one, is a detailed analysis of Rich's *ghazal*s to show how the techniques used by Rich in composing them were taken from Ghalib's poetry. It discusses the way in which Rich created analogous intertextuality in her *ghazal*s to recreate the effects she perceived in Ghalib's work. This helped the North American poet to produce an erotic-political ambiguity in her own *ghazal*s in order to combine gender issues with socio-political matters. Moreover, it served to create a gender ambiguity that allowed her to shatter the patriarchal norms of writing and empower women. In other words, as a feminist, Rich used the act of 're-vision' as a strategy to look back to a text that belonged to another time and place and see it with fresh eyes in order to adapt its methods of writing and cultural features to her own time and requirements. Rich, in fact,

adapted these techniques to her purposes so as to create a new poetic or 'a common language'.

Finally, it should be mentioned that this research is interdisciplinary and therefore contributes to diverse fields of study such as feminist studies, translation studies, and the North American and Persian/Urdu literary studies. Its contribution to feminist studies is by demonstrating the way in which Rich uses the methods of writing in the *ghazal* to develop her feminist language. It contributes to translation studies by highlighting the role of cultural mediator and pointing out the importance of considering intertextuality in the analysis of translations. More importantly, it is a contribution to North American and Persian/Urdu literary studies, since the utility of the *ghazal*'s ambiguity to female North American poets is totally new to these fields of study and so far has gone unnoticed.

Chapter 1

The Universal Vision of Adrienne Rich: The Role of Feminism and Translation on Rich's Poetic Language

The North American poet's will to change and translation of foreign poetry

Adrienne Rich, the North American poet, feminist, thinker, and essayist was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1929 and died on 27 March 2012 in Santa Cruz, California. On the occasion of her death, the arts page of the Persian BBC published an article on her life and activities entitled: "Adrienne Rich, the Poet of the Minorities, Sexual, Gender, and Racial Discrimination." (Pākzād, "Adrienne Rich"). The article sums up the way in which Rich, through her works in poetry and prose, played a social role in defending the rights of women, homosexuals, and African-Americans and was also an activist against war in countries such as Vietnam, Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan. In addition, it points out her interest in reading the verse of Middle-Eastern poets such as the Palestinian Maḥmoud Darwish.

In the 1960s and 1970s an intellectual focus for Rich was the poetry of revolution and resistance of such middle-Eastern poets as Maḥmoud Darwish, Nāzim Ḥikmet-Rān from Turkey, Faiz Ahmed Faiz from Pakistan, and Forugh Farrokhzād from Iran, and such European and Latin American poets as Garcia Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Muriel Rukeyser and Pier Paolo Pasolini. All these poets, she claims in "Poetry and the Forgotten Future," wrote "against the silence of their time and location" (Rich 2009, 144). These poets, she states appropriating the words of Rukeyser, conceived of poetry as an "exchange of energy" to "effect change in existing conditions" (Rukeyser qtd. in Rich 2009, 144).

A number of North American poets tainted by the cruelty and injustice of the American governmental policies of the time, saw in these poets alternative role models. They

sought to compose verse of resistance and liberation; they participated in anti-Vietnam War protests, feminist and anti-racist movements and other liberatory activities and riots.

The literary groups and poets involved in the struggles for social change included: the Beats with their leading figure Allen Ginsberg whose poem "Howl" stood as their signature. In this poem, Ginsberg not only desires a diverse vision for American society, but change in literary spaces and language (Nicholls 13); the Black Mountain poets with Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Denise Levertov, Robert Creeley, who led an avant-garde movement with their key poem "The Praises" by Olson (Golding 60-3); the Black Arts, with its leading poets, Audre Lorde and Amiri Baraka who wrote against the white poetics, segregation and injustice (Golding 66-8); the New York School with such poets as Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, Kenneth Kock, and James Schuyler, who were concerned with the world of visual and urban social life. Their most prominent figure was O'Hara who saw New York as a queer city (Damon 104-5); the Feminist poets like Hilda Doolittle, Muriel Rukeyser, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and Adrienne Rich, who called for a feminist awakening and equal rights and were concerned with empowering women (Keller and Miller 80-8); and the transcendental and pastoral poets such as Robert Bly, James Wright and W.S. Merwin who were moving toward more open forms and loose free verse (Golding 68-9).

These literary groups shared a whole range of technical and ideological notions which included their search for a new identity, their belief that "personal is political" and that art should be utilized for socio-political transformation. The tendencies and techniques of these writers and poets derived partly from the modernist impulse of opposing rhetoric. Ezra Pound sustained that the best form with which to combat rhetoric is free verse. Free verse safeguards the poets from worn-out diction and old-fashioned subjects. In addition, it will liberate language from discourse (Blasing 6):

… free verse was poetically mainstreamed and politically neutralized. Historically, then, free verse has signified anti-British, antihierarchical, and democratic political values (Whitman); totalitarian and hierarchical sociopolitical values marching to nature's way (Pound); radical or Marxist politics (Louis Zukofsky, Charles Reznikoff, George Oppen, Langston Hughes, Muriel Rukeyser, Amiri Baraka); and liberal politics (Williams, Levertov, Ginsberg). Free verse can be antiformalist (Whitman, O'Hara) or formalist (Pound, Olson, Zukofsky); it can appeal for its authority to nature (Snyder, Mary Oliver, Charles Wright), to the unconscious (Deep Imagists), or to the mechanics of language (language poets). (Blasing 16).

To change rapidly the language of poetry and to abolish the precedents had become a program for these poets. They aimed at using a new and freer form that foregrounded their struggle against violence and oppression and particularly against the Vietnam War (Blasing 15-6). Rich and some of her contemporaries like Robert Bly, and W.S. Merwin started composing in free verse, considered a liberational poetic technique.

These poets strived to reconfigure the definitions of power relationships. They directed their criticism not only against governmental policies, national or international, but against poetic forms which were inadequate to express their intention of portraying the bewildered picture of their society.

Thus these poets were committed to learning new forms and modes of writing, their tendency in general being the acquaintance with and learning of foreign poetic forms. They desired to understand the other in order to be able to identify with it.[1] In fact, they desired the

---

[1] As Friedman puts it "…the other can be the racial or ethnic other, but also the other by gender, sexuality, religion, class, and a host of other ways in which human beings separate themselves into distinct communities" (Friedman 2007, 279).

other because they had become strangers to their own selves and their own culture (Friedman 2007, 279). [2] In this respect, Rich stated:

> I have felt like a stranger in my own country. I seem not to speak the official language. I believe many others feel like this, not just as poets or intellectuals but as citizens—accountable yet excluded from power (2001 b, 8).

They saw translation as an opportunity to open their way to other cultures and literatures. According to Gentzler translation is one of the primary elements for the construction of cultures and therefore in order to study cultural evolution and identity formation translation should be taken into consideration (Gentzler 2008, 2).

In the nineteen sixties and seventies translation was the prevalent strategy adopted in the socio-political struggles by the majority of North American poets. According to Blackburn, translation had a geopolitical role in modernist poetry. It was used to resolve the domestic problem of the lack of confidence in the values of "Cold War American culture" by the strategy of an exchange of cultures (Blackburn 3). [3] In the Foreword to *Writing from the World II* (1985), an anthology of literary translations from the late seventies and early eighties, Paul Engle called for the urgent need for translation in the contemporary world:

> As this world shrinks together like an aging orange and all peoples in all cultures move closer together (however reluctantly and suspiciously) it may be

---

[2] "Desire in the borderlands between self and other oscillates between the dystopic and utopic, with perhaps a benign curiosity existing somewhere in the middle. Such fluctuations have inspired writing in all modes, from the lyric, narrative, and dramatic to the ironic, tragic, and comic. Desire for the other can involve the fascination for the stranger as alien, exotic, fearful, primitive, stigmatized, fetishized, and as assumed absolute difference. Such fascination often combines disgust and attraction, projecting repressed aspects of the self onto the other" (Friedman 2007, 279).

[3] Venuti maintains that Blackburn's view was utopistic as the number of translations published at the beginning of the sixties was still very small (2005 b, 251).

that the crucial sentence for our remaining years on earth may be very simply:

TRANSLATE OR DIE (Engle 2).

The most outstanding participants in this translation movement included such literary figures as Adrienne Rich, Robert Lowell, Robert Bly, James Wright, W.S. Merwin, Gary Snyder, Denise Levertov, Galway Kinnell, Elizabeth Bishop, W.D. Snodgrass, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti (Gentzler 2008, 32-3).[4] The superb urgency of translation for these poets and writers was as much a function of transmitting new themes and images into their literature as the transformation of their culture and politics.

Translation as a form of solidarity for women's network

What the first and second wave feminism chiefly sought in translation was the possibility of articulating connections between women writers from all over the world. Female translators created "new circuits of exchange" to introduce the work of other women writers and intellectuals. Their efforts are sometimes known as transatlantic feminism. A fundamental result of this was the attraction of the Anglo American women from the 1970s to the works of French feminism by such authors as Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. In fact, translation exerted a form of solidarity between women and opened a new way of dialogue for them notwithstanding their differences (Simon 1996, 80).[5]

---

[4] Ted Hughes points out that there was a very strong attraction to literary translation at the time of the dissemination of Buddhist ideas, of the Hippies, the emergence of the revolt of the young, and the pop music of the Beatles. These trends were changing the reality of the Industrial West (Hughes 9).

[5] "First-wave feminism was closely associated with this movement. Women have translated in order to build communication networks in the service of progressive political agendas and in the creative renewal of literary traditions… They believed, as Madame de Stael had so clearly stated, that movements of literary exchange are vital to the democratic life of any nations." (Simon 1996, 2).

Rich elaborated on women's network of connection in the foreword to the book, *The Other Voice*[6]. It is a collection of twentieth century women's poetry translated into English. In the foreword, Rich considered women as an oppressed group left silent and unknown to one another, who had for a long time been separated from each other because of their dependence on men. Rich valorized the female poets of this collection as women who strived to break their silence against the dominant "male monologue"[7] through translation. She sustained that female writers and poets should have recourse to other women's writings in order to internalize their common sensibilities and powers. She identified their common concern as the notion of "a common female culture." For example, Rich herself admitted that her first encounter with the poetry of the prominent twentieth century Iranian poet Forugh Farrokhzād became possible thanks to this very collection of translations.[8] She nominates Farrokhzād and a number of other female poets as powerful women who had a great impact on the poetic tradition and language of their respected societies. She particularly refers to "the sense of history, politics and female existence" in the poems of Farrokhzād (1976, xvii-xx).

A good example of this circuit of exchange between women was the translations into Persian made since 2005/2006 by Iranian female poets and translators of several of Rich's essays and poems. In January 2006 an article was published in the political journal *Irān-e Emruz* (*Today's Iran*, my trans.) by Keyvāndokht Shakibaii.[9] She asserted Rich's role as a political poet and pointed out her attempts to bring change to the situation of women. In addition, she introduced several of Rich's works including: *Of Woman Born, The School*

---

[6] Bankier, Joanna, et al, eds. *The Other Voice: Twentieth-Century Women's Poetry in Translation*. New York: Norton, 1976.

[7] For which she gives the example of Farrokhzād's poem, "The Mechanical Doll."

[8] In this collection three poems by Farrokhzād (1935-1967) were published: "A Window," "Mechanical Doll," and "I feel sorry for the garden."

[9] Interestingly enough, a year later, she is among the group of women who in April 2007 signed an appeal entitled "Khāmushi Jāyez Nist" (Silence is not Permitted)[9] in opposition to the arrest of two well-known Iranian feminist activists[9] in Iran. It is available on: (http://www.akhbar-rooz.com/printfriendly.jsp?essayId=9542/http://www.akhbarrooz.com/printfriendly.jsp?essayId=9542).

among the Ruins, The Dream of a Common Language and *An Atlas of the Difficult World.* Finally, she gave the translation of Rich's essay "Claiming an Education." The translator claimed that hers was the first Persian translation of any work by Rich either in prose or poetry. However, to the best of my knowledge, one poem by Rich was translated and published in 2005, in a collection of poems by women from around the world entitled *Women Poets* (1383)[10] by Farideh Hassanzadeh. It included the translation of Rich's poem "You're wondering if I'm lonely"[11] from the collection *Diving into the Wreck.* Three years later, Hassanzadeh published another collection of translations entitled *Contemporary American Poetry* (1386).[12] This collection dedicated to love, peace, and freedom included the poems of writers such as Adrienne Rich, Muriel Rukeyser, W.S. Merwin, and the black poets such as Langston Hughes, Margaret Walker, and Amiri Baraka. In the introduction, the translator names Rich and Merwin as the poets who stood against their governmental policies and rendered a political sense to contemporary poetry. They spoke against the Vietnam War and in defense of the American citizen's rights, yet this did not reduce the artistic and poetic aspect of their compositions. This collection contained the translation of six poems by Rich among which, "In those years," "Prospective Immigrants Please Note,"[13] "This war," and "I know you are reading this poem."

While inside Iran the emphasis was more on Rich's poems against war, outside Iran the Iranian feminist activist, Shādi Amin, focused her attention on Rich's contributions to

---

[10] Hassanzadeh, F., trans. *She'r-e Zanān-e Jahān (Women Poets)*. Tehran: Negāh Publications, 1383/2005.

[11] It was later translated again by Dumān Maleki and published in the monthly journal of art, Golestāne in 2003. It was then translated by Moḥsen Āzaram in 1390/2011. http://loeiji.blogfa.com/post-2071.aspx.

[12] Hassanzadeh, F., trans. *She'r-e Āmricā-ye Mo'āser az Nime-ye Dovvom-e Qarn-e Bistom tā Emruz (Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry)*. Tehran: Negāh Publications, 1386/2008. In the introduction to this collection Hassanzadeh gives a brief history of American poetry. She names Whitman, as the earthly father and Emily Dickinson as the celestial mother of American poetry and stresses the use of the body in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Several poets influenced by Whitman adopted a free form of poetry to speak of freedom and democracy.

[13] It was later translated by Dumān Maleki and published in the monthly journal of art, *Golestāne* in 2003.

feminism and Lesbian rights. In Germany she published the translation into Persian of four essays by Rich and four by Audre Lorde under the title *Qodrat va Leḏḏat* (Power and Pleasure, my trans.). [14] These translations were actualized from the German version *Macht und Sinnlichkeit* in 2006. They include the translation of Rich's essays: "Split at the Root", "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", "Women and Honor", and a lecture "The Function of Alibiwomen".

These attempts illustrate how women from diverse geographical locations and cultural backgrounds can empower themselves through the translation of other women writers' works. Translation can create a contact zone for the transference of cultural elements. In fact, translation acting as a transition zone can lead to new cultural production (Wolf 14-5).

Sherry Simon, following the ideas of Mary Louise Pratt, considers the notion of 'contact zone' as "the place where previously separated cultures come together and establish ongoing relations" (Simon 2002, 58). Friedman defines the 'contact zone' as: "the site of mutual influence and intercultural mingling, however unequally conditioned that exchange might be." She explains that intercultural mingling or in other words the "blending of differences" leads to cultural formation. Therefore, in the contact zone the wish for peace and understanding becomes possible notwithstanding the differences. In this respect, Audre Lorde sustained that this approach can lead to women's empowerment: "The future of our earth may depend upon the ability of all women to identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference" (Lorde 2001, 319).

Feminist translation and writing: the use of corporeal images as a strategy of resistance

For the feminists, the most effective form of cultural transmission, through translation, was the exchange of images as cultural elements in the contact zone. In this

---

[14] It is available in PDF format on: http://www.meydaan.com/UserFiles/File/Ghdrat-wa-LazatA4%281%29.pdf .

regard, Rich sustained that what remains in poetry translation are the images which are the most important cultural elements. She explained how foreign poetry should be read through translation:

> The music, the associative patterns within a language, the way certain words, sounds, meanings conflict and resonate within a poem are, if not lost, anyway transformed, transposed, rescored for a different instrument, in the act of translation. In my experience what carries over most powerfully in translation is the poetic image, the concrete and visionary apprehension of things in the world as the poet absorbs them into her inner life. In a translation which sets out to replicate meter and rhyme at all cost, we are in danger of losing the exact nature of the image, or of seeing it wrenched out of shape to conform to a certain sound-system… What we receive are the images, in which we touch our profound common experience and recognize certain themes that have observed and distributed us, the dreams of women sleeping everywhere in the world, the visions of women half-awake and waking (1976, xx-xxi).

Gloria Anzaldua in her book *Borderlands* points out that communication and relationships between women become possible principally through images. She defined image as an intermediary:

> An image is a bridge between evoked emotions and conscious knowledge; words are the cables that hold up the bridge. Images are more direct, more immediate than words, and closer to the unconscious (Anzaldua 69).

Lockart points out that Anzaldua defined the struggle of writing as being embodied by the "violence of imagery" and the search for metaphors and descriptions (Lockart).

Michael Bibby's remark elucidates the importance of bodily images to contemporary writers. He holds that while from the classical age to modernism, the body was considered as a separate entity from the self, since the mid-twentieth century the interest in the body as "a source of selfhood" has incremented (Bibby 15).

One of the first movements in the 1950s to 1970s that used the image as a strategy of resistance and liberation was The Black Arts. These artists and writers viewed their society in a larger political context. Their process of self-definition had given way to revolutionary thought. Their writings were not only a form of protest but "an art of liberating visions." As a result, the poets of this movement turned from the modern and formal styles to "a more militant poetic," that was, "the language of the street." Among these poets the most important are Amiri Baraka, Audre Lorde, and Nikki Giovanni. The main theme of their poetry was that of liberation from slavery and segregation and to revive the spiritual and mystical dimension of their culture (Beach 131).

The most influential poet of The Black Arts movement was Amiri Baraka (1934-2014). His poem 'Black Art' was called the signature of their movement. The most important contribution of this poem was the celebration of poetry's power to reverse power relationships (Beach 133). After Baraka, Audre Lorde can be named as a very influential poet in the movement. As a black feminist poet she defended the rights of Black women.

The poems of both Baraka and Lorde are marked by the use of very abundant and strong imagery. In fact, the Black Arts or Black liberation movement was one of the first movements that employed corporeal imagery. They tried to transfigure the dominant image of African American bodies in order to manifest their power and beauty (Bibby 8).

Rich paid homage to both of them. She addressed Baraka in her "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib":

LeRoi! Elridge! Listen to us, we are ghosts

condemned to haunt the cities where you want to be at home.

The white children turn black on the negative.

The summer clouds blacken inside the camera-skull.

I have learned to smell a *conservateur* a mile away:

they carry illustrated catalogues of all that there is to lose.

(1969, 66).

She dedicated a poem entitled "Hunger" in the collection *The Dream of a Common Language* to Audre Lorde. In addition, Rich only accepted the prize of the National Book Award for poetry on the condition that she was joined by Audre Lorde and Alice Walker in the name of all silenced women.

Her solidarity with African-Americans was later expressed in a work of art by the feminist artist Martina Hynan. She painted a portrait of Adrienne Rich illustrating her with a dark complexion. It was exhibited in a collection of photos and paintings entitled *Bodies That Matter*.

Adrienne Rich by Martina Hynan.[15]

Yet, the use of corporeal imagery is normally attributed to feminist writers and poets and, in a more general scale, to écriture feminine. Among the pioneers of French feminism, Cixous sustained that the possibility of change and empowerment for women lies in writing of themselves and their bodies. She pointed out that writing opens new spaces for women and will offer them the possibility of a diverse mode of thinking and a movement towards change of socio-cultural structures. Additionally, she insisted that writers and poets should listen to their bodies as an immense source of the unconscious (Cixous 879-80).

Second wave feminism founded in the early 1960s insisted on "multiple oppression." The movement desired direct contact with the socio-political realities of their time. It dealt not only with women's related issues but was also involved in issues of race, class, ethnocentrism, and homophobia. Naturally, the women of color, lesbian women, Jewish women, and third world women were its pioneers. Their idea was that the issues of gender

---

[15] It is available on: http://pinterest.com/arc79/bodies-that-matter/ .

should not be separated from "societal stratifications" and "multiple constituents of identity" (Friedman 1998, 70-2). As a result, their erotic language was to serve their political purposes. In other words, the feminist poets and writers were attempting to connect gender issues and corporeal images with socio-political matters.[16]

Adrienne Rich, as a pioneer of the US feminist movement, was similarly concerned with fusing corporeal images with socio-political matters. She aimed at employing the most private and intimate images of body, sex, and women to deal with socio-political problems. In other words, she attempted to conflate private with public.

Rich was influenced by other literary groups of her time like the Black Mountain poets, specifically Charles Olson's idea of poetry as the release of energy. Ginsberg's free style, Merwin and other poet-activists who considered poetry as a source of energy and power to be used against oppression and war also had a bearing on her work. Her struggles were not limited to women's survival and liberation. Her feminism, as Grewal and Kaplan put it, was transnational:

> transnational feminism examines the 'relationship of gender to scattered hegemonies' throughout the globe based on various economic, legal, cultural, political, and sexual structures of power... (Friedman 1998, 112).

For Rich there was no split between private and public. In fact, she expanded her feminist strategies to defend the rights of all marginal and oppressed groups from all times and locations.

---

[16]Pound considered the image as "the furthest possible remove from rhetoric." He believed that an image is an "absolute metaphor" that is known directly because it is perceived and conceived directly (Blasing 6).

In the 1960s under the influence of Simone de Beauvoir and James Baldwin, Rich dealt with the problem of writing as a woman, that is, from her body and her experiences (Rich 1993 b, 249). She affirmed that writing as a woman gives more dynamic energy to a poem (1993 d, 168). [17]

Rich tried to write openly as a woman, from the woman's body, and to take women as the theme and source of her literary production (Rich 1993 b, 249). Like Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) and the Audre Lorde (1934-1992), Rich wrote of the female body, sexuality and motherhood. She took as her models the female writers who wrote as women and about women; writers and poets such as Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson, Anne Bradstreet and Hilda Doolittle (Friedman 1984, 172-4). In addition, she used the images of women in her poems including Emily Dickinson, the Russian Natalya Gorbanevskaya, the astronomer Caroline Herschel (Whelchel 51), and other female protagonists such as Marie Curie and Elvira Shatayev who sacrificed their bodies for the liberation of their minds (Feit Diehl 406).

Rich's poem "Power" about Marie Curie reads as follows:

> Today I was reading about Marie Curie:
>
> she must have known she suffered from radiation sickness
>
> her body bombarded for years by the element
>
> she had purified
>
> …
>
> She dies   a famous woman denying
>
> her wounds

---

[17] From an early stage in her poetical career, Rich took poetic forms into her service to transform socio-cultural structures and to liberate the oppressed (Taylor Merriman 6). In this, she acted in alignment with the feminists like Luce Irigaray and Monique Wittig who believed in the transformative power of language. In "Diving into the Wreck" Rich announced that "I am she: I am he." She moved beyond the problem of sex and announced her 'self' as androgynous to shatter the stereotypes of masculine and feminine (Vanderbosch 112). Additionally, she shared the opinion of Helen Cixous on the power of language by writing of women and their bodies.

denying

her wounds came from the same source as her power (1993 c, 3).

Rich sustained that by listening to their bodies women can reach their deepest understanding of their 'selves' and eventually bring a change to the human condition. In her book *Of Woman Born* she wrote: "the possession by women of our bodies will bring far more essential change to human society than the seizing of the means of production by workers" (1995 c, 285).

In order to write of the body, and therefore to begin with the material, Rich insisted on the use of concrete images in her poetry (Langdell 223). She believed that they should begin with the material and leave behind abstraction as "the core of revolutionary process" (Rich 2001 d, 64-5). Consequently, she tried to overcome the predefined concepts of borders and places in order to look into the closest geography, which is the body. In her essay "Notes toward a Politics of Location" she wrote:

> the need to begin with the female body… not to transcend this body but to reclaim it. To re-connect our thinking and speaking with the body of this particular human individual, a woman… Begin with the material. Pick up again the long struggle against lofty and privileged abstraction. Perhaps this is the core of revolutionary process, whether it calls itself Marxist or Third World or feminist or all three (2001 d, 65).

Bodies had turned to "sites of ideological struggle" for the poets and artists of the sixties (Bibby 14). Corporeal imagery had given a significant meaning to the struggles of feminist poets such as Rich, Sylvia Plath, Ann Sexton, and Audre Lorde. They used bodily

images as a source of solidarity. They shared a set of common images in their works that not only asserted their network, but helped them in their political battles (Bibby 14).

As Michael Bibby discusses in his book *Hearts and Minds: Bodies, Poetry, and Resistance in the Vietnam Era,* the image of corporeality had turned into the "key point of resistance" for the poets and activists of Vietnam-era in their socio-political struggles (Bibby 14):

> For people whose identity has been principally linked to their bodies- African American, women, or soldiers, for example—the politicization of tropes, symbols, and images of the body both served to foreground a principal locus of their oppression and helped them articulate new ways of perceiving their own bodiliness as political identity. The discursive articulations of corporeality in the poetry of Black Liberation, Women's Liberation, and the GI Resistance, then, formed critical points of resistance in radical political technologies of self (Bibby 13).

The image of the body symbolizes a site of resistance in Rich's poems.[18] A good example is the poem "Tear Gas" composed after the event of October 1969 when protestors against the treatment of G.I prisoners at Fort Dix, New Jersey, were tear-gassed. In this poem she represents the body as the most important element of resistance and change:

> The will to change begins in the body not in the mind

---

[18] In the article "Vietnam and Sexual Violence," Rich describes the bombings in the Vietnam War: "…the bombings are so wholly sadistic, gratuitous and demonic that they can finally be seen, if we care to see them, for what they are: acts of concrete sexual violence, an expression of the congruence of violence and sex in the masculine psyche." (1995 d, 109). Further, in an interview Rich defined the image of war as: "possession and deprivation, economic and religious dogmas, racism, colonialist exploitation, nationalism, unequal power" (2011).

My Politics is in my body, accruing and expanding with every

  act of resistance and each of my failures

Locked in the closet at 4 years old I beat the wall with my body

  that act is in me still (1995 a, 420).

In this respect, Bibby refers to Foucault's theory of the relation between the body and power as one of the mainstream discourses on this issue. He discusses the way in which Foucault considered the body as an effect of power relations but not as pre-existing them. However, he points out that for Foucault wherever there is power, there is resistance, a discussion that was previously explored and justified by Judith Butler's reading of Foucault's *The History of Sexuality I*:

> That history is 'inscribed' or 'imprinted' onto a body that is not history suggests not only that the body constitutes the material surface pre-conditional to history, but that the deregulation and subversion of given regimes of power are effected by the body's resistance against the workings of history (Butler 1989, 607).

Translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s and ambiguity in Rich's poetry

In the 1960s, amidst the scenes of political revolt, riots, and activism, Rich was anxious to find a new mode of expression for the confusion that she was experiencing in both her private and public life (1993 b, 247). She desired a language that was adequate for the expression of her new identity and fortifying enough to give the oppressed groups the energy and power to confront their society and at the same time function as their voice and express

their demands. In order to achieve this, she sought to renovate her poetical language and form through the study of other literatures.

Rich had a longstanding interest in foreign poetry. She read several works by the French poets in the original such as Hugo, Baudelaire, Valery and the poems of many other European poets through translation such as the works of Brecht, Rilke, Ungaretti and Ekelof. She was also familiar with Akhmatov, Tsvetayeva, Lorca, Neruda and many others (Bermann 2011, 98). She underscored the importance of translation to her poetical carrier: "I've relied—both today and in my lifelong sense of what poetry can be—on translation: the carrying over, the trade routes of language and literature" (Rich 2009, 145).

In the 1960s and 1970s translation had a key role in familiarizing her with new styles and poetic language. In the early 1960s Rich was in Holland where she learned the Dutch language and translated some Dutch poetry by Hendrick de Vries, Gerrit Achterberg and others. Later, in New York she was involved in a translation project *A Treasury of Yiddish Poetry*. She was asked to create poetic versions of poems by Kadya Molodowsky, Rachel Korn, and Celia Dropkin (Rich 2001 g, 133-4). She declared:

> I can't emphasize enough how much my poetry has been stretched, enlarged, strengthened, fortified by the non-American poetries I have read, tangled with, tried to hear and speak in their original syllables, over the years (2001 g, 134).

She emphasized the importance of translation in becoming familiar with the poets of revolution and resistance: "Without translations from other languages I would have been severely deprived- unaware of the poetry of Yannis Ritsos, Nazim Hikmet, Mahmoud Darwish, …." (Rich 2001 g, 133-4).

However, the most influential translation project in her poetic language was the translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s. She encountered the *ghazal* in 1968, a time of confusion in her private life and of socio-cultural turmoil in North America. Her society was experiencing riots, war, terror and, in the words of the historian James T. Patterson "the most turbulent year in the post-war history of the United States" (Caplan 43). It was in this environment that the *ghazal* proved to be for her a solution and eventually armed her with the required tools to write freely of herself and her society.

In 1968, for the forthcoming occasion of the centenary of the death of the 19th century Indian poet Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869), Aijaz Ahmad, the Indian born Pakistani Marxist-literary theorist, invited a group of North American poets to translate thirty-seven *ghazal*s by Ghalib composed in Urdu. The *Ghazal* is a classical poetic form mainly practiced in Persian and Urdu.

The group of North American poets invited to the project included W. S. Mervin, Adrienne Rich, William Stafford, David Ray, Thomas Fitzsimmons, Mark Strand, and William Hunt (Rich 2001 g, 133; Caplan 43).[19] Their lack of knowledge of the original language led Ahmad, as a native speaker of Urdu, to provide them with the English literal translations of the *ghazal*s, accompanied by lexical, historical, and cultural notes. Ahmad assumed the role of the translator from Urdu into English and the American poets produced English poetic versions from his literal English translations.[20] The American poets were not asked to adhere to the rhyme scheme of the original or even to its word by word meaning. They, in Even-Zohar's words, domesticated Ghalib's verses in order to apply the themes and images in his poetry to the needs of their own society and the modern American audience.

---

[19] These poets shared their interest in mysticism and Buddhism and all participated in anti Vietnam War protests.

[20] Rich clarified that her translations from French, Dutch, Italian, Russian, Yiddish, Urdu, and Spanish, were done by means of dictionaries, literal translations, native linguists, or other poets' versions.

Rich, whose translations and later her original *ghazal*s in English have stood as the most widely accepted ones and as the quintessential model for other *ghazal* writers in English, defied the traditional approach to translation that expected strict fidelity to the original and the invisibility of the translator. The figure of the translator in Rich's texts is not concerned with the questions of fidelity "but rather the notion of prophetic inspiration concerning previously unrecorded experience, or later, the challenges of a literary and political mission" (Bermann 2011, 113).

For Rich and many other American poets translation was a form of re-writing or re-vision through which they could manipulate literature and culture in their given society (Bassnett, Lefever 1995, viii; Gentzler 2008, 2; Dimitriu 66-7; Bermann 2011, 112). Re-vision was a term applied by the feminists to the act of looking back to the old texts with a novel feminist outlook. Rich verified this in her essay that was published in 1971 entitled "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision." She defined re-vision as "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" (1993 d, 167). Rich and other feminists were looking for new concepts, images, and forms not only in the works of women but also male writers from other locations and times.

The translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s for Rich was a source of prophetic inspiration. Rich profited from its formal features and its theme and content to improve and proceed with her literary and political mission.

Through Ahmad's reading of Ghalib's verses, Rich found an anti-imperialist resonance in Ghalib's life and poetry. Ahmad presented Ghalib as a poet of the time of social crisis whose verses suggested supreme solutions. Ahmad wrote:

Ghalib lived at a time in the history of the sub-continent similar to the present one in America, in the sense that a whole civilization was breaking up and

nothing seemed to be taking its place. Worse still, what replaced the older civilization ran altogether counter to what Ghalib stood for. For a Muslim poet-intellectual who lived within the older order, life was difficult but intrinsically intelligible, being supported by a tradition within which he could confront and contain experience… there were shared experiences and shared concepts of love, anxiety, friendship, and all the other emotions that define man's place in society; there was in short, much suffering in that society but also a sense of relation… By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, this sense of order was already going and the civilization was in serious doubt as to its own validity: the British trader had assured that the old order was simply not worth preserving… (Ahmad 1994, xxi-xxii).

Ahmad as a Marxist literary theorist attributed to Ghalib a political image and role, and moreover, deemed his compositions the resonance of his society, nation, and community. Whereas an analysis of Ghalib's *ghazal*s may suggest a rather diverse interpretation of his verses and articulate a love-mystic sense to them. What matters is that Rich had encountered a political or Marxist reading of Ghalib's lyric and love poetry which was exactly what she was seeking.

Rich quoted Marx that "Language is the presence of the community" and in the words of Gary Snyder: "The community and its poetry are not two." (2001 b, 8). She was looking for a new identity for herself and others. As a white, Jewish, lesbian, feminist poet she sought a location that could set the ground for her identification. She configured that the body epitomizes the closest geography. Furthermore, she explained that even this location is not personal, but is collective and the poet should speak of 'we' and not 'I' (2001 d, 66-9). In this respect she wrote: "The difficulty of saying I—a phrase from the West German novelist

Christa Wolf. But once having said it, as we realize the necessity to go further, isn't there a difficulty of saying "we"?... And so even ordinary pronouns become a political problem" (2001 d, 75).

Raya Dunayevskaya named three events that played fundamental roles in the 60s and 70s: "the resurgence of the Women's Liberation Movement out of the Left; the publication for the first time of Marx's last writings, *The Ethnological Notebooks*; and the global national liberation movements of the seventies that demonstrated that Marxism continues to have meaning as a philosophy of revolution" (2001 f, 92).

In this respect Rich wrote:

> It was Marx's humanism above all that she [Rukeyser] felt had never been adequately understood—in particular his recognition of what she called the black and women's dimensions, but more largely as he sought not merely the "overthrow" of capitalism but a vision of "revolution in permanence," a dynamically unfolding society in which the human individual could freely develop and express her or his creativity; not a static Communist utopia but an evolving human community (2001 f, 86).

Rich appreciated the efforts of feminist poets like Muriel Rukeseyr and Raya Dunayevskaya, who fused "Marx's humanism with contemporary feminism" and wrote of "revolutionary lives of women." Above and beyond this, she wished for a revolutionary poetic language that was "untethered from the compromised language of state and media", that could suggest a way of writing on the edge, to be a language both private and public and like the language of Marx be the language of community (Rich 2001 b, 8). She wrote:

I want the tradition of oral voice in poetry, the remembering of what they tell us to forget. I want the landscape of the visual field on the page, exploding formal verse expectations. I want a poetry that is filmic as a film can be poetic, a poetry that is theater, performance, voice as body and body as voice… (2001 e, 118).

Rukeyser conflated, in her poetic language, history and the body, memory and politics, sexuality and public space, and poetry and physical science (Rich 2001 c, 120). Rich nominates Rukeyser as a poet of resistance with her poetry pertaining to political, erotic and visionary realms (Rich 2001 c, 127).

Rich considered Ghalib a poet of resistance who wrote in "an age of political and cultural break up." In the turmoil of 1968 in North America, she felt an affinity with Ghalib and likened his desperation to hers. Rich quotes Ghalib, who laments that thousands of his friends were killed in the Indian revolt of 1857 (Caplan 46). She shared with Ghalib feelings of pain and suffering and felt the same pain in her room in New York City as Ghalib experienced in his house in Delhi (Camboni 1982, 169-170):

How is it Ghalib that your grief, resurrected in

Pieces,

Has found its way to this room, from your dark

House in Delhi? (Rich 1969, 68).

Rich experienced the same struggles as Ghalib for a better society:

My *ghazal*s are personal and public, American and twentieth-century; but they owe much to the presence of Ghalib in my mind: a poet self-educated and profoundly learned, who owned no property and borrowed his books, writing in an age of political and cultural break up. (Rich 1969, 59)

Soon after this project in July 1968, Rich commenced composing *ghazal*s. Rich was a pioneer of *ghazal* writing in English but was not alone in her attempts. Ahmad's project had encouraged a great number of American poets to translate other *ghazal*s and even to write original *ghazal*s. It accentuated a wave of translation and composition of this Oriental poetical form in the English language in the following decades.

Rich composed her *ghazal*s just a few months after the assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. Her *ghazal*s manifested a strong relationship between politics and poetic form.

The *Ghazal* for Rich was political poetry; a poetry of resistance. She used it as a cross-cultural poetry to speak of the struggles of the marginal and oppressed groups particularly women and African-Americans. In this respect, Caplan points out that:

[Rich] uses the *ghazal* to mitigate the more immediate pressures of contemporary American literary and political culture. She employs it as a motif, a non-Western gesture, not a prosody whose requirements she must fulfill. At the same time, Rich wants the verse form to record the very pressures that assault her. Jumping between threatening images, the *ghazal*'s fragmentary argumentative structure evokes the age's skittish anxieties (Caplan 49).

Rich found in the *ghazal* the novelties that could serve to express the confusion she felt in both her private and public life. In this respect she said:

> I certainly had to find an equivalent for the kinds of fragmentation I was feeling, and confusion. One thing that was very helpful to me was working on the translations from the Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib, which led me to write original *ghazal*s. There, I found a structure which allowed for a highly associative field of images. And once I saw how that worked, I felt instinctively, this is exactly what I need, there is no traditional Western order that I found that will contain all these materials (Rich 1993 a, 269).

She published her first collection of *ghazal*s under the title "*Ghazal*s: Homage to Ghalib" in the volume *Leaflets* (1969). This volume reflects "the social unrest of the anti-Vietnam War movement and the birth of the Women's Liberation Movement as a renewed political and social force" (Langdell 88). *Leaflets* is a political volume that combines Rich's experience as a woman and a mother with the socio-political break-ups of her time. The poems in this volume have a free and open form particular to Rich. Olson called it an "open field" or Rich's own projective verse (Langdell 93). Rich tried to break the old orders of language to "recompose it" (Vendler 213).

She published her second collection of *ghazal*s entitled "The Blue *Ghazal*s" in the volume *The Will to Change* (1968-1970). The verses in this volume are filled with images of life, memories of loved ones and visions of dying people. She tried to express her will for change and transformation in these verses. In this volume, Rich was particularly influenced by the techniques of the new wave cinema, particularly the cinematic techniques of Jean Luc Godard and Pier Paolo Pasolini (Langdell 109; Rich 1993 a, 259). The language of cinema

encouraged her to utilize more images in her poetic language and load its structure with more liberated forms assimilating the broken and fragmented shots in the movies. In this regard, Kalstone writes of the similarity to film methods in the language of the *ghazal*s in Rich's *The Will to Change*: "*The Will to Change* is filled with *ghazal*s, fluid syntax imitating the methods of film, "letters," "pieces," "photographs"- beating on every possible door, for more and more provisional devices to release the self and make it palpable" (Kalstone 1978, 160).

Erkkila commented on Rich's *Leaflets* and *The Will to Change* emphasizing the influence of the *ghazal*, projective verse, and the French cinema on her poetry. She argues that, similar to Emily Dickinson's poetry, these poems do not have a logical narrative line but are shaped from the accumulation of images or in her own words by "verbal compression." Therefore, she supposes that Dickinson was Rich's model in composing the poems in *Leaflets* (1969) and *The Will to Change* (1971). However, the influence of Mirza Ghalib's *ghazal*s, the projective verse of Charles Olson, and Godard's new wave cinema are undeniable and served Rich to express herself in an age of cultural and political break-up (Erkkila 164).

Under these influences Rich's poetry in the two volumes *Leaflets* and *The Will to Change* was loaded with imagery. She combined poetic images with the visual images of photography and film, particularly, with references to Godard's movies. As Andre Lefevere suggested, "the time may have come to move beyond the word as such, to promote it into the realm of metaphor, so to speak, and leave it there" (Lefevere qtd. in Bassnett and Trivedi 13). Rich's statement, emphasizing the importance of image over form, illustrates the same notion:

> While the structure and metrics used by Ghalib are much stricter than mine, I have adhered to his use of a minimum of five couplets to a *ghazal*, each couplet being autonomous and independent of the others. The continuity and

unity flow from the associations and images playing back and forth among the couplets in any single *ghazal*. (Rich 1969, 59).

Like Ghalib, Rich deemed herself to be a poet of a society in crisis and in need of renovation, the renovation that resulted from changing the vision. It was precisely the forms and models of vision that connected Rich and Ghalib. Camboni writes that in Rich's poetry creative vision and imagination are united and the words gain transformative power. It is like in the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry where in the penetrating sight of the mystic, *ahl-e nazar*, thought, vision and word are united. In this respect, Camboni uses the words of Ghalib that knowledge is its expression and thought gives birth to things (1985 a, 156).[21]

Rich strived to use images that were both personal and collective, that went beyond the 'I' and represented 'we.' In fact, she sought to create a form of duality or collectivity in her poetic language, a duality that did not distinguish between male and female, personal and public, 'I' and 'we', and erotic and political.

Alicia Ostriker, in the book *Dancing at the Devil's Party,* points out that women's contemporary poetry is characterized by duality. When Rich examines "the oppressor's language" she refers to duality of language: "male versus female, sacred versus profane, mind versus body, public versus private, logos versus eros, self versus other, subject versus object, art versus life." Ostriker defines women poets as "boundary-breaking, duality dissolving, and authority-needing." (Ostriker 9).

The poetic language of the *ghazal* helped Rich to overcome this duality and adopt a collective or ambiguous language. Rich herself comments on her translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s in a letter to Ahmad:

---

[21] Camboni sustains that the concrete and mythic images that Rich found in the archaic civilizations or in the texts of other women writers turned for her into a historic patrimony and an insight into culture and identity (Camboni 1985 a, 164).

The marvelous thing about these *ghazal*s is precisely (for me) their capacity for both concentration and a gathering, cumulative effect… I needed a way of dealing with very complex and scattered material which was demanding a different kind of unity from that imposed on it by the isolated, single poem: in which certain experiences needed to find both their intensest rendering and to join with other experiences not logically or chronologically connected in any obvious way. I've been trying to make the couplets as autonomous as possible and to allow the unity of the *ghazal* to emerge from underneath, as it were, through images, through associations, private and otherwise…. For me, the couplets work only when I can keep them from being too epigrammatic; what I'm trying for, not always successfully, is a clear image or articulation behind which there are shadows, reverberations, reflections of reflections. In other words, something that will not remind the Western reader of haiku or any other brief, compact form, such as Pope's couplet in English, or the Greek anthology (Rich qtd. in Ahmad 1994, xxv-xxvi).

The images of the Islamic tradition of Persian poetry that Rich found through Ghalib's *ghazal*s were a vast source of inspiration or in other words 'vision' to her. Rich borrowed and adapted the imagery in Ghalib's poetry into her *ghazal*s and poems, the images that were at the same time erotic and mystical. The *ghazal* helped her to use a poetic language that spoke for all humanity, devoid of sex, race, and location.

Therefore, the following chapter attempts to provide some answers to the questions that can be raised at this point: what features of the *ghazal* helped Adrienne Rich to apply her corporeal language to the expression of her socio-political ideas? How did the *ghazal* help her

to form a duality in her poetic language in order to conflate her private with her public life and space?

Chapter 2

Ambiguity in the Ghazal: the Union of the Erotic and the Mystical

The *Ghazal*: a brief history

The North American poets of the 1960s and 1970s, wishing to express themselves and the turbulence and turmoil of those years, no longer felt at ease with the traditional English forms. They considered them an unsuitable vehicle, incapable of shaping a representative picture of their society. Increasingly, they turned to poetry in foreign languages to find inspirations, and some of them embraced the *ghazal* as the proper form for both the expression of themselves and their socio-political contexts. As Aijaz Ahmad maintains in his 1970 Introduction to the *Ghazal*s of Ghalib, "the present is—next perhaps only to the Elizabethan—a great age of translation in the English language, particularly by the American poets." (Ahmad 1994, xviii). In fact, the special interest in and the chief charm of the *ghazal*'s formal structure for the American poets lay in the opportunity it gave for evading convention and bringing innovation to their poetry.

The *ghazal* probably offered a kind of liberty to and was a new departure for the American poets in comparison to "customary" forms. It allowed the poets to include more subjects within a single poem by "glossing over or ignoring transitions, and by making tacit and allusive connections between the *bayt*s" (Rehder 83-4).

There has been a long-lasting debate among its scholars over the *ghazal*'s origins. Alessandro Bausani, an expert on Islam, Persian and Urdu literature, in his book *Storia della Letteratura Persiana,*[22] argues that the Persian *ghazal* is an imitation of Arabic meters. [23]

---

[22] Pagliaro, Antonino, Bausani, Alessandro. *Storia della Letteratura Persiana*. Nuova accademia editrice, 1960.

[23] Arabic love poetry has had a great effect on the development of Persian poetry (de Bruijn 2001, 355). "The modern school of *Mohdat* poets, flourishing in the 9th C. Iraq, was an obvious source of influence on the emerging Persian love poetry" (de Bruijn 2001, 356).

Later, in an essay entitled "Considerazioni sull'origine del gazal",[24] he completes his discussion by pointing out that the origin of the *ghazal* also goes back to the Persian pre-Islamic period and the folklore songs of minstrels. J. T. P. de Bruijn, a *ghazal* scholar, likewise, emphasizes the effect of Arabic love poetry on the development of the *ghazal*, at the same time, pointing to the evidence of its having origins in an ancient Asian tradition or minstrelsy (de Bruijn 2001, 356). The lack of primary sources from the Persian pre-Islamic period has made it a difficult job for *ghazal* scholars to declare with certainty the *ghazal*'s origins. Overall, *ghazal* scholars seem to share the idea that it was influenced by Arabic love poetry, while they do not deny the possibility of its form having its origins in the pre-Islamic period as an oral form. According to such scholars as Bausani and de Bruijn, however, it had its origins in the pre-Islamic period and the folklore songs of minstrels as oral forms (Bausani 2011, 310-11; Idem 2000, 138-9; De Bruijn 2001, 356).[25]

The Arabic genre of *ghazal* (*taghazzol*) developed as a lyric poem of indeterminate length on the topic of love. The g*hazal* was replete with the description of nature, wine and talk with the beloved. In Arabic the word *ghazal* means 'talk with women.' Its convention is a dialogue between an 'I', the lover, and 'you', the beloved. Normally, the lover talks to a present or absent beloved (Barua 106; de Bruijn 1997, 65-6). However, Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001), a Kashmiri American poet, the poet of the Diaspora, reminds us of another signification of the *ghazal* as the cry of the hunted gazelle, which communicates its melancholic and mournful tone in the expression of grief and loss (Agha 2000, 3).

---

[24] Bausani, Alessandro. "Considerazioni sull'origine del ghazal." *Il "Pazzo sacro" nell'Islam*. Ed. Maurizio Pistoso. Milano: Luni Editrice, 2000.

[25] It is known that from the second to the eighth century a form of love poetry was performed by female singers from Persia in cities of Hejaz (De Bruijn 2001, 356). Ancient Arabic lamentations were sung by women for their dead brothers, a tradition that can still be found in contemporary Arabic poetry. Then there are "the love lyrics ranging from the frivolous quatrains of the Persian poetess Mahsati up to the lyrical songs of Persian and Turkish women." (Schimmel 2003, 12).

The Persian *ghazal* started out this way, but added several features to make it a fixed form (Lewis 2008, xxvii).[26] Overall, the *ghazal* flourished with its definite form, as seen in the *Divan*s of the masters of Persian poetry, Rumi and Ḥāfeẓ and as explained briefly below, in the 12th century, when Persian was the literary language of a vast area of central Asia.

Formally speaking, the *ghazal* is a short lyric with a single rhyme scheme throughout. It is normally between five and fifteen couplets (*beyt*s), with seven couplets as the most perfect form. An important feature of the *ghazal* is refrain (*radif)*. It can be a suffix, a noun, a verb, and even a short phrase that is normally added to rhyme (*qāfiye*). *Radif* is repeated in the two lines of the first couplet and in the second line of all the succeeding couplets. It serves to bring coherence and unity to the poem, or to give emphasis through the repetition of the same word or image. *Takhalloṣ* is another feature of the *ghazal*. It is normally the pen-name of the poet that appears in the last couplet which is called *maqṭa'* or *makhlaṣ*.[27]

The *ghazal*'s imagery ranges over three main themes: erotic and love poetry, the description and veneration of nature, and the sublimation of mystical and spiritual concepts. The world of the *ghazal* resembles a canvas depicted with abundant colorful images. It illustrates gardens, roses, nightingales, and expresses an uninhibited sensual love, religious freedom if not outright heresy.

Ambiguity in the *Ghazal*

As regards this research, the most important feature of the *ghazal* is its ambiguity which stems from three main factors.

Firstly, the *ghazal* is both a love lyric and a mystic poem. It was originally a love lyric that was practiced in the courts to praise the king and the courtesans. It was written by court

---

[26] By the twelfth century when the *ghazal* had developed as a fixed form, it went beyond the concerns of romantic love and became a vehicle for the representation of a variety of themes, be they didactic, mystical, political and artistic (Lewis 2008, xxviii).

[27] de Bruijn names two reasons for the use of *Takhallus*: " … the identification of the poet with the lover who is speaking in the text, but also the boast of the poet's literary skill …" (2001, 355).

poets in the courts of the Ghaznavid (1000-1040), Timurid (1389-1501) and Safavid (1501-1722). In the two century time gap between the Ghaznavid and Timurid dynasties, the Seljuqid (1040-1157) came into power, but their court did not revere artists and poets. Later, the invasion of the Mongols and the defeat of the Iranians and eventually the Mongol rule (1221-1256) led the poets to turn away from the courts and address normal people in their *ghazal*s, which prepared the ground for the dissemination of Sufism (Islamic Mysticism)[28] in the thirteenth century among poets and artists (de Bruijn 2001, 355; Shamisā 93-4).

The Sufis who conceived of the world as an expression of the Divine used a symbolic language to keep their esoteric doctrines and spiritual discoveries secret to themselves (Nicholson 103).[29] They used symbols to refer to spiritual teachings and to express the divine love that could not be expressed explicitly (de Bruijn 1997, 63-5).[30] As a result, the language of the *ghazal*, full as it was of illusion, hyperbole, irony, imagery, symbol and allegory, served the Sufi poets to convey their teachings and ideas in an imaginative language (de Bruijn 1997, 61; Idem 2001, 355).[31]

In reality, the language of the *ghazal* did not offer itself to easy comprehension and this was what the Sufis most desired. As Mahdi Tourage maintains this kind of language was

---

[28] According to Scarcia and Pellò, Sufism has its roots in the Qur'an. However, it distances itself from the rigid rules of religion and offers new ways of communication between man and God. It explains the whole world as the expression and manifestation of the Divine. Therefore, the mysticism that Persian poets are concerned with from the year 1100, is not something absolutely spiritual or devotional, but is a historic, social and cultural phenomenon that reflects the religious atmosphere of the Oriental Islamic world (2005 xxvi).

[29] Ḥākemi maintains that Sufi or mystic poetry is loaded with symbols because the Sufis were constrained by the socio-political situation of their time and did not enjoy freedom of speech. Therefore, they expressed their opinions through symbols and metaphors and in an ambiguous mode (Ḥākemi 40).

[30] In mystical language "secrets are communicated through the paradoxical impulse of disclosure and concealment… the articulations of secrets in mystical language are only partial manifestations resurfacing in symbolic forms (Tourage 2007, 3).

[31] Asadpur maintains that the Sufis found language full of shortcomings and imperfections for the expression of deep Sufi concepts and consequently they found refuge in the symbolic language of the *ghazal* (Asadpour 112-114).

to keep their secrets: "Since the veils will never be lifted, the process of symbolic representation of secrets will not find closure." (Tourage 2007, 4).

The Sufi poets applied the *ghazal*'s images to refer to sublime and spiritual ideas. These images included those representing the elements of nature, like trees and flowers (*gol*), or animals like the nightingale (*bolbol*), or minerals such as pearl and ruby, images representing the heavenly spheres with their stars and planets, and even scenes from social life.

Thus, inevitably, many terms and images from the Sufi tradition entered the world of the *ghazal*:

the cupbearer (*sāqī*), goblet (*sāghar*), wine-vat (*khum*), and drunkness (*mastī*), winehouse (*maykhāna*), tavern (*kharābāt*), tavern-master (*pīr-i kharābāt*)",… "the lover (*ʿāshiq*) usually described as a witless wanderer (*parīshān*), a headless and footless vagabond (*bī-sar u pā*), a drunkard (*mast*), who is constantly intoxicated (*mast-i mudām*), transported in selfless rapture (*bīkhīshī*), 'out of his mind' and bereft of self-consciousness (*bīhūshī*) (Lewisohn 96-7).[32]

The theme of love in the *ghazal* had fascinated the Sufis as the best metaphor for the expression of divine love (de Bruijn 1997, 69). According to Tourage, in the world of the *ghazal*, "the partial intellect encounters the universal intellect" (2007, 154). The Sufi poets employed the love and erotic images of the *ghazal* to express their love for the divine. As a

---

[32] Indeed, many of the clichés and stock metaphors in Persian erotic poetry are bacchanalian (Nurbakhsh 125-214).

result, a double significance is attributed to the *ghazal*: it can be interpreted as poetry that is both erotic and mystic. [33]

The *ghazal*'s ambiguity also stems from its 'disunity'. In the *ghazal*, a couplet is considered a unit by itself, with the second line describing or standing as a response to, an illustration, or a proof of the first line (Pritchett 1993, 133). Each couplet, then, seems to be independent of the other. This feature has often been interpreted as an absence of linear, thematic, or chronological order between the couplets. It is precisely this apparent 'disunity'—the formal quality of the *ghazal*—that has most attracted American poets. The Western poets used the feature of disunity in the *ghazal* to speak of diverse subject matters in their poetry, ignoring the fact that its unity stems from its rhyme and refrain and association between images. This notion was given an essentially memorable expression by Sir William Jones who described the couplets in the *ghazal*: "like Orient pearls at random strung." (Scarcia, Pellò 2005, xx). This statement is of course too categorical, but it approaches the essence of the Westerner's interest in the *ghazal*. Elizabeth Gray writes in this regard:

> To the reader accustomed to Western literature the *ghazal* is puzzling and perhaps frustrating: there is no plot, no narrative, no movement toward a climax or resolution in the sense that Westerners understand dramatic development… Some Western critics decided that… there was no unifying element, each bayt was like a perfect, separate pearl. (Gray 10).

Disunity is best manifested in the collection of *ghazal*s (*Divān*) of the great fourteenth century poet Khwaje Shams al-Din Moḥammad Ḥāfeẓ Shirāzi (1315-1390). Disunity in

---

[33] This kind of ambiguity at the level of words in Persian literature is called *ihām*. *Encyclopedia Iranica* defines it as "a kind of play on words based on a single word with a double meaning (amphibology, double entendre.)" (Chalisova, "Ihām"). Polysemy is a possible equivalent for the word *ihām* in the English language.

*ghazal*s by Ḥāfeẓ, meaning the lack of coherence and valid and identifiable relations between couplets, has been the object of critical debates in the last two centuries among both Western and Persian scholars.[34]

However, Frances Pritchett in her article "Orient Pearls Unstrung: The Quest for Unity in the *Ghazal*" holds that disunity in the *ghazal* disappears when viewed through the prism of the poetic tradition of Persian culture, and what remains is unity. She mentions that in this poetic tradition it is each couplet (*beyt*) that is memorized, cited and appraised separately and not the whole poem. Therefore, unity in a single couplet should be considered as the basic element of unity for the whole poem.[35]

In the same vein, Agha Shahid Ali[36] acknowledges that the *ghazal* is made up of thematically and emotionally autonomous couplets. Therefore, each couplet can be quoted by itself without "violating the context" and without damaging the *ghazal*'s cultural and formal unity. However, he holds that the *ghazal*'s unity is cultural and formal. Its cultural unity is "based on association, memory, and expectation…", while its formal unity is given by rhyme and refrain (2000, 2-3).

In agreement with Riccardo Zipoli, Gianroberto Scarcia and Stefano Pellò believe that unity in the *ghazal* is generated from the association of images and thematic unity (2005, xxi). The association of images in the *ghazal* is possibly the most important element that brings unity to a single poem. In most cases, the lines are connected by "wordplay and related imagery" (Pritchett 1993, 133). Alessandro Bausani supports the argument by Scarcia and Pellò, according to whom each couplet in a *ghazal* is independent of the other, however, there

---

[34] "The theory of the *Ghazal*'s 'disunity' was vigorously challenged from the 1940s onwards, it still has its contemporary proponents among both critics and translators, especially for the Urdu *ghazal* (Lewis xx-xxi).

[35] Pritchett writes: "The individual verse is the basic unit not only for transmission, but also for commentary" (Pritchett 1993, 128).

[36] He introduced the correct form of the *ghazal* in the Introduction to the book *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English* (2000) for the American poets.

is a kind of unity between them which is formed by rhyme, rhythm, and conceptual links (1998, 311).[37]

The third factor that makes meaning in the *ghazal* equivocal is gender ambiguity. Gender ambiguity derives from three features. The first and most important is a grammatical feature, that is, the Persian language is grammatically without gender and the pronouns in Urdu are genderless. In the Persian language there is no distinction even between 'he' and 'she'. Therefore, given that the *ghazal* is either a dialogue between the lover and the beloved or the description of the beloved, lack of grammatical gender renders the gender and identity of the lover and the beloved secret or ambiguous. As a result, the beloved can be interpreted as earthly, male/female, or divine, God. De Bruijn writes in this respect that the fusion of the secular and the mystical has become so essential in *ghazal*s that normally it is a difficult task to make a difference between them (de Bruijn 1997, 55). [38]

Another stylistic factor that renders the nature of the beloved secret or ambiguous is the fragmented description of the beloved's body. In the *ghazal*, either the detailed parts of the body are described but not the whole body or the descriptions are symbolic. This feature serves the poet to avoid absolute materiality and thus leave the way open to both erotic and mystical interpretation (Scarcia Amoretti 2009 a, "Appunti"). Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti maintains that as the body of a person with its specific characteristics is not the total presentation of the individual since it does not manifest the soul of the individual or its

---

[37] Elizabeth Gray writes in this regard: "…each image held, embedded within it, a host of associations and recollections." (8).

[38] Michel Foucault in his book *The History of Sexuality* (1978) writes that in these traditions the secrecy of sex was not because of infamy, but for "the need to hold it in its greatest reserve,… it would lose its effectiveness and its virtue by being divulged." (57). Mahdi Tourage comments on this statement that "secrecy enhances the mystical enterprise and elevates it to the level of esotericism" (2005, 600).

duality and multiplicity, it was therefore wiser to use a prototype figure to function symbolically.[39]

In addition, the theme of the *ghazal* is normally a lover who addresses the beloved one, therefore normally the pronouns 'I' and 'you' are used which in any case leave the gender of the lover and the beloved ambiguous.

Elizabeth Gray, a translator of Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazal*s, writes about ambiguity and disunity:

> These *ghazal*s are often puzzling to the "Westerner" who approaches them for the first time. The same images reappear in poem after poem after poem. The poems do not seem to go anywhere: there is no opening, no action, no ultimate resolution or answer. Sometimes the lines seem unrelated to one another. And everything seems ambiguous: is the poet talking to the one he loves? Or is he approaching a patron? Or is this a nugget of wisdom aimed at the disciple who seeks union with God? If the poet is talking to or about his beloved, is the beloved a man or a woman? Is it actually the poet talking? (7).

Ambiguity in Persian miniature painting

Gender ambiguity in the *ghazal* was an area in Islam where, in the words of Annemarie Schimmel, women could "enjoy full equal rights" with men (2003, 15). As Professor Scarcia Amoretti states "it is generally assumed that perfect beauty must be somehow androgynous." (Scarcia Amoretti 2009 b, 287).[40]

---

[39] The figure of a youngster (mostly a young boy) desired by both men and women is the ideal figure in the *ghazal*. Therefore, a concealed homosexuality, particularly masculine homosexuality, is attributed to the tradition of Islamic poetry (Barua 105).

[40] Leonard Lewisohn holds that the female beloved in mystical imagery of classical Persian poetry was considered divine (Lewisohn 222). This feature then could not only suggest equal rights for women but more importantly their empowerment.

Gender ambiguity or androgyny is best illustrated in Persian miniature painting (*negārgari*), a type of painting that has co-existed along with Persian poetry. It flourished in the thirteenth century and reached its zenith in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the Persian language and Sufi thought predominated in central Asia.[41]

Negārgari is by definition the book illustration of a literary masterpiece, particularly a book of poetry. In this kind of painting the artist tries to depict a mystic or utopian place. S/he looks beyond the terrestrial landscape and avoids determining a specific time and place by choosing unnatural colors for the elements of nature like the sky, the water, and the earth. Moreover, in order to make the image more foreign to the terrestrial world, the painter does not apply perspective or shadow (Farshchiān 9; Amir Ḥosseini 42). A single image represents many subjects and each part of the page narrates a piece of the story. Each part should be looked at separately to have an idea of the whole image (Poliakova 107).

---

[41] For more information about the history of *negārgari* see: Oleg Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures: An Introduction to Persian Painting.* Princeton University Press, 2000.

The Nightmare of Zahhak by Mir Musavvir, 1525-35 (Grabar 69).

In certain schools or illustrations even the faces of the men and women look the same. In these cases the gender of the figure normally cannot be discerned but when necessary the difference is shown by the appearance of a beard or a moustache (Amir Ḥosseini 60). The ideal figure in these paintings and also in Persian *ghazal*s is the figure of a youngster (mostly a young boy) who is desired by both men and women and therefore represents an androgynous being (Scarcia Amoretti 2009 a, "Appunti").

A Couple Embracing, 1600. Free Gallery of Art, Washington (Garabar 78).

In *negārgari* the artist avoids imitating God or in other words the painting does not set out to reflect reality. The artist tries to produce a generic representation or a prototype image of man, animal, and other creations. There is always the same form, figure, and face repeated to depict man, animals and elements of nature. Every image is a model, a prototype which attains symbolic significance. Images move away from reality and approach the world of dream and the unconscious (Scarcia Amoretti 2007, "Think, Say").

The ambiguity that permeates the tradition of miniature painting is the result of imitating or illustrating the theme and imagery of Persian poetry, mostly the ambiguous

*ghazal*s by two masters of Persian poetry, namely Ḥāfeẓ and Rumi. In point of fact, *negārgari* was an echo or translation of Persian poetry.[42]

Ambiguity in the *ghazal*s by the Persian poets, Rumi and Ḥāfeẓ

In order to show the ambiguity that lies in the *ghazal* and to introduce the symbolic images and themes of the Persian *ghazal*, some examples from the *ghazal*s of the masters of Persian *ghazal* Mowlānā Rumi and Ḥāfeẓ Shirāzi are provided.

Mowlānā Jalāleddin Moḥammad Balkhi (1207-1273) known as Rumi is regarded as the most universally significant poet of Iran and the one who had a great impact on later poets and writers. His two major works are *Mathnawi* and *Divān*. The *Mathnawi* of Rumi along with his *ghazal*s (*Divān*) were a great contribution to the mystical thought in Islamic heritage. In the opinion of many scholars the *Mathnawi* by Rumi is not only the greatest work of mystical thought but of Islamic literature as a whole (Bukhari Lubis 121-122).[43]

Rumi's erotic-mystical poetry is pre-eminent and unique in its own terms. In his *ghazal*s the images of love and eroticism and those of nature combine with Sufi terms and traditions to form a mediating screen between earthly and divine love. The prevailing theme in his verses is the expression of desire and madness for the union with the ideal and divine beloved. For example, in *ghazal* 2131 he refers to the famous image of love between the moth and the candle in Persian poetry, where the moth, symbol of the lover, must burn itself in the fire of the candle, symbol of the beloved, to be united with the beloved:

و اندر دل آتش درآ پروانه شو پروانه شو   حیلت رها کن عاشقا دیوانه شو دیوانه شو

---

[42] Leonard Lewisohn writes that, ''An intensely Ḥāfizian ambience permeated the entire tradition of miniature painting in the greater Persia during the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries...'' (Lewisohn 213). In addition, numerous paintings illustrate the life and works of Rumi.

[43] Rumi's works left a great impact on the Persian speaking people in Khorāsān, Transoxiana, and Islamic India (Bukhari Lubis 122).

Let go all your scheming, lover

Let yourself go mad

　　　go mad

just step into the heart of fire

make yourself a moth

　　　a moth. (Trans. Lewis 2008, 121)

In the following verses, Rumi again expresses an ardent love for the beloved by using symbolic images:

مفتاح شو مفتاح را دندانه شو دندانه شو　　　قفلی بود میل و هوا بنهاده بر دل های ما

Desire clings, and lust locks upon the heart

become a key and turn like tumbler

Like a tumbler

ور زلف بگشاید صنم رو شانه شو رو شانه شو　　　گر چهره بنماید صنم پر شو از او چون آینه

If that gorgeous idol shows her face

fill up with her like a mirror

if she lets her silky hair down

　become her comb

and brush her. (Trans. Lewis 2008, 121-122).

In the Islamic tradition of poetry, each poet used the images that existed in the poems of his master or precedents to continue the tradition, but added some images to mark his own style. Through Rumi's poetry, the musical instruments and the images of the sun—*Shams* in Persian and Arabic—and the sea, entered the language of Sufi poetry (Fotuhi 233). *Shams* is the figure of the beloved in Rumi's *ghazal*s. To give just one example, a line from *ghazal* 1579 reads:

<div dir="rtl" align="center">شمس تبریز ز آفتابت   همچون قمریم ما چه دانی</div>

Shams-e Tabrizi, through your sun

we shine just like the moon. (Trans. Lewis 2008, 1).

Eastern and Western scholars have dedicated several books to the symbolic meaning of these images, as well as to their complexity and ambiguity in Rumi's poetry, particularly in recent years. In 1380/2000 Taqi Purnāmdāriān discussed the matter of ambiguity in Rumi's poetry from a deconstructive approach in his book *Dar Sāye-e Āftāb: She'r-e Fārsi va Sākht-Shekani dar She'r-e Mowlavi (Persian Poetry and Deconstruction in Mowlānā's Poetry, my trans.).* In 1387/2008 ʿAli Moḥammad Moḥammadi Āsiābādi in his book *Hermeneutics va Namādpardāzi dar Ghazaliyāt-e Shams (Hermeneutics and Symbolization in Ghazaliyāt-e Shams,* my trans.) analyzed the mystic images in Rumi's *Dīvān* and gave references to Sufi thoughts and doctrines. A year later, Ali Tājdini published *Farhang-e Namādhā va Neshānehā dar Andishe-ye Mowlānā* (*A Dictionary of Symbols and Signs in Mawlānā's Thought*). He mainly considered the references and allusions to the Qur'ān and *Ḥadith* in the images in Mowlānā'*s Mathnawi*. In 1390/2011, Raḥmān Moshtāq Mehr dedicated another

book to the analysis of symbols in Rumi's *ghazal*s entitled *A Dictionary of Symbols in the Ghazals of Mawlana*.

A major part of Annemarie Schimmel's research is centered on the issue of mystical language and poetry, particularly that of Rumi. She devoted a number of her books to this aspect, including *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rūmī* (1980), *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (1982) and *A Two Coloured Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (1992). Other scholars such as Franklin Lewis and Leonard Lewisohn also dedicated several works to Rumi.

An interesting case is offered by the book *Rūmī and the Hermeneutics of Eroticism* published in 2007. In this work Mahdi Tourage the Iranian-Canadian scholar of Persian literature studies sexual images in Rumi's *Mathnawi* and claims that he employed sexual and erotic images to convey mystical knowledge.

After Rumi, Khwaje Shams al-Din Moḥammad Ḥāfeẓ Shirāzi (1315-1390) known with the pen name Ḥāfeẓ, is recognized as the poet of the most ambiguous verses in the Persian literary tradition. The ambiguity in Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazal*s (*Divān*) opens them up to very diverse interpretations. According to Elizabeth Gray, it offers a diverse response for every single listener or reader. Every listener, she claims:

> seems to find in it an answer to his question, every reader thinks he is discovering an allusion to his desire, every man finds in him a sympathetic interlocutor capable of understanding his secret, and of harmonizing it with the modulations of his song (16).

Ḥāfeẓ had a vast knowledge of the Qur'ān and of Persian poetry. He employed a wide range of imagery in his *ghazal*s giving references and allusions to stories and sayings from

the Islamic tradition, pre-Islamic Persian epics and Sufi literature (Gray 8). Moreover, he

used the images and elements of nature to refer to moral and spiritual ideas and Divine love.

For example:

<div dir="rtl">

گل آدم بسرشتند و به میخانه زدند   دوش دیدم که ملایک در میخانه زدند

قرعه کار به نام من دیوانه زدند   آسمان بار امانت نتوانست کشید

آتش آن است که در خرمن پروانه زدند   آتش آن نیست که بر شعله او خندد شمع

</div>

      Elizabeth Gray translates these lines in English as:

Last night I saw angels knock on the tavern door.

They kneaded the clay of Adam and molded it into a cup.

The sky couldn't bear the burden of His trust,

So they cast lots and drew the name of crazy me.

Fire is not that at which the candle laughed.

Fire is that with which they struck the tinder of the moth. (Trans. Gray 99).[44]

---

[44] I give their translation in Italian by Gianroberto Scarcia and Stefano Pellò since their translation has been estimated as one of the most valid and closest to the original.

Vidi gli angeli, ieri. Bussavano a vespro in taverna:
  rimestavano il fango d'Adamo plasmando a coppa.
Peso grave del pegno d'amore non seppe, no, il cielo portare:
  giocaron cosi questo giro di dadi nel nome di me che son folle.
Non è, non è fuoco, la fiamma di cui la candela sorride,
  fuoco è quello che dentro il raccolto della falena divampa. (Trans. Scarcia, Pellò 2008, 67).

In fact, Ḥāfeẓ uses visual images to speak of Divine beauty (Gray 23). This is why Daryush Shayegan entitles his essay "The Visionary Topography of Ḥāfeẓ" when he speaks of the images used in his poetry:

<div align="right">

ای بی خبر ز لذت شرب مدام ما   ما در پیاله عکس رخ یار دیده ایم

کاید به جلوه سرو صنوبر خرام ما   چندان بود کرشمه و ناز سهی قدان

</div>

Gray translated it into English:

O you don't understand our joy in perpetual drinking,

in our cup we have seen the image of his face.

There are the winks and flirtations of the slim ones only until

our graceful cypress-pine sways into view. (Trans. Gray 45).[45]

He also employed a vast range of images of Sufi poetry like 'wine', 'cup', 'drunkard', 'veil' and 'mirror':

<div align="right">

تا بنگری صفای می لعل فام را   صوفی بیا که آینه صافیست جام را

کاین حال نیست صوفی عالم مقام را   راز درون پرده ز رندان مست پرس

</div>

Elizabeth Gray translates these lines as:

---

[45] Ecco, ho scorto entro coppa, il riflesso di volto d'amato:
  del mio libare inesausto sia data notizia all'ignaro!
Oh, modi e sguardi di snelle figure, qual grazia,
  finché la maestà che è nel pino quel nostro cipresso non sveli! (Trans. Scarcia, Pellò 2008, 13).

Sufi, the mirror of the cup is clear. Come,

and see the purity of this ruby wine.

Ask the drunken rends for the veil's secret,

for this state is not for the "highly ranked" ascetic. (Trans. Gray 43).[46]

In Ḥāfeẓ's poems the themes of earthly and divine love are in perfect union. The theme of the desire and attempts of the lover for union with the beloved marks many of his poems. The first *ghazal* of Ḥāfeẓ's *Divān* opens with the following lines:

که عشق آسان نمود اول ولی افتاد مشکلها   الا یا ایها الساقی ادر کاسا و ناولها

ز تاب زلف مشکینش چه خون افتاد در دلها   به بوی نافه ای کاخر صبا زان طره بگشاید

که سالک بیخبر نبود ز راه و رسم منزل ها   به می سجاده رنگین کن گرت پیر مغان گوید

Elizabeth Gray translates these line in English as:

O Saki, bring around the cup of wine and then offer it to me,

for love seemed easy at first, but then grew difficult.

Flooded with their heart's blood are those who wait for the scent

That the dawn wind may spill from her dark, musky curls.

Stain your prayer mat with wine if the Magus tells you to,

---

[46] Vieni, o sufi, ché limpido specchio a te scopre la coppa dinanzi.
  Se vieni, e guardi, a te un rosso candore di vino si fa manifesto.
A ebbra vita ribelle tu chiedi il segreto velato,
  ché ad alterigia di sufi rimane quest'estasi ignota. (Trans. Scarcia, Pellò 2008, 9).

for such a traveler knows the road, and the customs of its stations.

(Trans. Gray 37).[47]

Ḥāfeẓ like Rumi and other Persian poets not only uses the images employed by his precedents to continue the tradition, but brings new images into his poetry. Persian poets' skills were highly praised when they could use the same images of the tradition in a new sense or context. Gray writes in this regard:

> Delighting an audience demanded verse act like a prism, bringing different light from new angles to a rich and familiar image. Ḥāfeẓ uses imagery from many sources: stories and sayings from the Islamic tradition, from pre-Islamic Persian epics, Sufi literature, astronomy, astrology, alchemy, and the flora and fauna of Shiraz's gardens. (8).

In his poems, Ḥāfeẓ fuses the corporeal and material with the metaphysical. Scarcia and Pellò's comment on the remark made by Hans Heinrich Schaeder who maintains that the poetry of Ḥāfeẓ is a combination of 'sensible-real' and 'supersensible-spiritual'. They explain that it does not make sense to ask ourselves if the wine or the beloved in Ḥāfeẓ's poetry are real or symbolic. The wine, at the same time, stands for real drunkenness and esoteric knowledge, the beloved, at the same time, stands for a young boy and God (2005, xxix).

Ambiguity in Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazal*s not only stems from the disunity of couplets, as already discussed, the double-sense or ambience of the images, but also from the obscurity of the

---

[47] Il calice porgi, coppiere, e in circolo fallo girare,
   poiché cosa ben ardua è l'amore, che facile gioco una volta ci parve.
Da quella treccia attendiamo nell'ansia che s'apra ad aroma di muschio:
   oh, per quei riccioli foschi ritorti, qual sangue sgorgò dentro i cuori!
Se lo dice il Maestro dei magi, colora di vino il tappeto ove preghi,
   che ben conosce il viandante la strada, per ogni sua pietra miliare.
(Trans. Scarcia, Pellò 2008, 3).

identity and gender of the beloved. Gender ambiguity has generated a long-standing debate among scholars and translators of Ḥāfeẓ. Some translators ignore this ambiguity and attribute determined genders to the lover and the beloved. A good example is the translation of Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazal*s by Giovanni M. D'Erme. In his translation of Ḥāfeẓ's *Diwan*, *Canzoniere,* he attributes a masculine identity to the lover and a feminine one to the beloved. Scarcia Amoretti writes that when it comes to the translation of Persian texts, these attitudes are limiting, if not misleading. These kinds of translations take as their model the cliché of 'courtly love' with the result that not only do they not account for but they avoid allowing the indisputable ambiguity in the text from emerging (Scarcia Amoretti 2009 a, "Appunti").

Interestingly enough, in the book *Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History: From Antiquity to World War,* there is an entry for Ḥāfeẓ. It mentions that his poetry addresses the youth whose "gender is obscured because of the lack of obligatory indication of gender in Persian, though the occasional introduction of Arabic in the poems leaves no doubt that the beloved is male" (Murray 196).[48]

It is mainly supposed that the ideal beloved is embodied by the figure of a male youth. The youth was either a young Turk in the court desired by both male and female members of the royal family, or the figure of *sāqi*, a young boy who filled the cups of the Sufis with wine in their assemblies.

Gray defines *sāqi* as:

> The cupbearer, usually a young man, beautiful and adored, who brings the
> wine of love to those in the tavern; also the elusive friend or beloved, a
> Magian boy, a beautiful and distracting idol (Gray 144).

---

[48] Lewisohn comments: "The ambiguity of such erotic imagery could be fully exploited by the use of *double entendre* or amphibology (*īhām*) by Religion-of-Love poets – a poetic device of special significance in Hāfiz's poetics." (Lewisohn 48).

Consequently, when inevitable, like when the target language is gendered, it seems more correct to use a masculine pronoun for the description of the beloved, as is done in the translation by Scarcia and Pellò in Italian:

ز عشق نا تمام ما جمال یار مستغنی است   به آب و رنگ و خال و خط چه حاجت روی زیبا را

Ma a bellezza d'amico che giova, se l'amo d'amore imperfetto?

Non sono tocchi, non sono, che valgano a fare un bel volto più bello.

(Trans. Scarcia, Pellò 2008, 7).[49]

Or as in the translation by Elizabeth Gray where she uses a masculine pronoun for the beloved:

راحت جان طلبم وز پی جانان بروم   خرم آن روز کزین منزل ویران بروم

من به بوی سر آن زلف پریشان بروم   گرچه دانم که به جایی نبرد راه غریب

با دل زخم کش و دیده گریان بروم   در ره او چو قلم گر به سرم باید رفت

Happy that day that I leave this ruined house.

I seek rest for my soul. I will go after the beloved.

Although I know that the stranger's road leads nowhere,

I will follow the scent of his touseled curls.

---

[49] In this case, the Italian translation of Scarcia and Pellò is the most valid one, since they purposefully choose a masculine pronoun for the beloved, when the use of third person pronoun is unavoidable, throughout their translation. Their deliberate choice is stressed in the "Introduction," where they argue that the beloved in Ḥāfeẓ's poetry is a young man whose beauty reflects the divine and is unreachable (Scarcia, Pellò 2005, xxviii).

Even if I must travel his road on my head, like a pen,

I will go with a weeping eye and a wounded hearth. (Trans. Gray 133).

However, socio-cultural implications can also be attributed to Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazals,* even when they are interpreted as erotic-mystic poetry. He lived in the period between the fall of Ilkhānid Mongols's rule and the accession of the Timurid dynasty (1389-1501), a period that experienced economic instability, local wars and political unrest. Since he was a poet in direct contact with the courts, a number of his *ghazal*s implicitly or explicitly mention or criticize the figures in power (Scarcia, Pellò 2008, xvi-xvii).

Ḥāfeẓ was not the first Persian poet who combined the erotic-mystic language of the *ghazal* with socio-political themes. The basis of this tradition was laid down by Ḥakim Abol-Majd Majdud ibn Ādam Sanā'i Ghaznavi known as Sanā'i (1080-1131/1141). He is known as the most social poet of Persian literature. He used very bold language and criticized the affluent, the governors, the dogmatic religious authorities, and was a voice for the oppressed, the poverty-stricken, the libertines, or the black folks. Sanā'i harshly criticized the social status of his society, and instead, highly praised the life of the mystics who represented an ideal society. In fact, as a social poet he was the first to use mystical concepts in his *ghazal*s.[50]

Since he was a pioneer in this tradition, the feature of ambiguity in his *ghazal*s is not as relevant as in those written by Rumi and Ḥāfeẓ, but he assigned to poetry the ambience that afterwards became an inseparable part of it. After Sanā'i the Persian *ghazal* was developed and became even more complicated in the Indian Style of poetry.

---

[50] Before Sanā'i, the Sufi images were only applied in prose texts, but he applied them in poetry for the first time. He adapted many Iranian mythological elements from Persian legends for his Sufi purposes. For example, he made use of mythical and historical figures such as Jamshid, Keykāvus, Fereydun that were previously used in Persian literature in a Sufi context (Fotuḥi 228).

Ambiguity in the Indian Style of poetry

The Indian style of poetry, or *Sabk-e Hendi,* is a stylistic rather than a regional term. It is attributed to a Persian style of poetry and prose that originated during the 14th or 15th century in Persia. It was exported to India during the period of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526), most notably by Amir Khosraw Dehlavi (d. 1325).[51] A great number of Persian poets immigrated to India partly because of the harsh situation for poets and writers in their native land and partly because of the support of the Indian court. Their writings left such a great impact on the Indian poets that they started composing poetry in Persian and their fame is no less than that of their Persian counterparts. Among the Indian poets who dedicated themselves to the canon of Persian poetry such poets as Amir Khosraw, Fayzi, Bidel, Ghalib, and Iqbal can be named (Javādi 41-5).

Sabk-e Hendi carried with it to the sub-continent the Persian literary tradition. It continued to inspire poets even when Persian was replaced by Urdu as the official language of India. *Sabk-e Hendi* transmitted the elaborate rhetoric of the courtly Persian *ghazal* and its philosophical aspect, that is, Sufi doctrines, into the Urdu poetic tradition (Pellò 2006, 15; Shackle 3).[52] Therefore, the language of the classical Urdu *ghazal* is highly Persianized in register (Shackle 5), and mainly reflects the stylistic features in the post Rumi period (Lewis xxv). The style of this poetry is described by Alessandro Bausani as follows:

---

[51] "The virile stones and clipped rhythms of early Persian poetry (the Khorasani style), which had given way to passionate tenderness and fluent language of the lyric writers (the Eraqi style), now fell into languid rhythms, abstruse imagery, and often less-than-felicitous construction (the Indian style)." (Yarshater 28).

[52] The first Sufi poet to write or recite Sufi poetry in India was Khwaja Moʿin al-Din Sanjari (d. 633/1236) who was also the founder of Cheshti Sufi. He wrote *ghazal*s and *qasīde*s. Following him, some other Sufis composed Sufi poetry, among them: Amir Khosraw (651/1253-725/1325). In his poems many Sufi elements and images can be found. There was another branch of the Chishtī Sufi Order, named Sāberi-ye Cheshti-ye. More importantly, another Sufi order in India was Sohrewardīye whose followers were accomplished poets (Bukhari Lubis 145-8).

deviations from the rule of harmonious use of imagery, leading to a 'baroque' extension of the stock images and metaphors allowed in poetry, the predominance of mystical-philosophical themes, and an extreme tendency towards allegory (Bausani qtd. in Seyed-Ghorab 8).

Bausani states that the Indian style of *ghazal* is structurally freer than its precedent Persian styles, which means that the rhyming rules are not strictly observed and a vaster and more variable imagery is applied (Bausani 2000, 179).

In fact, the poets of the Indian style were particularly famous for innovation in imagery (Shafiʿi Kadkani 102) and extreme incoherency. Schimmel writes:

The former harmony between the different parts of an image or a trope was often broken up, and the disrupted parts of a simile put together in a new and unexpected way. The poets developed a predilection for the use of the infinitive (even in the plural!) and of abstract nouns. The language was enriched with words from colloquial Persian or loanwords from Hindi. In addition to breaking and rearranging the inherited images, the poets expanded their imagery with a number of new similes taken from daily life at the Mughal court and from contemporary events. (Schimmel 1973, 30).

The Indian poets composed *ghazals* in both Persian and Urdu. Their main difference lies in the issue of gender. Unlike the Persian language, in Urdu, nouns and verb suffixes are gender-marked. However, like Persian, there is no distinction between masculine and feminine pronouns (Schmidt 15; Bhatia 31).

The poets of the Urdu *ghazal* applied a grammatically masculine language to their poetry. Eventually, although pronouns are genderless, a masculine persona is mainly attributed to the beloved. Sarfaraz Niazi, a translator of Ghalib's Urdu *ghazal*s, discusses the matter as follows:

> Whereas there is no gender difference in the Persian language, such is not the case in Urdu, and the convention that developed in the Persian poetry invariably refers to the beloved as a male as a default. In some instances the beloved is a male, and this harkens back to the gender preferences of the ancient Persian royalty that brought young Turkish boys into slavery. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was fashionable to have these young companions as confidants and cupbearers to the point where royalty began to profess their love for them rather openly (Niazi, *Wine of Passion*).

Apart from the convention of Persian royalty, the use of grammatically masculine language majorly indicated neutrality. Following the tradition of Persian poetry and being strongly influenced by Sufism, Urdu poets applied this kind of language to leave open the interpretation of the beloved as male/female or divine. Carla Petievich writes in this regard:

> The classical Urdu *ghazal* is a literature narrated in the masculine voice… Idealized love is its main subject, and the idealized beloved is referred to as grammatically masculine even though s/he may be female. (125). [53]

---

[53] "…hegemonic reading and reception conventions associated with the *ghazal* actually work to render its gender politics invisible to huge audiences. Feminist scholarship has, over the past few decades, exposed this cultural and social invisibility, and the result has been a sea change in standard critical thinking in many fields…" (Petievich 124).

This kind of ambiguity led to the formation of another kind of tradition in the *ghazal* called *rekhti*. In this type of *ghazal* it was normal for men to adopt a feminine voice to address the beloved in their poetry (Pritchett 2003, 31):

Rekhti is the name by which all premodern Urdu poetry narrated in the feminine voice has come to be called. Rekhti is associated with the domestic sphere of socially elite, secluded women during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and alleges to speak in the particular idiom of their milieu. (Petievich 126).[54]

Gendered ambiguity made the *ghazal* accessible to women as well as men. This ambiguity was to the extent that *ghazal*s composed by women were indistinguishable from those composed by male poets:

Women can, in short, enter the *ghazal* world just as intimately and accessibly and identifying as men, without being put off by sexism. For it contains no real men and women, but only the lovers and the beloveds and rivals and advisors and other stylized characters who are needed for the great 'passion play" of the *ghazal* world. (Pritchett 2003, 34).

This ambiguity has encouraged women from the modern generation of Urdu poets to write *ghazal*s adopting a female persona, some examples of which can be found in the

---

[54] However, *rekhti* in our time has been thoroughly marginalized. The main reason being that it was mainly a male narrator who sometimes in female guise addressed other men. There was rarely a woman who composed poetry and it remained a male arena (Petievich 139).

bilingual anthology of *We Sinful Women: Contemporary Urdu Feminist Poetry* (1990) (Abbas 143).

In other words, it seems that the language of the *ghazal* goes against patriarchy, as there is no distinguished definition of a male and no predetermined image and description of a female.

However, the *ghazal* has largely remained a male exclusive realm. The most well-known Persian *ghazal* writers are: Sanai, Saʿdi, Aṭṭār, Rumi, and Ḥāfeẓ. Among the poets of the Indian style, the most renowned are: Ṣāʿeb Tabrizi, Kalim Kāshāni, Bidel Dehlavi, and most importantly Mirza Ghalib.

Mirza Ghalib's poetic style

Mirza Asadullah Beg Khan known as Ghalib (1797-1869) is considered as the "greatest Islamic poet of the nineteenth century" by Alessandro Bausani (Bredi 298) and the most important Indian poet of the *ghazal*. He was born in 1797 in Agra and died in 1869 in Delhi. He lived at the time of the British dominance of India, when the Indian continent was facing socio-cultural break-up.

At a very young age, he started composing poetry. He knew both Persian and Urdu and wrote collections of poetry (*Divān*s) in both languages. He himself preferred his Persian compositions over the Urdu ones (Ahmad 1994, xxi).[55]

In his early *ghazal*s he was under the influence of the great poet of India Mirza ʿAbd al-Qadir Bidel (1054/1644). Bidel's school had great significance in Delhi and shaped the Indo-Persian literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. All the poets and authors after him who wrote in Persian inevitably followed his school (Pellò 2006, 4).

---

[55] "Ghālib (d. 1869) who is now regarded as the greatest of all classical Urdu poets, although he professed to set greater store by his more abundant compositions in Persian" (Shackle 3).

Bausani holds that Ghalib inherited the use of complicated images from Bidel. He started his career as an imitator of Bidel. In fact, the influence of his philosophy, and the use of complicated images never left Ghalib's poetry, neither in his Persian nor his Urdu verses (Bausani 1968, 73).

As a follower of Bidel and other Persian mystic poets, Ghalib applied Sufi imagery and themes in his poetry (Jān Nethāri 25-7).[56] He was a Shia Muslim and the influence of Sufis such as Ebrāhim Adham, Ḏonnun Meṣri, Joneyd Baghdādi, and Ḥallāj is evident in his *ghazal*s (Jān Nethāri 25). He wrote many poems in praise of the Prophet of Islam and the Imāms.

The concepts of the mystic verses of Bidel, Ḥāfeẓ and Rumi prevail in his poems and shape the basis of his philosophy. In addition, his *ghazal*s are highly Persianized in register (Ali 6-8). Aijaz Ahmad suggests consulting Persian dictionaries to understand the diction in Ghalib's Urdu *ghazal*s, as he used words with Persian origins and with their original Persian meaning (Ahmad 1994, v). Moreover, his diction was complicated, and he used Sufi symbols in his poetry. For example, the image of the 'mirror', with its Sufi implications, is recurrent in Ghalib's *ghazal*s: [57]

صفاۓ حیرت آئینہ ہے سامان زنگ آخر   تغیر آب برجا ماندہ کا پاتا ہے رنگ آخر

the clearness/polish of the amazement of the mirror is the stuff/property of verdigris, finally

the change/alteration of left-in-place water/luster acquires color, finally

---

[56] Many images from Rumi's poetry can be seen in the poetry of Ghalib who followed the tradition of Dard, Bidel, and ʿOrfi (see Schimmel 1993, 306).

[57] "Another favorite, more static image is that of the mirror, central to the Sufi poetical tradition… But his most charming verses cannot be classified according to traditional imagery." (Schimmel 1975, 216).

(Trans. Pritchett, *A Desertful of Roses* No.63,1).[58]

<div dir="rtl">

کہ دیجے آئنہ انتظار کو پرداز   وصال جلوہ تماشا ہے پر دماغ کہاں

</div>

union is a glory/appearance- spectacle, but where is the mind/spirit/mood

such that a finish/perfection would be given to the mirror of waiting?

(Trans. Pritchett, *A Desertful of Roses* No.68, 3).

He expressed with expertise the concepts of mysticism and Sufism, and once he confessed: "Oh Ghalib, you express the issues of Sufism with particular master-hood. If you were not a drunkard I took you for a saint" (Ha'eri 19-20).[59] Bausani mentions that Ghalib applied Sufi images to his lyrics but it was "due rather to his following the traditional style than to genuine Sufi feeling. (1991, 1000):

<div dir="rtl">

اگر شراب نہیں انتظار ساغر کھینچ   نفس نہ انجمن آرزو سے باہر کھینچ

</div>

don't, outside the gathering of longing/expectation, draw a breath

if not wine, then 'draw' a wait for the wine-flagon

(Trans. Pritchett, *A Desertful of Roses* No.56,1).

---

[58] The translations given here of Ghālib's Urdu *ghazal*s are by Frances Pritchett. She is an expert on Ghālib and the Urdu *ghazal* at Columbia University. I have preferred her translations to other previous works because in her online work in progress "*A Desertful of Roses*", she has considered almost all previous translations and commentaries before giving her own translations. So far, it seems to be one of the most organized and viable sources.

[59] تجھے ہم ولی سمجھتے، جو نہ بادہ خوار ہوتا   یہ مسائل تصوف، یہ ترا بیان، غالب!
(Ahmad 1994, 33)

Iqbal compares Ghalib to such Sufis as Ḥallaj, who in fact "live with fire under their feet."

<div dir="rtl">

جو تھا سو موج رنگ کے دھوکے میں مر گیا   اے وائے نالہ لب خونیں نوائے گل

</div>

whoever/whatever was, that one died in the deceit/delusion of a wave of

color/pleasure

Oh alas, the lament of the bloody-voiced lip of the rose!

(Trans. Pritchett, *A Desertful of Roses* No.80,3).

<div dir="rtl">

نہ لیوے گر خس جوہر طراوت سبزہ خط سے   لگاوے خانہ آئینہ میں روئے نگار آتش

</div>

If the straw of the polish-lines wouldn't take moisture from the lines of

down/greenery

The face of the beautiful one would light a fire in the mirror-chamber

(Trans. Pritchett, *A Desertful of Roses* No. 73,1).

Some other features of his style can be mentioned such as the use of innovative and complex combinations of words, images, metaphors, and allusions to the Qur'ān and *Ḥadith*[60] and to other works of literature and stories (Ali 14-17). He not only employed the traditional imagery of Persian poetry in his *ghazals* but brought to them many innovative images.[61]

Ghalib himself emphasizes the use and importance of imagery in his poetry:

<div dir="rtl">

نقش فریادی ہے کس کی شوخی تحریر کا   کاغذی ہے پیربن بر پیکر تصویر کا

</div>

---

[60] Roberto Tottoli in the preface to *Oriente Moderno* defines Ḥadith as "the sayings of Prophet Muhammad." (i).

[61] Bausani writes that Ghalib introduced new tendencies and complexities into the world of metaphors, allegory and symbols of the Persian classical *ghazal* (1968, 74).

The drawing/picture is a plaintiff- about whose mischievousness of writing?

Of paper is the robe of every figure of the picture

(Trans. Pritchett, *A Desertful of Roses* No.1, 1).

In addition, as in the tradition of Persian poetry, Ghalib used colors and elements of nature in his poetry. The dominant color in his *ghazal*s is red. Schimmel writes in this respect:

Ghālib's imagery is that of traditional Persian-Urdu poetry; but the dominant colour is red. There are few poets who have used the imagery of fire in its various connotations as intensely as he did, combining the dance of the red sparks with the red roses which remind him, in turn, of red blood, and of red wine: all of them are in constant wave-like movement (Schimmel 1975, 220).

The diction and images of Sufi poetry with their roots in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* are very common in his *ghazal*s.

These complexities of Ghalib's style increase the ambiguity of his poetry, leaving it open to diverse interpretations. As has been previously discussed, ambiguity in Ghalib's *ghazal*s also turns on the axis of erotic-mystical duality. Ambiguity in his *ghazal*s is the result of the use of disunited couplets whose unity stems from rhyme, refrain and the association of images. Ghalib, following the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry, applies Sufi concepts to the love lyric of the *ghazal* therefore creating an erotic-mystical poetry. What adds to this ambiguity is the use of symbolic images and complicated combinations of words, as well as

gender ambiguity which is the result of the use of genderless pronouns, and the fragmented description of the beloved's body.

Finally, it can be argued that his erotic-mystical *ghazal*s have a mournful tone and express sorrow and lamentation. However, sorrow as a dominant theme in Ghalib's poetry is not individualistic but has a silent message of regeneration in it (1968, 74):

چراغ مرده ہوں، میں بیزباں، گور غریباں کا   خموشی میں نہاں، خوں گشتہ لا کھوں آرزوئیں، ہیں

Thousands of unfulfilled desires are hidden in (my) silence;

I am (like) an extinguished lamp on the speechless grave of a destitute.

(Trans. Ahmad 1994, 27).

Ghalib's socio-political concern may have remained passive, but he ignited the sparks of an active socio-political poetry for his descendants. After Ghalib many poets used the *ghazal* for the expression of political ideas. By the nineteenth century and the destruction of the aristocratic order in India, the Indian style of poetry was associated with the middle class. The *ghazal* then lost its sophisticated rhetoric and got closer to the language of people dealing more with everyday social realities. Both in India and Pakistan *ghazal*s were being published in Urdu dailies as "a useful tool for political commentary" (Kirk 31). It is also supposed that the ambiguity of the *ghazal* functioned as a kind of protection for the poets in politically dangerous times (Kirk 32). For example, Hāli (d. 1914) and Moḥammad Iqbal (d. 1938) utilized it to convey their nationalist messages (Shackle 7).[62]

---

[62] "…after the rebellion of 1857, to the 19th and 20th century reformist poetry of Altaf Husain Hali, Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, and Sir Allama Iqbal _ has always been deeply informed by…the sociopolitical events surrounding its production" (Kirk 31).

Moḥammad Iqbal (1877-1938) has been nominated as one of India's post-independence poets thanks to his nationalist poems (Majeed 2009, xxiv). In his Persian and Urdu verses he turned the passive socio-cultural desires and criticisms of Ḥāfeẓ and Ghalib into active poetical language. Bausani maintains that Ghalib was the forerunner of Iqbal in "his appreciation of action, of movement" (Bredi 298). He was also active in the socio-cultural events of his society. For example, he gave presidential addresses in 1930 and 1932 at the All-India Muslim League. In addition, in a conference in 1930 he discussed India's constitutional future (Majeed 2009, xxi).

Javed Majeed describes the socio-political poetry of Iqbal as follows:

Iqbāl's poetry "explores the complex relationships between the politics of Muslim separatism in South Asia and European imperialist discourses. These are two defining tensions within this politics. The first is between territorial nationalism and the global imaginings of religious identity, and the second is between the homogenizing imperatives of nationalism and the subjectivity of individual selfhood. These tensions are reflected in the composite geography of Iqbāl's work, which contains three elements: a sacred space, a political territoriality and the interiority of subjectivity. But these elements are in conflict with each other; in particular, the space of interiority in his poetry conflicts with the realm of politics in the external world (Majeed 2007, 145).[63]

Overall, it can be argued that the Indian style *ghazal* adopted a social role or voice after the invasion of the British. Following the rebellion of 1857 people began reading

---

[63] Some of his poems suggest "…not just historical geographies, but also a geography of subjectivity _ that is, the arrangement of an interior space of selfhood in relation to different parts of the external world" (Majeed 2007, 154).

*ghazal*s as "versified reportage of social reality." In fact, the *ghazal* had turned into a mirror of society.[64]

However, as Sonali Barua and many other scholars maintain, it is wrong to consider Ghalib a political poet. Barua writes that before Ahmad's project in which he represents Ghalib erroneously as a political poet, it was Moḥammd Iqbal and later Faiz Ahmad Faiz who were known as political poets. (Barua 108).

Although with their writings the social role of the *ghazal* had been incremented, yet it had not lost its erotic-mystic ambiguity:

> This world of inhuman pressure on the human (suffering, death) and human pressure on the inhuman (vain demands, protests, the consolations of great poetry) is the world of the *ghazal*; it's a world deeper than that of social conventions, and it's a world we all know all too well (Pritchett 2003, 34).

Notably, it was the erotic-mystical *ghazal*s of Ghalib that introduced the North American poets to this poetic form and not the political verses of Iqbal and Hāli. Ghalib's *ghazal*s, as discussed above, follow the tradition of Persian poetry and consequently are principally erotic and mystical. They are full of symbolic images rooted in the tradition of Persian poetry; they are culture-bound, full of allusions, and derive from the Sufi traditions and doctrines.

Therefore, the question remains, why did Adrienne Rich use the *ghazal* to express her political messages? What was the role of Aijaz Ahamd as a mediator with his literal

---

[64] "Rebellion … made the Indo-Muslim elite realize that they had suffered a crushing defeat, and that they needed to modernize and generally rethink their culture, including the poetry that was at its heart" (Pritchett 2003).

translation into English? Maybe as Venuti argues, the historical time of the translation of a text is determinant on its mode of "production, circulation and reception".[65]

---

[65] "Every stage in the production, circulation and reception of a translation is profoundly marked by its historical moment, tracing a history that is distinct from the history of the foreign text" (Venuti 2005, 800).

Chapter 3

Cultural Mediation and Cultural Translation: The Role of Aijaz Ahmad

North American poets' encounters with Persian poetry

The Americans, following in the footsteps of the British literary tendencies in Orientalism, showed a great interest in Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazal*s. In the early 1800s the journal *Portfolio* published some translations of Ḥāfeẓ, from Persian into English, by a number of unknown translators. Some other journals such as *Minerva* in the 1820s and *Boston's Foreign Periodical Literature* in 1833 also published articles on Ḥāfeẓ's poems (Yohannan 107-112).[66]

However, the main encounter between North American poets and Persian literature was through the religious and philosophical movement of Transcendentalism. Emerson as the leading figure of this movement found Persian poetry a source of inspiration for his writing along with the great Indian literary work *Bhagavad Gita*, Plato, German philosophy, and English Romanticism.[67] He had a philosophical approach to Persian literature and believed that there is a philosophical, religious, and mystical relationship between Transcendentalism and Persian poetry (Aḥmadzāde Heravi 200-1). It was through Emerson's reading of Persian poetry that the European scholars became acquainted with the spiritual perspectives of Sufism. He appreciated the boldness of expression, the valid ethical stance, the combination of poetry and religion, and secular and the sacred in Persian mystic poetry (Yohannan 115, 135).

From 1840 onwards, Emerson was engaged in reading and translating Persian poetry. He wrote about Ḥāfeẓ, admired his mystical insights and his dedication to nature, and

---

[66] These publications encouraged the American poets to imitate Persian poetry in order to rival the oriental themes in the poetry of such British and Irish poets as Robert Southey (1774-1843), Thomas Moore (1779-1852), and George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) (Yohannan 107-112).

[67] The transcendentalist intellectual, journalist, and philosopher, Margaret Fuller was among those who were effective in acquainting Emerson with Persian poetry (Camboni 2008, 13-16).

included him in the same category of poets as Shakespeare (Russell 12; Yohannan 127). In 1847 he translated a selection of Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazal*s on which he subsequently delivered a lecture in Manchester.[68]

Later, Emerson showed his interest in the poems of another Persian poet called Saʿdi[69]. As a contribution, he entitled one of his poems "Saʿdi" which was published in *The Dial*, the Transcendental journal. Saʿdi was Emerson's ideal poet to whom he paid homage by dedicating this poem. In 1855 the *National Magazine Devoted to Literature, Art and Religion* printed an essay on the poems of Saʿdi and Ḥāfeẓ in which the mystical aspects of Ḥāfeẓ's poetry were discussed and the resemblance between Saʿdi and Emerson's styles was highlighted (Yohannan 113).[70] Emerson's concern with the Persian poets such as Ḥāfeẓ and Saʿdi was so original that W. S. Kennedy believed that "a Persian tinge" from Ḥāfeẓ and Saʿdi found its way into Emerson's own works (Yohannan 124-127).[71]

Overall, Emerson translated seven hundred lines of Persian poetry, a number of which were translated from the German translations he had at hand which he re-versified into English (Russell 13; Yohannan 117).[72]

---

[68] In 1850 *The Liberty Bell* published some other translations of Ḥāfeẓ by Emerson.

[69] Saʿdi Shirāzi was a prominent thirteenth century Persian poet. His major works are *Bustān* (1257), *Golestān* (1258) and a collection of *ghazal*s.

[70] The article was entitled "Persian Poetry, with Examples: Ḥāfeẓ and Sadi."

[71] By 1883, the fame of the Transcendentalists' views on Persian poetry had spread to other countries. The *Overland Monthly* discussed the resemblance between the Persian Ḥāfeẓ and the Americans Emerson and Thoreau (Yohannan, 142-3). Some other contributions by the transcendentalists to Persian poetry can be listed as follows: The transcendental journal *Week* published papers on Saʿdi and Ḥāfeẓ. In 1852 Thoreau wrote about Saʿdi in *Journal*. He identified himself and his way of thinking with Saʿdi (Yohannan 135-143). In 1856 Emerson's friend, William R. Alger published the first *American Anthology of Oriental Literature*. Later, in 1861, a general discussion on Persian poetry was published in the *National Quarterly Review*. It covered the Persian poets Ferdowsi, Jāmi, and the mystic poet Jalālleddin Rumi (Yohannan 113).
From the second generation of Transcendentalists, Conway published the *Anthology (Oriental): A Book of Ethical Scripture* in 1870s which included discussions on the poets Saʿdi, Ḥāfeẓ, and ʿOmar Khayyām along with several quotations from Jalālleddin Rumi.

[72] Emerson was exposed to Persian poetry mainly through the German translation by Joseph von Hammer of Ḥāfeẓ *Divān*, *Der Diwan von Mohammed Schemsed-din Ḥāfeẓ*, which he bought at Elizabeth Peabody's bookshop in April 1846. His work with German translations of Persian poetry left its effect on his poetics (Russell 11; Yohannan 116, 124).

Among others who contributed to the introduction of Persian Poetry were such poets as Walt Whitman (1819-1892) and Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). Whitman, inspired by Emerson, wrote the poem "Passage to India",[73] and also composed a poem entitled "A Persian Lesson" in which he expressed his ideas on Persian poetry and Sufism (Camboni 2008, 13-16). Allan Poe was deeply influenced by the literature of the 'Orient' and the Qur'ān. This influence can be seen in some of his works like the poems 'Al Aaraaf' and 'Israfel' or the short story 'Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque." To these, the names of the American poets and scholars Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), Herman Melville (1819-1891), and Robert Lowell (1917-1977) can be added (Nojumiān 178). [74]

Two cultural mediators, Aijaz Ahmad and Agha Shahid Ali, and the introduction of the *ghazal* into North America

As demonstrated, the *ghazal* was not new to American letters. What was new in the time-span considered in this dissertation, that is the last thirty years of the twentieth century, was that the page turned and the promoters of Eastern literature had new faces. This time, there was no Western Orientalist or scholar, but the native poets and scholars from the East who strived to make their culture and literature known to the West.

---

[73] E.M. Forster entitled his novel *A Passage to India* (1924) after Whitman's poem.

[74] Just to mention some Persian works translated into other European languages: Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāme* which was translated into Italian by Italo Pizzi in 1886. (Javādi 138). (140). In the nineteenth century, particularly, the German achievement in Orientalism was notable. Von Hammer had translated the Divan of Ḥāfeẓ. In 1818 Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall translated a considerable number of Rumi's poems. A year later, Fredrich Ruckert transformed them into the *ghazal* form. Goethe's West-Ostlicher (1819) was a groundbreaking work and a true tribute to Ḥāfeẓ. The young German Orientalist, Jules Mohl's rendition of *Shāhnāme* into French appeared in 1838 in Paris. Hegel in his *Philosophy of Mind* (1894) highly praised Ḥāfez and Ruckert's translation of Rumi (152). In total, German Romanticism with its tendencies to pantheism greatly admired Persian Sufism and in this sense was close to American transcendentalism. (Javādi 147-8). A source of this attraction was the similarity of Western mysticism and Sufism. They share the ideas of: "Divine Love, Union with God, Death to Self, Eternal Life in God, the exile of the Spirit in the body and its longing for its previous heavenly abode, etc…" (Javādi 152). Goethe, Ruckert, and Platen had all tried to imitate the *ghazal* form (201). Annemarie Schimmel also composed *ghazal*s and quatrains 'in the spirit of Rumi'.

The need to introduce the real essence of the *ghazal* into the North American literary system, encouraged two of the most renowned poets and scholars of our time to do so. The role of cultural mediation and cultural translation played by the twentieth century scholar Aijaz Ahmad (?)[75] and poet Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001) was so significant that the poetic form, the *ghazal,* is gradually turning into a widely accepted genre in the North American literary system.

The translation of the *ghazal* in the hands of the Indian born scholars, Ahmad and Agha, led to its increasingly cultural visibility at an international level. As Harish Tirvedi in his essay "Translating Culture vs. Cultural Translation" argues that the translation of the Indian literary works at the time of British imperialism was in the service of the colonizing power, but, once it was in the hands of the Indians, translation began to significantly contribute to the opposite trend of nationalistic renaissance and decolonization (175-6).

The efforts of Ahmad and Agha resulted in the extensive translation and adoption of the *ghazal* as a new genre or poetic form by poets in the United States and Canada. It was even included in the teaching material of some universities. For example, it is taught at the New York and Columbia Universities. It is even taught in some high schools in the United States such as the summer school in Georgia (Schneiderman 4). Moreover, it is highly debated and produced on the web.

The different positions of these promoters of the Urdu *ghazal,* Ahmad and Agha, despite their similarities, resulted in their diverse approach to the *ghazal* and their diverse cultural mediatory role.

Aijaz Ahmad is a literary Marxist theorist and political commentator. He was born in Uttar Pardesh in India, but soon migrated with his family to today's Pakistan just before Partition and Indian Independence from British rule. Today, he teaches at diverse universities

---

[75] Very little is known about Aijaz Ahmad's life. Even when I contacted him via email in July 2013 he refused to respond to personal questions.

in the U.S. and Canada such as York University in Toronto, and at the Centre of Contemporary Studies, New Delhi in India. As a political commentator he contributes to the journals *Frontline* and *Newsclick*. He has published such books as *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (1992), and such essays as "Rushdi's Shame: Postmodernism, Migrancy and Representation of Women" (1991), "Fascism and National Culture" (1993), "The Politics of Culture" (1999), "The Communist Manifesto and World Literature" (2000), and "Imperialism of Our Time" (2004). In addition, as a political analyst, he has given many interviews and lectures on the Middle Eastern countries' governmental policies and the US policies regarding them, as well as the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, and recently on the Arab spring.

Ahmad introduced the *ghazal* to the North American poets by means of his translation project of Ghalib's *ghazal*s on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the poet's death in 1969. This project ended with publication of the volume *Ghazals of Gahlib* which was highly successful and influential in the North American literary system.

Following in the steps of Ahmad's project, many American poets composed the *ghazal*s or translated them into English. Among the works of translation it is worth mentioning the followings: William Chittick's *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (1983), a translation of thirty-one *ghazal*s by Rumi later followed by Coleman Barks's *The Essential Rumi* (1995) and then by Franklin D. Lewis's translation of *Rumi, Swallowing the Sun* (2008). Robert Bly translated Kabir's *ghazal*s: *The Kabir Book: Forty Four of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir* (1993). Elizabeth T. Gray Jr. translated fifty *ghazal*s by Ḥāfeẓ: *The Green Sea of Heaven* (1995), followed thirteen years later, by Robert Bly's and Leonard Lewisohn's joint translation *The Angels Knocking on the Tavern Door: Thirty Poems of Hafez* (2008). Robert Bly also collaborated with Sunil Dutta in a joint translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s: *The Lightning Should Have Fallen on Ghalib* (1999).

The North American poets who composed *ghazal*s in English following Ahmad's project are: Adrienne Rich with her *ghazal*s in two separate poetry collections: *Leaflets* (1969) and *The Will to Change* (1971), Robert Bly with his *ghazal*s in two volumes: *The Night Abraham Called to the Stars* (2001), and *My Sentence was a Thousand Years of Joy* (2005), Jim Harrison's *Outlyer and Ghazals* (1971), Denise Levertov's "Broken *Ghazal*s" in *Oblique Prayers: New Poems with 14 Translations from Jean Joubert* (1984). To these must be added the *ghazal*s of Alicia Ostriker, Robert Mezey, Galway Kinnell, and many others whose *ghazal*s are published in the book *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English* edited by Agha Shahid Ali. The g*hazal* was even adopted by such Canadian poets as John Thompson in *Stilt Jack* (1978), and by the feminist poet Phyllis Webb[76], *Sunday Water: Thirteen Anti-Ghazals* (1982), *Water and Light: Ghazals and Anti-Ghazals* (1984).

If Ahmad was a forerunner, then a poet that was later greatly influential in the spreading of the *ghazal* as an Asian poetic form to be assimilated within the literary system of North American poetry was Agha Shahid Ali. Agha was an Indian-American poet of the Diaspora. He was a Kashmiri-Indian and a Shia Muslim. He grew up both in Delhi and the U.S. He called Urdu his mother tongue and English his first language. When he was twelve he moved with his family to the US and attended school for the next three years in Muncie. On his return to India he attended the University of Kashmir and Hindu College where he published his first collection of poems. Later, as a graduate student at the age of 26 he returned to the United States. He was awarded his PhD from Pennsylvania State University in 1984 and an M.F.A from the University of Arizona in 1985. He taught at the MFA Program for Poets and Writers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, at the MFA Writing Seminars at Bennington College and at the Creative Writing programs at the University of

---

[76] Phyllis Webb points out that she wrote her *ghazal*s after the 1979 Iranian Revolution and they therefore reflect the suffering of women at that time (Sewell 114).

Utah, Baruch College, Princeton College, Warren Wilson College, Hamilton College and New York University (Zaidi, 56; "Agha Shahid Ali"; Ghosh, "The Ghat").

Although born a Kashmiri Muslim, Agha felt at home both in India and the United States. In fact, he is best known in the U.S. and identified himself as an American poet writing in English. He was the recipient of numerous fellowships and a finalist for the National Book Award ("Agha Shahid Ali"; Ghosh, "The Ghat").

His most famous collections of poetry include *A Walk Through the Yellow Pages* (1987), *A Nostalgist's Map of America* (1992), *The Country Without a Post Office* (1997), *Rooms Are Never Finished* (2002), his posthumous volumes of poetry *Call Me Ishmael Tonight* (2003), and a collected volume *The Veiled Suite* (2009) ("Agha Shahid Ali"). Jason Schneiderman, one of his former students, at New York University, and a poet in his own right, duly acknowledges Agha's influence both as an academic teacher and as a poet (Schneiderman 3).

Agha wrote *ghazal*s in English, most of which are collected in his posthumous book entitled *Call Me Ishmael Tonight* (2003). His *ghazal*s are full of themes and images belonging to the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry with strong cultural and symbolic meanings (57).[77] His poems reflect his conscious effort to transfer the cultural heritage and the collective memory of his community as well as its literary tradition (Seyhan 12). He also translated the *ghazal*s of Faiz Ahmad Faiz into English, *The Rebel's Silhouette: Selected Poems by Faiz Ahmed Faiz* (1991) which influenced his style.[78] In addition, he edited a very influential collection under the title *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English* (2000).

---

[77] Azade Seyhan calls the diasporic writer 'a cultural visionary': "…the participation of the diasporic registers the moment when other literary and artistic forms of expression enter (Western) history. Through this dialectic (… dialogue), the distance between the ports of departure and arrival appear to collapse; the migrant, exile or voyager not only crosses the threshold into another history and geography but also steps into the role of an itinerant cultural visionary." (Seyhan 14).

[78] Joseph Donahue reviewing Agha's book of poetry *The Veiled Suite* states that Agha was highly influenced by Faiz Ahmad Faiz, while Mark Doty maintains that his poems were deeply influenced by the style of James Merrill. ("Agha Shahid Ali").

Agha invited the students in his poetry classes and more extensively, American poets to compose poetry in the original *ghazal* form, which he considered to be the Persian *ghazal*. Agha introduced the *ghazal* originally as a Persian form that had its descendants in such languages as Urdu, Turkish, Hebrew, German, and Spanish. In this regard, he appreciated the efforts of many Westerners such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Karl Wilhelm Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), Friedrich Ruckert (1788-1866), August Graf von Platen (1796-1835) and Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) in introducing the *ghazal* (Ali 1-2).

He not only used the Western poetical forms such as canzone and sestina to express his Subcontinental ideas but tried to make the Eastern poetic form of the *ghazal* available to the North American poets to fulfill the same purpose. His role was so significant that he is sometimes considered as the cultural ambassador of his country and the first poet of the Diaspora who attempted to make this poetic form and its culture available to the English-speaking world (Zaidi 55-60). Christopher Merrill,[79] Agha's closest friend, writes about the reason he decided to introduce the *ghazal*:

> It was his enthusiasm for the *ghazal* that reshaped the American literary landscape. His impatience with free-verse *ghazal*s was well-known, but I suspect a latent dissatisfaction with his own free translations of *ghazal*s by Faiz Ahmas Faiz may have also convinced him to attempt to honor the form, writing a book of strict *ghazal*s himself and inspiring more than a hundred poets to contribute to his anthology, *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English*, a landmark event in our literature. His mistrust of Western appropriations of the *ghazal* is a function of a post-colonial sensibility alert to

---

[79] The collection of Agha's *ghazal*s *Call me Ismael Tonight* is dedicated to Christopher Merrill. Merrill is an American poet, essayist, journalist and translator. He teaches at the University of Iowa. Merrill is a poet dedicated to political injustice, spirituality, and a translator or co-translator of Asian language poems.

highhandedness in any form; his solution transcended the easy strictures of academic or political debate—in a word, counterpoint. As he told April Bernard, explaining his decision to write a poem, on commission, for a glossy magazine, "I may be for sale but I am not on sale!" And the editors receiving *ghazal*s every week now have Shahid to thank for this convergence of East and West." (Merrill).[80]

Agha strived to make his double or diasporic identity known to the American readers and poets. As a bilingual Indian-American poet, he tried to combine the cultural elements of both countries. While he referred to the traditional images of Persian and Urdu poetry and his memories of India in his poems, at the same time he made references to the lines and phrases by the American poets that had inspired him.[81] He blended multiple ethnic ideas and his poetry reflects his Hindu, Muslim, and Western heritages. Merrill writes in this regard:

> It was his genius to fuse the English and Urdu literary traditions: he knew *Paradise Lost* as intimately as the Koran; he was inspired by Dante and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. And he reshaped the American literary landscape by convincing us to write 'real *ghazal*s in English'- lights shining from the West down to the East. (Merrill, "A Route").

Agha's poetry builds a bridge between past and present, America and India, and it brings together the Islamic and American deserts, cities and tribes ("Agha Shahid Ali"). His

---

[80] Zaidi writes in this regard: "This distorted, peripheral use of form obviously upsets the poet who is conscious of his twin loyalties. For this very reason perhaps, Ali declares … that he wants to take back the gift "outright"." (Zaidi 60).

[81] Agha used the lines or phrases from American poets in some of his *ghazal*s to "salute the craft of those whom he knew and loved." (Agha Iqbal, Zafar Ahmad, "Foreword").

literary inspiration is as diverse, ranging from Ghalib and Faiz Ahmad Faiz to James Merrill and Lorca (Zaidi 57). For example, one of his poems is entitled "Amherst to Kashmir" in the book *Rooms Are Never Finished* (2001).

He considered the *ghazal* a site of border crossing, where the in-between identities could be expressed. As Nishat Zaidi writes:

> Agha Shahid Ali explored the dialogic possibilities in the poetic form whereby tensions and contesting claims of diasporic identity could seek synthesis and cohabit. He situated his diasporic identity on the site of the *ghazal* form where the twin identities could negotiate without any appropriation of one by the other. In this he also influenced the center by expanding the realm of linguistic and semantic possibilities (Zaidi 65).

This Indian-American poet of the diaspora tried to establish a place for the formal discipline of the *ghazal* in North American literature. He frequently used the phrase 'the *ghazal* in America' and invited the American poets to contribute to his edited anthology, *Ravishing disunities: Real Ghazals in English* (Agha Iqbal, Zafar Ahmad, "Foreword"). He aimed at expanding and enriching the American literary system by introducing the *ghazal* and making it part of the system.

When introducing the *ghazal* to the American poets, he insisted on keeping its formal structure and modes of expression in its English adaptations (Zaidi 64). He used the poetic form of the *ghazal* as an in-between space to make a bridge between two civilizations (Zaidi 56). Zaidi argues that it was the reciprocity of influence that mattered to him and not the "hegemonic interpretation of the 'other' by the center on its own terms, or plain commoditization of the culture of the 'margins.'" (Zaidi 60).

Agha's criterion in selecting the English *ghazal*s to be published in *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English* was mainly their faithfulness to the Persian *ghazal*'s formal structure. In Zaidi's opinion, the insistence of Agha on form was to invite the American poets to experience the same border crossing through writing in the new poetic *ghazal* form that he had experienced while writing in English forms. He wanted to share his experience of "multiple-linguistic, geographical, and historical-dislocations" with the American poets (Zaidi 66).[82]

Consequently, he was critical of the English *ghazal*s that were not faithful to the formal structure of the original. He defined those attempts: "…these arbitrary near-surrealistic exercises in free verse [that] pass for *ghazal*s…" (Agha 2000, 1). Agha appreciated the translations that Adrienne Rich and W.S. Merwin made of Ghalib's *ghazal*s and those made by Elizabeth T. Gray Jr. of Ḥāfeẓ's, which he considered as "real accomplishments" (Agha 2000, 11). However, when it came to their original *ghazal*s, he was critical of the fact that they did not respect the form. He writes:

> Anyway, I found their translations, …, rather attractive because they often struck me not just as efforts but real accomplishments. But when poets attempted their own original *ghazal*s, they simply did not bother with the form (Agha 2000, 11).

In this, he did not fail to blame Aijaz Ahmad for not establishing "the primacy of the form" when explaining the *ghazal* to the North American poets who collaborated with him in translating Ghalib (Agha 2000, 11).

---

[82] "Writers of diasporas often employ linguistic forms of loss or dislocation, such as fragments or elliptical recollections of ancestral languages, cross-lingual idioms, and mixed codes to create new definitions of community..." (Seyhan 16-17).

He admired the *ghazal*s of poets like James Harrison, Adrienne Rich, Robert Mezey, and Galway Kinnell, yet he tried to justify the reason they had not kept the form. He wrote in this regard:

> Perhaps the business of rhyme and refrain did not suite the aesthetic politics—and the political complexion—of various contexts in the late sixties and early seventies? The *ghazal*, as many of those poets practiced it, gave them the authority of a foreign and rich culture; it allowed them formally to question the authority of their own culture's often rigid proscriptions, and perhaps they saw in the thematic freedom of the couplets a chance for all kinds of liberation (Agha 2000, 11-12).

Agha's role in introducing the *ghazal* to North America in the late twentieth century was so significant that Christopher Merrill uses the following explanation to illustrate it:

> It is not often that we can trace profound changes in a nation's poetic landscape but here we can. Imagine when the Italian sonnet washed up on the shores of English literature: how in the hands of Sir Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spencer, Philip Sydney, William Shakespeare, and John Donne and many others the form reshaped our literature. It is too soon to say if the *ghazal* will have a similar effect on American poetry, but if it does literary historians will credit Shahid's pioneering work (Merrill, "A Route").

Aijaz Ahmad's cultural mediation and cultural translation

Notwithstanding Agha's criticism of Ahmad's translation project, it has stood as one of the most significant moves towards launching the *ghazal* in North America, and one of the

most influential. In addition, the *ghazal*s that Adrienne Rich composed under the impact of Ahmad's project, have stood as the paradigm of the English *ghazal*.

If Agha can be considered the poet-critic who privileged the formal aspects of the *ghazal*, Ahmad was the critic who highlighted the political and cultural role it could play. Agha and Ahmad represent not only two different moments in time but two quite different positions.

Ahmad introduced the *ghazal* as an outsider to the American literary system; a position that allowed him to see the *ghazal* as a force to break the dominant culture in North America.

For the occasion of the centenary anniversary of Ghalib, Mrs. Bonnie R. Crown, Director of the Asian Literature Program of the Asia Society of New York, was looking for people who could undertake the translation of Ghalib's major works. Daud Rahbar who had previously translated some portions of Hali's biography of Ghalib suggested the translation of his letters (Rahbar xvi), and Aijaz Ahmad proposed the translation of Ghalib's Urdu *ghazal*s.

In the 1960s Ahmad lived in New York City and witnessed the socio-cultural turbulence and the struggles of the literary groups and poets against the Vietnam War, racism, and the American governmental policies in general. He witnessed the struggles of the poets who desired to subvert mainstream ideology and poetics. He saw their interest in translation as a subversive force that could "import goods from beyond the system's boundaries" to function as a weapon for breaking down the established norms in the system (Lefevere 1985, 237; Gentzler 1996, 120).[83]

---

[83] Gentzler maintains that translation is like a cultural weapon that can break down the norms of an established system. For example, Ezra Pound succeeded in introducing new forms via translation into the British literary system early in the twentieth century when one could hardly call England a 'weak' nation. He goes on to say that, "Recent scholarship in the British literary system seems to indicate that all important changes in poetics over the last 500 years were led not by 'original' writing in the Toury/Even-Zohar sense, but via translations. Perhaps we need to rethink the vocabulary of 'weak' and 'strong' cultures altogether." (Gentzler 1996, 120).

It was in the face of this socio-political scene in North America that Ahmad proposed the translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s. As Dimitriu puts it, "the particular socio-literary conditions of a receiving culture will determine the texts that will have priority in translation" (Dimitriu 38).

Ahmad believed that the historical context of Ghalib's life was in many ways analogous to the situation in the North America of the 1960s, in the sense that, the society seemed to be breaking up and there was no hope of its rebuilding (Ahmad 1994, xxi).

In the introduction to the translations in the book *Ghazals of Ghalib* he discusses the historical and socio-political situation at the time of Ghalib. He starts the introduction to the volume as follows:

> The seven decades of Ghalib's life (1797-1869) were not a very auspicious time for the writing of poetry for anyone who lived in the city of Delhi. The British conquest of India was completed during those decades, the fabric of the entire civilization came loose, and the city of Delhi became a major focal point for countless traumatic crises. Ghalib, was not, in the modern sense, a political poet- not political, in other words, in the sense of a commitment to strategies of resistance. Yet, surrounded by constant carnage, Ghalib wrote a poetry primarily of losses and consequent grief… He is a tragic poet. (Ahmad 1994, vii).

He continues by giving the account of the British brutality in India and emphasizes that to understand Ghalib one should understand "…his sense of poetry in relation to the time in which it is written." (Ahmad 1994, xxi).

Not only was the socio-political background of Ghalib's time, according to Ahmad, analogous to that in North America, but the *ghazal*'s formal feature of disunity was conducive to the purposes of the American poets.[84]

The formal features of the *ghazal* as a lyric form offered the North American poets a sort of liberty.[85] In their struggles against the established English forms, they welcomed it as an alternative to the free verse style. Agha, in this respect, argues that the *ghazal* as a meditative form between the argumentative and monologue that was practiced in America was widely accepted, as the American mind was ready for "a formal disunity."

Eileen Gregory also discusses the liberties that a lyric form offers:

> the lyric in its fidelity to the claims of erotic, affective life, pushes against known boundaries, against the constraints of accepted descriptions of the valuable, the pious, the normal, the true (Gregory 24).[86]

Ahmad's choice may well be justified by Venuti's discussion on the reasons for choosing a foreign text:

> A foreign text may be chosen because the social situation in which it was produced is seen as analogous to that of the translating culture and thus as illuminating of the problems that a nation must confront in its emergence. A

---

[84] In the words of Even-Zohar: "It is clear that the very principles of selecting the works to be translated are determined by the situation governing the (home) poly-system: the texts are chosen according to their compatibility with the new approaches and the supposedly innovatory role they may assume within the target literature." (Even-Zohar 1990, 47).

[85] Agha in this respect maintains that: "If one writes in free verse-and one should-to subvert Western civilization, surely one should write in forms to save oneself from Western civilization." (Agha 13). Zaidi believes that by writing in the formal structure of the *ghazal*, Ali attempted to retain his identity (Zaidi 61).

[86] Lyric poetry is potentially the most radical and subversive of literary genres (Gregory 21).

foreign text may also be chosen because its form and theme contribute to the creation of a specific discourse of nation in the translating culture… (Venuti 2005, 180).

Moreover, Ahmad had a significant role in the North American poet's perception of Ghalib's poetry. The selection of the *ghazal*s, their reduction into fewer lines, the explanations and notes given on them, and overall, his socio-political ideology dominant in them reflect his strong influence. In fact, Ahmad role played as a cultural mediator whose ideological beliefs influenced the processing of the text (katan 89). R. Taft defines the role of a 'cultural mediator' as:

…a person who facilitates communication, understanding, and action between persons or groups who differ with respect to language and culture. The role of the mediator is performed by interpreting the expressions, intentions, perceptions, and expectations of each cultural group to the other, that is, by establishing and balancing the communication between them (Taft 53).

Ahmad chose only a limited number of *ghazal*s, thirty seven, from the *Divan* of Ghalib.[87]. He reduced each poem to five or six couplets eliminating some lines from each. He chose the lines that he found most suited to the interest of the American poets. For example, he omitted the lines that referred to mythical or historical stories not known by the foreign reader. However, in the 'introduction' to the volume he mentions that the *ghazal*s that had thematic unity are given in their entirety (Ahmad 1994, xxvii). In fact, he tried to make

---

[87] The *ghazal*s chosen by Ahmad for the collection were selected from the *Divān Ghalib* edited by Imtiyāz ʿAli ʿArshi (Aligarh 1958) which he names as the only dependable edition of Ghalib's poetry (Ahmad v).

Ghalib's poems more acceptable to the North American poets by adapting them to the poetics of the receiving culture (Lefevere 1992 a, 7). [88]

He takes full responsibility for the selection of the *ghazal*s and couplets explicating that his selection was based on the limitations of space and the translatability of the couplets. He adds that this selection is close to the one made by Ghalib in eliminating the couplets that seemed to lack excellence (Ahmad 1994, xxvi-xxvii).[89]

Furthermore, it is debatable that in proposing Ghalib's translation project Ahmad had an ideological viewpoint in mind. As Lefevere states: "Ideology is often enforced by the patrons, the people or institutions who commission or publish translations." (1992a, 14). Nevertheless, by his literal translations and explanations Ahmad imposed his own ideology and interpretation on Ghalib's *ghazal*s. He brought Ghalib's mystical poems closer to his own political concerns. In some cases, he interpreted mystical words and themes as political.[90] As Eva Hung argues when cultural translation happens in the hands of the promoters from the original culture and literature, the translator in fact takes upon him/herself the role of an interpreter and decides the image that he /she wants to be attributed to its culture (Hung 85).

According to Barua, Ahmad presented these poets with "a glamorized, politically corrected 1960s' version of Ghalib, apparently resuscitating him from the amoral epicurean image of the nineteenth century Urdu poet." (Barua 104-5). In fact, he made his work more influential and acceptable to the American poets and their purposes. Ahmad himself explains:

---

[88] When translating a text, the translator needs to have an idea of the type of text to translate and its culture-bound features. The mediator determines these factors for the translator deciding also on how the text should or might operate in the target system (Katan 91).

[89] *Entekhāb-e Ghalib* is a selection of Ghalib's Persian and Urdu poems selected and prepared by himself (Bausani 100).

[90] Nida suggests that the source-language features that are not recognizable can be replaced with target language ones that are (Venuti 2005, 21).

As for the interpretive notes which appear at the end of my literal versions of couplets, I have, of course, read the usual scholarly commentaries, but only with a view to formulating what is finally my own understanding and response… literal translation and commentaries which would make most sense to my American collaborators needed different methods and points of emphasis than would have been the case had I been writing a commentary in Urdu primarily for an Urdu audience. My versions have that deliberate slant (Ahmad 1994, vi).[91]

Overall, it should be said that Ahmad had a significant and determining role in the introduction and dissemination of the *ghazal* in the North American literary system. As Schneiderman remarks, there were *ghazal*s in English prior to the 1960s but they gained a new prominence after Aijaz Ahmad's translation project (Schneiderman 7).

The North American poets' translation strategies

Ahmad invited to the project the celebrated North American poets who had previously worked with literal English versions in translating foreign poetry (Ahmad 1994, xviii). These were W. S. Merwin, Adrienne Rich, William Stafford, David Ray, Thomas Fitzsimmons, Mark Strand, and William Hunt.[92]

Most of the poets who took part in Ahmad's project, domesticated the original text and produced very free versions of Ghalib's poetry in English, since domestication was the common trend in Anglo-American culture. Fluent or transparent translations, although they

---

[91] Tymoczko writes in this respect: "… a literary translator chooses an emphasis or privileges an aspect of the text to be transposed in translation (e.g. linguistic fidelity, tone, form, cultural content, or some combination thereof)." (Tymoczko 1999, 23).

[92] Ahmad felt that the final versions should be produced by professional and gifted poets. He explained that many academic translations had been done by Urdu scholars who had come into contact with Urdu and Persian because of their involvement with the Empire, that is, by people who were neither poets, nor men of imagination (Ahmad xix).

ignored cultural differences, were praised and rewarded in twentieth century North America (Venuti 2005, 183).[93] Such is the case of Coleman Barks's translation of Rumi's poetry. By domesticating the cultural differences Barks reduced Rumi's poetry and its cultural tradition into a modern ethical poetry to suit the taste of the American readers.[94]

However, Adrienne Rich and in some cases William Stafford and W.S. Merwin preferred the foreignizing method over domestication as the later functioned in favor of the target system. Particularly, in the United States, with its economic and political ascendancy, domesticating translations threatened to reinforce 'the global hegemony of English'. Therefore, a number of American translators aimed at challenging the dominant system:

> Today, an increasingly global situation of literary exchange means that there is a drive towards uniformity and leveling of difference, but there is also a counter-force of resistance working to produce original forms of the local. Translations contribute to both of these dynamics: while often serving as the vehicle of global commonplace, they also act as catalysts in the emergence of contestatory forms of writing. Translations provoke cultural exchange (Simon and Viswanatha 163).

These poets found translation a potential force against the dominant system and a possibility for change. By means of translation they could subvert the ideological and poetological constraints functioning in their system. As Tymockzco argues, a translator is

---

[93] In *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that translation serves "to domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning." (Said 78).

[94] In the period after World War II, and by the marginalization of modernism, a great number of translators chose the domesticating translation method in order to reduce "the foreign text to dominant cultural values in English." (Venuti 2005, 225).

considered a potential factor or an "agent of social change" (Tymoczko 2003, 181).[95] The translators not only guarantee the life of the original text, but also decide on how this new life should be given. In other words, they create a new image of the original adapted to their own time and readers (Lefevere 1995, 7).

These poet-translators were trying to create a new national identity by building a new literary repertoire through translation. This new identity could be shaped only in confrontation with new and foreign texts or in other words by knowing and becoming the other (Venuti 2005, 180). In this regard, Bermann and Wood quote Schleiermacher that: "Our language can thrive in all its freshness and completely develop its own power only by means of the most many-sided contacts with what is foreign." (2005, 175).

They tried to highlight the linguistic and cultural differences in their renderings. They aimed at producing the same effect in their translations as in the original. By foreignizing their translations, these poets could resist domestication, fluency, and transparency (Venuti 1995, 148) and make 'the other' visible to the reader.

They emphasized the cultural features of the source text in order to oppose "the global hegemony of English" that on the contrary normalizes the specific cultural values (Venuti 1998, 10). As Venuti argues, in this manner, the translator is faithful to and reproduces the cultural and linguistic differences of the source text in order to resist the dominant forms and value systems in the receiving culture. Consequently, the translator participates in cultural exchange (Venuti 2005, 20).[96]

Reproducing the foreign aspects of a text or in other words transferring its cultural elements in translation opens the possibility of cultural exchange. By exchanging cultures the

---

[95] "…translations could be perceived as factors of cultural change and progress also wielding the power to shape strong images of cultures, texts and authors and to construct cultural identities." (Dimitriu 28).

[96] Venuti defines foreignization as "any translation strategy that resists domestication, fluency, and transparency." (Venuti 2005, 148).

memory of a community and its traditions are transferred:

> When people speak of the creation of a new culture, they are inevitably looking ahead; that is, they have in mind that which (they presume) will become a memory from the point of view of the reconstructable future (Lotman 214).

In fact, translation not only functions as a space in which cultural exchange becomes possible, but itself performs as a transmitter of cultural elements by highlighting the foreign aspects of a foreign text. As Torop points out the creation of a new culture can be realized through translation which leads to the inclusion of new texts in a culture (Torop 593).

Cultural exchange through translation was particularly fruitful to the new generation of North American poets in the 1960s, who could no longer accept the established English poetic models. Translation could introduce them to a whole range of new possibilities. It offered them new poetics, compositional patterns and techniques (Even-Zohar 47). As Even-Zohar states, at such moments a literary vacuum occurs in the target system which leaves room for the translated literature to occupy a central position (Even-Zohar 48).

Even-Zohar, the prominent translation and cultural studies scholar, with his seminal works, "The Function of the Polysytem in the History of Literature" (1970) and later "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem" (1975) highlighted the role of translation in the formation of cultures and regretted the fact that the historians of culture ignored the major role of translation in the "crystallization of national cultures" (Even-Zohar 45). He explains how translation may shape the target literary system:

My argument is that translated works do correlate in at least two ways: (a) in the way their source texts are selected by the target literature, the principles of selection never being uncorrelatable with the home co-systems of the target literature (to put it in the most cautious way); and (b) in the way they adopt specific norms, behaviours, and policies in short, in their use of literary repertoire which results from their relations with the other home co-systems. These are not confined to the linguistic level only, but are manifest on any selection level as well. Thus, translated literature may possess a repertoire of its own, which to a certain extent could even be exclusive to it (Even-Zohar 46).

The postcolonial, postmodernist theorist, Homi Bhabha presumes that cultures are not closed entities and negotiation between them becomes possible in a hybrid space. According to Bhabha hybridity leads to identity formation because it is a space in which the negotiation of differences in culture and identity becomes possible (Wolf 14-15).[97]

Lotman calls this negotiation or dialogue, "border-crossing". He argues that each culture or semiosphere has inner and outer borders that are bilingual. The borders are the spaces of connection and difference that can lead to identity formation by "juxtaposing the familiar and the alien." In this, translation is the factor that makes possible dialogue between differences in the hybrid space or the borders. Therefore, for Lotman the most important feature of the borders of a semiosphere is their role as "translation mechanisms". In this

---

[97] Hybridity should be associated with "moments of transition" in the borders. Therefore, as Pratt points out hybridity is not the result of cultural merging but the contact zone between cultures and encounter of the spaces (Wolf 12).

respect, Lotman states that "the elementary act of thinking is translation" and "the elementary mechanism of translation is dialogue." (Lotman qtd. in Torop, xxxiii).[98]

Ezra Pound and cultural translation

Ezra Pound (1885-1972) was one of the most effective figures in the development of translation into English in the twentieth century (Weissbort and Eysteinsson 271).[99] He made clear that translation could bring cultural change by highlighting the foreign aspects of a text (Venuti 1995, 202).[100] He particularly emphasized the translation of Eastern poetry and literature. He went so far as to state that "the West must turn, finally, to the East or else continue its decline into artistic oblivion." (Williams 146).

He believed that the most significant element to be kept in poetry translation is the image, since the cultural memory of a society is compacted in it. As Andrew Tudor in his book *Decoding Cultures* discusses:

> The connoted message is certainly coded, understood through the filters of our various symbolic orders. So we see the replication of reality denoted by the image, but we understand *connotative* meaning in consequence of the interaction of that image with cultural codes (Tudor 74).

Pound emphasized that the most precise and fragmented details should be rendered in

---

[98] In fact, the practice of translation is the strategy devised by cultures to deal with the foreign or the 'other.' (Lefevere 1998, 13).

[99] Pound thought of translation as interweaving strands of words that connect people from different languages and nationalities. "The threads of language run back in time, and as one traces them back, variable connections can be made." (Gentzler 2001, 23).

[100] "…Pound increased the play of the signifier, cultivating inverted or convoluted syntax, polysemy, archaism, nonstandard dialects, elaborate stanzaic forms and sound effects_ textual features that frustrate immediate intelligibility, empathic response, interpretive mastery. And by doing this Pound addresses the problem of domestication that nags not just his own claim of cultural autonomy, but also the transparent discourse dominating English-language translation." (Venuti 2005, 203).

translation.[101] He focused particularly on the rendition of individual words, single and even fragmented images.[102] He defined an image as:

> a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a vortex, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing. (Pound qtd. in Gentzler 2001, 21).[103]

W.S. Merwin who understood Pound's ideas on translation gives his insight into it in the introduction to *Selected Translations, 1968-1978*:

> But if we take a single word of any language and try to find an exact equivalent in another … we have to admit it can not be done. A single primary denotation may be shared; but the constellation of secondary meanings, the movement of rings of associations, the etymological echoes, the sound and its own levels of association, do not have an equivalent because they cannot… Yet, if we continue, we reach a point where some sequence of the first language conveys a dynamic unit, a rudiment of form. Some energy of the first

---

[101]He avoided the transparent discourse that had been dominant in English language translations since the seventeenth century (Venuti 2005, 203).

[102] In the first phase of his career, although an imagist, he occasionally included abstract concepts in his compositions and renditions, however, in the second phase, as a late imagist or vorticist he focused mainly on "words in action and "luminous' details," in other words he gave more importance to the energy that could be represented through forms that language could take (Gentzler 2001, 19). He introduced the term vortex which he defined as "the point of maximum" energy that is an accumulation of all experiences and manifests itself in image that represents "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time…" (Pound qtd. in Gentzler 2001, 21). It is notable that painting styles such as those of Picasso and Kandinski had a significant influence on imagism and vorticism (Gentzler 2001, 21).

[103] "The vortex is the point of maximum energy… All experience rushes into this vortex… An image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time… Picasso, Kandinski, father and mother, classicism and romanticism of the movement. (Pound qtd. in Gentzler 2001, 21).

> language begins to be manifest, not only in single words but in the charge of
> their relationship (Merwin viii).[104]

The translation experiences of the imagists such as Pound, Richard Aldington (1892-1962) and Hilda Doolittle (1886-1961) were principally from Chinese[105] and Japanese poetry, Greek myths and tragedies (Beasley 37).[106] Their translation experiences did not cover the Indian and Persian literatures like the Transcendentalists, yet their ideas on translation from Eastern languages and more importantly their idea of the image was fundamental in shaping the translation tendencies and strategies among the poets in the second half of the twentieth century.

Robert Bly and the style of new imagination

Robert Bly (1926) is one of the central figures who paid particular attention to the importance of images for cultural transmission in translation in the second half of the twentieth century. Interestingly enough, he was the axis or the point of contact for the poets invited to Ahmad's project. Bly had a great impact on translation movements in the 1960s and 1970s. As early as 1949 as a student at Harvard, he organized meetings with writers and poets and published their works in its magazine.[107] Among the writers whose works were published by Bly were Adrienne Rich, John Ashbery and John Hawks. In 1965, with his friend David Ray, he founded the organization of 'American Writers Against the Vietnam

---

[104] In Merwin's opinion "words take on an energy in their contextual, intertextual life." (Gentzler 2001, 40).

[105] In the case of Chinese translations, the foreignness of the foreign text did not derive from faithfulness to the original text, but deviation from "domestic literary canons" (Venuti 2005, 200).

[106] Pound brought new forms into the English language literary system through his translations mainly from Chinese and Japanese poetry (Gentzler 1996, 120).

[107] It was at these meetings that Bly became familiar with foreign poetry ("Robert Bly and Coleman Barks in Tehran").

War'.[108] The organization was attended frequently by W.S Merwin, Allen Ginsberg, Adrienne Rich, and Robert Lowell. In addition, he had a long lasting literary relationship with William Stafford which later became the theme of a movie directed by Haydn Reiss in 1994 entitled "William Stafford and Robert Bly: A Literary Friendship."[109]

In the fifties Bly founded a journal entitled the *The Fifties* in which he majorly published the works that were written against the main and dominant literary norms in the United States. Bly found English and American poetry too "sterile" and "rational," too intellectual and suburban and indifferent to suffering. He believed that they should deal with everyday political and social realities and that they should write against suffering in all countries (Gentzler 1996, 128).

Bly attempted to develop his aesthetic called 'new style' or 'new imagination' in the fourth issue of his journal, *The Sixties*. He criticized the elevated forms and abstract language of North American poetry and called for the application of more graphic imagery in its language to convey deep emotions that would relate inner feelings to the outside politics (Gentzler 1996, 130-132). Gentzler writes in this regard:

> Bly finds English and American poetry too intellectual, too suburban, too indifferent to suffering. Bly finds North American verse rational and sterile, verse that avoids the joys and traumas of the unconscious. It is through the unconscious that deep images – the daring, the sensuousness, and the savagery characteristic of Bly's version of modern poetry – can be found. And for Bly, 'the poem is the images' (Gentzler 1996, 128).

---

[108] Bly explains that in the sixties he and some other poets were holding poetry reading sessions which was something new to them. Then came the Vietnam War and they therefore decided to hold poetry readings about it which was widely welcomed by people and gave dignity to poetry. ("Robert Bly and Coleman Barks in Tehran").

[109] The same director produced the movie, 'Rumi: Poet of the Heart' (2004).

In those decades, he had become more aware of the power of images in poetry. He noticed that many European and South American poets paid particular attention to "the world of the image" and therefore started translating some of their poems (Bly 2004, vii).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s he saw translation as a means through which he could transfer new images into his poetry; an act that could open the avenue for "a revolutionary poetry of the unconscious." (Gentzler 1996, 132). By translating and transferring new images into his poetry, he aimed at challenging the North American literary establishments.[110] Gentzler argues that Bly's translations were against the dominant norms and were conducive to "changing the literary and cultural centers in the United States." (Gentzler 1996, 117).

In the book *The Winged Energy of Delight*, a collection of Bly's translations from various languages, he emphasizes the importance of images and metaphors in these foreign poems. For example, he writes about the poems of the Swedish poet Tomas Transtromer:

> He has a strange genius for the image—images come up almost effortlessly. The images flow upward like water rising in some lonely place, in the swamps, or deep fire woods… One of the most beautiful qualities in his poems is the space we feel in them. I think one reason for that is the four or five main images that appear in each of his poems come from widely separated sources in the psyche… His poems are mysterious because of the distance the images have come to get there (Bly 2004, 2).

---

[110] Bly got this "new, innovative, highly original aesthetic" from literary translation. In 1956 he received a Fullbright to translate some Norwegian poems into English (Gentzler 1996, 128).

He admired the poems of the French poet Francis Pogne for his attention to "the things" and images and for the invention of what is called "the 'thing' poem" these days (Bly 2004, 99). He also valued the revolutionary poetry of Pablo Neruda and his focus on simple things and objects in his work (Bly 2004, 112). He liked also the visionary poetry of Georg Trakl (Bly 2004, 137), the spiritual poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke (Bly 2004, 155-6), and the sharp perception of the Japanese poet Basho and his interest in Buddhism (Bly 2004, 179). Bly writes about Miguel Hernandez that: "he wrote his first poems in the Gongora style of elaborate images, a practice in which the poet keeps from the reader the secret of what the poem is actually about." (Bly 2004, 311).[111]

The insistence of Bly on the transference of images through translation was not in vain. In fact, translation brought into Anglo-American poetry a range of new imagery (Flotow 105).[112] The translation of works by the poets such as Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, Antonio Machado, and Federico Garcia Lorca provided them with methods to resist normal and established forms and to welcome new ways of thought and imagination (Gentzler 2008, 32-3).[113]

Later, Bly turned to the translation of Eastern poetry by such poets as Kabir, Mirabi, Rumi, Ghalib and Ḥāfeẓ.

In an interview broadcast on television in Tehran in 2006, he explained the reason for his growing interest in the translation of Eastern poetry. He said that in the 1950s, he and a number of North American poets started looking for new models of poetry writing through

---

[111] In 1963 Bly published his collection of poetry entitled *Silence in the Snowy Fields* which he called the poems of deep image ("Robert Bly and Coleman Barks in Tehran").

[112] The definition of images and symbols as cultural elements comes from the very characteristic of culture itself that while it preserves "the memory of preceding states" and is aware of its "coherence" has a kind of inner dynamism and is capable of change (Lotman 215). Therefore culture was no longer considered as a set of unchanging and coherent values or attitudes, but as negotiation, symbolic competition or 'performance' (Simon 1999, 58). By this definition, culture is no longer exclusive to a tradition or identity but constitutes a network of symbols and meanings.

[113] As Char, a French poet-translator of resistance states, translators are "trans-porteurs" that "transport meaning through metaphor and imagery." (Bermann and Wood 258-9).

the translation of foreign poetry. They were frustrated by imitating English poetic forms and were looking for new poetic models to shape their identity ("Robert Bly and Coleman Barks in Tehran").

He was a pioneer of the translation of Eastern and mystic poetry. In the early 1970s he translated the verses of the fifteenth-century mystic poet Kabir.[114] He points to the use of metaphor in Kabir's poetry and stresses his ability to use spiritual and metaphorical poetry against the dominant religious dogmas:

> he [Kabir] wanted his metaphors to awaken the sleepers. His metaphors act like a loose electric wire, or a two-by-four to the head. In Kabir's poems, you see an astonishing event—highly religious and intensely spiritual poems written outside of, and in opposition to, the standard Hindu, Mohammedan, or Christian dogmas. (Bly 2004, 37-8).

Moreover, Bly appreciated Kabir's poetry for its ability to combine two traditions:

> His poems are amazing, even from his broad culture, for the way they unite in one body the two traditions—ecstatic Sufism, which is supremely confident, a secretive, desert meditation, utterly opposed to orthodoxy and academics, and given to dancing and weeping… (Bly 2004, 38).

---

[114] Bly read Kabir in its English versions by Rabindranath Tagore and Evelyn Underhill (Lewis 2000, 587). Bly published his translations under the title *Kabir: Ecstatic Poems* (1976).

The style and language of Kabir had been passed down from his master Rumi. As a result, Bly was engaged in translating Rumi and then Mirabi.[115] The great influence of Rumi's *ghazal*s on Bly led to the publication of his book *Iron John: A Book about Men* (1990). Moreover, he collaborated with Coleman Barks in producing some versions of Rumi's poetry published under the title, *Night and Sleep* (1981). Following this, he published his own version of Rumi's poems, *When Grapes Turn to Wine* (1983). In addition, he encouraged Barks to translate Rumi's poetry; an attempt that resulted in the publication of two separate volumes: *The Soul is Here for its Own Joy: Sacred poems from Many Cultures* (1995) and *The Rag and Bone Shop of the Heart: Poems for Men* (1992) (Lewis 587-8).[116]

When translating Ghalib's Urdu *ghazal*s, the features that particularly struck Bly were their tone of grief and their disunity: "We might look at the amazing way that Ghalib's *ghazal*s are put together. No clear thread unites all the couplets." (Bly 2004, 362). Bly explains that the *ghazal* form moves contrary to the expected textual consistency:

> It invites the reader to discover the hidden center of the poem or the hidden thought that ties it all together, a hidden center unexpressed by the poet himself or herself. I find this delicious. Moreover, when we arrive at the final sher, where, according to our typical expectations, the poet should cliché his argument, Ghalib often does exactly the opposite. He confounds everyone by making a personal remark. (Bly 2004, 363).

---

[115] When translating Rumi's *ghazal*s, Bly proposed a translation program entitled 'The Eight Stages of Translation'.

[116] Introducing Rumi in the book *The Winged Energy of Delight*, Bly remarks that Rumi adopts "the transparent 'you' so beautifully that each of us feels as if we too were being spoken to." He adds that Coleman Barks in his translations of Rumi "has echoed that tender 'you' so brilliantly." Bly defines Rumi's poetry as "ecstatic love poetry." (Bly 2004, 331).

In translating Ghalib, Sunnil Dutta collaborated with him by providing him with the literal translation of the poems from Urdu into English and moreover, by providing elaborate commentaries on each line.

In translating Ḥāfeẓ, the prominent scholar of Islamic studies and Sufi literature, Leonard Lewisohn collaborated with him (Bly 2004, viii). Bly appreciated the skillful use of metaphors in Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazal*s through which he brings several points of views together within one *ghazal*. Bly uses the metaphors of the threads of a fabric woven together to refer to the bringing together of several subject matters and points of views in a single poem: "He wove the many threads of the Persian poetic tradition into a continuous fabric." (Bly 2004, 379).

Bly was highly influenced by Persian poetry, by both its culture and its imagery. The translator of Robert Bly's collection of poetry *Eating the Honey of Words*, Fo'ād Naẓiri writes that Bly was familiar with the literature of Iran and India and had a good knowledge of Rumi, Khayyam, and Ḥāfeẓ. He holds that Bly's approach is more like Khayyam and one of his most important sources of inspiration is Eastern literature and mysticism (Naẓiri 9-11).

Furthermore, Bly himself wrote the *ghazal*s published in two separate volumes *The Night Abraham Called to the Stars*[117] and *My Sentence Was a Thousand Years of Joy*[118]. In his *ghazal*s, he combines the mystic ideas of Sufi poetry with the events of Western History.

Like Bly, but from a feminist point of view, Rich also insisted on the use of images in poetry and their transmission through translation. By transferring new images into their poetry and creating a style analogous to the original in their translations, they tried to bestow an interrogative power on their texts by questioning the norms of their literary system, culture, and society.

---

[117] He dedicated this volume to Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh who was the master of Nimatullahi Sufi Order from 1953 to 2008.

[118] This book of *ghazal*s contains his famous poem about the American led Iraq war.

In the following chapter, an attempt is made to show how the literal translations of Ahmad and his explanations helped Rich to understand the duality and ambiguity that lies in Ghalib's *ghazal*s and to recreate it in her adaptations in English.

Chapter 4

Aijaz Ahmad's Literal Translations and Adrienne Rich's Poetical Adaptations

Aijaz Ahmad's translation project

The book *Ghazals of Ghalib* edited by Aijaz Ahmad is a collection of thirty-seven *ghazal*s by Ghalib with their translations. Each *ghazal* in Urdu is followed by Aijaz Ahmad's literal translation into English and his explanations, and then by one to three poetical adaptations made by the North American poets.[119]

Before being published in Ahmad's volume in 1971, a considerable number of the poetical adaptations by the American poets had appeared in such journals as: a special issue dedicated to Ghalib entitled *Maḥfil* (1968-69), a special Ghalib Centennial booklet 'Poems by Ghalib' published in *The Hudson Review* (1969), *Poetry* (1970), *Delos* (1970), *The Mahalat Review* (1970) and *Transpacific* (1970) (Ahmad 1994, xxxii).

In the Introduction to this collection, Ahmad firstly provides a brief historical and literal introduction to Ghalib's life and work, where he introduces Ghalib as the poet of the time of socio-political crisis in India. Then, he goes on to describe the translation project, his role, and gives a brief discussion on the poetical productions of the American poets.

Ahmad considered the task of translating Ghalib's *ghazal*s very difficult. He argues that what renders translation from Urdu or Persian into English particularly difficult is the fact that they are languages of abstraction. He writes that in the Persian and Urdu *ghazal*s, the movement is always "away from concreteness. Meaning is not expressed or stated; it is signified." (Ahmad 1994, xv).

---

[119] I call these attempts of the North American poets 'poetical adaptations' for, indeed, they did not know the original language, Urdu, and were asked to produce poetic versions of Ghalib's poetry in English based on Ahmad's literal translation and explanations.

Later, he admits to his misinterpretation of many *ghazal*s. For example, in the note that he writes for the paperback edition of the book in 1994, twenty-five years after the project, he concedes that many of his explanations of the *ghazal*s now seem wrong to him:

The exercise was difficult; so, poets that we were, we chose to be playful. But a reprint, almost a quarter century later, of a work that so smacks of the impetuosities of youth involves for me a different, more dreary set of embarrassments. In the intervening years, my views have changed about everything that has a bearing on my own role in this book: the Urdu language and its poetics; the place of Ghalib in our literary and intellectual histories; my understanding of those histories as such; not to speak of poetry itself. Most things in the Introduction, and some in the apparatus I then provided for my collaborators, now strike me as wrong. (Ahmad 1994, xxxi).

In this respect, Annemarie Schimmel argues that the English translations of the Urdu *ghazal*s of Ghalib on the occasion of the centenary celebration of his death in 1969 were:

hitherto anything but successful; too complicated is Ghalib's style, too deeply is he steeped in the whole tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry and Islamic learning. Modern English diction cannot do justice to his intricate web of thought and his involved syntax. (Schimmel 1975, 216).

Whether the literal translations and interpretations by Ahmad are considered right or wrong or whether the poetic productions of the American poets are successful or not, what is of importance is that thanks to Ahmad's project, and his mediation as translator and cultural

interpreter of Ghalib's *ghazal*s, the American poets involved in it were encouraged to translate and write *ghazal*s in English.

It is even supposed that it was probably this alternative interpretation by Ahmad or as Shimmel maintains his "distorted understanding" of Ghalib's poetry that was influential to the development of Rich's poetic language. As Sonali Barua writes:

> Rich's appreciation of Ghalib was informed by what may arguably be regarded as a mediated and distorted understanding of what the poet stood for, that understanding was to prove remarkably nutritive to her growth as a poet and was to produce English *ghazal*s of which Ghalib himself might have approved (Barua 102).

All this may have paved the way for Agha Shahid Ali to set the *ghazal* as a genre in the American literary system. Agha mentions that the efforts of Rich and Merwin in this translation project showed him particularly how the use of free verse in translation can "capture the essence of a poem." (Agha 1991, xviii).

The North American poets involved in this project had their very own diverse methods which, as can be expected, resulted in their producing very diverse adaptations of Ghalib's ghazals. In this process, the translators were influenced by their culture at the time of choosing their method of translation, since a given culture is a determining factor in the method of translation (Lefevere 1992 a, 14).[120]

---

[120] Lefevere "defines translation in terms of manipulation: one of the processes of literary manipulation whereby texts are rewritten across linguistic boundaries and rewriting takes place in a very clearly inscribed cultural and historical context." (Lefevere 1992 b, vii). Lefevere holds that translations are constrained by "the times in which they live" (i.e. historical-ideological factors), "the literary traditions they try to reconcile" (i.e. literary factors), and the features of language they work with (i.e. linguistic factors) (Lefevere 1992 b, 6).

Ahmad, in his own terms, left the American poets free to choose their methods. They were asked to be faithful to the spirit of Ghalib's *ghazal*s, but, they could choose a literal or literary method as they desired. This, therefore, resulted in a multiplicity of methods:

> Some poets, like Adrienne Rich and William Stafford, are brilliantly close to the original- without cluttering their versions with archaism as literal translators of Urdu poetry tend to do, keeping clear of the trite, preserving quite wonderfully the intensity of Ghalib. Others, chiefly William Hunt and David Ray, have drifted quite far from any strict engagements with the details of the original. W.S. Merwin started working in couplets, with scrupulous attention to literal accuracy. But, somewhere along the line, he reverted to a method closer to his own poetry, stripping the image to its essentials, looking at the concrete object with unwavering and sometimes fierce attention, creating through economy of objects and language a poetry of reverberations, a sort of inner rhythm, and of constant possibility (Ahmad 1994, xxvi).[121]

The American poets were not even required to be faithful to the rhyme scheme of the original. Ahmad believed that the formal devices in the English poetic tradition compared to those in the Persian were restrictive. He adds that unity in the *ghazal* is not created by its rhyme and form but by the association of images and allusions (Ahmad 1994, xix).[122]

---

[121] The English translations of Ghalib do not depend on formal rhyme. "Inner rhymes, allusion, verbal associations, wit, and imagistic relations can quite adequately take over the functions performed by the formal end-rhymes in the original Urdu." (Ahmad 1994, xix).

[122] In this respect, Lefevere argues that rhyme and meter in translation are not determined by the 'structure' of the original, but by the 'translation poetics' of the translator's time (Lefevere, 1992 b, 100).

In this, the approach of Ahmad was totally in opposition to that of Agha Shahid Ali who about two decades later reprimanded Ahmad for his lack of attention to form and tried to introduce the *ghazal* by emphasizing its formal features.

Ahmad, on the other hand, tried to communicate the cultural significance of Ghalib's poetry, its intertextual relation with other texts in its literary tradition, by means of paratextual devices, that is, his additional notes and explanations. Therefore, his literal translations can be considered as academic translations:[123]

> Because of the decontextualizing process, intertextual relations in particular cannot be reproduced merely by a close rendering of the words and phrases that establish those relations in the foreign text. Such a rendering, however close, may create a semantic correspondence, but it will not incorporate the specific cultural significance of a foreign intertext, the significance that derives from the recognition of a connection between the foreign text and another text in the foreign cultural tradition (Venuti 2009, 159).

Ghalib's *ghazal*s and their intertextuality with the Persian poetic tradition

In fact, in order to understand Ghalib's *ghazal*s one should be able to distinguish the intertextual relations that they have with other texts in their tradition. This means that one should be familiar with the tradition of Islamic poetry, a point discussed by Abdelfattah Kilito in his books *L'auteur et ses doubles* (1985) and *L'oeil e l'aiguille: Essais sur "Les mille et une nuit"*(1992). He explains that in Arabic literary tradition, and this is applicable also to Persian and Urdu literature, there is no text that belongs solely to a single author or era, but each text is the development of the preceding ones. Kilito states that in the Arabic

---

[123] Ahmad as a translator "manipulates more than one textual level simultaneously… to explain the necessary cultural and literary background for the receiving audience." (Tymoczko 1999, 22).

literary tradition "individual style hardly exists', instead each work manifests a combination of common features from a number of other works (Kilito 2001, 2). He gives the example of the story of an Arab poet, Abu Nuwās, who goes to the Khalaf (al-Ahmar) and asks his permission to compose poetry. Khalaf refuses to let him do so until he has memorized a thousand passages of ancient poetry. Abu Nuwās disappears and returns to Khalaf only when he has learned a thousand lines. This time Khalaf refuses to let him compose poetry till he has forgotten all the passages that he had memorized. Abu Nuwās disappears and passes a long time in seclusion to forget all the verses he had memorized and then goes back to Khalaf. Only then does Khalaf give him permission to compose poetry (Kilito 2001, 14). Kilito narrates this story to indicate that a good poet should be familiar with the works of his predecessors, but should not solely and simply imitate them. Each poet should bring something new to his poetry in order to make his style distinguishable from his predecessors and thus enhance it.

Therefore, in order to understand the *ghazal* the reader or translator should find the intertextual relations that exist between it and other texts in the same tradition. One should pay attention to the literary tradition of Persian poetry that has its roots in the Quran, *hadīth* and in the mystic verses of the great poets such as ʿOmar Khayyām (1048-1131), Jalāleddin Moḥammad Balkhi known as Rumi (1207-1273), Khwaje Shams al-Din Moḥammad Ḥāfeẓ Shirāzi known as Ḥāfeẓ (1325/6-1389/90), and Bidel Dehlavi. It is important to find the allusions to literary, cultural, and religious texts, and historical events. Distinguishing the allusions serves enormously in understanding the true significance of the *ghazal,* so that, if this 'rule' is not followed a totally different interpretation may result.

As a consequence, it can be argued that not only was Ahmad's socio-political interpretation of Ghalib's poems an inspiration to Rich in creating an erotic-political ambivalence in her poems, but the images, forms, themes and the techniques of the *ghazal,*

rooted in its cultural and literary tradition, particularly influenced Rich's project of feminist re-vision.

Adrienne Rich's feminist project and the translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s

Rich, as a feminist poet, aspired to bringing a paradigmatic shift to the situation of women and to empower them. She reckoned that this aspiration could be realized by bringing change to the language of poetry, since she considered poetry a viable instrument for the expression of feminist consciousness. In this respect, she contributed widely to women's language or 'écriture feminine'. In her essay "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision" (1971), she deals with the relation between language and women's identity. She argues how language has long trapped women and states that a change in the concept of sexual identity is essential (Shima 24).

The North American poet desired a language that could reverse the dominant narrative of patriarchy. For this, she turned towards translation of foreign poetry to familiarize herself with new techniques and modes of writing. Among the various translation projects she undertook in the 1950s and 60s, it was that of Ahmad that was the most influential in the development of her poetic language.

Just as it was the language of the *ghazal* that allowed her to interpolate new images, forms and themes into her poetry and to develop a feminist language that went against patriarchy. In fact, for a feminist poet and author, the *ghazal*'s feature of ambiguity was significant as a novel method of writing that offered her the possibility of reversing the dominant narrative of patriarchy. For the feminists the viable instrument and strategy of resistance and creation were the innovations created through language.

Rich found in the *ghazal* a language that was in contrast to the general assumption about conventional languages. The feminists considered all conventional languages as

patriarchal and therefore as a danger to women (Flotow 9). However, the language of the *ghazal* with its ambiguity is a space or opportunity for women to express themselves.

The feminists have criticized many features of languages as obstacles to their struggles. Such authors as Luce Irigaray and Monique Wittig criticized the language grammar since it supports the model of gender as a binary relation. Wittig suggested the destruction of sex so that women can assume the status of a universal subject. She did this through the defense of the pre-gendered person, characterized as freedom. Consequently, considering the two languages French and English, she criticized the fact that persons are gender-marked within language which "gives way to a primitive ontological concept that enforces in language a division of beings into sexes…" (Wittig qtd. in Butler 2006, 27-9).

The *ghazal*'s gender ambiguity was an important factor in this regard. In the *ghazal*, the gender of the addressee is concealed and therefore the beloved can be considered a female, male or androgynous. Moreover, there is no pre-determined description of women. As a result the clichéd definitions of male and female are altered and thus it offers itself as an alternative to the conventional languages.

However, it was not only the *ghazal*'s gender ambiguity, but its erotic-mystical ambiguity that attracted Rich as a means for developing her feminist language. The intertextual and intratextual relations in the *ghazal* showed her new ways of writing to critique the patriarchal tradition. As Bermann puts it, the *ghazal* created for Rich a site for feminist expression, claiming power, transforming "cultural myths" and changing the narratives of patriarchy (Bermann 2011, 102-3).

An analysis of Ghalib's *ghazal*s, Ahmad's literal translations, and Rich's poetical adaptations

In this analysis, the attempt is to demonstrate how Rich, in her poetical versions of it, creates the same intertextual and intratextual relations found in Ghalib's poetry. For this reason, firstly the intertextual relations between Ghalib's *ghazal*s with other texts from the same literary tradition will be briefly discussed. Then, based on Ahmad's literal translations, the intertextual relations created in Rich's poetical versions will be explored. In addition, the intratextual relations between words and images within the *ghazal*s will be examined to show how Rich maintains them in her renderings. Finally, to emphasize how close her poetic version of Ghalib's *ghazal*s is to the original, a comparison with the versions produced by other poet-translators in the group will be made.

The criteria in analysing Ghalib's *ghazal*s are both Ahmad's interpretation and the cultural and literary tradition of Islamic poetry. Ahmad as a mediator between Ghalib's poems and the North American poets played an important role with his literal translations and explanations. On the other hand, and more importantly, when interpreting the *ghazal*s, the cultural and literary tradition of the poems, based on their intertextual relation with other texts, are taken into consideration.

In order to avoid repetition and for the economy of space, the text and explanation of a selection of *ghazal*s are given in their entirety while the samples of the others are given in the course of this analysis. The literal translation by Ahmad and the renderings by Rich and other American poets are set out as paralell text to make the task of comparison easier.

In order to analyze Ghalib's *ghazal*s and compare them with their translations, both semantic and formal aspects should be considered. However, obviously the semantic aspect is emphasized as in poetry translation normally what is lost is form, while the themes and

images are retained. In this regard Adrienne Rich mentions: "...what carries over most powerfully in translation is the poetic image" (1976, xx).

The *ghazal*s can also be analyzed based on their theme and the group of words and images used in them. There are generally two types of classical *ghazal*: the love *ghazal (ghazal-e 'āsheghāne)* and the mystic *ghazal (ghazal-e 'ārefāne)* (Shamisa 1991). Then, there are two other types of *ghazal* that derive from them. They are the love-mystic *ghazal (ghazal-e 'ārefāne-'āsheghāne)* and the *qalandari ghazal* (de Bruijn 1997).[124]

In order to distinguish the type of *ghazal,* one should pay attention to the group of words employed in it. The group of words used in a love *ghazal* concerns the expression of the lover's feeling and passion and describes the earthly beloved. The group of words frequently used in a mystical *ghazal* normally concerns Sufi expressions, spiritual concepts, and divine love. If the group of words is a combination of love and Sufi words and the poem addresses both earthly and divine love, then it is a love-mystic or erotic-mystic *ghazal*. If the group of words contains Sufi words but the concept is basically a profligate who denies the accepted religious or political principles and esteems the devalued and condemned issues, it is *qalandari*. Although, it should be kept in mind that a combination of types can be found in individual *ghazal*s.[125]

A good example of a love-mystic *ghazal* in Ahmad's collection is the following:

Ghazal **IV**

---

[124] Foruzanfar, in more general and simple terms, defines three kinds of *ghazal*: "sensous *ghazal* which describes the organs of the beloved, the mystical *ghazal* which is about the divine love, and the *ghazal* which has a tendency to libertine imagery (*qalandaryāt*) which expresses the spiritual experience and is so close to the symbolic language of classical Sufism." (Foruzānfar qtd. in Bukhari Lubis 117).

[125] Another important aspect that reflects the theme of the *ghazal* is *radif* (refrain). As mentioned before, *radif* is one word or a combination of two or three words repeated throughout the *ghazal*. Therefore, in many cases its meaning and significance may be of paramount importance to uncovering the meaning of a *ghazal*.

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
I go/depart, taking with me the scars of my unfulfilled desire to have lived (better, longer, in a better condition or time); I am (like) an extinguished candle, no more becoming/befitting in an Assembly of friends.	I go now, wearing the scars of my hope for a better time; I'm a pinched-out candle, no longer good for the banquet-table.
To the six appearances, the door of the mirror is opened; Here, the distinction between the perfect and the defective is gone.	The door of the mirror no longer opens to the six senses; here the distinction between defect and perfection is lost.
Ardor has undone the binding strings of the veil that concealed Beauty; But for the sight itself, there is nothing in between.	An ardent hand has undone the binding-strings of the veil, but there is nothing behind it that sight can pierce.
From my heart, the desire to cultivate fidelity has disappeared/died because, there/in that place, There is nothing to be gained except the vain desire to gain (no reward, only a vain expectation of reward).	I have given up cherishing faithfulness in my heart; because there no reward exists, only the vain desire of reward.
I am not afraid of the cruelty of love, but Asad, The heart that I was once proud of is no more (what it used to be). (16).	I don't shrink at the cruelty of love; but, Asad, the heart that I took pride in once is no longer what it was. (20).

As can be noticed, Ahmad tries to cover the diverse semantic and cultural significance of words in his literal version by providing other possible significances of words and phrases in paranthesis or by simply giving two interpretations or translations of a word or phrase by using the forward slash sign.

In his literal translations, he keeps the symbolic images of the Persian and Urdu tradition of poetry and tries to be consistent in choosing their equivalents so that the reader can recognize the same image or metaphor in all the *ghazal*s in the collection. In this manner, he underlines their frequency and significance.

The group of images used in this poem, 'unfulfilled desire,' 'extinguished candle,' 'the door of the mirror,' 'assembly of friends,' 'ardor,' 'binding strings of the veil,' 'concealed beauty,' and 'cruelty of love' indicates that it is a love-mystic *ghazal*. The theme of this *ghazal* is love but the use of mystic symbols such as 'mirror,' candle,' and 'assembly of friends,' indicate that it is also a Sufi poem. The tone of the poem is mournful and the poet laments that his desire to gain love is unfulfilled.

In the first couplet the poet speaks of his unfulfilled desire and his hopeless state. In the second line of the same couplet, a line that is normally a depiction or illustration of the first line, he uses the image of an extinguished candle which stands for the lover who has lost hope and is no longer befitting in an assembly of friends. 'Candle' is a key word in Sufi poetry. It is the equivalent of *sham'* شمع in Persian and Urdu. The symbolic significance attributed to the candle is the lover that should burn and annihilate himself in order to become one with the Beloved, who is, fire. In this case, Rumi considers 'candle' as the wayfarer and its 'fire' as the Divine love (Tājdini 607). If the candle loses its fire it symbolizes the lover who has lost desire, hope, and enchantment (Moshtāq Mehr 498). Moreover, in Rumi's poems the 'candle' is the symbol of the beloved. Relevant to this is a well-known symbolic

image in Rumi's poetry that depicts the butterfly symbolizing the lover turning around the candle which symbolizes the beloved. The butterfly desires to come into union with the beloved, but as it gets closer to the candle, the flame burns its wings. This symbolic scene stands for the burning and annihilation of the lover in union with the Beloved (Tājdini 603).[126]

'Assembly of friends' or 'banquet-table' is the equivalent of *maḥfel* محفل in Persian and Urdu. It stands for the gathering of the Sufis in a tavern to drink wine and celebrate their rituals.

In the second couplet Ghalib depicts the 'mirror' as perceiving all appearances either perfect or defective. It is the equivalent of *Āyene* آینه in Persian and Urdu. 'Mirror' is one of the recurrent images in the Persian and particualrly in the Urdu tradition of poetry. Ahmad explains that it represents perfect truth and clarity (Ahmad 1994, 3). *Āyene* is a term used with many diverse connotations, such as 'mirror of the soul', 'mirror of beauty', 'mirror of existence'. It is widely used by the mystics and mystic poets such as Rumi, Ḥāfeẓ and Bidel as the element that reflects the beauty of the Divine. In his *ghazal*s, Rumi uses the mirror as the symbol of man's soul and the place where the divine appears. In fact, it is believed that the Divine appears in entirety only to the mirror of man's heart. However, this presence and appearance is so strong that the lover who experiences it becomes drunk and ruined and finally through his own annihilation becomes one with the Beloved (Moshtāq Mehr 161).

In addition, 'mirror' is widely used in the poetry of the Indian poet Bidel Dehlavi. The Iranian expert and Professor Emeritus of Islamic and Persian literature Mahmoud Shafi'i

---

[126] Gianroberto Scarcia and Stefano Pellò define the symbolic significance of the 'candle' in Ḥāfeẓ's *ghazal*s. They explain that the image of moth and candle represent a symbolic love story. The lover-moth attracted by the light and heat of the beloved-candle gets closer to it till it becomes annihilated in its fire and consequently becomes one with the beloved. The image of the candle alone is the symbol of the lover that annihilates himself from the ardour of his emotion and passion (Scarcia and Pellò 2005, 724).

Kadkani calls Bidel 'the poet of mirrors,'[127] because of the abundant use of mirror-image in his poetry. Shafiʿi explains that for Bibil the mirror is an eye that is always open and enchanted by what it perceives (Shafiʿi Kadkani 2009, 323).

In the third couplet, there appears one of the most important words in the Islamic tradition of poetry, 'veil.' 'Veil' is the equivalent of the words *neqāb* نقاب *parde* پرده or حجاب *ḥejāb* in Persian and Urdu. In the tradition of Islamic poetry, it symbolizes anything that stands between the lover and the beloved (Moshtāq Mehr 268). Another image attributed to 'veil' is that God manifests himself to man under a veil. It is because His beauty is so immense that if presented without a veil, it could not be supported by human sight (Tājdini 167).

'Veil' is a key image in this tradition since it conveys ambiguity. As the beloved is concealed under a veil, its identity and gender are concealed. Therefore, the beloved can be earthly or divine, male or female. In this respect, Nuzhat Abbas in her essay "Conversing to/with Shame: Translation and Gender in the Urdu *Ghazal*" argues that the concept of the veil in the classical *ghazal* leaves the gender of the beloved indeterminate. It is not clear who or what is behind the veil: "The indeterminate gender is made to function as a veil or 'purdah.' This veil or 'purdah' thus frees the beloved to become a signifier of great things such as divine love." (Abbas 143).[128]

'Ardor' is the equivalent of *showq* شوق and *mawaddat* مودت in Persian and Urdu. Nurbakhsh translates it as 'yearning' and defines it as:

> being so inflamed with 'yearning' (*shauq*) that one tears the veil from the
>
> heart, yet holds back tears from the eyes, so that others remain unaware of this

---

[127] شاعر آینه ها/ Shāʿer-e Āyene-hā

[128] He adds that in modern poetry there is an appeal for clearness of genders. Therefore, it creates a crucial moment and a conflict in translation (Abbas 144).

'love-kindness,' for 'loving-kindness' is the mystery of Lordship (*robubiyat*) and disclosure of this is 'unbelief' (*kofr*), unless one is overcome by a state. (Nurbakhsh 16).

In another entry in the Encyclopedia of Sufi Symbolism by Nurbakhsh *shuq* is translated as 'ardent love'. Nurbakh explains:

In the terminology of the wayfarers, 'ardent love' is one of the levels of 'loving-kindness', being the 'excitement' (*hayajān*) of the heart, characterized by 'passion.' It has five degrees: the first is lamentation and anxiety, …; the second is weeping; the third is 'grief' (*ḥasrat*), …; the fourth is 'reflection' (*tafakkor*)…. (Nurbakhsh 22).

The fourth couplet again depicts a lover who has lost hope of attaining love. Here, the key word is 'desire.' 'Desire' is the equivalent of *ḥasrat* حسرت in Persian and Urdu. Nurbakhsh translates *hasrat* into English as 'grief. He defines it as the third degree of 'ardent love,' "in which station the wretched one in 'ardent love' grieves for his cherished moments which have been wasted and regrets every instant which has passed without his Beloved." (Nurbakhsh 22).

In the last couplet, the poet uses his pen-name (*takhalloṣ*), Asad,[129] to express his hopelessness.

---

[129] 'Asad' literally means 'lion'. It is one of the adjectives used for God and is associated with the sun. When a mystic achieves the high levels of spirituality and considers him/herself at the same level as God, he/she consequently, calls him/herself 'Asad.'

Based on the explanations given above, it can be noted that without a knowledge of the Islamic tradition of poetry, one cannot grasp all the significance of a *ghazal* so part of it will inevitably be ignored which may result in an erroneous interpretation of the poem.

In the collection of thirty-seven *Ghazals of Ghalib*, eighteen *ghazal*s are followed by the poetical adaptations by Adrienne Rich,[130] and as is evident in the following quotations Ahmad appreciates the collaboration of Rich:

> Work on this book brought me the gift of Adrienne Rich's friendship, with those words of Charles Olson which she quoted in her own book of those years: 'what does not change/ Is the will to change.' (Ahmad 1994, xxxi).

By her poetical adaptation, Rich tries to stay as close as possible to Ahmad's literal translation. Rich uses the cultural and symbolic images of Ghalib's *ghazal*s almost exactly as they appear in Ahmad's translation. For example, she uses the images, "scars of hope," "pinched-out candle," "banquet-table," "the door of the mirror," "ardent hand," "the binding strings of the veil," and "cruelty of love."

Rich keeps the form of the couplet and the *ghazal*'s mournful tone in her lines and succeeds in conveying the meaning of the original. In her adaptation, she replaces the image of 'extinguished candle' used by Ahmad by 'pinched-out candle', 'assembly of friends' is replaced by 'banquet-table' which is even more communicative of its mystical significance. She uses the image 'the door of the mirror' exactly as used by Ahmad. She replaces the word 'ardor' by 'ardent had'. In this manner, she personifies the word ardor and makes its imagery stronger, and more importantly indicates the ambiguity of love and mystic poetry by giving

---

[130] The only other poet in the group that has as many adaptations published in the volume as Rich, is W.S. Merwin.

more emphasis to the physical body. Finally, she keeps the symbolic word 'veil' in her adaptations as used by Ahmad.

Moreover, she keeps the *takhalloṣ* of Ghalib, namely 'Asad,' in the last couplet. Ahmad refers to the tradition of using the pen-name *takhalloṣ* of the poet in the last line by explaining that the *takhalloṣ* of Mirza Ghalib in many *ghazal*s is *Asad* (Ahmad 1994, 18).

Her efforts lead to the creation of the same intertextual relations as in Ghalib's *ghazal*s. This becomes even more evident when compared with the poetical adaptations of the other poet-translators in the group.

For example, William Hunt renders the same *ghazal* as follows:

Ghazal IV

Aijaz Ahmad	William Hunt
I go/depart, taking with me the scars of my unfulfilled desire to have lived (better, longer, in a better condition or time); I am (like) an extinguished candle, no more becoming/befitting in an Assembly of friends.	When I leave I'll hurt like a man beaten up by his old gang, a man who got what he asked for. Dropped like a used lightbulb, I won't be shocked.
To the six appearances, the door of the mirror is opened; Here, the distinction between the perfect and the defective is gone.	There is no way to fix what's happened inside me. Even with a door I probably shouldn't go back in.
Ardor has undone the binding strings of the veil that concealed Beauty; But for the sight itself, there is nothing in	For a time white heat drew me on to undress her, I forget who. It was the spaces between us that

between.	I loved.
From my heart, the desire to cultivate fidelity has disappeared/died because, there/in that place, There is nothing to be gained expect the vain desire to gain (no reward, only a vain expectation of reward).	What can you get watching a life run like clockwork? It is time to go when you don't even want loyalty.
I am not afraid of the cruelty of love, but Asad, The heart that I was once proud of is no more (what it used to be). (16).	Love could become more harsh, so what? Weather changes that way. You see, I've nothing to be proud of. (19).

As can be noticed Hunt not only changes the love-mystic ambiguity of the *ghazal* and produces mere love poetry, but he also changes the words, images, intertextual relations, context and even the form of the couplets. He creates a simple love poem by using the pronoun 'her' and the words 'heat', and 'undress'. Moreover, he changes the cultural and historical context of the *ghazal* and produces a poem set in the North American context by using the words 'man,' 'beaten up', 'gang', 'lightbulb', 'shocked', 'fix'. In addition, he changes the poem's tone. The mournful tone of Ghalib's poem has turned into indifference.

William Stafford is closer to Ghalib in respect to Hunt in the sense that he keeps the general theme and the tone of Ghalib's *ghazal* in his English version:

Ghazal IV

Aijaz Ahmad	William Stafford
I go/depart, taking with me the scars of my	No more campaigns, I have lost them all.

unfulfilled desire to have lived (better, longer, in a better condition or time); I am (like) an extinguished candle, no more becoming/befitting in an Assembly of friends.	A doused light, I can't stand all the convivial fraud.
To the six appearances, the door of the mirror is opened; Here, the distinction between the perfect and the defective is gone.	I can't find the truth. The world reflects crooked, or the crystal ball distorts. The seer turns blind.
Ardor has undone the binding strings of the veil that concealed Beauty; But for the sight itself, there is nothing in between.	The brilliant and the real_ I still know it's there, but you never attain it by jiggling the senses.
From my heart, the desire to cultivate fidelity has disappeared/died because, there/in that place, There is nothing to be gained expect the vain desire to gain (no reward, only a vain expectation of reward).	So, it's dead in my breast, the zeal, the principle_ Its only reward was the gleam while it vanished.
I am not afriad of the cruelty of love, but Asad, The heart that I was once proud of is no more (what it used to be). (16).	To you, my younger self: I still face the cruel game, but this heart that beat hopeful can't take it any more. (21).

Stafford keeps the form of the couplet, however, he fails to maintain its symbolic and cultural images. This version does not produce the same intertextual relations and as a result does not create the ambiguity of love-mystic poetry.

Ahmad points out that each translator had highlighted one aspect of Ghalib's poetry. That is why by giving two or three diverse translations for each *ghazal* its whole essense can be perceived. He insists that there is no right way of translating and that the message of this translation project is that translation is approximation (Ahmad 1994, xviii).

The third *ghazal* in the collection is another evident example of where Rich creates the same intertextual relations in her renderings by using the same images and allusions.

Ghazal III

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
Simplicity of our desires! Meaning that Again we remember her who cast a spell on our eyes.	Old, simple cravings! Again We recall one who bewitched us.
Life could have passed anyway! Why did we remember the way on which you tread.	Life could have run on the same. Why did we call her to mind?
Again, my thoughts go to your street! But, I remember the heart (my heart) that has been lost (there).	Again, my thoughts haunt your street; I remember losing my wits there.
What utter wilderness it is! Seeing the desert, I remember my house.	Desolation's own neighborhood. In the desert, my own house rises.
In my boyhood (boyishness), Asad, I had once lifted a stone (to throw) at Majnoon;	I too, like the other boys, once picked up a stone to cast

| But, immediately, I remembered my own head. (12). | at the crazy lover Majnoon some foreboding stayed my hand. (15). |

It is a love-mystic poem that depicts the vain wandering of the lover in search of his beloved. The most important metaphors and allusion are used in the last three couplets. The poet mentions Majnun, a well-known literary character in Persian and Urdu literature, to refer to someone who has gone mad from love.

In the third couplet, the word 'street' is a key word that indicates it is a love poem. 'Street,' the equivalent of *kuche* كوچه, *kuy* كوى, is normally used in love poetry to indicate the place where the beloved is. In the fourth couplet, the word 'desert' in contrast reminds us that it can be a mystic poem. 'Desert' is the equivalent of *biyābān* بيابان or *dasht* دشت. It stands for the spiritual world in which man can get closer to God. The mystic goes to the desert to find God. In addition, it indicates desolation. In the last couplet, the poet makes an allusion to Majnun. This refers to the story of the lovers Leilā and Majnūn narrated in the poems by the twelfth century Persian poet, Nezāmi Ganjavi (1141-1209). The lover Majnun cannot attain his beloved one, Leilā, and therefore goes insane from his love. The word Majnun literally signifies crazy or lunatic.

Rich keeps the words 'street,' 'desert,' and the allusion to 'Majnun' in her poetic version. In this manner, she foreignizes her text. However, since she fulfills its communicative purposes, it is accepted in the target culture and therefore, can bring change. (Schaffner, Adab 327)

Rich brings the cultural elements of Ghalib's poetry into her version. However, in order to avoid misunderstanding for the English language reader who is not familiar with the Persian poetic tradition, she writes explicitly part of the implied information in the *ghazal*. For example, while Ahmad uses the allusion to Majnun and gives extra information about it

in his explanations, Rich writes the implied information of 'a crazy lover' when referring to Majnun in her version. By keeping the images and allusions, Rich creates the same intertextual relation and as a result makes cultural exchange possible. As Tymoczko argues, unfamiliar cultural information resides not only in lexical items, but also in allusions (Tymoczko 26). Susan Stewart writes in this regard:

> While the allusive act always bears reference to and creates tradition, it also always bears reference to and creates the situation at hand, articulating the relation between that situation and tradition, and articulating the varying degrees of access available to tradition (Stewart 1146).

In keeping the allusions that are totally foreign to the English language reader, Rich provides their implicit significance within her rendering in order to create the same intertextual relations as in Ghalib's *ghazal*s.

Another example is a couplet in *ghazal* XXI:

Ghazal XXI

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
The dove is merely a handful of ashes and the nightingale a prison of color; O my cry, the scar of burnt heart is nothing (in comparison). (97).	The turtle-dove is a heap of cinders, the nightingale a vivid cage of sounds; O my cry, you are nothing to these. (103).

The images depicted by Ghalib in this couplet are the color of the dove and the nightingale. Ahmad explains that in this *ghazal* both 'dove' and 'nightingale' are the visual

images that stand for the burnt heart. However, the attribution of colors to these birds is something novel and strange. In the tradition of Islamic poetry, it is normally the sound of the nightingale that is described.

Ahmad explains it as: "In the traditional imagery of the Urdu *ghazal*, the lover is the bird which goes to the orchard, or the garden, to look for his beloved, the flower (the bird is, invariably, the nightingale)" (Ahmad 1994, 82). Moshtāq Mehr explains that *gol* گل 'flower' is the symbol of the beloved, his/her heavenly and divine beauty, the divine mysteries and secrets, and the perfect man (Moshtāq Mehr 559-563). Tājdini writes that *bolbol* بلبل 'nightingale' is the symbol of the lover and the mystic. In Rumi's poetry when there is no orchard or flower the nightingale remains silent (Tājdini 139-140).

Based on Ahmad's explanation, Rich creates the combination of 'a vivid cage of sounds'. In this manner, she not only refers to the color of the nightingale but indicates its symbolic significance that is related to its tradition, that is, singing in a cage or in the orchard.

W.S. Merwin renders the same couplet as:

Ghazal XXI

Aijaz Ahmad	W.S. Merwin
The dove is merely a handful of ashes and the nightingale a prison of color; O my cry, the scar of burnt heart is nothing (in comparison). (97).	The heart is burnt out but its sufferings were nothing to yours oh my cry charred dove nightingale still burning (102).

Merwin changes the form of the couplet and creates a stanza of five lines. He keeps the theme but does not keep its images and intertextual relations. By associating 'burning'

with both dove and nightingale he ignores the symbolic significance of the nightingale in the tradition of Persian poetry.

William Stafford renders it as:

Ghazal XXI

Aijaz Ahmad	William Stafford
The dove is merely a handful of ashes and the nightingale a prison of color; O my cry, the scar of burnt heart is nothing (in comparison). (97).	The dove is a clutch of ashes, nightingale a clench of color: A cry in a scarred, burnt heart, to that, is nothing. (104).

Stafford keeps the images, theme and form of the original *ghazal*, however, he does not communicate the implied significance attributed to the nightingale in the tradition of Persian poetry, since he refers only to its color but not its sound.

Another example is *ghazal* XIX. It is a mystical *ghazal* that demonstrates a common image in Urdu poetry, the injured feet of the wayfarer in the desert. Below are two couplets from this *ghazal* in which this image is depicted as follows:

Ghazal XIX

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
On every step, the distance of the goal from me is evident; At my own speed, the desert runs from me.	Every step I take unrolls the distance further; racing the desert, it lengthens underfoot.
Because of the blisters, the way in the desert of my madness	Footprints of blood in the path I travelled lit up the desert, a track of crimson pearls.

Remained illuminated like a chain of pearls. (89).	(92).

Ahmad marks it as a 'visual image' and explains: "If a man who has bleeding blisters on the soles of his feet walks through a desert, he will leave behind him a trail of bloodstains on the sand." (Ahmad 1994, 90).

In her rendering, Rich emphasizes the image of blistered feet in order to create the same intertextual relations in her version. She does so by replacing 'runs from me' with 'it lengthens underfoot,' and replaces 'blisters' with 'footprints of blood'. By using the word 'foot' in the images that she creates, she puts emphasis on the image of 'feet of the wayfarer in the desert'. She repeats the word 'foot' to make an association between the couplets and also to express its implied meaning or its mystical significance in the tradition of Urdu poetry. In this manner she keeps the intertextual relation that exists between this *ghazal* with other texts in the tradition of Urdu poetry.

W.S. Merwin renders the same couplets as follows:

Ghazal XIX

Aijaz Ahmad	W.S. Merwin
On every step, the distance of the goal from me is evident; At my own speed, the desert runs from me.	Where I'm going is farther at every step the desert runs from me with my own feet
Because of the blisters, the way in the desert of my madness Remained illuminated like a chain of pearls. (89).	The trail of my madness crosses the desert Red pearls on a page of manuscript (91).

Here although Merwin has changed the number of lines, he succeeds in keeping the theme, the images and the intertextual relations of the original.

Another example is *ghazal* X where Rich again uses the same words, images, and allusions and as a result creates the same intertextual realtions in her poetic version.

Ghazal **X**

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
Why wasn't I burnt/consumed in fire, having seen the luster of the friend's face; I burn, seeing my own powers of sight/my own ability to see, without losing sight, such splendor.	Why didn't I shrink in the blaze of that face? I flare up, apprehending the gaze that returned that vision unblinded.
The people of the world call me a fire-worshipper, Seeing me busy in complaints which shed sparks.	Out in the world they call me a disciple of fire because the words of my grief fall like a shower of sparks.
The blood of many has been proved on the neck of the decanter; Seeing you walk, the wave of the wine trembles.	Many have fallen in love with the slim neck of the decanter; seeing you walk, the wave of the wine trembles with envy.
We get sold ourselves, along with the wealth of poetry; But only after seeing/making sure of the true inclination of the nature of the buyer.	We and the poems we make get bought and sold together; but we knew all along for whom they were intended.

The Illuminating Lightning was to fall upon us, not on the Sinai; (They) give the wine only after seeing the receptacle of the drinker. (Wine should be given only after seeing the goblet of the drinker.) (48).	The lightning-stroke of the vision was meant for us, not for Sinai; the wine should be poured for him who possesses the goblet. (51).

It is a mystical and a love poem. In the first two couplets the group of words 'fire,' 'the friend's face,' 'burn,' 'sight,' 'fire-worshipper,' and 'spark' are a reference to the story of Moses on Mount Sinai where God appeared to him in the form of fire.

In the third couplet Ghalib compares the beloved's figure to a decanter. Decanter or goblet is the equivalent of *minā* مینا *jām* جام, or *sāghar* ساغر in Persian and Urdu. Ahmad explains the image of the decanter as:

> One has to remember the shape of the Persian decanter to appreciate the visual image in the first line. A phrase is, in fact, used in Urdu to describe a slender and shapely neck, mark of great beauty, which would literally mean "neck having (resembling) a decanter. (Ahmad 1994, 49).

As already explained, 'decanter' or 'goblet' stands for the human body and in this case for a perfect and beautiful body. However, the decanter is full of red wine which can also stand for Divine Essence. Therefore, the beloved is Divine and again refers to God as the beloved of Moses. Moreover, there is an association between the color red of blood to that of wine in a decanter and with the color red of fire. Red is the prevalent color in Ghalib's *ghazal*s. It can be the red of such elements as blood, wine, the heart, and the rose.

Finally, in the last line Ghalib makes an allusion to the myth of Moses on Mount Sinai when God appears to him. By so doing, Ghalib creates the metaphor of the lover or the mystic burning for union with the beloved. Ahmad reminds readers that the real meaning in a *ghazal*, is not the superficial one, but its symbolic significance. Its theme is perceived through understanding the association of images. He writes in this regard: "As often happens in Ghalib, the associative content of the metaphor is even richer than the actual content of that for which the metaphor is first created" (Ahmad 1994, 44).

Rich uses the same symbolic words and allusion as in Ahmad's translation. She also brings together the group of words 'blaze,' 'face,' 'flare up,' 'gaze,' 'vision,' 'a disciple of fire,' and 'sparks.' The association that she creates between these words, as in the original, refers to the story of Moses on Mount Sinai. In addition, she uses the same image 'neck of the decanter,' and associates it with the words 'wine' in the same line and the word 'goblet' in the last couplet. Moreover, by keeping the association between words, she also conveys the color red as in the original. Finally, in the last couplet, she uses the word Sinai thus making a clear allusion to the story of Moses.

As can be noticed, Rich creates the stylistic and cultural features of Ghalib's poetry not only by the use of the same words, images, and allusions which create the same intertextual relation in her renderings, but by making an association between words and images in a single *ghazal*. This not only helps Rich to use the same stylistic features as Ghalib but at the same time to create the same intratextual relations.

The other poets mostly ignore the intertextual and intratextual relations in their renderings and choose a domesticating method. William Hunt translated the same *ghazal*s as:

Ghazal X

Aijaz Ahmad	William Hunt

Why wasn't I burnt/consumed in fire, having seen the luster of the friend's face; I burn, seeing my own powers of sight/my own ability to see, without losing sight, such splendor.	What we mistake for the ocean I gave your name. The rest of my life was spent building this ship.
The people of the world call me a fire-worshipper, Seeing me busy in complaints which shed sparks.	My wife, my child, my father Walked further inland. Thin reeds, they watched as I tore down our house.
The blood of many has been proved on the neck of the decanter; Seeing you walk, the wave of the wine trembles.	Its frame sagged. It begged for sails. Your body before me swayed, filled with drowning.
We get sold ourselves, along with the wealth of poetry; But only after seeing/making sure of the true inclination of the nature of the buyer.	What we are we choose to spend in what we sing and I watch you careless as those, who are without hope, in love.
The Illuminating Lightning was to fall upon us, not on the Sinai; (They) give the wine only after seeing the receptacle of the drinker. (Wine should be given only after seeing the goblet of the drinker.) (48).	I have reached the thinnest horizon. All of my words to you were for others to share, but they are more distant now than your arms. (52).

Hunt's poem is a free version of Ghalib's. It does not keep the form, the theme, or the images. The only thing that he takes from Ghalib is the subject of a hopeless lover who cannot reach his beloved, but even here he differs from the original in that his beloved is solely earthly.

Overall, it can be said that in the analysis of Ghalib's *ghazal*s not only should the intertextual relations with other texts in the tradition be explored, but the relations created between images within a *ghazal,* that is, its intratextual relations or association of images. The relevance of these intertextual and intratextual relations and their production in Rich's translation not only demonstrate how cultural exchange takes place, but how Rich adopts the techniques used in composing a *ghazal*.

Rich skillfully creates these layers of meaning for each image in her adaptations. In this manner, she produces an association between images which are then open to diverse interpretations. Thus doing, she bestows the same ambiguity on her poetical versions as exist in the original.

The intratextual relation in Ghalib's *ghazal*s is the association of images and words in a single *ghazal* that allow him to use disunited couplets whose unity stems from the association of their images. Rich writes in this regard in a letter to Ahmad soon after beginning to work on the translations:

> The marvelous thing about these *ghazal*s is precisely (for me) their capacity for both concentration and a gathering, cumulative effect… I needed a way of dealing with very complex and scattered material which was demanding a different kind of unity from that imposed on it by the isolated, single poem: in which certain experiences needed to find both their intensest rendering and to join with other experiences not logically or chronologically connected in any

obvious way. I've been trying to make the couplets as autonomous as possible and to allow the unity of the *ghazal* to emerge from underneath, as it were, through images, through associations, private and otherwise…. For me, the couplets work only when I can keep them from being too epigrammatic; what I'm trying for, not always successfully, is a clear image or articulation behind which there are shadows, reverberations, reflections of reflections. In other words, something that will not remind the Western reader of haiku or any other brief, compact form, such as Pope's couplet in English, or the Greek anthology" (Rich qtd. in Ahmad 1994, xxv-xxvi).

A good example is *Ghazal* XII, a love and mystical poem. In this *ghazal* the art of Ghalib in using innovative images and making an association between them is manifest:

Ghazal **XII**

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
I am neither the flower/blossoming of song, not the curtain/tapestry/web/shelter/note of music; I am the sound of my own defeat/loss/breaking.	I'm neither the loosening of song nor the close-drawn tent of music; I'm the sound, simply, of my own breaking.
You are absorbed in the embellishment of your curls; And for me are the concerns/apprehension of matters far and long.	You were meant to sit in the shade of your rippling hair; I was made to look further, into a blacker tangle.
We brag of wisdom/foresight/self-possession,	All my self-possession is self-delusion;

but it is merely the deception of a simple heart (creation of simple-mindedness); We are occupied wholly with the secrets of an affable temper.	what violent effort, to maintain this nonchalance!
(Now that) you have appeared (have become manifest), be blessed With the prostration/adoration of the forehead that bends (to touch the ground) for suplication/with longing.	Now that you've come, let me touch you in greeting as the forehead of the beggar touched the ground.
(Now that) you ask for me, it is no wonder; I am helpless/poor/afflicted/miserable, and you who look after the afflicted. (55).	No wonder you came looking for me, you who care for the grieving, and I the sound of grief. (58).

In his translation, Ahmad provides the very diverse significances that can be attributed to its words and images. In this manner he shows the semantic layers and shadows of images.

In the first couplet, there is an association between the words 'flower', 'song', 'note of music', 'sound', and 'breaking'. In the second couplet the association of images is between the curls of the hair of the beloved and the snarls of Ghalib's thoughts and anxieties. In the tradition of Persian poetry the hair of the beloved is always depicted as long, curly and black. The blackness of the beloved's hair, here, is implied information that indicates the darkness of Ghalib's thoughts and apprehension. In the fourth couplet, the word 'prostration' stands for *sajde* indicating a ritual in Muslim's prayer.

Rich succeeds in creating the same intertextual and intratextual relations in her renderings. She produces the same layers of meaning and ambiguity that exist in the original.

In the first couplet, Rich replaces the word 'blossoming' by 'loosening' in order to make an association with the image of 'close-drawn tent' that follows it. In the second couplet, Rich skillfully conveys the implied significance of the beloved's hair by creating the combination of 'blacker tangle'. The word 'black' refers both to the blackness of the hair and thoughts, and the word 'tangle' refers to both the curls of the beloved's hair and the complications of Ghalib's thoughts. In this manner, Rich creates an association between the image of 'the shade of your rippling hair' and 'a blacker tangle'. In the fourth couplet, Rich uses the word 'touch' and 'beggar' to convey the act of blessing and greeting some one which is associated with the image of the forehead touching the ground to ask for blessing or when praying. The image of a 'beggar' also symbolically refers to the beggar of love.

Finally, in the last couplet, she replaces 'afflicted' used by Ahmad with 'the sound of grief' to associate it with 'song' and 'music' in the first couplet. In fact, she bestows unity on her *ghazal*s by creating association between its images.

The poetical adaptations of David Ray and W.S. Merwin are also given for this *ghazal*. David Ray changes the form, the theme, and the subject of this *ghazal*. He actually produces a new poem that was partly inspired by Ghalib. He creates stanzas that vary between three to eight lines. For example, the following stanzas seem to be inspired by the second couplet of Ghalib's *ghazal*:

Ghazal XII

Aijaz Ahmad	David Ray
You are absorbed in the embellishment of your curls; And for me are the concerns/apprehension of matters far and long. (55).	You sit, so absorbed, so oblivious, As if apprehension had left you long ago, Made you like a silent sea that will never more

	Endure a storm. You have created
	Some new and original simple-mindedness,
	Some ecstasy before which my longing must
	Bow down. Even your curls are an invitation
	To matters far and long. Your dreams? Yes
	Now I see this,
	You are set upon by dreams, pinned in
	Their golden light, like Saint Sebastian
	And his arrows. You sit like a fantastic
	Roman saint caught in a wood that survives.
	You sit dazed by dreams
	you've stolen from night. (60).

Whereas Merwin changes the form of the couplets. He tries to transmit the theme of the original *ghazal*, but he does not transfer its symbolic images. He does not keep the intertextual relations and diverse layers of meaning except in the first couplet:

Ghazal XII

Aijaz Ahmad	W.S. Merwin
I am neither the flower/blossoming of song, not the curtain/tapestry/web/shelter/note of music; I am the sound of my own	I am not a flower of song nor any of the bright shuttles of music I am the sound of my own breaking

defeat/loss/breaking.	
You are absorbed in the embellishment of your curls; And for me are the concerns/apprehension of matters far and long.	You think about how your hair looks I think of the ends of things
We brag of wisdom/foresight/self-possession, but it is merely the deception of a simple heart (creation of simple-mindedness); We are occupied wholly with the secrets of an affable temper.	We think we know our own minds but our hearts are children
(Now that) you have appeared (have become manifest), be blessed With the prostration/adoration of the forehead that bends (to touch the ground) for suplication/with longing.	Now that you have appeared to me I bow may you be blessed
(Now that) you ask for me, it is no wonder; I am helpless/poor/afflicted/miserable, and you who look after the afflicted. (55).	You look after the wretched no wonder you came looking for me (61).

Another example is taken from *ghazal* II:

Ghazal II

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
Inasmuch as the appearance (of the beloved) demands that it be seen,	The molecules of the mirror, if she appear, longing to open like eyelids and take her in.

The substance of the mirror, too, wants to take the place of eyelashes.	
We have taken with us into our grave the scar of the unfulfilled desire for happiness; Now you are (here) and your embellishment of yourself with a hundred colors like/of a blooming orchard. (8).	My body in the grave, scarred with its disappointment, and yours, alive as the rainbow glistening through the orchard. (11).

This *ghazal* concerns the main theme of Sufi poetry, that is, the yearning of the lover for union with the beloved, which can be earthly or divine. The third and fourth couplets are given here.

The first couplet speaks of the appearance of the beloved in a mirror. As explained before in the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry, the 'mirror' is like an eye always open to perceive everything. Moreover, in the tradition of Persian poetry, the mirror is the symbol of man's soul where the beloved or the divine appears. The second couplet speaks of the lover who dies without attaining his beloved one, while, the beloved is alive, beautiful and colorful like an orchard. 'Orchard' is the equivalent of *golestān* گلستان and *bāgh* باغ in Persian and Urdu. In Sufi poetry, an orchard symbolizes paradise or a Utopic place (Moshtāq Mehr 564-6).

The most important symbolic words used in these couplets are 'appearance' or 'manifestation', 'mirror', and 'orchard'. In the first couplet Ghalib creates an association between the words 'appearance,' 'seen,' 'mirror,' and 'eyelashes.' In the second couplet the association is between the words 'color' and 'orchard.'

Rich retains the words 'appearance', 'mirror' and 'orchard' exactly as they appear in Ahmad's translation. She creates an association between the words in the third couplet by using 'mirror', 'appear', and eyelids'. In the fourth couplet, she goes even further than Ahmad's translation and the original *ghazal* by adding a new image. Ahmad uses 'a hundred colors', whereas, Rich creates the image of a 'glistening rainbow'. By using this, she produces an association with 'orchard' but also indirectly with 'mirror', 'appear', 'eyelids', and 'glistening'.

Another example, in this regard, is *ghazal* XV:

Ghazal XV

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
Not all, but only a few, are revealed in the rose and the tulip; What faces those must have been that have gone (been hidden) under the dust!	Not all, only a few, return as the rose or the tulip; What faces there must be still veiled by the dust!
The 'daughters of the Bier' were, during the day, hidden behind a curtain (or, had hidden themselves behind the day's curtain); What did they think (feel, occurred to them, came in their hearts) at night that they came out unconcealed (naked)?	The three stars, three Daughters, stayed veiled and secret by day; what word did the darkness speak to bring them forth in their nakedness?
To him comes sleep, belongs the mind (peace of mind), belong the nights On whose arm you spread your hair.	Sleep is his, and peace of mind, and the nights belong to him across whose arms you spread the veils of your hair.

We are the monotheists; breaking customs (traditions, set patterns) is our way of life; Whenever the communities die, they became part of the faith.	We are forerunners; breaking the pattern is our way of life. Whenever the races blurred they entered the stream of reality.
If Ghalib continues to weep with this same prolixity, you, those who inhabit this world, Will see that these cities shall become a mass of wilderness. (73).	If Ghalib must go on shedding these tears, you who inhabit the world will see these cities blotted into the wilderness. (78).

The couplets in this *ghazal* seem disunited as in the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry. Disunity, as explained earlier, is an element that allows the poet to bring diverse subject matter into a single poem and more importantly add to its ambiguity and complexity. The unity of the *ghazal* and the relation between its couplets comes from the association between its images.

As Scarcia and Pellò point out, in the tradition of Persian poetry, each couplet of a *ghazal* is a world of images that seems to the Western reader separate from the other couplets. However, it is precisely this tradition that creates the bonds within the poem (Scarcia, Pellò 2005, xxi).

For example, in this *ghazal*, if the couplets are interpreted by their surface meaning, the following would probably result: In the first couplet, Ghalib speaks of those who have died and gone under the dust and that only a few of them return as flowers. In the second couplet, he speaks of three stars that are hidden by day but come out at night. In the third couplet, he speaks of the lover who would be at peace when his beloved's hair is spread over his arm.

The couplets interpreted by their surface meaning seem unrelated and the true significance of the poem is not clear. However, if viewed through the prism of its images and their association, the real essence of these lines is revealed.

The unity and connection between the first three couplets is created by the association of images: 'hidden' (repeated through out the *ghazal*), 'dust', 'curtain', 'night', 'unconcealed', and 'naked'. Each of these words has different layers of meaning in the tradition of Persian poetry. Based on these intertextual relations, the first couplet can be interpreted as mystical, meaning that the elevated souls of wayfarers appear in the form of flowers or that when the human soul becomes humble like earth, flowers and orchards will grow from his/her essence. When composing this line, Ghalib was most probably inspired by a couplet by the Persian poet ʿOmar Khayyām (1048-1131):[131]

تا سبزه خاک ما تماشاگه کیست   این سبزه که امروز تماشاگه ماست

Its translation by FitzGerald is as follows:

> Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
>
> Descend, ourselves to make a Couch-for whom
>
> (www.therubaiyat.com/fitzindex.htm).

Moreover, in some of Rumi's poems there is the concept that higher beings appear in the form of flowers (Tājdini 751-2).

For example, the word 'night,' *shab* شب, has several significations in Sufi poetry. In Rumi's *ghazal*s, it stands for the earth or the body or symbolizes the lover (Moshtāq Mehr

---

[131] This explanation is also supported by Bausani's remark on this couplet that: "The idea is not in itself a new one and it is already present in some couplets by Ḫayyām" (Bausani 1959, 108).

476). In Sufi poetry the darkness of night symbolizes a veil or concealment. Moreover, night brings union between the lover and the beloved. As a result, saints and wayfarers seek union with God at night (Tājdini 577-8).

In the Qur'ān 'night' stands for the time that gives man tranquility (Tājdini 576).[132] Moreover, in the Qur'ān XCVII it says that the angels descend at night:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ (1) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ (2) لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ (3) تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (4) سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ (5)

It has been translated into English by Haleem as follows:

1 We sent it down on the Night of Glory. 2 What will explain to you what that Night of Glory is? 3 The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months; 4 on that night the angels and the Spirit descend again and again with their Lord's permission on every task; 5 [there is peace] that night until the break of dawn. (Trans. Haleem 429).[133]

Ahmad defines *'oriyān* as 'Bare', 'naked', 'unconcealed' (Ahmad 1994, 74). In Sufi poetry it signifies that when the veils are raised, the truth or the true spirit is revealed.

In Sufi thought, *zolf* 'hair' symbolizes God's beauty because the Divine beauty is concealed in multiple layers like the tangles of hair. For Rumi the lover can tear any chain, but those of the beloved's hair (Tājdini 494). In addition, the beloved's hair is dark like night.

---

[132] It refers to the Qur'an XCIII: 2.

[133] Its Italian translation by the expert of Islam and Islamic literatures, Alessandro Bausani is as follows: "1 In verità lo rivelammo nella Notte del Destino. 2 Cos'è mai la Notte del Destino? 3 La Notte del Destino è più bella di mille mesi. 4 Vi scendono gli angeli e lo Spirito, col permesso di Dio, a fissare ogni cosa. 5 Notte di pace fino allo spuntare dell'aurora." (Trans. Bausani 481).

Ahmad defines *Banāt al-naʿsh* as: "Daughters of the Bier; the three stars that go before the Bier are called "Banat" (Ahmad 1994, 74). In Rumi's poetry, a shining star reflects the light of the Divine. In addition, the star stands for the manifestation of the Divine (Tājdini 534-6). Shining stars also symbolize the saints or those devoted to God or the perfect men (Moshtāq Mehr 446).

Ahmad by his explanations and his academic literal translation makes available the set of intertextual relations of Ghalib's poetry with other texts in the Persian and Urdu literary culture and tradition. Sometimes he tries to create intertextuality between his poems with texts from Western literature in order to make it more understandable for the North American poets. For example, the second couplet again can have a mystical interpretation. Ahmad explains the second couplet as:

> A limited thematic continuation of the first couplet: human presence in the
>
> elements… The Picasso-like imagery refers simultaneously to the pattern of
>
> the stars that one can see on a clear night as well as the powerful sense of the
>
> unreal, of presence beyond the human and beyond the light of day, that
>
> pervade really still nights,… (Ahmad 1994, 74).

Based on the intertextual relation of its words and images with other texts in the tradition of Islamic poetry, it can signify the concealment of the body by a curtain or veil. In the Qur'ān LXXI: 7, 'garment' and 'veil' stand for an obstacle in the way of understanding the truth. The Qur'ānic verse is as follows:

وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصَرُّوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا (نوح 7)

Its translation in English is:

> Every time I call them, so that You may forgive them, they thrust their fingers
> into their ears, cover their heads with their garments, persist in their rejection,
> and grow more insolent and arrogant (Trans. Haleem 391).[134]

'Cloth' is a metaphor for the body and the naked body stands for the pure spirit without a veil that can perceive the truth. In other words, the cloth and the veil function as obstacles to the unity of the lover and the beloved (Tājdini 777-8).

Therefore, it could be argued that this couplet talks of putting off clothes and veils in order to perceive the true knowledge or coming into union with the One.

Ahmad considers the third couplet as merely a complement on a lady's hair. He writes: "Hardly any difficulty, except perhaps observing the pleasure Ghalib takes in complimenting the lady on her hair" (Ahmad 1994, 74). He avoids providing the mystical significance of this verse. However, considering the symbolic significance of 'hair' of the beloved in Sufi poetry the spread of the beloved's tresses on the lover's arm can stand for the encirclement of the lover/the seeker by night/the true knowledge. This can be a metaphor for the union of the lover and the beloved.

In addition, there is an association between the first and the second couplet through the images of the rose, tulip, and star. The rose and tulip here stand for the chosen people or the saints who reveal themselves growing out of earth or dust, like the stars that reveal themselves at night. The common point between all these images is the concept of concealment.

---

[134] The Italian translation of Alessandro Bausani is as follows: "E ogni volta che li chiamavo a che Tu li perdonassi, si mettevano le dita nelle orecchie, s'avvolgevano nelle loro vesti, e s'ostinavano, e orgoliosi s'inorgogliavano" (Trans. Bausani 443).

Rich beautifully creates an association between couplets in her English version by using the symbolic word 'veil' instead of its diverse synonyms and implications used by Ahmad such as 'hidden', 'concealed', and 'night'. By repeating it throughout the first three couplets, she stresses the mystical significance of this *ghazal* and as a result imbues her adaptation with an erotic-mystical ambiguity.

Rich, by replacing the image 'under the dust' by 'veiled by the dust' in the first couplet, 'behind a curtain' by 'veiled' in the second couplet, and 'spread your hair' with 'spread the veils of your hair' creates an association between the first three couplets. In this manner, she conveys the significance of covering, concealment, and darkness of a veil and not only associates it with dust, night, and nakedness, but by using the word 'veils' for hair, she communicates the cultural implication of the hair of the beloved that is considered dark like night and is characterized as covering or concealing the body.

In the last two couplets, Ahmad's literal translation and explanations are a clear departure from the original. In his explanation of the last two couplets, Ahmad attributes to them a socio-political interpretation. This is one of a number of cases in which he departs from the original and imposes his own ideological insights on his explanations. He sustains that some *ghazal*s can be interpreted socio-politically, an insight that is highly debatable.

Ahmad interprets the fourth and fifth couplets as if they treat social concepts. His interpretation is emphasized by the use of the words 'community' and 'city.' He defines the word *mellat* ملت as community, nation, or group. He explains that the concept of 'nation' in Islam veers away from nationalism and is always toward totalization: "Thus, the death that Ghalib is talking about is not so much a death as the assimilation of the communal identity within a larger, progressively total human reality." (Ahmad 1994, 74-5).

Mellat in Urdu classical poetry signifies 'religion.' Shafi'i Kadkani discusses the notions of nation and community and points out that they are European and were not used in

Persian writings till the beginning of the twentieth century[135]. The use of the word *millat* as religion goes back to the Qur'ān III: 95. In this verse the word *mellat* is used in the meaning of religion:

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُواْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِي (آل عمران 95)

It is translated into English as:

> [Prophet], say, 'God speaks the truth, so follow Abraham's religion: he had true faith and he was never an idolater.' (Trans. Haleem 41).

Its translation in Italian is:

> Di: "Dio e verace! Seguite quindi la religione d'Abramo, che era un hanif, non era un pagano. (Trans. Bausani 1988, 44).

In both translations the word *mellat* is translated as 'religion'. Moreover, Bausani translating the same couplet, gives a more moderate significance for *mellat*:

> We are Unitarians, our religion is to abandon (man-made) traditions; when the (old religions) communities were effaced, they became portions of the (one) Faith" (Bausani 1959, 112).

---

[135] Shafiʿi mentions that the concept of nation is a recent and European one and the first time that it was used in Iran was by Mirzā Fathʿali Ākhundzāde (1228-1295) (Shafiʿi Kadkani 2010, "Talaqqi").

Bausani provides an explanation of the word *mellat* that: "With *millat* the religious community is meant, here especially the older ones, destroyed by the wrath of God for not accepting the new Prophets…" (Bausani 1959, 112).

In the same couplet, Ahmad translates *imān* ايمان as 'faith' and explains that it should be understood in the Islamic or "Marxist-Sartrean, sense of progressively total knowledge." He writes: "Totalization of the community is inseparable from totalization of knowledge in a very Hegelian sense. It is in this context that Ghalib's ideas of monotheism, community, and faith are to be understood." (Ahmad 1994, 75).

Although Ahmad explains this couplet in Marxist terms, it can have a mystical interpretation. In the first line, *Mowaḥḥed,* translated by Ahmad as 'monotheist,' means also 'union' which refers to the idea of *waḥdat al-wujud* and union with the Divine. Bausani translates the same word as 'Unitarians' (Bausani 1959, 112).

In the Islamic tradition of Persian poetry the most important doctrine which derives from Islamic mysticism (Sufism), is the 'forgetfulness of self' *fanā* and the 'unity of being' *waḥdat al- wujud*. In the thirteenth century the Sufi poets were deeply influenced regarding the 'unity of being' by the theosophical doctrines of the great Andalusian philosopher, mystic and poet Mohyeddin Ibn ʿArabi (1165-1240) (De Bruijn 357). The Sufi doctrines of Ibn ʿArabi had a great impact on both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars and mystics throughout the world. As can be understood immediately from the very term itself, *waḥdat al-wujud* defined in simple words means that all that exists is united and regarded as One. In his doctrine, Ibn ʿArabi sustains that All is One and the One is God (Bukhari Lubis 19). He explains that the 'Absolute Essence' itself appears in multiplicity, offering as an example the existence of the drops of water in the sea.[136]

---

[136] In other words, one of the most significant concepts of Sufism, especially in the thoughts of Ibn ʿArabi, is the concept of the Universal Self. "The dissolution of any dualism between the ego substance and 'external' substantial objects gives rise, among other things, to the idea of the

Ahmad himself points this out when explaining a line in *ghazal* V:[137]

The happiness of the drop is to die in the river; (22).

Ahmad uses the verb 'to die' for *fanā* فنا in Persian and Urdu. He defines the verb

"*fanā honā*" in Urdu: "to die, to be consumed, to become so much a part of something that

separateness is overcome." He explains that "The ultimate joy for the part is in once again

being reconciled with the whole."

Nurbakhsh explains the station of *fanā* in Sufism:

In the terminology of the wayfarers, the 'seeker' is one who passes from

instinctual appetites and desires of the *nafs* to the point where he may lift the

veil of imagination from the face of Reality and go from multiplicity to Unity

in order to become a perfect human being. This station is known as

'annihilation in God' (*fanā' fe'llāh*), and is the final station on the path of the

'seekers' (Nurbakhsh 50).

As a result, the mystical interpretation of this couplet can be that, if the religions, the

rituals that cause difference are destroyed, the real faith will appear.

Rich uses the word 'forerunner' instead of 'monotheist' and 'race' instead of

community probably to make it more acceptable to the American reader. She also translates

---

supremacy of the Universal Self over the individual self. The result is nothing but the dissolution of
the duality of one's 'own' self and other selves… and the non-existence of an antithesis between God
and man and accordingly, the non-existence of individuality in Persian Sufism" (Aḥmadi 82-3).

[137] Ahmad explains 'the unity of being' as a process of change in *ghazal* V. He writes: "The whole
ghazal, it seems to me, is about the process of change. The drop falls in the river and dies; this is the
ultimate joy for it. Water becomes air as the body grows weaker. Seasons change and, with seasons,
the colors too. And this, the final couplet is, in my opinion, a celebration of change and acceptance of
it as the eternal, joyous process" (Ahmad 24).

the last couplet as appears in Ahmad's version. As a result her rendering does not transmit the intertextual relations that exist in the original *ghazal*.

Merwin gives two versions of this *ghazal*. In his first adaptation, he conveys the meaning and the theme of the first three couplets. However, he changes its form and does not keep its symbolic images. He combines the last two couplets of this *ghazal* into one.

His second adaptation is rather a free one in which he changes the order of the lines. He also changes the theme of the original, and adds or omits concepts from it. In this, he totally omits the last two couplets of the *ghazal*:

Ghazal XV

Aijaz Ahmad	W.S. Merwin
Not all, but only a few, are revealed in the rose and the tulip; What faces those must have been that have gone (been hidden) under the dust!	Almost none of the beautiful faces come back to be glimpsed for an instant in some flower once the dust owns them
The 'daughters of the Bier' were, during the day, hidden behind a curtain (or, had hidden themselves behind the day's curtain); What did they think (feel, occurred to them, came in their hearts) at night that they came out unconcealed (naked)?	The three Daughters of the Bier as becomes stars hide in the light till day has gone then they step forth naked but their minds are the black night
To him comes sleep, belongs the mind (peace of mind), belong the nights On whose arm you spread your hair.	He is the lord of sleep lord of peace lord of night

	on whose arm your hair is lying (77).
We are the monotheists; breaking customs (traditions, set patterns) is our way of life; Whenever the communities die, they became part of the faith.	
If Ghalib continues to weep with this same prolixity, you, those who inhabit this world, Will see that these cities shall become a mass of wilderness. (73).	

Merwin keeps most of the images in the first three couplets, however by associating only one significance to each word, he does not communicate the concept of concealment, and therefore does not keep the intertextual relation that exists in Ghalib's *ghazal*.

Stafford keeps the form of couplets and conveys the meaning of the original *ghazal*. However, his adaptation does not communicate the symbolic significance of the images and therefore does not create an association between them.

Ghazal XV

Aijaz Ahmad	William Stafford
Not all, but only a few, are revealed in the rose and the tulip; What faces those must have been that have gone (been hidden) under the dust!	Only the survivors come forth in the rose, the tulip. What faces have gone down under the dust!
The 'daughters of the Bier' were, during the day, hidden behind a curtain (or, had hidden	All the star children curtained in the day_ how their hearts flooded, naked in the night!

themselves behind the day's curtain); What did they think (feel, occurred to them, came in their hearts) at night that they came out unconcealed (naked)?	
To him comes sleep, belongs the mind (peace of mind), belong the nights On whose arm you spread your hair.	Sleep comes, peace, quiet of rest, for one who holds an arm under your hair.
We are the monotheists; breaking customs (traditions, set patterns) is our way of life; Whenever the communities die, they became part of the faith.	We poets break through custom, find our way to life; old ways die, and weave themselves into faith.
If Ghalib continues to weep with this same prolixity, you, those who inhabit this world, Will see that these cities shall become a mass of wilderness. (73).	If the poet mourns this well, you dwellers in the world, you will find your cities drifting back into the wild. (79)

Ahmad's socio-political interpretation of Ghalib is not limited to the last two couplets in the above mentioned *ghazal*, there are other cases that show his influence as a Marxist literary theorist and his mediatory role in attributing a social or political interpretation to Ghalib's mystical *ghazal*s.

A good example is *ghazal* XIV:

Ghazal XIV

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
The wings are as dust (light, weightless,	Now the wings that rode the wind are torn by

decomposed), so that the wind may perhaps take them away. Otherwise, the feathers and the wings have neither strength nor forbearance.	the wind; Their feathers dust of the desert, their force shriveled to powder.
What heaven-faced loveliness approaches (arrives) now That the entire path has nothing, not even a speck of dust, save the illusion (appearance) of flowers.	What, who is this, coming our way, with the face of an angel, that the dust of the bare road is lost in a carpet of flowers?
Those who are intoxicated are so merely with the thought of the appearance of the flower: Otherwise, there is nothing (nothing material, nothing that could cause their intoxication) in the walls, the door (and expanse) of the wine cellar.	Anyone who still can hope is seeing visions. The walls and doors of the tavern are blank with silence.
I have been humiliated (thwarted, made humble, made to feel humble/ashamed, to feel small) by the destructive power of (destructiveness, destruction caused by) my own love: There is nothing in this house except the will to construct (more accurately, the wish to have constructed).	I am ashamed of the destroying genius of my love; this crumbling house contains nothing but my wish to have been a builder.
Now, Asad, my verses are mere pleasure of a pastime;	Today, Asad, our poems are just the pastime of empty hours;

It is evident that nothing is to be gained by this display of talents. (66).	clearly, our virtuosity has brought us nowhere. (72).

This *ghazal* is full of symbolic words belonging to the tradition of Islamic poetry and the images specific to Ghalib's style. They are *qobār* and *khāk*, *gol, kharāb,* and *sharābkhāne.* The group of words used in this *ghazal* indicate that it is a mystic poem. It expresses the mystic's despair in reaching the divine beloved.

Ghobār is the equivalent of 'dust' and here indicates weightless dust. *Khāk* is the equivalent of 'earth', 'soil', and 'land'. It has the same symbolic significances as *ghobār*. Ahmad explains that *khāk* signifies 'nothingness', and 'absence' (Ahmad 1994, 67).

Gol گل in Persian and Urdu is the equivalent of flower or rose. Its first symbolic significance in Rumi's *ghazal*s is 'the Beloved.' It also symbolizes the soul of the wayfarer that is separated from its source. The wayfarer's soul has a short life like a flower and longs for these few days to pass away rapidly, so that it can return to its source and join the divine spirit. Moreover, *gol* stand's for the manifestation of the Divine's beauty (Tājdini 559-61).

Kharāb خراب in Persian and Urdu is the equivalent of bad, rotten, broken in English. However, in Sufi terminology it signifies 'intoxicated' and 'drunkard' as mentioned by Ahmad.

Sharābkhāne شرابخانه, *meykhāne* میخانه, *meykade* میکده, *kharābāt* خرابات, *maḥfel* محفل or *majles* مجلس in Persian and Urdu are the equivalents of 'tavern', 'wine cellar' or 'banquet' in English. They refer to the place of gathering of the lovers or the libertines to drink and to read poetry. In Rumi's *ghazal*s it stands for a non-place (Moshtāq Mehr 616).

Considering the Sufi images used in this *ghazal* it can be interpreted as mystical. However, Ahmad attributes to it a socio-political interpretation. He explains that the image of flight symbolizes strength in Urdu poetry. In this couplet Ghalib expresses that the wings

have become so weak and the wind so strong that the wind takes the wings away. Soon after, he offers his hypothesis that since no personal pronoun is used, the wings may not be Ghalib's but his country's (Ahmad 1994, 67). In this manner, instead of attributing weakness and despair to a mystic or to Ghalib, he attributes it to India and makes a social interpretation of the *ghazal* feasible.

Ahmad again expresses the possibility of interpreting this *ghazal* socio-politically by saying that in the second couplet, in contrast to most *ghazal*s, it is not talking of the approach or appearance of an angel, or a beloved, but it speaks of heaven itself. Therefore, it may refer to "a whole condition" and may be interpreted not as the arrival of a person but the arrival of "a whole era" (Ahmad 1994, 67).

Furthermore, he interprets the mystical word *kharāb* socio-politically, by saying that it does not symbolize simply an intoxicated or drunkard person, but it may actually signify "a condition of being broken, or eroded." (Ahmad 1994, 68).

Ahmad justifies his social interpretation of the fourth couplet by saying that the use of the subjective pronoun 'I' is arbitrary. He writes: "Of course, the communal, or rather national, failure to effectively resist the British conquest is internalized in this image of personal failure." He adds that the house referred to in the second line probably does not refer to Ghalib's house but was somehow "associated in his mind with the city of Delhi which was crumbling like his own house, and with the surrounding, similarly falling, provinces of India" (Ahmad 1994, 69).

However, the word *khāne* (house) خانه generally, in mystical *ghazal,* and specifically, in Rumi's poetry, symbolizes the heart of man. In addition, in Rumi's poetry, *khāne* signifies the body of the wayfarer that must be destroyed and broken so that the mystic can find the treasure that is hidden in it (Tājdini 312). Rumi compares the house of the mystic's heart to

heaven (Tājdini 311). This simile resolves the association of the images 'heaven', 'house', and 'tavern' in this *ghazal*.

Ahmad justifies his choice of interpreting this *ghazal* socially by referring to its grammatical features. The general theme of the *ghazal* is a lover who addresses his beloved. Therefore, there is the frequent use of the pronouns 'I' and 'you'. Ahmad uses the lack of personal pronouns in this *ghazal* as a sign that it may refer to more general matters, namely, Ghalib's society and country.

However, in this *ghazal*, the use of images common to Sufi poetry indicate that it can be interpreted mystically, which makes Ahmad's social interpretation highly debatable.

In contrast to Ahmad, Rich keeps its mystical significance in her adaptation. She employs the symbolic images of Islamic poetry such as 'desert' and 'dust' and makes an association between them with the word 'powder'. In addition, by repeating the word 'wind', she makes an association with 'wings' both thematically and rhythmically. In contrast to Ahmad, Rich uses the word 'angel'. Moreover, she uses the image of 'carpet of flowers' to render the couplet more culture-bound and mystical. She also makes the third couplet mystical by using the mystical symbols of 'vision' and 'tavern'.

In comparison to Ahmad, Rich is much closer to the original *ghazal*. While Ahmad tries to interpret the whole poem as social, Rich keeps the mystical sense of the first couplets and like the original *ghazal* renders only the last two couplets as social. In the original *ghazal*, Ghalib expresses his dismay at the poet's efforts and spirituality, saying that it does not resolve any problems and it would be better if he could do something constructive for his society.

In another *ghazal*, in contrast to Ahmad who interprets the *ghazal* mystically, it is Rich who attributes a socio-political sense to it in her rendering.

Ghazal **XVI**

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
Why should one, having given his heart to someone else, utter cries of pain? If there is no heart in the breast, why should there be a tongue in the mouth?	Handing over my heart, where does this sobbing come from? If the breast is emptied, can the mouth still have a tongue?
She/he will not give up her/his habit; why should we change our way? Why be humble and ask why she/he is angry?	He'll never mend his ways, then why should I? Why should I offer meekness for his violence?
The one with whom we shared our grief has made us infamous; may this love be destroyed. Why should one, who cannot bear my grief, be my confidant?	I'd like to crumple this love, this shame into the fire; what is this need to share what can't be shared?
(Now that I am) in the cage, O friend! Don't fear telling me the story of the orchard. The nest which was struck (and destroyed) by lightning yesterday—why must it necessarily be mine?	Now I'm behind bars, go ahead, tell me the story— that nest the lightning shriveled last night— why do you think it was mine?
The trial is not insufficient to destroy one's house; If you were to be somebody's friend, he doesn't need the heavens to be his enemy.	What I'm living through now could smash my house in pieces: My friend, with you on earth I don't need enemies in the clouds. (83)

(81).	

It is a love-mystic *ghazal* speaking of a lover's desire and the cruelty of the beloved. The beloved can be interpreted both as earthly or divine, since the gender of the beloved is not specified. In this *ghazal* one of the most important images of Persian poetry is used. It depicts the love between a bird and a flower. Ahmad explains it as: "In the traditional imagery of the Urdu *ghazal*, the lover is the bird which goes to the orchard, or the garden, to look for his beloved, the flower (the bird is, invariably, the nightingale)" (Ahmad 1994, 82).

Apart from this imagery, the most important matter accentuated by Ahmad in his translation is gender ambiguity. By using he/she, his/her and the neutral pronoun of 'one' Ahmad highlights the ambiguity of genders and pronouns in Urdu and in the *ghazal*.

However, Rich renders this *ghazal* social. She skillfully transforms the elements of love poetry into a social poetry. She avoids using the word 'orchard' which has a mystical significance. Rich does not observe the ambiguity of the pronouns in Ahmad's translation and uses the masculine pronouns 'he' and 'his'. Reading her adaptation, instead of the imagery of 'bird and flower', the image of a hopeless man imprisoned behind bars comes to mind. In other words, by changing the imagery and avoiding gender ambiguity she changes its significance.

Gender ambiguity in the *ghazal,* rooted as it is, in its culture and tradition, served Rich in the development of her poetic language. In the *ghazal* the use of genderless pronouns serves to create ambiguous or androgynous selves which represent perfect beauty in the tradition of Islamic poetry (Scarcia Amoretti 2009 b, 287).[138]

For example, in *ghazal* VII, Ahmad highlights gender ambiguity by using him/her, he/she:

---

[138] Gender ambiguity also stems from the description of the beloved's body in the *ghazal* since synecdoche is used to describe the body, only specific parts being mentioned not the whole.

Ghazal VII

Aijaz Ahmad
Who can/could see him/her, for he/she is unique, incomparable; If there were even the faintest chance of duality/being possibly comparable to someone else, we would have surely met him somewhere (33).

Ahmad explains: "In Urdu, pronouns have no gender. Genders are indicated by the verb; even there, it is possible to conceal them. Hence, him/her in the first line of the translation." (Ahmad 1994, 35).

Rich also applies gender ambiguity to her renderings. In some cases she is even more faithful to Ghalib in this regard. For example, in *ghazal* III while Ahmad uses a feminine pronoun 'her', Rich uses the neutral pronoun 'one' which respects the gender ambiguity in the original *ghazal*:

Ghazal **III**

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
Simplicity of our desires! Meaning that Again we remember her who cast a spell on our eyes. (12).	Old, simple cravings! Again we recall one who bewitched us. (15).

In another *ghazal*, again the same thing happens. While Ahmad uses a feminine pronoun for the beloved, Rich renders it ambiguous by avoiding the use of any pronoun and uses 'the heart' instead of 'the heart of her':

Ghazal **XXI**

Aijaz Ahmad	Adrienne Rich
The dewdrop on the red poppy is not without end/function/meaning: The spot on the heart of her who is cruel is a place where shame has come (to pass). (97).	There is meaning in the teardrop that blurs the red eye of the poppy: The heart that knows its flaw understands the need for concealment. (103).

Nevertheless, in other cases, Rich is faithful to Ahmad, in the sense that like Ahmad, she uses a feminine pronoun for the beloved.

Ahmad keeps the theme of addressing the beloved in his translations by using the pronouns 'I', 'we' and 'you'. When a third person pronoun is used in the original, in some cases he emphasizes its gender ambiguity by using neutral pronouns such as 'one' or by using he/she or his/her to indicate their gender ambiguity. In other cases, he uses a feminine pronoun for the beloved.

In addition to gender ambiguity, in his explanations, Ahmad insists on the erotic-mystical ambiguity in the *ghazal*. He writes that in the *ghazal* the material world stands for the abstract and spiritual concepts and what is beyond matter. He clarifies that it is a concept in Islamic literature that God manifests Himself in what He creates (Ahmad 1994, 2). The best evidence of this is two lines by Ghalib:

The world is no more than a manifestation of the uniqueness of the Beloved;

But for the Beauty that seeks its own awareness, we ourselves would not exist.

(Trans. Ahmad 1994, 1).

Ahmad points out that by understanding the *ghazal*'s ambiguity and the association between its images, a new reading of the poem may result (Ahmad 1994, 35).

Adrienne Rich's border position

Interestingly enough, Rich was the only poet in the group that perceived the *ghazal*'s ambiguity and kept it in her poetical adaptations. It seems that Rich's position in her private life and in society was a fundamental factor in this regard. Throughout her life she was in a border position. As a young girl searching for her identity, she tried to connect herself to a Jewish identity. She married the Jewish professor Alfred Conrad in 1953. However, she did not find her response in this state and her struggles against patriarchy and racism started. She left her marriage when she became part of the women's movement and soon she was involved in lesbian manifestos (Gelpi, 233-8). In 1976, she met Michelle Cliff the Jamaican-born feminist and editor who would remain Rich's partner for the rest of her life. In addition, she tried to identify herself with African-Americans and other marginal and oppressed people, although she was a white woman of a privileged status in her society. Therefore, it can be said that she was always struggling between two positions, religions, genders, and races. In fact, her in-between position led her to understand the struggles of marginalized groups such as women and African-Americans.[139] Moreover, this ambiguity of identity helped her grasp the ambiguity that lies in the *ghazal* and to employ it later in her poetical language for the expression of her own identity.

As Gloria Anzaldua in her book *Borderlands* underlines, those who like her live in an in-between position have a borderland consciousness. They develop a kind of tolerance for

---

[139] Haj Yazdiha, after Bhabha, using the term hybridity for this in-between space, argues that it means "deconstructing the rigid labels that maintain social inequities through exclusion in race, language, and nation" and therefore can empower the marginalized groups (31-6). Yazdiha argues that according to Sara Ahmed hybridity is not a space between the identities which distinguishes them, but passes through and between them without origin or arrival (Yazdiha 33).

ambiguity and learn to embrace diverse cultures. They have a plural personality and operate in a pluralistic mode. They combine everything, good and bad, nothing is rejected or abandoned and they can combine the contradictions and create a sort of ambivalence (Anzaldua 79).

Anzaldua argues that those who have a borderland consciousness can show in their work, through images how duality is transcended. It is the answer to the problem "between the white race and the colored, between males and females":

> A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war (Anzaldua 80).

Adrienne Rich's feminist translation and the visible image of the translator

With her translations, Rich tried to cross the borders culturally and sexually and create a hybrid text in her poetic versions. She did so by keeping the same intertextual and interatextal relations, that is, by producing the same ambiguity and linguistic deviations that lie in Ghalib's *ghazal*. In this manner, she left open the possibility of interpreting her renderings in diverse modes. As Venuti writes:

> Intertextuality enables and complicates translation, preventing it from being an untroubled communication and opening the translated text to interpretive possibilities that vary with cultural constituencies in the receiving situations. (Venuti 2009, 172).

Rich brought the features of the original into her versions which may seem strange to the target culture reader. In this manner, she foreignized her renderings and made cultural exchange possible. In addition, she introduced new techniques of writing into English language poetic tradition.

It was, in fact, a strategy undertaken by the feminists. Feminists by considering translation as performance, deny the presence of the translator as 'invisible', or a 'shadow' of the author. They consider the translator as an active agent in the process of cultural transmission whose acts are not neutral.

The most important feminist theorist of cultural translation is probably Gayatri Spivak. She calls for a strategy of translation that requires the self-consciousness and self-criticism in the translator leading to the method of foreignization. In this, she adheres to the appeal of Venuti for more resistant translations. Venuti shows how "aesthetic and cultural Otherness" are controlled or determined by translation (Venuti 2005, 309). Yet, Spivak adds that a voice should be given to the body of the translator and more importantly, remarks that this body is gendered and "operates from within a specific set of cultural relationships— whose vectors of power can be influenced but not magically reversed by the act of translation." (Simon 1996, 146). She emphasizes that the feminist translator should consider language as "a clue to the workings of gendered agency." (Spivak 1993, 179).

Rich portrayed a highly visible image of the translator in such poems as "The Arts of Translation" and "Planetarium" and such prose as "Poetry and the Forgotten Future" and "Some questions from the Profession". She distanced the image of the translator from its negative feminine connotation as passive, invisible and merely playing a reproductive role.

By her adaptations, Rich went against the invisible practice of translation dominant in Europe and North America. By refusing to domesticate, she opened the way to encounter,

dialogue, and exchange in her translations. She made them a meeting place of languages, articulations, and messages (Bermann 2011, 114).

Her renderings stood as a hybrid text to make the transition between two texts and cultures possible, like the feminist translators who consider translation a performative utterance. Her text challenges the linguistic and cultural dominancy and gendered identity (Federici, 369).

For the feminists, translation goes against "the myths of objectivity and transparency in language." They aim at deconstructing the "archetypal feminine images and gendered discourses." (Federici 369). In their translations or rewritings the feminists put emphasis on the use of a metaphorical language as they intend to connect corporeality with identity and writing. As a result, they insist on the transference of new images and metaphors which represent difference. In this manner, they highlight the 'otherness' of the foreign text in translation not only by the transference of the images but by considering the gender difference. Overall, it can be said that they consider translation a medium of change, transformation, mediation, and creation. (Federici 365-7).

For Rich who felt marginalized by the authoritative system or who desired to speak for the marginalized groups, translation stood as a metaphor for her ambiguous experience in society (Castelli 25). This ambiguity or border position led many women as well as migrants like Salman Rushdi to call themselves 'translated beings.'" (Simon 1996, 128).

Edouard Glissant writes in this regard that the translator creates a language that stands between two languages. The translator in fact, creates a common language between both, but that is also unpredictable for both (Glissant 35-6). In fact, "feminist theories on androgyny are meant to describe a hybrid model..." (Leonardi 59).

This ambiguity or hybridity is not limited to Rich's renderings of Ghalib's poetry but she creates an analogous ambiguity in her *ghazal*s written soon after this translation project.

In the following chapter Rich's *ghazal*s will be analyzed to show the way in which she employed this ambiguity in her own use of this form and how it served her purposes.

Chapter 5:

Adrienne Rich's *Ghazal*s and the Dream of a Common Language

Leaflets **and** *The Will to Change*

Soon after her collaboration with Aijaz Ahmad, Adrienne Rich started composing her own *ghazal*s in English. She published two collections in this form: "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib," including 17 poems composed in 1968, and "The Blue Ghazals," with nine poems, written in the years 1968 and 1969. They were respectively published in the poetry collections *Leaflets* (1969) and *The Will to Change* (1971). Rich published one more *ghazal* in 1994 entitled the 'Late Ghazal' which appeared in the collection *Dark Fields of the Republic* (1995). Rich's *ghazal*s are erotic and political and at the same time speak for the rights of women and such marginalized groups as homosexuals and African-Americans.

Leaflets is a political volume. Dedicated to women's experiences and the women's Liberation movement, it also deals with such socio-political break-ups as anti-Vietnam War movements (Langdell 88). In this volume, Rich moves from identification with the male principle to identification with the female principle as the key to gaining transformative power. In her struggle to combine women and gender issues with socio-political matters, she addresses such political female poets as Anna Akhmatova. Moreover, the poetic form in this volume is radical. The sentences are fragmented and punctuation appears and disappears (Keyes 90-101; Bermann 2011, 101), a characteristic that made Charles Olson call it an "open field" or Rich's own projective verse (Langdell 93).

The poems in *The Will to Change* are also political. In these poems, Rich tries to express her will for change and transformation. When composing them, she was particularly influenced by Charles Olson's theory of projective verse and the techniques of the new wave cinema, specifically, the cinematic techniques of Jean Luc Godard and Pier Paolo Pasolini

(Langdell 109; Rich 1993 a, 259; Keyes 111). Like Olson, she considered poetry as a high energy construct. In this manner, she distanced her poetic language from the male principle and turned toward the female principle as the instinctual or unconscious manifestation of the human psyche and a source of power for women (Keyes 111-2). On the other hand, the language of cinema encouraged her to utilize more images in her poetic language and load its structure with more liberated forms assimilating the broken and fragmented shots used in contemporary experimental cinema. In this regard, David Kalstone writes of the similarity to film methods in the language of the *ghazal*s in Rich's *The Will to Change*:

> *The Will to Change* is filled with *ghazal*s, fluid syntax imitating the methods of film, "letters," "pieces," "photographs"— beating on every possible door, for more and more provisional devices to release the self and make it palpable" (Kalstone 1978, 160).

In the poems in *Leaflets* and particularly in *The Will to Change*, Rich combined poetic images with the visual images of photography and film with particular reference to Godard's films (Bermann 2011, 102-3). Rich writes in this regard:

> I think that the film and the poem and the dream have enormous amounts in common. They are built on images, the images are very dense in their ramifications, and you know, most films also have this reliance on language as accompanying the image. (Rich 1971 a, 37).[140]

---

[140] It can be argued that the shooting technique of the New Wave Cinema was comparable to the images used in Ghalib's *ghazal*s. Ghalib used fragmented images which were connected or associated to one another through their symbolic significance. Rich was influenced by Duncan in combining the contemporary with the visionary and manifested it in her collection *Leaflets*. She acknowledged that her poetry was influenced by "films, histories, political philosophies, song lyrics, visual arts, pamphlets,…" (Rich 2001 c, 136-7).

Rich's poems are so abundant in symbolic images that her poetry can be considered visionary or symbolist. In her poem, "Planetarium", she considers the poet a translator who translates pulsations into images:[141]

> … I am an instrument in the shape
>
> of a woman trying to translate pulsations
>
> into images for the relief of the body
>
> and the reconstruction of the mind. (Rich 1971, 14).

Rich believed in the power of images and appreciated visionary poetry as the characteristic that loads poetry with revolutionary power. For her, the poetics of language were the poetics of revolution (117). She maintained that "a visionary relation to reality" happens when people come together to define their common desires and identify the common forces of frustration. In this manner, they possess the power of "a collective imagining of change and a sense of collective hope." (2001 a, 153).[142]

The feminist poet, Alicia Ostriker also appreciated the work of visionary artists "dissatisfied with the rule of 'things as they are.'" (Ostriker qtd. in Camboni 2009, 147). In fact, visionary artists offered a new vision of their world that suggested transformation. They applied the images and symbols of diverse cultures in order to represent a diverse reality (Caruana, *A Manifesto of Visionary Artists*). Ostriker names Lucille Clifton, Toni Morrison,

---

[141] Rich expressed her concern with visionary poetry: "I want the tradition of oral voice in poetry, the remembering of what they tell us to forget. I want the landscape of the visual field on the page, exploding formal verse expectations. I want a poetry that is filmic as a film can be poetic, a poetry that is theatre, performance, voice as body and body as voice…" (2001 e, 118).

[142] Rich held that the "isolated visionary [poetry] goes to the edge of meaning", but she demanded a collective visionary poetry. (2001 e, 118).

Alice Walker, Toni Cade Bambara, Paule Marshall, and Audre Lorde as the black writers who produced visionary works (Ostriker 90).

In this respect, it is interesting that Rich's poems were illustrated by visionary female and feminist painters.[143] The visionary painter Susan Bee, married to the poet Charles Bernstein[144], designed several book covers for Adrienne Rich's poetry collections. She designed the cover for the *Fox* and the *Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth.*[145] In addition, she created a painting for *Diving into the Wreck* in honour of Adrienne Rich.
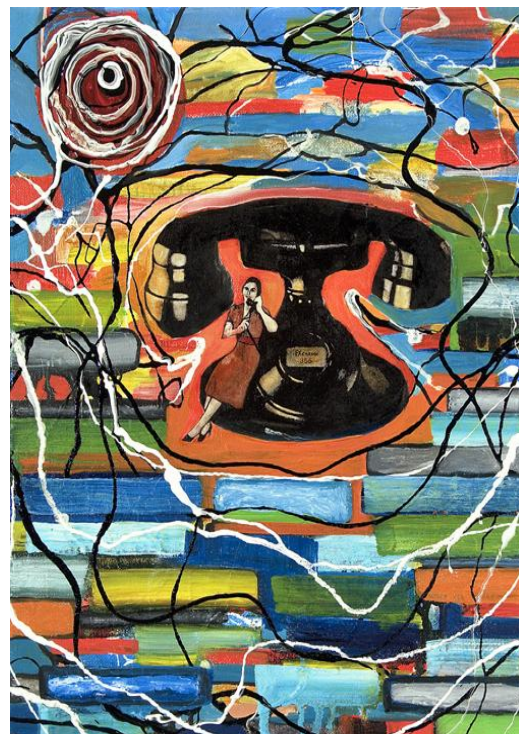
Fox/Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth, cover paintings by Susan Bee.[146]

---

[143] Visionary painting is full of images which stand as symbols or metaphors for more sublime concepts.

[144] Charles Bernstein is a contemporary North American poet and poet-translator. He was born in 1950 to a Jewish family in New York.

[145] Susan Bee in response to my questions, regarding her paintings for Rich's poetry collections, told me that her painting "Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth" was rejected by the publisher. This interview took place on December 17th, 2012.

[146] "Fox" belongs to her collection of paintings realized between 1992 and 2005. It is available on: http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bee/selected.html. The painting "Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth"

Diving into the Wreck, cover painting by Susan Bee.[147]

Bee gave the following explanation of her painting collection that includes *Diving into the Wreck*:

> My current series of oil paintings with collage, "Philosophical Trees," refers to the organic motifs of branches, trunks, and vine-like organic forms that structure the whole. These works have a relation to popular visual culture and a connection to surrealism in its dreamlike reveries and improbable logics and to certain folk-art and mystical traditions, such as the Kabbalah, with their "tree of life" diagrams. (www.saatchionline.com/SBee).

Another interesting example is the book *The Girl God* by Trista Hendren. It is a children's book that celebrates the Divine Feminine (www.thegirlgod.com/bookorders.html).

is among her works painted between 2006 and 2008. It is available on: http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bee/2006-08.html.

[147] It is taken from Bee's collection entitled *Philosophical Trees* (2004-2005), available on: http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bee/philosophical-trees.html.

It is illustrated by the paintings of Elizabeth Slettnes, an artist of the visionary movement. It "expresses the significance of a woman in a "Godly Manner" (http://alyscia.wordpress.com/2012/10/18/the-world-needs-a-girl-god-2/). Under each painting there is the saying of a writer or scholar. Adrienne Rich's words are the caption to one of them:

"Until we know the assumptions in which we are drenched, we cannot know ourselves." [148]

In the 1960s, under the influence of Simone de Beauvoir and James Baldwin, Rich tried to write overtly as a woman, out of her body and to take woman as a theme and source of art (Rich 1933b, 249). She asserted that writing from a woman's unconscious gives poetry a dynamic energy (Rich 1933d, 168). As the French feminist Hélène Cixous claims, the very

_____

[148] The painting by Elizabeth Slettnes accompanied by Adrienne Rich's saying. It is available on: (https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=440185616030228&set=pb.246744282041030.-2207520000.1355838109&type=3&theater.). *Dreams and Divinities* is a collection of paintings and poems by women artists. The paintings are by the artists of the visionary movement including Elizabeth Slettnes. It is available on: (https://fantasticvisions.net/publications/dreams-divinities/).

possibility of change for women lies in writing. Writing opens new spaces for women and gives them the possibility of having subversive thoughts which enables them to transform the structures of their society and culture. Therefore, she invited women to write of themselves and return to their bodies (Cixous 879-80).

In order to write of the woman's body and to bring materiality to her work, Rich tried to use concrete images in her poetry. To do so, she needed a form that allowed the spontaneous flow of energy, the expression of the unconscious and the anima; a form that was not restricted to limiting rules and orders, and did not follow a linear chronological order.

In order to familiarize herself with new poetic forms, she started reading poems in translation and to translate foreign poetry from such languages as Dutch, Yiddish, and Urdu. In the 1960s and 70s, translation and poetic imitation were a fundamental part of her project of feminist revision. Bermann writes on this subject:

> In the 60s and 70s, translation and poetic imitation contributed markedly to the project of feminist re-vision, a project explicitly meant to re-vise a literary tradition, to rename the world and to allow it at last to speak from a feminist, and later, a lesbian, and definitely a woman-centered, point of view. (Bermann 2011, 99).

Rich tried to interpolate into her poetry new words, images, and concepts from the foreign poems that she read in translation or translated, thus creating intertextuality in her writings. For example, she used words from the poems by such poets as Baudelaire and Horace. She quoted them directly, changed them, or used them in a new context. In addition, Rich used many words and images of female and feminist writers like de Beauvoir to create the image of the new woman. In this manner, she began a dialogue with texts from other

cultures and times which allowed her to critique the dominant patriarchal tradition (Bermann 2011, 100-1).

Translation for Rich became an instrument of change, a way to gaining power for women, and a strategy to transform the narratives of patriarchy (Bermann 2011, 103). Translating Ghalib's *ghazal*s, in particular, introduced her to new images, themes and forms that served to express "new modes of feminist experience." (Bermann 2011, 101).

Rich herself accredited her ability to create more concrete images to two main factors. Firstly, the translation of the Urdu *ghazal*s of Mirza Ghalib which brought a highly associative field of images into her poetry and secondly, the use of language and images in the films of the contemporary French director Jean-Luc Godard. These changes were particularly present in her poetry collections in the 60s and 70s: *Leaflets 1965-1968* (1969)*, The Will to Change 1968-1970* (1971), *Diving into the Wreck 1971-1972* (1973), and achieved their perfection in *The Dream of a Common Language 1974-1977* (1978).

In *Leaflets* and *The Will to Change*, Rich uses autonomous couplets whose unity is formed by association of images.[149] The associative technique is even stronger in *The Will to Change* where Rich considers it as a sign of the female principle. She takes the female principle as the main element and as the source of transformative power. In *Leaflets*, she tries to identify herself with the female principle although not always successfully. However, it is a task that she succeeds in fulfilling totally in *The Will to Change*. In *Leaflets*, Rich tries to recognize her shadow anima or as Robert Bly puts it to find its "special channels," (Keyes 106-8), but yet again, she succeeds in doing so in *The Will to Change* (Keyes 111-129). In *Leaflets,* she begins to use the pronoun 'I' to represent herself and all women. However, gradually from *Leaflets* to *The Will to Change*, this 'I' changes into 'we.' Finally, the use of

---

[149] The poems in the two volumes, *Leaflets* and *The Will to Change,* do not have a logical narrative line but are shaped from the accumulation of images or in Rich's own words by "verbal compression" that served Rich to express herself in an age of cultural and political break-up (Erkkila 164).

visual images and cinematic techniques in *The Will to Change* is much stronger than in *Leaflets*.

These two books of poetry, *Leaflets* and *The Will to Change* have been the subject of many critical interpretations by a number of scholars including Sonali Barua, Sandra Bermann, Marina Camboni, Denis Donoghue, Albert Gelpi, Claire Keyes and Wendy Martin. Particular attention is given to these collections on account of their radical forms and linguistic and thematic innovations compared to Rich's previous collections. These critics have undertaken to show the revolutionary sense of these poems. They share the idea that they are poems of loss and revolution both formally and thematically; they go against the rules of things as they are; try to shatter the dominance of patriarchy; fight against racism, and reflect the upheavals of the 1960s such as the Vietnam War. In addition, they hold that, in these poems, Rich succeeds in connecting private matters to public events and to identify her 'self' with both male and female principles. Moreover, the poetical forms are radical, they imitate the *ghazal* or the shooting techniques of the New Wave Cinema specifically the techniques of Jean Luc-Godard. Overall, as Keyes argues: "Sentences are fragmented, if there are sentences at all. Punctuation appears, disappears. The disorder of this apparently formless form is its artistic order." (101).

The scholars Marina Camboni, Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti, and Sonali Barua, have dealt specifically with the influence of Ghalib's *ghazal*s on Adrienne Rich's *ghazal*s in their essays, respectively "Come pagine di un diario: I *ghazal*s di Adrienne Rich" (1982), "Per fate Morgane da Ghalib a Adrienne Rich" (1983), and "Truth Is, at the Moment, Here: Adrienne Rich and the *Ghazal*" (2006). Camboni, by giving some examples, points out the influence of certain images, themes, and philosophies of Persian poetry on Rich's *ghazal*s and, eventually, the adoption of an androgynous identity by the poet. Scarcia Amoretti highlights the way in which Rich's *ghazal*s are similar to those of Ghalib in the use of words and images. She does

so by giving the translations of Alessandro Bausani in Italian of a few poems by Ghalib and comparing them to Rich's *ghazal*s. She also argues that Rich creates a gender ambiguity analogous to that in Ghalib's *ghazal*s. This gender ambiguity in the *ghazal*, mainly interpreted as masculine homosexuality in the tradition of Islamic poetry, is replaced by Rich with a feminine homophile. On the other hand, Barua compares the life events of the time of Ghalib with those in North America in the decades 1960s and 1970s and argues that Rich perceived a diverse understanding of Ghalib through Ahmad's reading of his poetry.

Having in mind the cogent and invaluable arguments of such scholars, the attempt here is to demonstrate in detail the techniques used by Rich, under the influence of Ghalib, to create a common or collective language. It attempts to show how Rich in her poems creates an analogous intertextual and intratextual relation to Ghalib's *ghazal*s. In this manner, it demonstrates the way in which Rich goes against the dominant literary system by creating a dialogue with other texts through integrating elements from other literary traditions. Diaz-Diocaretz writes in this regard:

> Intertextuality,…, could contribute to answer the queries concerning the salient features of what characterizes poems written, for example, from a feminist orientation, and will help identify the components that are peculiar to a set of texts that would comprise this category. It will enable us to approach the constitutive conventions which relate this type of discourse to tradition, or else deviate it from accepted modes and values. (Diaz-Diocaretz 68).

Intertextuality shows the alien elements that are present in Rich's *ghazal*s. Sometimes these alien elements are so fully integrated within the text that without a knowledge of Persian and Urdu literary traditions, recognizing them would be impossible. Therefore, it

seems clear and unavoidable that one should have a specialized knowledge of particular codes, symbols and formal features of the Persian poetic tradition to be able to distinguish the intertextual relations of Rich's poems with those of Ghalib.

Ultimately, this analysis demonstrates how Rich moved from her translation of Ghalib's *ghazal* in Ahmad's project to her own original compositions. In other words, it explores how she adopted the techniques of the *ghazal* to her purposes, for a new time, place, and reader.

"**Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib**"

In the introduction to "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib," Rich writes of how she was inspired by Ghalib's *ghazal*s, through Ahmad's reading of them, to compose her own *ghazal*s in this collection:

> This poem began to be written after I read Aijaz Ahmad's literal English versions of the work of the Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib, 1797-1869. While the structure and metrics used by Ghalib are much stricter than mine, I have adhered to his use of a minimum five couplets to a *ghazal*, each couplet being autonomous and independent of the others. The continuity and unity flow from the associations and images playing back and forth among the couplets in any single *ghazal*. (Rich 1969, 59). [150]

In her *ghazal*s, Rich uses the same couplet form as in Ghalib's poems. In addition, as in the Persian and Urdu *ghazal*, the second line of each couplet stands as an illustration or

---

[150] Adrienne Rich explains clearly "how the discontinuity of the *ghazal* provides an opportunity for a new kind of unity- one well-suited to the needs of a contemporary poet." (Glickman 50).

proof of the first line. To emphasize this feature, in some cases, Rich uses a colon ':' or semi-colon ';' as punctuation between the first and the second lines in a couplet:

Only the truth makes the pain of lifting a hand worthwhile:

the prism staggering under the blows of the raga. (61).

Another example is:

The tears of the universe aren't all stars Danton;

some are satellites of brushed aluminum and stainless steel. (62).

Similar to the Urdu and Persian *ghazal*, Rich creates disunited and autonomous couplets in her *ghazal*s and brings unity to them by creating an association between its images. The feature of disunity of couplets allowed Rich to bring together diverse subject matter into a single poem. Sonali Barua suggests that the feature of autonomy of the *ghazal*'s couplets and its underlying thematic unity are conducive to postmodern communication which is fragmented and aims for essence. She maintains that the technique of non-linear unity in the *ghazal* helped Rich to bring together several matters like feminism, lesbian life, politics, revolution, Black Power, the Vietnam war, and the events of the 1960s in general (Baura 114).

Following in the steps of Ghalib, Rich brings unity to the disunited and autonomous couplets in her *ghazal*s by creating an association between them. This method helped her in several ways: to produce revolutionary poetry that countered traditional norms and expectations; to shatter those norms and to express the fragmented subjects that concerned

her in both her private and public life. More importantly, it helped her with her feminist language. As Bermann writes:

> The *ghazal*'s ability to move author and reader toward a more non-linear, non-logical association of images suggested not only a revolutionary sort of poetry, running directly counter to traditional expectations, but also one increasingly associated with women's writing (Bermann 2011, 102).

For example, in *ghazal* 7/14/68: ii, Rich brings unity between disunited couplets by creating an association between images that indicate stability and growth and also the images that are associated with the color red:

7/14/68: ii

Adrienne Rich	Images of growing	Images of stability	Images of color red
Did you think I was talking about my life? I was trying to drive a tradition up against the wall.	drive a tradition up	the wall	
The field they burned over is greener than all the rest. You have to watch it, he said, the sparks can travel the roots.	The field… is greener travel the roots		burned over the sparks
Shot back into this earth's atmosphere our children's children may photograph		Shot back photograph	

these stones.		these stones	
In the red wash of the darkroom, I see myself clearly; when the print is developed and handed about, the face is nothing to me.			red wash of the darkroom
For us the work undoes itself over and over: The grass grows back, the dust collects, the scar breaks open. (62).	the work undoes itself over and over The grass grows back the dust collects		the scar breaks open

In this *ghazal*, Rich speaks of her desire to counter tradition, to revitalize it, and transform it. She uses the images of nature to indicate change and growth, the images of the wall and photography to indicate stability of the old traditions, and the images of burning and scars to speak of the desire and struggle for change. It can be noticed that, the couplets which at first seemed unrelated, reveal their unity when the relation between the images and symbolic words is deciphered.

Another example is *ghazal* 7/16/68: i:

7/16/68: i

Adrienne Rich	Images of color	Images of nature	Words related to the body
Blacked-out on a wagon, part of my life cut out forever—	Blacked-out on a wagon		my life

five green hours and forty violet minutes.	five green hours forty violet minutes		
A cold spring slowed our lilacs, till a surf broke Violet/white, tender and sensual, misread it if you dare.	Violet/white	A cold spring our lilacs a surf broke	tender and sensual
I tell you, truth is, at the moment, here Burning outward through our skins.	Burning outward		through our skins
Eternity streams through my body: Touch it with your hand and see.		streams	my body touch it your hand see
Till the walls of the tunnel cave in and the black river walks on our faces. (63).	the tunnel cave the black river	the black river	our faces

In this *ghazal*, Rich brings together the images of the train moving, time passing, nature changing, the river streaming, and feeling and the blood streaming throughout the body, in order to communicate a sense of flowing and streaming. By using the technique of association of images Rich creates a sort of ambiguity in her *ghazal* similar to that of Ghalib. She uses the images of nature or a train and combines them with images of the body. She even gives an intertextual reference to American poetic tradition, in particular to Eliot's Waste Land, by using the image "slowed our lilacs". She connects all this diverse subject

matter by creating an association between color-words. Overall, this ambiguity allows her to marry private issues with public matters.

In *ghazal* 7/17/68, Rich creates an association between the elements of nature with objects and inventions of modern time:

7/17/68

Adrienne Rich	Images of nature	Images of man's inventions
Armitage of scrapiron for the radiations of a moon. Flower cast in metal, Picasso-woman, sister.	radiations of a moon Flower	Armitage of scrapiron cast in metal
Two hesitant Luna moths regard each other with the spots on their wings: fascinated.	Luna moths spots on their wings	
To resign yourself-what an act of betrayal! —to throw a runaway spirit back to the dogs.		
When the ebb-tide pulls hard enough, we are all starfish. The moon has her way with us, my companion in crime.	the ebb-tide pulls hard enough we are all starfish the moon	
At the Aquarium that day, between the white whale's loneliness and the groupers' mass promiscuities, only ourselves. (64).	the white whale	the Aquarium

Here, Rich uses the images of the moon and sea to refer to feminine power. In the first couplet, she combines man's inventions with the images of nature like the moon and a flower. Moreover, she uses the image 'Picasso-woman, sister' probably to refer to the figure of women painted by Picasso and to Shakespeare's sister by Virginia Woolf in order to indicate the image of transformed women and female writers who are seeking change and empowerment. She, then, compares these women to Luna moths with spots on their wings. The spots can be interpreted as sins committed by women who are, however, happy and fascinated by their spots. It may indicate that their sin is their effort and struggle for change against the patriarchal law. Their efforts lead to a change in their identity. The moon in this poem is probably personified as a Goddess that guides and empowers women, while, the aquarium is the symbol of men's invention and patriarchal rule against nature that imprisons the white whales. The image of the white whale may symbolize passion and nature's power and is a clear reference to Melville's Moby Dick which seems to underscore the fact that the aquarium is a sort of prison substituting for the killing of the whale.

Another strategy that Rich borrows from Ghalib is the use of allusion to other literary, social and historical figures and events. She creates an association between the words and images used in a *ghazal* with the implicit reference of the allusions. For example, in one of her *ghazal*s she uses the name of Vivaldi. In this manner, she communicates the implied information about the 'Orchestra of concentration camp' by Karl Jenkins known as Vivaldi and makes an association between Vivaldi and the 'death-camps':

> An open window; thick summer night; electric fences trilling.
>
> What are you doing here at the edge of the death-camps, Vivaldi? (64).

Similarly, in *ghazal* 8/1/68, Rich uses the names, Jim and Custer, which refers respectively to oppression against black people and the fight against the Native Americans. In this manner, she creates an association by using 'Jim' instead of 'black boy' and relating it to 'white boys':

> Were you free then all along, Jim, free at last,
>
> of everything but the white boy's fantasies?

> And you, Custer the Squaw-killer, hero of primitive schoolroom—
>
> where are you buried, what is the condition of your bones? (67).

Moreover, inspired by Ghalib, Rich uses a sort of *takhallus*[151] in her *ghazal*s. She does not use a pen-name of her own, that is, of the poet, but the name of other poets or literary, artistic, and historical figures in the last line of some of her *ghazal*s.[152] For example, she uses the name of Whitman:

> "It may be if I had known them I would have loved them."
>
> You were American, Whitman, and those words are yours. (62).

Or in another *ghazal,* quoted above, she uses the name of Vivaldi:

> An open window; thick summer night; electric fences trilling.
>
> What are you doing here at the edge of the death-camps, Vivaldi? (64).

---

[151] In the Persian and Urdu literary tradition, *takhallus* is the pen-name of the poet that normally appears in the last couplet.

[152] In this manner, she draws closer to Rumi who uses 'Shams', the pen-name of his master and soul-mate as *takhallus* in his *ghazal*s.

Rich, moreover, imitates some of the thematic subjects common in Ghalib's *ghazal*s. In her own *ghazal*s, she creates analogous themes that are appropriate for her new readers within the context of her society. The themes used in her *ghazal*s, have intertextual references with Ghalib's poems through the use of some similar images and words.

For example, Rich uses the idea of the annihilation of the lover to achieve union with the beloved in the Islamic tradition of poetry to refer to the coming together of lovers in her *ghazal*:

> The vanishing-point is the point where he appears.
>
> Two parallel tracks converge, yet there has been no wreck. (61).

She does it through making allusions to some of the terms and images found in Ghalib's *ghazal*s. She uses the image 'vanishing-point' that reminds one of the concept of the annihilation of the lover in order to attain union with the beloved, and moreover, by the word 'appear' which, as previously discussed, stands for the Sufi image *tajalli*. *Tajalli* means the manifestation or appearance of the beloved or God.[153]

Another important theme that Rich borrows from Ghalib is the Sufi theme of *qalandariye* قلندريه . It is a kind of *ghazal* in which the poet takes the role of a hermit or

---

[153] In Islamic poetry, the words 'appearance', 'revelation' or 'manifestation' stand for *jelve* جلوه or *tajalli* تجلی in Persian and Urdu. Ahmad explains that it stands for indirect manifestation as God or the Creator manifests Himself in His creations. It also stands for direct revelation as God revealed Himself to Moses (Ahmad 2). In *A Glossary of Islamic Mysticism* and the *Encyclopedia of Sufi Symbolism* it is translated as theophany, manifestation, and mystical illuminations. Javad Nurbakhsh the master of the Nimatullahi Sufi Order explains the significance of *tajalli* in Sufi terminology: "The first station experienced by lovers is the tasting from goblets [*sāqar*] filled with the oceans of mystical illumination (*tajalli*). As they contemplate the radiance of divine intimacy in their hearts, redolent with fragrant breezes wafted from the invisible realm, the wide plains of the illumination of divine qualities are revealed to them. As the most mysterious aspect of their spirits inclines towards intimacy with God, they realize the purity of 'heart-savour' and experience the radiance of unveiled contemplative vision (Nurbakhsh 101).

libertine and censures all the religious laws, rules and rituals in the belief that the true religion is the religion of love. For example, in Ghalib's *ghazal* XXXIII, the poet gives away his *kharqah* and *sajjadah*, which are the garment and rug used when praying to God, in exchange for wine which is the symbol of passion. Ghalib depicts himself without any shame when pointed out by religious men for his drinking and heresy:

> In this gathering, I can have no shame (cannot act out of mere self-respect);
>
> I kept sitting, although fingers were pointed at me.

> For my wine, I am pawning my ragged garment and my prayer rug;
>
> It is long since we drank in an open banquet. (Trans. Ahmad 1994, 146).

He expresses his repugnance for religious rules and rituals and finds refuge and happiness in wine drinking.[154]

In another *ghazal* XXXVI, Ghalib once again speaks of the reclusion and heresy of the hermit or the saint. He shows his disinterest in worldly matters by ridiculing the 'throne of Solomon' or describing the 'miracle of the Messiah' as ordinary:

> This world is a children's playground for me.
>
> This spectacle unfolds day and night in front of my eyes.

> A (child's) play is the throne of Solomon for me;
>
> An ordinary thing is the miracle of the Messiah in my eyes. (Trans. Ahmad 1994, 161).

---

[154] This is the concept of the 'religion of love.' The hermit or the Sufi denies all the rules of religion and desires to find the beloved through love and passion.

Rich employs this theme to defend the African-Americans. Like Ghalib, who censures religious rituals and rules, Rich, in her *ghazal,* addressing Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones and Roy David Eldridge, criticizes the norms set by white people and instead admires what is conceived as negative or black:

> LeRoi! Eldridge! listen to us, we are ghosts
>
> Condemned to haunt the cities where you want to be at home.

> The white children turn black on the negative.
>
> The summer clouds blacken inside the camera-skull.

> Every mistake that can be made, we are prepared to make;
>
> Anything less would fall short of the reality we're dreaming. (66).

Moreover, like Ghalib who laments the loss of their gatherings:

> Where are (no more) those meetings, those separations!
>
> No more those days and nights, months and years! (Trans. Ahmad 1994, 62).

Rich expresses her sorrow for loss of friends and their gatherings:

> I'm walking through a rubble of broken sculpture, stumbling
>
> Here on the spine of a friend, there on the hand of a brother.

> All those joining! and yet we fought so hard to be unique.
>
> Neither alone, nor in anyone's arms, will we end up sleeping. (66).

In another *ghazal*, Rich addresses Ghalib and expresses that the mournful tones of Ghalib's *ghazal*s are also present in her own:

> How is it that Ghalib, that your grief, resurrected in pieces,
>
> has found its way to this room from your dark house in Delhi? (68).

Another feature that Rich borrows from Ghalib is to create a group of images in her poems. She emphasizes this use of images and their association in her *ghazal*s following Ghalib's style or in more general terms the style of the *ghazal* itself.

Rich's *ghazal*s have intertextual relations with both Ghalib's poems and the tradition of North American poetry. In fact, her *ghazal*s stand on the border between two literary traditions. She uses some symbolic words and images exactly as they appear in Ghalib's *ghazal*s, in this manner, she maintains the line of the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry. In some other cases, she uses the images or symbolic words of Ghalib's *ghazal*s and changes them by introducing them into a new context. Moreover, she creates a new set of symbolic words and images that are not foreign to the North American literary tradition. In this manner, she makes the poem acceptable to the North American or English language reader. The symbolic words and images frequently used in "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib" are: the word body and its parts, even bones, specifically, the image of the eye imprisoned in a skull, the images of nature, especially, a cold spring, and in contrast the frequent use of the words and images related to man's inventions and artificial things. For example the word 'electric'

is repeated throughout. In addition, she uses the words 'mind', 'wall', 'photography' and the words related to the sea such as 'ship', 'wreck', and 'whale.'[155]

By adopting the method of association of images, Rich creates her own set of images that suit her audience, her new historical and geographical context, and her purposes. It is as if she is creating a tradition, or adding new images to the American poetry system by imitating the poetic tradition of the Persian *ghazal*.

As Donoghue and Keyes point out these *ghazal*s should be read through their images like a symbolist poem whose unity flows from associations and images (Donoghue 219-220; Keyes 108).

For example, the first line of a *ghazal* dedicated to Sheila Rotner,[156] believed to be inspired by a phrase written by Rotner's four year-old son[157] (Barua 111-2), is linked intertextually with a couplet in Ghalib's *ghazal*s:

7/12/68

Adrienne Rich	Ghalib
The clouds are electric in this university. The lovers astride the tractor burn fissures through the hay. (61).	Hidden in my constructions are ways of ruin (ing): The warm blood of a farmer has in it the potential (of revolt) as there is potential electricity hidden in unthreshed corn. (Trans.

---

[155] It reinforces the connection of the text to Moby Dick and therefore the North American literary tradition.

[156] Sheila Rotner is a Pakistani artist, raised in Argentina and educated in the United Kingdom. She started her work with architecture and then went on to dedicate her time to sculpture and painting. In 1972, she moved to Washington and became a U.S. citizen. In the United States she participates in many projects and holds many exhibitions. She is known as a visual artist. (http://washingtonart.com/rotner/rotner.html).

[157] Rotner's son had written: "the clouds are electric in this university." He probably meant universe (Barua 111-2).

	Ahmad 1994, 27).

The images 'electricity', 'corn', and 'farmer' in Ghalib's *ghazal* change into the images of 'electricity', 'hay', and 'tractor' in Rich's couplet. Ahmad explains that the couplet written by Ghalib refers to the fact that when the corn is threshed by the farmer it produces sparks. Likewise, Rich writes: 'the tractor burns fissures through the hay".

Additionally, the reference that Rich makes to an Indian tradition in the third couplet of the same *ghazal* feeds the supposition that it was also inspired by Ghalib. She writes:

Only the truth makes the pain of lifting a hand worthwhile:

the prism staggering under the blows of the raga. (61).[158]

In another *ghazal*, Rich uses one of the most important images of Ghalib's poetry, namely 'dust.' It is the equivalent of *khāk* خاک or *ghobār* غبار in Persian and Urdu. Ghalib identifies himself with dust as the most unworthy, humble, and smallest element in the world to communicate that he is as unworthy as dust in comparison with the greatness of the Divine. However, he always adds that this small and unworthy element is full of love, passion, and impatience for union with the beloved. In Rumi's poetry *khāk* stands for the origin of the human being, humbleness, mystical annihilation, veil for the body, and multiplicity (Tājdini 328-31).

In one couplet, Rich skillfully incorporates the elements of Ghalib's *ghazal* into a Western literary concept:

---

[158] Raga is a melodic archetype by which normally the *ghazal* is sung. The Sanskrit term raga literally means, "the effect of coloring the hearts of men." Shahid Ali recalls Begum Akhtar who sang the *ghazal* of Faiz Ahmad Faiz (Agha 1991, ix).

In the Theatre of the Dust no actor becomes famous.

In the last scene they all are blown away like dust. (62).

She creates the combination of 'Theatre of the Dust' which may be inspired by 'theatre of the absurd' or by Shakespeare's "all the world a stage," while she uses the word 'dust' taken from Ghalib's poetry, which refers to the nullity of things. She combines it with a familiar concept for an American reader.[159]

In another *ghazal*, Rich uses the word 'night' with the same symbolic significance as used by Ghalib. For Ghalib 'night' stands for the time when truth is revealed and true knowledge is acquired and consequently union takes place. In the same vein, Rich writes that at night they were more conscious:

Sleeping back-to-back, man and woman, we were more conscious

than either of us awake and alone in the world. (61).

She uses the word 'letter' also with the same symbolic significance as Ghalib to refer to missing love letters:

The mail came every day, but letters were missing;

By this I knew things were not what they ought to be. (63).

In addition, Rich creates a set of new images and symbolic words by attributing to them the symbolic meanings used in Ghalib's *ghazal*s. For example, she uses the word 'eye'

---

[159] It may also remind the reader of the phrase "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" in the Anglican burial service, which indicates the finality of the corporeal body.

with the same symbolic significance that Ghalib uses for 'mirror.' In Ghalib's poetry the word 'mirror' refers to total perception, either perfect or defective:[160]

> The door of the mirror no longer opens to the six senses;
>
> here the distinction between defect and perfection is lost. (Trans. Rich in
>
> Ahmad 1994, 20)

Rich uses 'eye' to refer to the constant perception of everything:

> The eye that used to watch us is dead, but open.
>
> Sometimes I still have a sense of being followed. (65).

Another example is *ghazal* 7/24/68: i which is an elegy for the beauties of the past and a criticism of the present. Therefore, it may be an indication that the beauties of nature which existed in Ghalib's time are no more, or are no longer noticed:

> The sapling springs, the milkweed blooms: obsolete Nature.
>
> In the woods I have a vision of asphalt, blindly lingering.

> I hardly know the names of the weeds I love.
>
> I have forgotten the names of so many flowers.

> When we fuck, there too are we remoter
>
> than the fucking bodies of lovers used to be?

---

[160] In addition, in Ghalib's poetry truth can be revealed only in the mirror of the heart.

How many men have touched me with their eyes

More hotly than they later touched me with their lips. (65).

In the first couplet, Rich uses the word 'vision' in the same way as in Ghalib's poetry to indicate the perception of beauty either worldly or divine. However, to show that natural beauty does not exist anymore she creates the image of 'vision of asphalt'. In the last two couplets, she bids farewell to the romantic images of love poetry by indicating that they no longer exist either.

As a feminist strategy of linguistic deconstruction, Rich brings new images and metaphors into her poetry and changes the old images. For example in *ghazal* 7/26/68: i:

Last night you wrote on the wall: Revolution is poetry.

Today you needn't write; the wall has tumbled down.

A pair of eyes imprisoned for years inside my skull

is burning its way outward, the headaches are terrible. (66).

Rich repeats the word 'wall' and uses the image of eyes imprisoned within her skull. In another *ghazal* 7/26/68: iii:

So many minds in search of bodies

groping their way among artificial limbs.

Those stays of tooled whalebone in the Salem museum—

erotic scrimshaw, practical even in lust.

Whoever thought of inserting a ship in a bottle?

Long weeks without women do this to a man. (67)

Rich, in the first couplet, uses the word 'bodies', and in the second line, in contrast she introduces the image of 'artificial limbs' which is an intertextual reference to Ahab, the captain of the whaler that chased Moby Dick, who had a leg made of whale bone. In the second couplet, she uses the image of 'whalebone in the Salem museum' and in contrast brings in an erotic image in the second line. In the third couplet, she uses the image of a ship in a bottle which in the second line she attributes to sexual desire.

In some *ghazal*s, she combines erotic images with socio-political matters. For example she writes:

When they mow the fields, I see the world reformed

as if by snow, or fire, or physical desire. (63).

Moreover, Rich uses the sexual image of rape to speak of the socio-political problems such as destruction of thought and intellect. She writes:

If the mind of the teacher is not in love with the mind of the student,

he is simply practicing rape, and deserves at best our pity. (64).

She also makes a parallel between erotic and mental images:

When your sperm enters me, it is altered;

when my thought absorbs yours, a world begins. (64).

Rich insists on creating ambiguity in her *ghazal*s in the form of an erotic-political ambiguity achieved through disunity of couplets, association between images, the use of allusions and symbolic words. In many *ghazal*s, Rich strives to convey the message that more than one interpretation of her poems is possible. She tries to make her readers focus on diverse layers of meaning that can be perceived from her poems. For example, she writes:

When I look at that wall I shall think of you

and what you did not paint there.

To mutilate privacy with a single foolish syllable

Is to throw away the search for the one necessary word.

When you read these lines, think of me

and what I have not written here. (61).

Or:

The words are vapor-trails of a plane that has vanished;

by the time I write them out, they are whispering something else. (61).

In a *ghazal* dedicated to Aijaz Ahmad, Rich expresses the possibility of interpreting her poems in diverse modes. She says that each reader may have a different understanding or interpretation of her *ghazal*s:

When they read this poem of mine, they are translators.

Every existence speaks a language of its own. (68).

Finally, in a *ghazal* dedicated to Aijaz Ahmad, Rich points to the *ghazal*'s ambiguity and that by finding the relation between images, the true meaning of the *ghazal* can be perceived:

If there are letters, they will have to be misread.

If scribbling on a wall, they must tangle with all the others. (68).

In addition, like Ghalib, Rich creates gender ambiguity and also expresses her wish for unity between man and woman:

The ones who camped on the slopes, below the bare summit,

saw differently from us, who breathed thin air and kept walking.

Sleeping back-to-back, man and woman, we were more conscious

than either of us awake and alone in the world. (61).

Rich employs plural pronouns to show her desire to unite male and female. She avoids using gendered pronouns in many of her *ghazal*s and her later poems by utilizing first

person, second person and collective pronouns or using 'one'. In this manner, she conceals the gender of the speaker and the addressee in her poems and consequently adopts an androgynous self.

By using the pronouns 'I' and 'you', she tries to move beyond the self and create a dialogue between different voices or parts of the self (Templeton 29-30). Rich employs the pronouns 'I' and 'you' and shapes a dialogue between 'them'. For example, in her *ghazal* dedicated to Sheila Rotner, she writes:

> When I look at that wall I shall think of you
>
> And of what you did not paint there. (61)

Moreover, as in the tradition of Persian poetry, her description of the body is fragmented in order to leave the gender or identity of the beloved ambiguous. She uses the words 'skin', 'hand', and 'stream' which may refer to the blood stream:

> Eternity streams through my body:
>
> touch it with your hand and see. (63).

Rich tries to shatter the cliché of the female beloved by addressing her husband as the male beloved one. In the last *ghazal* in the collection "*Ghazal*s: Homage to Ghalib", Rich addresses her husband Alfred Haskell Conrad (A.H.C.). She writes it in the form of love poetry by placing a man as the object of love:

> I'm speaking to you as a woman to a man:
>
> when your blood flows I want to hold you in my arms.

The hairs on your breast curl so lightly as you lie there,

while the string heart goes on pounding in its sleep. (69).

She does so to change the patriarchal patterns of love poetry, to shatter the female stereotypes, to change the norm and the roles, and to empower women.

By concealing the gender of the person, using a fragmented description of the body, or addressing men as the objects of love in her poetry, Rich tries to recuperate the objectified and domesticated female body and thus bestows a new identity on the woman's body that has been depersonalized by patriarchy. In other words, it seems that the language of the *ghazal* works against patriarchy, as there is no distinct definition of a male and no predetermined image and description of a woman.

"The Blue Ghazals"

The collection of poems, "The Blue Ghazals", as the title indicates, could be a response to the blues of Amiri Baraka. Rich made the following comment on this:

> I think the energy of language comes somewhat from the pressure and need and unbearableness of what's being done to you. It's not the same energy you find in the blues. The blues are a grief language, a lost language, and a cry of pain, usually in a woman's voice, which is interesting. For a long time you sing the blues, and then you begin to say, "I'm tired of singing the blues, I want something else." And that's what you are hearing now. There seems to be a connection between an oppressed condition and having access to certain kind of energy, vitality, and subjectivity (Kalstone 1972, 59).

As in "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib", but more strongly, "The Blue Ghazals" are poems born from a woman's unconscious and therefore are full of energy. The dominant images in these poems are related to sea and water, and word-images that not only indicate the color blue given in the title of this collection but are symbolically related to feminist thinking. This is because feminist thought links women to the cyclical and fluid nature of the sea (Flotow 15). Rich also uses the image of water and identifies herself with it:

> The dew is beaded like mercury on the coarsened grass,
>
> the web of the spider is heavy as if with sweat.
>
> An Ashanti woman tilts the flattened basin on her head
>
> to let the water slide downward: I am that woman and that water. (20).

In these *ghazal*s, like those in her "Homage to Ghalib", Rich creates disunited and autonomous couplets whose unity is formed by the association of images.

For example, she brings unity to the above mentioned couplets by creating an association between water related words:

9/23/68

Adrienne Rich	Words related to water
The dew is beaded like mercury on the coarsened grass, the web of the spider is heavy as if with sweat.	dew sweat
An Ashanti woman tilts the flattened basin on her head to let the water slide downward: I am that woman and that water.	basin water

	water
(20).	

In another poem dedicated to Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones, Rich creates an association between the images of darkness and night to refer to the blackness and silence of Baraka:

9/29/68

Adrienne Rich	Images related to darkness and light
Late at night I went walking through your difficult wood, half-sleepy, half-alert in that thicket of bitter roots.	Late at night
Who doesn't speak to me, who speaks to me more and more, but from a face turned off, turned away, a light shut out.	a face turned off, turned away, a light shut out.
Most of the old lecturers are inaudible or dead. Prince of the night there are explosions in the hall.	Prince of the night explosions in the hall
The blackboard scribbled over with dead languages is falling and killing our children.	blackboard
Terribly far away I saw your mouth in the wild light: it seemed to me you were shouting instructions to us all. (22).	the wild light

She dedicates this *ghazal* to Amiri Baraka or, as Rich writes, to LeRoi Jones. Rich calls him "Prince of the night,'' associating night with the blackness of Baraka. In addition, she creates an association between the images of 'night' and 'darkness' to refer to the blackness and silence of Baraka in contrast to the images of 'light' and 'explosions' which refer to his precious words.

Another good example is *ghazal* 9/21/68 analysis of which shows how Rich brings unity to her poems in this collection:

9/21/68

Adrienne Rich	The images related to night and sleeping	The images related to passing of time and an old house	Images related to wood	Images related to sea
Violently asleep in the old house. A clock stays awake all night ticking.	Violently asleep A clock stays awake all night	the old house A clock… ticking		
Turning, turning their bruised leaves the trees stay awake all night in the wood.	The trees stay awake all night		Their bruised leaves the trees… in the wood	
Talk to me with your body through my dreams. Tell me what we are going through.	Through my dreams			
The walls of the room are muttering, Old trees, old utopians, arguing with the wind.		The wall of the room	Old trees, old utopians, the wind	

To float like a dead man in a sea of dreams And half those dreams being dreamed by someone else.	like a dead man a sea of dreams half those dreams being dreamed by someone else			To float a sea of dreams
Fifteen years of sleepwalking with you, wading against the tide, and with the tide. (20).	Fifteen years of sleepwalking	Fifteen years		wading against the tide, and with the tide.

In this *ghazal*, Rich associates the image of sleeping with an old house and a dead man, while the image of dreaming is associated with floating in a sea which indicates movement and change. She uses the image of a clock in the old house to suggest the passage of time and the image of trees, which like the clock are awake all night, to express awareness. The image of trees in her *ghazal* is like the image of a mystic in Ghalib's *ghazal*s who is awake at night to perceive the divine truth. Furthermore, when she says "Old trees, old utopians", Rich makes clear that by wood and trees she intends an ideal place, like 'orchard' in Ghalib's *ghazal*s. In this poem, she speaks of a dream in which she is wading against the tide and wants to make a change. By associating the symbolic words and images, it becomes evident that the poem is talking about the dream of change and transformation in opposition to stable traditions.

In another *ghazal*, Rich expresses her desire to bring change to ways of thinking by creating an association between images related to this concept:

12/13/68

Adrienne Rich	Images related to changing minds
They say, if you can tell, clasped tight under the blanket, The edge of dark from the edge of dawn, your love is a lie.	
If I thought of my words as changing minds, hadn't my mind also to suffer changes?	changing minds my mind also to suffer changes
They measure fever, swab the blisters of the throat, but the cells of thought go rioting on ignored.	the cells of thought go rioting on ignored
It's the inner ghost that suffers, little spirit looking out wildly from the clouded pupils.	the inner ghost that suffers
When will we lie clearheaded in our flesh again with the cold edge of the night driving us close together? (22).	clearheaded

Rich uses the images related to mind and thought to express her will for change. She depicts minds as suffering, without peace, and likely to riot.

Moreover, the third and fourth couplets have an intertextual relation with a couplet in Ghalib's *ghazal*s:

12/13/68

Adrienne Rich	Ghalib
They measure fever, swab the blisters of the	The molecules of the mirror, if she appear,

throat,	Longing to open like eyelids and take her in.
but the cells of thought go rioting on ignored.	(Rich, Ghalib *ghazal* 11).
It's the inner ghost that suffers, little spirit Looking out wildly from the clouded pupils. (22).	

Rich uses "the cells of thought" instead of "the molecules of the mirror" and "clouded pupils" instead of "eyelids" as in Ghalib's poem.

Similar to her previous collection of *ghazal*s, Rich employs allusion to create association with other words and images. In *ghazal* 9/28/68: ii, Rich alludes to the poem "Ideas of Order at Key West" by Wallace Stevens:

9/28/68: ii

Adrienne Rich	Images related to order and disorder
Ideas of order… Sinner of the Florida keys, you were our poet of revolution all along.	Ideas of order Sinner of the Florida keys our poet of revolution
A man isn't what he seems but what he desires: Gaieties of anarchy drumming at the base of the skull.	Gaieties of anarchy
Would this have left you cold, our scene, its wild parades, The costumes, banners, incense, flowers, the immense marches?	wild parades

Disorder is natural, these leaves absently blowing in the drinking-fountain, filling the statue's crevice.	Disorder is natural leaves absently blowing in the drinking-fountain
The use of force in public architecture: nothing, not even the honeycomb, manifests such control. (21).	honeycomb control

Rich calls Stevens a 'Sinner' within this order and the poet of revolution and disorder. She creates an association between these couplets by the images of order and disorder. She demonstrates that disorder is natural. She condemns and criticizes man-made order in contrast to the nature's disorder by giving the example of probably the most ordered element in nature, a honeycomb. She says that even the honeycomb manifests disorder in comparison to man-made architecture.

Moreover, in this *ghazal*, she borrows a theme from Ghalib's *ghazal*s and uses it in a new context. Rich praises disorder and anarchy and considers it natural and correct. It is probably inspired by a theme used by Ghalib where he praises heresy and wine drinking. The main theme of Ghalib's *ghazal* XXXVII is the repugnance of religious rules and rituals expressed through several allusions to myths and stories. For example, Ghalib makes an allusion to the story of Adam who left paradise, which symbolizes his renunciation of Divine rules. He praises the act of drinking and reprimands the religious man or the preacher ridiculing his beliefs and sayings by reminding him even within the Kaʿba[161] there may be an idol:

---

[161] Kaʿba in Mecca is the most important religious site for Muslims. Muslims are expected to face it during their prayer. Before the advent of Islam it was full of idols that were worshipped. However, the Prophet Muhammad announced that only God should be praised and all the idols were removed from the Kaʿba.

We have always heard of Adam leaving (being made to leave) the primal

    paradise, but

I was much (less literally, more) disgraced when I left (was made to leave)

    Your abode.

Drinking (drunkenness) has been associated with my name in this period;

Once more, an era has arrived (begun) in which Jamshed's cup should

    appear.

O preacher! Do not, for God's sake, lift the curtain of the Kaba.

Maybe the same unbelieving idol is found (appears) here as well. (Trans.

 Ahmad 1994, 166).

Ahmad explains:

> The poet is indulging in all kinds of allusions and word-play… The poet is
>
> also making use of a few historical facts: that the Kaʻba, the grand shrine
>
> where Muslims from all over the world congregate for their annual pilgrimage,
>
> was in fact a temple for idol-worship before the advent of Islam; that at the
>
> heart of the shrine [it is believed] is still a huge stone, wrapped in beautifully
>
> embroidered cloth, which is supposedly holy. (Ahmad 1994, 167-8).

Another feature that Rich borrows from Ghalib's *ghazal*s is the use of symbolic

words. She repeats them throughout all her *ghazal*s, creating unity or intertextuality between

them. In 'The Blue *Ghazal*s', this relation or chain between them is even stronger and the

intratextuality between the *ghazal*s is more evident. Rich creates a set of new images that are repeated through almost all the *ghazal*s in this collection: they are rooted in the words 'night', 'sleep', 'dream', 'wood', 'city', 'mind' and 'eye'. The images of 'night', 'wood', and 'city' are commonly used in both collections. It is as if she creates a tradition analogous to that in Persian and Urdu *ghazal*s.

Her *ghazal*s have intertextual relations with those of Ghalib by using some words with the same symbolic significance. However, with respect to the poems in "Ghazals: Homage to Ghalib," Rich distances herself from Ghalib's *ghazal*s. In these poems, she develops the techniques used in Ghalib's poetry but applies them to her own purposes, namely for creating a feminist or common language.

For example, Rich borrows the word 'street' from Ghalib's *ghazal*s and uses it with the same symbolic significance, that is, the place where the beloved one is or passes by:

> I'm tired of walking your streets
>
> he says, unable to leave her (21).

It appears in Ghalib's poems as follows:

> Again, my thoughts haunt your street;
>
> I remember losing my wits there. (Trans. Rich in Ahmad 1994, 15).

or:

> My dust (the dust I have become) is infamous now in my beloved's street;
>
> But, O wind, there is now no desire for flying. (Trans. Ahmad 1994, 132).

In some cases, she uses the symbolic words of Ghalib's poems and introduces them in totally new concepts.

For example, she borrows the word 'tangling' from Ghalib's poetry where it refers to the poet's or the lover's dark and anxious thoughts associated with the dark tangles of the beloved's hair:

> You were meant to sit in the shade of your rippling hair;
>
> I was made to look further, into a blacker tangle. (Trans. Rich in Ahmad 1994, 58).

and introduces it into a new context:

> City of accidents, your true map
>
> is the tangling of all our lifelines. (24).

In her *ghazal,* by 'tangling,' Rich refers to the complications of life which is compared to the tangling and complications of lines on a city map.[162]

Ghazal 9/28/68: i is a good example in which she uses a number of her own symbolic words:

> A man, a woman, a city.
>
> The city as object of love.
>
> Anger and filth in the basement.

---

[162] It is here to remind the reader that 'city' in Rich's *ghazal*s is the object of love.

The furnace stoked and blazing.

A sexual heat on the pavements.

Trees erected like statues.

Eyes at the end of avenues.

Yellow for hesitation.

I'm tired of walking your streets

he says, unable to leave her.

Air of dust and rising sparks,

the city burning her letters. (21).

She uses the words related to 'city' symbolically to speak of sexual matters. In this manner, she marries the events of social life to gender issues. She explicitly expresses this in the first couplet where she represents the city as the object of love.

By the use of disunited couplets, symbolic words, association between symbolic words, images, and allusions, Rich creates ambiguity in her *ghazal*s and succeeds in combining gender issues with socio-political matters. She creates unity between the private and the public, between the erotic and the political. In other words, the *ghazal*s in this collection are political poems that are illustrated by erotic images or are the abstract concepts of society and politics which are translated into material images.

Rich uses erotic language and creates new metaphors for the censored parts of the female or male body in conventional writing. In this manner she tries to go beyond the

stereotypes and overcome the clichés that define women and sexuality. For example, in the same *ghazal* given above, Rich uses the image of 'city' to portray an erotic scene. She explicitly defines the city as the object of love. She depicts diverse parts of a city to speak of sexual desire. It served her purpose to combine the erotic and the socio-political. Moreover, the image of disorder and chaos in the city can refer both to sexual desire and actual socio-political upheavals.

Another example is the last *ghazal* in the collection where she speaks of women's problems and combines gender issues with socio-political matters:

> Pain made her conservative.
>
> Where the matches touched her flesh, she wears a scar.
>
> The police arrive at dawn
>
> like death and childbirth.
>
> City of accidents, your true map
>
> is the tangling of all our lifelines.
>
> The moment when a feeling enters the body
>
> is political. This touch is political.
>
> Sometimes I dream we are floating on water
>
> Hand-in-hand; and sinking without terror. (24).

Rich creates an image of the woman's body that is suffering and is covered with scars. She associates it with the image of death and childbirth and interconnects it with the image of a city in which there are many accidents. In addition, she explicitly speaks of the duality of the erotic and political in her poem:

> The moment when a feeling enters the body
>
> is political. This touch is political. (24).

In fact, Rich uses the techniques of Ghalib's *ghazal* in uniting love and mystical poetry and applies it to her poetry to combine erotic and political issues. The erotic-political ambiguity in these *ghazal*s is much more evident and stronger that those in "Homage". Her *ghazal*s and her later compositions, like the Persian and Urdu *ghazal*, can have diverse interpretations. A good example is when her poetry is translated into Persian. In this case, its social aspect is highlighted and her position against war is discussed.

In addition, similar to Ghalib, Rich creates a sort of gender ambiguity in her poems. Gender ambiguity in these *ghazal*s is more emphasized with respect to those in "Homage". As previously mentioned in order to create gender ambiguity, she employs diverse strategies. For example, she uses such genderless pronouns as 'I', 'you', creates a dialogue between them, or uses the plural pronoun 'we':

> Talk to me with your body through my dreams.
>
> Tell me what are we going through. (20).

However, Rich moves further from dialogue. She embraces the polylogic to be able to overcome and incorporate otherness (Wadden 97). She uses "I" and "you" and integrates them into "we." Rich writes:

> The 'who' of that reader quivers like a jellyfish. Self-reference is always possible… But most often someone writing a poem believes in, depends on, a delicate vibrating range of difference, that an 'I' can become a 'we' without extinguishing others, that a partly common language exists to which strangers can bring their own heartbeat, memories, images. (Rich 2003 a, 86).

She expresses her desire for unity and collectivity where she says that man and woman are getting closer but are not yet united:

> A black run through the tunneled winter, he and she,
>
> Together, touching, yet not side by side. (23).

Further, she states that if they become united they can change their destiny. By using the pronoun 'we' she shows that the unity of 'I' and 'you' and collectivity can lead to change:

> Everything is yielding toward a foregone conclusion,
>
> only we are rash enough to go on changing our lives. (20).

Rich desires unity with all people and all things as she identifies herself with water and with the Ashanti woman:

An Ashanti woman tilts the flattened basin on her head

to let the water slide downward: I am that woman and that water. (20).

Moreover, Rich applied the rhizomatic and fragmented presentation of the body in her *ghazal*s. Particularly in "The Blue Ghazals", her representation of the body is symbolic and metaphoric. She applied the fragmented description of the body to both men and women. By the use of fragmented bodily images Rich went against the paternal law that sustains the integrity of the body (Butler 2011, 41).

In this, she was also under the influence of the representation of the female body in the films of the director Jean-Luc Godard. In his movies the representation of women is rhizomatic, multiple, and fragmented (Vegari, "Calling the Shots"). In this respect Ghalib's *ghazal* and Godard's movies converge. Their difference lies in the fact that in Godard's movies the fragmented description of the body is limited to women's bodies in order to give a sense of plurality to their existence, while in the *ghazal* this fragmentation principally serves to conceal the sex or more significantly the entity of the beloved.

The contemporary North American feminist and philosopher Judith Butler commenting on Jacques Lacan's saying: "C'est par la nomination que l'homme fait subsister les objets dans une certain consistence", concludes that bodies become whole only by the sexually marked name which is given by "the law of the father and the prohibition against incest" (Butler 2011, 41).

Adrienne Rich's common language

In these poems, Rich tries to lift the border between 'I' and 'you', and 'man' and 'woman'. She speaks of the equality of races and sexes. She expresses her desire for change

in everyone and everything, so that collectivity and unity take the place of individuality and distinction.

Following Ghalib's *ghazals,* where the gender of the beloved is left ambiguous, Rich uses an androgynous identity in her poems. By adopting an androgynous self, she approaches the doctrines of Islamic mysticism, which stresses the destruction or forgetfulness of 'self' for unity with 'The One' (Camboni 1985 b, 156). An androgynous identity, particularly in women's writing, overcomes restrictions and in Rich's poetry stands as a symbol of change and power (Camboni 1985 a, 196-8).[163] It was this ambiguity or multiplicity that Rich applied in her later collection of poetry *A Dream of a Common Language* (1978).

Scarcia Amoretti argues that instead of the very strong masculine homosexuality that is a characteristic of Islamic tradition and reaches its focal point in love poetry, Rich by using this poetry offers a feminine homophile. The masculine homosexuality of Islamic tradition and feminine homophile intuited by Rich have a common characteristic and that is the ambiguity in reading the world and the ambiguity in defining the self and the other (Scarcia Amoretti 1983, 226).

This is where the verses of Robert Bly and Adrienne Rich converge. Bly uses the masculine homosexuality of Persian poetry in his writing which leads to the creations of a men's network. The most evident example of this is his book *Iron John* that was strongly influenced by Rumi. However, Rich changes this masculine homosexuality into the form of a feminine homophile to serve her purpose of creating a network of women and a common language.

Rich tried to create a sort of duality in her poetry. She attempted to move beyond the self and create a dialogue between different voices or parts of the self (Templeton 29-30). She

---

[163] A good example is the queer theory that for Rich is the return of the repressed concept of androgyny by occupying the borderlands between genders and therefore questioning the fixities (Friedman 1998, 77-8).

used her shadow anima as a figurative double to personify the parts of herself that were being repressed and ignored (Wadden 12-13). Gelpi argues that the poems in these two volumes deal with "the double sense of the animus as self and other." (Gelpi 294). Hilda Doolittle in this respect writes:

> Everyone comes from the pair, from two…, and everything in life seems a repetition-reperformance of that pair… Everyone is one and two and still more; everyone moves out of one, of two; moves out of the double gaze, the double pace, and approaches a multiple identity" (Doolittle qtd. in Gregory 65).[164]

Robert Bly praised the importance of connecting the inner and outer worlds in the verses of the Spanish poet Antonio Machado:

> Machado said that if we pay attention exclusively to the inner world, it will dissolve; if we pay attention exclusively to the outer world, it will dissolve. To create art, we have to stitch together both the inner and the outer worlds. How to do that? Machado concludes, Well, we could always use our eyes (Bly 2004, 58).

Bly tried to connect the inner feelings and spirituality with political matters and with outside world events at the time when writing political poetry was condemned. It was not acceptable to write a political poem since it was about a particular social situation and thus could not be universal. Bly tried to change this perception by choosing specific political situations as subject matter for his poetry. He wrote poems about the Vietnam War and composed the first poem against the Iraq war in August 2002 which was published in the

---

[164] Derrida states that: "The double is not one thing in two, but a 'two' within identity" (Wadden 4).

book *My Sentence Was a Thousand Years of Joy*. ("Robert Bly and Coleman Barks in Tehran").

Moreover, he had perceived the duality that exists in the world of the *ghazal*. His insistence was not only on the connection of the spiritual with the political, but he tried to shape a form of duality against unitary identity. As perfectly explicated and illustrated by Paul Wadden in his book *The Rhetoric of Self in Robert Bly and Adrienne Rich*, Bly tried to show the feminine side in any man and the masculine side in any woman. He had understood the androgyny that lies in the poetry of Kabir. Overall, it can be argued that in his work there is a recognition of psychological androgyny ("Robert Bly and Friends Reviving the Oral Tradition").

This feature of Bly's poetry makes his writing assimilate more closely to that of Adrienne Rich. Wadden particularly focuses on the similarities that exist between Bly and Rich in adopting a double language or identity in their poems.[165] He writes:

> Diving into the Wreck" and "A Man Writes to a Part of Himself" are but two of many poems in which Rich and Bly use figurative doubling to open discursive space in which to explore, like underwater drivers, fluid and fragmentary self-identity. In these two poems, they enact husband-wife, mermaid-merman pairs to probe contrary self-image—self and yet not-self. In

---

[165] Wadden writes: "Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that despite their contrasting literary and political identities as leading figures, respectively, in the feminist and masculinist movements, Rich and Bly share some deep-seated commonalities. As two of the most prominent and influential of contemporary American poets, both underwent difficult transitions as young formalist-trained writers struggling to forge new conceptions of poetry and poetics; both grounded their literary practice in the radical activity of self-transformation; both unremittingly devoted themselves—throughout their careers—to progressive political and social issues, from the Vietnam war to the environment, participating vigorously as public intellectuals in national debates and writing prose works… As rhetorical activists and revisionist writers … few have done more in word or deed to attempt to re-shape the socio-political worlds in which they dwell" (Wadden 14).

other poems and for other purposes, they deploy self-mirroring twins, siblings,

shadows, half-born sisters, and even bi-partite beasts-and-angels. (3).

Rich aimed at creating a poetical language that could dissolve the differences, speak for all notwithstanding their gender or race and break taboos. In addition, she desired to write in a poetical language that could connect private to public and let her identify with both male and female principles, a revolutionary language which could shatter the rules of things as they are.

Overall, it can be argued that Rich's *ghazal*s are political poems but at the same time deal with women's problems and gender issues. In other words, Rich creates an ambiguity in her *ghazal*s in which she connects private to public or her gender identity to socio-political matters.

In 1994, Rich composed another *ghazal* entitled "Late Ghazal" that was published a year later in her book of poetry *Dark Fields of the Republic*. This poem shows how Rich had perfectly understood the techniques used in composing the *ghazal*. In this poem, Rich talks of the fragmented descriptions in the *ghazal*, of combining diverse subjects, of its imagery, erotic language, ambiguity, and the unity of the *ghazal* which is cultural and stems from the association of images.

Footsole to scalp alive facing the window's black mirror.

First rains of the winter   morning's smallest hours.

Go back to the *ghazal* then   what will you do there?

Life always pulsed harder than the lines.

Do you remember the strands that ran from eye to eye?

The tongue that reached everywhere, speaking all the parts?

Everything there was cast in an image of desire.

The imagination's cry is a sexual cry.

I took my body anyplace with me.

In the thickets of abstraction my skin ran with blood.

Life was always stronger... the cities couldn't get it.

Memory says the music always ran ahead of the words. (Rich 1995 b, 43).

Rich's renderings and her *ghazal*s, which can be considered as re-writings, overlap in the techniques and the imagery used in them. As a "border-crossing" poet of "indeterminate gender," Rich desired to create dialogue and exchange through her translations. She believed that translation is transformation and serves to break the aura of the original as primary, productive and male. She did so by "bringing translation into her own poetry, breaking down this binary." (Bermann 2011, 112-113). Bermann writes in this regard:

> Incorporating texts, words, forms from other languages, media and cultures into her own poetry and reflecting upon the importance of such a polycultural language and politics in both poetry and prose, she has signaled the polylingualism of all writing, something that has become an increasingly important theoretical assumption (Bermann 2011, 113).

Thus, in Rich's works the border between translation and original disappears. In some *ghazal*s she employs the themes and images used by Ghalib. In some cases, she applies the images or concepts of Ghalib's poetry in a completely new context.[166] In others, she uses new images and themes by applying to them Ghalib's poetical style. As Barua writes, "Rich's poems, in spite of deviations from the traditional form, retain the essential spirit of the classical *ghazal*." (Baura 109).

As Rich herself indicates, her *ghazal*s are American and concern her private life and the socio-political issues in her country, but at the same time they owe their presence to the *ghazal*s of Ghalib:[167]

> My *ghazal*s are personal and public, American and twentieth-century; but they owe much to the presence of Ghalib in my mind: a poet self-educated and profoundly learned, who owned no property and borrowed his books, writing in an age of political and cultural break-up. (Rich 1969, 59).

Rich stood on the border between two literary traditions and cultures in order to transfer new cultural elements and bring innovation into her poetry. As Friedman states, borders indicate the juxtapositions between literature of near and far and "dispersion not only in themes explored but also in forms of literary embodiment" (2007, 263).[168] This border

---

[166] Seyhan raises some questions regarding the matter of linguistic and cultural transposition: "What happens to the memory of a nation outside (without) the nation? How is national identity transformed in the modern world that exists in a state of perpetual geopolitical shifts? When origins and heritages become recollections and merge into other histories, who guards and guarantees our national histories and the specificity of our pasts?" (Seyhan 20).

[167] In this regard, Adrienne Rich explains clearly "how the discontinuity of the *ghazal* provides an opportunity for a new kind of unity- one well-suited to the needs of a contemporary poet." (Glickman 50).

[168] The results of this border writing can be seen when her poems were translated into Persian. A few of her poems were translated into Persian in the 1990s by Farideh Hassanzadeh in the *Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry* (1386) and *Women Poets* (1383). In addition, in 1976 in the

position or identity allowed Rich to compose poems that spoke for men and women, for black and white people and heterosexuals and homosexuals.

It seems that the border position that Rich is experiencing is similar to that of Anzaldua. These words of Anzaldua could have been written by Rich:

> As a *mestiza* I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are mine because I am every woman's sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is the queer of me in all races.) I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge the collective/religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanics and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. *Soy un amasamiento*, I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings. (Anzaldua 81).

For Rich, identity is not of roots but of relations, of meeting places and exchange; it is not one language, but a multiplicity of languages, articulations and messages (Rich 2003 b, 258). As Bermann states, in her writing, Rich refuses to domesticate "the distant, the tragic, the merely unfamiliar or the painfully too familiar," as a result her writing "offers a place—an open, rhizomic, linguistic meeting place—where encounter, exchange and Relation can occur." (Bermann 2011, 114). Her struggles were not limited to interlingual translation, but

---

'Introduction' to the book, *The Other Voice*[168], Adrienne Rich highly praised the three poems of the female contemporary Iranian poet Forugh Farrokhzād (1935-1967) published in the volume.

she used the feminist strategy of re-vision to create a language that could express her identity.[169] As she discusses in her essay "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision" (1971), the act of re-vision will bring a change in the concept of sexual identity by freeing women from the language that has long trapped them (Shima 24). Bermann states that re-vision for Rich was:

> a project explicitly meant to re-vise a literary tradition, to rename the world and to allow it at last to speak from a feminist, and later, a lesbian, and definitely a woman-centered, point of view. (2011, 99).

In Rich's essay, re-vision means 'looking back', 'improving', or 'seeing anew' (Bermann 2011, 99). It is the narration of the past, the transmission of the images, forms, stories and ideas of other texts, by bringing to them one's own ideas, viewpoints, and innovations. The act of re-vision enabled Rich to look back at a text from another time and place, written by a male poet and see it with fresh eyes and utilize it for her feminist project. In this manner, she succeeded in pressing into service the ambiguity that belongs to the tradition of Persian and Islamic poetry and apply it to écriture feminine.

Overall, it can be concluded that, the new self elaborated by Rich and the images, concepts, and forms applied in her *ghazal*s mirrored those of the male Muslim Indian poet Ghalib. The ambiguity offered by the *ghazal*, and the possibility it offered as a means to reject taboos and speak of human beings on an equal level without distinguishing between the sexes was so powerful that it served the purposes of a 19th century male Muslim Indian poet as well as those of the contemporary North American poet Adrienne Rich.

---

[169] For the feminists re-vision was a form of intercultural contact (Friedman 1998, 113-4).

Conclusion

As this research has demonstrated, the *ghazal*'s erotic-mystical and gender ambiguity helped the North American poet Adrienne Rich to create an erotic-political ambiguity and an androgynous identity in her poems. Its focus on the issue of ambiguity has sought to foreground its importance to Rich's political poetry and feminist language. The ambivalence of erotic and mystical language in Ghalib's *ghazal*s suggested to Rich a new mode of using and associating images to express her newly acquired consciousness of gender identity and to connect gender issues with the political realities of her society.

In the 1960s and 70s, North American society was the scene of revolts and riots. The Vietnam-War was going on and a number of poets were looking for new modes of writing to reverse their socio-political and literary system. Amongst these, feminists and African-Americans like Adrienne Rich, Amiri Baraka, and Audre Lorde were struggling for their rights and defining their identity by insisting on the use of bodily images as a source of revolutionary power and a site of resistance. Feminists insisted on 'multiple oppression' and desired to combine gender issues with socio-political matters. Adrienne Rich, as a pioneer of the US feminist movement, was similarly concerned with fusing corporeal images with socio-political events in her society.

Rich wanted a poetic language that could combine the most private issues of sex and gender with socio-political matters. For this reason, she engaged in translating foreign poetry. The most influential translation project that actually paved the way for her to combine the personal with the political, and moreover, to use collective images and express common desires was the translation of Ghalib's *ghazal*s. It particularly helped her with her feminist project. It enabled her to question the issue of gender hierarchy, to break the taboos that were imprisoning women in her society, to shatter the patriarchal law of bodily integrity, to

question, reject, and contradict political powers and patriarchy, and to create a new language that could provide new spaces for women to write of themselves and therefore to bring about a change in their situation.

In translating or re-writing Ghalib's *ghazal*s, Rich played an important cultural role by maintaining the symbolic and cultural images of Ghalib's poetry and by keeping the names, allusions, and stylistic features belonging to the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry. In so doing, she stood on the border between two literary traditions which enabled her to transfer new linguistic and cultural elements into her text.

Rich's *ghazal*s are North American and full of elements from its culture and literary tradition, however, they owe their presence to Ghalib's poetry. In her *ghazal*s, Rich adapted the methods used in Ghalib's poems to her purposes to speak of women and such marginal groups as African Americans. In other words, she created a style analogous to Ghalib's *ghazal*s but in a new context and for new readers.

The results of this research demonstrate the way in which translation and re-vision contributed to Rich's feminist project. Translation for Rich was a contact zone that made possible the transference of new forms, images, and themes into her poetry. Later, her *ghazal*s which stand as re-visions functioned as hybrid texts that embraced the cultural and linguistic elements of both North American and Persian/Urdu culture and tradition. Rich performed the act of re-vision by looking back to the poetry of an Indian male poet from another time and place and saw it with fresh eyes. In this manner, she succeeded in applying the techniques used in the *ghazal* to her feminist language. In fact, Rich considered translation and re-vision as strategies that could contribute to écriture feminine.

Rich's attempts in this regard, revealed an unnoticed function of the *ghazal*. The long line of studies made by the scholars and experts in Persian and Urdu poetry on the *ghazal*'s ambiguity has been unaware of its function for a feminist language. It might have remained

unnoticed, if Aijaz Ahmad had not taken on the responsibility of introducing the *ghazal* to the North American poets. And it would have continued to go unnoticed if there had not been a feminist poet among the group of poet-translators in Ahmad's project. Finally, it was Rich who applied the method of re-vision to Ghalib's *ghazal*s and produced poems that stand on the border between two cultures and traditions. Undoubtedly, Rich's border position in life was another important factor added to her being a feminist that helped her understand the ambiguity that lies in the *ghazal* and to apply it to her own poems. All these attempts could only be revealed by a comparative study that also takes into account the elements of translation studies.

Therefore, this interdisciplinary research is a contribution to both comparative literature and translation studies by showing the influence of the classical Persian poetic form the *ghazal,* through the translation project of Aijaz Ahmad, to the development of a feminist language in the works of the North American poet Adrienne Rich. Moreover, it can be considered a contribution to women's writing or écriture feminine since it explores the differences in terms of gender attributes and shows the ways in which these differences are expressed in language. It suggests that the techniques used by Rich in her *ghazal*s can be used by women writers and poets to create new spaces that allow them to express their identity and empower themselves. Therefore, it can be argued that this research is innovative for both Oriental and women's studies in the sense that it offers the use of ambiguity in the classical *ghazal* as a strategy for women's emancipation in modern times.

What follows here is a set of further explorations based on what has been discussed in this research.

Interestingly enough, the analysis of Rich's *ghazal*s reveals an undeniable resemblance between her poems and those of Modern Persian poetry (*she'r-e now*). Her writings in the late 1960s and early 1970s show, particularly, an amazing similitude to the

verses of the contemporary female Persian poet Forugh Farrokhzād (1935-1967). This similarity is not limited to their writing but can also be seen in the events of their lives. They both left their marriages to dedicate themselves to poetry writing. They were interested in the cinematic techniques of shooting and used new methods of writing to speak for women and oppose patriarchy and oppression. Their poems are full of symbolic images which stem not only from the influence of classical Persian poetry but also from the technique of film making. Both used images and language that attacked patriarchy and tried to break the taboos that were imprisoning women in their society.

Where does all this resemblance come from? How is it that the poetry of a female North American poet resembles that of an Iranian female poet? It seems that in composing her *ghazal*s, Rich underwent the same process as Forugh or other Modern Persian poets in that their poems were developed from classical Persian poetry specifically the *ghazal*. Similar to these Persian poets, Rich did not aim at producing *ghazal*s that were formally and thematically identical to the original ones, but took some of the techniques used in the classical *ghazal* that served her purpose and adapted them to create a new, or in her own words, a 'common language.'

The similarity between Rich's poems and Modern Persian poetry urges the researcher to undertake another study, namely the translation of Rich's *ghazal*s from English into Persian. If this were done and the Introduction and explanations added, it would clearly contribute to the development of Modern Persian poetry and offer Persian poets new modes of writing. This potential bilingual English/Persian edition of Rich's *ghazal*s accompanied by explanations and notes on the methods of composition and translation into Persian would also contribute to the research being carried out in literary and translation studies.

This study emphasizes once more the importance of translation in constructing and developing literary systems, but more importantly, it demonstrates how Rich's stylistic

analogue in her *ghazal*s recontextualizes both English and Persian/Urdu modernist poetics and demands their revaluation.

Works cited:

Abbas, Nuzhat. "Conversing to/with Shame: Translation and Gender in the Urdu *Ghazal*."

    The Annual of Urdu Studies. 14 (1999). 135-149.

Agha, Iqbal Ali, and Hena Zafar Ahmad. "Foreword." *Call me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of*

    Ghazals. W.W. Norton and Company, 2003.

Agha, Shahid Ali. *A Walk Through the Yellow Pages*. Gemini Press, 1987.

—, trans. *The Rebel's Silhouette*. Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Amherst: The University of

    Massachusetts Press, 1991.

—. *A Nostalgist's Map of America*. W.W. Norton and Company, 1992.

—. *The Country Without a Post Office*. W.W. Norton and Company, 1997.

—. "Introduction." *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English*. Ed. Agha Shahid Ali.

    Wesleyan University Press, 2000. 1-14.

—. *Rooms Are Never Finished*. W.W. Norton and Company, 2002.

—. *Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals*. W.W. Norton and Company, 2003.

—. *The Veiled Suite.* W.W. Norton and Company, 2009.

"Agha Shahid Ali." *Poetry Foundation*. 2010.

    http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/agha-shahid-ali#poet.

Ahmad, Aijaz. "Rushdi's Shame: Postmodernism, Migrancy and Representation of Women."

    Economic and Political Weekly 26. 24 (1991). 1461-1471.

—. "Fascism and National Culture: Reading Gramsci in the Days of Hindutva." *Social*

    Scientists 21. ¾ (1993). 32-68.

—, ed. *Ghazals of Ghalib*. 1971. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

—. "The Politics of Culture." *Social Scientists* 27. 9/10 (1999). 65-69.

—. "The Cummunist Manifesto and 'World Literature'." *Social Scientists* 28. 7/8 (2000). 3-30.

—. "Imperialism of Our Time." *Socialist Register* 40 (2004). 43-62.

—. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures.* 1992. London and New York: Verso, 2008.

Ahmad, Rukhsana. *We Sinful Women: Contemporary Urdu Feminist Poetry.* Women's Press, 1991.

Aḥmadi, Nāder, and Fereshte Aḥmadi. *Iranian Islam: The Concept of the Individual.* Palgrave Macmillan, 1998.

Aḥmadzāde Heravi, Shide. "Ralph Waldo Emerson va Sheʿr-e Iran*"* ("Ralph Waldo Emerson and Persian Poetry", my trans.). *Āyene Āb.* Ed. Bahman Nāmvar Moṭlaq. Tehran: Hamshahri, 1384/2005. 200-201.

Ali, Ahmed. "The Problem of Style and Technique in Ghalib." *Aspects of Ghalib: Five Essays.* Karachi: Pakistan American Cultural Centre, 1970. 1-18.

Amin, Shādi, ed and trans. *Qodrat va Leḏḏat (Power and Pleasure*, my trans.). Koln: Āydā, 2006.

Amir-Ḥosseini, Morteżā Khalaj. *Romuz-e Nahofte dar Honar-e Negārgari (The Secrets of Negārgari*, my trans). Tehran: Ketāb-e Ābān, 1389/2010.

Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Book Company, 1987.

ʿArshi, Imtiyāz ʿAli, ed. *Divān-e Ghalib Urdu.* Aligarh: Majlis Taraqqi e Adab, 1958.

Asadpur, Rezā. "Zabān-e ʿErfān, Zabān-e Ramzi-ye Sufi-ye" ("Mysticism's Language, Sufism's Symbolic language", my trans.). *ʿErfān Poli Miyān-e Farhanghā (Mysticism: a Bridge Between Cultures*, my trans.) Ed.Yusofifar, Shahrām. Tehran: Mo'assase-ye Taḥqiqāt va ʿOlum-e Ensāni, 1382/2003. 111-124.

Āzaram, Moḥsen. "Tanhāii: Sheʿri az Adrienne Rich." ("You're wondering if I am lonely: A

    Poem by Adrienne Rich.") *Shomāl az Shomāl-e Gharbi*. 1390/2011.

     http://azarm.persianblog.ir/post/904/ .

Bankier, Joanna, et al, eds. *The Other Voice: Twentieth-Century Women's Poetry in*

    Translation. New York: Norton, 1976.

Barks, Coleman, trans. *The Essential Rumi*. 1995. U.S: New Expanded Edition, 2004.

Barua, Sonali. "Truth Is, at the Moment, Here: Adrienne Rich and the *Ghazal*." *Reorienting*

    Orientalism. Ed. Chandreyee Niyogi. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006. 102-115.

Bassnett, Susan, and Harish Trivedi. "Introduction: of Colonies, Cannibals and Vernaculars."

    Postcolonial Translation, Theory and Practice. 1999. Eds. Susan Bassnett, and Harish

    Trivedi. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 1-18.

Bassnett, Susan, and Andre Lefevere. "General Editor's Preface." *The Translator's*

    Invisibility. London & New York: Routledge, 1995. vii-viii.

—. "Introduction: Where are we in Translation Studies?" *Constructing Cultures: Essays on*

    Literary Translation. Eds. Susan Bassnett, and Andre Lefevere. Multilingual Matters

    Ltd, 1998.

Bausani, Alessandro. "The Position of Ghālib (1796-1869) in the History of Urdu and Indo-

    Persian Poetry." *Der Islam* XXXIV (1959). 99-127.

—. *Le letterature del Pakistan e dell'Afghanistan*. Firenze, Milano: Sansoni, Accademia,

    1968.

—, trans. *Il Corano*. Milano: Bibliotecha universale Rizzoli, 1988.

—. "Ghalib." *The Encyclopedia of Islam* II. Eds. B. Lewis, CH. Pellat, and J. Schacht.

    Leiden: Brill, 1991. 1000-1.

—. *Persia religiosa*. Cosenza: Lionello Giordano Editore, 1998.

—. "Considerazioni sull'origine del ghazal." *Il "Pazzo sacro" nell'Islam*. Ed. Maurizio Pistoso. Milano and Trento: Luni Editrice, 2000. 137-154.

—. *La letteratura neopersiana*. Roma: La Sapienza Orientale, Edizione Nuova Cultura, 2011.

Bausani, Alessandro, and Antonio Pagliaro. *Storia della letteratura persiana*. Nuova accademia editrice, 1960.

Beach, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century American Poetry*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Beasley, Rebecca. *Theorists of Modernist Poetry: T.S. Eliot, T.E. Hulme, Ezra Pound*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

Bermann, Sandra, "Re-vision and/as Translation: The Poetry of Adrienne Rich". *Translating Women.* Ed. Luise von Flotow. University of Ottawa Press, 2011. 97-117.

Bermann, Sandra, and Michael Wood. *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Bhatia, Tej K., and Koul Ashok. *Colloquial Urdu*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Bibby, Micheal. *Hearts and Minds: Bodies, Poetry, and Resistance in the Vietnam Era*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996.

Blackburn, Paul. "The International Word." *Nation* 21 (1962). 357-360.

Blasing, Multu Konuk. *Politics and Form in Postmodern Poetry*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Bly, Robert, trans. *The Kabir Book: Forty Four of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir*. Beacon Press, 1993.

—. *Iron John, Men and Masculinity*. 1990. London: Rider, 2001.

—. *The Night Abraham Called to the Stars*. New York: Prennial, 2002.

—. *The Winged Energy of Delight*. New York: Perennial, 2004.

—. *My Sentence Was a Thousand Years of Joy*. New York: Prennial, 2006.

Bly, Robert, and Sunil Dutta, trans. *The Lightning Should Have Fallen on Ghalib: Selected Poems of Ghalib.* Ecco, 1999.

Bly, Robert, and Leonard Lewisohn, trans. *The Angels Knocking on the Tavern Door: Thirty Poems of Hafez.* Harper Collins, 2008.

Bredi, Daniela. "Urdu in Italy: Alessandro Bausani's Contribution". *Annual of Urdu Studies* 15. I (2000): 293-304.

Bukhari Lubis, Haji Muhammad. *The Ocean of Unity: Waḥdat Al-Wujud in Persian, Turkish and Malay Poetry.* 1993. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1994.

Butler, Judith. "Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions." *The Journal of Philosophy* (Eighty-Sixth Annual Meeting American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division) 86.11 (1989). 601-607.

—. *Gender Trouble*. 1990. New York and London: Routledge, 2006.

—. *Bodies That Matter*. 1993. New York and London: Routledge, 2011.

Camboni, Marina. "Come pagine di un diario: I *Ghazal*s di Adrienne Rich." *L'esotismo nella letteratura angloamericana.* Vol. 3. Ed. Elémire Zolla, et al. Roma: Lucarini Editore, 1982. 163-193.

—. "Come la tela del ragno: La costruzione dell'identità nella poesia di Adrienne Rich." *Come la tela del ragno*, *Poesie e saggi di Adrienne Rich con tre saggi critici*. Editrice universitaria di Roma: La goliardica, 1985 a. 145-178.

—. "Le parole di Filomela." *Come la tela del ragno*, *Poesie e saggi di Adrienne Rich con tre saggi critici*. Editrice universitaria di Roma: La goliardica, 1985 b. 179-213.

—. "Leggere la *Bhagavad Gītā* a Boston, leggere *Lolita* a Teheran." *L'oriente nella cultura dell'Occidente.* Ed. Daniele Maggi, Diego Poli, and Marina Pucciarelli. Macerata: eum, 2008. 9-32.

—. "Alicia Ostriker and the Politics of Poetry." *American Patchwork: Multi-Ethnicity in the United States Today.* Le Monnier, RSA Journal 20 (2009). 145-7.

Caplan, David. *Questions of Possibility: Contemporary Poetry and Poetics*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

Caruana, L. *A Manifesto of Visionary Art*. Paris: Recluse Publication, 2001. http://visionaryrevue.com/webtext/manifesto.contents.html .

Castelli, Elizabeth. "Les Belles Infideles/Fidelity or Feminism? The Meanings of Feminist Biblical Translation." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, Special Section on Feminist Translation of the New Testament* 6. 2 (1990). 25-39.

Chalisova, N. "Īhām." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iham .

Chittick, William. *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*. State University of New York Press, 1983.

Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa". Trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs* 1. 4 (1976). 875-893.

Damon, Maria. "Queer Cities." *Twentieth-century American Poetry*. Ed. Stephen Fredman. USA, UK, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 95-112.

Darling-Wolf, Fabienne. "Disturbingly Hybrid or Distressingly Patriarchal? Gender Hybridity in a Global Environment." *Hybrid Identities: theoretical and empirical examinations*. Eds. Keri E. Iyall Smith, and Patricia Leavy. Eiden and Boston: Brill, 2008. 63-80.

de Bruijn, J.T.P. *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Persian Poems*. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997.

—. "Ghazal." *Encyclopedia Iranica*. Ed. Ehsan Yarshater. Vol. X, Fascicle 4 (Center for Iranian Studies, Columbia University). New York: Bibliotecha Persica Press, 2001. 354-8.

D'Erme, Giovanni M. *Canzoniere*. Università degli studi di Napoli, 2004.

Diaz-Diocaretz, Myriam. *Translating Poetic Discourse: Questions on Feminist Strategies in Adrienne Rich.* Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1985.

Di Giovanni, Elena, and Rosa Maria Bollettieri Bosinelli. "L'altrove della traduzione." *Oltre L'occidente: Traduzione e alterità culturale.* Milano: Bompiani, 2009. 11-52.

Dimitriu, Rodica. *Theories and Practice of Translation*. Institutul European, 2002.

Donoghue, Denis. "Review of Leaflets: Poems 1965-1968." *Reading Adrienne Rich, Reviews and Revisions, 1951-81*. Ed. Jane Roberta Cooper. University of Michigan Press, 1984.

Engle, Paul, and Hualing Nieh Engle. "Foreword." *Writing from the World: II*. Eds. Marilyn Chin, et al. Iowa City: International Books and the University of Iowa Press, 1985.

Erkkila, Betsy. *The Wicked Sisters: Women Poets, Literary History, and Discord.* Oxford University Press, 1992.

Even-Zohar, Itamar. "The Function of the Polysystem in the History of Literature." *Masa* 6.3. (1970).

—. "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem." 1975. *Poetics Today* 11.1 (1990). 45-51.

Farshchiān, Maḥmud. "Introduction." *Romuz-e Nahofte dar Honar-e Negārgari* (*The Secrets of Negārgari*, my trans.). Morteżā Khalaj Amir Ḥosseini. Tehran: Ketāb-e Ābān, 1389/2010.

Federici, Eleonora. "Metaphors in Dialogue: Feminist Literary Critics, Translators and Writers." *Monografias de Traducciòn e Interpretaciòn* 3 (2011). 355-376.

Feit Diehl, Joanne. "'Of Woman Born': Adrienne Rich and the Feminist Sublime." *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*. Eds. Barbara C. Gelpi, and Albert Gelpi. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993. 402-423.

Flotow, Luise von. *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

Fotuḥi, Maḥmud. *Belāghat-e Taṣvir* (*The Eloquence of Images*, my trans). 1385. Tehran: Sokhan, 1389.

Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Adrienne Rich and H.D.: An Intertextual Study." *Reading Adrienne Rich: Reviews and Re-Visions, 1951-81*. Ed. Jane Roberta Cooper. The University of Michigan Press, 1984. 171-206.

—. *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*. Princeton University Press, 1998.

—. "Migrations, Diasporas, and Borders." *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*. Ed. David Nicolls. New York: MLA, 2007. 260-293.

Gelpi, Albert. "Adrienne Rich: The Poetics of Change." 1960. *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*. Eds. Barbara C. Gelpi, and Albert Gelpi. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993. 282-299.

Gentzler, Edwin. "Translation, Counter-Culture, and the Fifties in the USA." *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Eds. Roman Alvarez, and M. Carmen Africa Vidal. Clevedon, Philadelphia, Adelaide: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1996. 116-137.

—. *Contemporary Translation Theory*. 1993. Great Britain: Cromwell Press. 2001.

—. *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.

Glickman, Susan. "Proceeding Before the Amorous Invisible: Phylliss Webb and the Ghazal." *Canadian Literature* 115 (1987). 48-61.

Glissant, Edouard. *Poetica del diverso (Introduction à une poétique du divers)*. Trans. Roma: Meltemi, 1998.

Golding, Alan. "American Poet-teachers and the Academy." *Twentieth-century American Poetry*. Ed. Stephen Fredman. USA, UK, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 55-74.

Ghosh, Amitav. "The Ghat of the Only World: Agha Shahid Ali in Brooklyn." *Outlook*. 2001. http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?216239.

Grabar, Oleg. *Mostly Miniatures: An Introduction to Persian Painting*. Princeton University Press, 2000.

Gray, Elizabeth. *The Green Sea of Heaven, Fifty Ghazals from the Diwan of Hafiz*. Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 1995.

Gregory, Eileen. "H.D.'s Heterodoxy: The Lyric as a Site of Resistance." *H.D.'s Poetry: "the meanings that words hide"*. Ed. Marina Camboni. New York: AMS Press, 2003. 21-34.

Gun Guninghame, Patrick. "Hybridity, Transnationalism, and Identity in the US-Mexican Borderlands." *Hybrid Identities: theoretical and empirical examinations*. Eds. Keri E. Iyall Smith, and Patricia Leavy. Eiden and Boston: Brill, 2008. 13-40.

Hā'eri, Ḥasan. *Ṣā'eb va Shā'erān-e Ṭarz-e Tāze* (*Ṣā'eb and the Poets of the New Style*, my trans). Tehran: Nasl-e Āftāb, 1390.

Hākemi, Esmā'il. "'Erfān dar Farhang-e Eslāmi" ("Mysticism in Islamic Culture", my trans.). *'Erfān Poli Miyān-e Farhanghā* (*Mysticism: a Bridge between Cultures*, my trans.). Ed.Yusofifar, Shahrām. Tehran: Mo'assase-ye Taḥqiqāt va 'Olum-e Ensāni, 1382/2003. 39-44.

Haleem, M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, trans. *The Qur'ān*. Oxford's World's Classics, 2008.

Harrison, Jim. *Outlyer and Ghazals*. Simon and Schuster, 1971.

Hassanzadeh, Farideh, trans. *Sheʿr-e Zanān-e Jahān (Women Poets)*. Tehran: Negāh Publications,   1383/2005.

—, trans. *Sheʿr-e Āmricā-ye Moʿāser az Nime-ye Dovvom-e Qarn-e Bistom tā Emruz (Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry)*. Tehran: Negāh Publications, 1386/2008.

Hughes, Ted. "Introduction." *Modern Poetry in Translation*. New York: MPT/Persea, 1983.

Hung, Eva. "La traduzione collaborativa, ovvero ciò che possiamo imparare dalla tradizione traduttiva cinese." (Original title: "Collaborative Translation—or What Can we Learn from the Chinese Translation Tradition?") *Oltre L'occidente: Traduzione e alterità culturale*. Eds. Rosa Maria Bollettieri Bosinelli, and Elena Di Giovanni. Milano: Bompiani, 2009. 81-110.

Husain, Yusuf, trans. *Urdu Ghazals of Ghalib*. New Delhi: Ghalib Institute, 1977.

Jān Nethāri, Nāṣir. "Andishehā-ye ʿErfāni dar Sheʿr-e Ghalib Dehlavi" ("Sufi Thoughts in Ghalib's Poetry", my trans.). *Keyhān Farhangī* 151 (1378/1999). 24-7.

Javādi, Ḥasan. *Persian Literary Influence on English Literature*. California: Mazda Publishers, 2005.

Kalstone, David. "Talking with Adrienne Rich." *The Saturday Review*. April 22 (1972). 56-9.

—. *Five Temperaments: Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, James Merrill, Adrienne   Rich, John Ashbery*. Oxford University Press Inc, 1978.

Katan, David. "Translation as Intercultural Communication." *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*. Ed. Jeremy Munday. London and New York: Routledge, 2009. 74-92.

Keller, Lynn, and Cristanne Miller. "Feminism and the Female Poet." *Twentieth-century American Poetry*. Ed. Stephen Fredman. USA, UK, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 75-94.

Keyes, Claire. *The Aesthetics of Power: The Poetry of Adrienne Rich*. Athenes and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2008.

Kilito, Abdelfattah. *L'occhio e l'ago: Saggio sulle "Mille e una notte."* (Original title: *L'oeil e l'aiguille: Essais sur "Les mille et une nuit"*. 1992). Trans. Donata Meneghelli. Genova: Soprana, 1994.

—. *The Author and His Doubles*. (Original title: *L'auteur et ses doubles*. 1985). Trans. Michael Cooperson. Syracuse University Press, 2001.

Kirk, Gwendolyn Sarah. "Half-Drawn Arrows of Meaning: A Phenomenological Appraoch to Ambiguity and Semantics in the Urdu Ghazal." Diss. University of Texas at Austin, 2011.

Langdell, Cheri Colby. *Adrienne Rich: The Moment of Change*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2004.

Lefevere, Andre. "Why Waste Our Time on Rewriters? The Trouble with Interpretation and the Role of Rewriting in an Alternative Paradigm." *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*. Ed. Teo Herman. New York: St. Martins Press, 1985. 215-243.

—. ed. *Translation, History, Culture*. New Fetter Lane, London: Routledge, 1992 a.

—. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. New Fetter Lane, London: Routledge, 1992 b.

—. "Introduction: Comparative Literature and Translation." *Comparative Literature*. Duke University Press, 47. 1 (1995). 1-10.

—."Chinese and Western Thinking on Translation." *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Tradition.* Eds. Susan Bassnett, and Andre Lefevere. Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1998. 12-24.

Leonardi, Vanessa. *Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently?* Peter Lang, 2007.

Levertov, Denise. "Broken Ghazals." *Oblique Prayers: New Poems with 14 Translations from Jean Joubert.* 1981. New Directions Publishing, 1984. 6-7.

Lewis. Franklin. *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West.* Oneworld, 2000.

—, trans. *Rumi, Swallowing the Sun.* Oxford: Oneworld, 2008.

Lewisohn, Leonard, ed. *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry.* London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010.

Lockart, Tara. "Writing the Self: Gloria Anzaldua, Texual Form, and Feminist Epistomology." *Michigan Feminist Studies* 20 (Fall 2006-Spring 2007). http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.ark5583.0020.002 .

Lorde, Audre. "Our Difference Is Our Strength." *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement.* New York and London: New York University Press, 2001. 315-16.

Lotman, Yuri, B. A. Uspensky, and George Mihaychuk. "On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture." *New Literary History: Soviet Semiotics and Criticism* 9. 2 (1978). 211-232.

Majeed, Javed. "Geographies of Subjectivity, Pan-Islam and Muslim Separatism: Muhammad Iqbal and Selfhood". *Modern Intellectual History* 4.1. Cambridge University Press, 2007. 145-161.

—. *Muhammad Iqbal, Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism.* London and New York: Routledge, 2009.

Maleki, Dumān. "Do Sheʿr as Adrienne Rich." ("Two Poems by Adrienne Rich", my trans.). *Golestāne* 52 (1382/2003). 37

Meneghini, Daniela and Paola Orsatti, eds. *Corso di lingua persiana*. Milano: Hoepli, 2012.

Merrill, Christopher. "A Route of Evanescence: Agha Shahid Ali in America." *Mad Heart, Be Brave: On the Work of Agha Shahid Ali.* Ed. Kazim Ali. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Forthcoming.

Merwin, W.S. *Selected Translations, 1968-1978*. New York: Atheneum, 1979.

Moḥammadi Āsiābādi, Ali. *Hermeneutics va Namādpardāzi dar Ghazaliyāt-e Shams* (*Hermeneutics and Symbolization in Ghazaliyāt-e Shams,* my trans.). Tehran: Sokhan, 1387/2008.

Murray, Stephen O. "Hāfiz." *Gay and Lesbian History: From Antiquity to World War II*. Eds. Robert Aldrich, and Garry Wotherspoon. Routledge, 2001. 195-6.

Moshtāq Mehr, Raḥmān. *Farhang-nāme-e Ramz-hāye Ghazaliyāt-e Mowlānā* (*A Dictionary of Symbols in the Ghazals of Mawlana*). Tehran: Khāne Ketāb, 1390/2011.

Naẓiri, Fo'ād, trans. *Khordan-e ʿAsal-e Kalamāt (Eating the Honey of Words: New and Selected Poems)*. Tehran: Morvārid, 1386/2007.

Niazi, Sarfaraz K. *Wine of Passion: The Urdu Ghazals of Ghalib*. Lahore, Rawalpindi, Karachi: Ferozsons (PVT) Ltd, 2009. www.ghalib.org/index.html.

Nicholls, Peter. "Wars I Have Seen." *Twentieth-century American Poetry*. Ed. Stephen Fredman. USA, UK, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 11-32.

Nicholson, Reynold A. *The Mystics of Islam*. London: Routledge, 1914.

Nojumiān, Amir ʿAli. "Adabiyāt-e Irān dar Engelestān va Āmricā" ("Persian Literature in England and America", my trans.). *Āyene Āb*. Ed. Bahman Nāmvar Moṭlaq. Tehran, Hamshahri: 1384/2005. 169-179.

Nurbakhsh, Javad. *Sufi Symbolism I*. Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1986.

Ostriker, Alicia Suskin. *Dancing at the Devil's Party, Essays on Poetry, Politics, and the Erotic*. The University of Michigan, 2000.

Pākzād, Mahsā. "Adrienne Rich, Shāʿer-e Aqalliyat-hā, Tabʿiż-hā-ye Jensi, Jensiyati va Nežādi." ("Adrienne Rich, the Poet of the Minorities, Sexual, Gender, and Racial Discrimination", my trans.). http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/arts/2012/03/120331_l41_adrienne_aich_obituary.shtml

"Persian Poetry, with Examples: Hafiz and Sadi." *National Magazine: Devoted to Literature, Art, and Religion* 6. Ed. Abel Stevens. New York: Carlton and Philips, 1855. 119-122.

Petievich, Carla. "*Rekhti*: Impersonating the Feminine in Urdu Poetry." *Sexual Sites, Seminal Attitudes: Sexualities, Masculinities and Culture in South Asia*. Ed. Sanjay Srivastava. South Asian Studies Association, 2004. 147-164.

Petrucci, Mario. "Poetry in Performance: Intertextuality, Intra-Textuality, Poeclectics." *NAWE conference on Re-Writing*. 2000. http://www.mariopetrucci.com/NAWE2002.pdf .

Poliakova, Elena Artemovna. *Naqqāshi va Adabiyāt-e Irāni*. Trans. Zohre Feyżi. Tehran, Rozane, 1381/2001.

Pellò, Stefano. "Persian as a Passe-Partout: The Case of Mīrzā ʿAbd al-Qādir Bīdil and Hindu Disciples." *Culture and Circulation in Pre-Modern South Asia*. Eds. A. Busch, and T. de Bruijn. Leiden, 2006.

Purnāmdāriān, Taqi. *Dar Sāye-e Āftāb: Sheʿr-e Fārsi va Sākht-Shekani dar Sheʿr-e Mowlavi. (Persian Poetry and Deconstruction in Mowlānā's Poetry,* my trans.*).* 1380/2000. Tehran: Sokhan, 1388/2009.

Pritchett, Frances W. "Orient Pearls Unstrung: The Quest for Unity in the *Ghazal*." *Edebiyat* Vol. NS 4. US: Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1993. 119-135.

—. *Nets of Awareness, Urdu Poetry and Its Critics*. University of California Press, 1994.

—. "The Straw that I Took in my Teeth: Of Lovers, Beloveds, and Charges of Sexism in the Urdu *Ghazal.*" *Manushi* 136, 2003. http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00fwp/published/txt_straw_manushi.html.

—. *A Desertful of Roses: the Urdu Ghazals of Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib*. Online work in progress. Columbia University. www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ghalib/ .

Rahbar, Daud, trans. *Urdu Letters of Mirza Asadu'llah Khan Ghalib*. State University of New York Press, 1987.

Rehder, Robert. "The Unity of the *Ghazal*s of Ḥāfiẓ." *Der Islam* 52 (1974). 55-96.

Rāstgu, Sayyed Moḥammad. ʿ*Erfān dar Ghazal-e Fārsi* (*Mysticism in Persian Ghazal, my trans.*). 1383. Tehran: ʿElmi Farhangi, 1389/2010.

Rich, Adrienne C. *Leaflets*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969.

—. "Talking with Adrienne Rich." Interview with Stanley Plumly et al. Ohio Review 13.1 (1971) a. 28-46.

—. *The Will to Change, Poems 1968-1970*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971 b.

—. "Foreword." *The Other Voice: Twentieth Century Women's Poetry in Translation.* New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 1976. xvii-xxi.

—. "Adrienne Rich: An Interview with David Montenegro". 1991. *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*. Eds. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi, and Albert Gelpi. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993 a. pp. 258-272.

—. "Blood, Bread, and Poetry: The Location of the Poet." 1984. *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*. Eds. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi, and Albert Gelpi. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993 b.

—. *The Dream of a Common Language*. 1978. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993 c.

—. "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision". 1971. *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*. Eds. Barbara Charlesworht Gelpi, and Albert Gelpi. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993 d. 166-176.

—. *Collected Early Poems 1950-1970*. New York & London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995 a.

—. *Dark Fields of the Republic, Poems 1991-1995*. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995 b.

—. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. 1986. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995 c.

—. "Vietnam and Sexual Violence." 1979. *On Lies, Secrets, and Silences, Selected Prose 1966- 1978*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995 d. 108-116.

—. "Arts of the Possible." *Arts of the Possible*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001 a. 146-167.

—. "Foreword." *Arts of the Possible*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001 b. 1-9.

—. "Muriel Rukeyser: Her Vision." *Arts of the Possible*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001 c. 120-127.

—. "Notes toward a Politics of Location." *Arts of the Possible*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001 d. 62-82.

—. "Poetry and the Public Sphere." *Arts of the Possible*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001 e. 115-119.

—. "Raya Dunayevskaya's Marx." *Arts of the Possible*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001 f. 83-97.

—. "Some Questions from the Profession." *Arts of the Possible*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001 g. 128-137.

—. "Beginners." *What is Found There, Notebooks on Poetry and Politics*. 1993. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003 a. 91-101.

—. "Six Meditations in Place of a Lecture." *What is Found There, Notebooks on Poetry and Politics*. 1993. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003 b. 251-273.

—. "Poetry and the Forgotten Future." *A Human Eye: Essays on Art in Society, 1997-2008*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. 123-146.

—. "Adrienne Rich On "Tonight No Poetry Will Serve" an interview by Kate Waldman." *The Paris Review Daily,* 2011. http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2011/03/02/adrienne-rich-.

"Robert Bly and Coleman Bark in Tehran." *Parto*. 2006. Television of the Islamic Republic of Iran. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ekl0vejJNI. Television.

"Robert Bly and Friends Reviving the Oral Tradition." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbX_yrNnus8. Television.

Rumi: Poet of the Heart. Haydn Reiss and Magnolia Films, 2004. Film.

Russell, James R. "The Near East in the Mind of America." 2001. Lect. National Association for Armenian Studies. Web. 25 Aug. 2008. 1-14. http://www.near_east_in_the_mind_of_america_2-_Russell.htm.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978.

Scarcia Amoretti, Biancamaria. "Per fate morgane: da Ghalib a Adrienne Rich." *In forma di parole*. Libro XIII. Ed. Gianroberto Scarcia. Reggio Emilia, 1983. 209-226.

—. "Think, Say, Produce Images: the Partial Point of View of an Islamist." *Think with the Senses-Feel with the Mind. Art in the Present Tense*. Ed. Christian Capurro. Venice: Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, 2007. Talk transcript.

http://www.christiancapurro.com/archives/biancamaria_scarcia_site_talk_transcript.p
hp.

—. "Appunti per una lettura della rappresentazione del corpo nell'islam". Manuscript. (It was later published, but in a different form: "Il corpo nell'Islam: un'entità ambigua." *Sanctorum: rivista dell'Associazione Italiana per lo studio della santità. dei culti e dell'agiografia* 6 (2009) a. 153-161.).

—. "Per un dibattito interdisciplinare sulla sessualità nell'Islam: una nota." *Rivista degli studi orientali* Vol. LXXXII. Fac. 1. 4 (2009) b. 287-306.

Scarcia, Gianroberto, and Pellò, Stefano, ed and trans. *Ḥāfeẓ: Canzoniere*. Milano: Ariele, 2005.

—, trans. *Ḥāfeẓ, ottanta canzoni*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 2008.

Schaeder, H. H. *Goethes Erlebnis des Ostens*. Leipaig, 1983.

Schaffner, Christina, and Beverly Adab. "Translation as intercultural communication-Contact as conflict." *Translation as Intercultural Communication*. Eds. Mary Snell-Hornby, Zuzana Jettmarova, and Kaus Kaindl. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1997. 327- 337.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *Islamic Literatures of India*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973.

—. *Classical Urdu Literature from the Beginning to Iqbāl*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975.

—. *A Two Coloured Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry*. University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

—. *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi*. State University of New York Press, 1993.

—. *As Through a Veil, Mystical Poetry in Islam*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2001.

—. *My Soul is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam*. Continuum, 2003.

Schneiderman, Jason. "Looking in the Broken Mirror." *Teachers and Writers Magazine* 41. 3 (2010). 3-8. http://www.twc.org/assets/41-3_Schneiderman.pdf.

Schmidt, Ruth Laila. *Urdu, An Essential Grammar*. 1999. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Sewell, Lisa. "Free Verse and Formal: The English *Ghazal*". *A Companion to Poetic Genre*. Ed. Erik Martiny. Wiley Blackwell, 2012. 104-116.

Seyed-Ghorab, Ali Asghar. "Introduction." *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry*. Ed. Ali Asghar Seyed-Ghorab. Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2012. 1-14

Seyhan, Azadeh. *Writing Outside the Nation*. Princeton University Press, 2000.

Shackle, Christopher. "*Ghazal*." http://www.soas.ac.uk/southasianstudies/keywords/file24804.pdf.

Shafiʿi Kadkani, Moḥammad Reżā. *Advār-e Sheʾr-e Fārsi* (*Persian Poetry Periods*, my trans.). Tehran: Sokhan, 1380/2000.

—. *Shāʾer-e Āyene-hā: Barrasi-ye Sabk-e Hendi va Sheʾr-e Bidel* (*The Poet of the Mirrors: A Consideration of The Indian Style and Bidil's Poety*, my trans). Tehran: Āgāh, 1387/2009.

—. "Talaqqi-e Qodamā az Vaṭan." *Bokhārā*. 2010. http://bukharamag.com/1389.04.1241.html .

Shakibāii, Keyvāndokht. "Adrienne Rich: Shaʿer va Naẓari-ye pardāz-e Pažuhesh-hāye Zanān." ("Adrienne Rich: The Poet and Theorist of Women's Research", my trans.). Irān-e Emruz, 2006. http://www.iran-emrooz.net/index.php?/zanan/more/6250/ .

Shamisā, Sirus. *Seyr-e Ghazal dar Sheʾr-e Fārsi* (*The Evolution of Ghazal in Persian Poetry*, my trans.). Ferdos Publications. Tehran, 1370/1991.

Shima, Alan. *Skirting the subject: Pursuing language in the works of Adrienne Rich.* Susan Griffin and Beverly Dahlen. Almquist & Wiksell International, 1993.

Simon, Sherry. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

—. "Translating and Interlingual Creation in the Contact Zone: Border Writing in Quebec." *Postcolonial Translation, Theory and Practice*. 1999. Eds. Susan Bassnett, and Harish Trivedi. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 58-74.

Simon, Sherry, and Viswanatha, Vanamala. "Shifting Grounds of Exchange." *Post-colonial Translation:Theory and Practice.* Eds. Susan Bassnett, and Harish Trivedi. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. 162-181.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. Madison, New York, Routledge, 1993.

Stewart, Susan. "The Pickpocket: A study in Tradition and Allusion." *Comparative Literature* 95.5. The John Hopkins University Press, 1980. 1127-1154.

Suleri Goodyear, Sara. "Ideas of Order in an Afterword." *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English*. Ed. Agha Shahid Ali. Wesleyan University Press, 2000. 179-181.

Taft, R. "The Role and Personality of the Mediator." *The Mediating Person: Bridges between Cultures*. Ed. S. Bochner. Cambridge: Schenkman, 1981. 53-88.

Tājdini, Ali. *Farhang-e Namādhā va Neshānehā dar Andishe-ye Mowlānā* (*A Dictionary of Symbols and Signs in Mawlānā's Thought*). Tehran, Suroush Press, 2009.

Taylor Merriman, Emily. "'The spider's genius': Verse Technique as Liberating Force in Adrienne Rich's Poetry." *"Catch If You Can Your Country's Moment": Recovery and Regeneration in the Poetry of Adrienne Rich.* Ed. William S. Waddell. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.

Templeton, Alice. *The Dream and the Dialogue: Adrienne Rich's Feminist Poetics.* University of Tennessee Press, 1995.

Thompson, John. *Stilt Jack*. Anansi, 1978.

Torop, Peeter. "Foreword: Lotmanian Explosion." *Culture and Explosion*. Juri Lotman. Ed. Marina Grishakova. Trans. Wilam Clark. Berlin, New York: Nouton de Gruyter, 2009. xxvii-xxxix.

Tottoli, Roberto, ed. *Hadīth in Modern Islam. Oriente Moderno* 468. 5 (1953).

Tourage, Mahdi. "The Hermeneutics of Eroticism in the Poetry of Rumi." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25. 3 (2005). 600-616.

—. *Rūmī and the Hermeneutics of Eroticism*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007.

Trivedi, Harish. "Translating Culture vs. Cultural Translation." *In Translation: Reflections, Refractions, Transformations*. Eds. Paul St. Pierre, and Parafulla C. Kar. John Benjamins, 2007. 277-288.

Tudor, Andrew. *Decoding Culture: Theory and Method in Cultural Studies*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999.

Tymoczko, Maria. "Post-colonial Writing and Literary Translation." *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice.* Eds. Susan Bassnett, and Harish Trivedi. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. 19-40.

—. "Ideology and the Position of the Translator: in what sense is a Translator 'in between'?" *Apropos of Ideology: Translation Studies on Ideology – Ideologies in translation studies.* Ed. M. Calzada Perez. Manchester: St. Jerome, 2003. 181-201.

Vanderbosch, Jane. "Beginning Again." *Reading Adrienne Rich: Reviews and Re-Visions, 1951- 81.* Ed. Jane Roberta Cooper. The University of Michigan Press, 1984. 111-139.

Vegari, Amy. "Calling the Shots: Women as Deleuzian Material in the Cinema of Godard." *Michigan Feminist Studies: Bodies: Physical and Abstract*, 19 (2005-6). http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.ark5583.0019.005 .

Vendler, Helen. *Soul Says: On Recent Poetry*. The President and Fellows of Harvard Callege, 1995.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

—. "Local Contingencies: Translation and National Identities." *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*. Eds. Sandra Bermann, and Michael Wood. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005 a. 177-202.

—. *The Translator's Invisibility*. 1995. London and New York: Routledge, 2005 b.

—. "Translation, History, Narrative." *Meta* 3 (2005) c. 800-16.

—. "Translation, Intertextuality, Interpretation." *Romance Studies* 27. 3 (July 2009). 157-173.

Wadden, Paul. *The Rhetoric of Self in Robert Bly and Adrienne Rich: Doubling and the Holotropic Urge*. New York, Washington, Brussels, Viena, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003.

Webb, Phylliss. *Sunday Water: Thirteen Anti-Ghazals*. Island Writing Series, 1982.

—. *Water and Light: Ghazals and Anti-Ghazals*. Coach House Press, 1984.

Weissbort, Daniel, and Astradur Eysteinsson, eds. *Translation, Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Whelchel, Marianne. "Mining the 'Earth-Deposits': Women's History in Adrienne Rich's Poetry." *Reading Adrienne Rich: Reviews and Re-Visions, 1951-81.* Ed. Jane Roberta Cooper. The University of Michigan Press, 1984. 51-71.

Williams, R. John. "Modernist Scandals: Ezra Pound's Translations of 'the' Chinese Poem." *Orient and Orientalism in US-American Poetry and Poetics*. Eds. Sabine Sielke, and Christian Kloeckner. New York, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009. 145-165.

William Stafford and Robert Bly: A Literary Friendship. Haydn Reiss and Magnolia Films, 1994. Film.

Wolf, Michaela. "Interference from the Third Space? The Construction of Cultural Identity through Translation." *New Trends in Translation and Cultural Identity*. Eds. Micaela Munoz-Calvo, Carmen Buesa-Gomez, and M. Angeles Ruiz-Moneva. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 11-20.

Yarshater, Ehsan. "The Development of Persian Literatures." *Persian Literature*. Ed. Ehsan Yarshater. New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988.

Yazdiha, Haj. "Conceptualizing Hybridity: Deconstructing Boundaries through the Hybrid." *Formations* 1.1 (2010). 31-38.

Yohannan, John D. *Persian Poetry in England and America*. Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1977.

Yorke, Liz. *Adrienne Rich, Passion, Politics and the Body*. London and Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997.

Zaidi, Nishat. "Center/Margin Dialectics and the Poetic Form: The *Ghazal*s of Agha Shahid Ali." *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 23. Ed. Muhammad Umar Memon. University of Wisconsin   Madison, 2008. 55-66.

http://www.urdustudies.com/pdf/23/07Zaidi.pdf.