

Introduction

The introduction of the citation of Ḥāfiẓ in a contextualizing manner in the tradition of ‘poetic boasting’ (*fakhrīyya*) in Persian poetry, can best be presented by a verse from the tongue of the poet himself.

شعر حافظ در زمان آدم اندر باغ خلد دفتر سرین و گل را زینت اوراق بود¹

The poetry of Ḥāfiẓ in the time of Adam, within the Garden of Paradise,
Was the adornment of the pages of the book of the white and red rose.²

This study examines the reception of the medieval Persian poet Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī (d. 791/1389) during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the Zand, Qājār and Pahlavi periods, respectively. By undertaking a critical engagement with Ḥāfiẓ through an analysis of his influence on other poets and critics, I hope to cast new light on this supreme figure of classical Persian poetry for both western and eastern readers and his many admirers.

The importance of Ḥāfiẓ cannot be underestimated. Before the establishment of the modern system of colleges and universities, Ḥāfiẓ’s *Dīvān* was studied as a subject of literary research (*Ḥāfiẓ-shīnāsī*), along with Sa’dī’s *Gulistān* (Rose Garden) and the Qur’ān.³ Ḥāfiẓ is seen as more than merely a poet; indeed, he is viewed by some as an incarnation of the spirit of the nation of Iran.⁴ His poetry is so deeply interwoven into the psyche of Iranians that it might be said that to know Persians, one must know Ḥāfiẓ; likewise, it could be said that an in-depth understanding of the Persian character is impossible without understanding Ḥāfiẓ. His work is widely and commonly considered to be unparalleled; over the past seven centuries in Persia, no poet has matched his poetic skill, though many have tried. Ḥāfiẓ himself stated that he had no equal, that his verses are as valuable as gold:

حافظ تو این سخن از که آموختی؟ که یار تعویذ کرد شعر تورا و به زر گرفت⁵

Ḥāfiz! From who have you learned this fluency? That the beloved
Made your verse an amulet and gilded it with gold.

In addition to the almost universal acclaim for Ḥāfiz's work, it should be noted that exposure to and love of his verse is ubiquitous. Thābitī points out that as soon as any Iranian child learns to read and write, he or she becomes familiar with Sa'dī and Ḥāfiz. These two great poets of Persia are the friends and companions of every sad and lonely heart; they form a very special relationship with their fellow countrymen.⁶ Even in ordinary written and verbal communication among friends and family, Ḥāfiz's verses are cited to express moods of joy or sadness, to poetically contextualize and summarize ideas.

One of the most important elements of Ḥāfiz's poetry is the independence of his verses within the body of the *ghazal*.⁷ Many lines can be used as individual hemistichs on their own, thus contributing to their usage as proverbs. Sa'dī is the only other poet similar to Ḥāfiz in terms of the independence of themes. The following table shows a comparison of wisdom poetry by three first-class Persian poets: Nizāmī (d. 614/1213), Sa'dī (d. c. 691/1292) and Ḥāfiz. Wisdom literature (*andarz*) is a field of literature frequently employed in the Ancient Near East. This writing style is characterized by sayings of wisdom (*mithāl*) intended to teach about spirituality and virtue.

The key principle of wisdom literature is that while techniques of traditional storytelling are used, books also present insight and perception about nature and reality. The most famous examples of wisdom literature are found in the Bible. In Persian literature, wisdom verses are almost always rhythmic; one of the primary reasons for this is that a musical verse is more easily remembered than a non-musical verse. Thus, there are an immense number of couplets conveying many teachings in respect of humanity and moral conduct.

This is neither an assessment of the quality of poetry, nor a judgement of talent and skill; rather, it illustrates the ways in which Ḥāfiz's verses, like those of Sa'dī and Nizāmī, are full of delightfully composed proverbs and wise *bon mots*.⁸

Fear not the sin that benefits others.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ⁹	از آن گناه که نفعی رسد به غیر چه باک
It matters not if I am good or ugly. You correct yourself.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ¹⁰	من اگر نیکم اگر بد تو برو خود را باش
O Light of my eyes, peace surpasses war and is better than hostility.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ¹¹	ای نور دیده صلح به از جنگ و داوری
Cut short your speech before you are told it is enough.	(Sa'di)	سعدی ¹²	از آن پیش بس کنی که گویند بس
Virtue from the malevolent cannot be learned.	(Sa'di)	سعدی ¹³	از بدان نیکویی نیاموزی
Speak sweetly to all God's creatures.	(Sa'di)	سعدی ¹⁴	با خلق خدا سخن به شیرینی کن
One must not speak ill of the dead.	(Nizāmī)	نظامی ¹⁵	از پس مرده بد نباید گفت
Seek hardship for yourself and comfort for your friends.	(Nizāmī)	نظامی ¹⁶	رنج خود و راحت یاران طلب
To the blind man's eye, the Tigris river appears a drop.	(Nizāmī)	نظامی ¹⁷	دجله بود قطره از چشم کور
Become a man of God and live safely amongst foes.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ¹⁸	مرد یزدان شو و امین گذر از اهرمنان
Help the needy if you have the means.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ¹⁹	دریاب ضعیفان را در وقت توانایی
Every good deed brings a reward and each misdeed, a consequence.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ²⁰	هر عمل اجری و هر کرده جزائی دارد
Great masters never praise themselves.	(Sa'di)	سعدی ²¹	بزرگان نکردند در خود نگاه
Do not crave appreciation for yourself.	(Sa'di)	سعدی ²²	از کبر مدار هیچ در دل هوسی
Do not pass your time with base folk.	(Sa'di)	سعدی ²³	مهر با فرومایه روزگار
Listen, because the advice of the sage will do you no harm.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ²⁴	بشنو که پند پیران هیچت زیان ندارد
It is better not to associate with bad people.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ²⁵	بهتر آن است که با مردم بد نشینی
By pretence one cannot seat oneself in the chair of masters.	(Ḥāfiz)	حافظ ²⁶	تکیه بر جای بزرگان نتوان زد به گراف

An additional praiseworthy characteristic of Ḥāfiẓ, as noted by ‘Alī Dash-tī, is the scope of his imagination and his disinterest in the material world, particularly the trappings of place, greatness and power.²⁷ Dashtī presents the following verse as an example:

در این بازار اگر سودیست با درویش خرسند است خدایا منعم گردان به درویشی و خرسندی²⁸

If in this marketplace there is any profit, it is to the contented dervish,
O God, make me the beneficiary of dervishism and blessed contentment!²⁹

This book is divided into five chapters, a conclusion, an appendix and a bibliography. In chapter I, I offer an overview of the life of Ḥāfiẓ and his political connections with the princes of the Muẓaffarīd court, his somewhat controversial relations with the various classes of the men of learning and clerics (*‘ulamā’*) and his conflict with Mubārīz al-Dīn (Shāh Shujā’^{’s} father), as these are some of the necessary components of his later reception in history. In addition, I analyze the presence or lack of political themes in Ḥāfiẓ’s poetry and some key aspects of his poetic style.

Chapter II focuses on Ḥāfiẓ from a historical and sociopolitical perspective, covering the late Tīmūrīd period (771/1365-913/1507) through to the late Qājār era (1193/1779-1339/1925). I then discuss the reception of Ḥāfiẓ’s poetry after his death and the effect his work had on key poets of the Ṣafavīd era, such as Jāmī (d. 898/1492), Bābā Fighānī (d. 925/1519), Ahlī Shīrāzī (d. 942/1535-1536), ‘Urfī Shīrāzī (d. 999/1596) and Ṣā’ib Tabrizī (d. 1080/1669-1670 or 1088/1677). From the Qājār period, I explore the thought of seven critics and writers; namely, Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī (d. 1274/1896); Ridā Qulī Hidāyat (d. 1288/1871); Mīrzā Fath-‘Alī Ākhūnd-zāda (d. 1295/1878); Mīrzā Malkam/Malkum Khān (d. 1315/1898); Muḥammad ‘Alī Furūghī Dhakā’ al-Mulk (d. 1321/1942), ‘Abdul Raḥīm Ṭālibuf (d. 1329/1911) and Zayn al-‘Ābidin Marāgha’ī (d. 1329/1911).

In chapter III, I introduce the lives of seven poets (listed below) of the Zand and Qājār period, then draw comparisons between their work and that of Ḥāfiẓ:

1. Ādhar Bigdilī (d. 1195/1778)
2. Viṣāl Shīrāzī (d. 1262/1845)
3. Qā’ānī Shīrāzī (d. 1270/1853)
4. Furūghī Baṣṭāmī (d. 1274/1857)
5. Yaghmā Jandaqī (d. 1276/1859)
6. Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī (d. 1289/1872)
7. Ḥājī Mīrzā Ḥasan Iṣfahānī ‘Ṣafī ‘Alī Shāh’ (d. 1316/1898)

In this way, I offer evidence to support my research that Ḥāfiz's language, and in some cases his school of thought, greatly influenced the work of these poets. After undertaking a careful study of the *ghazal* collections of each of the selected poets, I then juxtapose their verses with those of Ḥāfiz and draw conclusions about the latter's influence.

Chapter IV examines Ḥāfiz's influence on a selection of poets and on the politics and literature of Pahlavi Persia. I consider the following poets:

1. Muḥammad-Taqī Bahār (d. 1330/1951)
2. Nimā Yūshij (d. 1338/1960)
3. Suhrāb Sipihri (d. 1358/1980)
4. Shahriyār (d. 1366/1988)
5. Aḥmad Shāmlū (d. 1379/2000)

I provide a brief biography of each poet in order to historically contextualize their work before examining Ḥāfiz's influence on each of them. Although they were all influenced by Ḥāfiz's poetic style in greater and lesser degrees, my analysis underlines that each of the poets selected was clearly affected by his symbolism, imagery and ideas.

In chapter V, I concentrate on the field of Ḥāfizology from the medieval to the modern period, covering almost 450 years (1500-1942) of editions and compilations of his *Dīvān*, from Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā to Ghānī and Qazvīnī. I examine key studies and commentaries on the *Dīvān*, focusing on the most significant works produced over the past two hundred years. I analyze the recent editions of and commentaries on Ḥāfiz's *Dīvān* from the period from 1942 to 2010, concentrating on the works of the following scholars:

1. Bahā' al-Dīn Khurramshāhī
2. Ḥusayn Hiravī
3. Manūchihir Murtaḍavī
4. Muḥammad Isti'lāmī
5. Muḥammad Ridā Barzigar Khāliqī
6. Raḥīm Dhū'l-Nūr
7. Sa'īd Niāz Kirmānī
8. Sayyid Yaḥyā Yathrabī

Lastly, I consider two important commentaries on Ḥāfiz produced outside Persia, briefly discussing the seventeenth-century works of Sūdī in Ottoman Turkey and Lāhūrī in Mughal India.

The conclusion (VI) addresses and attempts to answer seven key questions raised by this study concerning the reception of Ḥāfiz's poetry during

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is followed by a lengthy appendix on eight Persian poets of the Qājār period whose language and thoughts have, in one way or another, been influenced and inspired by Ḥāfiz.

In the course of my research on this book, I have greatly benefited from interviews with a number of eminent scholars of Persian literature whose personal communications are recorded as and when necessary. These scholars include: Bahā' al-Dīn Khurramshāhī (Tehran), Dr. Shahram Pazouki (Tehran), Dr. Mohamad Movahedi (Tehran), Prof. Kavoos Ḥasanli (Shīrāz University), Dr. Homayoon Katouzian (Oxford), Dr. Julie Meisami (Berkeley), Mr. Hushang Ibtihāj *Sāya* (Germany) and Prof. 'Alī Ferdowsi (Notre Dame de Namur University, Belmont, California). I have also made ample use of various libraries in Iran, the United Kingdom and the United States while researching the dissertation, including:

1. The John Ryland Library of the University of Manchester
2. The School of Oriental and African Studies, London
3. The Green Library at Stanford University, California
4. The Library of the University of Berkeley
5. The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
6. The Library of the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California
7. The Library of the University of Tehran, Iran
8. The Iranian National Library (*Kitābkhāni-yi Millī-yi Iran*)

Note on translation

It is my belief that the aim of the translator is to present the original as accurately as possible; thus, I translate Persian poetry into prose, which does not impose any restrictions with regard to rhyme or metre. All translations of poetry and text in this study, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Note on dates

Dates in the book referring to the Islamic lunar *hijrī* calendar (A.H.) are cited to the end of the Qājār period. Dates following 1330/1911 are written according to the solar (*shamsī*) Iranian calendar (A.Hsh.). Following the A.H. or A.Hsh. years, dates according to the Common Era (CE) are cited. Shāhānshāhī dates are noted as such.