The Divining Reader: A Construct Based on the Bibliomantic Approach to Hafez's *Divan*

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Abstract

Hafez Shirazi was a distinguished Persian poet. His poetry collection, *Divan*, is regarded as a literary work of profound significance. Iranians view this collection as something much more than poetry because it is also used for bibliomantic purposes. After studying Hafez in his social context and exploring distinctive qualities of his *Divan*, particularly its application as a divination tool, the present article largely aims to determine what type of reader the querent who uses Hafez's *Divan* is. The answer to this question has led to the introduction of a novel reader construct in the realm of reader-oriented theories. Divining reader is the term I use to refer to the reader who consults Hafez's poetry collection as a bibliomantic text so as to solve a problem or find an answer to a question. The divining reader has eighteen identifying characteristics, one of which is the willing unframing of disbelief, referring to the fact that the reader first unframes whatever disbelieving and then reframes the unframed disbelief into a belief.

Keywords: Bibliomancy, Divining Reader, Ghazal, Fragmentation, Willing Unframing of Disbelief

Introduction

Hafez Shirazi is viewed as one of the premier Persian poets. His poetry is truly unique in Persian literature. Both scholars and common people still learn his poems by heart and use them as sayings in everyday life. Hafez remains an excellent model for many contemporary Persian poets. His poetry has equally influenced foreign poets, such as Goethe. His *Divan* is regarded not only as a poetry book but also a divination tool.

Literary theory has seen plenty of interest in reading and readers. There is talk of ideal readers, mock readers, informed readers, implied readers, interpretive communities, and so on. Whenever I saw a person use Hafez's poetry collection to practice divination and read it for foretelling the future by interpreting random lines, I always wondered what type of reader that querent was. Now, the present article attempts to answer this question.

This article will first provide an overview of Hafez's poetry. Next, it will present well-known figures' perspectives on his poetry, specifically his *ghazals*—since Hafez is widely known for his *ghazals*. Then, fragmentation as a conspicuous feature of the poet's *ghazals* will be examined. After addressing the role of his poetry collection, particularly as a divination tool, in Persian culture, the article will finally provide an answer to the question.

Hafez and His Poetry

Nearly contemporary with Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400), Shamsoddin Mohammad Hafez Shirazi, known as Hafez or Hafiz, (*ca.* 1325-*ca.*1389) was one of the most distinguished Persian poets. The word "hafez" designates a person who has learnt off the Quran and can recite it from memory. Shamsoddin Mohammad carried this pen name because he knew and recited the Quran by heart. He was also a religious lecturer at mosque schools in his home city, Shiraz, in the south of modern Iran, where he provided Quranic exegesis. However, Hafez is most remembered among Persian-speaking people as an accomplished poet. His poems were mainly orally circulated among people and there were lots of rulers who invited him to their courts but he declined their invitations and never left Shiraz. There is a consensus among researchers that his poems were posthumously collected by Mohammad Golandam, one of Hafez's friends (Avery & Heath-Stubbs, 1952). The book is entitled *Divan-e Hafez* (Divan of Hafez) (Hafez, 2009). "Divan," also spelled "diwan," is the Persian word for "a collection of poems." Poems in *Divan-e Hafez* have not been arranged in chronological order but on the basis of rhyming schemes at the end of lines (Ordoubadian, 2006). Although there are different editions of the book, it generally comprises around 500 *ghazals*, a few *qas'ides*, two *masnavis*, a few *qet'es*, and a small number of *roba'is*. It must be mentioned that, despite a variety of poetic forms he utilized, Hafez is considered to be "by universal consent the supreme master of the art of the Persian *ghazal*—a literary form generally equated with the lyric;

though perhaps the sonnet is in some respects a closer equivalent" (Arberry, 1947, p. 1). *Ghazal* is an Arabic word for love-making and denotes a love poem or love-song (Cuddon, 1999). It employs between five and fifteen *beyts.* A *beyt* is the basic unit of Persian verse and approximately corresponds to a couplet in English. *Beyts* use a monorhyme, *i.e.* single rhyme, (*aa*, *ba*, *ca*, *da*, etc.). The meters vary a lot; those most commonly used produce lines of fifteen or sixteen syllables. Conventionally, the poet mentions his own pen-name in the final or the penultimate *beyt* of every *ghazal* (Loloi & Pursglove, 2000). *Beyts* are "linked by unity of subject and symbolism rather than by a logical sequence of ideas" (Augustyn, 2014, p. 78). The poet emphasizes the self-referentiality in the last couplet of a *ghazal* and insists that he is the creator of the poem. In fact, he "stands midway between poem and audience, incurring praise (or blame) both for the making of the poem and for the model of conduct it presents" (Meisami, 1990, p. 135).

Hafez's poetry utilizes a simple, often colloquial, and musical language, which is free from artificial virtuosity. It is also characterized by the "unaffected use of homely images and proverbial expressions. Above all, his poetry is characterized by love of humanity, contempt for hypocrisy and mediocrity, and an ability to universalize everyday experience and to relate it to the mystic's unending search for union with God" (Augustyn, 2014, p. 79). Main motifs of Hafez's poems include love, wine, God, physical beauty, eulogy of the sovereign, Sufism, roses, boys, and mornings. His mystical vision of the universe is sometimes on the verge of pantheism (Starkey, 2008). Traditional *ghazals* were about love and wine. In their association with ecstasy and freedom from restraint, these motifs lent themselves to the expression of Sufi ideas. Hafez gave these ideas and images freshness (Augustyn, 2014).

Prior to the 12th century, *ghazals* demonstrated profane love and often the poet's patron was praised in them as well. After that time, Sufism influenced and enriched *ghazals*, where divine love was substituted for profane love. Sufis used traditional imagery, metaphors, and symbols of *ghazals* in divine contexts. Hence, Hafez's poetry should be read with regard to this distinction. It is imperceptive to consider Hafez either a purely Sufi poet or merely a poet of profane or secular love. A *ghazal* can offer conflicting interpretations; it can be the articulation of both sexual desire and mystical ecstasy. Besides, since Persian pronouns are not gender-specific, the beloved in a *ghazal* could represent not only God but also a human of either sex (Loloi & Pursglove, 2000).

Well-Known Figures on Hafez

Sir William Jones (1746-1794), a British Orientalist and jurist, introduced Hafez to English-speaking readers by translating one of his *ghazals*, entitled "A Persian Song," which was published in his *Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771). Although Hafez is now regarded as the most widely translated Persian poet in

English, no true translation of his poems has been produced yet and every translator has provided us with his or her own Hafez (Meisami, 2000). The most famous non-English translation of Hafez's poems was made by Baron Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1856), an Austrian Orientalist. His German translation of *Divan* impressed some distinguished men of letters such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866), and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). Inspired by Hafez, Goethe (1819) wrote a collection of lyrical poems, entitled *West-östlicher Divan* (West-Eastern Divan). According to Rückert (as cited in Zangeneh, 2006, p. 11), Hafez's poetry "looks sensual and is supra-sensual; when he seems to talk about things spiritual, his spirituality is sensual as his sensuality is spiritual, and it is impossible to disentangle the two levels of meaning, which belongs to each other." Emerson (2010) wrote the following:

> To Baron von Hammer Purgstall, who died in Vienna in 1856, we owe our best knowledge of the Persians. He has translated into German, besides the "Divan" of Hafiz, specimens of two hundred poets, who wrote during a period of five and a half centuries, from A.D. 1050 to 1600. The seven masters of the Persian Parnassus—Firdousi, Enweri, Nisami, Dschelaleddin, Saadi, Hafiz, and Dschami,—have ceased to be empty names; and others, like Ferideddin Attar, and Omar Chiam, promise to rise in Western estimation. (p. 124)

While criticizing Richard Wagner's later operatic works, particularly his last opera *Parsifal* (1882), for condemning sensuality and praising chastity, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), a German philosopher, remarked:

> [B]etween chastity and sensuality there is no necessary opposition; every good marriage, every true affair of the heart is beyond this opposition. . . . But even in the case where there really is that opposition between chastity and sensuality, it is fortunately by no means necessary that it be a tragic opposition. This would seem to hold at least for all better-formed, more high-spirited mortals who are far from automatically counting their labile balance between "animal and angel" among the arguments against existence,—the subtlest and brightest, like Goethe, like Hafiz, have even seen in this one *more* enticement to life. (1998, p. 68)

Although great figures admired Hafez and his poetry, there were also persons, such as Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938) and Ahmad Kasravi (1890-1946), who expressed disapproval of Hafez's poems. Iqbal, an Indian/Pakistani philosopher and poet, fulminated against Hafez in his long poem *Asrar-e Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self) (1915/2010) though he removed the invective in later editions of the poem (Lewisohn, 2010). The most distinguished critic of Hafez's poetry was Kasravi, an Iranian historian, linguist, nationalist thinker, and secular reformer, who launched into diatribes against contemporary Iranian society, particularly Muslim clerics and

religious hypocrites. In one of his booklets, *Hafez Che Migooyad?* (What Does Hafez Say?), he also attacked Orientalism, around half a century prior to the publication of *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said (1935-2003), and argued that Orientalists adoring Persian poets such as Hafez were duplicitous men who had evil plans for the East and tried their best to deceive people of the East into thinking that it was worth abandoning the world and spending their time, like Hafez, on wording, rhyming, drinking in a quiet corner, and pursuing Sufi goals; at the same time, they attempted to create machines for themselves and trained European and American youth to become soldiers, aeronauts, and parachutists (Kasravi, 1943). However, it must be mentioned that, as a constitutionalist, Kasravi acknowledged that there were certain innocuous poems which could awaken the nation on the eve of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (Gheissari, 1998). Kasravi (1943) also condemned Hafez's *Divan* for spreading some improper teachings, including Bacchic-like rites, Determinism, and Sufism. In his view, such beliefs lead to despair, foolhardiness, revelry, and indifference in life (1943). Unfortunately, what made Kasravi pass such misjudgments "could only have been his insistence on absolute rationalism, which made no allowance for the *relative* nature of rational judgments. He had little appreciation for the contrast, diversity, allusion and nuance in which the lyric poems of Hafez are couched" (Parsinejad, 2003, pp. 179-180).

Undoubtedly, Hafez's poetry is "an inseparable part of the Iranian spirit.... [It] does reflect Iranians' intellectual and emotional response to events" (Limbert, 2004, p. x). Nonetheless, in another booklet, *Hassan Ketab-e Hafez-ash ra Misoozanad* (Hassan Is Burning His Book of Hafez) (1945), Kasravi launched into tirades against a large number of Iranians who had a disposition to substitute poetic quotations from Persian poetry books such as Hafez's *Divan* for deep rational thought. Kasravi criticized the structure of *ghazal* as well. In *Hafez Che Migooyad?*, he wrote that the only aim of Hafez and other Persian *ghazal*-composers was to rhyme and compose a poem to be called *ghazal* and they never intended to communicate and convey a meaning. In his opinion, this irrationality was the reason why *ghazals* had a fragmentary structure and carried no clear meaning as a whole. The following example, the first *beyt* of *Ghazal* 267 in Persian by Hafez (2009), illustrates Kasravi's point:

<div dir="rtl">

''ای صبا گر بگذری بر ساحل رود ارس / بوسه زن برخاک آن وادی و مشکین کن نفس''

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My translation reads: "O, Zephyr! If you [happen to] pass by the banks of [the River] Aras / Drop a kiss on the soil of that place and fragrance your breath." Kasravi (1943) argues that these lines never mean Hafez had a liking for Aras, a river with boundaries both between Armenia and Azerbaijan and between Turkey and Iran. He thinks Hafez had only heard the name of the river and, while writing the lines, seized the opportunity to rhyme "Aras" with "*nafas*" (breath). In order that a non-Persian reader of the present article can understand this well, it is better to

consider the transliteration of the above *beyt*: "Ey saba gar bogzari bar sahele roode Aras / Boose zan bar khaake an vadi o moshkin kon nafas."

Fragmentation in *Ghazals* of Hafez

Hafez experts have provided reasons for the fragmentary structure of *ghazals*. For example, the Iranian linguist Ali Mohammad Haqshenas (1940-2010), applying the theory of transformational-generative grammar by Noam Chomsky, distinguished between the deep structure and the surface structure of *ghazals* and then elucidated the fragmentation in Hafez's *ghazals*. In his view, it is only their surface structure that is fragmentary; however, their deep structure is spherical or circular, but not linear; therefore, the reader should go beyond the immediate literal meaning of the poet's *ghazals*. According to Haqshenas (1991), from a general perspective, Islamic-Iranian culture and philosophy are center-oriented and all apparently irrelevant pieces and units correlate in the end through a unifying center. Nevertheless, Khatereh Sheibani (2011), an Iranian lecturer at the University of Guelph, argues that the reader could observe harmony, at least in the rhythmic and formal aspects of *ghazals*. In her view, contrary to Haqshenas's interpretation,

> [T]his harmony does not rely only on the deep structure of a *ghazal*. Even if we make a distinction between surface and deep structures, this harmony would partly reside in its surface or formal structure. In fact, because of the *ghazal*'s rhythmic unity, Hafiz's poems lend themselves perfectly to musical performance. (p. 40)

According to a study by Bagheri Khalili and Mehrabi Kali (2013), the word usage and overall structures of *ghazals* in Hafez's *Divan* are center-oriented. Based on cognitive linguistics, particularly conceptual metaphor and image schemata, they state that Hafez's *ghazals* are cyclic and have an inclination toward circularity, which suggests that Hafez was a determinist and also craved for eternity and therefore had an idealistic and heroic personality; moreover, it is the beloved that stands at center of the circle in Hafez's *ghazals*.

According to Bahaeddin Khorramshahi (1982), an Iranian Hafez expert, the structure of Hafez's *ghazals* is spherical, which provides one with the opportunity to begin reading a *ghazal* from wherever one wishes and ends it wherever one prefers. He believes the structure of the *ghazals* is non-linear, multidimensional, and polygonal. This feature of Hafez's *ghazals* could remind Muslims of the Quran since some Quranic verses might sound mismatched and the whole chapter could therefore seem fragmentary. However, as stated above, all the verses are interrelated by a center. Sheibani (2011) remarks, "It is more appropriate to describe *ghazal* as a non-linear and 'spatial' structure that cannot be associated with any particular shape or volume" (p. 40).

According to Reza Baraheni, an Iranian literary figure, not only the Quran but also historical events of his time, particularly the Mongol invasion of Iran and anarchy created by it, impacted on Hafez and his poetry. Due to this, in Baraheni's (2002) opinion, the world looked and sounded instantaneous and fragmentary to Hafez; as a result, the formal and semantic unit of his poetry became a verse not the whole poem. Interestingly enough, fragmentation in Hafez's *ghazals* could be studied from a fresh perspective. Julie Scott Meisami (1990), a lecturer in Persian at the University of Oxford, remarks that, in some of the poet's *ghazals*, "we find a plurality of speaking voices, each of which informs a particular segment of the lyric" (p. 136). Based on this point, I have come up with the idea that the fragmentation could be regarded as a technique for including diverse voices in a *ghazal*. The social circumstances in which Hafez lived could support this supposition. Hafez lived during the reign of various Shahs, including Abu Es'haq Inju, Mobarezoddin, and Shah Shoja. Definitely, this variety influenced him and his poetry. Shah Inju was his patron. His early poems reveal a tendency toward a liberal interpretation of Islam. In addition, his poetic career was greatly dependent on attitudes of the ruler toward worldly pleasures, particularly the drinking of wine. However, when Mobarezoddin, an ascetic, ascended the throne, Hafez changed his style of expression and drew on indirect allusions for the most part. Shah Shoja was himself a competent poet and Hafez's liberal attitudes were consistent with the Shah's. However, their close association lasted for some six years. It is likely that the Shah grew jealous of him and, moreover, religious authorities disapproved of Hafez. Due to these, he was banished from Shiraz (Starkey, 2008). According to both history and hints in Hafez's *Divan*, his time was brimming with sin, corruption, crime, and duplicity. A Shah's mother led a life of debauchery. Another Shah's wife murdered her husband while he was asleep. Another woman instigated her husband's brother to dethrone him so that she could make love with the brother-in-law. Another Shah ordered his commanders to divorce their wives and then he composed *ghazals* for them. Shahs were among those who committed brigandage and fratricide. The period of time between their ascent to power and fall from it was short (Zarrinkoob, 1995). In my opinion, these conditions contributed to not only the fragmentation of Hafez's poetry but also the diversity of voices in it; however, according to the above-mentioned points, his *ghazals* comprise some features which attempt to maintain their unity, including a clear form and structure into which so many subjects, images, ideas, and symbols are compressed; rhythmic unity; insistence on the fact that it was Hafez who created them by using his pen name (and the inclusion of all other voices under the umbrella of his own voice); and the establishment of a link between *beyts* by using rhymes.

In addition to these, it must be remembered that Hafez was a shrewd critic of the social, cultural, and religious climate of his time and was no compromiser. Mohammad Este'lami, a Hafez expert, contends that the distinguishing characteristic of Hafez's personality was that he knew himself and never pretended

otherwise. He had achieved a considerable measure of freedom and was brave enough to attack any type of insincerity and inveracity. He disparaged anyone that deceived people. His weapon was his incisive words, which were replete with witticisms. Employing Sufi words, he launched into tirades against a sanctimonious person who struggled to behave like Sufis and dervishes. He criticized Muslim clerics and ascetics who committed grave sins in their privacy but, ironically enough, condemned a drunk in the street—since, in Islam, drinking alcohol is *haraam* (forbidden by Sharia). To Hafez, the drunk was much better than a sanctimonious ascetic (Este'lami, 2004). Hence, his poetry should never be studied superficially in such a way that Kasravi did. As a prominent social critic, Hafez was astute enough to know how to write what he wrote. If a *ghazal*, or even a *beyt*, sounds meaningless to a reader, it will be irrational to project the meaninglessness he perceives onto the text or its author. He should remember that Hafez's *ghazals*, according to the above-mentioned points, have a metaphysical interpretive layer, which he ought to take into consideration while pondering their meanings, otherwise he will never understand what he reads. Similarly, a person who has not felt the pain of love, particularly if it is divine love, cannot find a real meaning in a love poem and is likely to scoff at it.

Hafez in Persian Culture

Along with the Quran, Hafez's *Divan* can be found in a large number of Iranian houses. At *Norooz* (New Day), the Iranian New Year, as the exact moment of the start of the spring approaches, Iranian families gather around a table symbolically set with some items, seven of which begin with the letter S—due to this, the table is known as *haft-sean* (seven S's). Among these items, one can find two books, namely the Quran and Hafez's *Divan,* though neither begins with the letter S. This shows that Iranians consider the two books valuable. Moreover, Iranians read not only the Quran but also *Divan* around the table. Indeed, they hold Hafez in high esteem. To them, Hafez was much more than a poet. They regard him as an oracle.

Divan of Hafez, a Divination Tool

Iranians use Hafez's *Divan* to practice divination. They call this bibliomancy *fal-e Hafez*. In Persian, *fal* refers to "any practice which is employed to foreknow future events" (Anvari, 2009, p. 1622). Therefore, *fal-e Hafez* refers to such a practice using Hafez's *Divan*. The common way to do it is that the querent who is in a dilemma and seeks an answer to his question holds the closed *Divan* in his hands, prays for Hafez's soul to rest in peace, closes his eyes, concentrates on the question, and then opens the book to a random page. The *beyt* on which his eyes fall offers the answer. The querent usually reads on the other *beyts* of the poem in order to have a better understanding and interpretation of the *beyt* he chanced on, particularly if there is a crux-like line or *beyt* in some other part of the poem—when a passage in a literary work is so ambiguous that the rest of the work depends on its interpretation,

the passage is called "crux" (Baldick, 2008, p. 75). It is likely that a modern querent would perform a *fal* using an e-book of Hafez's *Divan* so that he would scroll it up and down haphazardly with closed eyes, stop it suddenly, and finally let the hovering mouse arrow fall on a random *beyt*. However it is done, the main point is that the querent must reach the *beyt* purely randomly.

Indeed, Hafez's *Divan* is not the only book which has been used for bibliomancy. For example, in the Middle Ages, it was trendy to use Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid* for divination and one of the methods was that the person pointed to a line or passage with closed eyes (Robertson, 1991). The former was called *Sortes Virgilianae* and the latter *Sortes Homericae*. This shows that the ancients held the poets in high esteem and regarded them as

> divine and inspired persons. Homer's works among the Greeks had the most credit, but the tragedies of Euripides and other celebrated poems were occasionally used for the same purpose. The Latins chiefly consulted Virgil, and many curious coincidences are related by grave historians, between the prediction and the event. (Spence, 2006, p. 374)

In Iran, Hafez's *Divan* is the most commonly used book for bibliomancy. The Quran is also referred to for this purpose. Divination by the Quran is called *estekhare* in Persian (Anvari, 2009). Divination by a holy book has been also common in Christianity.

> Bibliomancy, or divination by the Bible, had become so common in the fifth century, that several councils were obliged expressly to forbid it, as injurious to religion, and savoring of idolatry.

> This kind of divination was named *Sortes Sanctorum*, *or Sortes Sacriae*, Lots of the Saints, or Sacred Lots, and consisted in suddenly opening, or dipping into, the Bible, and regarding the passage that first presented itself to the eye as predicting the future lot of the inquirer. The *Sortes Sanctorum* had succeeded the *Sortes Homericae* and *Sortes Virgilianae* of the Pagans; among whom it was customary to take the work of some famous poet, as Homer or Virgil, and write out different verses on separate scrolls, and afterwards draw one of them, or else, opening the book suddenly, consider the first verse that presented itself as a prognostication of future events. (Bombaugh, 1870, p. 95)

Hafez's admirers created some myths about him after his death and counted him among heroes of wisdom and mysticism. He knew the Quran by heart and, like others, often resorted to *fal* or *estekhare* in despair and dilemmas. However, surprisingly enough, common people's mythologizing minds turned him into *Lesanol Gheyb* (the Tongue of the Unseen [World]) and used his *Divan* for bibliomancy simply because the existence of subtle puns and diverse images in his

ghazals proved it suitable for cautions and hopes given through bibliomancy (Zarrinkoob, 1995).

I think that fragmentation in Hafez's *Divan* gets his poetry into a state of conceptual flux; due to this and the other reasons stated above, his poetry is multilayered and open to diverse interpretations, and therefore suitable for bibliomancy. It should be also noted that the fragmentary structure of, together with contradictory and fragmentary hints in, a *ghazal* renders it "writerly." The French literary theorist Roland Barthes (1915-1980) distinguished between two types of texts: *lisible* (readerly) and *scriptible* (writerly). A "readerly text" has a single "closed" meaning. Its reader is idle and only consumes this fixed meaning. He understands the text according to familiar conventions and common expectations. However, a "writerly text" is "open." Its reader is active and produces meanings from a range of possibilities. The reader of a "writerly text" is regarded as the co-author of the text (1974, p. 4).

The Divining Reader and Other Reader Constructs

Undoubtedly, the reader who consults Hafez as an oracle through *Divan* plays a central role in deciphering meanings of the *beyt* or *beyts* he chances on. Certainly, the reader's expectations and presuppositions shape the way he understands, interprets, and judges the *beyts*. In such reading of poetry, the role of the reader is highlighted. Definitely, there have been some literary theorists and critics who have discussed the way a literary work is read, perceived, interpreted, and understood. Contrary to text-oriented theorists of Formalism and the New Criticism, their reader-oriented approaches to a literary work give an active role to the reader and assume that all texts "acquire meaning through an interaction between text and reader" (Schneider, 2010, p. 482).

Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997), a German literary historian, remarked, "A literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period. It is not a monument which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue" (1974, p. 14). Jauss was a major theorist of reception theory, a variety of reader-response theory. Reception theory shows an interest "more in historical changes affecting the reading public than in the solitary reader" (Baldick, 2008, p. 283). In Jauss's opinion, readers of any given period share a set of assumptions and criteria, called the "horizon of expectations," which they apply while exploring literary works. These horizons are not fixed and each generation has its own horizon of expectations. Therefore, a literary work has no single meaning and is always revalued and reinterpreted by various generations (Cuddon, 1999). Definitely, the querent consulting Hafez's *Divan* approaches it with a very subjective expectation in the form of a question. Despite this, his interpretation of the random *beyt(s)* is under the impact of his generation's "horizon of expectations." Indeed, the meaning he finds in the *beyt(s)* is different from what others could find.

Therefore, not only is the text "writerly" and open to a variety of interpretations but the querent also interprets the text in any way his question requires—obviously, questions are endless.

Since the 1970s, various reader models have been introduced by theorists in the context of reader-response theories, including actual reader/implied reader (Iser, 1974), competent reader (Culler, 2002), informed reader (Fish, 1980), mock reader (Gibson, 1950), model reader (Eco, 1980), and super-reader (Riffaterre, 1966/1980).

The imaginary reader "who, the writer hopes, will understand completely the experience he is trying to convey, and respond to it as he wishes" is called the "ideal reader" (Cuddon, 1999, p. 409). The "mock reader," introduced by Walker Gibson (1919-2009), an American professor of English, is similar to the ideal reader.

> [T]here are two readers distinguishable in every literary experience. First, there is the "real" individual upon whose crossed knee rests the open volume, and whose personality is as complex and ultimately inexpressible as any dead poet's. Second, there is the fictitious reader—I shall call him the "mock reader"—whose mask and costume the individual takes on in order to experience the language. The mock reader is an artifact, controlled, simplified, abstracted out of the chaos of day-to-day sensation. (1950, pp. 265-266)

The querent of *Divan* possesses characteristics of both the real individual and the mock reader. He is very complex, particularly because his approach is complex. So is a divining inquiry. He wishes to render relevant a question logically irrelevant to *beyts* which are expected to shape an answer. Simultaneously, he is also similar to the mock reader in that he tries his best to "experience the language" so as to ultimately find the most appropriate answer to his question. He therefore wears not only the mask and the costume but also the shoes of the mock reader.

Another representation of the ideal reader is the "model reader," introduced by Umberto Eco (1932-2016), an Italian literary critic and semiotician. He asserted,

> To make his text communicative, the author has to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by the possible reader. The author has thus to foresee a model of the possible reader (hereafter Model Reader) supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them. (1984, p. 7)

In Eco's (1990) view, texts written in such a way as to "support multiple interpretations" are "open texts" (p. 40). He insisted, "You cannot use the text as you want, but only as the text wants you to use it. An open text, however 'open' it be, cannot afford whatever interpretation." (Eco, 1984, p. 9); moreover, closed texts, on the other hand,

apparently aim at pulling the reader along a predetermined path, carefully displaying their effects so as to arouse pity or fear, excitement or depression at the due place and at the right moment. . . . They seem to be structured according to an inflexible project. (p. 8)

Contrary to Eco's insistence, the querent of Hafez's *Divan* uses a poem as he intends. Although he steps on the prearranged path of the *beyt(s)*, he makes any interpretation because his aim is not a mere understanding of the lines or the poet's intention; he does his best to find an answer. Hence, in order to interpret the lines in a way that they could offer an answer, he must refer to dictionaries, Hafez experts' explanatory notes, others' interpretations, and so on. From this perspective, the text that the querent deals with is an "open text."

The ideal reader is regarded as "an abstracted version of the 'implied reader'" as well (Mailloux, 1982, p. 203). According to the German literary theorist Wolfgang Iser (1978), the implied reader "embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect—predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct" and should never be identified with any real, or actual, reader (p. 34).

> The hypothetical implied and actual reader coexist, are one and the same person responding to a text in different ways and at different levels of consciousness. This view of the reader can be taken in conjunction with Umberto Eco's distinction between the 'open' and 'closed' texts. (Cuddon, 1999, p. 416)

Influenced by the Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden (1893-1970), Iser primarily focused on the individual text and its relationship with the reader. According to Iser, there are lacunae or blanks in any literary text. In order to understand the text, the reader keeps filling them in creatively. Here, the active participation of the reader is stressed. In Iser's (1978) opinion, the blank results from the indeterminacy of the text. Moreover, fragmentation, as in modern novels, increases the number of blanks. "The whole reading experience thus becomes an evolving process of anticipation, frustration, retrospection, reconstruction, and satisfaction" (Shi, 2013, p. 985). Through the reading process, at the same time that the reader is completing and organizing the text, the text is also organizing the reader, who has come to the text with a set of cultural, social, and historical norms. For Iser, the interaction between the reader and the text happens not only through blanks but also negations. Negation causes a variety of blanks. During the reading process, under the impact of the text, the reader calls into question the norms and negates them, thereby adopting a modified position toward the negated cultural, social, and historical norms (Iser, 1978). According to Iser's argumentation, "literary texts always take on a range of possible meanings" (Shi, 2013, p. 985). For him,

meaning is not "an object to be defined, but is an effect to be experienced" (Iser, 1978, p. 10).

The querent consulting Hafez's *Divan* undergoes the same process as stated above. Undoubtedly, blanks that he has to fill in while exploring the random text, *i.e.* the *beyt(s)* he chances on, are much more than blanks that an actual reader has to fill in while dealing with the same text regarded as a mere literary work. Accordingly, the querent's process of anticipation, frustration, retrospection, reconstruction, and satisfaction is a lot more complicated, cognitive, creative, and laborious. Furthermore, the extent to which the text influences and shapes the querent, his position toward all norms, and, generally speaking, his life is unparalleled because he wants to get an answer from the *beyt(s)* on the basis of diverse interpretations and techniques and make a decision, which will affect multiple facets of his life one way or another. It should be noted that a person who adopts such a methodology for finding a way out of dilemmas is usually forlorn and consults the poetry collection as a last resort. Therefore, the answer he gets from it, if put into practice, will impact on his life. I think no other reader construct can gain this much influence from a text that the divining reader—my term for the querent with all qualities I have mentioned so far and will also mention below—can.

Jonathan Culler, an American structuralist, prefers the term "competent reader" over the "ideal reader." In his opinion, the latter implies some readings are acceptable and superior, which cannot be substantiated. "The ideal reader is, of course, a theoretical construct, perhaps best thought of as a representation of the central notion of acceptability" (2002, p. 144). Contrary to Culler's standpoint, the divining reader searches for the most acceptable reading and interpretation, consistent with the answer he wishes to find. Therefore, an individual divining reader is an ideal reader in this regard. Obviously, the subjectivity of the divining reader is stressed here.

In his essay, "Describing Poetic Structures: Two Approaches to Baudelaire's 'Les Chats'," Michael Riffaterre (1924-2006), a French-born American literary critic, introduced the idea of the "*archilecteur*" (arch-reader, super-reader, or average-reader) within the framework of stylistics (1966/1980). For him, the analysis of a text, particularly a poem, should be based on responses and reactions of a collection of readers to specific passages of the text. His super-reader is an imaginary reader composed of students, translators, interpreters, and others, assembling from various contexts and backgrounds. "By tallying the effects of the poem's language on this array of respondents Riffaterre believes he can isolate those linguistic features that are poetically significant." In his opinion, "meaning is a property of the language itself and not of any activities the reader performs" (Tompkins, 1980, p. xiii). Hence, Riffaterre "diminishes both the author's and the reader's significance in the reading process" (Koutsantoni, 2009, p. 65, note 90).

Since the divining reader refers to any possible person or source so as to formulate his answer, he is similar to the super-reader in this regard.

The reader-oriented theory of Stanley Eugene Fish, an American literary theorist, is called "affective stylistics, in which the focus of attention is shifted from the spatial context of a page and its observable regularities to the temporal context of a mind and its experiences" (1980, p. 91). In fact, he discredited the dichotomy made by William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley (1954) between the text and its effect—their idea was called the "affective fallacy," describing "a confusion between the poem and its *results* (what it *is* and what it *does*)" (p. 21). Therefore, the ways a reader's responses to words in a text evolve in time and order gain Fish's (1980) attention. His ideal reader is called the "informed reader," someone who

> (1) is a competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built up;
> (2) is in full possession of "the semantic knowledge that a mature . . . listener brings to his task of comprehension" including the knowledge (that is, the experience, both as a producer and comprehender) of lexical sets, collocation probabilities, idioms, professional and other dialects, and so on; and (3) has *literary* competence. That is, he is sufficiently experienced as a reader to have internalized the properties of literary discourses, including everything from the most local of devices (figures of speech, and so on) to whole genres. (p. 48)

The divining reader does not intend to evaluate what he reads; however, he is affected by his reading. Moreover, as he reads on, his responses to the text change and develop. In addition, while examining the text, in order to build his answer out of the text and its interpretations, he tries to acquire as much linguistic, semantic, and literary competence as possible. Due to this, he might go through a large number of sources. Therefore, he is or will become an informed reader.

The reader constructs which have been studied so far in order to be compared and contrasted with the divining reader should not be confused with the "narratee," a term coined by Gerald Prince, an American literary theorist. A narratee is a person "who is narrated to, as inscribed in the text. There is at least one (more or less overtly represented) narratee per narrative" (2003, p. 57). Nevertheless, the divining reader could be also in the shoes of the narratee in the text he explores since the answer might be hidden in words of the narrator addressing the narratee, implying that the narrator passes on some indirect advice to the reader, who could be therefore called the narratee's alter ego.

Louise Michelle Rosenblatt (1986), an American literary critic, advanced the "transactional theory," suggesting a "reciprocal, mutually defining relationship" between the literary text and the reader (p. 122). She wrote:

> [R]eading has too often been thought of as an interaction, the printed page impressing its meaning on the reader's mind or the reader extracting the meaning embedded in the text. Actually, reading is a constructive, selective process over time in a particular context. The relation between reader and signs on the page proceeds in a to-and-fro spiral, in which each is continually being affected by what the other has contributed. (1995, p. 26)

According to this theory, the reading act is "an event involving a particular individual and a particular text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting, and as part of the ongoing life of the individual and the group" (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 100). Therefore, the text is only paper and ink until the reader arrives and begins the reading of the text, which is, in fact, brought into the reader's mind. Iser (1978) similarly insisted that "literary texts initiate 'performances' of meaning rather than actually formulating meanings themselves. Their aesthetic quality lies in this 'performing' structure, which clearly cannot be identical to the final product, because without the participation of the individual reader there can be no performance" (p. 27). It should be mentioned that Rosenblatt (1978) distinguished between two types of reading, namely aesthetic and non-aesthetic. In aesthetic reading, the focus is on what happens during the actual reading event and what feelings and ideas are aroused in the reader. However, in non-aesthetic, or "efferent," reading, the focus is on what solutions, actions, and facts are carried away by the reader from the reading after the event.

According to the above-mentioned pieces of reasoning, when the querent opens the book and explores its *beyts*, Hafez's *Divan* is (re-)created. Not only this but the author is also (re-)born. In my opinion, the author is brought to life, even prior to the reading event, when the querent directs his attention to the world of the dead and prays for the soul of the author—not to forget that the prayer is itself a text, an introductory text, which attempts to sanctify the main text, *i.e.* the forthcoming random *beyt(s)*. According to this, I believe the divining reader's activity space, or scope, is the widest, compared with spaces in which other reader constructs are. As to whether the divining reader's reading is aesthetic or efferent, the latter is the case more in that his main goal is to derive a solution from the reading event. Furthermore, to me, the divining reader's performance disproves the theory of "the death of the author" by Barthes (1968) in the essay "The Death of the Author".

> In his essay, Barthes calls for the 'death' of the author, asserting that it is only through his demise that we can move beyond the limitations of an author-centred criticism and recognize the many diverse voices that constitute the literary text. He emphasizes that the figure of the author can blind us to the other influences which are imprinted on the literary text. (Heffernan, 2007, p. 90)

However, the divining reader never seeks to topple the authority of Hafez over the possible meanings of random lines. The reason is that the divining reader does not aim to destabilize or renounce the power of the author, who keeps hovering over lines the querent chances on and helps the querent find an answer to his question. Moreover, the divining reader's focus is on the question which seeks an answer rather than on the birth or demise of the author. Additionally, by his theory, Barthes reacted against the "Romantic cult of genius and originality, in which authors are creative while readers are essentially receptive" (Baldick, 2008, p. 79); however, the divining reader is ready to be merely receptive if receptivity leads to an answer. From this perspective, it could be said that there is a significant difference between Barthesian subjectivity and the subjectivity of the divining reader, who enjoys greater freedom of interpretation without resorting to the announcement of the death of the author or the birth of the reader. Even when he formulates his answer by referring to sources apparently irrelevant to the random lines, he believes it was Hafez who offered him the answer in one way or another. This implies that the author who is brought to life by the querent's prayers for his soul is going to have a writerly presence and continue writing his poetry through the querent's interpretations.

In the end, it should be noted that among the meanings of the word "reader" are interpreter and foreteller ("Read," 1987). According to this, I believe the divining reader as a new reader construct foregrounds these secondary meanings and highlights the long-neglected role of the reader.

The Willing Unframing of Disbelief

Advocating "psychologically-based transactional theories" similar to what Rosenblatt introduced (Piturro, 2008, p. 9), the Americans Norman Holland and David Bleich developed a reader-response theory associated with psychoanalysis. For them, "reading is a form of covert wish-fulfilment, so the reader engages with a text as with any other form of desire" (Cuddon, 1999, p. 727). Holland (1980) contends that "any individual shapes the materials the literary work offers him . . . to give him what he characteristically both wishes and fears, and that he also constructs his characteristic way of achieving what he wishes and defeating what he fears" (p. 125). To Bleich, reading is "a subjective process in that a reader's personality determines what is perceived. As people engage in a perceptual experience, they simultaneously experience an emotional response to that perception" (Bainbridge & Pantaleo, 1999, p. 153).

Likewise, the divining reader's reading is a form of wish-fulfilment, not only covert but also overt in particular. As stated before, his reading is extremely subjective because it is his personal inquiry that shapes the reading process. Moreover, his personality surely affects what he perceives. Simultaneously, the personality is also affected by what is perceived. In any case, the divining reader

wishes to acquire some meaning, bringing about the formulation of his answer, although he selects the text at random and the outcome is unpredictable. For him, the world of *Divan* is an extension of the real world and the fictional world of the poetic text is factual. During the reading, he first unframes whatever disbelieving to him and then reframes the unframed disbelief into a belief—which I call the "willing unframing of disbelief." This is different from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1817/1983) "willing suspension of disbelief" in *Biographia Literaria* in that the divining reader does not suspend anything at all. Through interpretation, he fashions each and every experience during the reading event into a belief. What was considered disbelieving prior to the consultation of Hafez's *Divan* is now interpretively reframed into a belief, which might be itself the answer—therefore carried away into the factual world directly—or might contribute to a future answer. The willing unframing of disbelief is in contrast with Richard J. Gerrig's (1993) "willing construction of disbelief" in that the divining reader never constructs disbelief and, moreover, discards or disbelieves nothing after the reading event. According to this American cognitive psychologist, "fictions will fail to have a real-world impact only if readers expend explicit effort to understand them as fictional" (p. 240). Gerrig (1993) substitutes the "willing construction of disbelief" for Coleridge's (1817/1983) "willing suspension of disbelief". In his view, Coleridge had it backward. In fact, the reader of a fiction believes whatever he reads but disbelieves and discards some of whatever was read after finishing the fiction. Gerrig (1993) substantiates this idea by referring to the seventeenth-century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza, who "argued that the acceptance of belief is an automatic concomitant of comprehension. 'Unacceptance' may follow later, but the initial product of ordinary cognitive processing is a belief in the understood propositions" (p. 227).

Conclusion

Hafez was one of the finest poets of Persia. His *Divan* is frequently used for bibliomancy in Persian culture. Hafez is widely recognized as the undisputed master of *ghazal*. The predominant feature of his *ghazals* is fragmentation, which could be regarded as a technique for including diverse voices in them. The unity of his *ghazals* is maintained by using other techniques, such as the establishment of a link between *beyts* by using rhymes. Fragmentation helps to get Hafez's poetry into a state of conceptual flux, which contributes to diverse interpretations of lines a querent chances on. I always wondered what type of reader this querent was from the perspective of reader-oriented theories. Through the present article, I tried to answer this question. I call this querent a divining reader. The divining reader is the term I use to refer to the reader who consults Hafez's poetry collection as a bibliomantic text so as to solve a problem or find an answer to a question.

Introduced in the present article as a new reader construct in the realm of reader-oriented theories, a divining reader has eighteen distinctive qualities. This reader 1) approaches the text with a set of expectations and presumptions; 2) is complex; 3) tries to acquire as much linguistic, semantic, and literary competence as possible; 4) is an ideal reader; 5) enjoys the widest activity space and scope; 6) uses the text with the aim of answering a question and ends up with a novel interpretation; 7) tries to fulfill a wish; 8) unframes disbelief willingly; 9) consults as many sources as possible to find an answer; 10) searches for the most acceptable/appropriate reading and interpretation; 11) influences/shapes the text and is simultaneously influenced/shaped by it; 12) is the most influenced reader; 13) does not evaluate the text; 14) could be a narratee's alter ego; 15) (re-)creates/writes the text and revives the author; 16) establishes a relationship between the factual/visible world and the invisible world of the dead; 17) is free; and 18) deals with an open and writerly text.

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