

The Ghazal and the Canso : Parallels of Courtly Passion

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The dictum *Deus caritas est* (I John 4.8), God is love, through the prism of courtly literature becomes reversed: love is God. To be more precise: human love is god, i.e., *amor deus est*.¹ The mystic erotic we discovered in mediaeval India² is no less present in the literary works of mediaeval Persia.³ What is remarkable are the striking parallels between Bernart de Ventadorn's lambent *versos of fin'amors* and certain pieces of Persian poetry. It is not without interest that the mystical *ghazal*,⁴ which employs the same erotic diction and imagery as the courtly lyric, gained impetus in the late 12th century (Meisami, "Persona," 131), which is at least somewhat contemporaneous with the life of the troubadour (Dimrock 3; Paden 413). Of course, there are differences. Whereas in India we find the influence of the impassioned bhakti cult⁵ (Thomas, "Mystic," 220), in Persia one speaks of the importance of Sufism:

.... we must remember that for the Sufi poets, world and everything in it are loci of theophany for the Divine Reality. But by the very nature of things, certain loci display this Reality more clearly than others. Among its more direct manifestations are "wine, women, and song." Each is an image and symbol of higher realities, and eventually of the Highest Reality (Chittick 195).

From a broader viewpoint, Meisami notes that Nizami's⁶ (d. 1209) verse romance the *Haft Paykar* reflects an increasing penetration of esoteric learning into "the more imaginative sides of intellectual culture in Islam." The chief branches of such learning included philosophical thought, Shi' i / Isma'il and mystical *ta'wil*,⁷ and a personal discipline and ecstatic visions of the mystics; all three areas tended to overlap and interpenetrate one another (Meisami, "Design," 461).

As in mediaeval Persia, so also in mediaeval Provence, religious thought was part and parcel of quotidian existence. *Fin'amors* was not a game, but a

secularized ritual (Kohler 462). What is of interest here is how certain talented poets have prometheically stolen fire from heaven, as it were, to clothe, Eros numenistically. From the "holistic" literary approach, the horizontal mode of consciousness is paradoxically covered over by the vertical mode (Hollister 4-18).

It is a question of ambiguity. Annemarie Schimmel, for example, has underlined this aspect of Persian mystical poetry. With regard to the images of sensory love, she rejects the extreme positions that they are purely sensual or purely mystical. Instead, she opts for an intermediate position that stresses balance: "the oscillation between the two levels of being is consciously maintained" (Schimmel 288). The viewpoint of William Chittick is more nuance. He suggests that, while the Schimmel hypothesis is essentially correct, nonetheless given the context of Sufi metaphysics, the mystical must take precedence (Chittick 199). Be that as it may, there are times when the axis is evidently shifted toward the sensual.⁸ Consider, for example, the manner in which Hafiz⁹ employs the Shab-e Qadr, the night when Muhammed received inspiration from above through descending angels:

On such a precious and noble Night of Power it is my
desire to sleep with you till day, (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 24)

Hafiz states in one of his most famous ghazals:

Last night at dawn, they freed me from grief ;
in that darkness of night they gave me the Water of in Life.
What a blessed dawn that was, and what an
auspicious night, that Night of Power when
they gave me this new privilarge. QG 183 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 24-25)

It is not surprising that, despite the mystical overtones, these verses have almost unanimously been interpreted as reflective of carnal union with the beloved (Meisami, "Technique," 25).¹¹ Although troubadour poetry tends in the direction of *cor e cors*, the fact in never celebrated in verse.¹² Donald Frank puts it succinctly:

The concept of love as desire is at the base of the troubadour concept of pure or true love (Frank 13).

In his *Allegory of Love*, C. S. Lewis has proposed that this new unorthodox Religion of Love mimicked Christianity externally while simulataneously vitiating it from within (Lewis 18-22). Peter Dronke has pointed out the importance of mystical, noetic, and Sapiential language in the troubadour tradition:

. . . the mystical language has led us to a deeper understanding of what the love-poets meant by *dignite et la beaute la passion dsns la ffrance*, 'le pouvoir ennoblissant'; the noetic language has made more precise for us that way towards union with the beloved 'qui fait valoir l'amant'; the Sapientian language has shown us something of the hidden meanings that that are possible in 'le culte d'un objet excellent' (Dronke 97).

The innate opposition between external religiosity and internal lust does not seem to be the case with mediaeval Persian poetry. There appears to be a closer comparison to Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* where the sensual and the mystical are like parallel lines, distinct yet joined together by the poet's magical woof or words (Thomas, "Mystic," 223). It is not a question of stress? In *Humay and Humayun*,¹³ for example, the mystical tinge, although present, is extraordinary unobtrusive (Burgel 352).¹⁴ It is human love that is celebrated, religious and mystical language notwithstanding: *amor deus est*.

From the viewpoint of *courtly* literature, we suggest it would be even more precise to say that *amor dea est*, love is a goddess.¹⁵ Here we must part company with those who speculate that the innovation of *fin'amors* is that the lover is in a subordinate role (Lewis 2-4). Instead of something new, may it not be a kind of return to an older, archaic tradition in which the White Goddess is the supreme deity and her son lover and victim (Graves 387-388). In both the *canso* and the *ghazal* the beloved is apotheosized.¹⁶ In this poem of Hafiz, for example, the poet alludes to the myth of the day of Pre-Eternity, when, according to tradition, man was predestined to divine love (Meisami, "Technique," 19):

In Pre-Eternity the rays of your beauty breathed (a breath of) Epiphany;
QG 152 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 19)

Stressing the inimitable beauty of his beloved, Hafiz declares:

(This) friend's beauty does not need our imperfect (or: endless) love; What need for (additional) splendor, for (additional) points¹⁷ and lines has a beautiful face? QG 3.3 (tr. Skalmowski 590)

Although there is no allusion to Pre-Eternity is the *cansos* of Bernart de Ventadorn, the troubadour nevertheless treats his *domna*¹⁸ as if she were a goddess. Huchet proposes that the Bernardian *verso* is an *eikon*, both religious and aesthetic, in which the beauty of the Lady is contemplated (Huchet 16):

car sai c'am sui amatz per la gensor qued anc Deus fei ("Lancan folhon bosc e jarric," vv. 21-22)¹⁹ because I know that I love and am loved by the most beautiful woman God has ever made.²⁰

Lady, the most beautiful ever born and the best that I have ever seen (Nichols 96).

Among the best woman God ever made, I have chosen the finest (Nichols 102)

It is evident that here we are speaking of love in absolute terms. Small wonder that the poets connect passion with the finality of death, the ironic moment of fulfillment.

Open my grave after my death and look :

Because of my eternal fire (of love) there comes smoke out of my shroud (tr. Skalmowski 586)

Bernart's flame of love is no less intense :

God, she should realize now that I am dying for her love ;

(Nichols 88).

. . . but may death overtake me if I do not love her with all my heart

(Nichols 50).

This *cri de coeur* of Bernart recalls the image of the Burnign candle in these verses of Hafiz :

By your life, O sweet-mouthed idol — like the candle.
on dark nights, my desire is self-annihilation.

(tr. Meisami, "Technique," 90)

The beloved absent, the lover consumes himself like the candle that burns itself out,²¹ like the troubadour, who when the lady is absent, is utterly consumed with desire.

And if she stayed with me a long time, I would swear by the saints that there would be no greater joy in the world. But at parting I take fire and burn

(Nichols 88).

The lack of love or unrequited love is a kind of death, as indicated by these poets. And yet, oxymoronicly, love itself is also portrayed in terms of death and annihilation :

The mountain of my patience become soft as wax in the hands of your gief, since, like a candle, I have been melting in the water and fire of your love

QG 294 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 11-12).

The moment when Bernart looked into his lady's eyes was a moment of delicious death :²²

Mirror, since I saw myself reflected in you, deep sighs have been killing me (Nichols 168)

Mary Kay has reminded us of the association between mirror and death common in many cultures as demonstrated, for example, in the Narcissus legend (Kay 275).

When we speak of the mystic erotic, we are far from a fleeting moment of passion. The path of the lover is fraught with difficulties. Hafiz clearly affirms.

The road who of love is full of tumult and trial, O heart : he goes in haste along this road will stumble QG 221 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 8)

The poet advises the lover :

Though the path of love is the hiding place of those with curved bows,²³ he who proceeds wisely will overcome his enemies QG 128 (tr. Meisami,

"Technique," 8)

The way of the *fin'amans* is no less easy.

. . . . since I live as painfully as one who dies in fire (Nichols 50)

Never did God create my torment or agony which I do not suffer in peace, save the pain of love (Nichols 143).

Keppler points out that for the sufis suffering is in effect THE condition of love (Keppler, "Magie," 31). Not to mention the Zoroastrian mystics who described their devotion in terms of willing slavery to God or passionate self sacrifice for His sake :

Canonical Zoroastrian texts speak of the ultimate of the believer as becoming *xwesvih I yazdan*, "property of the yazatas [= gods]" (Russell 72) .

Bernart describes himself as a slave to his lady. Indeed, the persona of the timid, humble lover is his "trademark" (Kendrick 179).

. . . . I am so fearful of her. Therefore, I surrender myself, a suppliant, to her. If it pleases her, let her give me away or sell me (Nichols 116)

Sometimes the path to the lady's heart is described as a perilous journey.

Now what remedy is there ? since, in the sea of my sorrow, the skiff of my patience has fallen into a whirlpool, driven by the sail of separation.

The ship of life came near to being drowned by the waves of desire for you, in the shoreless sea of separation QG 297 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 11)

Here the ship (or skiff) is a metaphor for the poet's patience or life. In this *canço* of Bernart, the ship becomes a simile of the poet himself :

I have great hope from her. But it does me little good because she keeps me poised like a ship on a wave. I do not know how to escape from the sorrowful thought that afflicts me (Nichols 171).

Interestingly enough, Hafiz can also allude to the path of passion in terms of the desert :

The ups and downs of the desert of love is a snare of calamity : where is the lion-heart who does not fear calamity ? (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 9)

The desert image does not occur in Bernart's poetry, but the "ups and nifue downs" of love remind one of the continual deaths and rebirths the troubadour experiences.

This love wounds me in the heart gently with a sweet savor; a hundred times a day I die of sorrow and I revive with joy another hundred (Nichols 134).

The basic reason for the lover's suffering and anguish is the cruelty of the beloved.

Why more can I do if Love captures me and if no key but pity can open the prison into which he puts me, and I find no pity there ? (Nichols 134).

The more I implore her, the crueller she is to me,
(Nichols 131)

Hafiz faces similar difficulties :

It would be nice, if you learn fidelity and promise(-keeping), Because (otherwise) everyone you'll meet (lit. see) will get to know (your) cruelty (lit, tyranny) (tr. Skalmowski 587-588).

Trying to be philosophical, the poet says to himself : Hafiez ! Don't suffer (so) because of autumn's wind on the meadow of Time (or Fate).

Consider (this) reasonable thought : 'Where is a rose without thorns ?'
(tr. Skalmowski 527)

Despite the sufferings of the lover, the poets insist that the pursuit of love (= the rose), is worthwhile :

. . . . for the rose embodies the ideal of perfect beauty which man must strive after, and the thorn the suffering which he gladly accepts as the price we must pay for the pursuit that ideal.

The pangs of love far from invalidating man's pursuit of the rose make this pursuit an ennobling one, for it must not be forgotten that the rose is the most precious goal in life (Meisami, "Gardens," 166).

Hafiz seems to incarnate these sentiments when he says :

Gul 'aziz-ast, ghanimat shumuridash suhbat, (QG 164).

The rose is precious; count her company as gain, (tr. Meisami, "Gardens," 166)

Count thou as gain the night of love and seize the gift of hapiness, for moonlight the lover's heart; the tulip-garden's verge is sweet QG 288 (tr. Meisami, "Gardens," 166).

It is well-known that the courtly lover claims that his sufferings are the furnace in which his mettle becomes refined and perfected. Bernart proclaims :

Man can only achieve worthiness in the love and service of ladies,

. . . . No man is worth anything without love (Nichols 99).

Just as the love in which my heart is improved and cured is superior, . . .
(Nichols 102)

Spring is, of course, the season of love.²⁰ Hafiz's words express a *joie de vivre*:

It is spring; strive to be happy, for many a rose will flower when you are under ground. QG 456 (tr. Meisami, "Gardens," 167)

Not that Hafiz is an exception in comparison to his peers.

Many *ghazals* featured a brief stylized 'spring song' prelude consisting of a mere verse or two, and greatly resembling similar passages in troubadour poetry; for the courtly *ghazal*, as for the troubadours and *trouveres*, love was the only subject worthy of celebration,..... (Meisami, "Gardens," 159).

Unlike Hafiz, Bernart does not concern himself with the withering of Winter. On the other hand, the troubadour finds joy in the freshness of Spring and identifies with it.

When woods and thickets shoot forth their leaves, and the flowers and the greenery appear throughout the gardens and the meadows, [I too] rejoice and blossom, I am renewed and put forth leaves according to my nature (Nichols 108).

A form of interiorized Spring can be found in the works of both poets, but with a difference. For Hafiz, conscious only too well of the transience of things, the treasures of the garden become permanent once stored in the heart.

Lay up a treasure-store of the hues and scents of Spring, for after it will follow the highway-man of Winter QG 430 (tr. Meisami, "Gardens," 167)

As for Bernart, although Spring may have been the beginning of love, once the fire of passion has become planted in his heart, it operates independently of external circumstances.

My heart is so full of joy that everything seems changed to me : the frost seems like white, red, and yellow flowers (Nichols 171).

The nightingale appears in the poetry of both Hafiz and Bernart, but once again with a difference. For the troubadour, the nightingale's song is associated with the awakening of Nature and is an invitation to love.

When the fresh grass and leaf appear and the flower buds on the branch, and when the nightingale lifts his voice high and clear and sings his song, I rejoice in him, I rejoice in the flower, and I rejoice in myself, and even more in my lady (Nichols 154).

I have heard the shy nightingale's sweet voice, which has leapt into my heart so that it sweetens and lightens all the worry and mistreatment which love gives me (Nichols 105).

In the period when Hafiz wrote his poetry, the nightingale and the rose were conventional types of the lover²⁶ and the beloved respectively (Meisami, "Technique," 20).²⁷

The nightingale thinks only that the rose become his love; the rose thinks only of when she should be coy.

The nightingale learned its song from the rose's grace; it would not have all these songs and poems arranged in its beak. QG 277 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 21)

These last few lines remind us of Bernart's claim that the reason his songs are so good is that he has given himself over completely to love.

And so my singing is superior because I have joy in love and devote my lips and eyes and heart and mind to it (Nichols 81).

Courtly poets, both Bernart and Hafiz draw their inspiration from love.

Not only in theme, but also in form, the *ghazal* and the *canço* share certain similarities, not the least of which is their origin in music.²⁸ Philip Hitti, for example, has suggested that the word troubadour can be traced back to the Arabic root *TRB* (= music, song) (Hitti 562). On the other hand, Alec Robertson argues in favour of the word *tropator* or composed of tropes,²⁹ optional accretions to the liturgy (Robertson 250). Whether the etymon to *tropadour* is Arabic or Latin, or perhaps a confluence of the two, the word clearly indicates a singer of songs, and there is more than adequate manuscript evidence to document that

the versos of Bernart de Ventadorn were sung (Lazar 43-48). With regard to the *ghazal*,

In early periods it is often equivalent to 'song', reflecting the lyric ties with music and its status as sung poem;³⁰ (Meisami, "Persona," 125).

Later on, one distinguished between sung or un-sung *ghazals*, i.e. , *ghazal-i malhun* and *ghazal-i mujarrad* respectively. It was also a question of contrasting rhythmical patterns: a quantitative pattern (*vazn-i 'aruzi* for the un-sung *ghazal* and an accentual rhythm determined by the musical mode (*vazn-i iqa't*) (Meisami, "Persona," 142-143). Another formal consideration lies in the apparent "incoherence" of both lyric forms.

Orientalist criticism of the *ghazal* has often expressed contempt for its stereotyped, conventional diction, its rhetorical complexity, and its apparent formal incoherence (Meisami, "Persona," 125).

The difficulty for the modern reader is that the *ghazal* is composed of a series of epigrammatic distichs (*bayts* or *shi'rs*) which are united by rhyme ([a a] b a , c a, etc.) and "canonical" meters (Skalmowski 16, Pritchett 199). In latter periods the normative length did not generally exceed nine or ten two-line verses (Meisami, "Persona," 125).³¹ Since each line is a complete thought (end-stopped lines), enjambement being forbidden, it may be difficult to ascertain a consistent train of thought (Meisami, "Unity," 117). Thus the *ghazal* may appear in some sense to be "atomistic" or "molecular" (Pritchett 119). Nonetheless, in her analysis of Hafiz's *ghazal*, "Hal-i dil ba tu guftanam havas ast" (Appendix A), Meisami demonstrates that there is indeed an overall structure that gives meaning. In the first 3 two-line verses, Hafiz introduces and develops the motif of love made impossible by the beloved's distance and the impossibility of declaring his love. In the last 3 two-line verses, while seeming to develop the original motif, Hafiz actually introduces the real subject, i. e., poetry itself. There is a climactic final line that makes the main theme explicit and draws a conclusion. The transition comes at midpoint, the 4th two-line verse, with the ambiguous image of "stringing the fine and backwards to love, but also forward to poetry; and it forms a priceless pearl," a frequent metaphor for composing poetry. This verse points a "turn" resembling the "turn" of the sonnet.³² The transition is between love and poetry, different but allied themes. In our study of Guilhem de Cabestanh's *Canso II*, we discovered a "turn" at midpoint of the poem's strophic structure.³³ Here the six strophes are composed of nine verses each, with the fifth central verse mediating a series of antitheses (Appendix B) : Str. I: confusion vs. understanding, Str. II complaint vs. acceptance, Str. III: complaint vs. silence , Str. VI: torment vs. consolation (Thomas. "Point" 163-168). Obviously, this is not a classical, straight-line construction, Whereas the problem with the *ghazal* is the lack of transition,³⁴ the "incoherent" composition of the *troubadour* criticized by Jeanroy and others³⁵ can be explained by the antithetical construction of their poems.³⁶ When it comes to Bernart, Mancini is not wrong in asserting that

“In gioco degli *opposita* trova la sua celebrazione piu perfetta” in Bernart de Ventadorn (Mancini 63).

When we analyzed Bernart’s “Lo tems vai e ven e vire”³⁷ (appendix C), a similar series of antitheses³⁸ was uncovered, but without Guilhem’s mediating verse: Str. I: no action vs. action, Str. II: action vs. reason for action, Str. III: blame vs. punishment, Str. IV: action vs. lack of action, Str. V: present vs. future (negative) action, Str. VI: future (positive action vs. reason for hope, Str. VII: positive vs. negative³⁹ (Thomas, “Artless,” 275-278). There is a veritable polyphony of rivaling viewpoints (Rosenstein 357).⁴⁰ It may well be that this zig-zag internal construction is motivated, at least in part, by the poet’s reactions to the implied audience. Now the singer addresses the sympathetic elements in his audience, now the hostile (Meisami, “Persona,” 134; Golden 6). Once we have a better understanding of the inner workings of the *ghazal* and the *canso*, the charge of “incoherence” is transformed into respectful admiration for the poet’s superlative craft.

As our study has tried to demonstrate, there is not a small number of parallels between the Occitanian *canso* and the Persian *ghazal*. Despite the external trappings of mysticism drawn from Sufism and Christianity, the real emphasis is on human love. Both the troubadour and the Persian courtier use religious language to express erotic emotions. Concentrating on the *ghazals* of Hafiz, we discovered significant similarities to the *versos* of Bernart de Ventadorn. Both poets apotheosized the beloved. Speaking of love in absolute terms, they employ death as a metaphor for love. Paradoxically, the lack of love is also described as a kind of death. The path of the lover is a difficult one because of the beloved’s cruelty. Nonetheless, overcoming the obstacles results in the improvement of the lover. The season of love, Spring is absent neither in the *canso* nor in the *ghazal*. The nightingale appears in Bernart and Hafiz, but with noted differences. With regard to form, it was observed that the *canso* and the *ghazal* have their origins in music. Despite the obvious difference in form and structure, the *verso* and the *ghazal* share the same fate of being unjustly criticized for incoherence. It turned out to be a question of not properly comprehending the underlying poetic structure. There is nothing new in saying that courtly literature is not confined to Europe. However, although we are not totally convinced that “the feelings and conceptions of *amour courtois* are universally possible in any time or place or at any level of society” (Dronke 2), we do nonetheless suggest that it is eminently appropriate for Eurocentric scholars to broaden their horizons in order to better appreciate the courtly literatures of other cultures.

APPENDIX A

1. Oh vain desire ! to tell you my heart's state :
oh vain desire ! to hear of your feelings.
2. Oh vain desire ! to sleep til dawn beside you,
on such a noble and precious Night of Power.
3. Oh vain desire ! to sweep the dust from your path,
for honour's sake, with the tips of my lashes.
4. Ah, what a vain desire ! to string such a fine and priceless pearl, in the dark of night.
5. O Zephyr ! give me aid tonight;
it is my vain desire to flower at dawn.
6. See my callow hope ! desiring in vain
to hide from my rivals a tale exposed.
7. Oh vain desire ! -- to utter, like Hafiz,
in spite of all pretenders, licentious verse.
(M. Shamlu, no. 41, tr. Meisami, "Unity", 132.

APPENDIX B

Never would I have believed that I would abandon frivolous pleasure for Love or song for the joy of love nor would I have ever believed that I would weep for tenderness. *Love holds me tight in her power*⁴¹, for in the beginning she gives me many a sweet pleasure, and I believe that God made me to serve both her and her merit.

If I often complain about the one whom I praise and if I thank her when I should complain, *I do not act deceptively*. The one whom Love ennobles ought to suffer many things : for on many occasions it happens that good conquers evil, as it should be.

A lover who changes his conduct without a good reason should not complain about his sufferings or speak about his sorrow or make his troubles known or praise himself for the good that he receives. There are several who speak this way right off, but they know not the source of joy and displeasure.

I do not know enough of love to speak of it without fear; but I have seen that an excess of laughter does not accompany a great joy, *Many a sigh* has a false air about it. That is why Love directs me as she directs the best, without blame and without fault.

Lady, *willingly command* the most faithful lover who most patiently awaits your pleasure and serves his lady and her worth best of all, command him by your proclamation to do what pleases you. Nothing holds me back but fear⁴².

You torment my thoughts so much that, many a time when I pray, I see you there before me. So vivid is my memory of your fresh colour and *your graceful, perfect body* that I can remember nothing else. From this sweet thought nobility and graciousness come to me.

APPENDIX C

Time comes and goes returning through days, through months, and through mongs, and through years, and I al as know not what to say, for my longing is ever one. It is ever one and does not change, for I want and have wanted one woman, from whom I have never had joy.

Since she does not lose a chance to mock, grief and pain come to me, she has made me sit at such a game that I have the worst two to one until she makes peace. But that love is lost which is maintained by one side only.

In fact I should be the accuser of myself, since there was never born of woman who served so long in vain; and if she does not chastise me for it, I will forever double my madness toward her, for a fool does not fear until he experiences.

I will no longer be a singer or of the school of Lord Eblke, for neither my singing, my voice, nor my melodies do me any good; and no matter what many do or say, I do not know how it may profit me and see no improvement.

Although I make a show of joy, I have great sadness in my heart. Who ever saw more penance done before the sin? The more I explore her the crueller she is to me, but if she does not improve in a short time, there will be a parting.

However, it is well that she subjects me utterly to her will, for, although she unjustly delays things, she will have pity. For so the Scriptures show: a single day of good fortune outweighs more than a hundred others.

Indeed I will not part with my life as long as I am safe and sound, just as after the kernel is gone, the straw flutters a long time. And although she has shown no haste, she will certainly not be blamed by me if only she improves by herself from nor on.

Oh good and desirable love; body well-formed, slender and smooth, fresh and fine-hued flesh which God has fashioned with his hands; I have always desired you, for no other creature pleases me. I want no other love at all.

Sweet, noble creature, may the one who has so friendly formed you give me the joy I hope for. (Nichols 130-131).

Notes and References

1. Need one stress the well-known distinction between *caritas* and *amor*. The former is intellectual, the latter instinctual. *Caritas* is used only of men, whereas *amor* is applied to both men and beasts.
2. "The Mystic Erotic: Carnal Spirituality in Old Provence and Medieval India," *Neohelicon*, XXI, I (1994), 217-246.
3. 9th - 15th centuries A. D.
4. From the perspective of medieval Arabic and Persian poetics the term *ghazal* designates poetry on the subject of love, whether it is found in a lyric wholly devoted to that subject or whether it

- is incorporated into a larger formal structure along with other generic categories. More specifically, the Persian *ghazal* from the twelfth century onward, designates a specific type of lyric which acquired distinctive format features that, combined with content-oriented generic elements, made it a lyric genre from a more Western Point of view (Meisami, "Persona," 125). The more formal aspects of the *ghazal* will be discussed later on in this study.
5. This movement was an emotionally charged devotional worship of a personal deity (Dimock 3-4).
 6. Nizami, or more properly Nizammedin abu Mahammad Ilyas ibn Yusuf, born 1141 A. D., became the creator of the Persian love story (Nizami, *Princesses*, 167-168)
 7. Allegorical exegesis (*ta'wil*) is central to Isma'ilism, which posits an exoteric and an esoteric aspect, a *zahir* and a *batin*, not only for Scripture but for the entire universe, every element of which participates in a complex sign-system (Meisami, "Design," 458). Let us note, in passing, that Persian rhetoric lacks a specific term for allegory comparable to the Western allegoria (Meisami, "Technique," 3).
 8. On the other hand, the axis shifts toward the mystical in two of Nizami's romances. In *Khrusaw and Shirin*, Farhad loves Shirin without expecting her to return his love, unlike Khrusaw who seeks physical satisfaction. The former renounces all worldly attachments and retires to the desert. Upon hearing the false news of Shirin's death, Farhad kisses the earth and dies. In *Layla and Majnun*, despite the fact that Layla is forced to marry Ibn Salam, a marriage which is never consummated, the lovers never commit adultery and are joined only a death. Transcendence is achieved by the lover through love (Southgate, "Anomaly," 47-49). At the same time, there are the poetic works of Sa'di (1213-1292), which vacillate between pornographic pieces on sodomy and mystical passion (Southgate, "Sa'di," 415).
 9. With Hafiz, a Persian court poet, the *ghazal* reaches its peak in the 14th century. His poems combine, on one hand, mastery of the genre's complex conventions, and, on the other, an innovative and personal style unparalleled in his day (Meisami, "Unity," 116).
 10. Hafiz, Divan, ed. Muhammed Qazvini and Qasim Ghani (Tehra, 1320/1941), 342. All citations from Hafiz will be from this edition, except when noted, and will be designated by QG followed by the numbering used by the editors.
 11. It is obvious that an important source of allusive metaphor in Hafiz is religion (Meisami, "Technique," 23).
 12. Some have even suggested that the Occitanian lyric is born from a sexual impasse, from the lack of sexual union (Huchet 103).
 13. A medieval Persian romance written by Khaju-i Kirmani (1281-1361), an older contemporary of Hafiz (Burgel 347).
 14. Examples of a mystical tinge would be:
 - A. Humay's journey, inspired by love, to reach Humayun is a symbol of the soul's journey to God.
 - B. The journey from Sham (Evening) to Khawar (East) is reminiscent of the mystical journey from darkness to light.
 - C. The movement from the capture of cannibals to the ascent to the throne.
 - D. Crossing the sea of fire to conquer the sorcerer's castle.
 - E. Despair and roaming in the desert followed by union with the beloved.
 - F. The motif of renunciation:
 - a. Although a prince, Humay leaves his country to seek Humayun.
 - b. Humay renounces his throne as King after a dream of Humayun urging him to come after her.
 - c. In China, thinking Humayun dead, he forswears his power toward leadership of the army.
 - d. After Humayun's death, he renounces his kingship and retreats into the desert. (Burgel 353-354).
 15. This quality of being a sort of absolute or self-sufficient entity is called in Persian *esteyna* or "Sovereignty" (Skalmowski 590).

16. When Humay first looks upon Humayun, she appears like a supernatural being and he swoons (Burgel 349).
17. Literally "mole."
18. *Domna* usually designated a mature woman of noble rank who is also, in most cases, married (Monsoon, "Lady," 259).
19. All citations of the poetry of Bernart de Ventadorn are from the edition of Moshe Lazar.
20. Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. and John A. Galm et al. ed., *The Songs of Bernart de Ventadorn* (Chapel Hill, NC: Un. of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 108. All further citations will be from this edition and will be indicated in the text with the page number.
21. One remembers the King of Nizami's Story Told by the Greek Princess on Sunday in the Yellow Pavilion of the Sun. Despite the fact that Periru rejects his amorous advances because she claims that "All our women, once they have given their hearts to a man, are destined to die in childbirth" (Nizami, *Princesses*, 52), nonetheless he languishes with desire:
 "You leave my desire unfulfilled, but I find even less peace when I am separated from you . . .
 "(Nizami, *Princesses*, 53).
22. One remembers that moment in *Humay u Humayun* when the prince looks at a picture of Humayun with whom he instantly falls in love (Burgel 384). Then there is Nizami's Story Told by a Moorish Princess on Monday in the Green Pavilion of the Moon. One day, when the wind lifted the veil of a woman and he perceived her face, Bisha the Ascetic falls in love at first sight. He even goes so far as to say: "' Right or wrong — I cannot help it'" (Nizami, *Princesses*, 63). And let us not forget the Story Told by a Russian Princess on Tuesday in the Red Pavilion of Mars, which is the tale of Turandot:
 If her dream-drunk Narcissus eyes glanced at you only once, you became her prisoner for the rest of your life and free men envied you your shackles (Nizami, *Princesses*, 78).
 In addition to the importance of the eyes, Chaire Kappeler investigates the erotic resonance of the image of hair in the poetry of Hafiz (Kappeler, "Chevelure," 9ff).
23. There appears to be a complicated word-play (iham) on the word *Kamaddaran* (bowmen). It may refer to more than one thing: 1. the dangers in life that wait for the lover, 2. the beloved herself whose eyebrows are conventionally compared to curving bows which shoot arrows into the lover's heart, 3. perhaps a whole bevy of beauties to try the lover's steadfastness, or finally, 4. those who blame the lover for his conduct (Meisami, "Technique," 8).
24. Note that in the Chinese *Yu-tai hsin-yung* (*New Songs from a Jade Terrace*), an anthology of love poetry compiled in the middle of the 6th century A.D., the predominant season is autumn. This "Place Style Poetry" deals with postcoital longing, whereas most of Bernart's poems the *verso* glows with pre-coital desire. In the Lazar edition, the 49 *cansos* open with the season of Spring and only two with Autumn.
 Eliza Ghil has demonstrated that this Natureingang is neither a universal way of beginning a *canso* nor is it exclusively characteristic of the *canso* as genre (Ghil 97).
25. As Wendy Pfeffer indicates, the nightingale appears in nearly a quarter of his *cansos* (Pfeffer 210).
26. Bernart does not seem to identify with the nightingale. However, in one of his most famous *versos*, it is apparent that the troubadour desires to be like the lark in its flight toward the sun (= the lady), but her rejection frustrates him.
 Can vei la lauzeta mover de joi sas als contral rai, que s'oblid's.s laisa chazer per la doussor cal cor li vai. ai! tan grans enveya mèn ve de cui quéu veja jauzion, meravilhas ai, car desse lo cor de dezirer no'm fon. (vv. 1-8)
 When I see the lark beat his wings for joy against the sun's ray, until, for the sheer delight which goes to his heart, he forgets to fly and plummets down, then great envy of those whom I see filled with happiness comes to me. I marvel that my heart does not melt from desire (Nichols 167-168).
27. In Hafiz's metaphorical system, the nightingale unites courtly lover, poet and *rind* (Meisami, "Gardens," 252). The *rind* was one who abhorred hypocrisy by flouting convention (Meisami, "Unity," 133, n. 29).

28. One may wonder at the fact that Humay, Ramin (*of Gurgani's Wis u Ramin*), and Tristan are all musicians (Burgel 352).
29. Matthew C. Stell has shown how Bernart's melodies are strongly associated with liturgical chant style and modal theory (Steel 246ff).
30. One recalls the Latin *carmen*, which can mean song or poem: *carmen* < *canmen*, the root *can* - being the same as we have in *canere*, to sing.
31. Other formal features of the *ghazal* include:
1. the observance of a single metrical and rhyme throughout (typical of both Arabic and Persian lyric)
 2. an obligatory initial rhyming distich (*the matla'*)
 3. the incorporation of the poet's *takhallus* or pen name, in the final or penultimate line
 4. Its structure is typically paratactic. (Meisami., "Persona," 125)
- As to Bernart de Ventadorn, the structure of most of his *cançons* conform to the troubadour tradition of the twelfth century, i.e., 5 to 7 strophes of 7 to 8 verses with a *tornada* of 2 to 5 verses at the end (Lazar 28-30). Nathaniel B. Smith has observed that Bernart's lack of parallelism is compensated for by a high density of sound repetition (Smith 220).
32. For a provocative comparison of Hafiz's *ghazals* and Shakespeare's sonnets, see Wojciech Skalmowski, Hafiz and Shakespeare: An East West Encounter, "*Paperes in Honor of professor Mary Boyce* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 583-591.
33. It has been noted that the "ship" of Bernart's *canço* "Tant ai mo cor ple de joya" is found in the middle of the poem (Str. IV) and marks a turning point between hope and despair (Monson, "Tristan," 390).
34. A comparison with the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud seems appropriate here. One of the difficulties with understanding Symbolist poetry also lies in the lack of transition.
35. Alfred Jeanroy, *La Poesie lyrique des Troubadours* (Paris: Didier, 1934), II, 113-114; James J. Wilhelm, *The Cruellest Month: Spring, Nature and Love in Classical and Medieval Lyrics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 155-171; Stephen G. Nichols, Jr., "Towards An Aesthetic of the Provençal *Canço*," in *The Disciplines of Criticism: Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation, and History*, eds. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 352-353.
36. It seems that this misunderstanding is at the base of Aletti's criticism of Bernart's moral "incoherence" as opposed to Chrestien de Troyes whose characters' behaviour is more coherent (Aletti 112).
37. This *canço* is composed of 8 strophes of 7 verses, plus a *tornada* of 3 lines.
38. The first half of the antithesis is composed of four verses, the second half of three.
39. The *tornada* in IX. 57-59 simply echoes the positive aspect of Str. VIII.
40. Compare the "principle binaire" that Imre Szabics discovered in her analysis of "Can I'erba fresch e lh folha par" (Szabics 247). In her comparison of the poetry of Catullus and Bernart, Marilyn Desmond discovered a binary opposition expressing contradictory emotions (Desmond 407).
41. All mediating verses are italicized.
42. When it comes to Str. V, we have preferred the reading of Langfors to that of Cots because it conforms more to the overall structure of the *canço* (Thomas, "Point," 166).

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