Flirting with the Radical: Intertextuality, Intervisuality, and Gendered Subversions in Manuscripts of *Sūz u Gudāz*

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Abstract

This essay focuses on a corpus of eight mid- to late eleventh-/seventeenth-century illustrated manuscripts of the poem *Sūz u Gudāz* by the poet Naw'ī (d. c. 1019/1610). The text describes the struggle of a Hindu maiden, whose fiancé has died, to commit *satī* on his funeral pyre despite the interventions of various figures in her life. The essay discusses how later Safavid painters adapted and transformed established pictorial compositions associated with *maṣnavīs* from the *Khamseh* ("Quintet") of Neẓāmī to illustrate Naw'ī's poem, reflecting its status as a *javāb* (pointed response) to Neẓāmīan romances. The illustrators often altered the compositional models to draw attention to the gendered dimensions of Naw'ī's subversive poetics.

Keywords

illustrated manuscripts – Persian painting – Safavid art – intertextuality – intervisuality – *javāb* – gender – Naw'ī

Poetry and painting are intimately connected forms of cultural expression in premodern Perso-Islamic painting. Evidence for this interconnectivity is found in the pictorial formats most commonly examined by historians of Persian art – manuscript illustration, a genre ontologically anchored in literary texts; and single-sheet paintings and drawings, whose subject matter frequently alludes to canonical literary-pictorial themes and could be further glossed by verses conjoined to them when mounted in an album. Although art historical examinations of Persianate text-image relations have traditionally privileged the utility of pictures in giving visual form to their physically proximate or referent texts (Roxburgh, 2003: 5), scholars since the 1970s have devoted increased attention to less descriptive facets of the text-image nexus, including shared concepts underpinning pictorial and literary creativity as well as the negotiation of hermeneutic agency between pictures and texts.² Nonetheless, such aspects remain insufficiently studied. This limitation, rooted in part in a persistent taxonomic distinction between literature and visual art, has tended to obstruct the formulation of critical questions surrounding the conceptualization, development, and evolution of text-image relations in regions where Persian was a primary literary language. These questions include whether the image's contingency upon, or autonomy from, text is a useful model for the Persian pictorial arts,³ and to what extent diachronic and synchronic patterns may be discerned in the staging and reception of the text-image interface, particularly in the arts of the book.

FIGURE 1
 “Yūsuf Fleeing the Advances of
 Zulaikha,” from a *Bustān* of Sa’dī
 manuscript, Herat, 893/1488, Dār
 al-Kutub, Cairo, Adab farisī 22,
 fol. 52b
 © AKG-IMAGES / PICTURES
 FROM HISTORY

An aspect of text-image relations in Persian illustrated manuscripts that has come increasingly into focus is the potential for pictures in books to exceed their basic illustrative function through the incorporation of visual elements that may, upon first glance, seem unrelated to the text at hand but that index other works of literature, prompting an intertextual reading.⁴ In this way, illustrations could function as visual glosses similar to textual commentaries. In mediating meaning between two or more texts using visual forms, artists signaled their familiarity with the dialogic, cumulative, and inherently intertextual quality of classical Persian poetry: in that tradition, poets often deployed polyvalent imagery developed over centuries and adapted thematic and structural characteristics from the works of earlier masters to forge a conversation with the past and build upon the tradition.

Such intertextual performativity was indicated by Golombek (1972) in a foundational analysis of the renowned illustration of “Yūsuf Fleeing the Advances of Zulaikha” by the artist Behzād, appearing in a manuscript of the *Bustān* of Sa’dī (d. c. 690–1/1291–2) completed in Herat in 893/1488 (Fig. 1). The illustration, with its intricate depiction

of Zulaikha's pleasure-palace, was not inspired by the text at hand – Sa'dī's description of the seduction – but by a later and significantly longer version of the tale by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492); the latter text includes, among other details reflected in Behzād's painting, a description of the palace's luxurious complexity.⁵ Behzād's erudite manipulation of text, intertext, and image would have appealed to the circle of learned sophisticates (including Jāmī himself) at the late Timurid Herat court of Solṭan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (r. 873–5/1469–70 and 875–91/1470–1506),⁶ where the manuscript was produced. Recent studies by Chad Kia (2019) and Lamia Balafrej (2019) have drawn greater attention to the hermeneutic agency of manuscript illustration in that particular milieu. Kia suggests that the practice of infusing manuscript illustrations with “excessive” elements to prompt intertextual readings expanded beyond the intellectually rarified late Timurid court of Herat to successor milieux, such as the courtly centers of sixteenth-century Safavid Iran. Two questions that the present study will address are whether such practices enjoyed an even wider appeal and whether they were ever modified or elaborated upon.

Transformations in the visual and literary arts during the Safavid period (1501–1722), particularly after the establishment of Isfahan as the Safavids' third and final capital in 1598, suggest that both questions may be answered in the affirmative. The Isfahan phase of Safavid rule witnessed the culmination of a half-century-long process of decentralization in artistic patronage and production: sponsorship expanded beyond royal and princely courts to include regional governors, merchants, and members of the intellectual and artistic classes; and artists practiced their trade with greater independence than before, often working for more than one patron at a given time. One effect of these shifts was the proliferation of works tailored to the economic means of a wider patronage base, and thus produced at far less expense than a courtly illustrated manuscript. These included manuscripts made with less costly materials as well as independent paintings and drawings executed on single sheets of paper (Farhad, 1987). Though less extravagant in production, the conceptual and expressive complexity of these works often rivaled that of deluxe illustrated manuscripts.⁷

In the literary sphere, the practice of novel poetic styles that diverged from the classical “Khurasani” and “Iraqi” modes of New Persian verse became widespread.⁸ The most prominent of these new styles was known to its practitioners and enthusiasts as *shīveh-ye tāzeh* or “the fresh style.” Its introduction is usually credited to Bābā Faghānī, who flourished in the late ninth/fifteenth and early tenth/sixteenth centuries; however, it became particularly popular by the eleventh/seventeenth century across all regions where Persian was a principal literary language, including Iran, Central Asia, the Ottoman Empire, and the Indian subcontinent.⁹ It was in the last of these regions where many *tāzeh-gūyan* (“speakers of the fresh”) achieved success, leading critics of later centuries to refer to this style as *sabk-e hendī*, or “the Indian style,” even though many practitioners living in Isfahan and other Iranian centers were highly celebrated in their day.

A chief concern of fresh-style poets was to breathe life into what they viewed as a stagnant poetic tradition by creating innovative, conceptually and linguistically startling verses (Losensky, 1998: 195–203).¹⁰ Nonetheless, as the literary historian Paul Losensky has shown, certain elements of past tradition – such as the intertextual allusion to past masters' work through the selective adaptation (or “imitation”) of theme, phrasing, rhyme, and meter – were well suited to this goal and remained potent devices. By the ninth/fifteenth century, critics wrote of a variety of imitative genres known by different terms and having subtle functional distinctions (Losensky, 1998: 105–14). The most neutral was *naẓīreh-gūī*, “speaking the similar,” in which “there are no indications of how or to what extent [the model poem and its imitation] resemble one another”

(Losensky, 1998: 112). Another term, *tatabbu'*, broadly signifies “writing a poem using the same rhyme and meter as an earlier one”; however, it specifically connotes willfully imitating a model with “diligence and effort” (Losensky, 1998: 109). *Javāb-gū'ī*, “speaking the response,” posits an answer or solution to a problem that the imitator has identified in a well-known model; here, the imitation generates a “careful and reasoned debate across time” (Losensky, 1998: 112). For practitioners of the fresh style, *javāb-gū'ī* may have been particularly relevant, activating an intertextual dialogue with the past that was at turns deferential and critical, in line with their goals of refreshment (Losensky, 1998: 211–12). In other words, the fresh style was more than just an assemblage of innovative rhetorical devices, but a posture toward the Persian literary tradition – that is, a poetics rather than a style.¹¹

In recent decades, historians of Persian art have attempted to correlate innovations in later Safavid painting, particularly the emergence and proliferation of new visual trends such as *farangī-sāzī* (the “Europeanizing” mode), with cutting-edge literary impulses like the fresh style, to posit a broad “spirit of innovation” that transected creative fields (Babaie, 2001: 153; Farhad, 2001: 123–4, n34; Landau, 2006: 197–8, n532, 266; Rizvi, 2012: 240; Uluç, 2010: 48–50). Their emphasis upon stylistic novelty in both literature and depiction however, overlooks the fact that “speaking the fresh” was more than just a style marked by novel linguistic devices; it was a conceptual ethos, defined in large measure by its critical and inherently intertextual engagement with the past. The present study explores whether these features of fresh-style poetics inflected visual creativity in later Safavid Iran. Illustrated manuscripts of fresh-style poetry may be sites where such potential points of convergence between poetics and depiction can be discerned.

Among the most widely illustrated fresh-style texts is *Sūz u Gudāz* (“Burning and Melting”), a romantic *masnavī* completed around the year 1010/1600 by the poet Naw'ī of Khabūshān.¹² An Iranian by birth, Naw'ī composed *Sūz u Gudāz* in India and dedicated it to the Mughal emperor Akbār (r. 963/1556–1014/1605).¹³ His tale focuses on an anonymous Hindu woman living under Mughal rule, who resolves to commit *satī* (ritual self-immolation) on the funeral pyre of her fiancé even as members of her community and even Akbār himself attempt to dissuade her. Despite the poem's Indian origin and theme, only one known copy of the text was illustrated in a Mughal center (British Library, Or. 2839).¹⁴ In contrast, five illustrated copies may be ascribed to mid- to late eleventh-/seventeenth-century Iran based principally on stylistic evidence. Additional paintings and tinted drawings, surviving today as independent folios, indicate that several more later Safavid-era illustrated copies of Naw'ī's text were either planned but left incomplete, or executed and then dismembered. A small number of other contemporary pictorial works produced in Iran, including a well-known mural in Isfahan's Chehel Sotūn Palace, also appear to refer to the story.¹⁵ The quantity of these surviving materials suggests that Naw'ī's poem achieved its greatest acclaim in Safavid rather than Mughal domains.

Prior to the twenty-first century, illustrated *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscripts sparked limited interest among art historians. Massumeh Farhad (2001) marks the first sustained, synthetic examination of the corpus. Farhad divided five of the manuscripts into two groups based on their illustrative style and suggested a propagandistic rationale for the proliferation of such volumes, based on a theory first proposed by Sussan Babaie with respect to the Chehel Sotūn mural – namely, that it was intended to symbolize the Safavids' watershed military victory over the Mughals at Qandahār in 1059/1649 (Babaie, 1994a: 136–7). Farhad, in turn, reasoned that the abundance of contemporary illustrated copies of *Sūz u Gudāz* reflects an appetite among later Safavid-era consumers to possess their own symbolic “souvenirs” of the Qandahār conquest (Farhad, 2001: 126).

In a similar vein, detailed literary analysis of Naw'ī's text has only been undertaken in recent decades. Dismissing earlier interpretations of the poem as a Sufi allegory, Sunil Sharma (2010) has drawn particular attention to *Sūz u Gudāz* as a paradigm of the fresh style, noting the poem's novel setting (contemporary Mughal India) and startling theme (the "strange and exotic" practice of *satī* among Hindus).¹⁶ Sharma has additionally situated *Sūz u Gudāz* within a tradition of courtly *maṣnavīs* composed in "imitation" of the *Khamseh* ("Quintet") of the poet Neẓāmī (d. 605/1209).¹⁷ Since the classical *maṣnavī* genre, exemplified by Neẓāmī's poems, was "particularly associated with the topic of courtly ethics" and attends to "themes of kingship and justice,"¹⁸ Sharma has characterized *Sūz u Gudāz* as an attempt to refresh this traditional poetic genre by addressing contemporary issues – that is, how a Muslim ruler like Akbār should dispense justice among his Hindu subjects, some of whose practices are anathema to Islamic law (including *satī*, considered a form of mutilation and suicide). For Sharma, the poem's novel qualities accentuate the continued relevance of an ancient ethics of kingship in the contemporary Mughal context. In a subsequent essay, he follows Babaie and Farhad to suggest that the political significance of the poem's composition was mirrored in its purported propagandistic use in later Safavid art (Sharma, 2013: 150–1).

While these studies have elucidated critical aspects of *Sūz u Gudāz* as a(n illustrated) text, several questions remain with respect to its status as a celebrated specimen of fresh-style poetics. Two particular questions at the core of the present study are to what extent the text's poetological elements – including its intertextuality as an "imitation" after Neẓāmīan models – shaped both its popularity and its visual expression in later Safavid Iran, and how this might advance our understanding of the hermeneutic field forged in the imbrication of text and image in Persianate culture.

1 Naw'ī and *Sūz u Gudāz*¹⁹

Muḥammad Reẓā Naw'ī (b. 961/1553–4 or 970/1562–3, d. 1018 or 1019/1609–11) was born in the Khurasani town of Khabūshān (present-day Qūchān). He was raised by his father, a merchant who conducted business in both Safavid Iran and Mughal India. Some *taẓkerehs* report that while still a youth Naw'ī and his father moved to Kāshān, then Iran's main literary hub.²⁰ There, Naw'ī is said to have studied poetry with Kamāl al-Dīn Moḥtasham Kāshānī (d. 996/1588), arguably the most celebrated living Persian poet at the time.²¹ If these reports are true, then it may be assumed that Moḥtasham's central role within the literary avant-garde of late tenth-/sixteenth-century Iran shaped the tastes of his pupil.²²

At the age of seventeen, Naw'ī moved to Gujarat with his father and then returned to Khurasan. Soon after his father's death, Naw'ī once again left for the Indian sub-continent, but instead of plying the family trade he decided to work as a poet. He was initially retained by the Mashhadi *sayyid* and Mughal emir Mīrzā Yūsof Khān Reẓāwī, first in Lahore and then Kashmir, where Mīrzā Yūsof Khān was appointed governor in 995/1587. During this period, Naw'ī built his reputation as a master of the fresh style. Around 1010/1600, Mīrzā Yūsof Khān died, and the poet entered the service of the Mughal emperor Akbār's son, Dāniyāl, who was then serving as governor of the Deccan. Naw'ī probably composed his two best-known poems in long form, a *Sāqīnāmeḥ* and *Sūz u Gudāz*, as a member of the prince's Burhanpur court. Following Dāniyāl's death in the spring of 1013/1605, Naw'ī was accepted into the circle of Dāniyāl's father-in-law, the Mughal grandee Mirza 'Abd al-Raḥīm Khānkhānān, who was also a poet and a major patron of the arts in Burhanpur. Naw'ī died within the decade.

Composed in *hazaj* meter, and about six hundred couplets in length,²³ *Sūz u Gudāz* opens with conventional prolegomena, including praises to God and the Prophet; odes to springtime and *nawrūz*;²⁴ a brief account of the commissioning of the poem by Prince Dāniyāl; and an encomium to the reigning monarch Akbār.²⁵ The prolegomena are followed by the main narrative, which occupies most of the text. The poem closes with a brief epilogue,²⁶ featuring a debate between a salamander and a fish over who is the truer lover.²⁷

Although a generic conceit of the courtly *maṣnavī*, and therefore only moderately reliable as a document of the circumstances surrounding the poem's composition, the third section of the prolegomena – the commission account – is a critical passage of the text where Naw'ī establishes his poetic goals. Naw'ī writes that he was interrupted at home one evening by a messenger summoning him to court (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 292–5). Ushered to the royal audience with much fanfare, he becomes overwhelmed by the luxury of the setting, and in a fit of bewilderment he prostrates himself before “Prince Dāniyāl.” The prince lifts the poet up, addressing him as the “scion of the Brahmins of Love [poetry]” (*ay barhaman-zād-e maḥabbat*) (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 295; translation mine), and then launches into a speech lambasting the romances of yore: “Old love songs irritate the soul / [Like] shards of glass poured into lovers' wounds” (*navā-hā-ye kohan khāṭir kharāshīd / be-zakhm-e āsheqān almās pāshīd*) (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 295; translation mine).²⁸ In reference to hackneyed tropes of Persian poetry, he asks how many more stories about nightingales and moths listeners must suffer, and then complains that “the tale of Farhād and Shīrīn has become old / like a spent pleasure or last year's calendar. / There is nothing left of Lailī except a name / Nothing of Majnūn but empty words.” Since “the old love songs are best left unheard,” he enjoins the poet to “speak first of what you have seen ... [and] refresh poetry with ‘speaking-the-fresh’ (*tāzeh-gūī*)” (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 295; translation mine).

“Dāniyāl” then invites the poet to consider the admirable, if strange (*‘ajab*), “fire-worshipping” customs (*ātash-parastī*) that occur at Hindu temples. One of these is cremation, which “Dāniyāl” describes as purifying the “light of the soul” (*cherāgh-e rūhī*) by separating it from the “body of clay” (*jesm-e khākī*). Another is *satī*, a custom in which the prince perceives the “brave” (*javān-mardāneh*) demonstration of Hindu women's commitment to love (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 295–6).²⁹ “Dāniyāl” then presses the poet to write a tale based on what he has seen: “O Naw'ī, no one can rest easy [when afflicted] with love. / The more you speak about these things, the more we can recover from love ... / Make our ears happy with fresh speech / So that the old stories are forgotten” (*kasī Naw'ī chanīn āsāyad az ‘eshq / az īn-hā har cheh gūī āyad az ‘eshq ... / be-ḥarf-e tāzeh'ī khorram konī gūsh / keh tarikh-e kohan gardad farāmūsh*) (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 296; translation mine).³⁰ Inspired by the prince's fervent appeal – which is likened to the Quranic revelation – Naw'ī returns home to compose a “fresh” romance.

Thus, in using “Prince Dāniyāl” as a mouthpiece, Naw'ī frames the main narrative that ensues as an exemplar of the fresh style, explaining that his goal is to supplant the banal allegories and romances of the Perso-Islamic tradition with a new tale about strange and exotic Hindu customs.³¹

The main narrative of *Sūz u Gudāz* centers on an ill-fated young Hindu couple in Mughal India. These characters remain anonymous throughout, and are referred to only generically as *pesar* (son/youth) and *dokhtar* (daughter/maiden). In this study, they will be called “the Youth” and “the Maiden.” The two characters fall in love as infants. Holding secret and open meetings with one another, their desire grows steadily over their childhood; however, they do not act upon it. After ten years, they decide to marry. The Youth seeks the permission of his father, threatening to convert to Islam and to commit sundry blasphemies if he is not allowed. His father gives his blessing the same

day and sends a messenger to the Maiden and her family, announcing his consent to the union. In a fit of joy, the Maiden has herself adorned by attendants and then tells her mother the good news. Her family prepares a lavish celebration and commissions an astrologer to augur an auspicious hour for the nuptials (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 298–304).

Meanwhile, the Youth starts out for his betrothed's family home for the wedding celebrations but is haunted by a presentiment of ill-fortune. En route, he rests in a foreboding alleyway surrounded by buildings weakened by rain. Simultaneously, trumpets and drums announce his arrival, causing the structures to collapse. He is killed in this accident. His companions seek out his corpse from amidst the rubble, their eyes likened to the pickaxe of Farhād, the tragic sculptor from Neẓāmī's *Khosraw and Shīrīn*. Once found, the Youth's body is placed upon a funeral bier. The Maiden soon arrives at the scene. Seeing her beloved's corpse, she rends her garments in grief and becomes senseless and inconsolable. At that moment, she decides to commit *satī* on the Youth's funeral pyre (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 304–8).

Brahmin elders of the community attempt to dissuade the Maiden but their efforts only stoke her ire. She denounces them and any others (including her own mother) who might try to stop her:

No person has control over any other person's life.
Is my life not my own? Is it not the life of a person? ...
My heart is thirsty, and I am fed up with life.
If not fire – then poison or the sword.

NAW'Ī, 1374/1995: 307–8; translation mine

Catching wind of the story, the emperor Akbār decides to intervene: from his perspective as a Muslim, suicide is forbidden. He summons her to court and endeavors to sway her from her decision by offering a life of luxury, adoption as his own child, and even marriage as his *rānī* (Hindu queen). The Maiden is unresponsive, repeating only the word “burning” (*sokhtan*) to herself (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 309–11). Akbār grants the Maiden leave but then privately urges his son Dāniyāl to make a final effort to dissuade her. He advises the prince to becoming intimately united with the Maiden (“like milk and sugar,” *chūn shīr u shekār*) as he accompanies her to the pyre: “If you see her softening, be her companion. / And if not, stand over her head just like the fire” (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 311–12; translation mine).

A crowd gathers to watch Dāniyāl and the Maiden's procession. Taking the cue from his father, the prince tries to calm her fervor by flirtatiously reciting the love songs of yore. Such “worship of the old tales” (*afsūn-parastī*) only provokes her outrage. Reaching the pyre, the prince once again tries to discourage the Maiden, but she remains unmoved. Bidding farewell to all, she enters the flames, at first lifting the head of the Youth's corpse into her lap, and then reclining against him. Face to face with her beloved, she delivers a final monologue while being consumed in the flames (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 312–15).³²

Naw'ī closes the main narrative with a set of verses comparing the true bravery of this Hindu Maiden with the shameful existence of men, asking God to free him from the base condition of “manliness” (*mardi*) by setting fire to his thoughts in the hope of renewal (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 315–16).

Scholars have acknowledged that Naw'ī composed *Sūz u Gudāz* in “imitation” of Neẓāmī's *maṣnavīs* (Farhad, 2001; Sharma, 2010); however, given the fact, observed above, that diverse forms of imitation in Persian poetry served subtly different purposes, further precision is necessary. For his poem, Naw'ī adapted the meter (*hazaj*) as well as various structural and thematic elements from two of Neẓāmī's romantic

maṣnavīs – *Khosraw and Shīrīn* and *Lailī and Majnūn*.³³ As the above summary indicates, he continually alerts his reader to the fact that *Sūz u Gudāz* was modeled on Neẓāmī's poems by peppering his narrative with intertextual references; for example, by mentioning Farhād's pickaxe and Lailī and Majnūn during the incident of the Youth's death, or, more implicitly, by alluding to Majnūn's monomaniacal repetition of Lailī's name in his description of the Maiden's audience before Akbār, when she repeats the sole word *sokhtan*.³⁴ However, since Naw'ī also identifies *Khosraw and Shīrīn* and *Lailī and Majnūn* in the commission account as *partes pro toto* of the very literary tradition that he seeks to upend, he establishes from the onset that *Sūz u Gudāz* was not merely a neutral imitation (*naẓīreh*) of Neẓāmī's romances, but a deliberate and transformative response (*javāb*) to them. Whether later Safavid-era illustrators of the poem were cognizant of these poetological throughlines may be gauged by examining the extant visual materials.

2 Illustrated *Sūz u Gudāz* Manuscripts of Later Safavid Iran³⁵

Four intact illustrated manuscripts of *Sūz u Gudāz* produced in later Safavid Iran are known to survive:

1. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Suppl. Persan 769
2. Chester Beatty Library, Per 268
3. Chester Beatty Library, Per 269
4. Walters Art Museum, W.649

A fifth manuscript contains both *Sūz u Gudāz* as well as a *Farhād and Shīrīn* by the poet Jamāl al-Dīn 'Orfī of Shiraz (d. 999/1591).³⁶

5. National Library of Israel, MS. Yahuda Ar. 1067

In addition to these intact examples, three stylistically discrete clusters of independent illustrated folios carrying *Sūz u Gudāz* verses may have once been prepared for or extracted from intact manuscripts:

6. The Israel Museum *Sūz u Gudāz*³⁷
7. The Cairo University *Sūz u Gudāz*³⁸
8. The "Three-Column" *Sūz u Gudāz*³⁹

As a group, the manuscripts suffer from a dearth of internal documentation. Most of them lack any record of their contexts of production, and none contains explicit evidence of a site of manufacture. The manuscript with the most complete internal documentation is Walters Art Museum W.649, whose colophon records a date (1 Ṣafar 1068/8 November 1657), the name of its scribe ('Ebādollah b. Sayyid Morād al-Ḥosaynī), and that it was made "as a memento" (*bar sabīl-e yādgarī*) for its recipient (Muḥammad 'Alī, "the painter, the Mashhadi").⁴⁰ The pictorial components of the other manuscripts may be roughly assigned, based on style, to the decades around the mid-eleventh/seventeenth century as well (c. 1140s/1630s–1070s/1660s), that is, within a couple generations after the poem's composition.

Another manuscript, CBL Per 269, contains the name of a scribe, 'Abd al-Rashīd, possibly referring to the renowned Iranian calligrapher 'Abd al-Rashīd Daylamī (d. 1081/1670–1) who spent much of his career in the service of Mughal patrons. If CBL Per 269's scribal signature is "authentic," then its calligraphy may have been executed in India and later illustrated in Iran. A more plausible scenario, however, is that the name 'Abd al-Rashīd was used by another scribe working in the Safavid realm.⁴¹ Given the particular subject matter of *Sūz u Gudāz* as well as 'Abd al-Rashīd's fame, the scribe may have adopted this name as a way to brand his work as Indian: in the later Safavid period, a certain cachet was attached to such "exoticism," as is suggested not only in the

prevalence of foreign themes in fresh-style poetry,⁴² but also by the “Indianizing” styles and motifs that typify the work of several Persian painters of the era, such as Bahrām Sofrehkesh and Shaikhī ‘Abbāsī.⁴³ It may therefore be hypothesized ‘Abd al-Rashīd’s name was signed to CBL Per 269 in an effort to boost its cultural (and perhaps monetary) value. Furthermore, the fact that the colophon lacks the name of a patron or dedicatee may indicate that the manuscript was produced for open sale.

The eight manuscripts exhibit a varying degree of illustrative quality and finish. At one end of the spectrum are the skillfully drawn, fully painted, and heavily gilded paintings of CBL Per 268 (e.g., Figs. 8 and 11); at the other end are the lightly tinted illustrations of the Cairo University cluster, whose draftsmanship is comparatively inexpert. This material evidence, along with the patronage of one of the manuscripts by a painter (Walters Art Museum W.649) and the possibility that another (CBL Per 269) was made on spec, suggests that *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscripts were produced for consumers of various economic means, and that its appeal transected social and class distinctions.⁴⁴

Fifteen themes or episodes from *Sūz u Gudāz* are illustrated in the corpus:

1. The Poet Prostrates Himself before Dāniyāl
2. The Worship of Fire
3. The Youth and Maiden Long for Union*
4. The Youth and His Father
5. The Maiden and Her Attendants
6. The Maiden and Her Mother
7. Pre-Nuptial Celebrations*
8. The Death of the Youth
9. The Funeral Procession
10. Elders Attempt to Dissuade the Maiden
11. The Maiden’s Audience before Akbār
12. Dāniyāl Escorts the Maiden to the Pyre
13. The Maiden Bids Farewell to Dāniyāl*
14. The Preparation of the Pyre*
15. The *Satī*

The four themes marked with asterisks above occur uniquely in single manuscripts. The remaining eleven themes are illustrated in more than one copy. No single manuscript contains an illustrative suite with all fifteen themes, and each suite differs from the others. Moreover, as noted earlier, the manuscripts may be roughly divided into two groups based on variations in their visual properties.⁴⁵ Together, this evidence suggests that an illustrative tradition for Naw’ī’s poem had yet to solidify by the time that manuscript copies with pictures proliferated in Iran.

3 Illustrating *Sūz u Gudāz*

Absent an illustrative tradition for *Sūz u Gudāz*, how did later Safavid illustrators develop their compositions for this recently minted text? Similar challenges confronted Shirazi painters of the second half of the tenth/sixteenth century. A text frequently illustrated by these artists was *Majāles al-‘oshshāq* (“Assemblies of Lovers”), composed by the late Timurid-era courtier and writer Kamāl al-Dīn Gāzorgāhī, containing a series of anecdotes about the love affairs of renowned mythical and historical personages. Like *Sūz u Gudāz*, *Majāles al-‘oshshāq* was composed in a place and period (Herat in 909/1503–4) remote from the context in which it was most prolifically illustrated (Shiraz between the 950s/1550s and 990s/1580s). Lale Uluç (2006) has written that Shirazi painters developed illustrations for Gāzorgāhī’s text by adapting conventional models whenever

possible, including generic enthronement and *majles* (courtly gathering) scenes, as well as standard compositions associated with canonical romances (Uluç, 2006: 183–223). Moreover, Marianna Shreve Simpson (2010) has shown that beginning in the 990s/1580s, painters in the same center adopted a similar expediency when illustrating Iskandar's visit to the Ka'ba in copies of Ferdawsī's *Shāhnāme*, a theme that had fallen out of favor in illustrated copies of the epic by the 890s/1490s: without a direct model to draw upon, Shirazi illustrators repurposed long established compositions of other Ka'ba scenes, including "Majnūn at the Ka'ba" from Neẓāmī's *Lailī and Majnūn* (Simpson, 2010: 141–5). The practice of Shirazi illustrators may be useful to bear in mind when considering the emergence of an illustrative tradition for *Sūz u Gudāz* a century later.

An episode from *Sūz u Gudāz* that seems unlikely to have had a relevant Persian pictorial model is the Maiden's *satī* on her beloved's funeral pyre, one of the most frequently illustrated subjects in the corpus, occurring in seven out of the eight manuscripts.⁴⁶ Although references to the practice of *satī* occur in Persian poetry from as early as the late seventh/thirteenth or early eighth/fourteenth centuries, it only later enjoyed some popularity as a theme, particularly in Mughal India (Sharma, 2010: 260). Lacking a solid literary foundation, *satī* never developed into a Persian pictorial theme; Naw'ī's later Safavid illustrators had to develop compositions for his story's dramatic denouement from whole cloth.

Two compositional formats were used by illustrators of "The *Satī*." Adopting a bird's-eye perspective, illustrations in the first format (W.649, ms. Yahuda Ar. 1067, and the Israel Museum and "Three-Column" clusters) show the Maiden lying on top of the corpse of her beloved in the center of a pile of logs, engulfed by an enormous

FIGURE 2
"The *Satī*," from a *Sūz u Gudāz*
manuscript, Iran, 1068/1657,
Walters Art Museum, W. 649,
fol. 19b

© THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM,
BALTIMORE

FIGURE 3
 “Shīrīn’s Suicide,” from a
 manuscript of the *Khamseh*,
 Tabriz, ca. 1505, The Keir
 Collection of Islamic Art on loan
 to the Dallas Museum of Art,
 K.1.2014.739
 © IMAGE COURTESY OF THE
 DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART

conflagration; groups of mourners are gathered below (Fig. 2). These compositional features immediately recall an earlier pictorial precedent, namely, depictions of Shīrīn’s suicide on the funeral bier of Khosraw in manuscripts of Neẓāmī’s *Khosraw and Shīrīn* (Fig. 3).⁴⁷ Illustrations in the second “*Satī*” format (Suppl. Persan 769, CBL Per 269) take a different approach (Fig. 4). Here, the composition’s foreground and background are divided diagonally by a hillock: in the foreground, the Maiden enters the flaming bed of logs upon which the Youth’s corpse rests, with attendants at the side; in the background, a mounted “Prince Dāniyāl” and his companions are arrayed along the upper edge of the hillock, peering down upon the events unfolding below. Once again, these compositional features recall an antecedent, namely, depictions of “Khosraw Spies Shīrīn Bathing” (Fig. 5), another frequently illustrated theme in manuscripts of Neẓāmī’s *Khosraw and Shīrīn*: by the ninth/fifteenth century, the formula of a mounted Khosraw covertly gazing down upon a seminude Shīrīn as she washes herself in a pool, divided diagonally by an interceding hillock, was well established for depictions of this theme.⁴⁸ (The seventh illustration of “The *Satī*,” in the Cairo University Museum cluster, fuses elements from both compositional formats.)⁴⁹

The use of established visual models may have been a practical method for illustrating a text that lacked a defined pictorial repertoire. However, the fact that illustrations of “The *Satī*” are modeled on compositions specifically linked with *Khosraw and Shīrīn* – a point overlooked in previous scholarship – is of heightened interest since Nawī composed *Sūz u Gudāz* as a *javāb* to Neẓāmī’s romances. It seems plausible that such visual borrowings were meant to prompt recognition of the intertextual relationship between

FIGURE 4
 "The Satī," from a *Sūz u Gudāz*
 manuscript, Iran, mid-seventeenth
 century, Chester Beatty Library,
 CBL Per 269, fol. 26a
 © THE TRUSTEES OF THE
 CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY,
 DUBLIN

FIGURE 5
 "Khosraw Spies Shirin Bathing,"
 from a *Khamseh* of Neẓāmī
 manuscript, Tabriz, first half of the
 sixteenth century, British Library,
 Or. 2265, fol. 53b
 © BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD

FIGURE 6
 “The Youth and Maiden Long
 for Union,” from a *Sūz u Gudāz*
 manuscript, Iran, mid-seventeenth
 century, Chester Beatty Library,
 CBL Per 269, fol. 10b
 © THE TRUSTEES OF THE
 CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY,
 DUBLIN

Neẓāmī’s and Naw’ī’s texts. The specific resonances between illustrations of “The *Satī*” in the first compositional format and the prototype of “Shīrīn’s Suicide” would have also emphasized a narrative symmetry between Naw’ī’s and Neẓāmī’s poems, namely, that each story ends with the death-by-suicide of the female protagonist.⁵⁰ In both cases, visual memory of Neẓāmīan illustrative compositions would have been a prerequisite for recognizing the aptness of the composition’s restaging, similar to the ways in which an audience’s familiarity with canonical poems was a necessary precondition for grasping the full significance of verses composed in “imitation” of them.

The various illustrations of “The *Satī*” are not alone in having been modeled after pictorial compositions associated with Neẓāmī’s romances. Other illustrations in the *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscript corpus reveal a similar reliance. “The Youth and Maiden Long for Union,” occurring uniquely in CBL Per 269 (fol. 10b), illustrates the earliest portion

FIGURE 7
 "Laili and Majnūn at School," folio
 129 from a *Khamseh* of Neẓāmī
 manuscript, Herat, 931/1524–5,
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
 gift of Alexander Smith Cochran,
 1913 (13.228.7.7)
 © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
 OF ART, NEW YORK

of the main narrative, describing the protagonists' childhood and their growing desire for one another (Fig. 6).⁵¹ The painting is set in an interior, divisible into two horizontal registers. Above, a young woman at the left presents a kneeling boy to a second woman seated opposite him; he holds a handkerchief to his face. Below, a young male servant offers a plate of food to a girl, who trains her gaze upon the boy in the upper register. The sole verse copied on the page describes the protagonists tearfully singing a tune of longing to one another.⁵² Based on this couplet, the boy with the handkerchief may be identified as the Youth; however, the woman with whom he interacts, seated across from him, is unlikely to be the Maiden, since her physically larger proportions indicate her adulthood. An alternate candidate for Nawā'ī's female protagonist is the girl in the lower tier, who gazes up at the Youth.

The illustration is modeled on a well-known composition established by the ninth/fifteenth century for illustrating "Laili and Majnūn at School,"⁵³ an episode from Neẓāmī's *Laili and Majnūn* detailing the eponymous lovers' unspoken pining for one another in their school days. The conventional format is exemplified by an illustration

from a *Khamseh* manuscript dated 931/1524–5 (Fig. 7). The interior setting is divided into several horizontal registers. In the uppermost tier, a white-bearded instructor is shown supervising a male student who reads from a book. In the tier below, a boy and a girl are shown seated on either side of a bookstand.⁵⁴ Set apart by her golden head-gear, the girl in the lower tier has been identified as Laili; following the same logic, the male student in the upper tier, who wears his own fancy turban, may be identified as Majnūn.⁵⁵ The compositional similarities between the CBL Per 269 illustration and the “Laili and Majnūn at School” model are easily recognized – the arrangement of the interior in registers; the diagonal opposition of the youthful protagonists; and the supervision of the scene by an adult figure.

The choice of prototype seems particularly relevant: since Nawī refrains from describing the context of his protagonists’ burgeoning ardor, the CBL Per 269 illustrator was free to imagine the scene as he saw fit. By modeling his work after the conventional “Laili and Majnūn at School” composition, he drew attention to the implicit narrative parallel between Nawī’s and Neẓāmī’s pining childhood sweethearts.⁵⁶

The CBL Per 269 illustrator, however, altered details from the model (Figs. 6 and 7). He replaced the reading and writing implements of the original setting, a *maktab* (writing-school), with vessels for food and drink; transformed the male student in the lower tier into a servant; and introduced a new figure into the composition, the female attendant or caretaker who presents the Youth. The painter also inverted the gender of the composition’s principal adult figure; like her white-bearded precursor in the Neẓāmīan pictorial model, she appears to be an instructor, but instead of teaching the male protagonist from a text, she counts on her fingers, perhaps drilling the Youth in his numbers.⁵⁷ With these alterations, the model’s *maktab* has been “renovated” into a domestic *ḥaram*, where the Youth and Maiden are homeschooled. Since the setting is neither identified nor described by Nawī, the adjustments seem deliberate, but their meaning is as yet unclear.

Another *Sūz u Gudāz* illustration modeled after a compositional prototype associated with a Neẓāmīan romance is “The Worship of Fire” (Fig. 8). Depictions of this theme appear in three manuscripts (CBL Per 268, CBL Per 269, and MS. Yahuda Ar. 1067); however, the version in CBL Per 268 (fol. 8a) is the most fully realized. It illustrates the second part of “Prince Dāniyāl’s” speech from the prolegomena, in which he invites the poet to “stroll past the fire temple (*ātaṣ-khāneh*) / [And] observe the rites of the idol and the idol-temple (*āyīn-e bot o bot-khāneh*)” (Nawī, 1374/1995: 295; translation mine).⁵⁸ The focal point is a female figure, who stands on a marbled staircase with her arms outstretched before the portal of a walled enclosure; housing an immense conflagration, this structure is identifiable as the “fire temple.” To the right, two men and two women are shown praying. To the left, an elderly man sits on the bank of a river, while two youths standing behind him exchange a lidded vessel on a tray.

Although a prototype for the illustration is not immediately apparent, the fact that later Safavid-era *Sūz u Gudāz* illustrators repurposed established compositions associated with the romances of Neẓāmī helps to identify the model as “Majnūn at the Ka’ba,” one of the most renowned illustrated episodes from Neẓāmī’s *Laili and Majnūn*.⁵⁹ In this incident, Majnūn is brought to Mecca by his father, who urges him to pray that God relieve him of his madness for Laili, which has disrupted the community; instead, Majnūn defiantly grabs hold of the Ka’ba’s door-knocker and prays that his love increase a hundred fold.⁶⁰ By the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century, Herati painters established the standard illustrative format for this theme, with the Ka’ba at the center of the *ḥarām* platform, Majnūn at the Ka’ba door, pilgrims in *iḥrām* (ritual white garments) surrounding him, and angels floating amid golden cloud-scrolls above the sanctuary;⁶¹

FIGURE 8
 "The Worship of Fire," from a
Sūz u Gudāz manuscript, Iran,
 mid-seventeenth century, Chester
 Beatty Library, CBL Per 268, fol. 8a
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 CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY,
 DUBLIN

FIGURE 9
 “Majnūn at the Ka’ba,” from a
Khamseh of Neẓāmī manuscript,
 Herat, 834/1431, State Hermitage
 Museum, St. Petersburg, Inv. no.
 VP-1000, 1, fol. 175a
 © THE STATE HERMITAGE
 MUSEUM / PHOTO BY VLADIMIR
 TERE BENIN

in some illustrations, they carry pan-shaped or domed censers that emit flames, sanctifying the space with perfumed incense (Fig. 9).⁶² Mid- to late tenth-/sixteenth-century illustrators sometimes amended certain details of this composition, for example, by showing Majnūn's father as an elderly man with a cane standing beside his son and gesturing toward him (Fig. 10).⁶³

The CBL Per 268 illustrator borrowed several elements from the standard “Majnūn at the Ka’ba” composition for his “Worship of Fire” painting, including the walled sanctuary setting, the worshippers performing prayers, and the primary devotee standing

FIGURE 10
 “Majnūn at the Ka’ba,” from a
Khamseh of Neẓāmī manuscript,
 Iran, possibly Qazvin, 1549–51, The
 Morgan Library & Museum, MS
 M.836, fol. 279b, gift of the estate
 of Belle da Costa Greene, 1950
 © THE MORGAN LIBRARY &
 MUSEUM, NEW YORK

before a doorway at the focal point. He also incorporated the elderly father figure of the late tenth-/sixteenth-century variants into the multifigure riverside vignette at the left. The youths exchanging a domed vessel on a tray may have been derived from the angels bearing censors in “Majnūn at the Ka’ba.”

“Prince Dāniyāl’s” speech – the portion of Naw’ī’s text being illustrated – lacks a pronounced narrative symmetry with Neẓāmī’s account of Majnūn’s Meccan pilgrimage; this contrasts with the intertextual parallels established by illustrations of “The *Satī*” and “The Youth and Maiden Long for Union,” described above, which are modeled after illustrations of narratively correlated themes in Neẓāmīan romances – “Shīrīn’s Suicide” and “Lailī and Majnūn at School,” respectively. The painter’s selection of compositional prototype may instead be based on a nonnarrative connection: the text of the prince’s speech is where Naw’ī outlines his poetic goal of superseding the old, threadbare love stories of the Perso-Islamic literary canon, including *Lailī* and *Majnūn*.

Supporting evidence for this hypothesis may be found in the alterations that the CBL Per 268 illustrator made to the “Majnūn at the Ka’ba” model. Most conspicuous is the substitution of the Ka’ba with a Hindu fire temple,⁶⁴ in accordance with the

above-quoted couplets. The painter also transformed the all-male crowd of pilgrims into a mixed-gender gathering, reflecting the subsequent verse, which reads:

[Behold] how as a group, they separate from the attachments of life
To become *kabāb* on the flames of the fire – women and men alike.⁶⁵

NAW'Ī, 1374/1995: 295; translation mine

Notably, the gender of the central devotee (Majnūn, in the prototype) has also been inverted.

While the above-quoted couplet may have supplied the pretext for the transformation of the central figure's gender, a slightly later passage of the text may have also guided the illustrator: "Prince Dāniyāl's" praise, cited above, for Hindu women (*zanān*) who commit *satī* as "brave" (*javān-mardāneh*); the relevant verse occurs on the reverse (b) side of fol. 8, which contains the illustration on its obverse (a).⁶⁶ The central female in "The Worship of Fire" appears to embody this characterization, readily offering herself to the large pyre. As Sunil Sharma (2010) has indicated, the "brave Hindu woman" was a literary convention, which, through an implicit association with *satī*, was invoked as a contrast to the (lesser) love of (Persian, male) poets and heroes (Sharma, 2010: 259–61). This trope was popular among fresh-style poets (ʿĀbedī, in Naw'ī, 1348/1969: 17–30; Bābā-Ṣafarī et al., 1387/2008). Part of its potency lies in the juxtaposition of two antithetical terms: *zanān* ("women") and *javān-mardāneh* (a compound containing the word "manly," *mardāneh*).⁶⁷ By replacing Majnūn – the "quintessential" love-mad poet of the Persian canon (Sharma, 2010: 257, n20)⁶⁸ – with the new female archetype, the CBL Per 268 illustrator has called attention to the broader meaning of the motif. What is more, his substitution of "the canonical poet" with the "brave Hindu woman" may allude to Naw'ī's objective of supplanting outmoded romances with a "fresh" tale, as outlined in "Prince Dāniyāl's" speech.

The CBL Per 268 illustrator appears to have been particularly keen to alert the viewer to the gendered implications of supplanting Majnūn with the "brave Hindu woman." This is suggested by his modification to the elderly "father figure" adapted from the tenth-/sixteenth-century compositional prototype(s). In the "Majnūn at the Ka'ba" illustrations, this figure is often shown standing with the assistance of a cane extending his hand toward his son in a gesture of interlocution (Fig. 10); in "The Worship of Fire," he is seated close to the central female figure (Fig. 8). Although the adjustment may seem like a mundane formal variation, it may in fact be significant, insofar as it forces the old man to gesture unambiguously toward the woman's sex, emphasizing the gendered dynamics of replacing the prototypical "Majnūn" figure with the "brave Hindu woman."

An additional significance of the adjustment to the "father figure" is that his seated posture allows him to rest his foot on the lower text-box of the page. Breaking the so-called "fourth wall," the painter thus establishes an intimate connection between the elderly figure and the verses contained in the text-box, which relate "Prince Dāniyāl's" astonishment at the Hindu custom of cremation, a practice prohibited in Islam:

When the stubborn life of men comes to a close
They throw them like twigs into the mouth of the fire.⁶⁹

NAW'Ī, 1374/1995: 295; translation mine

The physical connection between the elderly figure and this verse may be read, textually and visually, as a sardonic portent of his imminent demise and the destruction of his body. This interpretation is supported by other elements in the picture. For example, the course of marble stairs cascading down from the enclosure to the river may

be identified as a stone *ghat*. In India *ghat* staircases are used to gain access to water for everyday washing and ritual ablutions, but also serve as the platforms for cremation, allowing human remains to be easily cast into or cleared away by the river. The Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi, on the Ganges, is considered especially sacred in Hindu cosmology as the site where the universe was created; believing that they would receive special benefits, some premodern individuals ventured to Varanasi at the end of their lives to be laid on the *ghat* while awaiting death (Gielen and Kashyap, 2019: 25). Equally supportive is the pair of boys who stand immediately behind the old man and exchange a vessel with a domed lid on a tray: such implements may refer to several objects used in Hindu funerary and cremation rituals; however, given the parallel drawn earlier between these youths and the angels carrying flaming censers in the “Majnūn at the Ka’ba” prototype, it is possible that the vessel they carry refers specifically to a bowl used for transporting the home fire to the cremation grounds by the deceased’s eldest son, who leads the procession (Michaels, 2003: 132ff.).

Together, these visual and verbal elements suggest that the vignette in the lower left of the composition illustrates the impending obliteration of the elderly male figure. One might go so far as to suggest that through his correspondence with Majnūn’s father – who brings his son to the Ka’ba to renounce his heterodox love for Laili and thus restore social order – the elder in “The Worship of Fire” is a patriarchal figure emblematic of a system whose time has come to an end.

The CBL Per 268 painter’s adaptation of the “Majnūn at the Ka’ba” prototype and his gendered alterations to that model foreshadow a set of verses at the end of *Sūz u Gudāz*, following the Maiden’s *satī*:

Anyone whose heart has been burned by the flames of love [i.e., love-poets]
Should take a lesson in bravery (*javān-mardī*) from this woman ...
You, Naw’ī, should be ashamed of being a man.
You should be ashamed of this base existence.
This bragging of love and “manliness” (*mardī*) is stupid.
This pretense to the pilgrim-cloak of “manliness” (*iḥrām-i mardī*) is a transgression (*ḥarām*)!

NAW’Ī, 1374/1995: 315, n6⁷⁰

In this passage, Naw’ī characterizes the use of false and boastful words – specifically in love poetry – as a shameful male morbidity. To underscore his point, he alludes obliquely to Majnūn’s quasi-heretical “prayer” during his pilgrimage to Mecca. For Naw’ī, Majnūn’s words are transgressive – not because of their unorthodox content, but because they are a false demonstration of the depth of his love, a pretense to “manliness” to be superseded by the “brave Hindu woman’s” acts of devotion. In this way, Naw’ī emphasizes the gendered dimension of replacing the “love songs” of yore, bemoaned by “Prince Dāniyāl,” with a new paradigm.

Through his selection and reconfiguration of the “Majnūn at the Ka’ba” pictorial model, the CBL Per 268 painter has given visual form to both the poetic goals that Naw’ī outlines in “Prince Dāniyāl’s” speech and the gendered gloss on these objectives that the poet provides at the end of the narrative. The painter has, in effect, created a visual *javāb* to the established composition associated with Majnūn’s pilgrimage, echoing Naw’ī’s verbal *javāb* – his “reasoned and deliberate” response – to the same story, which pivots on the role of gender in the Persian poetic canon.⁷¹ The CBL Per 268 illustrator’s interest in the gendered dimension of Naw’ī’s poetics seems to have been shared by other illustrators as well. For example, one of the alterations that the painter of CBL Per 269’s “Youth and Maiden Long for Union” (Fig. 6) made to the “Laili and Majnūn at

School” prototype was to invert the gender of the (male) instructor, described earlier. In light of the foregoing analysis of “The Worship of Fire,” it seems significant that the homeschool scene’s female substitute, as it were, teaches through gesture rather than from a text: in the interpretive field staged by each *Sūz u Gudāz* illustration, words are implicitly gender-coded as a male prerogative, while action resides with the female, the latter abrogating the former.

Another set of verses foreshadowed by “The Worship of Fire” illustration occurs in the passage of text following the Youth’s fatal accident, when the Maiden enters the scene and sees her beloved’s corpse for the first time. Naw’ī poignantly narrates the psychologically altering effect of this trauma, describing the Maiden as rending her garments in grief and becoming senseless:

Her body was more naked (‘*uryāntar*) than the rose’s shirt (*pīrahan-e gol*),
Her dress-bodice (*gerībān*), more torn than the rose’s hem (*dāman-e gol*).⁷²
Bare from head to foot, [ambling] like a hypnotized flame (*sho’leh-ye maftūn*)
One might say that Laili had become Majnūn [*majnūn* = “crazed”]!

Naw’ī, 1348/1969: 50–1; translation mine

Embedded within this vivid portrayal of the Maiden’s anguish is the intimation of a more profound shift in her identity: exploiting the pun in Majnūn’s name, Naw’ī conflates the Maiden’s transformation from an exuberant bride-to-be into an agonized would-be widow with her metamorphosis into a poetic archetype, the “brave Hindu woman” – a new kind of “Majnūn.”⁷³ His play on words further emphasizes the gendered dimension of the Maiden’s transfiguration in suggesting an inversion of female (Laili) and male (Majnūn). All of these shifts are synoptically prefigured in “The Worship of Fire” through the replacement of Majnūn “praying” at the Ka’ba from the compositional model with the “brave Hindu woman” offering herself the flames at the fire temple. As one of the first pictures in the manuscript’s illustrative sequence, “The Worship of Fire” thus establishes a hermeneutic frame for the poetry and pictures that follow. It prepares the manuscript’s users to read both text and image through the lens of Naw’ī’s poetological aims of refreshing the literary canon by composing a critical, intertextual response to the Neẓāmīan romance, one that pivots on a radical subversion of the tradition’s gender norms.

4 Exposing Shame

A later illustration in CBL Per 268, “The Maiden and Her Attendants” (fol. 16a, Fig. 11), provides further evidence for the painter’s sustained interest in the gendered dimension of Naw’ī’s *javāb*. It illustrates the passage of text in which the Maiden has just received word that the Youth’s father has consented to their marriage, excitedly rushing to have herself made up by her dressers (Naw’ī, 1374/1995: 302–3). Seated in the lap of one attendant while another looks on, the Maiden is depicted in extreme décolletage with breasts exposed, holding a mirror in her hand and gazing out toward the viewer.

The Maiden’s seminudity in this and other illustrations in the *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscript corpus have aroused the curiosity of historians of Persian painting.⁷⁴ Prior to the Safavid era, nude and seminude women were infrequent subjects of Persian painting. Their appearance was usually limited to illustrations of literary texts that specify their presence, such as the well-known episode from Neẓāmī’s *Khosraw and Shīrīn* in which Khosraw spies Shīrīn bathing, described earlier (Babaie, 2009: 125; Canby, 2018: 63; Habibi, 2018: 228; Hamdy, 1979; Landau, 2013: 116). In the eleventh/seventeenth century,

FIGURE 11
 "The Maiden and Her Attendants,"
 from a *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscript,
 Iran, mid-seventeenth century,
 Chester Beatty Library, CBL
 Per 268, fol. 16a

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FIGURE 12
Album painting from the St.
Petersburg *Muraqqa'*, Iran,
1085/1674, Russian Academy of
Sciences, Album E-14, fol. 93a
© THE INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL
MANUSCRIPTS OF THE RUSSIAN
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ST.
PETERSBURG

the unclothed woman became a somewhat more common pictorial theme, particularly in the single-sheet format (Fig. 12). The appetite for such depictions may have been fueled, in part, by the increased circulation of European prints and paintings, in which women in various states of undress were familiar subjects – recumbent nudes, ultra-décolletés, and the like; attention has been drawn to several later Safavid-era examples based directly upon European models (Babaie, 2001: 123–8; Canby, 1996: 32; Farhad, 1987: 227–31; Landau, 2013: 105–16).⁷⁵ Persian painters and viewers may have interpreted the bared bosom as an implicitly erotic hallmark of cultural, specifically European, “otherness” (Landau, 2013: 113).⁷⁶ Scholars have therefore argued that the essential utility of depicting Nawī’s Maiden with bare breasts was to present her as an eroticized cultural

“other,” a Hindu variation on the more prevalent seminude *farangī* motif, particularly in light of the fact that her nudity is seemingly unwarranted by the text (Farhad, 2001: 124; Landau, 2013: 113).⁷⁷ This assertion, however, is partly incorrect.

As described above, upon seeing the Youth's corpse for the first time, the Maiden tears her garments in grief, leaving her figure unequivocally exposed. (Naw'ī describes her as “more naked than the rose's shirt” and “bare from head to foot.”) Her exposure is depicted in illustrations of “The Death of the Youth” that accompany this passage in Walters Art Museum W.649 and the “Israel Museum” cluster.⁷⁸ In both pictures, she is shown standing in a lower corner, her gown discomposed to reveal a single breast. Although the Maiden's nudity is discussed no further in the text, most illustrators of *Sūz u Gudāz* continued to depict her in disheveled clothes, typically with at least one uncovered breast, in their versions of subsequent themes such as “The Funeral Procession,” “Elders Attempt to Dissuade the Maiden,” and “The Maiden's Audience before Akbār,” as well as in her various interactions with “Prince Dāniyāl.”⁷⁹ It may be speculated that her persistent exposure in these pictures was intended, in part, to sustain narrative continuity.

More peculiar are the seminude depictions of “The Maiden and Her Attendants” (Fig. 11): these paintings illustrate an incident that occurs a full seventy verses before the Maiden's grief-induced disrobing.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, analysis of the two verses framing the CBL Per 268 illustration, one above the picture and the other below, may explain why its painter chose to depict her with naked breasts. Rushing to have herself made up to receive her fiancé:

She went to sit on her dresser's knee
As a cup was placed to her lips and a mirror in her hand.
While she sat [there], the dresser's skirt became filled to the brim with roses
By the joy of that newly sprouted (*naw-khīz*) palm tree.

NAW'Ī, 1374/1995: 302–3; translation mine

This passage is replete with erotic connotations. For example, the “cup” that the dresser places to the Maiden's “lips” in the first verse may be read euphemistically, indicating pleasures other than wine-drinking.⁸¹ In the second verse, the term for the Maiden's “sprouting” (like a palm shoot) – *khīz* – can also denote “wantonness” or “ruttishness,” especially in female birds (!).⁸² It is the joy of the “sprouting” Maiden that causes the dresser's skirt in turn to become “filled to the brim with roses” – *ze gol lab-rīz* – a metaphor for sexual arousal.⁸³ Hypothetically, the Pers. 268 painter depicted the Maiden in extreme décolletage as a way of alerting the reader-viewer to the erotic subtext of the passage.⁸⁴

Depictions of female-female eroticism, like depictions of the erotic in general, are rare in Persian painting.⁸⁵ Contemporary discourses on sexual behavior suggest that such depictions would have been stigmatized in some corners of later Safavid society. As the historian Kathryn Babayan (2008) has noted, orthodox Shi'ite clergy, with the support of Safavid monarchs, initiated a campaign in the early eleventh/seventeenth century to police sexuality and to “effect heteronormative subjects” (Babayan, 2008: 250–1). At first only casually observed, by the end of the century prohibitions on immodest clothing, dancing and musical entertainment, and mixed-gender gatherings were systematically enforced (Babayan, 2008: 251; Landau, 2013: 115–17); heterosocial activity was increasingly regulated through religious and juridical interdiction (Babayan, 1998: 369–70; Landau, 2013: 115); and homoerotic acts were persecuted with heightened fanaticism – including female-female relations, which had traditionally been subject to less

scrutiny than sex acts between men (Babayan, 2008: 254–5). Babayan also notes that erotic acts between women who were social and religious equals were “pathologized” as *majnūn* (crazy) in a legal text dated 1067/1656–7 (Babayan, 2008: 255) – that is, only a year earlier than the completion of the only dated illustrated *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscript (Walters Art Museum, W.649). It is tempting to ponder whether Iranian readers of this period, including painters, interpreted Naw’ī’s description of the Maiden’s “transformation” into “Majnūn” as a veiled reference to her possible homoerotic inclinations.

The clerical strictures on gender and sexual normativity were promulgated in polemical literature of the later Safavid period. As Babayan has noted, a satire entitled *Aqā’id al-nisā’* (“The Beliefs of Women”), composed by the jurist Aqā Jamāl Khwānsārī (d. 1710/1122), portrays the women of Isfahan as “consistently breaking the rules of seclusion, improperly exposing themselves in *ḥammāms*, neglecting to put on modest demeanors in the presence of men outside their families, and only laxly observing their ritual obligations” (Babayan, 2008: 253).⁸⁶ While only moderately reliable as a historical document of “illicit” activities that women in later Safavid Iran allegedly practiced, Aqā Jamāl’s satire nonetheless betrays an anxiety over transgressions of normative female behavior. A particular flashpoint was women’s “indecent exposure,” presumably because it threatened a slippery slope toward graver indulgences – whether in mixed-gender or homosocial settings, domestic or public. According to Sussan Babaie (2013), the increasingly prevalent depiction of European women in extreme décolletage frames what is essentially the same “perversion” – *vaqāḥat*, which she translates as “shameless exhibitionism” – as a habit of the *farangī*, the quintessential cultural “other” (Babaie, 2013: 148).⁸⁷ The idea is that more than simply being exposed, the subjects of these pictures appear to delight in exposing themselves. Against this sociocultural backdrop, the illustration of “The Maiden and Her Attendants,” supported by the erotic subtext of its attendant verses, may have been legible as an explicit reference to the issue of *vaqāḥat*, particularly in homosocial milieus, staging Naw’ī’s Maiden not simply as a cultural “other,” as scholars have previously asserted, but as a sexual transgressive as well, her sapphism laid bare, as it were, by her “shamelessness.”⁸⁸

Compounding the depiction of the Maiden’s “shamelessness” in the CBL Per 268 illustration of “The Maiden and Her Attendants” is her outwardly directed gaze.⁸⁹ Comparison may be made with formally related depictions of the seminude *farangī* woman in extreme décolletage, which, according to Babaie, signal *vaqāḥat* as much through the subject’s alert outward gaze as by the exposure of her bosom (Babaie, 2009: 135). The notion that the “shameless” female gaze represents an erotic perversion rests upon the belief that the subject acknowledges the viewer gazing upon her naked breasts, and finds gratification in it; later Safavid viewers may well have projected this psychological dimension onto such depictions.

The female gaze is (also) a subversion of a deeply entrenched gendered dynamic, which codes gazing as a male prerogative: in the later Safavid context, this formulation is exemplified by Aqā Jamāl’s penetrating “glimpse” into (and exposé of) the exclusively female spaces of Isfahan.⁹⁰ Notably, the setting of “The Maiden and Her Attendants,” rendered conventionally as a landscape, is identifiable as the Maiden’s own home – according to the text, an all-female space inhabited only by the Maiden, her attendants, and her mother.⁹¹ Thus, while the Maiden’s “shameless” self-exposure may have stimulated an erotic response in the viewer (or “gazer”), her subversive counter-gaze potentially activated a more complex set of critical and ethical reactions.⁹²

Julie Scott Meisami (1987) has drawn further attention to the gendered dynamics of gazing in the Persian poetic tradition, specifically in a discussion of Khosraw spying on Shīrīn bathing from Neẓāmī’s *Khosraw and Shīrīn*. In that episode, the disguised

prince briefly satisfies his voyeurism by leering at the bathing woman, whose identity is unknown to him, averting his gaze as soon as she catches him; when she discovers that she is being watched, she covers her breasts with her hair and flees. Meisami writes that Khosraw's gaze reveals his attitude toward women as "objects to be possessed" (Meisami, 1987: 149); indeed, Khosraw whispers to himself how he wishes to one day possess both a maiden such as this bathing beauty – and a horse like hers too.⁹³ Meisami further states that the "unprincely garb" of Khosraw's disguise betrays an inner character marked by "a self-indulgence and an opportunism that become increasingly apparent [in the story]" (Meisami, 1987: 150). Her reading complicates prevalent interpretations of the story as a commentary on mistaken identity or on the heightened value of mystical knowledge (of love) over perceptible phenomena (which induce lust).⁹⁴ The ethical and gendered implications that she discerns in Neẓāmī's text may have also been particularly consequential to later Safavid-era audiences attuned to such issues.

The CBL Per 268 illustration of "The Maiden and Her Attendants" (Fig. 11) itself supports this hypothesis. In adapting depictions of the "shameless" seminude *farangī* woman, as described above, the painting draws attention to the latent homoeroticism of the poetic passage being illustrated. At the same time, it strategically alludes to that other bare-breasted pictorial antecedent, "Khosraw Spies Shīrīn Bathing" (Fig. 5).⁹⁵ Unlike the previously discussed examples of *Sūz u Gudāz* illustrations, which are modeled on intertextually relevant compositional paradigms from the Neẓāmīan illustrative repertoire, "The Maiden and Her Attendants" bears little compositional resemblance to depictions of Neẓāmī's episode of voyeurism. Among their many differences, the figures in the *Sūz u Gudāz* illustration are arrayed laterally and viewed straight on, while in the prototype they are diagonally opposed and viewed from a bird's-eye perspective (Figs. 5 and 11). And yet, such significant structural adjustments may be meaningful. The new spatial arrangement preserves the opposition between gazer and gazed, but rather than situating a gazing male and a gazed-upon female figure along the diagonal for the viewer to look down upon, it is reconfigured in a way that allows the female protagonist to directly return the gaze of the reader-viewer:⁹⁶ *we* now occupy the place of the disguised Khosraw, voyeuristically indulging our sight upon the half-naked beauty. Instead of shamefully demurring like Shīrīn, however, the seminude Maiden "shamelessly" reciprocates our scopic hold.

What drove the artist to perform such an elaborate sleight of hand can only be speculated. One explanation may be that the Maiden's exchange of gazes with the reader-viewer gives concrete, if not hyperbolic, visual expression to "Prince Dāniyāl's" enjoinder to "speak first of what you have seen," that is, what takes place in the here and now. Bringing the illustration out into the world by breaking the "fourth wall" (albeit in a different manner than the elderly figure in "The Worship of Fire"), the Maiden's outward gaze may have prompted the manuscript's intended reader-viewers in later Safavid Iran to consider the relevance of *Sūz u Gudāz* and its illustrations to the contemporary age.

It should be noted that Safavid-era painters of the late tenth/sixteenth century had already begun experimenting with the canonical iconography associated with Shīrīn's bath in similar ways as the illustrator of CBL Per 268. One example is a painting depicting a woman holding a wrapping cloth about her hips (Fig. 13). The picture would have been immediately recognizable as an allusion to Neẓāmī's female protagonist, even without being physically situated within a manuscript of his poetry or annotated by an explanatory caption, her seminude state and the blue color of her cloth both being details closely associated with Shīrīn.⁹⁷ Much like the CBL Per 268 illustration of "The Maiden and Her Attendants," the painter of the single-sheet picture has oriented the subject directly in front of the viewer, who now occupies the place of the gazing

FIGURE 13
A maiden by a pond, signed
Kamāl, Iran, 1580–90, Aga Khan
Museum, AKM422
© THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM,
TORONTO

Khosraw. Moreover, like the CBL Per 268 illustrator, he has depicted “Shīrīn” not as a maiden demurring from our gaze, but rather seductively returning it – possibly unwrapping her loincloth to expose, rather than conceal, her nudity.⁹⁸

As much as the Maiden’s “shameless” counter-gaze brings the story out into the world of the reader-viewer, it also draws the viewer into the world of the illustrated story, described in detail across the pictorial suite and populated by multiple other gazing figures whom she “shamelessly” confronts in a half-naked state: the Brahmins of

FIGURE 14
 "The Maiden's Audience before
 Akbār," from a *Sūz u Gudāz*
 manuscript, Iran, mid-seventeenth
 century, Chester Beatty Library,
 CBL Per 268, fol. 25a
 © THE TRUSTEES OF THE
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her community, Akbār, and Dāniyāl, who are often accompanied by entire groups of ancillary male onlookers. For example, in the CBL Per 268 illustration of "The Maiden's Audience before Akbār" (fol. 25a, Fig. 14), the Maiden bows toward the emperor, bending at the waist, with one breast hanging from her open dress so conspicuously as to arouse the interest of a youthful wine-topper who points toward her while suggestively grasping the neck of a bottle held erect at his knee. In other manuscripts, illustrations of Dāniyāl accompanying the Maiden to the pyre portray her not as concealing her body,

FIGURE 15
 “Dāniyāl Escorts the Maiden to the Pyre,” from a *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscript, Iran, mid- to late seventeenth century, National Library of Israel, ms. Yahuda Ar. 1067, fol. 23a
 © NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ISRAEL COLLECTION

but as positioning herself in ways that promote the greater visibility of her breasts: in the W.649 illustration of this theme, one breast is framed in the crook of her bent arm, making it protrude; in the Israel Museum *Sūz u Gudāz* version, she cups one breast as though presenting it to the prince; and in Ms. Yahuda Ar. 1067, she raises her arms to reveal both breasts to the full – and smiles (Fig. 15).⁹⁹

While Nawī avoids direct reference to the Maiden’s actions and appearance in this portion of the text – suggesting that these variant visual interpretations are products of

the painters' imaginations – what he instead describes is the group male gaze trained upon her body. As Dāniyāl begins to ride his horse alongside her, flirtatiously singing the “old love songs” in an attempt to dissuade her from self-immolation:

The whole world, from every quarter, stopped.
The wares of life were given over to the plunder of spectators.

NAW'Ī, 1374/1995: 312; translation mine

The word choice here is pointed, likening the Maiden's body to material “wares” (*matā'*) available for the onlookers' scopical spoil, recalling Khosraw's self-whisper expressing a desire to acquire both Shīrīn and her prized “possession,” her horse Shabdīz. The implication is that the gazer, not the gazed-upon, is the one shamed in this economy of looking. Unlike Shīrīn, the Maiden is neither oblivious to nor shamed by the male gaze cast upon her exposed body; instead, her exposure transposes the shame that she is “supposed” to feel onto those who indulge their sights. In a noteworthy flourish, Naw'ī links the shame implicit in the male gaze to that peculiarly male habit of false and empty speech: just a few verses later, the Maiden breaks the near total silence that she has held throughout and excoriates Dāniyāl's attempt to seduce her with the old love songs, crying out that he has shamed her¹⁰⁰ with such insincere and outmoded words (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 312–13).

In adapting a contemporary stock figural type – the “shameless” *farangī* woman – to depict the central subject in “The Maiden and Her Attendants,” the CBL Per 268 painter has created a trenchant rejoinder (*javāb*) to well-established pictorial compositions of Khosraw spying on Shīrīn, mirroring Naw'ī's critical approach to the Neẓāmī romance and the canon of Perso-Islamic love tales in general. The potency of the response hinges on the gendered dynamics and ethical implications of the male gaze. Like the correlated *farangī* figures, the Maiden's outward gaze acknowledges that of the viewer, but its function within the manuscript is to assimilate its user to the male onlookers who recur throughout the pictorial suite, indulging their sights upon the Maiden's seminude body and implicating us alongside them in a pedigree of shameful gazing that stretches back to Khosraw. Together with “The Worship of Fire” – a visual *javāb* to standard depictions of “Majnūn at the Ka'ba” – “The Maiden and Her Attendants” takes aim at core issues raised by canonical Perso-Islamic romances and the illustrative traditions that sustain them: the emptiness of speech and the shame of gazing, both gender-coded as exclusively male prerogatives.

5 Conclusion

The foregoing analyses have revealed later Safavid-era illustrators of *Sūz u Gudāz* to be attentive readers, fully engaged with Naw'ī's poetological aim of writing a *javāb* to the “old love songs” of the Persian canon and its consequences for entrenched attitudes toward gender. Their illustrations do more than simply prompt an intertextual reading between poetic model and response, as practiced in the preceding centuries in paintings produced at the courts of late Timurid Herat and early Safavid Iran, with their “excessive” extratextual pictorial elements. Instead, their strategy is intervisual, adapting and reconfiguring illustrative models from an established repertoire inextricably linked with Neẓāmī's romances.¹⁰¹ Their pictures give visual form to both the action of the narrative and Naw'ī's poetics, while prompting intertextual readings between the poem and the antecedents to which it responds. In this way, they function as formal and rhetorical *javābs* in their own right – pointed responses to the very pictorial conventions through which canonical romances were sustained and propagated. In the

FIGURE 16
Mural possibly depicting a theme
from *Sūz u Gudāz*, Isfahan, Chehel
Sotūn Palace, mid-seventeenth
century
© ALFRED MOLON

process, text and image are interfused to create a hermeneutic field where new meanings are generated or hidden significances revealed. Their illustrations elucidate the significance of *Sūz u Gudāz* (and its textual models) in the later Safavid era, a social and religious climate where prohibitions governing gender and sexual normativity became progressively more stringent.

This conclusion returns us to what is arguably the most visually and historiographically prominent “illustration” of Naw’ī’s poem, the mural introduced at the beginning of this essay, located in the Chehel Sotūn Palace at Isfahan and executed in the middle decades of the eleventh/seventeenth century (Fig. 16).¹⁰² The mural occupies the southern wall of a room identified in the scholarly literature as Chehel Sotūn P3, adjacent to the southeast corner of the main audience hall.¹⁰³ Executed in a “Europeanizing” (*farangī-sāzī*) style, it depicts a group of thirty figures in a landscape; at the center is a maiden in a diaphanous shirt gesturing toward a large pyre in the distance while being restrained (or embraced?) about the hips by a youth in Mughal princely garb; surrounding the two main figures are attendants, musicians, and dancers, among others. All of these elements find parallels in illustrations of Naw’ī’s story.

As described earlier, scholars have relied on the mural as a critical piece of evidence for investigations into the later Safavid-era reception of *Sūz u Gudāz*. According to Sussan Babaie, the mural served as an allusion to the Safavid triumph over the Mughals at Qandahār in Šafar 1059/February 1649. Though located in a side room that was part of the “private domain of the palace,” Babaie (1994b) has suggested that its “Europeanizing” style links it visually to four large paintings in the main audience hall that depict the Safavids’ military and diplomatic interactions with their eastern neighbors (Babaie, 1994b: 191);¹⁰⁴ she has proposed that these were completed concurrently with the palace in 1057/1647 (Babaie, 1994a: 126, 134). Her evidence for a connection between the *Sūz u Gudāz* mural and Qandahār comes from a passage from the Safavid court historian Valī Qolī Šāmlū’s chronicle *Qeşaş al-Khāqānī*, which relates a story about the widow of a Hindu Mughal official who perished at the siege: having chosen to commit *satī*, the widow allegedly foretold of a Safavid victory while being consumed by the fire. Šāmlū writes that upon hearing the story, he was reminded of *Sūz u Gudāz*, and this in turn inspired him to compose a short verse narrative commemorating the Qandahār *satī*.

Since “[Shāmlū’s] reference to Nau’ī’s poem surely could not have gone unnoticed in the court at Isfahan,” Babaie has reasoned that the *Sūz u Gudāz* mural was intended as an ideological, as well as visual, complement to the four-mural suite in the main hall: “Whereas the large historical paintings in the audience hall proclaimed the Safavid court as a sanctuary for ... deposed monarchs, the *Sūz u Gudāz* story symbolized the actual victory over a prized territory” (Babaie, 1994a: 137). She thus dates the mural to shortly after the Qandahār conquest in 1059/1649 (Babaie, 1994a: 137). As noted earlier, scholars have subsequently used Babaie’s hypothesis as grounds for explaining the popularity of illustrated manuscripts of Naw’ī’s text (Farhad, 2001: 126; Sharma, 2013: 151).

Although Shāmlū’s reference to *Sūz u Gudāz* may have shaped its reception at the Safavid court, he only began composing *Qeṣaṣ al-Khāqānī* in 1073/1662–3 and completed it in 1085/1674–5 (Babayan, 2002: 473n1; Newman, 2009: 140). Therefore, any hypothetical interpretation of *Sūz u Gudāz* extrapolated from his impression of the text could not have been current before the 1080s/1670s. This does not mean that earlier audiences did not perceive a connection between *Sūz u Gudāz* and Qandahār; it means that evidence for an appreciation of *Sūz u Gudāz* as a symbolic memorial of the Qandahār campaign prior to Shāmlū’s writing is slim.¹⁰⁵

In this light, it seems relevant that the only solid date associated with production of illustrated *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscripts in Iran is 1 Šafar 1068/7 November 1657, recorded in the colophon of Walters Art Museum W.649. What this suggests is that illustrated copies of the poem were already being executed in Iran – notably, in this instance, for a nonroyal patron – at least a half-decade before Shāmlū began composing his chronicle, and possibly earlier.

The importance of Shāmlū’s text as a document of the reception of *Sūz u Gudāz* may lie beyond any explicit or implicit connection to Qandahār. On its own, the author’s seemingly unremarkable claim of being reminded of *Sūz u Gudāz* when first learning about the Qandahār *satī* reveals an established familiarity with Naw’ī’s poem by the time *Qeṣaṣ al-Khāqānī* was composed.

The Chehel Sotūn mural is similarly significant for reasons beyond a hypothetical Qandahār connection. The room where it is located (P3) is decorated with additional murals depicting well-known themes from Persian literature, including “Khosraw Spies Shīrīn Bathing,” as well as “Yūsuf and the Women of Egypt,” from Jāmi’s *Yūsuf and Zulaikha*, a tale in which the female protagonist attempts to seduce the enslaved Hebrew prophet; these murals are executed in a contrasting style associated with the painter Rezā ‘Abbāsī (d. 1044/1635), which predates the “Europeanizing” mode of the Chehel Sotūn mural.¹⁰⁶ (Both styles, it should be noted, were practiced concurrently, even if the latter represents a subsequent development.) The stylistic disparity between the *Sūz u Gudāz* and other literary-themed murals in the same room seems relevant: if the *farangī-sāzī* style adopted for Naw’ī’s poem was considered novel at the time that the mural was created, particularly in contrast to the older, more “traditional” style used to depict canonical literary themes, then the concurrence of two distinct pictorial idioms in P3’s mural program may have been intentional, distinguishing Naw’ī’s poem as an innovation upon the romances of the Persian literary past.¹⁰⁷ This suggests that the poetological significance of *Sūz u Gudāz* as a *javāb* to the canon may have been more pertinent than any political significance hypothetically attributed to it.

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Notes

- 1 The author would like to thank Priscilla Soucek, Sheila Canby, Maryam Ekhtiar, and the late Abdullah Ghouchani for reading and commenting on an earlier version of this essay. Additional thanks are owing to Bianca Iano, Ernest Davis, Shannon Wearing and two anonymous reviewers for their feedback on the current version.
- 2 The bibliography on text-image relations in Persianate culture is too long to list here. The wide range of scholarly approaches may be gleaned from the following studies: Babaie (2001); Blair (2014); Brend (2000); Bürgel (1988: esp. chapter 6); Chagnon (2015); Clinton and Simpson (2006); Ettinghausen (1981); Golombek (1972); Kia (2019); Lamei (2001); Mehran (2006); Roxburgh (2003); Simpson (1979, 2010); Soucek (1972, 2003); Wright (2012: esp. 198–230).
- 3 Roxburgh (2003: 16) notes the “confounding choice of seeing painting at opposite ends of a spectrum (painting as subservient to text vs. painting as an autonomous visual entity).”
- 4 Barry (2004: 201) describes this as “dual illustration.”
- 5 The architectural inscriptions depicted in the painting contain the relevant verses from Jāmi’s text. See Barry (2004: 197–201); Blair and Bloom (1994: 63). Cf. Bahari (1996: 108–12); Balafrej (2019: 91–6); Golombek (1972: 28); Lentz and Lowry (1989: 292).
- 6 The cultural life of the late Timurid Herat court was first systematically studied in Subtelny (1979) and several subsequent essays by the same author.
- 7 For the conceptual sophistication of non-deluxe manuscripts produced in later Safavid Iran, see Chagnon (2015: esp. chapters 5 and 6). For single-sheet pictures, see Babaie (2001).
- 8 The “Khurasani” style refers to verses composed beginning in the ninth century which use straightforward poetic language and concrete imagery while limiting Arabic loanwords in favor of purely Persian terminology. The “Iraqi” style refers to poetry composed from the twelfth century which adopts a more complex and symbolic language and a comparatively greater use of Arabisms, and often addresses metaphysical themes.
- 9 Losensky (1998) is the main study of the fresh style. The *tazkereh* of Muḥammad Ṭāher Naṣrābādī, a compendium of tenth-/sixteenth- to eleventh-/seventeenth-century Persian poets, demonstrates the widespread nature of the fresh style. See Naṣrābādī (1378/1999) for a recent edition.
- 10 By the mid-eighteenth century CE, literary tastes in Iran had shifted back toward a classicizing idiom (in a reactionary, “revivalist” phenomenon known as *bāzgasht-e adabī*, “literary return”) and from that time through the twentieth century came to malign fresh-style poetry as bizarre and aberrant.
- 11 Cf. Lefevere (1992: 26): “A poetics can be said to consist of two components, one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole.”
- 12 The traditional Persian *maṣnavī* is a narrative poem composed of rhyming couplets. *Maṣnavīs* may be heroic/epic, romantic, or didactic in theme.
- 13 The patronage of *Sūz u Gudāz* is a matter of debate. It was dedicated to the emperor Akbār, who features as a prominent character in the tale alongside his son, Dāniyāl. This prince was known to be one of Nawī’s patrons, as was his father-in-law, the Mughal grandee ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Khānkhānān. For further discussion, see Sharma (2010: 262–3).
- 14 The illustrations of Or. 2839 (fols. 8a, 15a, and 17b) are reproduced in unnumbered plates in Nawī (1912) and briefly discussed in Farhad (2001: 119–20); Losty (1982: 99, cat. no. 81); and Titley (1983: 121, 123). A twelfth-/eighteenth-century album page depicting a scene from the poem was also produced in India (Wellcome Library, no. 119231).
- 15 See Chagnon (2015: 411n6; cf. 271n818). Sharma (2013: 150–1) links an album painting in the Calderwood Collection at Harvard Art Museums (2002.50.7) to *Sūz u Gudāz*. This identification

- merits further scrutiny since the iconographic elements do not correspond precisely to Naw'ī's text and are not paralleled by illustrations from the known *Sūz u Gudāz* corpus; cf. Natif in McWilliams (2013: 262, cat. no. 130).
- 16 For the critique of the "mystical" interpretation of *Sūz u Gudāz*, see Sharma (2010: 259–60; 2013: 150–1).
- 17 Sharma (2010: esp. 251, 265). Farhad (2001: 118, 127) also refers to the poem's composition in imitation of Neẓāmīan romances.
- 18 Sharma (2010: 251). Cf. Meisami (1987: 180).
- 19 A brief account of Naw'ī's life, based on several *taẓkereh* sources, is given by Farhad (2001: 116–17) and Sharma (2014). For fuller treatments, see Golchīn-Ma'ānī (1369/1990–1: 2:1471–87); Naw'ī (1374/1995: 13–63).
- 20 Naw'ī's time in Kāshān has been questioned by Golchīn-Ma'ānī (1369/1990–1: 2:1478–9) and Sharma (2014).
- 21 For Mohtasham's biography, see Losensky (2014).
- 22 For a recent study of Mohtasham's cutting-edge *voqū'gū'ī*- ("incidentalistic") style poems, see Losensky (2009).
- 23 A.H. 'Ābedī's edition of *Sūz u Gudāz* (Naw'ī, 1348/1969) includes 608 lines of poetry. A.H. Zākerzādeh's edition (Naw'ī, 1374/1995) includes *Sūz u Gudāz* in 483 lines, with interpolated verses from various manuscripts in footnotes. Zākerzādeh omits 42 verses that appear toward the end of the main narrative in the 'Ābedī edition and which also occur in the manuscripts examined for the present study.
- 24 In some manuscripts, the odes to springtime and *nawrūz* appear in the prolegomena; in others, they occur as part of the epilogue, immediately following the main narrative. The various sequencing is reflected in Naw'ī (1348/1969, 1374/1995).
- 25 Since both Dāniyāl and Akbār are mentioned in the prolegomena, the poem's "true" patron has been a matter of scholarly debate. Cf. Sharma (2010: 263, n43).
- 26 See note 24 above.
- 27 According to classical rhetoric, the salamander is drawn to fire even more than the moth, and unlike its counterpart, cannot be burned by it; see Sharma (2010: 260, n29), citing Schimmel (1992: 199).
- 28 Alternate translations of Dāniyāl's speech are given in Naw'ī (1912: 24–5) and Sharma (2010: 255). In one of the manuscripts discussed in this chapter, Walters Art Museum W.649 (fol. 5b, line 3), the second hemistich reads: "[Like] a hundred talons slicing into the heart" (*be-ṣad nākhun jagar rā dar tarāshīd*).
- 29 Cf. Naw'ī (1912: 25–6).
- 30 Cf. Naw'ī (1912: 26).
- 31 For the significance of the "strange" or "exotic" as a hallmark of fresh-style poetry, see Losensky (1998: 201–2).
- 32 The description of the Maiden's death is abbreviated in Naw'ī (1374/1995) (see note 22 above). For a more complete version, see Naw'ī (1348/1969: 55–9).
- 33 A third romantic *maṣnavī* from the *Khamseh* is *Haft Paykār*, but it is composed in a different meter (*ḥaff*). Neither of the two remaining poems from Neẓāmī's quintet, *Maḥzan al-asrār* and *Eskandar-nāmeḥ*, is romantic in theme. For the similarity of the commission accounts in *Khosraw and Shīrīn* and *Sūz u Gudāz*, see Sharma (2010: 256n16). For the shared narrative trajectories and thematic elements of *Sūz u Gudāz* and Neẓāmī's two poems, see Farhad (2001: 126) and Sharma (2010: 257n20).
- 34 For Majnūn's repetition of Lailī's name, see Chelkowski (1975: 51–3, 57).
- 35 For bibliography on the manuscripts listed below, see Chagnon (2015: cat. nos. 11–18).
- 36 The two texts may have been compiled as a single volume because of professional and literary connections shared by their authors. Both Naw'ī and 'Orfī were Iranian practitioners of the fresh style who worked in India, at separate times enjoying the patronage of 'Abd al-Raḥīm Khānkhānān. Their poems are both modeled after precedents by Neẓāmī. See Chagnon (2015: cat. no. 17).
- 37 Each of the seven folios belonging to this cluster is catalogued with an individual record number: Israel Museum 640.69, 641.69/2, 642.69, 643.69/4, 644.69/5, 646.69/7, and 647.69.8. Israel Museum records indicate that there was once an eighth folio, now lost. See Chagnon (2015: cat. no. 13); Milstein and Brosch (1984: 90).
- 38 Each of the six folios belonging to this cluster is catalogued with an individual record number: Cairo University Museum [1749] 1768, [1776] 1765, [1777] 1766, [1778] 1767, [1779] 1769, and [1780] 1770. See Chagnon (2015: cat. no. 16, plates 6.6 and 6.14).
- 39 I have provisionally named this dispersed cluster of tinted drawings, mounted as album pages, after a distinguishing codicological feature: the distribution of the poem in three columns, contrasting with two-column arrangement in the remaining manuscripts. One folio from the "Three-Column" cluster is Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 65.48. Three additional folios have been recently sold at auction; see: Christie's London, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds*, sale 7751, October 6, 2009, lot 119; Christie's London, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds*, sale 10490, April 23, 2015, lot 63; and *Art of the Islamic*

and *Indian Worlds Including Oriental Rugs and Carpets*, sale 14218, October 26, 2017, lot 93. For an analysis, see Chagnon (2015: cat. no. 18).

- 40 For a discussion of the manuscript's recipient, see Chagnon (2015: chapter 3). According to Milstein and Brosch (1984: 90), institutional records indicate that the Israel Museum *Sūz u Gudāz* cluster is also said to have once included a folio bearing an artist's signature (Muḥammad Yūsuf) with a date (1068/1657), perhaps on its now-lost folio. See note 36 above. MS. Yahuda Ar. 1067 also contains a colophon with a date of 1[0]27/1617–18, but the year seems to have been added in a later hand and is therefore unreliable. See Chagnon (2015: cat. no. 17).
- 41 Soucek (2011) raises a similar possibility with regard to calligraphic specimens signed with 'Abd al-Rashid's name.
- 42 See note 31 above.
- 43 See Soudavar (1992: 365–8), for a discussion of these artists.
- 44 Cf. Farhad (2001: 126).
- 45 Farhad (2001: 128n16) suggests that this distinction is stylistic. I have argued instead that the difference is more aptly described as compositional, and may be partly accounted for through comparative analysis of the "breakline verses" of illustrations in each group; see Chagnon (2015: 284–94). For the significance of "breakline verses" (the passages of a text positioned immediately above or below a space reserved for pictures in manuscripts, often used to guide painters in their illustration of a scene), see Mehran (2006).
- 46 Farhad (2001: 125) writes that the absence of "The *Satī*" from CBL Per 268 makes the manuscript seem "almost incomplete." Other themes illustrated in seven out of the eight manuscripts include "The Poet Prostrates Himself before Dāniyāl" and "The Funeral Procession." Cf. Milstein and Brosch (1984: 90), noting that while six versions of another theme, "The Maiden's Audience before Akbār," survive today, a now-lost seventh version is said to have once been included among the Israel Museum cluster of folios; see note 37 above.
- 47 According to Soucek (1971: 92), "[In] the sixteenth century the suicide of Shīrīn becomes a popular subject for the terminal illustration of the text." Cf. Dodkhudoeva (1985: 169, no. 114).
- 48 See, for example, an illustration of c. 1400 in the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution (F.1931.32): <https://asia.si.edu/object/F1931.32>. Even small details in the *Sūz u Gudāz* illustrations, such as the princely figure's placement of a "finger of astonishment" to the mouth, are adapted from the Neẓāmīan prototype. See also Soucek (1971: plates 36–45). Cf. Dodkhudoeva (1985: 127–33, no. 50).
- 49 For further discussion of this illustration, see Chagnon (2015: 293–4).
- 50 Past scholars have called attention to a perceived thematic, rather than narrative, link between *Sūz u Gudāz* and *Khosraw and Shīrīn* – that both poems are allegories for the "mystical concept [of] self-annihilation." See Coomaraswamy in Naw'ī (1912: 5); Robinson in Arberry et al. (1962: 40, cat. no. 268), later cited by Babaie (1994a: 137) and Farhad (2001: 126) (from whom the above phrase is quoted). For Sharma's critique of the "mystical" interpretation of *Sūz u Gudāz*, see note 16 above.
- 51 For the episode, see Naw'ī (1374/1995: 298–300; 1912: 31–3).
- 52 It reads: "Desiring to worship fire and crying tears of blood, together they sang the following song" (*hūs-e ātash-parast o dīdeh khunbār / be-ham īn naghmeḥ mī-kardīd takrār*) (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 299; translation mine).
- 53 See, for example, an illustration from a *Khamseh* manuscript dated 835/1431 in the Hermitage Museum (VR-1000, fol. 169a), in Adamova (2012: 93); and another from a *Khamseh* manuscript of c. 1450–60 in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Suppl. person 1112, fol. 93a) in Richard (1997: 82, cat. no. 47). See also Soucek (1971: plates 97–9). Cf. Dodkhudoeva (1985: 170–74, no. 120).
- 54 In some ninth-/fifteenth-century illustrations of this theme, these tiers of figures are reversed, including two nearly identical versions executed in different cities thirty years apart from one another: one from a *Khamseh* manuscript dated 835/1431–2 and produced in Herat (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994.232.4); the other from a *Khamseh* partly completed in 866/1461 in Baghdad (Topkapı Saray Museum, H.761).
- 55 Soucek (1975: 17–18) has posited that Majnūn may be the youth seated opposite the figure identified as Lailī but notes that the illustration is a "standardized genre scene," making the precise identification of the figures difficult.
- 56 Modern scholars have noted this narrative parallel between *Sūz u Gudāz* and *Lailī and Majnūn*. Sharma (2010: 257n20) writes that the "love between two children is reminiscent of the legendary love story of Lailī and Majnun, first versified by Neẓāmī in Persian." See also Naw'ī (1384/1995: 298), where the editor has ascribed the "chapter title" *be-maktab do hendū-zādeh rā bā yek-dīgār va olfat va mehrbānī kardan* ("At school the two Hindu children fall in love and grow intimate with one another") to this episode, even though no "school" is mentioned in the text.

- 57 Comparison may be made to a version of the same theme from the illustrated Mughal copy of the text (British Library, Or. 2839, fol. 8a). Here, the Youth and Maiden engage in conversation with an elderly male instructor while seated on a terrace outfitted with a portable desk, books, and writing implements. See Naw'ī (1912: unnumbered plate) for a reproduction.
- 58 Schimmel ([1979] 2007: 90) notes that fire-worship is a variation of (Hindu) idol-worship in Persian poetry. Sharma (2010: 261) writes that Persian poets associated both fire- and idol-worship with Zoroastrians and Hindus alike. Note that the two couplets carried on page with "The Worship of Fire" illustration (CBL Per 268, fol. 8a) refer less to fire-worship than to cremation: *ze har khosh-rūy dar nā-khosh gerefteh / cho hizam khūy bā ātash gerefteh / cho bar mardān sar āyad 'omr-e sar-kash / cho khass be-nahand-eshān dar kām-e ātash* ("From all that is beautiful, they become gripped by sickness. / Like kindling, they go with the fire. / When the stubborn life of men comes to a close, / They throw them like twigs into the mouth of the fire") (translation mine).
- 59 Cf. Dodkhudoeva (1985: 175–7, no. 123).
- 60 For the Persian text, see Neẓāmī (1394/2015: 99). For an English synopsis, see Chelkowski (1975: 53–5).
- 61 Cf. Soucek (1971: 399–402, plates 102–5).
- 62 See also a *Khamseh* of Neẓāmī completed in Herat in 922/1516, now in the Walters Art Museum W.609, fol. 137a. According to Bursi (2020), perfuming the Ka'ba with incense and other materials was a long-standing, and possibly pre-Islamic, practice, and was intended to simulate an olfactory characteristic of Paradise.
- 63 Another example is Topkapi Saray Library A.3559, fol. 160r, for which see Uluç (2006: 399–400, fig. 303). A related "Majnūn at the Ka'ba" composition may be found in a *Majālis al-ushshāq* manuscript of c. 1000/1590 (British Library I.O. Islamic 138, fol. 192b). For the evolution of "Ka'ba scenes" in Persian manuscripts from the eighth/fourteenth through tenth/sixteenth centuries, see Simpson (2010).
- 64 In a future study, I will focus on the role of religion in Naw'ī's poem and artistic responses to it, including transformations such as this.
- 65 Like the verses referring to the "fire" and "idol-temple," this couplet occurs on the preceding page (fol. 7v), facing the illustration.
- 66 See note 29 above.
- 67 See Yarshater (1988: 265–6) for a discussion of "fresh-style" poets' inclination to exploit such paradoxes.
- 68 Majnūn ("the crazed") is based on a quasi-historical Arabian poet from the first Islamic century named Qays b. al-Molawwalḥ. In Neẓāmī's story, Majnūn composes love songs to Laili when he is separated from her. Cf. Seyed-Gohrab (2009). For a focused study of depictions of Majnūn, see Meisami (2011).
- 69 The cremation of the elderly is also alluded to, with macabre lyricism, three couplets earlier: "Behold the splendor of this place of fire-worship / Where the dust and dirt of existence are scattered like flowers" (*be-bīn rawnaq-gah-e ātash-parastī / gol-qfshān-e khass o khāshāk-e hastī*) (Naw'ī, 1374/1995: 295; translation mine).
- 70 Sharma (2010: 259) reproduces some of these couplets; I have altered his translations slightly and provided additional verses from this passage. Note the pun on the word *harām*, referring to transgression but also alluding to the sacred enclosure at Mecca, where pilgrims in *iḥrām* gather.
- 71 For the application of the literary device of *javāb* to painting, see Balafrej (2019: 91–6); Chagnon (2015: esp. chapter 2).
- 72 "The rose's "shirt" and "hem" were conventional metaphors for the beloved's body in Persian poetry as early as Ibn Sina (d. 428/1037). Cf. Saberi (2000: 34).
- 73 Notably, Majnūn, like the Maiden, is a "would-be widower" in Neẓāmī's story, never marrying Laili but flocking to her grave after her demise, where he himself perishes after a month of constant attendance. See Chelkowski (1975: 65).
- 74 Farhad (2001: 129n59) has noted that the Maiden's breasts are exposed only in the manuscripts from the first stylistic group that she studied (CBL Per 268, Walters Art Museum W.649, and the "Israel Museum" cluster), and not in the second stylistic group (CBL Per 269 and Bibliothèque Nationale Suppl. Persan 769). The Maiden's breasts are also bare in illustrations in National Library of Israel Ms. Yahuda Ar. 1067 and the "Three-Column" cluster. She is shown fully clothed in the Cairo University Museum cluster.
- 75 For further discussion of eroticized images of women in Safavid art, see Canby (2018: esp. 59–68); Habibi (2018).
- 76 Cf. Babaie (2013: 143). Habibi (2018) questions the extent to which depictions of nude (European) women were primarily appreciated as erotica by Persian viewers.
- 77 Cf. Natif in McWilliams (2013: 262, cat. no. 130).
- 78 For reproductions of these illustrations, see Farhad (2001: fig. 5) (for Walters Art Museum W.649, fol. 13a); Milstein and Brosch (1984: 90–1, plate) (for Israel Museum, 643.69).

- 79 Illustrated in Chagnon (2015: plates 6.26–9). See also note 74 above.
- 80 See Naw'ī (1374/1995: 303–6) for the text. Another illustration of the same theme is Walters Art Museum W.649 (fol. 10b), reproduced in Chagnon (2015: plate 6.31); Farhad (2001: fig. 4).
- 81 Babaie (2009: 131–6) discusses the erotic implications of “drinking from cups” in later Safavid-era pictures of partly or fully nude women coupling with European men, which often include a vignette of a dog slurping from a vessel.
- 82 Steingass (1892) and Dehkhodā (n.d.) concur on this meaning of *khīz*.
- 83 As in other languages, the words *gol* (“rose”) and *lab* (“lips”) connote the female genitals in Persian. *Lab-rīz* is commonly used in reference to a vessel poured (*rīz*, past participle of *rikhtan*, “to pour”) all the way up to the lip, or brim (*lab*). (See note 81 above for the erotic implications of “drinking from cups.”) Steingass (1892) provides an alternate gloss of “concupiscence” for *rīz*.
- 84 He was not alone in this interpretation. The painter of the ms. Yahuda Ar. 1067 version of the same theme (fol. 13b) has also inferred the latent textual references to erotic activity between the two women, although instead of depicting the Maiden's naked breasts, he rather more explicitly portrayed the dressing-woman fondling them from behind, and the Maiden, in turn, reaching around to blindly explore the area around her partner's genitals. See Chagnon (2015: plate 6.32) for an illustration. The implicit (homo)eroticism of the episode is emphasized by the dressing-woman's caress of the Maiden's belly. Comparison may be made with eleventh-/seventeenth-century depictions of (hetero)erotic foreplay in which the male lovers fondle the bellies of their female partners (e.g., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 50.164, and Victoria and Albert Museum, I.S. 133–1964, fol. 44a).
- 85 Babaie (2013: 143–4) has identified a depiction of female homoeroticism in a vignette from one of the large murals in the main audience hall of the Chehel Sotūn.
- 86 Cf. Babayan (1998: esp. 362–70).
- 87 Cf. Babaie (2009: 135).
- 88 Incidentally, the connection between the Maiden's “self-exposure” and her shame is expressed in the text of the poem as well. Immediately following her grief-driven disrobing (“Bare from head to foot ...”), Naw'ī likens the Maiden to “one disgraced from birth, without shame” (*cho mādar-zād-e rosvāyān bī nang*) (Naw'ī, 1348/1969: 50–1). Shame and shamelessness recur prominently as themes throughout the poem.
- 89 This contrasts with the W.649 version of the same theme, where her eyes are trained on her dressing-woman; see Chagnon (2015: plate 6.31); Farhad (2001: fig. 4).
- 90 The art historical bibliography on the gendered implications of “the gaze” is too long to list here. A foundational study is Mulvey (1975). A discussion in a later Persianate context may be found in Najmabadi (2005: chapter 2).
- 91 Naw'ī makes no mention of the Maiden's father anywhere in the text.
- 92 Implicit in this admittedly heterocentric formulation is that the viewer/user of the manuscript would have been male. A potentially fruitful future avenue of inquiry, however, would be to consider whether women may have also been patrons and readers of *Sūz u Gudāz* manuscripts.
- 93 For the Persian text, see Neẓāmī (1392/2013: 184, line 36).
- 94 Cf. Shaw (2019: esp. 207–8). Shaw (2019: 207) writes that “When Khosrau encounters the naked princess bathing, he recognizes her beauty but looks away respectfully. He looks inwardly to his intended Shīrīn, whom his eyes do not recognize in the water. Likewise, she dresses, thinking only of her prince.” Although this interpretation may have been one way that readers in certain times and places read the story, Shaw does not present evidence for such a reception of Neẓāmī's tale.
- 95 Cf. Habibi (2018: esp. 235), which addresses the interfusion of meaning between depictions of (semi) nude *farangī* women and canonical Persianate portrayals of Shīrīn in later Safavid painting.
- 96 This shift may be characterized as a difference first proposed by Alois Riegel between “internal coherence,” which describes scenes (in visual art or film) in which links are forged between figures in the work through glance and gesture, and “external coherence,” in which a figure gazes outward, entangling the viewer if not precisely addressing their presence. See Roxburgh (2003: 27n29), citing Kemp (1992).
- 97 For the Persian text, including the description of Shīrīn's blue cloth (*parand-e nūlgūn*), see Neẓāmī (1392/2013: 185ff.).
- 98 For other discussions of this painting, see Çakir Phillip (2014: 58); Canby (2018: 63n29); Langer (2013: 182).
- 99 For these illustrations, see Chagnon (2015: plates 6.27–9).
- 100 The Persian term used is *bad-nām kardan*, “to give [one] a bad name.”
- 101 The early modern Persianate practice of intervisuality, described in this essay, may be compared to similar practices in the production of illustrated history manuscripts in medieval France, discussed in Hedeman (2010). Hedeman describes intervisuality as “accidental or deliberate, the adaptation of a popular visual model associated with one text to illustrate another plac[ing] both texts into a network of allusions that invariably impacts how they were both understood.” This definition

aply summarizes the performativity of the intervisual adaptations from the Neẓāmīan illustrative repertoire that structure the *Sūz u Gudāz* illustrations discussed in this essay. Hedeman goes on to describe three distinct functions of intervisuality in medieval French manuscripts: a device to interlace texts, to enhance one text's authority (say, by adapting biblical illustrative models in a secular manuscript), and to supplant or stand in for (missing, implied) texts. Whether a similar performative range may be applies to Persianate intervisual practices will form the subject of a future study by the present author.

- 102 The precise dating of the mural and the palace as a whole is a matter of debate, discussed at length in Babaie (1994a; 1994b: esp. 191–209).
- 103 For a floorplan, see Babaie (1994a: fig. 3).
- 104 Three of the murals commemorate royal banquets held for toppled Mughal and Uzbek rulers who sought refuge at the Safavid court, while a fourth has been identified as Shah Ismāʿīl doing battle with the Uzbeks.
- 105 This also calls into question the mural's dating to shortly after 1059/1649.
- 106 For reproductions of these murals, see Babaie (1994b: 189, plates 175–6). Other murals in the room, also executed in the style associated with Reẓā ʿAbbāsī, reflect lyric themes of youthful lovers drinking wine in nature.
- 107 Landau (2006: 182–3, 197–8) draws a parallel between the innovative poetics of the fresh style and the contemporary development and use of the *fārangī-sāzī* style in painting.