TIME AND REALITY IN NASĪB AND GHAZAL

The appearance of the ghazal, i.e. love-poetry as an independent thematic unit apart from the nasīb, the amatory prelude of the qaṣīda, is one of the few revolutionary developments generally conceded to Arabic literary history. Although some research has been done on the genre, a considerable number of problems remains to be solved. Whether the ghazal originated exclusively from the nasīb, or whether other poetic models must be taken into account, is still open to discussion, and there is also difference of opinion as to the dominant external factors promoting its development and giving rise to the new concept of love inherent in it. Is it primarily religion, monotheism and/or Qur'ānic ethics, as has been emphasized by Muslim scholars in particular? Or does it seem more plausible to consider economic and social conditions, the disintegration of bedouin society, leisure and luxury in the pilgrim towns, want and poverty among tribes of the Hijaz in a nomadic or semi-nomadic condition? This leads us to the question of how to differentiate between the urban ghazal of ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa (d. about 93/712) and the so-called ʿUdhri ghazal of Jamīl (d. about 82/701) and other elegists. Form and content of the new genre, its motifs and techniques are not sufficiently studied either. The poets of the 7th century introduced new themes and concepts, but they also made use of conventions, sometimes subtly changing their meaning or employing them in unusual combinations. As a result, we observe a curious synthesis of tradition and innovation that has not been adequately described until today. Some of these questions could be answered with more precision. I believe, if we were able to define the basic difference between the ghazal and the nasīb with its stylized image of the bedouin hero and his lost beloved, the aristocratic representatives of tribal norms and ethics.

In view of the various elements, formal and conceptual, constituting the Umayyad ghazal, it would seem futile to look for a common denominator or a single cause explaining all of its characteristic features. However, when comparing love poetry of the jāhiliyya to amatory verses of the first Islamic century, I came to the conclusion that at least some elements of the latter could be derived from a common source, a change

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1 The terms ghazal and nasīb are used in this paper only in a limited sense, as terms of genre, and not in the general meaning of “erotic theme”.
2 I am only concerned with the pre-Islamic nasīb, for the amatory prelude of the Umayyad qaṣīda has not been analysed in detail and compared with the earlier genre up to now.
in aesthetic consciousness based on two interrelated factors: 1. a new experience of time, 2. a new attitude towards reality. When exactly this change took place is difficult to decide. As far as I can see, the first traces appear in texts from the beginning of the 7th century, thus coinciding with the preaching of Muhammad. In order to give some substance to my theory, I propose to analyse a short love-poem and to compare it to the pre-Islamic nasīb with special regard to motifs and concepts. The choice of the text is fortuitous, more or less, for there are numerous specimens of the ghazal equally suited to prove my point. As it happens, it was this particular poem which first drew my attention to the change in aesthetic consciousness mentioned above.

The poem in question forms part of the diwān of Abū Dhu‘ayb al-Hudhalī (d. about 28/649), but is attributed to two other poets as well, “a man of the tribe Khuza‘a” and Sulaymān ibn Abī Dubākīl, a contemporary of al-Āhwās (d. 105/723 or 110/728). The latter attribution is confirmed by the Kitāb al-Aghāñī in two places. There is a different version of the text in the chapter on al-Āhwās, who allegedly was inspired by it. In addition, four verses are quoted with their melody in a later section. When first analysing the poem I thought it possible that Abū Dhu‘ayb was the author, for his love-poetry presents several innovative features transcending pre-Islamic poetics, as has been noted already by J. Hell, the editor and translator of the diwān. After close comparison of the text with Abū Dhu‘ayb’s poetry, however, his authorship appears to me rather doubtful, for the poem, as to wording and technique, but also on the conceptual level, differs considerably from the rest of his diwān. In the absence of further evidence we may assume, therefore, that the verses were composed by Ibn Abī Dubākīl towards the end of the 7th century or later.

The two versions of the text are somewhat different in character. Neither of them can be regarded as complete, for we are told in the Aghāñī that Ibn Abī Dubākīl “recited his qaṣīda, in which he said...”. The quotation (12 lines) ends, moreover, on a discordant note quite unusual

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3 A shorter version of the analysis was read at the 2nd Symposium on Classical Arabic Poetry held in Cambridge, July 1983. I am indebted to the participants for valuable suggestions regarding the interpretation of the poem.


6 Loc. cit., p. 2. —Similar views have been expressed by G. E. von Grunebaum, cf. EI s.v., “Abū Dhu‘ayb”.

in a closing line. The text from Abū Dhu‘ayb’s ḏīwān is shorter (9 lines) and thus more fragmentary, nevertheless it presents the aspect of a carefully constructed, finished poem. We do not know whether the sequence of verses has been selected by the poet himself or by a sensitive transmitter, but it seems to have been done deliberately so as to produce a certain poetic effect. For this reason I decided to treat the two versions apart, and to accept Abū Dhu‘ayb’s text as principal basis of the analysis (= version A). After discussing it line by line, I shall examine the text of the Aghānī (= version B) in order to find out whether it adds to the results of the analysis or contradicts them.

Version A

1. Ya bi‘at dhima ala anja‘ū
   Ya bi‘at dhima ala anja‘ū
   Wa‘adam unlu‘a wa‘adam bi‘ami aquir
   Yaskibl amin ‘al ilwa’ik ma‘mobn
   Wa‘irb ‘arab shu‘afu’u ma‘fum‘ant
   Yadib wa ‘anam kant ‘ahl ‘u troshub
   ‘aqrir ‘amrib mara taqait
   Wa‘um ‘alina ‘aqrir ‘aqrir ‘aqrir
   Fa‘ari aljabh ha‘i ‘ajal wa‘‘ajal
   ‘an kan yinnub ‘amal ala la yinnub

2. Mali ‘ajin ‘ala jumalik aqrib
   ‘Alla ‘ajal ‘ala ‘ummal

3. ‘At‘a‘um ilhamatu shu‘uha ‘a‘jum‘ani

4. ‘A‘ari alblada ‘ala sakibb bi‘iru‘a

5. ‘Abhul ahlai ‘alami ‘ala ‘a‘r‘i
   ‘Asabi ‘unaliin ‘ar‘i ‘tajubla

6. ‘Abhul ‘asabi ‘unaliin ‘ar‘i ‘tajubla

7. ‘Abhul ‘asabi ‘unaliin ‘ar‘i ‘tajubla

8. ‘Abhul ‘asabi ‘unaliin ‘ar‘i ‘tajubla

9. ‘Abhul ‘asabi ‘unaliin ‘ar‘i ‘tajubla

1. Oh tent of Dahmā? that I am avoiding!
   Youth has passed away, but my love for her will never pass.

2. Why is it that I sigh when your camels are brought near,
   and that I turn away from you when you are nearest to me?

3. How lovely you are! May a man in distress have confidence in you, and may he ever hope to win your love?

4. The dove cries out its grief and moves my heart,
   and longing returns at night like a herd grazing far away.

5. A land where you are not dwelling seems barren to me,
   even if it is moistened by dew and flourishing.

6. Whenever my people settle in a place, I find myself unable to cast a glance at any other woman.

7. I treat the slanderers kindly, pretending to keep away from you, whereas they hate me and are busy plotting against me.
8. Whenever a nightly wind rises from the direction of your abode, it seems to me, as if the camp-site were chosen or avoided with regard to it.

9. And if I find my enemy loving you, then I love him, whether he belongs to your tribe or not.

Line 1

The two hemistichs of the first line contain separate statements and will be examined apart. The poet begins with an invocation using a well-known formula of the nasīb with a slight variation (yā bayta Dakhā?). Lichtenstädter in her study on the nasīb lists it among the formulas of introduction, quoting from an-Nābigha adh-Dhubyānī: Yā dāra Mayyata.

But instead of the camp-site the poet addresses the tent of the beloved, and he adds a new motif (alladhī atajannabu), for it never occurred to the pre-Islamic poet to avoid the place where his beloved was dwelling. The notion is common in the ghazal, however, the accepted reason being that the lover wants to protect the woman’s reputation. There is an interesting parallel in a poem of four lines by Jamīl, who at the beginning employs a curious variation of the camp-site motif: “Are you avoiding this camp-site or are you visiting it? But what is the use of visiting a camp-site whose inhabitants have left?” (a-tahjuru hādhā r-rab‘a am anta zā‘iruh/wa-kayfa yuzārū r-rab‘u qad bāna ʿamiruh). After two more lines he applies the same verbal opposition to the tent of the beloved: “I saw you visiting the tent whose inhabitants you hate, but your heart is in the tent you are avoiding” (raʿaytuka taʿti l-bayta tubghiḍu ahlahu/wa-galbuka fi l-bayti lladhī anta ḥājiruh). In this poem the original function of the motif has lost its meaning. The Ḫḍrī poet does not need a deserted camp to be reminded of his beloved, nor would he forget her after continuing his travels; she is always in his mind. We further note that the three elements merely alluded to or implied in the first hemistich are united and elaborated upon by Jamīl: the abandoned camp, the tent of the beloved, the avoidance of her dwelling. The last motif doubtless results from a change in social ethics, but it also implies an emotional conflict, for the poet refrains from doing what he most ardently wishes to do. I shall return to this point when discussing line 2, where a similar conflict is expressed.

The second hemistich leads us back, or so it seems, to the familiar atmosphere of the nasīb. The complaint of old age and failing success with

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women is one of the most frequent subjects of the qaṣida. However, if we compare the carefully constructed antithesis (dhahaba sh-shabābu wa-hubbuhā lā yadhhabu) to the treatment of old age in the nasīb, a new attitude will be perceived. The poet of the jāhiliyya reacts in two slightly different ways to the experience of growing old. He complains of the fact that women laugh at him and do not take him seriously any more, and then begins, by way of compensation, to remember his youthful pleasures and adventures, and to boast of his former success with women. Thus the motif serves as a transition to self-praise (fakhr). The second attitude consists of the initial complaint, too. The poet wonders why he still feels longing and desire, although he must realize the futility of his hopes and wishes. He consequently resolves to forget love and women, and turns to other objects, his excellent camel or his weapons, for example. Both motifs have a definite function in the structure of the polythematic qaṣida. At the same time they indicate a concept of love that is fully in agreement with the system of values advocated by pre-Islamic poets. Love means pleasure, possession, success and social prestige. It seems foolish, therefore, to continue loving a woman, if none of these objects can be achieved. When separation is imminent, the poet is expected by tribal society to “cut his bond”. Statements to the effect that love does not end are rare and merely made for emphasis, as in the following verse by Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā: “The heart of every lover finds consolation after parting, but my love for you is not consoled” (wa-kullu muḥibbin aḥdatha n-na’yu ‘indaḥu suluwwa fu’ādin ghayra ḥubbūkī mā yaslū).10 The negative particle mā used here with the imperfect tense precludes any reference to the future. The poet is concerned with the present state of his feelings only.

If we compare the conventional attitude towards old age with the idea expressed in line 1, we observe a manifest change of reaction. The passing of youth, the transitoriness of human life, finds another compensation, the continuity of the poet’s love. The second part of the antithesis (wa-ḥubbuhā lā yadhhabu) refers to the present, but it is possible to apply it to the future as well: “And my love for her will never pass”. The translation is supported by the context, as I hope to show, but it is also in accordance with the concept of love expressed in the ‘Udhri ghazal, where love is valued as an experience independent of success and prestige, and set against separation, old age and even death. Thus Jamīl says to Buthayna: “My heart will love you, as long as I live, and when I die, my soul-bird will follow your soul-bird among the graves” (yawwākī mā ‘ishtu

The anti-social tendency of this concept is evident and has been pointed out repeatedly in modern research. The bedouin hero of the jāhiliyya conforms to tribal ethics, while his vitality and vigor assist him in overcoming the adversities of love. The poet of the ghazal advocates the rights of the individual, but his protest against social demands remains passive and is finally self-destructive. His defiance of society is equivalent to a negation of life.

The factor of time will be discussed at the end of the analysis, but I should like to draw attention to the fact that the verb dhahaba in this line is the only verb in the perfect tense throughout the poem. The two other forms in the perfect (qurribait, sakanti) belong each to a temporal clause introduced by the particle idhā. They denote repetition and continuity of action and virtually represent the imperfect tense.

Line 2

In the second line, either two independent situations or a sequence of two situations are described. The poet reflects upon his own strange behaviour. He is sad when he should be happy for his beloved is approaching (mā lī aḥinnu idhā jīmāḥuki qurribat), and he turns away from her when the occasion for a meeting appears most favourable (wa-aṣuddu ʾanki wa-anti minnī aqrabu). The commentary explains that he wants to protect his beloved from slander. As in the preceding line, his behaviour is motivated by social considerations, but the wording suggests, in addition, a more subtle meaning. For the poet not only states his reaction, he also alludes to the emotional tension, the conflict of feelings in which he is involved. Here, again, the contrast to the nasīb is manifest. In the jāhiliyya love is envisaged as powerful and even violent, but it has only one dimension, as it were. Complicated emotions, ambivalence of feeling, are not yet realized and described by tribal poets. In the ghazal, on the other hand, the paradoxes of love are a favourite theme, as evidenced, for example, in the verse by Jamīl: "When she is near me, my longing increases, and when she is absent, I am sleepless because her abode is separate from mine and remote" (idhā ṣaqqabat zudtu shīṣyān wā-in naʾatariqtu li-bayni d-dārī minhā wā-li-l-buʿdi). Reflections of this kind presuppose a shift of attention from the external world, the pre-Islamic poet’s main concern, to the level of subjective experience.

Line 3

The third line is more conventional than the preceding verses and may be treated briefly. The poet’s exclamation and his two questions (li-llāhi

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11 Loc. cit., p. 109, 1.
12 Loc. cit., p. 74, 1.
darruki hal ladayki mu‘awwalun/li-muka‘afa‘in am hal li-wuddiki ma‘labu) are in
harmony with the emotional atmosphere of the poem and heighten it, but
similar verses could be found in pre-Islamic poetry as well. Within the
nasīb, however, the questions would be merely rhetorical, the expected
answer being in the negative, whereas in this context we may assume that
the poet expresses his hopes without necessarily anticipating a negative
answer.

Line 4
The two hemistichs of the fourth line are loosely connected and serve,
in different ways, as an expression of the poet’s Stimmung (mood). The
motif of the dove whose plaintive voice excites the lover (tad’ū l-ḥamāmatsu
shajwahā fa-tahji‘uni) is frequent in Umayyad love-poetry, but exceedingly
rare in verses of the jāhilīyya. It is even possible, I should think, that the
few examples we have are not authentic. For the early poet does not pro-
ject his feelings into his surroundings; the romantic attitude towards
nature whereby every object is imbued with the poet’s emotion, is
characteristic of a later age. Even when watching the lightning from the
direction of his beloved’s abode, he does not dwell on longing and sor-
row, but soon turns to a lengthy and detailed description of a
thunderstorm. Another pre-Islamic motif, which may come to mind in
this connection, is the ‘‘raven of separation’’ (ghurāb al-bayn). However,
the ‘‘raven’’ can hardly be regarded as an analogy to the ‘‘dove of the
thicket’’ (ḥamāmatu aykatin), for it belongs originally to the magical
sphere. Like other animals, especially birds, it was employed in soothsaying,
and it still had its magical connotation in the nasīb, I believe. Later,
of course, it developed into a mere symbol of hopelessness, like the
famous ‘‘Raven’’ of E. A. Poe.

The second hemistich contains the only metaphor of the poem, a
beautiful image, by which the poet’s longing is compared to a herd of
camels returning home at night (wa-yarūḥu ʿāzibu shawqiya l-muta‘awwibu). The
image was certainly not invented by Ibn ʿAbī Dubākil. We find it
already in a qaṣīda by an-Ḥābīb adh-Dhuḥaylī: ‘‘And a bosom, to
which night leads back its sorrow grazing far away’’ (wa-sadrin arāha
l-laylu ʿāziba hammiḥi).13 An-Ḥābīb is a late poet (d. after 602) who,
because of his relations with the courts of Ḥirā and Ghassān, lost some of
his bedouin style, as his poetry clearly indicates. The hemistich is one of
the few examples in pre-Islamic poetry where emotion is described direct-
ly. Thus it fits in well with other characteristics of the ghazal.

13 The Divans... Loc. cit., p. 2 (No. I 3).
Line 5

The idea expressed in the fifth line constitutes a new motif, which is incompatible, moreover, with the poetics and mental attitudes of the jāhil-iyya. The poet declares that all regions seem barren to him while his beloved is absent, even if they are moist and fertile (wa-arā l-bilāda idhā sakanti bi-ghayrihā/jadban wa-in kānat tuṭallu wa-tukhsibu). The verse indicates that the poet views his surroundings from his own individual perspective, and that he is at the same time conscious of his subjectivity and reflects upon it. The last point seems to me most important. For in realizing that the world changes according to the mood or perspective of the observer, he has lost the naive, unconscious objectivity characteristic of pre-Islamic and all early poetry. Whereas in literary periods the objective attitude is a mode of expression deliberately chosen by poets and writers, the poet of early periods has no choice. He still lives with the illusion that reality, the world around him, is as he sees it. That is why he attempts to describe it in detail and with as much precision as possible. In quitting this illusion the Arabic poet has reached a new stage of perception, which necessarily manifests itself in the poetry he creates. The relativity of time and place is often referred to by Umayyad poets. Thus Jamīl says with regard to his experience of time: "The day is long when she is dwelling elsewhere, and a year in which we meet is short" (yaṭīlu l-yaymu in shāḥaṭat nawāhāl/wa-ḥawlun naltaqī fihi qaṣīru). It may be argued that the well-known motif of the "long night" in pre-Islamic poetry implies a similar experience. That is true, of course, but the point I am trying to make concerns the degree of consciousness reached by the poet. In the jāhiliyya poets are able to describe certain phenomena, but they are not yet able to reflect upon them and to analyse their implications. The later poet's realization of his own subjectivity suggests to my mind a different stage of knowledge, which presupposes the same shift of attention or "introversion", in the original meaning of the term, referred to in connection with line 2.

A final point with regard to the fifth verse is the function of the verbal expression arā. It is employed four times in the text. Twice I have rendered it by "it seems to me"; in the two other places it does not add to the meaning, but merely indicates self-observation (line 6) or observation of a psychological situation (line 9). In all four lines the principal function appears to be the same, emphasizing the poet's subjective view. In the pre-Islamic qaṣīda arāra'aytu is not used in this function, as far as I know. The expression occurs, as a rule, in sententious statements, and would be best translated by "I hold" or "I am of the opinion".

Line 6

In the sixth line, as in the preceding verse, a new motif is introduced by Ibn Abi Dubakil. His assertion that he is unable to look at other women (wa-yahullu abi bi-l-makani fa-lā arāfīrī li-ghayrīkī narratān yataqallabu) would hardly fit in with the pre-Islamic poet's concept of love. After separation he seeks new pleasures, although memories of his former attachment overcome or even haunt him sometimes. The vow to remain faithful, on the other hand, is a leitmotiv of the 'Udhrī ghazal, as evidenced by the diwān of Jamīl in many places. The notion expressed in line 6 allows of a more subtle interpretation, however. It does not only imply faithfulness, but may be understood as an allusion to the poet's total preoccupation with the beloved. The motif was developed and elaborated upon continuously by Umayyad and later Abbasid poets. ʿAbbās ibn al-Ahnaf (d. 188/804 or 193/809) devoted a poem to it, where he describes the loss of all his perceptive faculties. Not even his tongue obeys him any more, but insists on pronouncing the beloved's name. The last verse constitutes an ingenious variation of line 6, for the poet tells us that, whenever he happens to glance at another woman, she is transformed before his eyes into the image of his beloved.¹⁵ Thus reality has lost its power at last, and the lover's mind is dominated exclusively by his imagination.

Line 7

With the seventh line we are back again within the conventional framework of the nasib. The tale-bearer, who causes trouble between the lovers, is a familiar figure and remains so throughout medieval Arabic poetry. The pre-Islamic poet's attitude towards him is simple; he blames and curses him and complains about his plottings. As for Ibn Abi Dubakil, a more artful conduct is to be perceived. Instead of showing enmity against those who hate him, he restrains himself and keeps up friendly relations, in order to safe-guard his love-affair (wa-usānītū l-wāšīhī fīkī tajammulun/wa-humū ʿalayya dhāwū ḍaghāʾīna duwwabu). His behaviour is very much at variance with the bedouin hero's code of honour, who always retaliates on equal terms. Traditional ethics have been abandoned in favour of individual moral decisions.

Line 8

The exact interpretation of line 8 presents some difficulties, although the meaning in general is clear. Whenever the wind rises from the direc-

tion of the woman's dwelling, the poet is moved by it and brings it in relation to his own place of settlement (wa-tahiju sariyatu r-ryahi min ardikum/wa-arâ l-janâba lahâ yuhallu wa-yujnabu). Hell translates the second hemistich as a statement of fact and takes it to mean that the poet's tribe actually used to settle according to the wind blowing from the region where the beloved resides.16 This does not make sense in my opinion. I prefer to regard the verb arâ as denoting the poet's subjective view. But even then two possible interpretations offer themselves. The verse may refer to the poet's wishes, i.e. he thinks that the camp-site should be chosen so as to be touched by the wind. According to the second alternative suggested by my translation, arâ is regarded as merely indicating the poet's impression, similar to its meaning in line 5. When he is excited by the wind, it seems to him as if the camp-site had been chosen in a favourable place, but he knows quite well that this is not the case. Whatever the poet intended to say exactly, the basic function of the verse remains the same, emphasizing his preoccupation with the beloved, and his inclination to see all phenomena of the external world in relation to her.

Line 9

The closing line of the text contains, in a way, a heightening of the meaning expressed in line 7. There, the poet practised restraint in order to protect himself and his beloved from the tale-bearers. Now he goes a step further in proclaiming that he will love his enemies, if they should be friends of the woman and her clan (wa-arâ l-aduwwa yuhibbukum fa-uhibbuhu). The additional remark in the second hemistich extends the promise to everyone, whether he belongs to her tribe or not (in kâna yunsabu minki aw là yunsabu). From the point of view of bedouin society and its norms this is perhaps the most unusual statement of the poem. Tribal loyalties and preferences are set aside in favour of individual relations. The verse signifies a total rupture with the pre-Islamic system of values rarely expressed in such unequivocal terms.

In conclusion, the principal means of structuring the text will be considered briefly. The sequence of verses presents the aspect of unity and coherence, but it is not strictly determined and could be reversed in some places without major effects on the interpretation of individual lines or of

16 "Und erhebt sich der nächtliche Wind von eurem Lande her, so sehe ich, wie man seinetwegen an einem Plätze halt macht und (ihn) meidet". Loc. cit., p. 43.—The verb tahiju translated here as "rises", could also be taken to mean "excites (me)", as E. Bräunlich suggested; Abu Du'aib-Studien. Der Islam 18, 1929, pp. 1-23, cf. p. 18.
the poem as a whole.\textsuperscript{17} There are no direct syntactic or semantic links between the verses, in contrast with the nasib, whose structure depends primarily on narrative and syntactic links, except for purely descriptive passages. In the ghazal the same methods of composition are still employed, as evidenced by version B, but they are to some extent replaced and augmented upon by rhetorical and stylistic means.\textsuperscript{18} As for Ibn Abi Dubākil’s poem, the use of parallelism, repetition of words and paronomasia (tajnis) is most conspicuous. From line 4 onwards each verse begins with a verb in the imperfect tense, and the same applies to the second hemistichs of lines 4 and 8. Another striking parallelism is provided by the pairs of verbs at the end of lines 5 and 8, as also in both hemistichs of line 9 with variations. The occurrence of arā four times in the poem (lines 5, 6, 8, 9) and its function has already been discussed (see p. 9). Other instances of repetition are: tahīju (4, 8), ghayrihā/ghayrīki (5, 6), yunsabu (9). Paronomasia within a line or from line to line occurs several times: dhahabal/yadhhabu (1), qurribat/qarabu (2), atajannabu/janābāl/yujnabu (1, 8), ḥubbuhā/yuḥibbukum/ω̯ibbuhu (1, 9), yahullu/yuḥallu (5, 6). On the phonological level there is a high percentage of sonors and an unusual frequency of doubled consonants, due to geminated verbs and to the poet’s preference for the second and fifth verbal form. As a result, the sound and rhythm of the text appear rather homogeneous. Despite its predominantly verbal style, we do not receive the impression of liveliness and action, but of a slow and quiet movement, which is in harmony with the sonorous quality of sound.

In addition to the rhetorical means of structuring the poem, we observe two unifying elements on the semantic level. One of them is the factor of time to be discussed at the end of the analysis. It should be noted in advance, however, that the text, from the aspect of time, falls into two parts of unequal weight, the statement “youth has passed away” in the first line, and its antithesis, as it were, the description of the poet’s unchanging love in the remaining lines. Version B somewhat obscures the issue, but does not contradict it. The second factor is the poet or “lyrical I’ of the poem constantly expressing itself, instead of disappearing behind the objects of the material world, like the poet of the nasib. In this respect the poem fully conforms in character to the ĈUdhrī ghazal, as has been demonstrated by quotations from the Diwān of Jamīl, the foremost representative of ĈUdhrī poetry.

\textsuperscript{17} In fact, the order 8, 7, 9 of the closing lines would seem more plausible.

The lines are numbered so as to indicate the relation of the two texts, additional verses being marked by small letters. Line 6 of version A is missing completely, lines 5 and 8 are contaminated in a somewhat careless manner, it seems. There are also some variants, but they do not affect the interpretation, except for line 7 (1 Khansā', 2 ilā jimalīki, 3 li-mutayyamin, 4 tabki, hammi, 8/5 tahabbu jariyyatu, 9 yawuddukum, awudduhu, 7 ukhdilifu). The text can be divided with regard to content into groups of three verses, which will be treated together. Only additional lines are translated in full.

Lines 1, 1a, 2

Lines 1 and 1a are connected by narrative means, i.e. in the manner of the nasīb. In the first verse the poet refers to his avoiding the beloved; in the second line he explains his reason, at the same time renewing the avowal of love.

1a I consented to avoid you, but I swear, in spite of avoiding you my longing remains.

The two verses are further linked by a subtle play on words, the verbal opposition of "avoiding" and "longing" (atajannabu/ajnabu). In line 2 the subject is continued, and there is also a connection by paronomasia between lines 1a and 2 (sudūd/Asuddu). The three verses evidently belong together, as they are linked by rhetorical means and by the same motif, the poet’s avoiding the beloved and the emotional conflict implied.
Lines 3, 3a, 3b

In line 3 the poet asks himself, whether he is justified in trusting in his beloved. The question is followed by memories of former meetings.

3a Verily, I saw you before this, when I was preoccupied with loving you or seeking your friendship,

3b for we were neighbours at the time, and life was easy; your words were not suspected then.

The function of the short retrospect is not easy to determine with certainty. The poet may recall the woman’s gracious behaviour in the past, in order to set his mind at rest and to justify his present confidence in her.

On the other hand, he may remind her of her previous attitude by way of reproach. At any rate, the verses form a narrative sequence composed in the way of the pre-Islamic nasīb. In addition, we observe a number of linguistic devices for structuring the passage and for connecting it with preceding and subsequent lines. There is paronomasia between lines 2 and 3a (qurribat/aqrabu/mutaqarribu), to which the verb yurqabu in line 3b may be added. A striking feature is the frequency of the morphological patterns mufāṣṣal/mutafaṣṣil, which extends to lines 4 and 5a (muʿawwal/mutayyam/muwakkal/mutaqarrib/mutajāwir/mutaʿawwib/mutanassab).

Lines 4, 8/5, 5a

Contrary to the preceding passage, the following lines are independent of each other and in no way determined as to their sequence. Their grouping together is justified only by a certain homogeneity of content, for they are all concerned with the poet’s feelings and his preoccupation with the beloved. Both in line 4, where the plaintive voice of the dove is mentioned, and in line 8/5 the poet speaks of his being affected by the phenomena of nature.

8/5 Whenever the wind blows from the direction of your abode, it seems to me that the land is rendered moist and flourishing by it (i.e. by the rain it brings).

The translation of arā as expressing the poet’s subjective view corresponds to its interpretation in line 5 of version A. It would hardly make sense to regard it as a statement of fact. Although the form of the verse is the result of contamination, the idea it conveys would fit in with other motifs of the ghazal, especially of the later courtly ghazal, where the cosmic power of the beloved is glorified. The following line is of dubious authenticity, as only one manuscript of the Aghānī transmits it.

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5a Whenever I see a woman called by your name, my longing for you increases, and I hope you may be related to her.
The poet’s excitement when hearing the name of his beloved pronounced is a common motif in the ghazal; thus Jamīl says: “Someone called out, while we were at the heights of Minā, and moved my heart to sadness without knowing it. He called another woman by the name of Laylā…” (wa-dā‘īn da‘ā idh nahnu bi-l-khayfī min Minan/fa-hayyaja ahzāna l-fu‘ādi wa-lam yadri – da‘ā bi-smi Laylā ghayrahā…).20 Line 5a is connected with lines 8/5 and 9 by the repetition of arā, and with line 9 by paronomasia (mutanassab/yunsabu).

Lines 9, 7, 7a

The last group of verses is concerned with the poet’s attitude towards other people. Line 9 constitutes an isolated statement, the poet’s promise to love his enemies, if they happen to be friends of the beloved. Lines 7 and 7a, on the other hand, form a narrative sequence similar to the passages above. The variant ukhāli‘u “I contradict” for usānī‘u “I treat (the slanderers) kindly” slightly changes the meaning of line 7, for it weakens the opposition between the poet's friendly conduct and the plotting of his enemies. Line 7a contains memories of the past, this time of an unpleasant nature.

7a Later you conspired with them against me, and I was angry; anger on that account is surely warranted.
The line refers to the lovers’ quarrel, a favourite theme in the ghazal of ‘Umar ibn Abī Rabī‘a and other poets of his circle. But however serious the quarrel, it usually ends with peace being restored. Thus line 7a can hardly be regarded as the closing line of the poem.

It is evident from the examination of version B that the first six verses form a coherent sequence, as they are closely structured on different linguistic levels. From the seventh line onwards (= line 4) the order of verses is not strictly determined, except for lines 7 and 7a. There are also some obvious lapses, such as the contamination of lines 5 and 8. The means of structuring the text are almost identical in both versions (parallelism, repetition of words, paronomasia), but version B provides in addition several narrative links similar to the nasīb. The text of the Aghānī suggests to my mind a transmitter who faithfully reproduced the beginning of the qaṣīda, and who then became less conscientious, leaving out lines or adding to the text without specific purpose or plan. Version A, on the other hand, seems to be the result of deliberate selection.

20 Loc. cit., p. 100, 9-10.
Despite several missing verses, all relevant motifs are retained (avoidance of the beloved, confidence in her, the poet’s being affected by nature, the tale-bearers). It is further significant that only those verses are omitted which contain references to the past. As a result, version A is more homogeneous with regard to time, as also with regard to its emotional atmosphere or Stimmung. The memories evoked by the poet in version B slightly impair the “lyrical” character of the text, especially in line 7a. They do not contradict the interpretation, however, for the function of memory in this context clearly differs from its function in the nasīb.

On the basis of the preceding analysis the two factors mentioned at the beginning, time and reality, can be described and interpreted as they manifest themselves in nasīb and ghazal. The first issue may be considered from two aspects: a. time as an objective factor in the poem, b. time as experienced subjectively by the poet.

a. In the nasīb time appears, on the one hand, as linear or historical. The transitoriness of all human affairs is revealed in the traces of the abandoned camp, in separation, old age and loss. On the other hand a cyclical movement manifests itself in the process of nature, in recurrent seasons, life and fertility of plants and animals. Both movements, linear and cyclical time, form a carefully planned contrast sometimes, as A. Hamori pointed out in his essay “The Poet as Hero”. In the poem of Ibn Abī Dubākil linear or historical time is referred to only once, when he says in the first line: “Youth has passed away”. In version A it is the only statement in the perfect tense and by its isolation acquires a certain prominence. The subsequent verses may be understood as its opposition or compensation, as it were, the elaboration of the poet’s avowal: “And my love for her will never pass”. It is also significant that cyclical time, the process of nature as an objective fact, is totally absent from the poem. The reason is obvious, I believe, for the world around the poet, its phenomena and conditions, have no independent weight. They are important to him and mentioned only in so far as he is able to respond to them emotionally and to react to them.

b. Time exists and can be experienced in the present only, the past and the future being an “extension of the mind” (distentio animi), memory and expectation, as St. Augustine states in his famous meditations on time (Confessions, Chapter 11). Both the poet of the nasīb and the poet of the ghazal speak within the present, but their experience of time is different, for the first “extends his mind” towards the past, whereas the second is turned to the future. The initial situation of the nasīb is always sad and unsatisfactory, because love and happiness are gone. The poet

either recalls the past in order to redeem his diminished self-esteem, or he is visited by memories of the beloved and repeats in his imagination the experience of former happiness. He then lives through an emotional crisis, he weeps violently and finally recovers and has done with it. In compliance with the demands of tribal society he "cuts his bond". His hopes and wishes are rarely projected into the future. This is one of the main points of difference between nasīb and ghazal. For the ghazal, even if the past is alluded to sometimes, is concerned with a present love-affair, which means that the poet's imagination is dominated by the future, by hope and fear. When parting from the beloved, Jamīl not only weeps, like the pre-Islamic poet, but anticipates his future sufferings: "By God, I am sure that many a tear will be shed, when we are dwelling far from each other" (a-lā qad arā wa-lāḥi an rubba ʿabratin/idhā d-dāru šaṭṭat baynanā sa-tarīḍu).22 In version A of Ibn Abī Dubākil's poem the sequence of verbs in the imperfect tense denotes a continuous present. In version B the poet explains or justifies his attitude towards the beloved in some places by reference to the past (lines 1a, 3a, 3b, 7a). However, contrary to the function of memory in the nasīb, his recollections have no significance or function in themselves. Their relevance depends exclusively on the present state of his love-affair. The future is not mentioned explicitly in the text, but it is always implied, for all statements in the imperfect tense express continuity of feeling and repetition of action and reaction. There is no opposition between human time and time in the process of nature, as in the nasīb. In its place, another antithesis is to be perceived; historical time, the transitoriness of human life, is contrasted with time as it is experienced by the "lyrical I" of the poem. As such, its movement is neither linear nor cyclical, but continuous, the unchanging flow of the lover's emotion.23

The experience of time thus described presupposes a degree of introspection unknown to poets of the jāhiyya. It is a well-known psychological fact, which can be applied to individuals and to peoples as well, that the discovery of the world precedes the discovery of the self. The pre-Islamic poet's perception of reality, his naive objectivity, constitutes a previous stage of knowledge compared to the later poet's reflection of his own subjectivity.24 The shift of attention from the external

23 In a more sophisticated age the lover's experience of time is expressed directly and succinctly, as in the verse of ʿAbdās ibn al-ʿAfnaf: "Her love is such that the heart knows nothing else besides, no "before" remains and no "thereafter" (ḥawāsh hawān lam yaʿlam al-qalb ḍhayrul/laṣṣa lahu qablu wa-lāṣṣa lahu bāḍu). Loc. cit. No. 186, 3.
24 The opposition I am trying to establish, as also my use of the term "naive", comes very near to Schiller's concepts of the "naive" and the "sentimental" in his essay "Über naive und sentimentale Dichtung" (1796), for he based his definition on two different ways
world to the poet’s self, which must have taken place in the course of the 7th century, necessarily provided a strong impulse to his creative faculties. The aesthetic consequences are twofold; they consist in a shift of emphasis with regard to content and in a new mode of expression. The pre-Islamic poet’s passionate desire for giving permanence to the phenomena of the material world by describing them in detail and with as much precision as possible, is a dominant factor in his poetry and explains many of its characteristic traits. In the nasīb, as in early epic literature, reality is viewed as if it existed apart from the observer. The poet depicts what he sees and hears, without telling us what he thinks or feels about it. In the ghazal this passion for the visible and concrete has been slowly replaced by the poet’s preoccupation with himself and his emotional life. Ibn Abī Dubākīl does not mention a single object or fact, present or past, without informing us about his personal attitude or reaction. The phenomena of nature, people and events, even the beloved, are not mentioned for their own sake, but offer an opportunity to dwell on his inner experience. The frequent occurrence of arā noted in the text serves the same purpose, I believe, emphasizing the poet’s subjectivity. If we wanted to express it somewhat pointedly, we might say that the poet of the nasīb regards himself as part of the world, whereas the poet of the ghazal regards the world as part of himself. “Lyrical” poetry in the traditional, romantic understanding of the term has become possible in Arabic literature.

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of perception and, as a consequence, on two modes of expression. Schiller’s employment of the terms “naive” and “sentimental” is slightly ambiguous, however, and therefore sometimes misleading. On the one hand, they are absolute categories to be applied to poetry of all periods. On the other hand, they denote stages of human development; “naive” poetry in the true sense, as represented by the Homeric epics, is a stage of literature irrecoverably lost. Only geniuses like Shakespeare or Goethe, who appear incongruous in their own time, may still be called “naive” poets. It is the second notion which seems to me relevant to the present discussion.