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Article in *Comparative Critical Studies* · June 2020

DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2020.0362

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Russifying the *Radīf*: Lyric Translatability and the Russo-Persian Ghazal

REBECCA RUTH GOULD

Abstract:

Building on Earl Miner's insight that the lyric is a 'foundation genre' of world literature, this article develops this idea in the context of thinking about lyric translatability. I do this by examining the Russo-Persian lyric, a hybrid literary genre that developed within Russian literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Radically unlike its classical Persian prototype, the Russo-Persian ghazal is a case study in lyric translatability. I explore the development of this hybrid genre from its appropriation by the Russian Romantic poet Afanasy Fet (d. 1890) to its influence on Sergei Esenin's *Persian Motifs* (1925), a text that adds a new dimension to the Russian-Persian encounter. Moving beyond historicist treatments that focus solely on direct impact or empirical encounters, this exploration of the Russo-Persian lyric traces the movement of literary form as a process of cultural translation that sometimes misunderstands the original, but which also transforms it, generating new literary form for a receptive audience. Broadly, this research sheds light on how the ghazal and its adaptations modifies and extends our understanding of lyric form, and on what is and is not translated through the lyric genre.

Keywords: ghazal, Orientalism, translation, translatability, Esenin, Hafez, Fet

The literary comparatist Earl Miner once argued that, of all literary genres, the lyric is the 'foundation genre for the poetics or literary assumptions of cultures throughout the world'.¹ Miner substantiates this view through examples drawn from Chinese, Greek, Sanskrit, Japanese and Korean, but lyric translatability can be inferred from an even broader range of European and non-European literatures. There are good methodological reasons for preferring a narrow approach to what might appear as an impossibly broad one. If one wishes to illuminate a specific literary history, or shed light on one author or text, a narrow approach may provide the greatest certainty, albeit at the cost of suppressing more cosmopolitan trajectories. Even well-intentioned efforts to explore

the lyric form from outside European contexts end up reifying existing European norms.² Yet there are also compelling arguments in favour of Miner's universalism, not least its ability to challenge presentist and Europe-focused narratives of literary history, and to expand our understanding of poetry's place in the world.

This essay pursues Miner's insight with reference to the translatability of lyric form. Rather than policing the borders of translation, the concept of lyric translatability is developed here within a framework of cultural translation that extends translation's meanings beyond conventional borders. It helps us identify the aspects of literary form that are most amenable to translation. In the process, the concept of lyric translatability builds on the work of prior poets and translators who aimed to bring about a meeting of cultures through what Peter Burke has called a 'double process of decontextualization and recontextualization, first reaching out to appropriate something alien and then domesticating it'.³ Translatability does not equate to universality; the lyric is variable, heterogeneous and not (necessarily) prominent in all literatures. It is, however, a recurrent feature of the lyric that it translates more readily than do other literary genres. Hence the widespread popularity of the ghazal, the haiku, and other lyric verse forms, while equally significant genres have failed to make a comparable mark on world literature. Lyric translatability reveals what is translatable about literature in general in ways that other genres are not, no matter how important they may be on their own terms.

Given its implications for how we narrate world literary history, the conflict between what might be called the *translatable* and the *untranslatable* approaches to the place of the lyric within world literature must be made visible. In addition to affecting how we narrate the history of literature, these differences have implications for our understanding of literary form. My own approach here is aligned with the translatable approach. I have been struck as a translator from, and scholar of, Persian by the translatability of the ghazal relative to other literary genres, including the *qaṣīda* and the *masnavī*. Lyric translatability is arguably related to Persian poets' perception of the lyric as a transcendent form, that can easily dispense with contextual signs that mark other genres.

The exclusion of premodern and Asian literatures from the mainstream history of the lyric has both shaped and constrained our understanding of this generic form. Even when we cannot reasonably or usefully wholly dislodge Eurocentric narratives, we can provincialize them.⁴ The account of the hybrid Russo-Persian lyric that follows aims

to do that by narrating a circuitous and far from linear encounter that extends across languages and centuries. The pages that follow present three ways in which translation, broadly understood, facilitates such provincialization: as a mask, when it comes into existence through an intermediary source text; as cultural transcreation, where no original source text is posited but a general aesthetic is imitated; and as plagiaristic appropriation, where the boundaries between author and translator are challenged and the role of the original is obscured. While each phase is presented in a chronological sequence, I do not propose a linear model. Rather, I create a framework for discussing the role of translation and its others across, between, and within literary cultures. More specifically, I showcase the role of the lyric in enabling these cultural transmissions.

The transmission of a literary ethos delineated in these pages illustrates what I call 'lyric translatability', by which I refer to the capacity of the lyric as a genre of discourse to transmit culture norms in ways that eludes other discourses.⁵ This unique quality of the lyric is pinpointed by Aamir Mufti when he argues with reference to the Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz that 'the concept of lyric makes possible [...] the translation, the passage, of [...] poetry from a literary history that is specifically Urdu into a critical space for the discussion of Indian literary modernity as a whole'.⁶ As presented here, lyric translatability plays an important role in the transmission of cultural identity. Whereas Mufti tells the story of lyric translatability with reference to the passage from the Pakistani nation-state to a South Asian cosmopolitan modernity, I narrate a parallel movement performed by the Russo-Persian lyric from its placement with a belated Russian Romanticism to a cosmopolitan and multilingual Caucasus.

By conceptualizing the lyric as a genre of discourse rather than a free-floating form, I hope to extend the meaning of genre in ways that bring together strands in European and Islamic literary theory, even while recognizing the incommensurability of these and other literary traditions.⁷ The examples offered here are case studies of specific kinds of translational encounters, explorations of the logics informing the movement of language across different cultural contexts. They do not foreclose the many ways in which texts, cultures, and experiences move across languages, or the reasons for their transmission.

The Russo-Persian lyric reflects the prominent place of poetry within the two cultures from which it emerges. Alongside cultural affinities, the highly formalized poetics that have shaped both traditions bring them into a fruitful relation, making them ideal candidates for

cross-linguistic comparison. It follows that a comparative examination of the lyric voice across these two literatures can tell us much about lyric translatability and the potential as well as the perils of literary comparison. The circuitous trajectory of the Russo-Persian lyric traced here moves from the translations of Hafez into Russian by Afanasy Fet, to the transcreated Persian aesthetic by the Russian lyric poet Sergei Esenin, to the translation of Esenin's poems into Persian. Moving between the concept of form and genre, I discuss the Russo-Persian ghazal as a discursive literary genre that translated core aspects of the Persian literary aesthetic to a new audience. In this respect as in others, the Russo-Persian ghazal functions as does the postcolonial Urdu ghazal identified by Mufti; it articulates 'a selfhood at odds with the geometry of selves put into place by partition', and in the process contests nation-bound identities.⁸

To the extent that it exemplifies lyric translatability, the ghazal flourishes in contexts of cultural intersection. The Russo-Persian ghazal comes to life in multilingual encounters, as it contests 'the urge to flatten world literature and make it monologic' with the lived experience of texts in translation.⁹ While the present discussion is concerned with a hybrid form that, as we will see, is more Russian than Persian, it is nonetheless necessary to broadly sketch the contours of the classical Persian genre that serves as its inspiration and in some respect as its prototype. Section One therefore reviews the classical Persian ghazal according to its three most striking features: compression of space and time, verse sequence, and the role of the refrain (by which I translate *radīf*). This section is followed by close readings of poems that result from three types of translation: as a mask (Section Two), as a mode of cultural transformation (Section Three), and, finally, a case wherein translation is misleadingly presented as an original creation by the translator (Section Four). Without comprehensively treating the Russo-Persian literary encounter, I hope that these case studies set the stage for closer engagement with Russian appropriations of – and deviations from – Persian lyric form.¹⁰

1. THE PERSIAN GHAZAL AS PROTOTYPE

In order to probe the deeper structural and aesthetic issues at stake in this consideration of lyric translatability, I will briefly review a ghazal by the archetypal Persian lyric poet Hafez (c. 1320–1389), from three angles: the reconfiguration of space and time, the ordering of verses, and the role of the refrain that imposes on the verses a coherence that intimates, yet ultimately diverges from, the work of rhyme in European languages.

The ghazal discussed here belongs to the ‘question and answer [*so’āl va javāb*]’ genre of Persian poetics; it is constructed as a dialogue between the poet and his lover.¹¹ I begin with the first dimension, the ghazal’s reconfiguration of space and time, as reflected in its opening verse:

گفتم غم تو دارم گفتا غمت سر آید
 گفتم که ماه من شو گفتا اگر بر آید
 گفتم ز مهرورزان رسم وفا بیاموز
 گفتا ز خوب رویان این کار کمتر آید¹²

(I said, I’ll suffer because of you. S/he said, Your suffering will pass.
 I said, Become my moon. S/he said, I wish I could.
 I said, Learn the custom of loyalty from lovers.
 She said, Among the moon-faced this is rarely done.)

A particular difficulty of translating this (and any other) ghazal relates to the third-person pronoun, which is not gendered in Persian. I have used the bifurcated s/he to render this intrinsic duality and to anticipate the Russian engagements that follow. While such a rendering is inadequate from the point of view of literary translation, it reminds us of the ambiguity of the Persian original, and the challenges it poses to lyric translatability. Far from alienating the reader, the generic and ungendered status of the speakers has the effect of generalizing the space that surrounds them. It generates a text ‘at the intersection between abstracted signs and tangible spaces’, to quote Domenico Ingenito.¹³ The foundation for lyric translatability is already activated within the ghazal itself, through the ambiguity of gender markers.

This opening exchange, which follows the format of the traditional ‘question and answer’ genre, is reproduced in a series of variations in subsequent verses. Hafez’s dialogue between two lovers is driven forward by the tension between them, which is situated in a world of abstracted signs, and is immune to every external process and temporal movement. The verses operate in a suspended geography occupied only by the two lovers, at odds with everyday conventions of space and time. Abstraction from the external world characterizes this literary form.

The abstraction from space and time evident in this lovers’ dialogue is formalized through a sequentiality that is determined by the aural qualities rather than the thematic content of the verse. This feature, which supports Jonathan Culler’s argument that the lyric ‘displays more openly its figuration, its rhetorical positing, in lieu of argument or demonstration’, is the second constitutive feature of Hafez’s ghazal that was later communicated to Russian poets of the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries.¹⁴ The dialogue continues, structured by the repetition of ‘*goftam*’ (‘I said’) at the opening of every hemistich and of verbs ending in ‘d’ at the end:

گفتم که بر خیالت راه نظر ببندم
گفتا که شب رو است او از راه دیگر آید
گفتم که بوی زلفت گمراه عالمم کرد
گفتا اگر بدانی هم اوت رهبر آید

(I said, I will barricade your image from the road of my sight.
S/he said, It is a thief, and will arrive through a different path.
I said, The scent of your hair has led me astray.
S/he said, When you understand, you will see that the scent can also be
your guide.)

As we can see from this intimate dialogue, the poem is driven forward by the tension between the lovers, as well as by the verses’ sounds. The combination of intensity of feeling rather than analytical sequence constitutes the lyric’s aural logic, and evokes the musicality that, according to Robert von Hallberg, ‘authenticates poetry’.¹⁵

Abstraction of space and time and aural logic constitutes the Persian lyric ethos as it was transmitted to Russian poets. But in order to fully grapple with the transposition of the Persian lyric to a Russophone environment during the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, it is necessary to engage briefly with the third constitutive feature of the Persian lyric that was transmitted to Russophone audiences, and which proved particularly propitious for assimilation into the Russian language. I refer to the *radīf*, arguably the foundation of the Persian lyric, and a poetic device that, as we will see in Section Three, Esenin in particular used to extend the possibilities of Russian poetics.¹⁶

One of the most distinctive and recognizable features of Persian poetics, the *radīf* entered literary history by way of a contrast with Arabic poetic norms. In the twelfth century CE, the Persian poet-critic Rashīd al-Dīn Vaṭṭvāt dedicated a special section of his rhetorical treatise, *Gardens of Magic in the Nuances of Poetry*, to explaining this literary device. Defining the *radīf* as ‘a word, or more than one word [...] that recurs after the rhyming word’, Vaṭṭvāt noted that the Arabs ‘do not use *radīfs*, except for recent innovators displaying their virtuosity’.¹⁷ Elevating the *radīf* to the gold standard of poetic excellence, Vaṭṭvāt added that the poet’s talent (*tab*) and excellence (*baṣṭat*) are ‘made evident when he composes poems with a *radīf*’.¹⁸

At the same time that the *radīf*'s formalization within the literary-critical tradition was heralded by Vaṭvāt, Persian poets turned increasingly to this literary device to develop the resources of the Persian literary language as it defined itself against – and within – Arabic poetic genres and norms. Technically, the *radīf* is a formal device that follows the rhyme letter (known in Persian as the *ravi*) and closes each distich in classical Persian verse.¹⁹ It is repeated immediately following the rhyming letter, twice in the first distich, and at the end of every subsequent one. The *radīf* functions like a rhyme, by intensifying a verse's sonic resonance, but is often longer and more formally demanding than rhyme alone. Beyond its suitability for Persian, the *radīf* has the potential to be activated in unpredictable ways in Russian, a heavily inflected language with highly structured sound patterns internalized within its morphology.

Beyond the feats of technical virtuosity it enables, the *radīf* is significant from the point of view of comparative poetics: it links form with content and challenges prevalent notions concerning 'what can be brought together and held' within the space of a single poem.²⁰ Semantic rhyme features heavily in Russian poetry, as it does in many European poetic traditions. Yet, the *radīf* takes the idea of semantic rhyme one step further, making it the dominant feature of the poem, and extending it beyond the single word unit.

2. FET'S MASKS OF TRANSLATION

Perhaps not unsurprisingly in light of Iran's geographic proximity to Russia, as well as the shared lyric tradition discussed below, the contact between these two literatures runs deep. It is also not surprising that the first substantial contact between the two literatures transpired within the framework of Russian Romanticism, given that, as one Russian critic has claimed, one of Romanticism's 'most characteristic and structural features' is its 'typological correspondence with the Persian and Turkic literary system of the Middle Ages, and above all with lyric poetry from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries'.²¹ In 1829, Pushkin boasted to the Qajar court poet Fazil Khan that Hafez and Sa'adi were 'known names' in Russia.²² While critics have later speculated that Pushkin's words were 'either an error or a bit of flattery', this statement attests to the elevated place of Persian in the Russian literary imagination even prior to Russian poets' translation of the Persian canon.²³ Even if the names of Hafez and Sa'adi were not as famous in Russia as he had claimed, Pushkin at least realised that they merited such recognition.

Many decades would pass before Persian was institutionalized within the Russian academy, or the lyric (*lyrika*) within Russian poetics. Meanwhile, poets such as Vasily Zhukovsky and Griboedev cultivated relationships with Persian in their literary output—in the latter case as an extension of his position as a diplomat for the Russian legation to Iran.²⁴ While Iran-related themes appear in Griboedov's verse, he does not make much effort to cultivate a specifically Persian aesthetic.²⁵ The first extended engagement with the ghazal in Russian poetics took place in the versions of Hafez by Afanasy Fet (1820–1890), a Romantic poet known for the intensity of his lyric voice.²⁶ Fet did not know Persian; his versions of Hafez were based on a volume by the German poet Georg Daumer that the Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev had gifted him following his return from a trip to Germany.²⁷ Daumer's work on world literature, including volumes such as *Polydora: ein weltpoetisches Liederbuch* (1855), significantly expanded the global repertoire of poems available to be set to music by the major composers of his era, including Brahms, who considered Daumer his favourite poet. Daumer also authored a study of the life of the Prophet Mohammed that was sympathetic to its subject.²⁸ However, his access to Hafez was quite mediated, and his own poetry has been described as 'pseudo-oriental'.²⁹ Like Fet, Daumer did not know Persian, and relied on the erudition of his contemporaries to access the Persian text.

In Fet's preface to his translations, originally published in 1860 in the journal *Russkoe Slovo* (Russian Word), he erroneously indicates that Daumer was translating directly from Persian. Fet begins by acknowledging his ignorance of Persian and then invokes the authority of Daumer's German versions. 'Not knowing Persian', he states, 'I used a German translation, put together by a translator well-known in Germany'.³⁰ Fet defended this approach, noting that 'a German translator, as befits a [good] translator, would sooner harm his native language than depart from the source text' (p. 208). As numerous scholars have shown, Fet's faith in the accuracy of Daumer's versions to Hafez's poems was ill-founded, even by the scholarly standards of his own time. Writing in the decades after Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* (1819), which introduced Hafez to the German world, Fet cites this text in the epigraph to his Hafez cycle. When he began translating Daumer's versions of Hafez in 1860, numerous German translations of Hafez were available, including that of von Hammer (1812–13), Friedrich Ruückert (1822), and Rosenzweig-Schwannau (1858).³¹ While each of these translations was done on the basis of the Persian text, Daumer's was a free imitation

of the German versions at his disposal. Tellingly and in contrast to Fet, he refers to his Hafez cycle as a '*Sammlung und Auswahl*' ('collection and selection'), not a translation.

Fet travels further along the path of domestication than did his German counterparts, partly as a result of the relative foreignness of Hafez to the Russian literary culture of the time. Recognizing this foreignness, Turgenev was apprehensive concerning the reception of Fet's versions of Hafez with Russian readers. As he wrote to Fet in response to the translations he had sent him, the poems would be 'rejected as insignificant' and would have the effect of 'chilling the opinion of the reading public' with regard to a poet whom they did not know, and whom they could only come to appreciate through a 'conquest of the senses'.³² Yet, for a literary culture that was as yet ignorant of the ghazal, and for a poet such as Fet who looked to Hafez as to an instrument for transforming Russian literature, Daumer's transcreative approach had advantages that could not be found in von Hammer, Ruückert, Rosenzweig-Schwannau, or even Goethe.

Above all, Daumer's Hafez enabled Fet to craft a poetic persona that closely mirrored his own. As Alekseev argues, Hafez's image acquires in Fet 'the characteristics of a literary mask' for the poet himself.³³ This fusion was partly enabled by the biographical parallels (imagined and actual) between the two poets: the year when Fet composed his versions of Hafez was a year of upheaval in his personal and professional life, and a time when he was severing his longstanding working relationships and preparing to retire to the countryside. At this turning point in Fet's life, he began to conceive of himself as the very 'mystic and sage' who, as he described in his preface to his versions of Hafez, 'in his ripe old age [...] gives up the fruits of his many years of labour' and 'begins to sing with such bright colours, evincing life, with the aroma of genuine freshness that adorn the songs of youth' (p. 208). These words, applied by Fet to Hafez in 1860, can also be read as Fet's self-portrait, and as an anticipation of the future that awaited him.

Notwithstanding the personal proximity that Fet appears to have felt with his subject, this particular Persian-Russian lyric encounter was marked by extreme linguistic, historical and cultural distances that were not always registered in the text. Alongside Fet's lack of access to the Persian originals, and his reliance on a similarly mediated German version, the explanatory notes appended to Fet's versions of Hafez are sometimes misleading. For example, Fet mistakenly described the Ka'ba as the 'mosque and burial place of Mohammed'. Also, Fet's

editorial comments essentialize Hafez's cultural milieu. In his preface, for example, Fet describes 'Asia' as 'a country of wonders that is constituted by contradictions' (p. 209). Since the German version from which Fet was working was not annotated, we can be certain that the explanatory notes are entirely his own.

Given both translators' lack of access to the original text, it might seem a stretch to call Fet's versions of Hafez translations, were it not for the fact that this is how Fet referred to them, and how they are discussed in subsequent literary history. As literal translations, Fet's renderings are clearly lacking. But what if we read them as poems, from the vantage point of Russian poetics? Viewed from the perspective of the target language, Turgenev's harsh assessment seems extreme. No matter how remote their relationship to the (sometimes non-existent) original, Fet's versions of Hafez create an eloquent and sometimes poignant Russian lyric self. I will focus here briefly on two texts. The first is the final poem in Fet's Hafez cycle, which, following Daumer, rearranges five of seven verses (*bayts*) from the ghazal of Hafez beginning 'The path of love has no end'.³⁴ One striking Russian couplet reads:

Любовь свободна. В мире нет преграды,
Которая бы путь ей заступила.³⁵

(Love is free. There are no borders in the world
that could block her path.)

Daumer's corresponding text is:

Der Liebe Weg ist unbegrenzt, sie halten
So kalte Schranken nicht und enge Hagen

(The path of love is unbounded, it holds.
There are no cold barriers to narrow its path.)³⁶

These verses correspond to the opening verse (*matla'*) of Hafez's ghazal:

راهیست راه عشق که هیچش کناره نیست
آنجا جز آن که جان بسپارند چاره نیست

(The path of love has no end.
Aside from dying, there is no relief.)

while the Russian, German, and Persian verse each has a different emphasis, their lyrical power springs from the same insistent desire to assert the boundlessness of love. The concept of love's boundlessness echoes throughout the Persian corpus, including in Hafez.³⁷ Yet this

concept is rendered with equal force in German and Russian in an idiom that suits those respective literary traditions. Fet's Russian is clipped and emphatic. The statement 'love is free [*liubov svobodna*]', which is achieved in only two words in Russian thanks to the inflected nature of the language and its elision of the 'to be' verb in the present, adds to the poetic intensity of the verse. Daumer's German is more prosaic, with the second clause (*sie halten / So kalte Schranken nicht und enge Hagen*) functioning as a continuation of the first (*Der Liebe Weg ist unbegrenzt*). Finally, Hafez links the two clauses with a connector (که). The thought extends across the entire verse, with an emphatic negation (نیست) of the kind that frequently features in the ghazal. In each of these versions, the boundlessness of love is conveyed, but according to the poetic resources of each language.

My second example from Fet's Hafez cycle not only does not correspond to a Persian original. In fact, it breaks with the logic of the Persian ghazal:

Ах, как сладко, сладко дышит
Аромат твоих кудрей!
Но ещё дышал бы слаще
Аромат души твоей.³⁸

(Oh, how sweet it is to breathe
your curls' scent!
Even sweeter would it be to breathe
the scent of your soul.)

Daumer's German reads:

Ach, wie süß, wie süß sie duftet,
Deiner Locke krause Zier!
Doch sie duftete noch süßer,
Duftete dein Herz mit ihr.³⁹

(Oh, how sweet, how sweet she smells,
Your curly lock is a frilly ornament!
She smelled even sweeter
when your heart had her scent.)

Here, Fet faithfully translates, not Hafez, but his German source. This translation gracefully renders the German original, replicating much of its grammar and syntax. In the process, it violates the logic of the Persian ghazal, structured as it is according to the principle of what William Jones famously called 'pearls at random strung' whereby standalone verses are linked by assonance and other aural and aesthetic characteristics.⁴⁰ In the

versions of both Daumer and Fet, the basic unit of the poem is no longer the stand-alone couplet (*bayt*), as with Hafez, but the stanza, as in much European poetry. This particular poem may have been inspired by the following verse of Hafez:

آن طره که هر جعدش صد نافه چین ارزد
خوش بودی اگر بودی بوییش ز خوش خوبی

(That lock of hair, every curl of which is worth one hundred Chinese perfumes
Would be pleasant if it had a smell of kindness.)⁴¹

Even if the German and Russian verses cited above can be linked to the Persian, the sequencing of the verses in German and Russian imposes an analytic logic onto the text that is absent from the original. As a comparison of the Persian with the Russian and German shows, one Persian verse (comprised of two hemistichs) has been expanded into two verses (comprised of four hemistichs), and aural logic has been supplemented with the analytical logic of a comparative argument ('how sweet. . . Even sweeter').

These two brief examples offer a varied account of lyric translatability. The first demonstrates an instance in which the lyric dimension of a Persian ghazal is transmitted across not two but three languages, notwithstanding that neither translator had access to the original. In the second case, the aural movement of Persian is supplanted by an abstract comparison. Fet missed much about the Persian source. At the same time, a vital dimension of the Russo-Persian literary encounter was established through these approximations, which were part of the poet's efforts to reconstruct his own literary persona in the image of the Sufi mystic. Thanks to Fet's incomplete and partial translations, Hafez entered Russian poetry and the ghazal was incorporated into Russian poetics. The Russian domestication of Hafez was by no means complete with Fet's cycle, but this work inaugurated a process that led to more extensive developments during the subsequent century.

In the contemporary scholarly environment, wherein centuries of scholarship have facilitated access to Hafez in the original through numerous translations, cribs and other learning aids, mediated encounters such as that between Fet and Hafez are easy to dismiss as derivative, or, even worse, as arguments against world literature.⁴² Yet, as important as it is to highlight the consequences of a misrepresented or entirely non-existent original, approaches that merely note distances and divergences between the source text and the resulting translation tell us little about the translatability of literary form. Were we to simply list

the ways in which Fet's imitation of Hafez diverges from the original, and classify it as a failed translation on that basis, many crucial aspects of the aesthetic encounter would be missed. We would also miss how lyric translatability extends translation's meanings and refashions literary form.

Having examined a case of translation based on an intermediary text, Section Three turns to a case of what might be called cultural transcreation, in contrast to a recreation of a specific literary text.⁴³ In the case of the transcreation that follows, a composite *idea* of the Persian lyric, rather than a specific text, was rendered into Russian verse by the modernist poet Sergei Esenin (d. 1925). While cultural transcreation is a variation on the anthropological concept of cultural translation, it is not so much a culture that Esenin translates as a specific ethos of lyric translatability, that is not reducible to any single culture.⁴⁴

3. ESEININ'S CULTURAL TRANSCREATIONS

Esenin's *Persian Motifs* (1925) was composed the year of the poet's death.⁴⁵ In many respects these poems mark the culmination of his lifelong engagement with lyric form. While not specifically composed as ghazals, the lyric voice that Esenin pioneered in this volume is heavily indebted to the ethos of the ghazal, including its compression of space and time, its aural sequentiality, and its use of the *radīf*. Of equal importance for Esenin's Russo-Persian aesthetic is his idealization of a world where time and space operate according to the same aural logic informing lyric translatability that Fet discerned in Hafez. Just as Fet's Hafez cycle inaugurated his self-chosen exile from urban life and retirement in a village, so are Esenin's *Persian Motifs* inspired by his sojourn in the Caucasus, a land that Russian poets had for many generations regarded as a repository of poetry.⁴⁶

Esenin journeyed three times to Baku between 1924 and 1925. During his last trip, which extended from 28 July to 3 September 1925, he composed the poems that were later published as *Persian Motifs*.⁴⁷ Among the most important sites of poetic inspiration for Esenin, Baku during the 1920s was a crossroads of multiple literary traditions, and a meeting place for Iranian, Georgian and Armenian intellectuals of many different backgrounds and persuasions.⁴⁸ The poems in *Persian Motifs* were inspired by the nineteenth-century Orientalist tradition spearheaded by Afanasy Fet, as well as more directly by poets personally known to Esenin who were also influenced by Persian poetry. These

poets, who helped to create what is known to literary history as Russia's Silver Age, included Dmitri Kuzmin, Nikolai Gumilyov, Konstantine Balmont and Valery Bryusov. With respect to the Russian poets of this generation, it has been claimed that 'the complex period in Russian poetry between 1900 and 1917 could almost be called the Persian era of Russian poetry in terms of stylistic affinities'.⁴⁹

Esenin's entire poetic output is heavily marked by a lyric ethos. Viewed alongside his longstanding engagement with lyric form, *Persian Motifs* appears as the culmination of his lifelong movement towards lyric translatability. Whether through direct influence or happenstance, the refrains of poems such as 'The harvest moon grows cold' and 'I have never been to the Bosphorus' further develop the kinship between the ghazal and the Russian lyric. Alongside its lyricism, the second defining feature of *Persian Motifs* is its Orientalism. The poet blends inspiration from Hafez, Omar Khayyam and Ferdowsi (as mediated to him in Russian translations) with a contemporary interest in the events taking place on the other side of the Iran-Soviet border.⁵⁰ In terms specifically of the ghazal form, Esenin may have been influenced by the Azerbaijani ghazal writer Aliagha Vahid (1895–1965), with whom, according to local reports, he became acquainted with while living in Baku.⁵¹

The poems in *Persian Motifs* convey the three constitutive aspects of ghazal noted in Section One (compression of space and time, aural sequentiality, and the refrain). Although the poems were clearly inspired by the Persianate milieu of early Soviet Baku, like Fet, Esenin did not know Persian, nor was he permitted by the Soviet government to travel to Iran, notwithstanding his efforts to do so. Esenin instead relied on the stories about Iran which his journalist friend Veniamin Popov shared with him.⁵² Notwithstanding his oblivion to his local environment, Esenin took an interest in the Azeri language. He confessed to a friend that he had started to address his father Ivan Ivanovich in the Azeri form of his name as Ivanzadeh.⁵³

For their expansion of the borders of translation, Esenin's Russified Persian lyrics are case studies in the mechanics of lyric translatability. In addition to introducing a new literary idiom into Esenin's Soviet horizons, these poems acquired afterlives when they were translated into Persian in 2014 (as discussed in the next section). Above all, Esenin's poems further develop the hybrid Russo-Persian lyric that Fet inaugurated but could not complete. Esenin attains to the apotheosis of Russo-Persian lyricism through intertextual allusions, imagery, and assonance. As Evsiukova has written, the fact that in *Persian Motifs*,

‘Russia and Persia occupy the same position on the chromatic spectrum’ shows that, for the poet, ‘they are two sides of the same [poetic] creation’.⁵⁴

Three moments from *Persian Motifs* will serve here to convey Esenin’s hybrid Russo-Persian lyric. Just as Persian ghazal relies on a *radīf*, so does the first example here rely on a refrain (Russian *напев*) to achieve its poetic effect. In metapoetic fashion, Esenin explicitly invokes the function of the refrain in his verse:

Ты сказала, что Саади
Целовал лишь только в грудь.
Подожди ты, Бога ради,
Обучусь когда-нибудь!

Ты пропела: «За Ефратом
Розы лучше смертных дев».
Если был бы я богатым,
То другой сложил напев.

You said that Sa[‘]di
Kissed only the breast.
Be patient for God’s sake!
One day I’ll learn!

You sang: “Beyond the Euphrates
Are roses better than mortal maidens.
If I were rich,
I would have composed another refrain.

Although these verses are not structured according to the form or metrics of the classical Persian ghazal, they nonetheless retain its constitutive features: compression of space and time, aural rather than analytic sequentially, and an orientation to a refrain, which in this case has only metapoetic status.

Consider now a second example: a poem from *Persian Motifs* that deploys a refrain in a way that closely parallels the role of the *radīf* in a Persian ghazal:

Воздух прозрачный и синий,
Выйду в цветочные чащи.
Путник, в лазурь уходящий,
Ты не дойдешь до пустыни.
Воздух прозрачный и синий.

The air is clear and blue.
I’ll go out to the flower thicket.

Traveller, in the receding azure,
 You'll never reach the desert.
 The air is clear and blue.

This poem is heavily marked by repetition. Its movement relies on aural logic in its nuanced interaction with a colour spectrum unique to Esenin. While the recitative quality of the lyric is found in many different traditions, and rhyming features heavily throughout world poetry, this refrain resembles some Persian *radīfs* in that it repeats entire words, such as *'siniī'* ('blue'), rather than clusters of sounds without semantic significance. The resonance of cobalt-blue (*siniī*)—the specific colour invoked as a refrain in the above-quoted verses—in both Russian and Persian poetics, in which contexts it is associated with both the sky and the sea, further intensifies the link.

Noting that imagery taken from the blue colour spectrum recurs twelve times across the poems of the *Persian Motifs*, Abtin Golkar—an Iranian specialist of Russian literature—argues that for Esenin, the colour *siniī* evokes 'a sky or a sea that is not bound by anything, within which the entire world exists in a condition of freedom'.⁵⁵ According to Golkar, the effect of deploying this chromatic spectrum is similar in Russian and Persian. He further outlines how Esenin uses the yellow colour spectrum in ways that mirror the poetic associations of this colour in Persian poetics. For Hafez, gold and honey colours denote opposing qualities. Similarly for Esenin, the juxtaposition of these colours is figured as an opposition between the 'soul and the body' and 'spirituality and materiality'.⁵⁶ Even more revealing of lyric translatability, Golkar underscores how Esenin constructs a unique poetic style by masterfully deploying the colour spectrum. Far from being alienable from their poetic context, in Esenin, as in the lyric generally, 'word creation on the basis of colours, such as "dark-blue frontier" and "light-blue country"... can only be understood in relation to their placement within Esenin's work as a whole'.⁵⁷ The cross-referencing and intertextuality on which Esenin's colour scheme depends may account in part for why this poem cycle remains relatively unknown in English. Here, the lyric appears less translatable and more bound to languages with lexicons that register the full colour spectrum.

Having considered the significance of Esenin's metapoetic refrain and his use of the colour spectrum to generate a Russo-Persian lyric, I will conclude this inquiry into lyric translatability by examining two stanzas from another poem in *Persian Motifs* that adopt the aural sequentiality identified above as a constitutive feature of the Persian ghazal.

Никогда я не был на Босфоре,
 Ты меня не спрашивай о нем.
 Я в твоих глазах увидел море,
 Полыхающее голубым огнем.

Не ходил в Багдад я с караваном,
 Не возил я шелк туда и хну.
 Наклонись своим красивым станом,
 На коленях дай мне отдохнуть.

I've never been to the Bosphorus,
 so don't ask about this it.
 I saw the sea in your eyes,
 blazing with blue fire.

I didn't go to Baghdad in a caravan.
 I didn't carry silk or henna there.
 Bend your graceful frame.
 Let me rest at your knees.

These stanzas reflect all three constitutive features of the Persian ghazal noted above: compression of space and time, aural sequentiality, and the refrain (ending alternately on *ye*, *yom*, and *nom* in the Russian). As with *Persian Motifs* generally, there are salient differences between these verses and the classical Persian form from which they draw inspiration. Crucially, the final verse does not carry the refrain as far as it would have to in order to satisfy the criterion for a Persian ghazal. Yet there is a pervasive sense in each of the poems included in *Persian Motifs* of a poetic idiom that is activated only through recitation. Although such lyricism is partly a product of Esenin's unique poetics, it was the Persian ghazal, as mediated to him by Fet and other Russian poets, that enabled him to find his own lyric voice.

4. TRANSLATION VERSUS AUTHORSHIP

Having considered a case study of cultural translation wherein the source text is only accessible via an intermediary language, and of cultural transcreation, wherein no source text is posited, I conclude by considering a case wherein it is not distance from, but proximity to, the original that makes the text a subject of contestation. This is the first full translation of Esenin's *Persian Motifs* into Persian, by the Iranian writer and translator Hamidreza Atash-bar-ab in 2014.⁵⁸ Atash-bar-ab's translation is accompanied by an extensive introduction that, as first reported by the Iranian Esenin scholar Abtin Golkar, surreptitiously

plagiarizes an earlier study of the text by the Soviet scholar Belousov.⁵⁹ In his review of Atash-bar-ab's work, Golkar notes that 'the reader cannot guess [...] that [his] text [...] is from Belousov and not the outcome of the 'many attempts and [extensive] research' which Atash-bar-ab attributed to himself. Although Atash-bar-ab purported to produce an original work, the structure, subheadings and prose of his text all mirror this Soviet work, which dates from 1968. In fact, Atash-bar-ab translates word-for-word the work of the earlier Soviet scholar; he describes his own work on the title page of the book as 'research', when in fact it is a translation of Belousov's text. Writing for the online media site *Alef*, Atash-bar-ab defended himself from the allegations of plagiarism on the grounds that he cited Belousov extensively in his introduction, and therefore could not be accused of concealing his reliance on the Russian text.⁶⁰

Atash-bar-ab's self-defence when faced with accusations of plagiarism harkens back to Fet's misleading presentation of his relationship to Hafez's Persian originals: whereas Atash-bar-ab misrepresented his use of Belousov, Fet misrepresented Daumer's access to the Persian text. Both paratexts reveal translators working in vibrant literary cultures that actively assimilated foreign texts, authors and genres into their literature. But whereas Fet acknowledged his debt to the intermediary text and freely recreated the original, Atash-bar-ab concealed his debt to the earlier Soviet scholar. The difference in their approaches reflects key differences in the contemporary status of translation as compared to the nineteenth century. The negative reception accorded Atash-bar-ab's translation suggests that in Iran today as in Europe, translation is consistently regarded as inferior to non-translational creation. Within such a framework, transcreation is necessarily of a subordinate status and lyric translatability remains undertheorized and underappreciated.

The account of lyric translatability given by these episodes in the development of the Russo-Persian lyric also tells a different story about the relation between source and target, author and translator, original and translation, than either Fet's disregard for the original or Atash-bar-ab's surreptitious appropriation of it viewed in isolation suggests. That story is one of translatability and its role in constituting and conditioning world literature. Like Jonathan Culler, albeit for an entirely different literary tradition, "I have not attempted to determine what is or is not a lyric but have been asking what is the best model of the lyric for encouraging a capacious appreciation of these poems."⁶¹ Without defining the lyric or delimiting its parameters, I have examined that aspect of lyric form

which is characterized by its propensity for translation across space and time. Each poem discussed here has generated new lyrical registers in the languages they have touched. Understood in these capacious terms, lyric translatability is reinvented every time it is generated, and cannot be held captive to any national tradition. Possessed neither by the author, the text, or the tradition in which it is manifested, lyric translatability invites the reader to experience literary language as if for the first time, every time the poem is read.

NOTES

This research has been supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under ERC-2017-STG [grant agreement no. 759346]. All translations from Russian and Persian are my own. Diacritics are indicated only in the notes. I would like to thank Maria Swanson, Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll and Kayvan Tahmasebian for feedback.

- 1 Earl Miner, 'Why Lyric?', in *The Renewal of Song: Renovation in Lyric Conception and Practice*, edited by Earl Roy Miner and Amiya Dev (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2000), pp. 4–5. For a different take on this important essay, see the introduction to this special issue.
- 2 One example of this tendency is a special issue of *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, specifically dedicated to 'The Lyrical Phenomenon' (no. 21, 2001). While this issue contains several articles on Arabic poetry, lyric is engaged more extensively as a concept with reference to European texts than with reference to Arabic texts.
- 3 Peter Burke, 'Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe', in Peter Burke and Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, eds, *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 10.
- 4 My concept of provincializing European narratives is informed by Dipesh Chakrabarty's influential work, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- 5 For an earlier effort to articulate a concept of lyric translatability (not denominated as such), see Rebecca Ruth Gould, 'Hard Translation: Persian Poetry and Post-National Literary Form', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 54.2 (2018), 191–206.
- 6 Aamir Mufti, 'Towards a Lyric History of India', *boundary 2*, 31.2 (2004), 245–274 (p. 255).
- 7 In this respect, I further develop a line of inquiry initiated in Rebecca Ruth Gould, 'Inimitability versus Translatability: The Structure of Literary Meaning in Arabo-Persian Poetics', *The Translator*, 19.1 (2013), 81–104.
- 8 Mufti, 'Towards a Lyric History of India', p. 274.
- 9 Karima Laachir, Sara Marzagora, and Francesca Orsini, 'Significant Geographies: In lieu of World Literature', *Journal of World Literature*, 3 (2018), 290–310 (p. 293).
- 10 More extended considerations of the Persian ghazal, can be found in Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth, eds, *Ghazal as World Literature, vol. I: Transformations of a*

- Literary Genre* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2005), and Dāryūsh Šabūr, *Āfāq-i ghazal-i Fārsī: sayr-i intiḡādī dar taḡavvul-i ghazal va taḡhazzul az āghāz tā imrūz* [The universe of the Persian ghazal: critical research on the evolution of the ghazal and taḡhazzul from its beginning until the present] (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Paḡīdah, 1976).
- 11 On this genre, see Wojciech Skalmowski, 'Modes of Address in the *maxlaḡ* of the Ghazals of Sa' di and Hafez', in *Studies in Iranian Linguistics and Philology* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2004), pp. 531–540.
 - 12 *Divān-e Hāfez*, edited by Parvīz Nātel Khānlārī (Tehran: Kharazmi, 1983), pp. 470–471 (ghazal 227).
 - 13 Domenico Ingenito, Hafez's "Shirāzi Turk": A Geopoetical Approach', *Iranian Studies*, 51.6 (2018), 851–857 (p. 857).
 - 14 Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 351.
 - 15 Robert von Hallberg, *Lyric Powers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 10.
 - 16 For more extended discussions of the *radīf* in Persian poetics, see Paul Losensky, "DEMAND, ASK, SEEK": The Semantics and Rhetoric of the *Radīf Ṭalab* in the Persian Ghazal', *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, 21 (1997), 19–40, and Rebecca Ruth Gould, 'Form Without a Home: On Translating the Indo-Persian Radīf', *Translation Review*, 90 (2015), 15–28.
 - 17 Rashīd al-Dīn Vaṭvāt, *Ḥadā'iq al-siḡr fī daḡā'iq al-shī'r* [Magic Gardens in the Nuances of Poetry], edited by 'Abbās Iqbāl (Tehran: Sanā'ī, 1404/1984), p. 315.
 - 18 *Ibid.*
 - 19 See Wolfhart Heinrichs, 'Radīf', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, 12 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2004), VIII, 368.
 - 20 Lorna Crozier, 'Dreaming the Ghazal into Being', in *Bones in Their Wings: Ghazals* (Regina, Canada: Hagios, 2003), p. 66.
 - 21 S. L. Kaganovich, "Vostochnii romantizm" i russkaia romanticheskaia poezīia', *Kontekst: Literaturno-Teoreticheskie Issledovaniia 1982* (1983), 192–223 (p. 192).
 - 22 A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 17 vols (Leningrad: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1937–1959), III, 160.
 - 23 Aleksis Rannit, 'Iran in Russian Poetry', *The Slavic and East European Journal* 17.3 (1973), 265–272 (p. 267).
 - 24 For Griboedov's biography, see Lawrence Kelly, *Diplomacy and Murder in Tehran: Alexander Griboedov and Imperial Russia's Mission to the Shah of Persia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002).
 - 25 The influence of Oriental themes on Griboedov's work is discussed in Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 162, 198–200.
 - 26 Although a major voice in the Russian literary canon, Fet has only been the subject of a few extended studies, such as Richard Gustafson, *The Imagination of Spring: The Poetry of Afanasy Fet* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1966).
 - 27 Georg Friedrich Daumer, *Hafis: Eine Sammlung Persischer Gedichte; Nebst Poetischen Zugaben Aus Verschiedenen Völkern Und Ländern* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1846).
 - 28 Georg Friedrich Daumer, 'Mahomed und sein Werk', published in *Orientalische Gedichte* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1848).

- 29 Henry Burnand Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 152, with reference to *Orientalische Gedichte*.
- 30 Afanasii Afanasevich Fet, *Stikhotvoreniia* (Moscow: Izd-vo K. Soldatenkov, 1863), p. 207. All future quotations from Fet are to this volume; page references are given in parentheses in the main body of the text.
- 31 For the German reception of Hafez, see Shafiq Shamel, 'Persian Ear Rings and "Fragments of a Vessel": Transformation and Fidelity in Hammer-Purgstall's Translation of Two Ghazals by Hafiz', *Monatshefte*, 102.1 (2010), 22–37. Also see Alexander Bubb's article in this special issue.
- 32 I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, Pis'ma, 1859–1860, vol. IV (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), p. 115.
- 33 P. V. Alekseev, 'Hafiz v Tvorcheskom Soznanii A.A. Feta', *Sibirskii filologicheskii zhurnal* (2014), 71–79 (p. 75).
- 34 *Divān-e Hāfez*, pp. 162–163 (Ghazal 73). Intriguingly, this verse is cited by Golkar in connection with his exegesis of Esenin's colour scheme (see note 55 below).
- 35 Fet, *Stikhotvoreniia*, p. 224 (poem XXVII).
- 36 Daumer, *Hafiz*, p. 45 (poem LXXVII).
- 37 Leonard Lewisohn, ed., *Hafiz and The Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010).
- 38 Fet, *Stikhotvoreniia*, p. 219 (poem XVIII).
- 39 Daumer, *Hafiz*, p. 51 (poem LXXXVII).
- 40 For the history of literary criticism on this topic, see Julie Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Lyric Poetry: Orient Pearls* (London: Routledge, 2003) and Francis Pritchett, 'Orient Pearls Unstrung: The Quest for Unity in the Ghazal', *Edebiyat*, new series, 4 (1993), 119–135. The modernist Iranian poet Bijan Elahi reflects on this distinctive aspect of the Persian lyric in his commentaries on Hafez. See Bijan Elahi, 'The sequence of Hafez's verses [*Tavāli-ye abyāt-e Hāfez*]', *In shomāreh bā ta'khir*, 7 (2013), 60–76.
- 41 *Divān-e Hāfez*, p. 988 (Ghazal 486).
- 42 A point made most influentially by Emily Apter, *Against World Literature* (London: Verso, 2013), with the unfortunate, if underexplored, consequence that her argument would appear to limit readers to engaging with texts that they can read in the original language. Also see the counterargument of Lawrence Venuti, 'Hijacking Translation: How Comp Lit Continues to Suppress Translated Texts', *boundary 2*, 43.2 (2016), 179–204.
- 43 Literary transcreations generally involve prose renderings such as P. Lai, *Great Sanskrit Plays, in New English Transcreations* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1964) and R. K. Narayan, *The Mahabharata: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic* (New York: Viking 1978). Notably, transcreation has not been extensively theorized for poetry.
- 44 See *The Translation of Culture: Essays to E. E. Evans-Pritchard*, edited by T. O. Beidelman (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971) and the critique in Talal Asad, 'The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology', in James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 141–64.
- 45 Sergei Esenin, *Persidskie Motivy* (Moscow: Sovremenniiia Rossiia, 1925). Although never published in English in full, some of the poems belonging to this cycle have

- been translated by Rebecca Ruth Gould as ‘The harvest moon grows cold,’ *Xavier Review*, 32.1–2 (2012), p. 100, and ‘I have never been to the Bosphorus,’ *Berkeley Poetry Review*, 42 (2012), pp. 88–89. For a preliminary discussion of Esenin’s Russo-Persian lyrics, see Rebecca Ruth Gould, ‘Sergei Esenin’s Impressions from the Caucasus,’ *Xavier Review*, 32.1–2 (2012), pp. 97–99.
- 46 On the topic of Russian poets’ idyllic relationship to the Caucasus, see Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- 47 For these dates, see İsaخان İsaخانlı, *Şeir gülüstanının təkrar olunmaz çiçyi–Serqey Yesenin* (Baku: Xəzər Universitəsi, 2010), p. 105.
- 48 For Baku as a cosmopolitan crossroads, see Bruce Grant, ‘Cosmopolitan Baku,’ *Ethnos*, 75.2 (2010), 123–147.
- 49 Rannit, ‘Iran in Russian Poetry,’ p. 267.
- 50 For a discussion of Esenin’s local sources, see Nelli Saak’ian, ‘Shagane tyi moia, Shagane!’, *Literaturnaia Armeniia*, 12.10 (1970), 73–76.
- 51 This acquaintance (which has been contested by scholars such as İsaخان İsaخانlı), is rendered in fictional form in Gusein Nadzhafov, *Balakhanskii mai: dokumental’no-khudozhestvennaia povest’* (Baku: Giandzhilik, 1986). Also see K. Mahmudova, ‘Azerbaijanskii poet Aliqha Vahid i Sergei Yesenin,’ *Esenin i poeziia XX i XXI vekov: traditsii i novatorstvo: Materialy mezhd. nauch. konferentsii*, edited by O. E. Voronov (Riazan’: Riazanskii gosudarstvennyi universitet imeni S.A. Esenina, 2004), pp. 175–179.
- 52 For Popov’s travels in Iran, see N. K. Verzhbitskii, *Vstrechi* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1978), p. 185.
- 53 V. Boldovkin, ‘He is nearest and dearest for all of us’, *Slovo*, 2 (2003), p. 83.
- 54 L. V. Evisukova, ‘Lyrika Esenina 1924–1925 (k problem khudozhestvennoi evoliutsii)’, Avtoreferat for kandidatskaia dissertatsion (Moscow: N. K. Krupskaiia Pedagogical University, 1979), p. 12.
- 55 Abtin Golkār, ‘Sistema tsvetovykh oboznachenii v tsikle ‘Persidskie motivy’ S.A. Esenina v kontekste persidskoi kul’tury’, in *Sergei Esenin: Dialog s XXI vekom* (Riazan’: Riazanskii gos. universitet im. S.A. Esenina, 2011), p. 276.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 279.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 280.
- 58 *Dar māyehā-ye irāni [Iranian themes]*, translated by Ḥamīdrezā Ātash-bar-āb (Tehran: Hermes Publishers, 2014). One poem from Esenin’s cycle was previously translated by Ḥeshmat Jazani in *Dah shā’er-e nāmdār-e qarn-e bistom [Ten Famous Poets of the Twentieth Century]* (Tehran: Morgh-e Āmin Publishing House, 1993), p. 114.
- 59 Abtin Golkār, ‘*Cherā taḥqīq va tarjomeh?* [Why scholarship and translation?], *Enteqād-e ketāb*, Vol. 4, supplement of *Negāh-e now*, 89 (21 June 2011). The book that was the apparent subject of plagiarism is V. G. Belousov, *Persidskie motivy* (Moscow: Znanie, 1968).
- 60 Ḥamīdrezā Ātash-bar-āb, ‘*Chun gharaz āmad hunar pūshideh shud* [When bias comes, art is veiled],’ *Alef*, website, 27 October 2016: <<http://old.alef.ir/vdcfjedjxw6dxma.igiw.html?407340>> [accessed 3 May 2020].
- 61 Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, p. 349.