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Abstract: This article examines the temporality of interlinear translation through a case study of the rendering of Friedrich Hölderlin's poetry into Persian. We argue that, in its adherence to the word order of the original, the interlinear crib prioritizes the temporality of the instant (*kairos*) over the temporality of the linear sequence (*chronos*). *Kairos* is made manifest in the literalist translations of Hölderlin by the modernist Iranian translator-poet Bijan Elahi (d. 2010). This inquiry advances our understanding of the role of syntax in constituting literary form and in shaping translation, and exposes the contingency of the translator's decisions in every given literary juncture.

Keywords: Persian, translation, temporality, *kairos*, Hölderlin, Bijan Elahi, poetry

The Temporality of Interlinear Translation: *Kairos* in the Persian Hölderlin

by Kayvan Tahmasebian and Rebecca Ruth Gould

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از کسی اما که چنان تو، روسو،
جان او حوصله‌ی بحر بود و شد حصن حصین ـ
با آن نفس مطمئن، با آن
قریحه‌ی شیرین شنیدن، گفتن،
که یکی از ملأ اعلی
میخداوار و یکی، نادان که اهورایی
پس چه بی آداب، ترجمان از زبان پاکانند
دستگیر خوبان[1]

From someone but that like you, Rousseau
his spirit was the sea's patience and became a fortified fortress—
with that certain soul, with that
sweet taste of hearing, saying
that one from holy fullness
God-of-wine-like and one ignorant that divine
then how unceremoniously they are translators of the language of the pure
understood by the good.

Quoted above is a translation into Persian of a portion in Friedrich Hölderlin's "Der Rhine," by modernist Iranian poet Bijan Elahi (1945-2010), followed by our word for word back translation of the Persian into English. In both versions, the words barely hang together, and it's difficult to extract any meaning from them. We read that the "assured soul" has a "sweet taste of hearing" but we never learn what it says or why, or what these words actually mean. There is a breakdown in communication, even while the poetry itself remains. Even more than its German source, Elahi's translation is a pouring forth of words that have lost both sense and direction, and that signal no sense of finality. Unfinished sentences melt into remnants of the succeeding sentences. The words make sense individually—perhaps only

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individually—but their contiguity sparks meanings that evaporate as soon as their parsing begins. Michael Hamburger's English translation of the poem is more intelligible:

> But he whose soul, like yours,
> Rousseau, ever strong and patient,
> Became invincible,
> Endowed with steadfast purpose,
> And a sweet gift of hearing,
> Of speaking, so that from holy profusion,
> Like the wine-god foolishly, divinely,
> And lawlessly he gives it away
> The language of the purest, comprehensible to the good.[2]

It was in consultation with the original poem and with an interlinear crib provided by the polyglot translator, Azizeh Azodi (1924-2008), that Elahi produced this translation. He is engaged less by *what* Hölderlin represents, as with *how* he represents it, and the temporal relations entailed in that representation. Elahi's translation stubbornly refuses to diverge from the original arrangement of words, while being extremely flexible in its production of neologisms for domestic use.

Interlinear translations like Elahi's are subject to infamy in the world of translation. As idiosyncratic word-for-word reproductions of literary texts, they are not much favoured by translation studies or by world literature scholars. Few perceive a benefit in reading barely readable and extremely literal translations. Even when they are used in the process of generating translations, interlinear cribs are rarely if ever accepted as complete in themselves.[3] Notwithstanding this disdain, interlinear glosses have not been entirely overlooked by translation practitioners. They originated in the practice of translating sacred scriptures, in which context divine speech would be harmed by profane intervention.[4] The idea of relating sacred language to a word-for-word reproduction of word order was already defended in late antiquity when, to justify a word-for-word approach to translating the Scriptures, Jerome proclaimed in his "Letter to Pammachius" (396 CE) that "in translation [*interpretation*] from

the Greek–except in the case of Sacred Scripture–where the very order of the words is a mystery–I render not word for word, but sense for sense."[5]

The first fully extant translation of the Qur'ān into Persian, preserved in the *Translation of Tabari's Commentary* (*Tarjoma-ye tafsir-e Ṭabari*, 961-76) produced by a group of scholars in Samanid-ruled Central Asia found a beautifully poetic aura in its interlinear fidelity to the original Arabic. Friedrich Hölderlin's idiosyncratic translations of Pindar (1800) and Sophocles (1804) similarly cleaved close to the original Greek syntax. Although Walter Benjamin offers in his seminal essay, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers" (1923), a fervent theoretical defence of literal translation, he did not put these ideas into practice in his translations of Baudelaire, Proust, and Saint-John Perse. Lu Xun's essay "Hard Translation and the Class Character of Literature" (1928) proposes another rehabilitation of radical literalism in translation. Recent scholarship, however, has paid little attention to literal translation. In an age when even Google Translate can make more sense than a human-generated interlinear crib, the exigency or significance of word-for-word rendering continues to be overlooked.

The grammarians of antiquity employed word for word translation for academic purposes such as philological analysis and language instruction. As a pedagogical method, interlinear translation continued to flourish until the early twentieth century. Yet entirely interlinear translations are deemed unsuitable for readers who lack access to the original because they estrange everyday meaning. Interlinear translation is not supposed to reproduce the original sense in another language; rather, as we argue in this essay, it aims to reproduce the *sequence* of ideas in the original, to offer a glimpse of the experience of reading and encountering the original under the aegis of a *kairos*-based qualitative temporality that is distinct from the quantitative temporality of *chronos*.[6] Interlinear translation organizes words according to the order of a foreign syntax. Because of the syntactic incompatibility between different languages, interlinear translations are often difficult to read in the target language.

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While interlinear translation is not an adequate instrument for conveying the meanings produced through an utterance, it can usefully bring into relief the ways in which meanings are re-ordered as they move from one language to another.

The contribution of syntax to hermeneutics and aesthetics was explored by the eleventh century Persian grammarian ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (1009-1078 CE). Writing in Arabic, Jurjānī developed a theory of *naẓm* (order) when he endeavored, in his treatises *Asrār al-Balāgha* (Secrets of rhetoric), and *Dalāʾīl al-Iʿjāz fi-l-Qurʾān* (Proofs for the inimitability of the Qur'ān), to explain what makes the language of the Qur'ān inimitable. Jurjānī's emphasis on discursive order as a constituent of the text's "meaning of meaning" which goes beyond the mere signification of individual words has implications for the contemporary study of literary texts.[7] As the syntactic order of words reflects the orchestration of thought in a text by prioritizing and anteriorizing certain words, Jurjānī's notion of discursive order can provide a foundation for studying interlinear translations with respect to the way they reflect the presentation of thought in the original text.

In the present essay, we further Jurjānī's inquiry by approaching interlinear translation as a temporal mechanism which is based on a different axis of fidelity: to the "now" of the text, that is, to the way the ideas are *present*ed in the text. We discuss this temporal structure of a translation's modality in the context of the Persian translation of Friedrich Hölderlin's poems by Bijan Elahi. As Elahi suggests in his preface, his translations are premised on interlinear glosses and remain, to a large extent, literalist in their final versions. Before turning to Elahi, we must first clarify what Hölderlin has to offer to this approach. We then examine how Elahi's translation of Hölderlin can enrich an interlinear translation method. Finally, we inquire into the exigency of the temporal structure of interlinear translation. That is, how the recognition of the temporal structure of interlinear translation can help us better appreciate word-for-word glosses in particular, and literary works in general.

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Syntax and Literary Form

Fidelity to the "time of the now" is particularly necessary in a Hölderlin translation. Not because Hölderlin took this task upon himself in his translations of Pindar and Sophocles, but because the remarkable swelling of the words *jetzt*, *nun*, *so,* and *heute* in Hölderlin's poems, all referring to an exigent now, call for synchronisation to the time of the text. When Hölderlin opens a stanza in "Wie wenn am Feiertage …," with "So stehn sie unter günstiger Witterung [so now in favourable weather they stand]," or more delicately in another with "Jetzt aber tagts! Ich harrt und sah es kommen [But now day breaks! I waited and saw it come]," or in the single final "Dort [there]," the poet's deixis reaches out across the boundaries of time and space to the reader's active imagination. With deixis, the reader is invited to partake in the poet's creation that passes in an eternal "now."

The temporal relations of the artwork in Hölderlin's poems, however, are not limited to the deictic functions that make possible the imaginative communion between the poet and the reader across times and space. In his notes on *Oedipus* and *Antigone*—two plays by Sophocles that he translated in 1804—Hölderlin anticipated the temporal structure of representation through his cryptic remarks about the *Rhythmus der Vorstellungen* (rhythm of representation): "Hence the rhythmic succession of representations [*der rhythmischen Aufeinanderfolge der Vorstellungen*] wherein the *transport* manifests itself demands a counter-rhythmic interruption, a pure word, *that which in metrics is called a caesura.*"[8] Temporality is implicated in a notion of rhythm when understood, as in musicology or in poetic meters, as the punctuation of sequences by interruptions, which creates the effect of duration. However, Hölderlin uses the notion in a context in which rhythm is constituted by a collision between the finite and the infinite, the incalculable "living sense" of the immanent medium and the "calculable law" that delimits the originally shapeless content. "Among men," Hölderlin states, "one must above all bear in mind that everything is *something*, i.e. that it is cognizable in the

medium (*moyen*) of its appearance, and that the manner in which it is defined can be determined and taught" (317).

For Hölderlin, this calculable structuring principle is necessary for appreciating the artwork beyond mere subjectivity; it delimits otherwise shapeless content. This gives the artwork an amphibian existence in two concurrent temporal modes: first, the time of its immediate present, as shapeless and undifferentiated medium, in an infinite movement toward indeterminacy, and second, the time of its representation when it is made intelligible through the division of the medium into recognizable metronomic intervals. Without silence between words, speech would not make sense. Similarly, without intervals between ebbs and flows, waves would be a constant destructive flood. Without rhythmic intervals, artworks would lose their representational capacity.

In his exploration of the linguistic expressions of the notion of rhythm, Émile Benveniste remarks that Aristotle has used "rhythm" in the sense of "distinctive form, proportioned figure, arrangement, disposition."[9] Yet, Benveniste gives us a designation of the word in Plato which has significance for our temporal remodelling of interlinear translations. Benveniste sees in Plato's use of ῥυθμός (*rhuthmós*, meaning rhythm) the abstraction of a disposition from something fluid, as the form something takes in an instant. Rhythm is instantaneous form, which is subject to change and cannot endure. "Plato's innovation," Benveniste observes, "was in applying [rhythm] to the *form of movement* which the human body makes in dancing and the arrangement of figures into which this movement is resolved" (286). Like a sequence of keyframed movements in photography (figure 1), which determine the movements that the viewer sees, rhythm is represented by a succession of snapshots in fortuitous moments that divide an otherwise unified gesture. Each individual moment has its position defined in relation to the moments before and after it.

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This chain-like relation to a 'before' and an 'after' is significant: it makes of the whole something more than the sum of its parts. The movement in its entirety also contains the relation between the individual moments, which are unique in their proper positions, in the sense that changing the position of the units is either impossible or makes a completely different movement as a whole. As shown in figure 1 (below), rhythmic representation dissolves movement into an ordered series of gestures or 'now's, which find their overall meaning and function in the fact that they precede or follow other gestures. To understand the temporal dimension of interlinear translation, we need to extend this model to the syntactic relations between words in sentences. Although Benveniste promises with his chapter title, "The Notion of 'Rhythm' in its Linguistic Expression'," an exposition of the linguistic aspect of the notion of rhythm, in fact he confines himself to etymological clarifications of the term. By contrast, we aim to establish the temporal structures that are contained within syntactic relations and grammatical constructs.

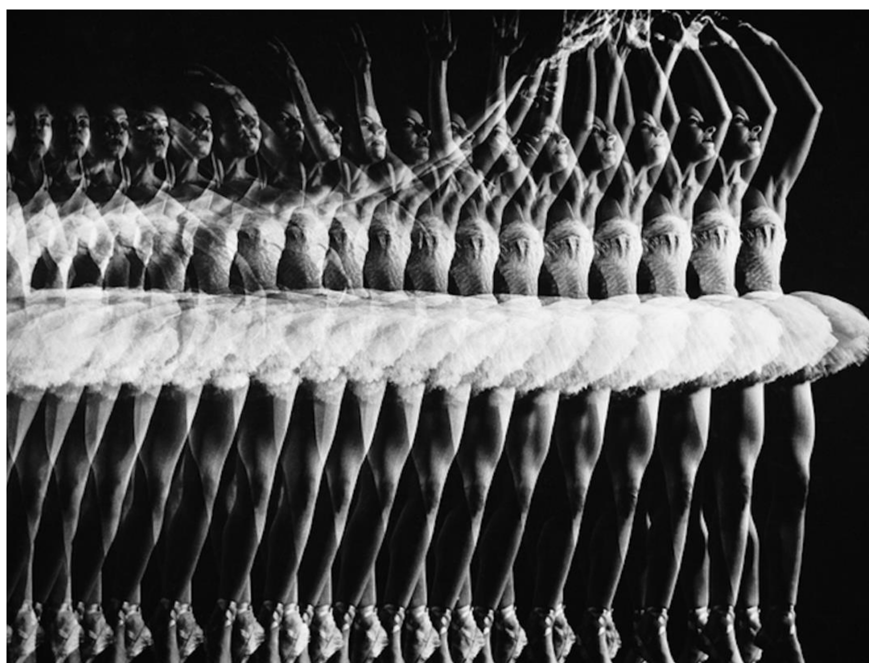

Figure 1: "Stroboscopic multiple exposure of" by Gjon Mili (The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images).

Whereas Benveniste is concerned with the semantic shifts of the term rhythm, for Saussure, temporal relations of linguistic signs are displayed through a semiotic lens when he

observes sign in tension between mutability and immutability. Saussure observes similar tensions between the mutability and immutability of signs. For Saussure, "the sign is exposed to alteration because it perpetuates itself.[10] Following Saussure's proposal that semiotic phenomena be examined in both temporal and atemporal modes, we should examine the image of the ballerinas dancing in figure 1 in two ways. First, in terms of its synchronic situation and second, in terms of its diachronic status. Otherwise stated, we should examine the movement depicted in figure 1 along an *axis of simultaneities*, examining only one gesture at a time, and along an *axis of succession* which examines the sequential progression of gestures towards an end. The axis of simultaneity reveals the "associative" relations between a gesture and its potential substitutes at a given time. The axis of succession reveals what Saussure calls the "syntagmatic" relations among the gestures in their actual sequences. According to Saussure, syntagms are "combinations supported by linearity" (123). Derived like "syntax" from Greek elements that mean "joining together," a syntagma chain is generated when words are linked up into longer sequences.[11]

Saussure's notion of syntagma is important for our purposes because it is in a syntagma chain that "a term acquires its value" and "stands in opposition to everything that precedes or follows it" (123). This gives us insight into the temporality of the series of words that join together according to syntactic rules and according to the positions that syntax assigns to them in meaningful discourse. The sum total of the meanings of individual words does not make a discourse meaningful; rather, meaning derives from the syntactic structure that gives each word a position. Roman Jakobson has identified this semantic dimension of discourse as positional (syntactic) contiguity in opposition to semantic similarity.[12] The syntactic dimension of discourse represents a sequential temporality, that is, an adjacency determined by the temporal and spatial relation of 'before's and 'after's. This is the chronological dimension of a verbal configuration that also gives it a meaningful direction toward an interpretable end. In this

chronological dimension, the text or enunciation undergoes a delay in waiting for an ultimate actualisation of sense, in relation to a past (e.g. in the direction of author's intention) or a future (e.g. in the direction of reader's projection).

As noted above, Jurjānī illuminated this syntactic aspect of sense making, though without reference to its temporal implications, in his theory of order (*naẓm*), which he used to explain the origin of the Qur'ān's inimitability. For Jurjānī, the measure for judging the beauty and meaningfulness of words is their location in the "composition and order [*al-ta'līf-i wa al-naẓm*]" with respect to the contiguous words.[13] "The words are not deemed appropriate as…individual words [*alfāẓun mujarradātun*]; rather, their propriety or impropriety is in proportion to the meanings that follow it" (46). Jurjānī dedicates many pages in his treatise to the effects of *taqadum* (antecedence) and *ta'khīr* (postponement) of sentence parts and how they generate varied meanings or levels of beauty while the matter—that is, the sentence's constituent parts—remains constant.

In attending to the different shapes imposed on words through syntactic configuration, Jurjānī approximates to Aristotle's notion of ῥυθμός as a structuring principle.[14] Jurjānī gives an instance of the author's capacities for such rhythmic interventions where he quotes the Arabophone Persian lexicographer Sibawayh (d. 796) to explain the reason for the antecedence or deferral of subject and object in a sentence: "words that are deemed more important are situated in antecedent positions which are more emphasized, even though both the subject and the object are important and noteworthy" (107). According to this principle, the active and passive configurations of the grammatical subject and the grammatical object, for the same action (as in "X broke Y" and "Y was broken by X") create two different rhythms. This can be explained in terms of differing priorities in the presentation of the ideas. Therefore, the sequentiality of verbal elements in a sentence can be regarded in a direction other than progression toward an end sense. Sequence also generates instantaneous positions for elements

in relation to each other. The syntactic temporality determines which idea comes first and which next.

Closer examination of the surface structure of interlinear translations enables us to recognize a parallel temporal structure for syntax along with the linear progression of the verbal sequence. The sequence of words in a text can either be perceived as a progression toward an ultimate sense or the words in sequence can be captured in passing, as each having their own moment. The loss of sense in an interlinear translation reminds us that it is not the simple lining up of words that generates sense. A loss of sense occurs in interlinear translation because, while they are in their proper place according to the syntactic rules of the original, the words are not perceived to be in their proper place according to the norms of the target syntax. Simply put, words in an interlinear translation lose their syntactic contiguity while maintaining continuity by following each other. In temporal terms, interlinear translations cannot hold each component in its own proper time as prescribed by the target language's syntax. Whereas in a meaning-oriented translation, words can be banished from their original position in the original text in order to make sense according to the target language's syntax, interlinear translation treats the loss of sequential position as irreparable and rejects it.

From this perspective, an interlinear translation remains faithful to the original text's rhythm by strictly reproducing its word order. However, the loss of sense, which is the inevitable outcome of an extremely literalist translation, enables us to see the significance of rhythm in the original syntactic configuration. Rhythm functions as a surplus to the meaningful words arranged in sequential order. Rhythm determines for each word an exact position and a proper moment in the sequence in which it appears.

In his reflection on the word "rhythm" and how it relates to meanings such as "structure" and "form," Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben agrees with Aristotle's claim in *Physics*, Book 2, that the "something else" that makes an aggregate unified—making a whole

more than the mere sum of its parts—is "Form" as an original principle. "Precisely because rhythm is that which causes the work of art to be what it is, it is also Measure and *logos* (*ratio*) in the Greek sense of that which gives everything its proper station in presence."[15] Interlinear translation places this surplus principle in focus, though negatively and *in absentia*. In the absence of syntactic coherence which is inevitably lost in the translated text, the syntagma chain that holds words together in their progression toward a meaningful end is dissolved; only the proper location of the ideas is preserved. Although the 'before' and the 'after' in the series are in place, they have lost their chronological sense and relation. The preservation of the original word order does not necessarily make sense because in order to make sense, the words would have to fit into a recognizable syntactic pattern. In the absence of such a pattern, interlinear translation generates only a contiguity without relation which highlights—indeed presents—the intervals and the gaps between words. Moreover, interlinear translation can only work by cancelling out any teleological (that is, sense making) function.

Nevertheless, the difference between the interlinear crib and the original is not only that the former is meaningless while the latter is meaningful. When the words and the word order are the same, it is the relation among the words that is absent from the interlinear crib. Words in the interlinear crib do not reach out for each other due to a lack of syntactic joints. That is, the contiguity of words does not establish a recognizable continuity. Seen in a temporal framework, the chronological development of discourse, characterized by expected antecedence and postponement of words with respect to each other, is interrupted in the interlinear translation. It is the function of syntax to create and maintain this sense of expectation. Borges located the beauty of interlinear translations in the estranged and unexpected effect they produce.[16] This is because in interlinear translations the syntactic norms of the translated language are unable to fill the chasm and create continuity. The estrangement of interlinear translations is an effect of their untimeliness. Pointing toward the meaningless

chasm between words to the hollow that surrounds the words, interlinear translation sounds anachronistic in the target language. Order is present in this chronological inconsistency, but it is too weak to be perceived.

Interlinearity and *Kairos*

Having considered the role of syntax in constituting literary form, it is time to examine in greater detail the temporal rubrics according to which the ordering of literary form takes place. While the chronological development of discourse guarantees its progression toward a meaningful end, interlinear translation presents the original only in its transience. In Latin, the Greek term *kairos* "expresses timeliness [thus the appropriate] measure, brevity, tact, convenience) and opportunity (thus advantage, profit, danger), or any decisive moment that is there to be seized, normatively or aesthetically, as it passes by."[17] Classicists have described *kairos* as "the right or opportune time to do something, or the right measure in doing something.[18] The Sophists of ancient Greece understood *kairos* as a kind of moral relativism.[19] Pindar associated *kairos* with syntax and used the term "to characterize words, both expertly fired and well-woven, which hit their marks."[20]

Within this temporal framework, the interlinear crib remains faithful to the *kairos* of the original by representing translated words in their original opportune moment. The interlinear crib translates not what the words mean but how they mean. By reflecting the total passing away of the ideas, the interlinear gloss renders the transience of the text, which is not reducible to any *a priori* presupposition or *a posteriori* sense attached to it. In its reference to the exterior surface of the original text, an interlinear translation reconstructs the original in its real-time formation. Correspondingly, the original functions as a template for generating an opportune moment for the words and ideas, not as a cryptic source to be decoded and then recoded.

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A similar sense of *kairos* as the right moment and the authentic present can be found in Sufi terminology as *waqt*. Arabist Franz Rosenthal refers to *waqt* as “a given point in time,” in contrast to *zamān*, which is a “linear time segment,” and *dahr*, which is “the never-ending circular flow of time.”[21] In the Persian context, *waqt* designates a now-ness freed from chronological time. As the eleventh century South Asian Sufi Hujwiri writes, “*waqt* is that with which one is freed from the past and the future as when some truth penetrates one’s heart and causes a joy in which one thinks of neither the past nor the future.”[22] Unlike the chronological time that turns beings into its passive inhabitants, *waqt* is a mode of time that is appropriated, owned, and mastered by the Sufi. Unlike chronological time that is wasted or spent in the logic of exchange, *waqt* is the opportune moment that exists either in a state of loss (*faqd*) or gain (*vajd*).

Although, as Rosenthal indicates, a clear semantic distinction cannot be made in Arabic between *zamān* and *waqt*, the terminological use *waqt* in Persian Sufism suggests an obvious nuance assigned to the term. For example, when Persian Sufi Ruzbihan Baqli Shirazi (1128-1209) quotes from Abu Bakr Shibli that “I am *waqt*, and my *waqt* is so precious, and there is nothing in my *waqt* but I, and I am truth,”[23] he surely intends a sense of time that is not interchangeable with *zamān*. In this sense, *waqt* suggests an existential relation with time defined by agency. That is, *waqt* is mastered and appropriated time; it is time with reference to which one can or cannot say “it is *my* time.” Both linear and circular conceptions of time in Arabic, that is, *zamān* and *dahr* respectively—which are employed in premodern and modern Persian poetry and prose as well—are teleological and centred on fate. The former refers to a singular fate in the future and the latter to a fate that recurs. In both senses, time is marked by duration and delay, or, by a gap between the potential and the actual. Both conceptions of time are attended by a sense of waiting for realization. By contrast, *waqt* designates a self-

actualizing potential in the moment. It is the time of exigency and does not recognize any kind of waiting.

With reference to E. Schmitt's comparison of the Greek and Arabic usages of the terms in Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*, Rosenthal points out that in that context "*chronos* was rendered by *zamân*, *waqt*, and *ḥayâh*, *hôra* by *zamân* and *waqt*, and *kairos* usually by *waqt* but also by *zamân*" (531). However, we identify *waqt* with *kairos*, in line with the Sufi conception and designating the proper time for something. This conception of *waqt* can be found in the famous passage in *Ecclesiastes* 3:1-8: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven…A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

It is with respect to such distinctions in our perception of time that we distinguish "time" in T. S. Eliot's

> Houses live and die: there is a time for building
> And a time for living and for generation
> And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane
> And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trots
> And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto,[24]

in "Four Quartets" (1941) from his

> There will be time, there will be time.
> To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
> There will be time to murder and create,
> And time for all the works and days of hands[25]

in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915). "Time" in "Four Quartets" refers to *kairos*—to *waqt*—as the decisive moment to be seized and as timeliness. Time in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" refers to a chronological time which can be postponed, assigned to a future, and perpetually awaited. While the former is the exigent time of action, the latter is the deferable time of idleness, irresponsibility, and excuse.

To sum up, the chronological aspect of syntax consists of arranging words to generate meaningful sentences in a language. At the heart of its representational function and in its kairological dimension, syntax assigns the words their proper locus. But, in its decisive fidelity to the *kairos* of the original, the crib recreates a text full of breaks and interruptions. What

makes presenting a text in its *kairos*—in its now-ness—exigent? In favour of what should the meaning of a text be obscured in its translation? In the next section we discuss, with reference to Hölderlin's poems in Persian translation, a circumstance in which fidelity to the sequence of ideas in a text matters as much as the meanings the text may represent.

Hölderlin as Case Study

As a poet who conceived of poetry creation as a form of perpetual translation, Hölderlin would probably not be surprised to learn of the popularity of his verse in the eastern lands that represented for his heroes, the ancient Greeks, the beginnings of civilization.[26] After all, his own translations of Sophocles' *Oedipus* and *Antigone* deliberately emphasized, and even overstated, the oriental dimension of these texts.[27] As Hölderlin wrote to his publisher Friedrich Wilmans when producing the final versions of his translations in 1803, "I hope to present it to the public in a more lively way than usual by accentuating its *oriental* strain which it repudiated."[28] Having suppressed the oriental dimension which was native to it, Greek art in Hölderlin's view needed to have this element reactivated for a German audience.

Many of Hölderlin's poems, including "At the Source of the Danube" (1801) and "Patmos" (1802), are replete with idealized visions of a mythical Asia, the origin of civilization and beginnings of antiquity. The link between Hölderlin and Persian poetics however reaches well beyond the poet's Orientalist imagination; it penetrates to the very essence of his poetics, revealing a shared fascination with the way in which poetry contorts and repurposes language in order to bring about a mystical epiphany. For his Iranian translators, Hölderlin's translational methods served as a model for how he was to be translated.

Hölderlin once compared translation to gymnastics. "It gets beautifully supple when forced to accommodate itself to foreign beauty and greatness and also often to foreign whims," he wrote to his friend and fellow student Christian Ludwig Neuffer, a poet who was at that time translating Virgil.[29] Much like his Persian translators, Hölderlin's approach to translation

perpetually shifted according to the exigencies of the moment. He used translation to transform the language into which he was translating. Given this precedent, it is unsurprising that the Persian poet who was drawn to him more than any other is Bijan Elahi. As a pioneer of late Iranian modernism, Elahi did more than any other poet to transform Persian poetry through his translations from world literature, which included poetry in Spanish, French, Arabic, modern Greek, English, and German.[30] In this and the following sections, we briefly review Hölderlin's approach to translation in relation to his own poetics, and then turn to the translational interventions that, alongside—yet separately from—the Iranian reception of Heidegger have framed contemporary Iranians' encounter with Hölderlin.

Hölderlin's words say a great deal about his own approach to translation from the ancient Greek, and his understanding of translation as a way of stretching language to its limits spilled over into his poetic creations. His famously contorted syntax, which tests the limits of the German language through its unusual conjunctions, ungrammatical constructions, and unexpected line breaks, has entranced readers for centuries. As Hölderlin made clear, his experiment with the German language was indebted to his experience in translating ancient Greek poetry. He saw translation from ancient Greek as a means through which the German poets of his era could discover their own culture and identity. He once explained his vision of the relationship between antiquity and modernity, and the native and the foreign, to his friend Casimir Böhlendorf, stating that "we must master what is native to us to the same extent as what is foreign [*das Fremde*]. For this reason, the Greeks are indispensable to us. But it is precisely in that which is native or national to us that we will never achieve their level for, as mentioned, the most difficult thing is the *free* usage of what is *our own*."[31] As these words suggest, Greek mattered to Hölderlin as a means of accessing his German self through translation, of discovering it in the process of estrangement. The freedom Hölderlin idealized brought the poet into relation with a cultural and linguistic other that would help the target

culture see itself in the light of the foreign. Similar accounts have been offered of the Iranian appropriation of European culture.[32]

Whereas Hölderlin's conception of otherness was rooted in Greek antiquity, his subsequent readers and interpreters have identified other axes of difference. We examine the translational axis of Hölderlin's Persian reception, at the level of language as well as of culture. Along the way, we trace a dialectical movement between Persian poetics and German Romanticism that is manifested less through direct appropriation than in a shared interest in the work of poetry in transforming language. For Hölderlin as for his Persian readers, interpreters, and translators, poetry pushes language to its limits by developing his above-described "rhythm of representation," that is structured by the "pace at which verbal relations come to be perceived.[33] As Hölderlin translator Richard Sieburth recognizes, this rhythm of representation is profoundly inflected by translation; in his literal rendering of Pindar, for example, Hölderlin anticipates his Persian interpreters by developing a poetics that cleaves "so closely to the lexical and syntactical textures of the Greek—often at the expense of what would commonly be termed its meaning" that it generates "a new language, situated at the outer limits of intelligibility, neither recognizably Greek nor German, antique nor modern, but located in a liminal zone somewhere in between."[34] Although he is referring to Hölderlin's Pindar, Sieburth could here have been describing many of Elahi's renderings of Hölderlin.

Poetry creation shares in common with translation the compulsion to interrupt everyday colloquial speech, and to disorient the medium of language in order to bring about a new revelation. Hölderlin's Persian translators brought this reorientation about through translation. While the most commonly trodden path to Hölderlin in modern Iran leads through Heidegger, whose influence on Iranian modernism and on state-sponsored Shiʿa Islam was tremendous, our focus is on Hölderlin's trajectory within Persian poetics, and his role in probing, and then extending, the limits of language. Rather than reduce Hölderlin's poems to proxies for a

philosophical agenda, we hold with Heidegger that, "for the sake of what has been composed," commentary on the poems of Hölderlin "must strive to make itself superfluous."[35] In an essay on Hölderlin that criticized Heidegger for not practicing what he preached and reducing Hölderlin's poems to philosophical tracts, Adorno argued that "the illusory character of art has a direct effect upon its relationship to poetry. What is true…as poetry cannot be so, literally and unreflectedly, as philosophy[36] As Hölderlin recognized, what is superfluous for philosophy is exigent for poetry. What we offer here, then, is less commentary on Hölderlin's poems and their translations than a poetics of engagement, through translation, with language at its limits.

Hölderlin in Iran

The Iranian reception of Hölderlin's poems has been mediated through half a dozen volumes of his selected poems in Persian translation, mostly dating to the 2010s.[37] However, Iranians encountered Hölderlin in translations scattered across various literary magazines as early as 1970s.[38] The post-1979 Iranian revolutionary embrace of Heidegger's assaults on modernity and the Enlightenment increased the thirst for reading Hölderlin, whose name permeated articles about and translations of Heidegger's writings on the relation of poetry, language, and thought.[39] The framing of Hölderlin's poetry in Persian within a Heideggerian framework is marked in two ways: the usual accompaniment of Hölderlin's poems by Heidegger's commentaries in Persian translations of the German poet Persian and by frequent allusions to Hölderlin's poetry in the context of debates among Iranian philosophers over the possibility of "poetic thinking [*tafakor-e shāʿerāna*]" in rationalist modernity. Heidegger's turn to a "poetry which thinks [*denkende Dichten*]" influenced a strand of Iranian philosophers who sought an alternative to European modernity's secular rationalism and humanist subjectivism.[40]

The tendency to synthesize poetry and rational thought resonates with a dominant antinomy in premodern Persian Sufism between *ʿeshq* (love) and *ʿaql* (reason).[41] This dichotomy between poetry and reason also defines divergent stances toward poetry within

discourses on Iranian modernity: whereas secularist Ahmad Kasravi (1890-1946) advocated burning Hafez's poetry due to its non-scientific content, the controversial "anti-western" public philosopher Ahmad Fardid compares his relationship to fourteenth century Iranian poet Hafez to Heidegger's relationship to Hölderlin.[42] Fardid translated Heidegger's critique of western metaphysics into Persian Sufi notions he borrowed from Hafez in the course of what he called "intuitive wisdom [*ḥekmat-e onsi*]." For Fardid, Hölderlin embodied an exception in the history of European poetry and thought in his rejection of Western subjectivism (*khod-bonyādi* in Fardid's terms, also translated as "autonomy") (36). Fardid called Hölderlin a "bird out of time [*morgh-e bivaqti*]" who, although suffering from westoxication (*gharbzadegi*),[43] overcomes the fate of 2,500 years of western history, that is, subjective metaphysics: "But in Hölderlin, 2,500 years of names trembled. One cannot comprehend Hölderlin with 2500 years of western history."

In the remainder of this article we examine Bijan Elahi's translation of Hölderlin from the vantage point of translation methodology and comparative aesthetics. Instead of following a "hermeneutics of suspicion" that surpasses the text in order to reveal an underlying repressed, hidden, or veiled meaning deep within it, Elahi adopts a radically literalist translation method that lingers insistently on the text's surface.[44] Elahi's literalist translation of Hölderlin, influenced by Hölderlin's own approach translation from ancient Greek, presents the poetic text as a pure self-evident exteriority. By engaging with the literalist methodology Elahi developed for translating Hölderlin, we explicate the temporality of interlinear translation.

For many Persian readers, Elahi's translations of Hölderlin read like "monstrous examples of literalness,"[45] to borrow Walter Benjamin's description of the reception of Hölderlin's translations of Sophocles by 19th century German readers. The radical idiosyncrasy of word-for-word translation transforms the text into a stubbornly impenetrable surface that defeats any hope of extracting deeper meanings from this "poet of philosophers."[46] Unlike

Mahmud Haddadi's remarkably readable translation of Hölderlin's poems (2014), Elahi's translation makes for challenging reading. In the preface to his translation, Haddadi is preoccupied with expanding the reader's understanding of "the matter of Hölderlin's poetry." He aims to open "a window to the world of his thought [*rowzani beh donyā-ye andisha-ye vey*]" (12). Furthermore, in line with his view of Hölderlin's poems as "essentially philosophical and historicist [*dhāt-e falsafi va tārikh-pajuhāna*]," Haddadi has appended his translations with commentaries of Heidegger and others (12).

As a literary translator, Haddadi shuns literalist translation, seeing it as a "medieval legacy [*murda-rig-e qorun-e vosṭā*]," and as a "heap of disjoined words, unlinked sentences, and a dead text."[47] Elahi, by contrast, opts for a radical literalism in his translation of Hölderlin. Elahi was engaged in translating Hölderlin since 1968.[48] His translations were mediated through a 1961 bilingual edition of Michael Hamburger's English translation and a series of interlinear cribs (*pāy-khān*) from the original German, by his close friend and collaborator, the polyglot Iranian translator Azizeh Azodi, who translated in a professional capacity not just from German and English into Persian but also from German into English.[49]

The paratextual material included in Elahi's posthumously published translations of Hölderlin's poems are collected in *Niyat-e khayr* (Good faith, 2015), named after Hölderlin's eponymous fragment. The book includes a preface clarifying the translator's relationship with Hölderlin's poems, endnotes elucidating the allusive texture of the poems and the meaning of rare Persian words used in the translation, a letter from Azodi to Elahi (dated 1980) containing an interlinear crib and Azodi's explanations regarding the syntactic features of the excerpt, a note by Elahi comparing his translations of Hölderlin and Hallaj , Hamburger's English preface to his 1966 selection, *Poems and Fragments* (translated by Azodi into Persian), two short paragraphs from Heidegger on Hölderlin's hymns[50] (also translated by Azodi), and a short memo by the Iranian-German poet Cyrus Atabay (Elahi's co-translator for a couple of

Hölderlin's poems), dated 1973. Except for Heidegger's short note, the paratextual material consists of poetic, aesthetic, and biographical elucidations of Hölderlin's poetry.

The foreign effect in Elahi's translation, comparable to the ways in which Hölderlin's German is touched by Greek syntax, Biblical undertones and his Swabian dialect, has lexical and syntactic origins. The lexical dimension of Elahi's translation is evident in the translator's choice of rare Persian words (such as *porchim* meaning "meaningful," *zāvar* meaning "servant," and *juhidan* meaning "dripping"), unprecedented compound nouns (such as *busa-mast* for *trunken von Küssen*, *hama-āfarin* for *Die Allerschaffende*, and *may-khodā* for Bacchus), and obsolete terms (such as Zoroastrian *yasht* for *Hymne*, old Persian *chāma* for *Ode*, and localized Bakhtiari *gawgerist* for *Elegie*). The syntactic dimension of Elahi's translation derives, in many instances, from the Persian text's fidelity to the word order of the original German. In the next and final section, we explore this specific aspect of Elahi's work in relation to his understanding of sacred language and its implications for our understanding of the temporality of interlinear translation.

Elahi's versatility in poetry translation is revealed in the wide range of his formal and stylistic experiments: from almost word-for-word translations to sense-for-sense renderings to extremely free adaptations—what Edward Fitzgerald called "transmogrifications." While Elahi's Hölderlin translation belongs to the category of word-for-word translation, his translations of T. S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday* and Arthur Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations* are rather sense-for-sense renderings, and his translation of Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* is a free adaptation. Elahi's translation of Hölderlin is centred around a strict fidelity to the word order and lineation in the original poem. By this steadfast syntactic faithfulness, Elahi provides a critique of an "ignorant, erroneous, and reactionary" misconception of translations as *les belles infidèles*, an aesthetic principle according to which translation is either faithful by virtue of its precise (*daqiq*) accuracy or beautiful (*zibā*) and divergent from the original (196).

Elahi echoes Perrot D'Ablancourt's seventeenth century antinomy between beauty and fidelity as he argues against potential criticisms that his translation of Hölderlin lacks beauty due to its word-for-word illegibility. Against this either/or condition that is premised on the identification between creating beauty and making sense, Elahi proposes a "more faithful, more beautiful" (197) aesthetics. Calling his translation of Hölderlin "scholarly [*dāneshgāhi*], he develops a concept of the *fidus interpres* (faithful translator) who creates beauty by avoiding any normalizing intervention of the orator and by remaining faithful to the raw literalism of the grammarian. In this sense, Elahi echoes Benjamin's dictum that "the preservation of meaning is served far better—and literature and language far worse—by the unrestrained license of bad translators."[51] However, whereas Benjamin firmly rejects any idea of freedom in literary translation that is based on sense preservation, Elahi seeks a reconciliation between fidelity and freedom, best represented by his metaphor for poetry translation as "dancing in chains."[52] For Benjamin, the communication of meaning is not fundamental to literary language. Yet, for Elahi, the specific licence to translate Hölderlin according to a literalist and quasi-interlinear method originates in the translator's resolution to preserve the idiosyncrasy (*gharābat*) of the original in its new language.

Gharābat, Elahi's key word in translating Hölderlin, means "exile" or "banishment." In a specifically literary usage, the term denotes "verbal complication" and is one of the four categories of lexical fault in classical Persian poetics, when "a word is used in an unclear meaning, unfamiliar to the speakers of a language."[53] While in classical Persian poetics (*balāgha*), straightforward communication of meaning is regarded as a necessary condition of eloquent language, within the framework of Persian poetics, Elahi's translation of Hölderlin creates eloquence in a radically new way, out of an estranged lexicon and syntax. However, Elahi's decision to avoid accessible communicative language in his translations originates less in poetic exigency than in a mystical understanding of "sacred" dimension of language.

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"Translators of Hölderlin should perceive language in the sacred [*qodsi*] sense of the word," Elahi states at the opening of his preface, and adds this is Hölderlin's "distinctive characteristic: *making present a language without presence* [*zabān-e bi-hożur rā bā hożur migardānad*]."[54]

The perception of Hölderlin's language as divine is not unique to Elahi. Fardid compares the German poet to Hafez, known in Persian as *lesān al-ghayb* (literally, "tongue of God") and describes Hölderlin in cryptic terms adopted from Persian Sufism and Shiʿa messianism: "The proximity [*qorb*] of a poet who has God with him and who is with God, who as a poet praises *feyż-e aqdas* (the most sacred blessing) and *mala'-e aʿlā* (the highest fullness). The God who is the god of the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow. Heidegger believes in such a poet only in Hölderlin."[55] Yet, there is a huge difference between their approaches to Hölderlin: whereas Fardid refers to the German poet within a framework of "authenticity [*eṣālat*]," in the sense of a return to an authentic self in his fervent critique of western subjectivism and global westoxication, Elahi reiterates a poetics in which the self is subject to manipulation, distortion and change by the foreign. In Elahi's case, such a distortion takes place in the context of a radically literalist translation and selfless fidelity to the foreign syntax.

Elahi's Literalist Methodology

As noted above, the association of interlinearity and sacred language dates back at least to late antiquity, with Jerome justifying a word-for-word approach to translating the Scriptures. Jerome proclaimed that "in translation [*interpretatione*] from the Greek—except in the case of Sacred Scripture—where the very order of the words is a mystery–I render not word for word, but sense for sense."[56] In this final section, we examine Elahi's methodology in translating Hölderlin in further detail and use it to reveal the temporal structure of strictly literalist translations in light of the distinction between *chronos* and *kairos* discussed above.

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Elahi's translation is based on the interlinear Persian cribs provided by Azodi. "The aim of these interlinear [*pāy-khān*] cribs," Elahi asserts, "is the faithful representation of syntax [*naḥv*] and of the grammatical issues [*nokta-hā-ye dasturi*] and compound words [*hamvand*] which abound in Hölderlin's work."[57] As shown in Table 1, which brings together the Persian and English translations of Hölderlin's "Der Rhein," the word order of the original has been meticulously followed in Azodi's crib. For the sake of convenience, we designate a model in which numbers represent the order of lexical units as they appear in the original (1a), in the Persian crib (2b), and in the published versions of Elahi (2a) and Haddadi (3a). Since Persian is written right to left, the numbered words are ordered right to left throughout the tables:

Table 1: From Hölderlin's "Der Rhein" in Persian Translation

1a.	**1b.**
Wem$_{1}$ aber$_{2}$, wie$_{3}$, Rousseau$_{4}$, dir$_{5}$, Unüberwindlich$_{6}$ die$_{7}$ Seele$_{8}$ Die$_{9}$ starkausdauernde$_{10}$ ward$_{11}$ Und$_{12}$ sicherer$_{13}$ Sinn$_{14}$ Und$_{15}$ süße$_{16}$ Gabe$_{17}$ zu$_{18}$ hören$_{19}$, Zu$_{20}$ reden$_{21}$ so$_{22}$, daß$_{23}$ er$_{24}$ aus$_{25}$ heiliger$_{26}$ Fülle$_{27}$ Wie$_{28}$ der$_{29}$ Weingott$_{30}$, törig$_{31}$ göttlich$_{32}$ Und$_{33}$ gesetzlos$_{34}$ sie$_{35}$ die$_{36}$ Sprache$_{37}$ der$_{38}$ Reinesten$_{39}$ gibt$_{40}$ Verständlich$_{41}$ den$_{42}$ Guten$_{43}$ (Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, translated by Michael Hamburger (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 202)	But he whose soul, like yours, Rousseau, ever strong and patient, Became invincible, Endowed with steadfast purpose, And a sweet gift of hearing, Of speaking, so that from holy profusion, Like the wine-god foolishly, divinely, And lawlessly he gives it away The language of the purest, comprehensible to the good (Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 203)
2a. از کسی$_{1}$ اما$_{2}$ که چنان$_{3}$ تو$_{5}$، روسو$_{4}$، جان$_{8}$ او$_{7}$ حوصله‌ی بحر$_{6}$ بود* و* شد$_{11}$ حصن حصین$_{10}$ – با آن$_{12}$ نفس$_{14}$ مطمئن$_{13}$، با آن$_{15}$ قریحه‌ی$_{17}$ شیرین$_{16}$ شنیدن$_{19}$، گفتن$_{21}$، که$_{23}$ یکی از$_{25}$ ملأ$_{27}$ اعلی$_{26}$ میخدا$_{30}$وار$_{28}$ و یکی*، نادان$_{31}$ که* اهورایی$_{32}$ پس چه* بی آداب$_{34}$، ترجمان از* زبان$_{37}$ پاکانند$_{39}$ دستگیر$_{41}$ خوبان$_{43}$ (Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr*, 89)	**2b**. کسی که$_{1}$ اما$_{2}$، مثل$_{3}$ روسو$_{4}$، تو$_{5}$ مغلوب‌ناشدنی$_{6}$ روح$_{8}$ش$_{7}$، آن$_{9}$ قوی مقاومت‌کننده$_{10}$، شد$_{11}$ و$_{12}$ حس$_{14}$ مطمئن$_{13}$ و$_{15}$ استعداد$_{17}$ شیرین$_{16}$ شنیدن$_{19}$ گفتن$_{21}$ چنین$_{22}$ که$_{23}$ از$_{25}$ پری‌ی$_{27}$ مقدس$_{26}$ مثل$_{28}$ خدای شراب$_{30}$، ساده‌وار$_{31}$ خدایی$_{32}$ و$_{33}$ بی‌قانون$_{34}$ آن را$_{35}$، زبان$_{37}$ ناب‌ترین$_{39}$ را$_{38}$، می‌دهد$_{40}$ مفهوم$_{41}$ برای$_{42}$ خوبان$_{43}$ (Azodi's interlinear crib in Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr*, 193, dated February 1981).
3a. اما$_{2}$ کسی را که$_{1}$ چون$_{3}$ تو$_{5}$، روسو$_{4}$وار* جانی$_{8}$ چیره‌ناپذیرانه$_{6}$ پایدار و قوی$_{10}$ اعطایش شد$_{11}$،	**3b**. اما$_{2}$ او که$_{1}$ جان$_{8}$ش$_{7}$، چنان$_{3}$ جان* تو$_{5}$، روسو$_{4}$، قوی و صبور$_{10}$،

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و12 درکی14 مطمئن13؛ نیز15 موهبت17 دل‌انگیز16 آنکه* نخست* نیوشا باشد19، و15 از آن پس* به سخن درآید21؛ چندان22 که23 به مانند28 خدای شراب30، سودازده‌وار31 خدایی32 و33 از25 سر سرشاریی27 برکت‌خیز26، طرد هر قاعده کند34 و* به جای آن* تحفه* کلام37 ناب39 را38 بیاورد*، تحفه* آن* زبان* را* که* بر42 نیکان43 رساست41	نشکستنی6 شد11، با12 عزم14 راسخ13 و15 خوش16استعداد17 در* شنیدن19 و* گفتن21، چنان22که23 همچون28 خدای شراب30 دیوانه‌وار31، خداوار32، و33 بی‌قانون34، از25 ملأ27 اعلی26، زبان37 پاک‌ترین‌ها39 را38 به42 خوبان43 مفهوم41 می‌کند40
Mahmud Haddadi, *Āncha mimānad,* 122-123). * signifies an added explanatory word	(A normalized translation by Kayvan Tahmasebian, based on Michael Hamburger's English translation)

As can be seen in the table, apart from specific syntactic features of the Persian language, such as the postpositive placement of adjectives and possessives (as in 6-8-7, 14-13, 17-16, 27-26), and the lack of equivalents for articles or certain prepositions (as in 18, 20, 29), the crib (2b) faithfully reproduces the original word order. We have provided a normalized Persian version of Hölderlin's atypical German syntax (3b) in order to show how the word order may differ from the original when the translator aims for comprehensibility. Haddadi's translation of the same poem (3a) shows that the communication of meaning may require more than re-ordering words according to the syntactical norms of the target language. In his case, it entails the addition of explanatory words (marked by asterisks).

Elahi's published version of this excerpt is no more faithful to the word order presented by Azodi's word-for-word crib than Haddadi's. The passage incorporates many of Elahi's typically radical domestications in his translations. For the German compound word *starkausdauernde* (strong and patient), he uses the phrase *ḥowṣela-ye baḥr* (literally, "sea's patience") taken from Hafez's ghazal; for *unüberwindlich* (invincible), we find *ḥeṣn-e ḥaṣin* (literally, "fortified castle"), a stock collocation used by premodern Persian poets (such as Masʿud Saʿd Salman and Farrukhi Sistani in 11th century); for *sicherer Sinn* (assured mind), the Qur'ānic phrase *nafs-e moṭma'en* (literally, "soul at peace") (89:27) is used. Elahi's reordering and domesticating strategies do not however result in a legible Persian text. To the contrary, the Persian excerpt sounds estranged and does not make obvious sense. This is typical of Elahi's translations, which tend to be more challenging to comprehend than the original.

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These verbal complications acquire significance in the context of Elahi's view of "estrangement [*gharābat*]" as the essence of Hölderlin's poetry and as that which should be preserved in translations of his work. Having shown how literalist translation cleaves to the word order of the original, we now re-examine the temporal structure of word-for-word translation in light of Elahi's understanding of syntax (*naḥv*) or "arranging expression [*ʿebārat-bandi*]"[58] as the origin of the inherent foreignness in Hölderlin's poetry alongside his strategies for creating presence (*ḥożur*) in translation.

Compared with the communicative translation of Haddadi, the following examples—from Elahi's translation of Hölderlin's "Patmos" (1802) and "Andeneken" (1803) respectively—reveal the extent to which Elahi's translation is bound to the word order and lineation of the original (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: From Hölderlin's "Patmos" in Persian Translation

Doch$_1$ bald$_2$, in$_3$ frischem$_4$ Glanze$_5$, Geheimnißvoll$_6$ Im$_7$ goldenen$_8$ Rauche$_9$, blühte$_{10}$ Schnellaufgewachsen$_{11}$, Mit$_{12}$ Schritten$_{13}$ der$_{14}$ Sonne$_{15}$ Mit$_{16}$ tausend$_{17}$ Gipfeln$_{18}$ duftend$_{19}$, Mir$_{20}$ Asia$_{21}$ auf$_{22}$ (Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 230)	But soon, in a radiance fresh, Mysteriously, In the golden haze, Quickly grown up, With strides of the sun, And fragrant with a thousand peaks, Now Asia burst into flower for me (Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 231)
با این‌همه$_1$ دیری نپایید که$_2$ در$_3$ فروغی$_5$ تازه$_4$ و* اسرارآمیز$_6$، از$_7$ دل* دودی$_9$ زرین$_8$، در فرابالیدنی پرشتاب$_{11}$، —و* همپا$_{13}$ی$_{14}$ با$_{12}$ خورشید$_{15}$—* آسیا$_{21}$ با$_{16}$ هزار$_{17}$ قله$_{18}$ عطرآگین$_{19}$ در پیش$_{22}$ نگاه*م$_{20}$ شکفتن گرفت$_{10}$ (translated by Mahmud Haddadi, *Āncha mimānad*, 155) * signifies an added explanatory word	اما$_1$ زود$_2$، به$_3$ تابشی$_5$ شاداب$_4$، رازناک$_6$، در$_7$ دود$_9$ طلایی$_8$، شکفت$_{10}$، تندبالیده$_{11}$، با$_{12}$ گام‌ها$_{13}$ی$_{14}$ خورشید$_{15}$، با$_{16}$ هزار$_{17}$ قله‌ی$_{18}$ عطرآگین$_{19}$، بر$_{22}$ من$_{20}$ آسیا$_{21}$ (translated by Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr*, 55)

Table 3: From Hölderlin's "Andeneken" in Persian Translation

denn$_1$ süß$_2$ Wär'$_3$ unter$_4$ Schatten$_5$ der$_6$ Schlummer$_7$.	for sweet It would be to drowse amid shadows.

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(Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 250)	(Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 251)
زیرا که$_1$ خواب$_7$ در$_4$ سایه‌سار$_5$، یقین که$_*$ شیرین$_2$ است$_3$. (translated by Mahmud Haddadi, *Āncha mimānad*, 174) * signifies an added explanatory word	زیرا$_1$ شیرین$_2$ می‌بود$_3$ زیر$_4$ سایه‌های$_5$ نیمخواب$_7$. (translated by Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr*, 51)

The postponement of *der Schlummer* (the slumber) to the end of the line, in the passage from “Andenken” (Table 3), makes its existence palpable through the preceding predicates *süß* (sweet) and *unter Schatten* (under shadows). Similarly, “Asia,” in the example from “Patmos,” (Table 2) transforms poetically from the geographical region in Asia Minor where mount Tmolus Messogis stand, into a radiant presence evoked by the preceding predicates: *Glanze* (radiance), *blühte* (bloomed), *Sonne* (sun), and *Gipfeln* (peaks).

Like Hölderlin who, in his translation of Pindar, “translated word for word, sometimes syllable by syllable, fracturing words in German as they were fractured in Greek by the lineation of the edition he used, getting as close as possible to root meanings,”[59] Elahi reconstitutes Persian words through German syntax (as in *hama-zenda* for *Die Allebendigen*) (34), coins new compound words in Persian by conjoining the root meaning of the original German words (as in *ān-hameh-bā-ham-āreh* for *der Allversammelnde*) (173), makes unexpected cuts in the middle of words (as in *pāki-zeh* for *Reinentsprungenes*) (176) and cuts the poetic lines in the middle of words (as in *beh-yād/hamziyān* for *zusammenlebten/Im Gedächtniß*) (61/236). In addition, Elahi uses Hölderlin’s favoured trope, the *figura etymologica*, in which words sharing the same etymological derivation are used in the same passage. Also, Elahi’s translation is dominated by the syntactic idiosyncrasy of a belated grammatical subject (*ta’akhor-e fāʿel*) as a direct outcome of cleaving close to the original German word order, as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Normal Persian word order is based on a SOV (subject-object-verb) pattern. Yet, in many instances in Elahi’s translation that pattern is inverted into a VOS (verb-object-subject)

pattern. From the vantage point of predicates preceding subjects, Persian is more flexible than English. As noted by David Farrell Krell, the translator of Hölderlin's *Death of Empedocles* into English, the English language "wails when forced to go without its subjects, verbs, and objects all lined up in a row."[60] Although the antecedence of the subject and the deferral of the verb does occur in both premodern and modern Persian poetry, it is normally generated by metrical requirements, as in the following examples by Sa'eb (d. 1676) and Nima Yushij (d. 1960), respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Inverted Word Order in Sa'eb and Nima Yushij

سر$_1$ نمی‌پیچند$_2$ از$_3$ تیغ$_4$ اجل$_5$ دیوانه‌ها$_6$ Sa'eb Tabrizi, *Divān*, vol.1, ed. Mohammad Qahraman (Tehran: ʿElmi va farhangi, 1984), 157.	که$_1$ می‌گیرند$_2$ در$_3$ شاخ$_4$ تلاجن$_5$ سایه‌ها$_6$ رنگ$_7$ سیاهی$_8$ Nima Yushij, *Collected Poems* (*Majmuʿa ashʿār*), ed. Sirus Tahbaz (Tehran: Negah, 1994), 517.
دیوانه‌ها$_6$ از$_3$ تیغ$_4$ اجل$_5$ سر$_1$ نمی‌پیچند$_2$ (normal prosaic order in Persian)	که$_1$ سایه‌ها$_6$ در$_3$ شاخ$_4$ تلاجن$_5$ رنگ$_7$ سیاهی$_8$ می‌گیرند$_2$ (normal prosaic order in Persian)
Madmen$_6$ will not turn$_2$ their head$_1$ from$_3$ the sword of$_4$ death$_5$	When$_1$ the shadows$_6$ take$_2$ a dark$_8$ hue$_7$ through$_3$ the branches of$_4$ *talajan*$_5$ [a bush native to Mazandaran]

In the absence of a regular metrical pattern, Hölderlin's syntactic manipulations are justified by what Sieburth calls, after Hölderlin, the "rhythm of representation," that is "the pace at which the verbal relations come to perceived."[61] Similarly to our earlier discussion of the chain of gestures that make up a dancing figure's movement, Elahi uses the cinematic metaphor of sequence (*nemābandi*) to refer to the way in which ideas are presented in language. He justifies his fidelity to Hölderlin's unconventional Greek-inflected syntax in his translation as an effort to retain the verbal sequence of the German text. Whereas in languages which normally anticipate the subject at the beginning of the enunciation, a belated subject may generate a sense of absence, Elahi associates this antecedence with a certain sense of presence.

The subject is belated in Hölderlin's poetry. Its sovereignty challenged, it is left to re-activate the divine power of language in the act of naming. Elahi compares the poet's capacity to make present "a language without presence [*zabān-e bi-hożur*]" to the Adamic language that

actively names the world, unlike the automated and passive use of pre-fabricated words that are unable to present anything.[62] In “Andenken,” the postponed *der Schlummer* (the slumber), as noted above, only names what is already and vaguely given to the reader as something “sweet” and “under the shadows.” This can also be seen in the transformation of “Asia” into a radiant, flowery sun in “Patmos.”

Elahi founds the axis of fidelity in his translation of Hölderlin upon a theologically inflected notion of presence and naming which is comparable to the Qur’ānic dictum: “when He intends a thing, He commands, ‘be,’ and it is!” (Qur’ān 36:82), whereby divine language repeatedly actualises itself in the act of creation. The same process is evident in Walter Benjamin’s theory of divine creation as naming.[63] We have engaged in these pages with the idea of presence in a less theological and more worldly sense in order to better understand the exigent mechanisms of syntactic fidelity in interlinear translation. “Presence” in this context simply means being in time. It is the time of the now, which Benjamin called *jetztzeit*. This is the form of time that cannot be postponed, and its temporality is best captured by the language of poetry. An interlinear translation cannot be assessed based on its communication of meaning, for it has not primarily sworn fidelity to meaning. More important is its ability to keep pace—in the precise temporal sense—with the original. If translation is basically a discourse of fidelity—whether to the source or to the receiving culture—the interlinear crib is a mode of translation that is constitutively faithful to the original *kairos*.

Syntactic word order always defines a temporal sequence characterised by “before” and “after.” This has three implications. First, syntax defines the proper moment of each idea in every enunciation; second, any manipulation of the normal syntactic order, as in Hölderlin’s poem, can also be examined as a temporal reconfiguration; and third, a gloss of Hölderlin’s poem, as in the case of Elahi’s literalist translation, functions according to a relation of

synchronicity between the translation and the original, which means *present*ing the ideas in their original moment, in opportune, kairological, time.

As Frank Kermode intuited in his account of narrative, *kairos* does not refer to a natural sequence of time; rather it refers to the form of time that is filtered through the lens of our experience. By way of illustration, Kermode turns to the sound of a clock.[64] Although we commonly associate *tick-tock* with clocks, in fact this supposed onomatopoeia is a fiction imposed by the human desire for beginnings and ends. Outside of human perception, there is no difference between *tick* and *tock*. The sounds are identical. It is only our desire for narrative—for temporal and specifically diachronic difference—that makes the alternating beats appear dissimilar. As with narrative, so with poetry: the ordering of words by language is constitutive of what is literary. Speech in its communicative function, as natural language, has at most a minimal role. The translator who cleaves to the *chronos* of a text at the expense of its *kairos* will be led astray. It follows that, in the context of poetry translation, it is not so much individual words that need to be translated as their locations and mutual relations. As Bijan Elahi understood and we have aimed to argue, the *kairos* of poetry is more effectively rendered by the interlinear crib and by literalist translation than by any of the many communicative methodologies that have attended its attempted recreation.

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[1] Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr* (Tehran: Bidgol, 2015), 89.

[2] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, translated by Michael Hamburger (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 223.

[3] See Maurice Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia: A Cultural History* (College Park: Penn State University Press, 1997), 176.

[4] For an example of interlinear translation in the context of multilingual Qur'ānic hermeneutics, see Ronit Ricci, "Reading between the Lines: A World of Interlinear Translation," *Journal of World Literature* 1 (2016) 68–80.

[5] Jerome, "Letter to Pammachius," tr. Kathleen Davis, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 23.

[6] The qualitative/quantitative framework for *kairos*/*chronos* is further developed in J. E. Smith, "Time and qualitative time," *Review of Metaphysics* 40 (1986): 3-16. We discuss our understanding of *kairos* in greater detail below.

[7] For further on Jurjānī's theory of *naẓm*, see Lara Harb, *Arabic Poetics: Aesthetic Experience in Classical Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 203-247.
[8] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters*, tr. and ed. Jeremy Adler and Charlie Louth (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 318 (italics in the original, and slightly modified following Pfau, who translates *Vorstellungen* as "representation." See *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters on Theory*, tr. and ed. Thomas Pfau [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988], 102). Parenthetical citations are henceforth to the Adler/Louth edition.
[9] Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, tr. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), 285.
[10] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, tr. Wade Baskin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 74.
[11] R. Anthony Lodge, Nigel Armstrong, Yvette Ellis, and Jane Shelton, *Exploring the French Language* (New York: Wiley, 1997), 55.
[12] Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," in Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 55-82.
[13] Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-iʿjāz*, ed. Mahmud Muhammad Shaker (Cairo: Maktaba al-Khanji, 1984), 44. Also see Rebecca Ruth Gould, "Inimitability versus Translatability: The Structure of Literary Meaning in Arabo-Persian Poetics," *The Translator* 19(1): 81-104.
[14] Agamben has discussed this sense of "rhythm" in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, *Book 1* [985b] in *Man without Content,* 94-104, in a chapter dedicated to the structure of the work of art according to Hölderlin.
[15] Giorgio Agamben, *The Man without Content*, tr. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 98.
[16] Jorge Luis Borges, *This Craft of Verse*, ed. Cătlin-Andrei Mihăilescu (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 57-76.
[17] Françoise Balibar, Philippe Büttgen, and Barbara Cassin, "Moment," in *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, edited by Barbara Cassin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 686.
[18] James L. Kinneavy, "Kairos in Classical and Modern Rhetorical Theory," *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis*, ed. Phillip Sipiora, James S. Baumlin (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002), 58.
[19] Joanne Paul, "The Use of Kairos in Renaissance Political Philosophy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 67.1 (2014), 46.
[20] Balibar, Büttgen, and Cassin, "Moment," 686.
[21] Franz Rosenthal *"Sweeter Than Hope": Complaint and Hope in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 528-9.
[22] Ali b. Uthman Hujwiri, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, ed. Valentin Zhukovsky (Leningrad: Maṭba'a-ye dār al-'olum-e etteḥād jamāhir-e showravi-ye susyālisti 1926), 480.
[23] Ruzbihān Baqli Shirāzi, *Commentary on Ecstatic Sayings* (*Sharḥ-e shaṭḥiyāt*), ed. Henry Corbin (Tehran: Anjoman-e irānshenāsi-ye farānsa, 1981), 251.
[24] T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems (1909-1962)* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1930), 182.
[25] Eliot, *Collected Poems*, 4.
[26] Hölderlin's conception of the Orient differs from that found in many European Orientalisms, as documented in Éva Kocziszky, *Hölderlins Orient* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009).
[27] For analyses of Hölderlin's translations in relation to his poems, see Charlie Louth, *Hölderlin and the Dynamics of Translation* (Oxford: Legenda British Comparative Literature Association, 1998) and Rainer Nägele, *Echoes of Translation: Reading between Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
[28] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Samtliche Werke*, edited by Friedrich Beißner and Adolf Beck, 8 vols. (Stuttgart: Cotta/Kohlhammer, 1943-85), VI, 434 (letter dated 28 September 1803).
[29] Hölderlin, *Samtliche Werke*, VI, 109-10, 125.
[30] We reflect at length on Elahi's translational method in Kayvan Tahmasebian and Rebecca Ruth Gould, "Translation as Alienation: Sufi Hermeneutics and Literary: Modernism in Bijan Elahi's Translations," *Modernism/Modernity* volume 5, cycle 4 (*Print Plus+*).
[31] Hölderlin, *Samtliche Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1969), 2: 941.
[32] Morad Farhadpour, "Thought/Translation," trans. Kayvan Tahmasebian and Rebecca Ruth Gould, in *Routledge Handbook of Translation and Activism*, ed. Rebecca Ruth Gould and Kayvan Tahmasebian (London: Routledge, 2020), 54-69.
[33] Richard Sieburth, "Introduction," in *Hymns and Fragments: Hölderlin,* trans. Richard Sieburth (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 28. For a probing account of Hölderlin as a translator, also see George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press: 1975), 323-335.
[34] Sieburth, "Introduction," 25.
[35] Martin Heidegger, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlin's Dichtung* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1951), 7.

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[36] Adorno, "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry," *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2 trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 114.
[37] In chronological order, these are:
1) *Sheʿr va falsafa-ye holderlīn* by Mahdi Esteʿdadi Shad (Sweden: Baran, 1995) [Translation of ten poems by Hölderlin and two essays by Heidegger].
2) *Gusha-neshin-e yunān, yā hiperiyon* by Mahmud Haddadi (Tehran: Nilufar, 2012) [Translation of Hölderlin's *Hyperion* (1797-9) from German, appended by a short biography, a note about Hölderlin's themes and style, a note about Hölderlin's poems, and notes on the allusions].
3) *Āncha mimānad: gozida-ye si sheʿr va sharḥ-e ān hamrāh-e goftāri az mārtin hāydeger* by Mahmud Haddadi (Tehran: Nilufar, 2014) [Translation of thirty poems by Hölderlin accompanied by a translation of Heidegger's "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry" (1936)].
4) *Niyat-e khayr* by Bijan Elahi (Tehran: Bidgol, 2015) [Translation of thirty-seven poems by Hölderlin].
5) *Khosravāni-hā* by Shapur Ahmadi (Tehran: Tamaddon ʿelmi, 2018) [Translation of eighteen poems by Hölderlin].
6) *Sokunat-e shāʿerāna: bist-o-chahār sheʿr be hamrāh-e taḥrir-e sevom az namāyesh-nāma-ye empedokles* by Mahmud Haddadi (Tehran: Nilufar, 2019) [Translation of twenty-four poems by Hölderlin accompanied by a translation of Hölderlin's unfinished drama *The Death of Empedocles*].
[38] For example, Bijan Elahi and Cyrus Atabay's co-translations in *Andisha va honar* 6: 5 (1970).
[39] For example, Reza Davari Ardakani, "Shāʿerān dar zamāna-ye ʿosrat be che kār miāyand? [What are poets for in a destitute time?]," *Majalla-ye dāneshkada-ye adabiyāt va ʿolum-e ensāni* 72-73 (1970): 311-325, republished in *Sura* 23 (1990): 8-12. The title alludes to Heidegger's "What are Poets for?" (1946), which offers an interpretation of Hölderlin's "Brod und Wein."
[40] This philosophical circle is introduced in Ali Mirsepassi, *Iran's Troubled Modernity: Debating Ahmad Fardid's Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
[41] See Mohammad Reza Shafīʿi Kadkani, "ʿAql varzidam o ʿeshqam ba malāmat barkhāst [Love blamed my reasoning]," *Iranshenasi: A Journal of Iranian Studies* 13:3 (2001): 510-518.
[42] See, respectively, Ahmad Kasravi, *Ḥāfeẓ che miguyad* (What does Hafez Say?) (Tehran: Kushad, 1946) and Ahmad Fardid, "Nesbat-e motafaker bā shāʿer [The thinker's relation to the poet]," *Muqef* 2 (2005): 36-40.
[43] Fardid introduced the term Westoxication (*gharbzadegi*) into Iranian discourse, and his disciple Jalal Al-e Ahmad chose it as the title for his famous book, *Westoxication* [*Gharbzadegi*], which appeared in English as *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West*, trans. R. Campbell, annotations and introduction by Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1984).
[44] For metaphors of interpretative "surface" and "depth," see Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *Representations* 108:1 (2009): 1-21.
[45] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Vol.1 1913-1926*, edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 259.
[46] Aris Fioretos, "Introduction," in *The Solid Letter: Readings of Friedrich Hölderlin*, edited by Aris Fioretos (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 6.
[47] Mahmud Haddadi, "Tarjoma va pā-ye chubin-e 'vafādāri'" [Translation and the wooden leg of fidelity]," *Nāma-ye farhangestān* 16:1 (2017): 122-131.
[48] Bijan Elahi, "Seh tarjoma bā do dhil [Three translations with two endnotes]," *Bidār*, vols. 8-10 (1999): 274.
[49] Among the books translated by Azodi are Reinhard Schulze's *Geschichte der Islamischen welt im im 20. Jahrhundert* (1994), tr. as *A modern history of the Islamic world* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000). The English edition used by Elahi is Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Verse*, translated by Michael Hamburger (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).
[50] The paragraphs are taken from Martin Heidegger's preface to *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung (1936-1968)* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1971).
[51] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 260.
[52] Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr*, 196. Also see Bijan Elahi, "Dancing in Chains: Bijan Elahi on the Art of Translation," translated by Rebecca Ruth Gould and Kayvan Tahmasebian, *Wasafiri* 99 (2019): 64-68.
[53] Hesam al-ʿOlama Aq Owla, *Dorar al-adab* (1935), 4.
[54] Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr*, 13. Emphasis added.
[55] Ahmad Fardid, "Nesbat-e motafaker bā shāʿer [The thinker's relation to the poet]," *Muqef* 2 (2005): 36.
[56] Jerome, "Letter to Pammachius," 23.
[57] Bijan Elahi, "Seh tarjoma bā do dhil," 274.
[58] Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr*, 14.
[59] David Constantine, "Service abroad: Hölderlin, Poet-Translator. A Lecture," *Translation and Literature* 20.1 (2011): 86.
[60] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Death of Empedocles: A Mourning Play*, translated by David Farrell Krell (New York: SUNY Press, 2008), viii.

[61] Sieburth, "Introduction," Hölderlin, *Hymns and Fragments*, 28.
[62] Bijan Elahi, *Niyat-e khayr*, 13.
[63] Walter Benjamin, "On Language as such and on the Language of Man," in *Selected Writing*, 62-74.
[64] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 [1967]), 45-46.