

The Distinctive Features of the Navoi Style

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Abstract: This article examines specific aspects of the use of poetic art in literary texts, related to the study of classical Uzbek poetics. This topic is illustrated using the work of Alisher Navoi as an example. One of the poet's ghazals is analyzed, and the poetic techniques used in it and their significance in revealing the theme and ideological content of the work are discussed. The article also provides a detailed analysis of Alisher Navoi's mastery of the artistic medium and his unique creative style.

Keywords: Ghazal, artistic word, artistic thought, poetic art, tashbeh, tamsil, tajnis, tajkhuli arif, talme, tardu aks, istiora, epithet.

Introduction: In the ghazals of Alisher Navoiy, one can observe the masterful employment of exquisite artistic devices characteristic of classical literature. The poet's divan entitled Favoyid ul-kibar ("Benefits of Old Age") also contains a ghazal beginning with the following matla' (opening couplet), which is richly adorned with diverse poetic arts:

Telba ko'nglum yorasi hadsiz tani uryon aro,
Uyladurkim, yer tutar devonae vayron aro...

This ghazal demonstrates the refined aesthetic principles of the classical Eastern poetic tradition and reflects the poet's high artistic craftsmanship in the use of imagery and expressive devices.

If we turn our attention to the meaning of the couplet, it expresses the idea that: "The wound of the naked (bare) body is boundless ..." Thus, the couplet conveys the idea that "my mad heart within the body is like a lunatic who has taken up residence in a ruin." In this context, the intensity of the lover's emotional state is expressed at an exceptionally heightened level.

The phrase in the first hemistich, "yorasi hadsiz tani uryon" ("a naked body with countless wounds"), serves as an example of hyperbole, more specifically the tablīgh type of exaggeration. That is, the depicted

condition is deliberately amplified: it remains rationally conceivable, yet its actual realization is extremely difficult and almost beyond the bounds of ordinary experience. In the first and second hemistiches of the couplet, the poetic device of simile (tashbīh) is employed: the heart dwelling within a wounded body is likened to a madman who has taken up residence in a ruin, as expressed in the second hemistich.

In this instance, all the essential components of the simile are present:

Mushabbah (the object being compared) – the lyrical subject's heart and the naked body covered with countless wounds;

Mushabbahun bih (the object of comparison) – the ruin and the madman;

Adāt al-tashbīh (the comparative particle) – uyladurkim ("as though," "it seems that");

Wajh al-tashbīh (the basis of comparison) – the parallel between the wounded state of the body and the ruined condition of a building.

This structural completeness of the simile demonstrates the poet's adherence to the refined conventions of classical poetics and highlights the deliberate artistic construction underlying the imagery.

In addition, the fact that these elements are “compared to each other in every respect” ensures the perfection of the simile, allowing the tashbīh to fully achieve its artistic effect. In this ghazal, the word “devona” (“madman”) is used metaphorically to signify the lover, transforming it into an *istiorah* (metaphorical device) that adds a unique aesthetic embellishment to the couplet’s artistry.

The second couplet of the ghazal is also rich in refined poetic devices:

Buki, la’ling nuktasi har dam o’lukni tirguzur,
Kirdi Ruhulloh, magar ul chashmai hayvon aro.

In this couplet, the prominent artistic devices include *istiorah* (metaphor), *talmeh* (allusion), *tanāsib* (antithesis or parallelism), and *tajohul-i arifona* (deliberate feigned ignorance). In the first hemistich, the ruby (la’l) is metaphorically associated with the beloved’s lips, while in the second hemistich, the phrase *chashmai hayvon* (“fountain of life”) also refers to the lips.

The expressions “o’lukni tirguzmoq” (“reviving the dead”) and “chashmai hayvon” serve as examples of *talmeh* and *tanāsib*, while the conceptual interplay between the first hemistich—“The ruby of your lips (and every word emanating from it) revives the dead”—and the second hemistich—“Could it be that Ruhullah has entered the fountain of life (i.e., your lips)?”—demonstrates a sophisticated use of *tajohul-i arifona*, a subtle, artful rhetorical device.

In the third couplet, the poet continues to depict the lyrical hero’s perception, portraying with vividness and emotional intensity the cause of his amazement through both imaginative insight and the limitless possibilities of language:

La’l yozilg’on kebidur la’l aro qilsang nazar,
Ko’zki hayratdin tikibmen ul labi xandon aro.

Here, what astonishes the lyrical hero is the beloved’s lips—the la’l—and while observing them, he perceives a coincidental resemblance: the smiling lips remind him of the word la’l (لعل). Considering that in Arabic calligraphy, expert scribes could render this word in a way that resembles the form of a smiling lip, we recognize that this simile has a plausible basis in reality. Moreover, attention should be paid to the verb “yozilmoq” in Navoiy’s works, where it is sometimes

used in the sense of “to be spread or scattered,” adding another layer of linguistic subtlety to the depiction.

This couplet exemplifies Alisher Navoiy’s mastery in combining visual imagery, linguistic ingenuity, and classical poetic devices to create highly vivid and expressive literary art. Thus, it can be understood that the lyrical hero is struck with amazement while gazing at the beloved’s lips, described as “la’l sochilgan la’li”—that is, the ruby-red lips from which either noble words are uttered or whose color resembles scattered rubies. This phenomenon, which prompts the reader to ponder “what meaning is intended here,” is characteristic of classical literary scholarship and is known as the *īyḥām* (art of ambiguity) in the science of *bade’* (rhetoric). Through this artistic device, poets embed multiple layers of meaning within the subtext of their couplets. Alisher Navoiy is undoubtedly one of the masters of such verbal artistry.

In the first hemistich, the phrase “la’l yozilg’on kebi la’l” functions as a complete simile (*tashbīh-i tam*), in which: la’l – *mushabbah* (the object being compared, i.e., the lip);

la’l yozilg’on – *mushabbahun bihi* (the object of comparison, i.e., the written form of the word or the scattered ruby);

kebi – *adāt al-tashbīh* (the comparative particle, “like”); the resemblance of la’l (the lip) to its written form – *wajh al-tashbīh* (the basis of comparison).

It is also notable that, according to the rules of *‘arūd* (classical prosody), in the first hemistich the initial foot is *sadr*, the middle feet are *hashv*, and the final foot is *‘arūd*; in the second hemistich, the first foot is *ibtidā’*, the middle feet are *hashv*, and the final foot is *‘ajūz* (or *zarb* in some sources). Consequently, the repetition of the word la’l at the beginning and middle of the first hemistich exemplifies the poetic device of *radd* (repetition), which reinforces both the musicality and the rhetorical emphasis of the verse. The repetition of la’l at the beginning and middle of the first hemistich exemplifies the *radd us-sadr ilal-hashv* type of rhetorical repetition. The use of la’l in the middle as “lip” functions as an *istiorah* (metaphor). Moreover, since the word is employed simultaneously in its literal sense and in a figurative or transferred sense, it also serves as an example of the poetic device *tajnīs* (*paronomasia*). In the second hemistich, the phrase *labi*

xandon (“smiling lips”) functions as an epithet, enhancing the descriptive and expressive quality of the verse. This enhances the expressive power of the depiction even further.

In the fourth couplet, we once again witness Alisher Navoiy’s mastery in employing the diversity of poetic language, layered meanings, the interplay of outward and inward aesthetic qualities, and depth of expression:

Qatra su ichra, degaykim, bargi gulning aksidur,
Qatra qonim rangini kim ko’rsa ul paykon aro.

In this couplet, Navoiy writes: “Whoever observes the color of my droplet of blood in the paykon will liken it to the reflection of a flower petal on a droplet of water.” To fully grasp the underlying meaning and the richness of the poetic devices, each artistic detail requires careful consideration.

The paykon is a spearhead made of lead fixed at the tip of a bow arrow, whose appearance resembles a droplet of water. The qatra qon (droplet of blood) matches the color and shape of a flower petal. Thus, the poet carefully selects similes (tashbih) such as “droplet of water – paykon” and “droplet of blood – flower petal reflection,” ensuring proportionality in shape and color, thereby creating a vivid and realistic poetic image in the reader’s mind.

However, the function of these similes does not end here. Navoiy also uses them as a means of hyperbole, to express the intense emotional experiences of the lover. Furthermore, the repetition of the word qatra at the beginning of both hemistiches exemplifies the radd us-sadr ilal-ibtidā’ type of rhetorical repetition. The harmonious interplay of these similes within a single conceptual frame also serves as a fine example of tanāsib (parallelism) in classical poetry.

In the subsequent couplet, we again encounter examples of Navoiy’s exceptional poetic skill and distinctive imagery. Here, the poet pays attention to the letters within the words he selects:

Qomating yodida ko’nglum ichra har keskan alif,
Rost bo’lmish ul alifdekki, yozilg’ay jon aro.

In this couplet, Navoiy draws upon the art of calligraphy (kitābat) associated with the orthography of Arabic letters, a well-established practice in classical literature, demonstrating his meticulous attention to

both visual and semantic qualities of language. Here, we can observe a truly unique example of the Navoiy style. To appreciate it fully, we first consider the meaning of the couplet: “When I remember your figure, each ‘alif’ that pierces my heart stands upright as if it resembles the ‘alif’ in the word jon (soul/life).” In other words, according to the principles of kitābat (calligraphic art), the poet draws attention to the letters alif in the words qomat (figure), yod (memory), and jon (soul). To understand this, one must know their spelling in Arabic script; otherwise, the essence and aesthetic richness of the device remain obscure.

In Arabic script, these words are written as follows:

qomat: قامت (qāf, alif, mīm, tā)

yod: يد (yā, alif, dāl)

jon: جان (jīm, alif, nūn)

As the lover contemplates the beloved’s figure, the alif in these words is imagined to pierce his heart, symbolizing how the memory of the beloved intensifies the pain of separation, as though the beloved’s form is piercing his soul with a metaphorical spear. Here, the poet seamlessly integrates hyperbole into the principles of kitābat, once again demonstrating the boundless expressive possibilities of language. Furthermore, the repetition of jon at the end of this couplet and at the beginning of the following one creates another type of rhetorical repetition known as radd ul-‘ajuz ilal-sadr:

Jon fidong o’lsun, habibimkim, hamono bor edi
Qasdi maxluqot aro insonu sen inson aro.

In this couplet, Navoiy employs the classical poetic device of nida (vocative), where the lyrical hero addresses another person or entity directly, expressing his infinite love and noble wishes for the beloved: “My soul is devoted to you, my beloved! Indeed, the purpose behind the creation of all beings was to create humanity, and among humans, you are supreme.” From the couplet’s meaning, it is evident that the beloved mentioned in the ghazal—the most exalted of humanity (khayr un-nās)—is the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Thus, through the use of hidden talmeh (allusion), the poet subtly references the creation of humankind and the prophetic figure, making this composition one of Navoiy’s most exquisite na’t ghazals. In the second hemistich, by inverting the

positions of the words *aro* and *insan*, another poetic device—*tard wa aks* (syntactic inversion)—is also employed: “*Qasdi maxluqot aro insan u sen insan aro*”. This further enhances the artistic depth and rhetorical sophistication of the verse. This artistic device not only exalts the beloved and vividly expresses the lover’s passion, but also imbues the hemistich with a special aesthetic elegance, conceptual depth, and rhetorical eloquence. The final couplet of the *ghazal*—its *maqtaʻ*—is equally rich in artistry. Here, the poet brings the entire composition, developed logically and progressively from beginning to end, to a philosophical and aesthetic conclusion, highlighting the culmination of the poetic thought:

*Ey Navoiy, istasangkim oʻlimgay el darddin,
Dardi holingni dema nazm aylabon afgʻon aro.*

Addressing himself, the poet says: “O Navoiy, if you wish for the people not to perish from grief, do not express your suffering and state of mind in verse through lamentation and sighing.” In the first hemistich, the poet employs vocative and hyperbole, while in both hemistiches, another poetic device appears: the repetition of the word *darddin* at the end of the first hemistich and *dardi* at the beginning of the second exemplifies *radd ul-ʻarūz min as-sadr*, a type of rhetorical repetition. Through the analysis of this *ghazal*, we gain insight into Alisher Navoiy’s exceptional poetic mastery and his distinctive literary style, often referred to in scholarship as the “*oliy*” or “*Navoiyona*” style [Ishoqov, E. *Soʻz sanʻati soʻzligi*. Tashkent: Oʻzbekiston, 2014, p. 307]. The study highlights certain features of his style connected with the use of poetic devices, examining their aesthetic and artistic significance within the text and their role in illuminating the *ghazal*’s themes.

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