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Article

The Artistic Symbolism of the 'Eye'

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Abstract: This article presents a poetic analysis of the "eye," one of the most frequently employed symbols in Alisher Navoiy's poetry. In particular, it examines how Navoiy, in his ghazals, effectively utilized the somatic imagery of the eye and its equivalents in the native language, as well as its Persian and Arabic counterparts, thereby developing unique and expressive artistic motifs and making a significant contribution to the elevation of the eye's artistic symbolism.

Keywords: *Navoiy's lyrics, the symbol of the "eye", "ayn", "chashm", "basirat", "nargis", issues of artistic aesthetics.*

1. Introduction

Observations reveal that in some of the great poet's ghazals, somatic imagery of the eye is employed up to four times within a single couplet [1]. For instance, in the ghazal with the matla' "Parim bo'lsa, uchub qochsam ulustin to qanotim bor" included as No. 133 in the G'aroyib us-sig'ar divan, such an instance is observed in the fifth couplet: Kechib ko'zdin yozay bir xatki, dahr ahlig'a ko'z solmay Bu damkim, ko'z savodidin qaro, ko'zdin davotim bor.

In this couplet, the word "ko'z" appears four times, including in the expressions ko'zdan kechmoq (to disregard), ko'z solmoq (to look attentively), ko'z savodi (ink of the eye), and once as the standalone word ko'z [2]. Some words in this couplet may require explanation for contemporary readers of ghazals. According to specialized lexicons, particularly the Explanatory Dictionary of the Language of Alisher Navoiy's Works, these words are interpreted as follows:

DAHR AHLI – the people of the world, humanity, folk [ANATIL, I, 475] SAVOD – 1. ink, black; 2. darkness; 3. surroundings; 4. city, land; 5. draft copy; 6. black mustache [ANATIL, III, 20] DAVOT – a container for storing ink prepared for writing [ANATIL, I, 439] The couplet can be interpreted as follows: "At this moment, disregarding what people might say, I write a letter; though I possess an inkpot for the eye, let the letter be as dark as the pupil itself." The repeated use of expressions related to the eye, such as ko'zdan kechmoq, ko'z solmaslik, and ko'z savodi, creates a rhetorical effect of repetition, enhancing the artistic quality of the verse [3].

In Navoiy's poetry, the application of somatic imagery, particularly of the eyes, can be observed across entire ghazals [4]. For example, in the ghazal numbered 121 in the G'aroyib us-sig'ar divan, this phenomenon is evident: Orazing mushtoqidur bu ko'zki, bo'lmish dardmand, Garchi bordur dardlig' ko'zga yorug'luqtin gazand.

Here, the lyrical hero acknowledges that the beloved's radiant gaze may harm the pained eye, yet he cannot resist the desire to behold her moon-like face. The poet expresses this longing through synecdoche, using the eye as a representative of perception and emotion [5]. Furthermore, the couplet exemplifies antithesis: despite the potential harm of

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the light to the suffering eye, the lover's desire to see the beloved's luminous face prevails, creating a tension between attraction and pain [6].

2. Materials and Methods

This Another instance reads: Dard o'tin yoqti ko'zumga hajr, chun ko'rdum yuzin, Kuydurur albatta har doruki, bo'lg'ay sudmand. In this couplet, the lyrical hero describes how the fire of longing is ignited in his eyes due to separation from the beloved. The poet substantiates this idea by likening it to a medicinal effect: just as any remedy burns when applied, so too does the longing inflict pain. Here, the art of allegory is employed, grounding the poet's expression in a tangible, life-like phenomenon. Bu qizarg'an ko'z aro mardum emaskim el ko'zi, Tegmasun husnungg'a deb o't uzra solibmen sipand.

In one couplet, the lover describes the pupil of his beloved's reddened eyes caused by separation not simply as a pupil, but metaphorically as resin placed in fire, so that the eye of the people does not touch the beloved's beauty. Here, the lover's eye is likened to fire (cho'g'), and the pupil to resin (isiriq): Tokim ul bemor ko'z oshuftasi bo'lmish ko'zum, Istabon jinsiyat og'riq shevasin qilmish pisand.

In this verse, a universal human truth is expressed in artistic form: one wishes to share the condition of the beloved. From the moment the lover's eye becomes enamored with the ailing eye, he desires to experience the same suffering, sharing in the pain endured by the beloved. This couplet also demonstrates the expression of the beloved and the lover through eye imagery. Another example reads: Ko'zlarim la'lig'a hamrang o'ldi, vah, ne hol ekin. Kim, bu achchig' yig'lag'an soyi ul aylar no'shxand.

Here, both eye and lip imagery are used to convey similarity and contrast. In the first line, the color of the lover's eyes mirrors that of the beloved's lips, expressing resemblance. In the second line, however, the eyes' bitter tears contrast with the beautiful smile of the lips, creating an exemplary case of antithesis through the expressions achchig' yig'lag'an (bitterly weeping) and no'shxand aylar (smiling), while the ruby-like imagery (la'l) is applied to the lips. In another couplet: Ko'zni bir iz tufrog'idin ravshan etkim sud emas Shofi kofuriy chekib osmoq anga mushkin parand.

The lover's eyes, dimmed by continuous weeping caused by separation, cannot be brightened merely by wrapping them in fragrant silk. The verse emphasizes that applying the soil of the beloved's trace to the lover's pained eyes can restore their clarity. Furthermore: Ul quyosh hajrinda bilmankim, Navoiyy ko'ziga. Barcha olam tiyradur yo bog'lamishdur chashmband.

In this couplet, the beloved's separation renders the entire world dim to the lover's eyes, attributed either to the beloved's absence or to a binding placed over the lover's eyes. In this seven-couplet ghazal, eye imagery is employed ten times. Despite the repetition, does not produce monotony; rather, it enhances the artistic value of the ghazal.

3. Results

Navoiy extensively incorporated proverbs and idiomatic expressions related to the eye in his ghazals. This practice likely contributed to their widespread popularity among the people. For instance, the idiom ko'ziga to'tiyo qilmoq, meaning "to cherish or honor," has been actively used in the vernacular. Linguistically, idioms, like proverbs, undergo minimal change over time [7]. Evidence of the idiom's continuity since Navoiy's era is found in the ghazal included as No. 33 in the G'aroyib us-sig'ar divan, whose matla' exemplifies this expression [8]. Oncha davron birla ko'rdum ahli davrondin jafo, Kim, ko'zumga to'tiyodek bo'ldi jonondin jafo.

In this couplet, the lyrical hero depicts his complaints about the sufferings he endures due to the beloved by drawing a parallel to the injustices he observes in his contemporaries. In other words, the lover experiences the beloved's afflictions so intensely that, in comparison, the hardships inflicted by his era and peers appear trivial, like a token of honor (ko'ziga to'tiyo) in his eyes [9]. Expressions related to eye somatism frequently

appear throughout Alisher Navoiy's ghazals. For instance: Ko'z uchi birla boqting-u, qiyding Navoiyy ko'nglini, Bilding anikim, bir qiyo boqmoqqa hojatmand erur. [G'S, Ghazal 135]

Here, through the expressions ko'z uchi birla boqmoq (to glance sideways) and qiyo boqmoq (to gaze earnestly), the poet conveys his artistic intention in a unique and distinctive manner [10].

In the ghazal with the matla' "Zihe azalda karam aylabon sanga xalloq", included as No. 309 in the G'aroyib us-sig'ar divan, Navoiy employs the phrase ko'z yummoq (to close one's eyes, to sleep) to create a vivid and eloquent poetic image: Sipehr har kecha yuz ming ko'zin nedin yummas, Visolingga yana bir kecha gar emas mushtoq.

In this couplet, the lyrical hero expresses amazement that if he were not longing for the beloved's union for even one more night, why would the heavens close a hundred thousand eyes each night? Here, the sparkling stars are metaphorically linked to the lover's anticipation of the beloved [11].

In Sufi scholarly sources, the term ko'z (eye) signifies the human faculty of perceiving the Divine in objects and events, representing vigilance and discernment over all that is good and harmful. Similarly, in such sources, somatic imagery including chashm (eye), abru (eyebrow), and jamol (face) often connotes the divine inspiration bestowed upon the seeker's heart. One of the seven external pillars of Sufi virtue (futuvvat) is directly associated with the eyes, emphasizing that one must close the eyes from what is forbidden [12].

In literature, particularly in poetry, eye imagery or chashm terminology is considered a medium through which divine inspiration flows into the heart of the seeker. The term chashm is often used in Persian-Tajik compound expressions. For example: Ham ramad tekkan ko'zungga chashmi bedorim fido, Ham uchuq chiqqan labingg'a joni afgorim fido. [G'S, Ghazal 31]

In this matla', chashmi bedor (wakeful eyes) appears, while in the second couplet, chashmi xunbor (blood-shedding eyes) is employed. The expressions convey the idea: "May my wakeful eyes be devoted to your eyes that have suffered; may my blood-shedding eyes be devoted to your wounded lips." Another example: Xonaqahda tiyramen, dayri fano tufrog'ini Ham supur kirpik bila, ham chashmi giryonimg'a o'k. [BV, Ghazal 338] Here, the lyrical hero, seated in sorrow within the khanqah, requests that the fleeting earthly soil of the beloved be swept with his eyelashes and collected by his weeping eyes (chashmi giryon). Similarly: Charx uza har yon shihob ermaski, ko'kning holima Yosh to'kar har lahza chashmi ashkbori bu kecha. [BV, Ghazal 555]

The hero observes that although stars do not shoot across the sky this night, the heavens, moved by his plight, cause his blood-shedding eyes to shed tears continuously [13]. Mastlig'din har kishiga chopsa markab xo'yfishon, G'ayratidin ashk chashmi xunfishonimdin ketar. [FK, Ghazal 166] Here, if the intoxicated rider pursues everyone recklessly, from the hero's vigor, his own blood-shedding eyes lose tears, emphasizing the intensity of his grief.

In Navoiy's lyric poetry, eye imagery is also employed alongside the nargis, a violet-hued flower growing in water [14]. In the ghazal with the matla' "Ko'nglum o'rtansun agar g'ayringg'a parvo aylasa", the following couplet exemplifies this association: Rashkdin jonimg'a har nargis ko'zi bir shu'ladur, Bog' aro nogah xirom ul sarvi ra'no aylasa.

Analysis of the couplets reveals that the lyrical hero depicts the beloved's sudden posture as if she were a slender cypress, and in a moment of jealousy, her eyes appear as radiant as a single ray of the narcissus (shahlo) to his perception. In this couplet, the poet employs the artistic devices of simile (tashbeh) and personification (tashxis): the beloved's figure is likened to a cypress tree, which is itself personified with the human characteristic of turning or moving gracefully [15].

In many verses, instead of the direct mention of the eye, the attribute of nargis (narcissus) is used metaphorically, employing the figure of speech known as istiora

(metonymy). Examples from Navoiy's ghazals include: Vahki, har kirpigi bir nishtar erur zahrolud, Garchi bor ul iki nargisda shakarxob to'la. [G'S, Ghazal 32]

Here, the lyrical hero laments that although the beloved's two eyes are filled with sweet sleep, each eyelash seems imbued with poison. Ikki o'tlug' nargisingkim, qildilar bag'rim kabob Biridur ayni xumor ichinda, biri masti xob. [G'S, Ghazal 41]

In this verse, the hero mourns that one eye, immersed in intoxication, and the other, in blissful slumber, metaphorically "scorched" his heart. Ki, hozir erdi o'shul sarv-u nargisi maxmur, Valek rag'mima qilmas edi qadahg'a shitob. [G'S, Ghazal 44] Even if the beloved with intoxicated eyes were present, the hero would not hasten to indulge in the cup, emphasizing self-restraint and emotional control. Shabnam ermas nargis ashkidur nedin qon yig'lamas, Ko'z yumub ochquncha gulshan umri poyonin ko'rub. [G'S, Ghazal 57]

The hero interprets the morning dew as the beloved's tears, equating the ephemeral moment between closing and opening the eyes with the final moments of the garden's life. Agar Navoiyy ikki nargising xayoli bila Mariz-u mast jahondin o'tar, sen o'lg'il sog'. [G'S, Ghazal 296] Here, the hero expresses that even if his beloved's two eyes were to leave the world in a state of illness or intoxication, he wishes for her continued well-being.

In Navoiy's ghazals, the eye is also metaphorically expressed using terms from Persian (diyda), such as in: Uyqu xos o'ldi mening baxti garon xobimg'a, Uyqusizliq nechakim diydayi giryonima xos. [G'S, Ghazal 275] Here, the hero notes that just as sleep suits his heavy fortune, wakefulness suits his tearful eyes. Miskin Navoiyy bersa jon, ey diyda, har dam to'kma qon, Ul har necha qilsa fig'on, sen asrag'il zinhor dam. [G'S, Ghazal 415]

The hero, calling himself humble, prays that even if he gives his life, his diyda (eyes) will not shed blood-tears, and despite others' laments, the beloved would not voice reproach. La'ling g'amidin diydayi giryon bila bordim, Ko'rmay seni yuz nola-vu afg'on bila bordim. [G'S, Ghazal 418] The hero recounts that the beloved's lips caused his eyes to shed tears, and he could not see her except through cries and wailing.

Furthermore, eye imagery is expressed through terms such as qarog' (pupil, black of the eye), as in: Ko'zumni toki qilmish ul saodat axtari matla', Qarog' ermaski, shabgun hulladin qildim anga burqa'. [G'S, Ghazal 290] Qarog'larim emastur, balki topqach ko'zga qoqmishmen, Itardin vahm etib, raxshing sitomin, balki mismorin. [G'S, Ghazal 489] Sirishk qonin oyog'ing uchun xino qilayin, Qabul tushsa qarog'im ezib qaro qilayin. [G'S, Ghazal 504] Erur ko'ngulda safo ishq toza dog'i bila Nechukki, ko'zda yorug'lug' erur qarog'i bila. [G'S, Ghazal 556]

4. Conclusion

These verses demonstrate the poet's skillful use of eye imagery, its synonyms, and related Persian and Arabic terms (chashm, diyda, nargis, ayn), each employed with precision to create unparalleled artistic effects. It can be stated that in his ghazals, Alisher Navoiy skillfully utilizes eye somatism, its Uzbek equivalents, and Persian and Arabic counterparts, thereby producing unique and aesthetically resonant poetic innovations, contributing significantly to the artistic elevation of the eye symbol in his lyric poetry.

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