



CONVERGENCE OF STYLISTIC DEVICES IN MYSTIC POETRY

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Abstract

A literary work is a product of artistic language, and therefore, the language of a literary work depends on the author's skill and the possibilities of the language. Writers and poets choose words and expressions to create imagery and scenes, determining their literal and figurative meanings, identifying synonyms and antonyms, and using syntactic structures of the national language. That is why literature is called “the art of depicting life through words.” Research indicates that the language of a literary work is the only means of realizing its content.

Literature Review

The main feature of artistic language is that it serves to depict life and create imagery. In literary studies, the language of literature is studied both aesthetically and linguistically. Aesthetic analysis is relevant to literary criticism, while linguistic analysis pertains to linguistics. Artistic devices and expressive means are not just features of artistic language, but they are elements that enhance imagery and emotionality. In literary criticism, these elements are also referred to as “poetic devices”, “syntactic figures” or “stylistic figures.”

Therefore, it can be concluded that the essence of imagery and image creation lies in the skillful use of figurative and stylistic devices. The objects of our research—'Gulshan-i Raz' and 'Songs of Innocence and Experience'—are Sufi-mystical works, and the depiction and description of symbolic images in such works are closely linked to artistic expressive means. As Sufi imagery is based on metaphor, symbol, and allegory, tropes play a vital role in these texts. A trope



is the use of a word or phrase in a figurative rather than its literal sense, and it enhances the expressiveness of speech.

Methodology

In Mahmud Shabistari's "Gulshan-i Raz", we encounter numerous artistic devices. Through them, Shabistari conveys profound Sufi, divine, and philosophical concepts. These include metaphor, personification, epithet, hyperbole, simile, litotes, and allusion. We will examine these devices in detail. Starting with personification, A. Ulughov defines it as a depiction where human qualities are attributed to inanimate objects or natural phenomena. For example:

"Every herb that turns yellow has felt pain,
Every flower that speaks has known a secret."

Meaning: Grass turns yellow because it feels pain, and flowers bloom beautifully because they speak secrets. Here, grass and flowers are personified with human emotions.

Another example:

"Clean the mirror of your heart,
So that the light of Truth may shine upon it."

Here, the heart is compared to a mirror and is personified with human attributes. Often combined with other devices like epithet, simile, and personification, hyperbole is used to emphasize limitless power and intensity. In art and literature, hyperbole enhances expression and attracts attention. For instance:

"Even the sea cannot extinguish this love." Meaning: Love is so immense that even the sea cannot quench it—emphasizing the infinity of love.

"From the lover's tears, rivers flow." This exaggerates the lover's sorrow to the level of flowing rivers.

Simile (Tashbih). Simile is used to vividly describe a phenomenon by comparing it to something familiar. In "Gulshan-i Raz," similes are formed with words like "like," "as," "similar to," "just as," "akin to," "like unto," "resembling," and others. Shabistari uses similes 72 times. For example, in the answer to the second question:

"Like captives you are confined to one spot,
Binding your feet with your own helpless hand."



You sit like women in the street of ill fortune,
You take no shame to yourself for your ignorance.”

These lines depict people as captives—motionless and helpless—and compare them to women rejected by fate. These are examples of simile.

Epithet. According to Professor B. Turayev, epithets are artistic adjectives traditionally used in literary works. In classical literature, especially Sufi poetry, epithets play a crucial role. Through epithets, Shabistari expresses the important characteristics of people, objects, and events. For instance, in response to the 14th question:

“For that is as a lamp of exceeding light,
The third verse thereof is Highest heaven.”

Here, “exceeding light” and “Highest heaven” are epithets emphasizing divine brightness and elevation. These expressions enhance the imagery and philosophical depth.

Allusion. “Gulshan-i Raz” is rich in references to Sufi philosophy and Islamic scriptures such as the Qur’an and Hadith. These references are known in literary theory as allusions. We observe two main types in the work: religious and Sufi allusions.

One example is the reference to “light” as used in the Qur’an (Surah An-Nur, 24:35): “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...” This verse symbolizes divine knowledge and existence.

Another example involves references to prophets like Moses and Adam:

“The light of the prophet is a mighty sun,
Now shining in Moses, now in Adam.
If you read the chronicles of the world,
You will know clearly its several degrees.”

These lines allude to divine revelation through prophets. Sufi allusions often refer to mystical unity with God. For instance, the phrase “The Beloved” symbolizes God and divine love. This is a recurring theme in Sufi poetry, seen in works by Rumi, Hafez, and Attar. In the poetry of William Blake, abstract concepts are presented as symbolic images drawn from nature and society. His work frequently employs personification, giving vivid, emotional qualities to non-human entities. For example:



From “London”:

“And the hapless Soldier’s sigh

Runs in blood down Palace walls.”

This symbolizes the suffering of soldiers and the cruelty of political power.

In “Earth’s Answer,” the Earth is personified as a being yearning to escape darkness.

Results and Discussion

Personification appears in nearly every poem and image, occurring approximately 50–60 times.

Epithets—adjectives placed before nouns to convey emotional or aesthetic value—are also widely used in “Songs of Innocence and Experience.”

Title of poem	Piece from the poem	Meaning
“The Tyger”	“Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright, In the forests of the night.”	Burning bright - The tiger’s supernatural power and mysterious nature are intensified through the use of epithets
“The Lamb”	“Softest clothing, woolly, bright”	Softest, woolly, bright - Epithets that describe the lamb’s innocence and purity
“London”	“In every cry of every Man, In every Infant’s cry of fear, In every voice, in every ban, The mind-forged manacles I hear.”	Mind-forged manacles – A powerful epithet about how society mentally enslaves people.
“The Sick Rose”	“O Rose, thou art sick.”	Sick Rose - An epithet used as a symbol of a decaying society or corrupted purity

Conclusion

Mahmud Shabistari and William Blake both use allusions to explore deep philosophical and religious themes. “Gulshan-i Raz” is rooted in Islamic mysticism and draws heavily on the Qur’an and Sufi sources. “Songs of Innocence and Experience,” influenced by Christian theology and Miltonic tradition, examines the relationship between humanity and God.



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