

Criteria of Artistic Expression in Literature

Khayrullayeva Nodira Ne'matulloyevna ¹, Mekhmonova Nigina Fakhreddinovna ²

¹ Asia International University, PhD Associate Professor

² Graduate Student at Asia International University

Abstract:

This article discusses the methods of analyzing literary works based on artistic criteria such as talent and creativity, tradition and innovation, and mastery and impact. It also explains how all elements of an artistic work combine to help perceive specific aspects of real-life events.

Keywords: Criteria of mastery and impact, artistry, elements of art and literature, criteria of talent, writer's personality, literary technique, imagery.

The artistic essence of art and literature is connected to human creativity. The term "artistic" originates from the Arabic words "Bad'un" and "Bade'a," meaning "to invent, transform, create something new, or innovate." Artistry involves animating aspects of existence and attributing human characteristics to them. It reflects the creator's ability to convey their thoughts to readers as clearly and deeply as they have experienced and perceived them. The highest expression of artistry manifests through the talent and mastery of the creator, embodied in the artistic images they produce.

Artistry is the science of talent and creativity, tradition and innovation, and criteria of mastery and impact. It is essential to note that all elements of an artistic work interconnect to aid in perceiving and understanding specific aspects of life events. Most importantly, artistic works refine our emotions, motivate us to explore life, and encourage self-discovery.

Art always places artistry at its core. The essence of form and content in art and literature arises from the need for artistry. The foundation of artistic contemplation is shaped by the author's perspective and relationship with the subject.

The English literary scholar Terry Eagleton emphasizes that not all works qualify as artistic; only those that depict real-life events through artistic imagery can be considered truly artistic. The term "artistic" signifies beauty, elegance, and sophistication. Therefore, "artistry" is closely tied to the most delicate aspects of literature. If a work lacks novelty and instead relies on repetition, it

becomes irrelevant to literature. The fate of any literary work is determined not by its rhetoric but by its innovation and aesthetic value. This is why great artistic works become part of both national and global literary history. Innovation pertains to both the content and the form of a work.

The Concept of "Artistry" in the Works of Abdurahman Jami, Davlatshokh Samarkandi, and Navoi

The term "artistry" was utilized in the works of Abdurahman Jami, Davlatshokh Samarkandi, and Navoi. In Europe, it was initially associated with Goethe's works, while in Russia, it emerged in the 19th century. During the 1920s-30s, the works and educational materials of Abdurahman Sa'di and Fitrat employed terms like "elegance," "refinement," and "refined literature" in place of "artistry."

According to F.M. Dostoevsky, "Artistry, for example, even in the case of a modest novelist, is the talent to express one's thoughts precisely through the characters and imagery in the novel, allowing the reader to understand the author's ideas exactly as intended."

Rodnianskaya states, "Artistry is a complex combination of intrinsic characteristics that define the outcome of creative labor in the realm of art." Hegel emphasized mastery and its influence in literature, while Dostoevsky highlighted the significance of talent. B.G. Belinsky asserted that the value of a poetic work is determined by its alignment with reality. Chelyshev, on the other hand, noted, "Only a work that embodies a true idea and whose form perfectly aligns with its content can be considered artistic."

I. Sultan emphasized, "If we aim to uncover the 'secrets' of an artistic work's impact—determining the factors or conditions that bring about this impact—we encounter numerous issues related to the creation of the artistic work. However, by isolating the most significant of these issues, we can identify the criteria of artistry that determine the work's influence."

Artistry and its criteria have been studied by Uzbek literary scholars such as I. Sultan, U. Toychiyev, E. Khudoyberdiyev, A. Rasulov, and M. Qo'shchimov; Russian literary scholars such as B.G. Belinsky, N.K. Gey, F.M. Dostoevsky, and I.V. Rodnianskaya; and Western literary scholars including E. Greenlaw, T. Eagleton, R. Wellek, B. Dorothy, and A. Stauffer. Based on these studies, the following classification has been developed:

I. Talent as the Core Criterion of Artistic Creation

Talent is a fundamental criterion and one of the primary causes of artistic creation. It develops through aptitude, ability, and capacity, which are closely linked to heightened sensitivity and literary experience.

The Four Aspects of the Talent Criterion:

1. *Labor:* Talent alone is insufficient for success. Without continuous effort, a writer cannot produce a true work of art. For instance, despite their backgrounds in medicine, physics, law, theology, chemistry, and biology, prominent figures in Afghan-American diaspora literature of the late 20th and early 21st centuries became accomplished writers through relentless labor and research.
2. *Expertise:* Professional knowledge, extensive experience, and high skill levels are essential for any type of work. Regardless of the topic, a writer must thoroughly study the subject and accurately integrate relevant information into their writing.
3. *The Personality of the Writer.* The writer, as an inseparable part of society, is influenced by social issues. Not only Afghan-American writers but also Afghan diaspora writers in Europe have artistically expressed themes of leaving their homeland due to instability in Afghanistan and issues of personal freedom.

4. **Circumstances.** Personality develops in connection with circumstances, which are closely tied to one's past, present, and future. These circumstances can have both positive and negative impacts on talent. Although members of the Afghan diaspora live as equals with others in their host countries under humanitarian values, they often long to return to their homeland. This longing, alongside the nostalgia for pre-war Afghanistan, is vividly reflected in their works, portraying the pain of separation from the homeland and dramatizing the harsh realities experienced there.

II. Distinctive Features of Artistry. Artistry is characterized by its use of imagery and language. In literature, human characteristics are often metaphorically expressed through representations of objects, animals, and phenomena. The criterion of artistry encapsulates language, literary techniques, and imagery.

1. **Literary Techniques.** Every writer must be familiar with the existing rules and principles of literature before beginning to write. Literary techniques encompass content, composition, form, literary genres, character classifications, and artistic tools. The literary technique of Khaled Hosseini, for example, evolved with his successive novels. In *And the Mountains Echoed*, an entire chapter is written in the epistolary genre, showcasing the author's exceptional skill. Nabi's letter to Dr. Varvaris, recounting events from 1949 to 2002, demonstrates a unique stylistic approach that compresses events in time and space, offering a distinctive perspective on reality.
2. **Language.** Language is the primary tool of literature. The language of a literary work differs from that of scientific texts through its vividness, emotionality, imagery, aphorisms, and other qualities. Every poetic detail, artistic insertion, and character depiction in the text must be precise and convincing.

The inclusion of colloquial expressions, dialectal phrases, religious terms, historical references, explanations, translations, neologisms, humorous irony, and wordplay enhances the clarity of a work. Not only the characters' speech but also the fluidity of the narrator's and author's language impacts the reader aesthetically. The author skillfully manages narrative control: sometimes holding it firmly, other times passing it to the characters or an external narrator. This interplay creates a multifaceted narrative style—polyphonic speech—that keeps the reader engaged while expanding the dimensions of realism.

In diaspora literature, the clash of languages and cultures predominates. This is evident in novels written in English, which often incorporate Arabic, Persian, and Turkic words as well as Eastern motifs. These stylistic choices reveal the authors' artistic intent to highlight a painful truth: the youth in the Afghan diaspora are growing up without benefiting from their homeland's classical literature. For instance, the phrase "*Zendagi migzara*" ("Life goes on") captures this sentiment. In works such as *Shamol Ortidan Yugurib* (Running After the Wind), the speeches of Iqbal Tohiri and "Bobom" include a higher frequency of Persian and Turkic words, illustrating the blending of languages and the cultural richness of diaspora experiences.

3. **Imagery.** Imagery is the primary characteristic of art, representing a unique form and method of perceiving life, its "language," and its "judgment" on life events. Imagery encompasses the essence of literary creativity and its general attributes, including literary characters, artistic language, nature, objects, things, animals, and more.

Sometimes, imagery and artistry are used interchangeably as concepts. In sources on literary theory, one often finds the notion that "imagery is artistry." However, the above definitions clarify that artistry is a broader concept than imagery.

The poetic essence of an image is comprehended as a unity of its meaning, content, and formal expression. Taking this into account, A. A. Potebnya states: "Directing poetic essence toward the

separation of idea and image undermines the integrity of the artistic world and artistic logic. In the process of sensory perception, the integration of certain components in art occurs. This integration simultaneously highlights the distinctiveness of content and the divergence of logical coherence."

4. Tradition and Innovation. Tradition and innovation serve as criteria for reflecting the individuality and uniqueness of a writer's artistry.

I. Sulton defines tradition and innovation as follows:

"In every national literature, the aesthetic experience accumulated over centuries—positive achievements in depicting aspects of life, and the methods and tools for doing so—is called literary tradition. New approaches and tools, confirmed by the new historical conditions for depicting life, are referred to as literary innovation."

Tradition demands not only adoption but also development, which renews, enriches, and refines it. However, this process must avoid turning tradition into stagnation.

1. Innovation. Before writing a work, a writer must be familiar with the history of national literature, its terminology, and what it contains and lacks. The introduction of new ideas and characters into literature is essential.

Innovation disconnected from tradition is merely experimental and aligns only with the taste of readers. This taste is born from the experiences of the past and the present while connecting to the future.

Tradition is assimilated, and innovation is created. If innovation is formed in harmony with tradition, it, too, eventually becomes tradition. Thus, tradition and innovation complement and balance each other as essential internal factors driving the development of literary art.

2. Tradition. The critical and creative adoption of past literary achievements involves solidifying and reinterpreting them. Through this, new and mature images emerge, offering artistic perception enriched with ideological and artistic depth.

Every era absorbs the best elements of the literature that preceded it while striving to contribute something new to it. Continuity and loyalty to tradition in literature ensure that each national literature retains its distinctiveness and national identity.

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