

A LOOK AT THE GENESIS OF WORKS CREATED WITH ALLEGORICAL CONTENT

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Abstract

In this article discussed about the genesis of works of the type of bird discussion created in the Turkish language tradition. In addition, the reasons for the similarity of the form and content of these types of works; the interaction of the works, as well as the peculiarities of their creation, will be briefly discussed. Along with this, the issues of tradition and followership in the creation of figurative masnaviy are also dealt with in detail.

Keywords: "Flower and Nightingale", Turkish language, Western language, Eastern language, allegorical, figurative, tradition, form, content.

Introduction

When discussing medieval Uzbek literature, or even the entire Eastern literature, it is essential to highlight the epics that depict the spiritual and moral world of a person, their material existence, and the complex life struggles of ordinary people. Without such allegorical works, it is impossible to fully comprehend ancient Eastern literature.

Allegorical works are considered important sources that define the status of medieval Eastern literature. Philosophical and mystical works such as Abu Ali Ibn Sina's "Risalat ut-Tayr", Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazali's "Risalat ut-Tayr", Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq-ut-Tayr", Jalaluddin Rumi's "Bulbulnoma", and Alisher Navoi's "Lison-ut-Tayr" hold significant value in both Eastern and Western literature. These classical works have influenced the creation of numerous later works in the genre of debate.

The similarity of these works is evident in several aspects. Firstly, all these poems are written in an allegorical form, where all the characters are birds or figures related to them. Secondly, these works are written in a Sufi spirit, and all of them glorify Ishq-i Haq — the divine love for Allah and His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Thirdly, another characteristic that connects these works is their composition in the masnavi form. The only significant difference among these works lies in how love (ishq) is perceived and expressed individually. This is a natural phenomenon, as love is a singular essence, yet each person experiences and articulates it differently. Because the above-mentioned works are thematically profound and ideologically perfect, they have depicted love at the highest level of artistic excellence. As a result, these masterpieces have remained

in history as literary treasures and have inspired numerous subsequent works in the same genre.

The tradition initiated by Fariduddin Attar, Jalaluddin Rumi, and Alisher Navoi — writing works based on the debate of birds motive — continued in various forms and directions even after them. The chronological and geographical scope of such works is itself sufficient to establish their significance in literature.

The munozara (debate) genre has long been one of the most popular literary forms, attracting many poets and writers. Within this genre, the debate of birds holds a special place. A glance at the history of Eastern literature, particularly Uzbek and related Turkic literatures, reveals a substantial number of works based on this motif. The munozara theme has always been regarded as a dynamic literary subject, giving rise to numerous works across different literary periods.

Methods

Eastern literature is renowned for its richness and diversity of literary genres. The works produced within this literary tradition have significantly contributed to world literature with their poetic excellence, thematic depth, and fluid expression. In Eastern literature, particularly in the literary traditions of Turkic peoples, mystical works of the "Gul and Bulbul" (The Rose and the Nightingale) type hold a special place due to their artistic and compositional perfection.

One of the timeless and classical themes in Eastern literature is divine love. Expressing love through the imagery of the rose (gul) and the nightingale (bulbul) has become a distinctive tradition in Turkic literature. Many works of this type have been created over different periods by various poets and writers. Although some scholarly research has been conducted on the Gul and Bulbul theme, which represents a shared literary tradition of the Turkic language, much remains to be explored.

In the western region of the Turkic world, specifically in Turkey, several studies have been carried out on these works. These studies have approached the subject from the perspectives of historical linguistics and literary analysis. However, from the standpoint of textual criticism and source studies, Gul and Bulbul-type works still require further academic investigation and analysis.

Discussion

The earliest known work of this type in Turkish literature is recognized as Jalaluddin Rumi's "Bulbulnama". However, the motif of the relationship between the rose (gul) and the nightingale (bulbul) is believed to have first appeared in Persian literature, particularly in the works of the master poet Attar. Some scholars suggest that the characters of the rose and the nightingale, along with certain related episodes, can be traced back to the ancient Indian epic "Kalila wa Dimna". In written literature, these motifs are first found in Fariduddin Attar's works, such as "Mantiq-ut-tayr" and "Bulbulnama". Others argue that the earliest example of such allegorical works is Abu Ali ibn Sina's "Tayr qissasi".

Unlike the view that connects these allegorical works solely to oral folklore and attributes their literary adaptation to Fariduddin Attar, it is possible to identify Abu Ali ibn Sina's "Tayr qissasi" and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's "Tayr qissasi" as some of the earliest examples of debates among birds written in an allegorical style. The historical periods in which these authors lived also clarify this matter: Fariduddin Attar (pseudonym; full name: Muhammad Abu Bakr ibn Ibrahim, c. 1148/51–1219/21, Nishapur) lived and worked after Ibn Sina and Ghazali. It is evident that Attar further developed the allegorical meanings found in Ghazali's works, refining and expanding the symbolic representations of birds.

It is important to note that most of the bird debate works in literary history were not directly inspired by Ibn Sina and Ghazali but rather by Attar and Alisher Navoi. While these works share symbolic similarities, Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq-ut-Tayr" holds a unique and distinguished place among works dedicated to the theme of the rose and the nightingale's love.

Another poet who composed a masnavi titled "Gul va Bulbul" was Salohiy, who lived and worked in the 18th century. Historical records indicate that this work was written in the Hijri year 1153, corresponding to 1740 CE. In Uzbek literature, scholars such as B. Valikhojayev and X. Rasulev have studied this work, while in Turkish literature, researchers like F. Bakirci and G. Zavotçu have explored its significance.

While examining the artistic aspects of the work, X. Rasulev highlights the evident influence of Alisher Navoi on Salohiy's writing. Comparing Salohiy's work to that of Navoi, he states:

"In his poem Gul va Bulbul, Salohiy glorifies humankind, emphasizing that God placed humans above all other creatures, even higher than angels. He describes human love as the highest virtue and asserts that because of this virtue, humans are the greatest of all beings. At the same time, like the great master Navoi, Salohiy encourages people to cherish life, appreciate its blessings, and make the most of what it offers."

Another scholar, F. Bakirci, compares Alisher Navoi's "Lison-ut-tayr" and Salohiy's "Gul va Bulbul", identifying several similarities between the two works. He describes them as follows:

"Like in Alisher Navoi's Lison-ut-Tayr, Salohiy conveys the experiences of love and Sufi philosophy through the voices of eight different birds. The dialogues among the birds take the form of a question-and-answer exchange, revealing stylistic similarities between the two works. The responses given by the Bulbul in Salohiy's work and the Hudhud's answers to the Parrot in Navoi's Lison-ut-tayr bear striking resemblances. Furthermore, just as in Lison-ut-tayr, Salohiy incorporates short anecdotes to vividly express the emotions and ideas embedded in the text."

This comparison highlights the deep intertextual connection between Salohiy's "Gul va Bulbul" and Navoi's "Lison-ut-tayr", further demonstrating the continuity of allegorical and mystical traditions in Turkic literature.

Results

The literary tradition of bird allegories, initiated by works such as Abu Ali ibn Sina's *Risalat ut-tayr*, Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazali's *Risalat ut-tayr*, Fariduddin Attar's *Mantiq-ut-tayr*, Jalaluddin Rumi's *Bulbulnoma*, and Alisher Navoi's *Lison-ut-tayr*, continued in various forms and thematic adaptations until the 20th century. Over this vast period, a significant number of allegorical works were produced, each distinguished by its profound meaning, philosophical depth, and refined portrayal of love. The sheer volume of works dedicated to the Gul va Bulbul motif in both Eastern and Western Turkic literary traditions is sufficient to underscore the significance of this theme in literature.

The emergence of these works in Turkic literature was not spontaneous; rather, they were built upon the foundations laid by earlier literary masters. When discussing bird allegories, the names of Fariduddin Attar, Jalaluddin Rumi, and Alisher Navoiy are particularly noteworthy. The idea that "knowledge is built upon knowledge" is especially relevant here. Before composing their own masterpieces, poets inevitably studied previous works on the subject, acquiring the necessary literary and philosophical background.

From this perspective, it is evident that Fariduddin Attar, too, drew inspiration from preceding works, particularly that of Ghazali. As scholars note:

"Attar expanded upon the allegorical themes present in Ghazali's work, refining the portrayal of birds and using their symbolic imagery to define human roles and spiritual journeys. A key innovation by Attar, absent in Ghazali's work, was the introduction of the Hudhud (hoopoe) as a central character."

Through this process, Fariduddin Attar transformed the foundation set by Ghazali into an entirely new and distinct literary creation, enriching the tradition of allegorical storytelling in Persian and Turkic literature.

Alisher Navoiy, drawing inspiration from Fariduddin Attar's *Mantiq-ut-tayr*, expressed his own philosophical and spiritual perspectives through his epic poem *Lison-ut-tayr*. Some scholars who have failed to fully appreciate Navoiy's literary genius have erroneously regarded *Lison-ut-tayr* as a mere translation of Attar's work. However, in-depth studies conducted by Russian and Uzbek Navoiy scholars have thoroughly examined the origins and evolution of such allegorical plots. Their research has conclusively established that Navoiy's *Lison-ut-tayr* is an original and outstanding artistic creation that solidifies the poet's unique position in classical literature.

Navoiy enriched this theme with his own literary brilliance, reinterpreting it from a philosophical standpoint and further elevating its allegorical depth. His *masnavi*, infused with symbolic meaning, became a foundational work that inspired subsequent creations in this genre. The Gul va Bulbul motif, along with numerous other allegorical works, carries the distinct stylistic and ideological imprints of Navoiy's creative influence. Even before Navoiy's time, the theme of the Gul va Bulbul relationship had been a prominent topic in literary discourse.

In his work *Majolis-un-nafais*, Navoiy specifically mentions the Gul va Bulbul narrative and its author, shedding light on its significance within the broader literary tradition. His

exploration of this motif was not only a continuation of an established literary convention but also a transformation that imbued it with a new philosophical and artistic dimension, ensuring its lasting impact on subsequent generations of poets and scholars.

Mawlana Ruhi Yorzī was one of the distinguished scholars of Khorasan. He was a person of refined taste and admirable character. He wrote debates between “The Nightingale and the Rose” and “The Candle and the Moth,” demonstrating great artistic subtlety in these works. During his time, many literary figures from the regions of Sarakhs, Darun, and Yorz became his disciples.

This opening couplet belongs to him:

Namexoham ki kas yobad ey sirri holam ogohiy,

Va garna olame so‘zam ba yak ohi sahargohi¹.

Through his passionate and philosophically profound prose and poetry, Navoi became a vital source in Eastern literature—one that nourished the flourishing of the literary and artistic world of the East. It is no coincidence that his name remains alive among the people not only in Uzbekistan but also in Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan. Navoi is widely recognized as the founder of Turkic literature. F. Köprülüzade, discussing Navoi’s influence on Ottoman literature, states:

"From the late 15th century until the Tanzimat period, all Ottoman poets studied the Chagatai language to enhance their literary knowledge, read Navoi’s works, and composed poetic responses (naziras) in the same dialect. Since Navoi’s works were taught in the courts of Anatolia, Rumelia, and India, as well as among the Iranian Turks, special dictionaries were compiled to help readers fully grasp their meaning. Great poets such as Fuzuli, Nedim, and Sheikh Ghalib regarded Navoi as their literary master. Introducing Navoi in all his greatness to the younger generations of Turks is our national and scholarly duty."

In every genre of Turkic literary works, we can see continuity with Navoi’s legacy and harmony with his creative vision. The same applies to works dedicated to the relationship between the rose and the nightingale. Regardless of whether these texts were written in Persian or Turkic languages, the presence of Navoi’s literary influence at their foundation is undeniable. He served as an essential source of inspiration for poets, providing artistic nourishment and paving the way for new literary creations within this tradition.

As noted, the allegorical nature of bird debates has been preserved in both Eastern and Western Turkic literary traditions. Some works on the theme of the rose and the nightingale, written in Western Turkic, belong to the Eastern Turkic literary sphere, while others were composed in the Western Turkic language under the influence of the Eastern Turkic literary tradition and Navoi.

F. Bakirci, in evaluating the poetry of Niyazi, a 16th-century poet, states: "Although he lived in a Western Turkic linguistic environment, sources indicate that he frequently read Navoi,

¹ Ўн беш томлик / А. Навоий. Т. 12. Мажолис ун нафоис. Тошкент: Ғафур Ғулом номидаги Адабиёт ва санъат нашриёти, 1966.

which is why his poetry was written in Navoi's style and in Eastern Turkic." Furthermore, in his article "A Common Theme in the Turkic World: The Rose and the Nightingale," F. Bakirci references O. F. Sertkaya, who classified Anatolian poets writing in Eastern Turkish into five distinct groups. In the second group, Sertkaya includes Niyazi among the poets who wrote in Navoi's era, noting that he composed ghazals and masnavis in Navoi's style. Another poet who composed a masnavi titled "The Rose and the Nightingale" was Salohi, who lived and wrote in the 18th century. According to sources, this work was completed in the year 1153 Hijri (1740 CE). The poem has been studied by scholars such as B. Valikhojayev and Kh. Rasulev in Uzbek literature and by F. Bakirci and G. Zavoççu in Turkish literature. While analyzing the artistic quality of the work, Kh. Rasulev highlights the clear influence of Navoi in Salohi's poetry. Comparing Salohi to Navoi, he states:

"In his "The Rose and the Nightingale" poem, Salohi exalts humanity, emphasizing that God has placed humans above all creatures, even angels. He defines human love as the greatest virtue, stating that because of this quality, humans are superior to all beings. At the same time, like the great master Navoi, Salohi encourages a love for life, appreciation of its blessings, and making the most of its opportunities."

Scholar F. Bakirci, who also studied Salohi's works, compared Alisher Navoi's *Lison ut-Tayr* with Salohi's *The Rose and the Nightingale*, highlighting the similarities between the two works. He states:

"Just as in Alisher Navoi's *Lison ut-Tayr*, where the experiences of love and mystical concepts are expressed through the voices of eight birds, Salohi employs a similar method in his work. The dialogues between the birds unfold in a question-and-answer format, drawing attention to the stylistic resemblance between the two works. For instance, the response of the Nightingale in Salohi's poem and the Hoopoe's reply to the Parrot in Navoi's work reflect a common approach. Moreover, in *The Rose and the Nightingale*, short stories are effectively used — just as in *Lison ut-Tayr*—to enhance the expression of intended ideas and emotions."

Conclusion

It is well known that many literary masterpieces of classical Eastern literature, developed within a strong tradition, are deeply rooted in the divine words of Allah—the Qur'an—and the Hadiths. The finest works of Eastern literature are based on the principles found in the Qur'an and Hadith. One well-known example is the Yusuf and Zulaykha narrative, which originates from the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) as told in the Surah Yusuf of the Qur'an.

The allegorical bird debates found in literary works are often linked to oral folklore. However, there is another perspective worth considering. Works such as Avicenna's *The Tale of the Birds*, Al-Ghazali's *The Tale of the birds*, and Fariduddin Attar's *The Conference of the birds* (*Mantiq ut-tayr*) bear strong thematic and titular similarities to Alisher Navoi's *Lison ut-tayr*. These titles were not chosen arbitrarily; rather, they reference the phrase *Mantiq ut-tayr* found in the Qur'an, specifically in Surah An-Naml (*The Ant*), Ayah 15.

Additionally, Surah An-Naml contains several parables and wisdom stories that have served as prototypes for many literary narratives. For instance, the Qur'anic stories of Prophet Sulayman (Solomon) and the Hoopoe, as well as Sulayman's conversation with the ant, have inspired numerous allegorical works. A close examination of the debates in classical literary texts reveals that the ideas expressed by these mystical scholars regarding the heart and the "bird of the soul" are rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith.

Therefore, it is no coincidence that works such as Fariduddin Attar's *Mantiq ut-Tayr*, Alisher Navoi's *Lison ut-Tayr*, and Payvandi Rizoyi's *The Language of Birds* begin with Qur'anic references before proceeding with their narratives. Through the symbolic experiences of birds, these works illustrate the journey of the human soul towards spiritual perfection and the ultimate union with the Divine.

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