

## Afghan Society and Literature

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### Abstract

There are different ideas about the identity of literature in some societies. Based on their ideas, they define or interpret literature. Similarly, in the Afghan society, literature is interpreted in several new meanings, instead of its original meaning. Accordingly, their notion often provokes reactions to literature, which both suppress literature in society as well as poets and writers. These perceptions of literature are prevalent in a variety of societies. Based on that, literature is sometimes defined in terms of its thematic aspect, which is detrimental to its nature, and sometimes it is combined with other parts in which the original form of literature is lost. Therefore, the creation of original literature in such societies is also difficult. In such societies there is often a reaction to contemporary phenomena, which changes over time. But with the advent of new phenomena in the internal flow, there are also many problems.

In Afghan society, the creators of the original literature are often seen as a means of disseminating the cultures of other societies, and in return for their efforts, they are often called traitors or committed to other societies. Accordingly, the creator of the creative work can no longer freely present their artistic writing to their community.

**Keywords:** Afghan Society, Literature, Ethics, Eloquence and Rhetoric, Use of Hard Words, Imagination and Waste of Time, Singers, Threats, Social Personality.

### Introduction

Literature is speech or writing which has artistic value. Characterization of artistic value is important in literature because any artistic writing affects the reader or listener. In artistic writing, a theme is presented in such a way as to affect the feelings and emotions of the audience as well as to gain their own peace of mind and enjoyment as well as the author's message.

In Afghan society, when it comes to the subject of beauty and taste in the audience, the general public does not like such writing and speeches based on traditional culture. In their view, such writing and topics undermine human moral standards. Too often they prefer dry message over literary work.

The writings and themes in this society are preferred by many ordinary people who do not clash with traditional issues no matter how good the message is for contemporary life. Often in this society many people hold different perceptions to literature. Sometimes, they prefer text and speech rather than artistic text whose language is harsh, sweet, and fluent language will often interpret the meaning of morality and sometimes use fictional literature. This article discusses these topics and explores many aspects.

### **1. Purpose of the Research**

To get engaged in the Afghan society that many people misuse the literal meaning of literature and undermine the nature of literature.

#### **Research Questions**

Does literature convey its message to the audience in a pleasant and effective language?

What do you think literature means?

### **2. Research Methodology**

In this research, the library method has been used. Some parts of it have been analyzed and examples have been given and the results are presented in a table.

### **3. Literature Review**

*Adab* is an Arabic word, which is a plural of literature. Literary scholars have come up with different definitions of the word *literature*. New identities have been introduced over time; but the common denominator is imagination. Whenever there is a wave of imagination in a text, it is literary.

We will now present an introduction to literature that has been commented on by scholars and is also referenced in literary research works: *Adab* 'Literature' is an Arabic word, for which some cultures have given a literal meaning of education, good society, good behavior, ethics and celebration. Some of them include meanings such as semantics, intelligence, culture, and art (Hashmi, 2014, p.50).

According to Rohi, "literature is a linguistic art which presents realities in pictures. The point of an image is that literature does not express reality directly and indirectly; rather, a literary work is presented by the author in a beautiful and emotional way.... The most important feature of a literary work (poetry, story, drama, satire, etc.) is the transmission of emotion. If a literary works do not convey emotion, and do not affect the emotions of the listener or reader; thus it is not considered a literary work." (Rohi, 2005, p.9).

Some literary scholars believed that literature is the trainer of the human soul. As Rohi (2005) mentioned, the art and literature is mostly an expression of the state of mind, perceptions, and aspirations of human beings, and by purifying the emotions, it affects man to such an extent that science and philosophy cannot have such an effect.

Some famous foreign writers' perceptions about literature are as follows:

Hudson wrote, "The work of literature is to develop or improve information, but in whatever way it presents a subject, it is so delicious that it quenches the thirst for human aesthetics. As Matthew Arnold said, 'Literature is the interpretation of human life' (Hashmi, 2016, p.15).

Habibi cited the British Encyclopedia as "Interpreter of human feelings, thoughts and emotions ... but with words and sweet expressions that affect others and are enjoyable" (Wziri, 2012, p.11).

"Innovative literature is a form of art that has a profound effect on the minds and spiritual world of the people, nurtures the way of thinking and feeling and plays a major role in adjusting human morals and human emotions and shaping them in a healthy way" (Hashmi, 2016, p. 15).

So, the subject of emotion has been developed by the scholars and they have considered it as an important feature of literature, and it is through this feature that it connects the relationship between psychology and literature and the inner-feelings of human beings in the creation of literature.

The subject of artistic value in literature is important. If there is artistic value in any speech or writing it is called literature. If artistic piece has no value, it is not literary piece. It is written about the characteristic of artistic value that "Art or artistic value is the characteristic which distinguishes literary and other ordinary writings. In writing artistic or literary prose or in the five genres of prose literature, the writer's taste, feeling, and inclination are of fundamental value and importance for the expression of a meaning or reality. The author describes what he saw, heard, felt, or went through in his mind and imagination. But there is no need to come up with an argument like research and scholarly writings" (Hashmi, 2016, p. 39).

In this recognition also, the inner-feelings of man play a role in the subject of artistic value and this is the part which plays a full role in the creation of literature.

Two theories signifying the purpose of literature - literature for literature and literature for life - are quite common. Current practices of literature reject this notion of "literature for literature's sake" and support the second theory. In addition to the beauty and spiritual solace of literature, it also serves to educate and reform social and moral issues. It also enlightens people's minds and teaches those ways to live better.

#### **4. Ethics**

In our society, literature often means ethics. Morality is also an important divine gift for life. In this regard, the good morals of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) are mentioned in the Qur'an. Morality is the human essence that establishes a bond of love and happiness between

people. Ethically, the individual can have a great personality in the society and the society can be saved from any misfortune.

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) was asked which deed is one of the good deeds. It is narrated on the authority of Abu Dharr: “I heard Muhammad (peace be upon him) say that the first deeds, which are weighed and weighed on the scales of man, are generosity and good morals” (Durani, 2016, p.18).

The behavior of a polite person in society is described. I think the word *polite* here is used for someone who has good morals. The speech, individual, and social behavior of a virtuous person are different from other people and these attract the attention of other people in the society based on these characteristics. All in all, poets and writers are often people who have always gathered something in the world of imagination for the welfare of society and human values and have conveyed that message to their people. So, it is possible that some people link moral and literary relations from there. It already has a lot to do with education and educational issues. But the authors could be different. Not every writer (poet and writer) can have good morals and not every person with good morals can be a writer.

The speech and writing of a writer are effective based on art. Art affects the audience. The speech and writing of a person with good morals is also polite; it respects the feelings of the other side. Therefore, this speech is also well-written for the people. A man of good morals is called a man of high moral character in society.

Poets offer much in their poems for the survival of society and respect for human dignity. They are members of the community who weep over the pain of others and call the grief of others their own:

I wish!  
I wish I was on fire  
I sprayed myself  
In fire pit  
Hungry people  
Cold rooms  
(Akbar, 1999:88).

In a nutshell, the poet and the writer talk and discuss the subjects of their society, condemning oppression, tyranny, bad traditions, and many misfortunes, and encourage the people of the society to unite and fall in love with them. They focus on the result of shared goals and social interests. Accordingly, some people take moral meaning from literature or introduce ethics in the path of literature or literature in the path of morality.

## 5. Eloquence and Rhetoric

Some people use fluent language when speaking, which is sweet and interesting to the audience. Some religious scholars, teachers, journalists and some tribal elders and some

others, even those who are illiterate, speak well or according to the context or situation. Some will say that they have profound knowledge of the literature.

Eloquence depends on the knowledge of meanings. The literal meaning is clarity, and every word or phrase in the term that has a clear meaning is called an eloquent word or phrase. The literal meaning of rhetoric is to reach the end, and in literary terms, rhetoric refers to the adaptation of speech and speech to the demands of the situation.

In other words, rhetoric is speech that is appropriate to the situation of the speaker and the place and occasion. Some think that eloquence and eloquence are one and the same but different: eloquence is the art and eloquence of speech and eloquence is the meaning of (Hashmi, 2016, p.302).

Nagar wrote: “asserted that Eloquence is a means of expression, effectiveness, and attraction. Lack of eloquence is considered a defect in a civilized society because without it, we can't focus our audience on ourselves and bring their tastes to higher ideals, which will lead to good deeds for the society and humanity. Eloquence, first of all, brings the emotions of the listener and the readers to life, to the waves, refreshes the heart and soul; So, when the flow of life in it is strengthened, it can give to the heavy responsibilities of humanity and society. It is the duty of a poet and a preacher” (Nagar, 2019, p. 44).

Most people in our society believe that the influence of someone's speech, whether psychological or sweet, is of high literary value. Leaders of some political parties and some officials and tribal leaders are so skilled in this field that they attract many supporters because of their speeches and then manipulate them for their own purposes.

So those who have eloquent language use sweet and fluent language when speaking. Their language is definitely the color of folk literature. In their speech lies the logic of folk literature. Sometimes they share short stories and memoirs for the purpose of influencing their speech or bringing up examples that present their message to the audience; so in such a speech the color of literature is wrapped and is considered literary.

## **6. The Use of Hard Words in Text and Speech**

Some writers use words in their writings and some speakers use words in their speech that the reader and listener do not understand the meaning of. But some say their literature is too high. Some people think that no writer or speaker who has a high level of literature knows what they mean. Bringing harsh words into the text and speech is a big flaw. What we write or say is based on a need and we have our readers or audiences. Therefore, the writers and speakers of such writings are not called writers and their writings and speeches have no literary color.

When harsh words are used in a text or speech, the text and speech are hard on the reader. The reader cannot read correctly and does not understand the meaning. Rather they hate it. Long sentences and hard words cast a shadow over the meaning of the text. The

audience and the reader cannot see it. We have prose in the literary era of Pashto language that it has hard and long sentences. Although the word *sajja* at the end of the sentence is used for effect, yet it does not currently count in the literature.

We also have prose writers in the ancient literary period. Even in the Middle Ages, literary history prose is brought, which is artistic prose and not simple prose. We must have the history of prose in our language in addition to the history of poetry. Every period in which simple prose or artistic prose has been written can be explored in the history of prose. This is also an example of Khair al-Bayan, also known as artistic prose writer: "I have seen Khair al-Bayan, in four languages, agreeing with the Qur'an. It contains the statement that it is not allowed to tell the truth and that it is haram to lie" (Bahir, 2020, p.12).

Although the use of long sentences and harsh words in the text is a flaw, some believe that this approach represents profound understanding of literature.

## **7. Imagination and a Waste of Time**

From the time of Aristotle, poetry is said to be the word that is imaginative. The poet composes his poem based on imagination. The power of imagination is important in the poetic paintings, creative industries, and numerous artistic aspects. When poets and writers use this essence in their poetry and writing or make artistic paintings, in our society Some people think that this is empty fantasy and have nothing to do with real life. Reading such works is a great waste of time. But literature is a branch of the social sciences that presents social facts and realities through language using mental images in a way that affects the reader and the audience.

Aristotle says: "There is no logical truth in literature, but why there is literary truth or literary truth in it" (Hashmi, 2016, p. 52). Writers and poets create motivation in human beings based on their artistic language, use language that affects their emotions and flows and conveys the goal that the poet and writer have in sweet language. I once read a novel by Shin Taghi, but when someone saw it, he took it from me and said, "There is no point in reading such books." Rather it is a waste of time. But the subject of Shin Taghi's novel provided a picture of the situation in his country, and I even saw events in it that help us in real life. How much do the poet and writer contribute to the process of giving thought to the people of the community? Some do not understand and ignore it.

Writers and poets have always reflected the progress of society, the fight against corruption, oppression, and colonialism in their poems, that is, all the topics related to life are presented in their works in artistic language. Literature has its own educational aspect. Literature presents social realities and facts through language through a mental image. Literature also presents us with various social issues in such a way that it quenches our literary or taste thirst. In addition to this, the sweet language will either make a big difference in the population on the basis of or the effect of a story or then strive for practical goals.

Why read literature? "Literature helps us to understand life ... Stories, novels and poetry tell us experiences that we have never encountered or encountered, So, how do we deal with it? Imagination is the world we want. This means that art can be a great display of human desires whether we write a scientific book on history or psychology. So, should we read literature about what man wants? This is also an implication of Aristotle's words. That is, we also read literature to overcome the evils of life. We want to experience bloodshed without danger. We want to overcome our fears and we can't make a practical effort to overcome them because of the risk of death." So, literature is such a relaxed way, that it gives us a sense of courage" (Shkuly, 2017, p .6).

Similarly, Ghazanfar has written a long article on Dr. Akbar's one verse, 'Stars do not fall'. "It has implicit meanings that help convey the original meaning of the poem. The stars of the sky do not fall, the great personalities do not fall, and the lucky ones do not want to come to the place of the poor. We must not rest on our laurels; we must move on to success. In the language in which we convey information (such as the language of conversation or science), we use the popular original meaning of the word but in poetry we pay attention to its music in addition to the popular and original meaning of the word" (Ghazanfar,2014, p. 448).

The contemporary period in Pashto literature began in the second decade of the twentieth century. At that time, poets were consciously trying to awaken the people. During the reign of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, some writers and poets had migrated to foreign countries. There they saw the many conveniences and improvements of modern life. When they returned during the reign of Amir Habibullah Khan, they started trying innovations. Amir Habibullah Khan had good relationship with foreign peoples. He conveyed many messages for modern life in his poems so that we too can face a new change and develop our society.

Thus, reading literary works teaches us about life events and conditions even as it quenches our literary thirst in such a way that we enjoy reading it and also feel a freshness of soul.

## **8. Singer vs Poet**

One day there was a party in the village, Famous and influential people were invited for it. A young man said: I wish I could be a poet. Others said: What people want and what you want. What is poetry? Now still wants to sing. Who among our relatives has passed away singing that you wish for?

No matter how much he convinced them that the singer and the poet are different, and the poet does not mean that he sings the songs, they were not satisfied.

The prevailing traditions in our society not only do not allow women to recite poetry; but have also created problems for many young people. Most young people have the ability to write good poetry; nevertheless, they cannot recite poetry or have their work

published. It is written in the Art book: "When society is thirsty for information about someone and does not find information, it often quenches its thirst with myths." (Ghazanfar,2014, p1.)

Stories can be made about that person and rumors can be spread. The existing stories about Rehman Baba are an attempt to break this deadlock. Our literary historians have tried to find out the truth of these stories. These stories are also worth reading in terms of what our people think of Dr. Rahman Baba. In this concept, Rehman Baba is introduced as a great man, a Sufi, a music lover, and a lover of worldly affairs.

Ustad Ghazanfar wrote: "There are four great myths about the poet in all of us. One idea is that the poet is the lord of discovery and dignity and inspiration. Another concept is that the poet is a singer and musician. According to the third notion, the poet is a militant intellectual and the fourth common notion is that the poet is a lover. These interpretations, in turn, have influenced poets and shaped their poetry and personality. There are more poets among than engineers, engineers, carpenters, or mullahs from other walks of life who have the characteristics of monks, lovers, singers, and social activists" (Ghazanfar, 2014, p. 1).

As a consequence, people in our society know poets and singers in one sense. The great misfortune here is also that the songs of the singers are loved by the people. Love singing but if any member of the family has the talent or taste to sing, and then he dies with a social custom knife to silence his voice, what should we do? So, this prevailing notion has created a big problem for new poets. Even close relatives and family members want to kill the charm of his poetry. In addition, some other accusations are sometimes leveled against the poets that are considered a disgrace.

## **9. Creative Panic and Threat**

Poets and writers play a role in the transformation and development of society by delivering messages in their autobiographies that affect and nurture the community. When poets and writers see bad issues, tragedies, and other misfortunes in their society; then they condemn and provoke the people to stand up against such issues. Sometimes based on the dominant system and traditional issues, nothing can be said clearly. Rather, the poet looks at some issues in an artistic way as a critique and condemns the actions of the system and society and calls for a solution.

So, many writers and poets throughout history have been sacrificed in this way. Sometimes they are threatened and sacrificed on the basis of traditional issues based on the adjustment of time and circumstances which still cast a shadow over the problem. There are still many topics that poets and writers cannot write out of fear. Sometimes poets and writers are criticized and threatened for creating original literature.

Rohi wrote: "Literature is not only provided by the government, Rather, the innovative writers and poets themselves are also dedicated to social and cultural reform. Authors and

literary critics who have taken steps to separate literature from politics have come under fire and have been accused of indifference, indulgence, and bargaining " (Rohi, 2005, p. 314).

In the meantime, the creator of the original art, in short, also comes under criticism in society and sometimes falls as a victim to the adjustment of certain social assumptions. In addition to the issues that dominate any system, there are many problems facing the poet and writer. But there are some successful writers who have criticized living inside and outside the country and created both original art and life.

I think such a shadow of the social imagination is now more visible in fiction than in poetry.

Khushal Khattak says:

Don't sleep in the land of my eyes

The crowd will be drenched in blood (Zewar, 2007, p.157).

## 10. Research Findings

Questions were presented to students, teachers and the general public, and the results are presented in the following tables:

1. Does literature convey its message to the audience in a pleasant and effective language?

Table 1: Respondents' demographics

Students and lecturers	(Y)	(No)
14 girls ( 57 boys) 71	57	14
8 men ( 21) lecturers 29 (women	21	8
100 people	74%	26%

- 2- What do you think literature means?

Table 2: Respondents' perceptions

Ordinary people	Ethics	The use of harsh words in text and speech	Imagination and a waste of time	Total
ages 30 – 20 (boys 60 , girls 40)	20%	30%	60%	100%
ages 45 -30 25 , men 75 ) (women	50%	30%	20%	100%

## 11. Conclusion

There are still many challenges to the creation of original art or literature in Afghan society. In this society, most people do not know the true meaning of literature due to the shadow of dual traditions. Rather, they have different interpretations of literature, many of which have nothing to do with the origin of literature.

Traditional traditions are a major obstacle to the creators of original art in this society; they hide their original art so as not to fall prey to these traditions. Over the past decades, original art performers have been subjected to numerous beatings and some believe that they are not leading the society in the right direction but are violating certain moral lines in the society. However, there are a handful of literary readers and scholars who write about the nature of literature and discuss its golden art and value in it. Over the past decades, many people have been imprisoned or directly victimized for their poetry and writing because many ordinary people did not understand the meaning and essence of literature and assumed that they were bound by moral boundaries.

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Mainstream literature on Afghanistan tends to portray the country as a terra incognita “the land of tribes, the home of warlords, and the graveyard of empires. The current media analysis with regard to politics of Afghanistan takes a culturalist approach, which ignores the sociopolitical conditions and historical context of events.” For instance, the process of nation-state construction in the late 19th and early 20th century and the militarization of society and warlordism are two processes that could prove this claim. Political culture of such a nationally diverse country has been reconstructed through a violent, oppressive, tribal dynastic rule “a tribalized political culture of one social group enforced on other communities. Afghanistan has never had a strongly unified national culture, and war has led to further fragmentation. The old flag of green, white, and black horizontal strips has been abandoned, and there is no national anthem. The national currency (the Afghani) is printed in two separate locations, with a locally varying exchange rate. History and Ethnic Relations. Emergence of the Nation. An Afghani man sits in the rubble of Kabul, Afghanistan in 1995. Between 1992 and 1995, the Taliban seized control of southern Afghanistan. (third century B . C . E . to the second century C . E . ) and the Muslim Ghaznavid and Ghurid dynasties (tenth to the twelfth centuries). It was a base of action for many rulers of India, notably the Mughals. Pratiek Sparsh Samantara surveys some of the best contemporary literary fiction and non-fiction to come out of Afghanistan, from both Afghan and international authors, and looks at how these books interpret the culture, society and history of this unsettled landscape. Afghanistan book covers. © U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samiel Morse | Wikimedia Commons. When you ask someone to name the most inspiring book they’ve ever read, the answer will almost always be one that carries the theme of human endurance, and books set in the onerous terrain of Afghanistan are front-runners in chronicling Afghan Literature Folk lore and legends told through song and storytelling are a centuries-old tradition in Afghanistan and continue to thrive today. Afghanistan has a rich literary tradition as well. During the medieval period literature was written in Dari, Pashto, Turkic and Arabic. The royal courts of regional empires such as the Samanids, the Ghaznavids, the Timurids, and the Mughals, were great patrons of Persian literature supporting literary geniuses like Rumi, Rudaki, Abdullah Ansari, Ferdowsi, Jami. Maulana Jaluludin Balkhi (Rumi). 5. SOCIETY. Religious Diversity As with much of the region, the rise and fall of political power has been inextricably tied to the rise and fall of religions. It was in Afghanistan that the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism began in the 6th century BCE. To understand Afghan society, read “Before Taliban” and “Heroes of the age” by David Edwards, and “Afghanistan: a cultural and political history” by... Afghanistan traces the historic struggles and the changing nature of political authority in this volatile region of the world, from the Mughal Empire in the sixteenth century to the Taliban resurgence today. Thomas Barfield introduces readers to the bewildering diversity of tribal and ethnic groups in Afghanistan, explaining what unites them as Afghans despite the regional, cultural, and political differences that divide them. He shows how governing these peoples was relatively easy when power was concentrated in a small dynastic elite, but how this. Continue Reading. Afghanistan: A Cultural a