

Techniques of Shakili Art and Their Impact on Building the Poetic Scene Among the Poets of the State of Bani Al-Ahmar

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Abstract

The previous study, which carried aesthetic and symbolic dimensions that enriched cultural discourse with expressive messages and introduced new forms in literature and the arts, revealed unified and cohesive poetic structures. These structures embody the lyrical text's blending, synthesis, and balance principles. This is exemplified in Dr. Saleh Al-Wais's study Features of Fine Art in Andalusian Poetry.

Keywords: Artistic Techniques, Colour, Shadow, Light.

1. Introduction

The research begins with a luminous introduction, in which the researcher highlights the connections and intersections between visual, poetic, and plastic arts, such as sculpture, painting, and music, in the creation of a harmonious, integrated art form known as "visual art" (Al-Miqdad, 2011, p. 15). Literature is often regarded as the pinnacle and origin of these arts, with poetry, in particular, holding a special place. With its vocabulary, poetic language carries sensory and abstract dimensions that colour its scenes with hues, shapes, and other elements, filling them with spirit, movement, emotion, and feeling (Asi, 1970, p. 44).

The poetic imagination of poets plays a crucial role in this, despite varying between one poet and another. It seeks, in its specific textual context, to "deviate from traditional frameworks and explore new visionary horizons, producing aesthetic approaches with distinctive technical mechanisms that penetrate the poetic text, merging the abstract and the concrete, or combining art (sensation and awareness) under what is known as poetic formation techniques" (Nouri, 2020, p. 130). All of this is achieved through words, sentence structures, and their compositions. Forming, in this sense, is the process of creating a text through exceptional creative skill that adapts the linguistic material to create a balanced and innovative system.

Thus, formation is essentially a system for structuring words based on specific semantic principles to craft a complete poetic image that expresses certain aesthetic values. The aesthetic impact of the poetic image is often realised through colour, shadow, light, and other techniques. In this study, we will focus specifically on the first three elements: colour, shadow, and light.

First: Colour and Its Significance in the Poetic Scene

Colour is one of the most prominent aesthetic elements in shaping the poetic tableau. It holds a wide presence that can alter the course of creative form, either positively or negatively. Colour wields a certain power over other visual arts "through its suggestive and symbolic ability to create a pictorial image that embodies spiritual, religious, and functional concepts. Colour thus becomes a means of expressing values, phenomena, or meanings—whether they be aesthetic, intellectual, philosophical, expressive, or symbolic" (Al-Douri, 2009, pp. 39-40). Colour grants life and existence an undeniable value, serving as the main tool in both painting and photography. In poetry, colour intertwines with painting on both an artistic and aesthetic level, as both art forms build creative works and often overlap. The poet paints a scene using verbal colours, while the painter strives to depict their painting through actual colours, not words (Rogers, 1990, p. 53). Colours, though a silent artistic medium, interact with other elements of the painting, giving it additional depth.

The aesthetic construction of colourful visual tableaux in the poetry of the Nasrid era reflects the vivid landscapes and natural beauty that these poets observed gardens, nature's allure, luxury, and the splendour of palaces. The most prominent colours they used to shape their poetic imagery include:

1. The Colour White:

The aesthetic significance of white is often tied to internal and psychological motives, with its connotations revolving around "old age, the weight of time, purity, innocence, beauty, and inner peace, although the image of old age carries multiple meanings" (Al-Maghribi, 2009, pp. 216-217). This is evident in their poetry, where the imagery of ageing occupies a vast space. For instance, the poet Lisan ad-Din Ibn al-Khatib masterfully creates a vivid scene symbolising beauty and wisdom, as illustrated in his verse (Miftah, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 128):

"Youth has fled, and I have cast behind me
The passions of youth and the flirtations of love.
All that remains is the poetry of my youth,
For now, my kinship lies with old age."

In this depiction, the image of old age conveys a sense of dignity and wisdom, contrasting with the frivolity of youth. What was once acceptable in youth—flirting, romanticising, and indulging in life's pleasures—represents a time that has passed, never to return. The poet now embraces old age, a visible marker of this life change, signalling a withdrawal from youthful desires and the distractions of life (Mahjoub, n.d., p. 8). In expressing this moral message, Ibn al-Khatib utilises the symbolic power of white to depict old age (referred to through the term "grey hair") without mentioning it directly. Instead, he uses the suggestive meaning of the word to indicate

the passage of time and the search for spiritual purity based on his experiences. The scene is constructed on a comparison between the faults of youth (the past) and the virtues of old age (the present). Old age not only changes one's appearance but also adds a sense of dignity, vitality, and radiance, turning it into a symbol of wisdom, virtue, chivalry, and reason.

One of the most significant sensory images that poets focused on and shaped in their poetic tableaux is the image of the woman, where they skilfully used various colours to describe her. Poets delved deeply into depicting the female body, often using white and yellow in their romantic expressions. These colours were employed to craft the woman's physical form, portraying her as having white veils and being likened to the dawn, the sun, and the moon (Mohammad, 2014, p. 37). This is exemplified in the visual value captured by Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, who states (Matlub and al-Hadithi, 1969, p. 165):

"The white is none but the shining sun,
A silver ingot filled with rose,
And between the whites and blacks is a clear distinction,
For the believers' faces are white,
Illuminating the eyes and heart,
Sleeplessness and slumber delight with them,
For those with intellect, the truth is clear,
But the disbelievers' faces are darkened."

The words become more than mere symbols or signs through the poetic language and the harmony and integration of colours in the tableau. Instead, they act as a set of "sensory stimuli" that evoke images and emotions in the receiver's mind, stirring their feelings and emotional responses (Asfour, 1992, p. 304). The word *white* reveals the hidden beauty associated with the lover's perception of the colour. The white woman captivates the heart, and phrases like sun and silver ingot further enhance the creative mechanisms and symbolic structure, weaving an imaginative world of the woman's beauty. This allows for the design of an expressive fantasy model that mirrors the real world, opening up new horizons for the poetic text to establish a context filled with visual suggestiveness, dazzling the sight and stealing away sleep due to the overwhelming brilliance of the white colour (silver). The poet masters the details of the form by adding red (rose), thereby aligning the imagined image with the real one of the beloved's cheeks.

These colours intertwine within the internal framework of the painting, serving as the backdrop for the imagined portrait of the beloved. The creation of such visual counterparts reflects the poet's emotional response to a psychological perception triggered by a strong feeling towards the white woman. The poet then compares two contrasting colours white and black contrasting the face of a black woman with that of a white woman. This comparison is imbued with symbolic meaning, equating the black woman's face with that of a sinner, darkened by sin, and the white woman's face with that of the believers, radiant with light. This tableau is constructed by invoking a scene from the Day of Judgment and the associated fear and terror, as mentioned in

the verse: "On the Day [some] faces will turn white, and [some] faces will turn black. As for those whose faces are black [it will be said], 'Did you disbelieve after your belief? Then taste the punishment for what you used to reject.'" (Al-Imran: 106).

2. The Colour Black:

Black is often associated with sadness, despair, and stillness, representing an absence of life. In ancient symbolism, black and other dark colours were linked to death and evil. In the Qur'an, black is mentioned seven times, five of which are connected to the face. The Qur'an specifically refers to its darkening as a consequence of wrongful deeds, both in this world and the afterlife. It is a sombre colour that signifies darkness, ignorance, depression, and discontent.

In the poetic imagery of the poets from the Nasrid dynasty, black carried various meanings, some negative and others positive. It symbolized purity, strength, authority, boldness, and cunning. At the same time, it also represented darkness, silence, despair, destruction, grief, sorrow, death, and failure.

In the poetic palette of Abu al-Hasan al-Shushtari, black and white are juxtaposed to express internal and Sufi struggles. In one of his poems, he says:

"The darkness of separation has vanished, and it has turned grey,
The dawn of reunion has come after a long distance was crossed,
The light of intimacy has dispelled my gloomy night,
And the armies of separation have retreated upon meeting it."

In this verse, Abu al-Hasan skilfully manipulates colour, much like an accomplished painter. He contrasts black, expressed through the term "darkness", with white, represented by "dawn". These colour terms are woven into partial images that form an overall visual representation, where metaphors such as "the darkness of separation" and "the dawn of reunion" contribute to the cohesiveness of the scene. This interplay of opposites — darkness/light, ignorance/knowledge symbolises the soul's journey towards the divine light in Sufi thought. The black colour and other elements serve as a metaphor for the spiritual darkness from which the Sufi seeks enlightenment and purity.

The image is completed with the white colour of dawn, symbolising purity and spiritual clarity. The verb "approached" reinforces this sense of movement towards divine light. Thus, the balance between black and white in this scene evokes a sense of inner peace and tranquillity, aligning the struggle between light and darkness with the quest for spiritual wholeness. It is a visual metaphor for the Sufi's internal journey, wherein black represents the darkness of the self and its worldly desires. In contrast, white represents the divine light that illuminates the soul.

3. The Colour Red:

In Arabic poetry, particularly in Andalusian poetry, red is associated with the dualities of life and death. It is often linked to themes of pride, battles, defeating enemies, and confronting them with the "red cup of death." Additionally, red signifies death through the imagery of blood,

though its connotation can soften when it is associated with lamentation, illness, fear, love, eroticism, shyness, and modesty.

In the poetic imagery of the Andalusian poet Marj al-Kuhl, the colour red appears with powerful visual and emotional undertones:

"Oh, the one who speaks, seeing my meadow and its redness,
It is the redness of Roman blood that has been shed,
How much this meadow needed kohl,
Of those who passed from my forefathers, carrying swords."

The Andalusian poet skilfully utilized the red colour to create a coherent visual scene, which contributed to the growth of his descriptive and expressive power. The intense saturation of the colour red is employed here to convey a political message, one with a stronger impact than if it had been rendered with any other hue in the poetic tableau. Moreover, the poet blends this red with shifts in colour from green to kohl (black), symbolising the power of the enemy who transformed the green, vibrant meadow into a dark, tragic scene filled with flowing blood. This imagery stirs up intense emotions of fear and alarm in the enemy's hearts.

Similarly, the poet Ibn Zamrak strikingly uses the colour red in his praise of the Nasrid ruler. He writes:

"The parchment grew fearful of you and turned red,
As if the meadows of the script were a flushed cheek,
The royal insignia gleams in its adornment,
Carrying oceans from your ten fingers,
It is embroidered by a thread of ink,
With red banners and red manuscripts."

Here, Ibn Zamrak harnesses the expressive power of red to signify awe, authority, and vast knowledge. The colour red unveils symbolic dimensions and political implications, expressing the emblem of the Nasrid dynasty, symbolizing power and control. He paints a vivid sensory image of the red ink flowing over the parchment, drawing upon a series of smaller visual scenes to present a complete image. Ibn Zamrak achieves this by relying on successive visual contrasts—describing the manner of writing (e.g., "meadows of script," "flushed cheek," "thread of ink," "red banners," "red manuscripts")—thus establishing a play of colour contrasts between the real and imagined worlds. Through his unique ability to translate mental imagery into external, tangible forms, the poet creates a visual scene that reflects "pure intellectual creativity." He invents a space where all his concerns can be poured into his tableau, blending two seemingly distant realities in his mind and revealing them equally through poetic painting.

4. The Colour Green:

Green occupies a significant space in Arabic poetry, forming a substantial part of its material and immaterial vocabulary. Materially, it encompasses elements of nature such as plants, trees, and meadows. Immaterially, it reflects the poet's perception and sensitivity to both the external and internal worlds, indicating feelings of sorrow or joy. The colour serves as a language with meanings embedded within the context of the poetic text, working alongside metaphorical and figurative images to shape the poem. The poet harnesses all linguistic possibilities and vocabulary to create a new language rich in symbols and meanings that expand the horizon of the poetic scene. This contributes to forming various frameworks infused with positive energies and semantic forces, generating sensory cues and emotional responses in the reader.

Several factors play a crucial role in the way this colour is employed within the poetic landscape, with the Andalusian poet's appreciation of nature being paramount. Many poems from this period describe the beauty and formations of nature.

The poet Lisan al-Din Ibn al-Khatib skilfully crafts a colourful tableau, using the colour green with dense symbolic and suggestive connotations. The colour assumes a dynamic quality that reflects both the poet's essence and emotional state, acting as a mirror to both. It nourishes the semantic aspect of the poetic text. Ibn al-Khatib expresses pain, yearning, and alienation, imbuing the colour green with a different meaning from its usual connotations, describing his homeland:

"Is there any news of her?
Has the valley grown lush and flowered?
Has the morning greeted a dwelling on the brink,
Whose days have faded into mere imagination and memory?
My land, to which I gave my heart,
In the arms of which life flourished green,
And my spirit, which nurtured its wings
Here I am, with neither wing nor nest."

In this imagery, Ibn al-Khatib positions the green valley as a symbol of sorrow and loss of identity. The interrogative structure he employs repeated three times (Is there, has it grown, Has the morning greeted) implies a kind of psychological distress. The poet questions the lushness of his homeland, suggesting that the loss of the green valley reflects stark contradictions. The colour green is intentional, as it contrasts with the reality of his city after its destruction, where ruin replaced prosperity. The poet shifts from the positive connotation of green to negative implications by linking it to words such as (alienation, weariness, exile, sorrow, embers, tears, separation, and distress).

These terms give the colour a different, transformed meaning, signifying a transition from happiness to misery, from stability to abandonment and homelessness, leading to psychological

repression. This inversion transforms the vibrant green of his city into a hue that evokes destruction, warfare, and isolation.

In the poetic context, green represents a temporal struggle, destructively affecting the human soul, rooted in the personal experience of living in a lush environment. The green signifies memories, where its connotation is undesirable, associated with loss and despair over days gone by that will never return. Thus, for the poet, the colour green embodies a dominant and impactful compensatory presence in many of his poetic expressions, employed with great diversity, vibrancy, and freedom according to the nature of the poetic context.

The Andalusian poet Ibn Khatimah also utilizes colour as a fundamental component of his tableau, skilfully integrating it to match the speaker's psychological state. He draws on the landscapes of Andalusia to create a harmonious and cohesive poetic image, as seen in his depiction of the meadows:

"Come to the meadows, for the rain has draped them,
The drops caress them softly,
The birds sing above them joyfully,
Rising like a bride seeking a match,
And no match exists like your beauty,
So, answer her with garments of leaves."

In this imagery, the green of the meadows symbolises renewal, growth, vitality, and ecstasy. Symbolic images effectively shape the poetic scene, with evocative images and colours forming the poem's foundation. This creates a new language that embraces suggestion. Green is associated with meadows, tranquillity, and peace of mind, as it is one of the colours closest to the human spirit.

5. The Colour Yellow:

Yellow conveys diverse meanings depending on the context; it may carry negative connotations, suggesting decay, illness, and fear due to imminent danger. However, it can also symbolise goodness and optimism.

The poet Abdul Karim al-Qaisi portrays the paleness of his face as a testament to the illness and despair he experiences while imprisoned and away from Granada. In a poem praising his mentor, Abu Abdullah al-Bayani, he vividly describes his painful condition, stating:

"For in my heart lies a disease from the love of beautiful maidens,
Famine, tears, pallor, and sighs
All apparent on my body today to the one who imagines,
Evidence of truth belonging to justice."

In this imagery, al-Qaisi paints a poetic tableau filled with suffering from all angles. He employs yellow to represent the strength of giving, sacrifice, and effort. The moments of happiness in his memory pass swiftly and fleetingly. The experiences he has endured resonate with profound psychological implications, prompting him to utilize colour techniques that reflect a shared sense of emotion. The power of his imagery revolves around a psychological theme born from the colour's connotations as a source of horror, fear, and death. The words he selects are intertwined with the overall atmosphere of his work; they reflect the constraints of imprisonment and the turmoil in his psyche, resulting in internal instability. He adorns his imagery with a cloak of weakness, illness, and lamentation, allowing his poetic scene to brim with evocative meanings, which he unveils gradually. As a poet deeply in love with Granada and forcibly separated from it, the vocabulary he employs (disease of the heart, famine, tears, pallor, sighs) simultaneously reveals psychological implications arising from his anxious, contradictory self.

Conversely, for Ibn Zamrak, the colour yellow elicits positive connotations, particularly in his poetic depiction of his sovereign al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah's horses:

"Or is it yellow in the evenings,
Draped in merriment,
Adorned with its radiant beauty,
And its neck proclaims as the night stretches forth
It lacks neither recognition nor pride."

In this context, the yellow embodies a dynamic awareness that achieves meanings beyond mere sensory experience, venturing into expansive dimensions imbued with aesthetic values that sometimes manifest more profoundly than direct meanings. The yellow hue of the horses stirs feelings of joy and imagination, skilfully portraying the colour of the horses as they interact with the sunlight and shadows. Ibn Zamrak uses this to sharpen his creativity and invent new images that blend sensory beauty and moral significance, representing pride and magnificence. The golden hue of the horses symbolises beauty and joy, exuding a psychologically soothing effect due to its association with light and warmth, imparting delight and cheer. Thus, he establishes the colour as an objective equivalent to the beauty of governance and the authority of the Banu al-Ahmar, even in their absence, remaining a source of inspiration and wise leadership.

Light and Shadow:

Light can initially impose itself as both a physical phenomenon and a biological construct of significant presence. It reveals structured and meaningful aesthetic forms. As an element that shapes the poetic tableau, light plays a crucial role in its architecture, enhancing beauty. The splendour of architectural structures is magnified in sunlight against a blue sky, which serves as a backdrop. Light highlights the relationships between parts of the architectural composition, creating a reciprocal relationship where each reveals the other.

In contrast, shadow is the area deprived of light due to an intervening barrier. Its shape is dictated by the obstacle between the shadow and the light source. It acts as the secondary light obtained from the intersection of shade with other elements. In the realm of art, light and shadow are not

opposites; rather, they frame a comprehensive picture. The use of light and shadow among the poets of the Banu al-Ahmar varies depending on the nature of the scene and the poet's artistic ability to craft an aesthetically beautiful and complete tableau. They strive to engage the audience and form a mental image that transcends conventional poetic scenes.

For instance, Ibn Khatima al-Ansari elevates the concept of light from an abstract idea to a concrete, aesthetic meaning, associated with ideals and perfection—the source of inspiration, light, and the essence of existence. He expresses this when discussing God's grace:

"The secret of generosity shines,
If one with insight witnesses a light or answers a call.
The universes transcend and reveal their brides,
If you had two eyes, you would be the one to commune with them."

In this depiction, light serves as the foundational element of the tableau. The notions of "radiance and illumination" symbolize renewed hope, aligning with the mystical persona seeking essence and the abundance of existence. This light carries spiritual connotations of guidance, the pursuit of truth, and transcendent spirituality, allowing for a fertile interpretation of the poem.

Ibn Khatima contrasts this celestial light with a shadowy region that obscures it. He employs kohl (eyeliner) in this context, symbolizing a shadow that interacts with and complements the light, adding beauty to the scene by using kohl to adorn the eyes of girls. In this way, he establishes the shadow as an objective counterpart to the dualities of manifestation and concealment inherent in the mystical experience.

On the other hand, poet Abdul Karim al-Qaisi imbues shadow with aesthetic significance, intending to illustrate the qualities of generosity and munificence of the rulers of the Banu al-Ahmar. He writes:

"He found among those who welcomed him in their land,
A shadowing shade in gardens of pleasure,
From virtue, a great fortune in souls,
Pleasant and a resting place for the youth."

Al-Qaisi constructs his poetic scene by assigning expressive energy and meanings to light and shadow, creating allure through their distribution. The illuminated sections of the gardens, represented by the colour green, enhance the scene's density and brilliance, capturing the audience's attention. In contrast, the shadowed areas (the cool, shady places) are skilfully employed, and enriched with meaning and suggestiveness, giving them a fixed moral quality. This not only nourishes the symbolic dimension of the poem but also completes the portrayal of the characteristics of the rulers. The poet deftly designs the outlines of his imagery, using colour to evoke feelings in the audience, thereby reinforcing the attributes of generosity and kindness among the kings of the Banu al-Ahmar.

2. Conclusion:

From the preceding poetic excerpts, it becomes evident that the impact of formative techniques—embodied in colour, shadow, and light—plays a crucial role in constructing the poetic scene. The colours create a rich artistic tableau, imbued with psychological and political meanings, some of which carry suggestive connotations signalling time changes.

For instance, the connotation of white is linked to imagery of ageing and the departure of youth, signifying the passage of time. In contrast, the colour black is associated with dimensions of anxiety and fear. The red colour in the poetic scene evokes images of war, destruction, bravery, and grandeur. At the same time, green is associated with tranquillity and peace of mind, as it resonates closely with the human spirit.

Moreover, the interplay of light and shadow transcends mere representation of nature, delving into meanings of manifestation and concealment, abundance, growth, and well-being. This intricate relationship between colours, light, and shadow enriches the overall emotional and aesthetic experience of the poetry, allowing it to convey profound messages about existence, human emotions, and the socio-political landscape of the time.

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