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The Language and Style of Qiyomiddin Khodim's Essays

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This article examines the artistic language and style of the essays by Qiyomiddin Khodim, a prolific writer, poet, and public figure who made significant contributions to Pashto literature in the mid-twentieth century.

As is well known, one of the defining characteristics of the essay genre is the author's active presence in the text, the expression of the authorial "I", and the clear manifestation of the writer's individuality. However, the authorial "I" can take different forms. For instance, in Khodim's essay قافله ("The Caravan" [1]), expressions such as ما داخلک ونه پیژندل ... ("I did not recognise these people ..."), ما واورېدل... ("I heard ..."), and ما دا خوب ووایه او تعبیر مې وغوښت ... ("I recounted this dream and asked for its interpretation ...") demonstrate the author's direct participation in the narrative. Here, the author does not merely describe the events surrounding the caravan; he also takes part as someone who has experienced the dream, observed the people, and attempted to understand its meaning. In this respect, the authorial "I" functions as an observing and reflective subject in the essay.

In the essay سیلاب ("The Flood"[2]), however, the first-person pronoun "I" is not used explicitly or frequently. Nevertheless, the author's attitude becomes apparent through questions and direct expressions such as دا ولې؟ د خدای لپاره دوی ویده دي او که مړه؟! ("Why is this? For God's sake, are they asleep or dead?!"). Here, the author does not simply describe the scene but also expresses astonishment and concern, conveying his attitude through rhetorical questions. He then continues his reflections with the phrase فرض کړو ... ("Let us suppose ..."). Thus, in this essay, the authorial "I" is manifested not through explicit first-person forms but through questions, expressions of attitude, and personal reflection.

In the essay اورکی ("The Little Spark"[3]), the authorial "I" is even more implicit. The events unfold through a dialogue between a little spark and a nightingale. Nevertheless, the author's observations and questions remain clearly discernible: ایا دا د اور سپرغی ده چې باد یې وړی؟ که د ژوندانه پای ته رسېدلې ډیوې ده چې

[1] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 35.
[2] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 57.
[3] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 41.

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په سلګیو سلګیو وروستنی دقیقې شمېرې؟ (“Is this a spark of fire being carried away by the wind, or a lamp that has reached the end of its life and is counting its final moments amid quiet sobs?”). Through these questions, the author observes the phenomenon, considers it from different perspectives, and invites the reader to reflect on it as well. Thus, in this essay, the authorial “I” does not appear as a character but rather as an observing and questioning narrator.

In the essay ویده ماشوم (“The Sleeping Child”[4]), the authorial “I” emerges in the reflection at the end of the narrative. The events are initially depicted through the relationship between a mother and her child, after which the child’s situation is linked to human life more broadly. Following the statement هو، د ژوندانه مثال همدا دی! (“Yes, this is precisely what life is like!”), the author draws a comparison between human life and the child’s play and sleep. Although the authorial “I” is not directly expressed here, the author’s position becomes apparent through the conclusion drawn from the narrated events.

At times, Khodim expresses his authorial “I” directly through emotional reactions. Expressions such as آه! ... (“Oh! ...”), افسوس! ... (“Alas! ...”), اوه، دا څومره ... (“Oh, how ...”), and تاسف دی ... (“It is regrettable ...”[5]) indicate that the author does not remain indifferent to the events or situations he describes but instead conveys his personal response to them. Khodim does not use emotional expressions merely to convey a particular mood. In many cases, he first describes a situation, then expresses his attitude towards it, raises a question, and thereby develops his reflections. For example, in the essay بندی توتی (“The Caged Parrot”[6]), the condition of the parrot evokes the author’s sympathy, leading him to reflect on human compassion through the question خلک دا ولې کوي؟ (“Why do people do this?”). In the essay د غوټی زندګي (“The Life of a Bud”[7]), the beauty of nature evokes admiration and pleasure in the author. This is followed by a reflection on the brevity of life, prompted by the bud’s contemplation of its own existence. As these examples demonstrate, in such essays, emotion often develops into reflection, through which the authorial “I” becomes manifest.

Thus, in Khodim’s essays, the authorial “I” is manifested not only through first-person pronouns and verb forms but also through the author’s emotional responses to events and situations. Feelings such as astonishment, sympathy, joy, disapproval, and supplication reveal the author’s personal attitude towards what is being depicted. These emotional responses are often followed by questions, direct addresses, and reflections, thereby creating a transition from description to the expression of the author’s own thoughts.

One of the distinctive features of Qiyomiddin Khodim’s essays is that he does not simply present his ideas in a straightforward manner. In many cases, he addresses a specific recipient directly, expressing his thoughts in the form of supplication, prayer, advice, exhortation, and warning. The addressee may be a person, but it can also be God, the heart, nature, a white-haired person (an old man), a particular object, or an abstract concept. Such forms of address give Khodim’s prose a dialogic and emotional quality, contributing to the prominence of subjective and affective expression in his writing.

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[4] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Naway Zhwandun*, *[New life]*, Kabul, 1320 (Lunar Hijri), p. 155.

[5] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 53.
[6] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 53.
[7] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 42.

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In the essay ای د قلم خاوندانو (“O Bearers of the Pen!”[8]), the essayist writes: ای حقیقی ضمیرلرونکو، ای د وجدان آواز ترسیموونکو، ای د هر بی ژبي په ژبه پوهیدونکو، ای الحاماتو آخیستونکو، ای د تاریخ اړوونکو! (“O possessors of a true conscience, O those who give expression to the voice of conscience, O those who understand the language of every voiceless being, O recipients of inspiration, O makers of history!”). The addressees here are creative writers. Rather than simply referring to them as “writers”, Khodim characterises them as people of conscience and makers of history. The purpose of this address is not merely to call upon them, but to remind them of their role and influence in society, as well as their responsibility towards it, and to encourage them to fulfil that responsibility.

The essay also contains the following statements: مه وایی چه د دنیا د تنازع للبقا میدان دی! مه وایی چه مونږ په دنیا کي رقابت او همچشمی دپاره پیدا یو! مه وایی چه هلیي مندي کړی چه کاروان لاړو! مه وایی چه مونږ په قوم او ملت خدمت کوو! (“Do not say that the world is an arena of the struggle for survival! Do not say that we were born into this world to compete and vie with one another! Do not say, ‘Hurry up, run, the caravan has departed!’ Do not say that we are serving our people and nation!”). The repetition of the word “Do not say!” conveys meanings of exhortation, prohibition, and command. Furthermore, placing the Pashto expression “Do not say” at the beginning of each sentence, rather than in its usual grammatical position at the end, creates an instance of inversion. Its repeated occurrence at the beginning of successive sentences also constitutes anaphora. Through these stylistic devices, Khodim seeks to express his ideas firmly and persuasively and to encourage creative writers to adopt a particular outlook.

In the essay ای باغوانه (“O Gardener!”[9]), although the addressee is a gardener, the address is in fact directed at the entire Afghan people. In the essay, the “garden” symbolises the homeland, while everyone born in that land is portrayed as its gardener. Through emotionally charged exclamations such as ای باغوانه! د خدای دپاره! ستا د باغ لویه ونه وهی!!! هله!!! زر کوه هله!!! (“O gardener! For God’s sake! They are cutting down the great tree in your garden!!! Come on!!! Hurry up!!!”), the author conveys a sense of supplication and warning.

At times, Khodim addresses God directly. In the essay مینه ګناه ده؟ (“Is Love a Sin?”), expressions such as ای خدایه، مینه ګناه ده؟ (“O God, is love a sin?”) and ای څښتنه، مینه ګناه ده؟ (“O Lord, is love a sin?”) combine direct address with questioning. Through these direct questions to God, the author expresses his inner search and astonishment, while also revealing his spiritual experiences. The repetition of these forms of address further intensifies their emotional impact. In the expression ای خیرمِحضه، که مینه شر وی، نو له تا څنګه صادرپږي؟ (“O Absolute Goodness, if love is evil, how can it originate from You?”), the author turns “goodness”, an abstract concept, into an addressee, thereby personifying it.

In some of his essays, Qiyomiddin Khodim addresses God through genuine prayer and supplication. For example, in the essay د خپل هر فعل اجر (“The Reward for Every Deed”), he writes: ای خدایه! بیا به داسي نه کوم، ته د پښېمانه زړونو ربښتیانی دعا نه رد کوي! (“O my God! I will never do such a thing again. You do not reject the sincere prayers of repentant hearts!”). The expression “O my God!” constitutes a direct address to God, while the words “I will never do such a thing again” convey repentance and a promise. The statement “You do not reject the sincere prayers of repentant hearts” expresses the author's hope in God's mercy.

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[8] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 22.
[9] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 20.

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A similar form of supplication can be found in the essay د اوښکي ارزاني (“The Cheapening of Tears” [10]). In this essay, the author prays: ای خدایه مونږ نه هغه زړونه واخلي چه د مظلوم او بي وزلی له سترګو څخه په عبث تویيدونکو مرغلرو نه خوږيږي او هغه لاس او پښي او ژبه مه راکوه چې بي لاسو او بي پښو ته صدمه رسوي او خلک ژړوي!!! (“O God! Take away from us those hearts that feel no pain at the sight of the tears, like pearls, needlessly shed by the oppressed and the destitute. Do not give us hands, feet, or tongues that harm those who are helpless and cause people to weep!”).

In general, prayers and supplications of this kind occur frequently in Khodim’s essays, and he often concludes his works with a prayer. In fact, the essays زما دعا (“My Prayer”[11]) and زه دا نه غواړم (“I Do Not Want This”[12]) consist entirely of direct supplications addressed to God. Through such prayers, Khodim not only expresses his inner feelings but also urges people to awaken their moral conscience and embrace goodness and compassion.

In the essay ای خیبر غرونو! (“O Mountains of Khyber!”[13]), the addressee is neither God nor a human being, but a geographical feature—the Khyber Mountains. In expressions such as ای خیبر غرونو! (“O Mountains of Khyber!”) and ای د افغان د شهامت او عظمت ډبرینو یادګارونو! (“O stone monuments to Afghan courage and greatness!”), the mountains are presented not merely as elements of a natural landscape but as images carrying historical and symbolic significance. By addressing the mountains and rocks, the author is, in fact, directing his words to the Pashtuns themselves. Expressions such as بس کړئ! (“Enough!”), راتیټ شئ... (“Lower yourselves...”), and وشرمیږئ... (“Be ashamed...”) demonstrate how Khodim addresses the mountains as if they were human beings, issuing commands and making demands of them.

As demonstrated by the examples above, the frequent use of the Pashto interjection ای (“O”) is a distinctive feature of Xodim’s style. Through this interjection, the author directly addresses people, characters, natural phenomena and objects, expressing his feelings and personal attitudes. Its repetition strengthens the emotional tone of the text, particularly when combined with commands, advice, warnings, supplications and prayers. Thus, direct address serves not only to convey ideas but also as an important stylistic device that highlights the emotional, dialogic and subjective features of Xodim’s essays.

Another important feature of Qiyomiddin Khodim’s essays is his use of rhetorical questions to engage the reader directly and encourage reflection. For example, in his philosophical essay نور هم صبر وکړم؟ (“Shall I Be Patient Any Longer?”[14]), Khodim describes waiting for someone and expresses the grief and hardships he experiences throughout this period. Through the question نور هم صبر وکړم؟ (“Shall I Be Patient Any Longer?”), he conveys his uncertainty as well as his lingering hope. At the end of the essay, he poses another question: تر کله؟! (“How much longer?!”). This question does not seek a straightforward answer; rather, it expresses the emotional tension and the point at which patience reaches its limit after a prolonged period of waiting.

[10] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 45.
[11] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Naway Zhwandun*, *[New life]*, Kabul, 1320 (Lunar Hijri), p. 8.
[12] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 84.
[13] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 13.
[14] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 44.

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In his essay سپين وېښته (“White Hair”[15]), the author addresses white hair and gradually explores its meaning through a series of rhetorical questions: ای سپين وېښته چې ړومبی ځل د ځوانانو په سر يا ږېره کې ښکاره کېږي، څه وايي؟ (“O white hair, what do you say when you first appear on the head or in the beard of a young person?”); ايا ته د ځوانی د وروستني شکست سپين بيرغ يې؟ (“Are you the white flag of youth’s final defeat?”); او که ته د هغه حقيقت سپېڅلی قاصد يې؟ (“Or are you the sacred messenger of that truth?”); او که د هغه سبا نماينده يې (“Or are you the representative of that tomorrow?”). Through these questions, the author explores the meaning of white hair from several different perspectives. The sequence of questions gives the text an emotional and dialogic tone, encouraging the reader to reflect alongside the author.

The essayist’s work مرګ که ژوند؟ (“Death or Life?”[16]) begins by questioning the very concept of death through the phrase مرګ...؟ (“Death...?”), thereby inviting readers to reflect on death. As the author contemplates death, he portrays life as a deceptive, reproachful, difficult, and arduous path. By contrast, what follows death is depicted as a flower garden filled with fragrant blossoms, where the delicate strings of the rubab produce melodies sung by houris. The author then uses rhetorical questions such as نو ولې له ده دومره وېرېږئ او ډارېږئ؟ (“Then why are you so afraid and frightened of it?”) and نو څوک دی چې دې وخت او زماني ته ځان ورکړي؟ (“Who, then, would wish to surrender themselves to such a time and age?”) to encourage readers to reconsider their conventional views of death.

Qiyomiddin Khodim’s essay سېلاب (“The Flood”[17]) is distinguished by the strong emotional impact of its exclamations and rhetorical questions. In this essay, Khodim uses exclamations to create a vivid picture of a dangerous situation, while rhetorical questions intensify the sense of anxiety and unease. At the beginning, the writer uses a series of exclamations, such as اوه، دا څومره تياره ده! څومره توره وريځ ده په دې ټکنده غرمه کې دومره تياره!! (“Oh, how dark it is! What a black cloud in the scorching midday heat!”) and اوه، برېښناګاني، داسې ښکاري لکه د اور مترو کې! (“Oh, the lightning! It looks as though it were in the midst of fire!”), bringing the danger vividly before the reader. He further conveys the gravity of the situation through an emotionally charged appeal: هلئ، ويښ يې کړئ، ورغږ کړئ چې چه چاره وکړئ، دومره غفلت! دا غرمه او دا درومند خوب! (“Come on, wake them up! Shout to them to do something! Such negligence! How can they be in such a deep sleep at midday!”). He then raises several questions that express disapproval and anxiety: دا څوک دی! دا ولې داسې بېخبره دي؟ (“Who are these people?! Why are they so unaware?”); د خدای لپاره دوی ويده دي او که مړه؟!! (“For God’s sake, are they asleep or dead?!!”); and دا ټول ويده دي؟!! (“Are they all asleep?!!”). These rhetorical questions heighten the sense of alarm and anxiety while reinforcing the call to “wake” people up.

In his essay دا شاعر دئ (“This Is a Poet”[18]), the questions posed by the writer do not express his personal emotional experiences; rather, they serve to engage the reader in reflecting on a particular idea: ايا موږ دا نه شو کولی چې ژړېدونکي سترګي د رحم او عاطفې په دسمال پاکې کړو؟ (“Can we not wipe the tears from weeping eyes with the handkerchief of compassion and empathy?”), ايا دا نه شو کولی چې خفه خلک وخندوو؟ (“Can we not make unhappy people smile?”). According to the grammar of Pashto, the modal verb construction نه شو کولی (“cannot we?”) reinforces and emphasizes the meaning of these sentences,

[15] La’l Pocho Azmun, *Rana Chena: A Collection of the Prose Writings of Mawlana Qiyamuddin Khadim*, Vol. 1, p. 121.
[16] La’l Pocho Azmun, *Rana Chena: A Collection of the Prose Writings of Mawlana Qiyamuddin Khadim*, Vol. 1, p. 135.
[17] Qiyamuddin Khadim, *Khayali Dunya*, *[The Imaginary World]*, 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 57.
[18] Qiyomiddin Xodim, Nowe Rana [New Light], Kabul, 1343, p. 163.

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additionally conveying the sense of "is it possible that we cannot?" However, the author does not expect answers to these questions. Instead, he encourages readers to question themselves and reflect on human attitudes towards others.

Another function of rhetorical questions becomes apparent in the author's essay رحم ("Compassion"[19]). In this essay, the author begins his discussion with the issue of showing compassion towards animals and gradually extends it to the question of human relationships, using questions such as: نو دا چې وړو وړو کبانو ته د نهنګانو خوړلو او تېرولو ځنې نجات ورکړو؟ ("Then, can we not save small fish from being eaten and swallowed by whales?"). In particular, the author deepens the discussion through a question such as: گوندی دا هم نه شو کولی چې د خپل ظالمانه جبروت له اسمان څخه د طبیعي رابنکته کېدو نه څو ورځې مخکې رابنکته شو او د نورو همجنسانو سره سم کښېنو؟ ("Could we not, perhaps, descend from the heights of our tyrannical power a few days before our inevitable fall and sit as equals alongside other human beings like ourselves?").

Here, the author does not confine himself to a single question but poses a series of questions in succession. As a result, rhetorical questions function as a means of developing and broadening the argument step by step. The discussion initially concerns compassion towards animals, but subsequently moves towards the issue of human relationships. In fact, animals serve in this essay as symbolic representations of human relationships. By drawing comparisons between them, the author raises ethical questions concerning humanitarianism and compassion.

In Qiyomiddin Xodim's essay د ژوندانه طلسم ("The Mystery of Life"[20]), which is constructed in the form of a dialogue, an elderly man sitting by the sea and reflecting on the course of his life engages in a conversation with himself. He poses such questions as: بس! همدا و ژوندون؟ ("Enough! Was this all that life was?") and ای ژوندونه! ته همدا وې؟ ("O Life! Was this all you were?"). These questions are more than simple expressions of astonishment. They serve as interrogative conclusions to the reflections developed throughout the essay. Underlying them are the realisation that the pleasures of youth and the delights of life were deceptive, a retrospective contemplation of the years that have passed, and an attempt to comprehend the truth.

In the essay بندی طوطی ("The Caged Parrot"[21]), the author uses rhetorical questions to express his attitude indirectly. Speaking through the parrot, he poses questions such as: افسوس دی خلک په تټر کې زړونه نه لري چې دغسې وروکي او نازکه زړونه ازاروي؟ ("Alas, do people have no hearts in their chests to refrain from hurting such small and delicate hearts?") and خلک دا ولې کوي؟ ("Why do people do this?"). Rather than explicitly stating that people are acting wrongly, the author conveys his critical attitude through the interrogative form. The question "Why?" in particular further intensifies this critical perspective. Thus, in this essay, the rhetorical question serves as a means of indirectly expressing the author's attitude.

Thus, rhetorical questions and exclamations in Xodim's essays serve two main purposes: they intensify emotional expression and help develop the author's ideas. Through these devices, Xodim conveys inner feelings, expresses criticism and concern, and encourages readers to reflect. Successive questions allow him to explore issues in greater depth, while exclamations strengthen emotional

[19] La'l Pacha Azmun, Rana China: Da Mawlana Qiyamuddin Xadim Da Nasri Likno Tolga, vol. 1, p. 119.
[20] Qiyomiddin Xodim, KhiyaliKhayali Dunya [The Imaginary World], 1339, (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 59.
[21] Qiyomiddin Xodim, KhiyaliKhayali Dunya [The Imaginary World], 1339, (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 53.

appeals. These devices therefore contribute to both the content and the reflective, emotional character of his essays.

The use of symbolic imagery is particularly evident in Qiyomiddin Xodim's essays. In پسرلی (“Spring” [22]), the author associates the arrival of spring with renewal in the life of the homeland and its people. Expressions such as “د نوی ژوند” (“new life”) and “د خپګان وخت تېر شو او د خوشحالۍ وخت راورسېد” (“The time of sorrow has passed, and the time of happiness has arrived”) connect spring with hope and positive change. The image of wounded saplings ready to blossom and bear fruit further suggests national renewal and future achievements.

In ویده ماشوم (“The Sleeping Child” [23]), a child's play with soil and the little pieces of bread he makes become symbols of human activities and everyday concerns. His sleep, in turn, is associated with death. Through this simple scene, Xodim reflects on the transience of life, human efforts and the inevitability of death.

In قافله (“The Caravan” [24]), the caravan symbolises society moving towards a common goal, while those attempting to turn it back represent forces opposing its progress. The different interpretations offered at the end of the essay, including «ملي قافله او مرتجعين» (“The national caravan and the reactionaries”), reveal its social and political implications. Thus, the author conveys his ideas through symbolic images and dialogue rather than direct statements.

Similarly, in د غوټی ژوند (“The Life of a Bud” [25]), the emergence, blossoming and withering of a flower bud symbolise the stages of human existence. Its question «مګر ای خاونده! زما زندګي وار همدا وه؟» (“But, O Lord! Was this all there was to my life?”) expresses reflection on the brevity of life. Through this image, Xodim emphasises the importance of making meaningful use of one's lifetime.

اورکی (“The Little Spark”[26]) is not merely the title of the essay but also a symbolic image of light emerging from darkness. At the beginning, Xodim leaves the nature of the image uncertain, asking whether it is a spark or an extinguishing lamp. Later, the little spark declares: “ نو په خدای نور شپه نړول په کار دي!” (“Then, for God's sake, it is time to break through the darkness!”). This statement suggests the idea of overcoming darkness and seeking a way forward. The final reference to “a place where searching is free” further connects the image with the pursuit of knowledge and freedom of thought.

The essay also employs Aesopian language to address intellectual freedom. Darkness can be interpreted as a symbol of ignorance and restrictions on thought, while the little spark represents the desire to seek truth. Through the dialogue between the spark and the nightingale, Xodim draws attention to those who not only fail to find their own way despite having light but also prevent others from doing so. Thus, the author expresses the importance of freedom of thought indirectly through symbolic images and dialogue.

The historical context of the period also provides a relevant background for this interpretation. The Wesh Zalmiyan (ویښ ځلمیان – “Awakened Youth”) movement and liberal members of parliament contributed to the expansion of public debate and press freedom in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The

[22] Qiyomiddin Xodim, Naway Zhwandun [New life] [New Life], Kabul, 1320 L.H., p. 78.
[23] Qiyomiddin Xodim, Naway Zhwandun [New life] [New Life], Kabul, 1320 L.H., p. 155.
[24] Qiyomiddin Xodim, Khayali Dunya [The Imaginary World], 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 35.
[25] Qiyomiddin Xodim, KhiyaliKhayali Dunya [The Imaginary World], 1339, (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 3542.

[26] Qiyomiddin Xodim, Khayali Dunya [The Imaginary World], 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 42.

Press Act of 31 December 1950 established a legal framework for publishing without prior censorship[27], although this period of relative openness was short-lived (Encyclopaedia Iranica, n.d.; United Nations, 1950).

It should be emphasised that the use of symbolic imagery does not automatically constitute Aesopian language. Its distinctive feature is the indirect expression of ideas and criticism through images, events and figurative representations. Xodim employs this technique to address sensitive social and intellectual issues without expressing his views explicitly.

Research indicates that Xodim was compelled to express socio-political issues indirectly rather than openly. This is corroborated by the following assessment written by Abdullah Baxtani in his review of Xodim's poetry collection:

“Besides his national poems, his ghazals, which embody profound sorrow, are skilfully expressed in the language of classical poetic art. To such an extent that his irony is sometimes not direct, but rather conveyed indirectly and with eloquence... In some poems in “A Garland of Pearl”, the word ‘awakened’ was omitted from the expression ‘Awakened Youth’ because of the restrictions of the time. It was later restored in the collection Sarbon. This was because the political climate had changed by then”[28].

Although these observations concern the poet's verse, they also provide insight into his approach to expression in prose.

From this perspective, the previously analysed essay ای باغوانه (“O Gardener!”[29]) can be examined in terms of Aesopian language. In this essay, social meanings are conveyed through the images of a garden, birds, a large tree and a gardener. The freedom and harmony among the birds in the garden represent the ideal environment depicted by the author. The garden can be interpreted as representing the life of the Pashtuns, while the harmony within it symbolises national unity.

The central conflict in the essay arises from an attempt to cut down the large tree. The author's warning, “ددې په وهلو ټول باغ زېرېږي!” (“If it is struck, the entire garden will turn yellow!”), indicates that damage inflicted on the tree will affect the whole garden. The Aesopian aspect of this essay lies in the author's presentation of a social problem through the images of the garden and its inhabitants, without explicitly identifying the problem itself. Through this depiction, actions that threaten the integrity of society are represented. The gardener's indifference to the events, in turn, brings to mind individuals who fail to fulfil their responsibilities. The author's repeated appeals to the gardener serve to urge him to take action.

In the essay سیلاب (“The Flood”[30]), the image of a flood serves as a basis for reflecting on dangerous situations and human responses to them. Initially, the author depicts a flood, dark clouds, darkness and a state of sleep. He draws attention to people's failure to recognise the impending danger. The flood subsequently ceases to be merely a natural phenomenon and becomes associated with a threat that must be prevented. At the end of the essay, the author states that human determination, fortitude and willpower can withstand the flood of time. Accordingly, the image of the flood can be

[27] https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/860916/files/1950

[28] Qiyomiddin Xodim, Khayali Dunya [The Imaginary World], 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 41.

[29] Qiyomiddin Xodim, *Tsarwān* [The Shepherd], Kabul, 1346 L.H., p. 77.

[30] Qiyomiddin Xodim, Khayali Dunya [The Imaginary World], 1339 (Solar Hijri), Wray, p. 57.

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associated with dangerous circumstances arising before individuals and society. The dark clouds, lightning and thunder signify an approaching threat, while the villagers' continued sleep evokes a state of unawareness and indifference. The author's appeal, "ويښ يې کړئ" ("Come on, wake them up!"), urges people to take action.

However, at the end of the essay, the author's statement, " د انسان عزم، همت او اراده د زماني د سيلاب مخه لاهم ګرځوي، پاتې لا د باران سيلاب! او اسمان تل د همتناکو د ارادې په موافق حرکت کوي!!!" ("Human determination, courage and willpower can even change the course of the flood of time. There is no need, then, to speak of a flood caused by rain! The heavens always move in accordance with the will of determined individuals!!!"), brings symbolic imagery together with a direct call to action. This suggests that the author may be alluding to a particular political event or force.

Thus, while social criticism in Ey bog'bon! ("O Gardener!"), written in the Aesopian mode, is conveyed indirectly through symbolic images, in Siylab ("The Flood"), symbolic representation primarily serves to reveal the idea of recognising danger and taking action against it.

In his essay د انتقام حس ("The Feeling of Revenge" [31]), Xodim employs Aesopian language to explore the themes of power and resistance. The relationship between large and small ants serves as a metaphor for oppression and resistance. The central conflict revolves around a large ant tormenting smaller ants, one of which clings to its leg and prevents it from moving freely, leaving the larger ant powerless to act.

Interpreted through the lens of Aesopian language, the large ant represents a force that uses its power to oppress others, while the small ant symbolises resistance to such oppression. Through this image, the author suggests that the dominance of power is not permanent and that oppression can provoke resistance. However, in our view, the conflict between the ants may also be interpreted as an indirect representation of relations between states rather than merely interpersonal relations. In this regard, the essay can be linked to political developments in Pashtun history, particularly the Durand Agreement of 1893 and the territorial issues that followed, as well as the partition of British India and the establishment of Pakistan in 1947. The movements aimed at uniting the Pashtuns against this historical and political background are also significant for interpreting the essay.

In conclusion**,** Qiyomiddin Xodim's essays are characterised by an emotional, figurative and reflective style. Direct address, rhetorical questions, repetition, contrasts, symbolic imagery and descriptions of nature play an important role in expressing the author's thoughts and feelings. These stylistic devices enable him to convey ideas indirectly, strengthen their emotional impact and encourage readers to reflect. Thus, his essays are distinguished not simply by the narration of events, but by the reflection and personal interpretation built upon them.

[31] Qiyomiddin Xodim, Naway Zhwandun [New life] [New Life], Kabul, 1320 L.H., p. 516.