

The Mechanics of Rhyme in Nimaic Poetry: A Comparative Study of Iranian and Afghan Poets

Najibullah Qayum 

١. Professor of Persian Language and Literature, Department of Persian Dari Language and Literature, Baghlan University, Afghanistan. Email: Najibullah.qayum@gmail.com

Article Info (253-275)

ABSTRACT

Article type:

Research
Article

Article history:

Received:

٠٩/٠٤/٢٠٢٤

Accepted:

٠٥/٠٨/٢٠٢٤

Keywords:

Khalil
Ibn Ahmad
Nimaic Poetry
Rhyme

Rhyme has held a fundamental significance in Persian poetry from ancient times to the present. Shams-e Qais Razi considered rhyme one of the essential pillars of poetry, even more important than meter. Nima Youshij, the father of modern Persian poetry, despite his revolutionary changes in the form and structure of Persian poetry, still regarded rhyme as a crucial element of poetry. He believed that poetry without rhyme is like a house without a roof or doors. Rhyme is the science that discusses the side-music of poetry, covering rhyme letters, movements, and flaws. These rules were first codified by Khalil Ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi (100–175 AH), who also founded the science of prosody. Ahmad Shamlou, a pioneer of blank verse who wrote poetry without meter and rhyme, said about rhyme: "Rhyme is exceedingly beautiful, and if it is not forced, it significantly aids the meaning." This descriptive-analytical study, using library sources, discusses the application of rhyme in modern or Nimaic poetry.

Citation: Qayyum, Najibullah (2024). The Rhyme in Nima'i Poetry (Iranian and Afghan Poets). *New Literary Studies*, 3(2) 253-27

Publisher: Association for the Promotion of Persian Language and

Lit



© The Author (s).

DOI: [20.1001.1.28211413.1403.3.2.11.4](https://doi.org/10.28211413.1403.3.2.11.4)

Introduction

Rhyme (*Qafiyeh*) has been a fundamental pillar of Persian poetry since antiquity. Historically, scholars like Shams Qays Razi regarded rhyme as an essential component of verse, sometimes even more vital than meter. Nima Yushij, the pioneer of modern Persian poetry, maintained this reverence despite his revolutionary structural reforms, famously asserting that “rhymeless poetry is like a house without a roof or a door,” or “a man without bones.” While classical poetry operates within rigid, pre-determined structures where rhyme and refrain (*Radif*) provide the primary connective tissue between independent verses, modern Nimaic poetry operates as a cohesive whole. In this new paradigm, the placement and presence of rhyme are no longer fixed; they are dictated by the poet’s intuition, the flow of thought, and the rhythmic requirements of the text. This study explores the evolving role, placement, and structural forms of rhyme and refrain in the Nimaic poetry of both Iranian and Afghan poets.

Method

This research employs a descriptive-analytical methodology utilizing library-based resources. The study analyzes the structural nuances of Nimaic verse by examining the relationship between linguistic meaning and musicality. It specifically investigates how rhyme functions when the traditional independence of the “couplet” is replaced by the “strophe” or “paragraph” structure. The research also compares the techniques used by prominent Iranian poets (such as Nima Yushij, Forugh Farrokhzad, and Ahmad Shamlou) with those of Afghan poets (such as Wasif Baxter and Khalilullah Khalili) to identify commonalities in their approach to modern prosody.

Results

The analysis identifies several key characteristics regarding the application of rhyme in modern Nimaic poetry:

- **Unpredictability of Placement:** Unlike classical forms, rhyme in Nima

ic poetry does not have a predetermined position. It may appear at the beginning, middle, or end of lines and stanzas, guided entirely by the poet's sense of musical harmony and the thematic shifts within the poem.

- **The “Paragraph” Approach:** Nima emphasized that rhyme should change when the content or the “sentence” changes. This links rhyme to the semantic unit of the poem rather than a fixed metrical count.
- **Structural Mechanics:**
 - Poets often use “extra” silent letters or truncated metrical units (*mazahef*) to mark the end of a line, enhancing the auditory boundary even when the line length varies.
 - Rhyme is employed as a tool for “musical weaving,” binding disparate lines together.
- **Afghan and Iranian Convergence:** Both Iranian and Afghan poets exhibit similar innovative uses of rhyme. For example, in the works of Wasif Bakhtari, rhyme remains a stabilizing force, used effectively within stanzas, whereas in other modern works, rhyme might be omitted entirely when the poem's content shifts into disjointed or descriptive prose-like imagery.
- **The Role of Refrain (*Radif*):** When used, the *Radif* continues to support the rhyme, serving as a secondary musical marker. However, its use remains optional and entirely at the poet's discretion.

Conclusion

Rhyme in Nimaic poetry is not a casualty of modernization but a transformation. It has evolved from a mandatory, fixed constraint into a flexible, artistic instrument used to create harmony, emphasize semantic unity, and provide musical closure to specific thought-units. While the rigid laws of classical rhyme have been discarded, the *aesthetic necessity* of rhyme persists in the Nimaic tradition. The study concludes that for both Iranian and Afghan poets, rhyme serves as an essential “alarm” and structural bond that elevates the text from mere prose to the realm of art. Ultimately, the effective use of rhyme in modern verse depends on the poet's ability to align musicality with the internal pulse of the poem, ensuring that the “house” of the poem is neither hollow nor structureless.