

Analysis of the components of Maximal Ghazal

Niloufar Masih 

1. Master's student, Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Literature and Humanities,
Payam Noor University, Islamabad West Center, Kermanshah, Iran . Email:
niloufarmasih@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

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Contemporary ghazals, especially those of after Simin's era, underwent many changes in the 1970s and continued with postmodern ghazals in the 1980s and finally in the 1990s, it accepted a non-normative direction. With the emergence of various movements, including the maximal ghazal by Arash Azarpik, who is one of Simin Behbahani's students - and in the 1970s he is considered as one of the pioneers of the ghazal with his minimal and spoken ghazal - this style took a trans-abnormalities direction. Because the classic ghazal with the number of verses and specific topic was considered a popular writing format for centuries.

The Nima revolution created the first innovative attitudes in the spirit of poetry, especially in ghazal. Simin Behbahani started these innovations and later continued by his students according to the appropriate time and place. Maximal ghazal has moved from that traditional format to new perspectives and foundations with direct connection with the spirit of ghazal. In this article, which was compiled in a descriptive-analytical way, it is revealed that Maximal Ghazal has been able to open various windows towards new contents, fresher emotions and finally transformation in the structure of the form by addressing the new findings. Therefore, in this article, while introducing the genre of maximal ghazal, we also list and analyze its key components.

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Introduction

Following the formal innovations of Simin Behbahani in the 1990s (1370s SH) and the subsequent rise of Postmodern Ghazal in the 2000s (1380s SH), contemporary Persian ghazal underwent another radical paradigm shift in the 2010s (1390s SH) with the emergence of the “Maximal Ghazal” (*Ghazal-e Maksimal* or *Ghazal-e Motavval*). Conceived and introduced by Arash Azarpeyk within the philosophical framework of the *Oryānism* (Wordism) literary movement, Maximal Ghazal departs from classical brevity and normative constraints toward a trans-normative (*fara-hanjar-goriz*) aesthetic.

While classical ghazal traditionally functioned as a short lyric poem of single-subject orientation (often 5 to 12 distichs), Maximal Ghazal expands both the length and conceptual architecture of the genre, sometimes exceeding the length of traditional qasidas. Despite scattered theoretical notes and poetic manifestos, a comprehensive, systematic stylistic investigation categorizing the distinct elements of this modern form has been lacking. To address this gap, this study examines:

۱. What defines Maximal Ghazal, and what are its core structural, linguistic, emotional, and cognitive components?
۲. Do these innovative traits establish an autonomous stylistic identity (*sabk-shenakhti*) that expands the definition of Persian ghazal beyond its classical boundaries?

Method

This research utilizes a descriptive-analytical methodology grounded in contemporary literary theory, semiotics, structuralism, and phenomenological analysis. The corpus is analyzed across four core dimensions of literary style: external form, internal structure, language/discourse, and thematic-cognitive content.

The primary textual corpus consists of the theoretical treatises and poetic works of Arash Azarpeyk (chiefly the collection *Cheshmha-ye Yalda*, 2020), alongside supporting analytical and poetic texts by Niloufar Masih (*Jens-e Sevvom*, 2019) and Zeinab Norouzali (*Antology-e Kootah-*

nevisan-e Iran, 2020). The study systematically identifies, classifies, and evaluates the fourteen distinctive structural and thematic components of Maximal Ghazal.

Results

The analysis demonstrates that Maximal Ghazal operates not merely through linear elongation, but through a multifaceted transformation across fourteen distinct stylistic components:

۱. **Trans-generic Synthesis (*Fara-zhanrik*):** Synthesizing elements from drama, cinema, psychological novels, and epic narrative while maintaining the organic lyrical unity of the ghazal.
۲. **Visual and Graphic Innovation:** Breaking single hemistichs into staggered Nimaic layouts, incorporating prose poem textures, and employing embedded poetic frameworks.
۳. **Dialogue- and Monologue-Driven Narrative:** Utilizing multi-layered conversational dynamics involving the author, narrator, historical/fictional characters, and the active reader.
۴. **Polyphonic Voice (*Seda-ye Multi-fonic*):** Granting independent semiotic voices to non-human objects, punctuation marks, and environmental elements based on phenomenological agency.
۵. **Internal/External Phenomenological Characterization:** Abandoning descriptive mediation (“aboutness”) to directly enact psychological turmoil; repeating refrains (*tarji’band*) reflect internal psychological fixations (*khoreh-ye zehni*), whereas evolving stanza-links (*tarkib-band*) depict external existential transitions.
۶. **Integration of Diverse Sub-forms:** Embedding Minimal Ghazal, Narrative Ghazal, Concrete/Postmodern Ghazal, and Form-Ghazal into a cohesive “trans-form” (*fara-form*).
۷. **Multi-centering (*Markaz-afzayi*):** Replacing classical monocentrism and postmodern radical decentering with an additive 360-degree cognitive perspective, substituting holistic discernment (*tashkhis*) for subjective judgment.
۸. **Sevenfold Punctuation System:** Formulating a standardized punctuation semiotics (e.g., bullet points for omniscient narrator, quotation marks with slashes for dialogue, double slashes for

internal monologue, brackets for intervening narrators, italics for recurring motifs, and filled squares for episodic shifts).

۹. **The “Ghazal-as-a-Book” Paradigm:** Expanding scale up to 180 distichs (e.g., *Gol Bet Namak*, *Morshed o Dokhtarak*) to provide comprehensive, book-length conceptual elaboration rather than superficial length.
۱۰. **Emotional Diversity:** Moving beyond traditional binary sentiments (joy vs. grief) to encompass over 90 complex psychological emotions (e.g., existential dread, hypocrisy, remorse, complex grief).
۱۱. **Cognitive Pluralism and Applied Phenomenology:** Incorporating psychological critique, critical mysticism, and non-dichotomous consciousness (*Jens-e Sevvom* / Third Gender agency) where subject/object positions remain fluid.
۱۲. **Fourfold Typological Classification:** Categorizing Maximal Ghazal into:
 - *Lyrical Non-narrative*,
 - *Word-Centric (Oryanist Meta-poetry)*,
 - *Neo-Qalandari (paradoxical fluid-self)*, and
 - *Narrative-Dramatic*.
۱۳. **Rhyme and Meter Flexibility:** Modulating autonomous stanza-rhymes, triple-hemistich distichs, and structural shifts within a singular rhythmic meter.
۱۴. **Dynamic Cognitive Frameworks:** Transitioning freely among subject-centered, object-centered, alter-subjective, and floating cognitive architectures.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Maximal Ghazal represents an autonomous, evolutionary milestone in contemporary Persian poetry. Its structural and internal innovations—particularly the integration of polyphony, phenomenological depth, trans-generic narrative, and emotional pluralism—provide an organic vehicle for expressing the fragmented complexities of modern consciousness.



Unlike traditional “tunnel-vision” lyrics that are confined to single-track emotions, Maximal Ghazal functions as an expansive, book-length literary canvas. By redefining formal mechanics through *markaz-afzayi* (multi-centering) and trans-formal flexibility, it transcends both classical static conventions and postmodern disorientation, establishing a robust, distinct stylistic paradigm in modern Persian literature.