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AYINE (MIRROR) IN BIDEL’S GHAZALS:
A MAP OF THE VOCABULARY

Speaking is a trouble, but how many texts on the silence!
Due to your breath, you get covered with rust, just like a mirror.

This article and the subsequent one by Riccardo Zipoli present some results and reflections on the use of the word āyine (mirror) in the ghazals of Bidel. These two articles are based on data collected during a research begun a few years ago at the University of Venice: the aim of this research was to analyze the grammatical and semantic functions of the word āyine in the ghazals of Bidel, and attempts to identify the contextual features of the theme (or themes) related to this word.

As of today, on the basis of data gathered in the first stage of our research, we find that in the first 1,619 ghazals (more than half of the divān) there are as many as 1,650 lines in which this term occurs once or twice for a total of 1,676 occurrences (1,510 times standing alone, 17 times in derivatives and 149 times in compounds).

The idea of this contribution is to identify and describe the fundamental semantic nuclei of the corpus collected to date, and

3 To form a quantitative idea of the use of the term āyine (standing alone, and in derivative and compound words) in the whole set of Bidel’s ghazals and therefore the size of the corpus to be studied, we can work out a simple proportion: 1) as I mentioned earlier, in the first 1,619 ghazals there are 1,650 lines with this term; 2) the divān contains around 2,780 ghazals (a total of around 31,000-32,000 lines); 3) we will therefore assemble a corpus of about 2,700 or 2,800 lines (depending on whether we apply the proportion to the verses or the ghazals). To streamline the exposition, henceforth I will only use the expression «the term āyine» or simply āyine, to refer not only to the occurrence of the individual lemma but also to occurrences of its compounds and derivatives.
organize the most frequent lemmas in semantic fields that highlight the ideas of greatest importance found in our contexts. These fields will then delineate the conceptual pivots of Bidel’s poetics around which the theme of the mirror rotates.

As we will see, the poet uses a great many different words in this corpus. At the same time, however, the «mirror» acts as the guiding thread, as the binder of this heterogeneity highlighted by the lexical wealth of our lines/context as a whole. Ayine is the element of continuity to which the other lemmas must in any case relate (both directly and indirectly).

This is because the most frequent lemmas can also be considered as poles of attraction for the mirror motif: they constitute motifs that not only hinge on the mirror theme but which, in turn, attract this motif itself (for example, it is possible for the theme of heyrat/amazement to induce the poet to introduce the image of the mirror; the opposite process is not necessarily the case, as the formulation of our work might lead one to imagine).

The drafting of a lexical map and an initial reflection on it can constitute the grounds for describing a set of «strong» ideas which interact of necessity with the mirror motif in Bidel’s poetics.

It is obvious that this map will be further enriched at the end of our work, when the other half of the verses have been examined, but this does not change the fact that the nuclei identified so far will remain in any case. On the contrary, what is more likely to change is their weight: some concepts may be reinforced by the presence of new lemmas while others may be found to be fully covered already in the system I am presenting here.

As a preamble, our objective is intended to be achieved above all by investigations at a lexical level: for this purpose we have drawn up the frequency list of the lemmas of our corpus of lines/context. We extracted the lemmas with $f \geq 20$ (frequency equal to or greater than 20) from the list of lemmas ordered by frequency. It seems to us that, in reference to a corpus of the current size of ours, this threshold can in fact be considered significant. Even if a lemma with $f \geq 20$ is found theoretically about every 80 lines, and therefore recurs rarely, it is nevertheless significant if one takes account of just how rich and dispersed the lexicon of this corpus is. It contains a total of 2,270 lemmas with an extremely high percentage of hapax, 46%, and

$^4$ It should be noted that this percentage is slightly lower than that found in the sample of 1,000 lines of Lirica Persica Corpus 49.55% (D. Meneghini,
this means that almost half of the lemmas occur only once in our 1,650 lines, confirming the exceptional lexical richness of our corpus of lines/contexts. In this panorama, a frequency such as the one chosen by us (f ≥ 20) is unquestionably significant. The high percentage of hapax (and consequent significance of f ≥ 20) should be read taking account of the particular nature of the corpus of verses analyzed: this is because it concerns contexts which have in common such a highly connoted lemma as āyine, which brings with it a priori a series of concepts and references expressed, for example, by verbs such as: šekastan, bastan, didan, nomudan, pardâxtan; and by nouns such as del, temsâl and seyqal.

The subject examined belongs to a semantic field the components of which are highly probable even if at different levels. In short therefore, it is necessary to bear in mind that the lexical richness of a corpus composed of the contexts of a specific lemma should be assessed differently from that of a corpus of poems selected randomly. In other words, it would be plausible to expect that a corpus composed of specific lines/contexts would not be as rich as a random one.

Let us look at some data regarding āyine provided by the list of lemmas of the corpus: in 1,650 verses we have 1,510 occurrences of the lemma in its isolated form and 169 occurrences that comprise lemmas derived from āyine and lemmas composed with āyine; of these, the most frequent is āyinedâr with 73 occurrences, followed by āyinexâne with 13 occurrences and āyinepardâz with 11 occurrences. A total of 1,679 occurrences, therefore, with 29 verses in which the term āyine appears twice.

There are 191 lemmas with f ≥ 20.

\[\text{Lirica Persica Hypertext} - \text{browse and search 20,000 lines of Persian ghazals, Venice, Ca' Foscari, 2000 on CD-Rom, Main Page > Authors > Bidel > Browse > Statistical Tables > Lemma Frequency Distribution Table; for a description of Lirica Persica project see: D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, Main Page > Project. This figure is not just due to the fact that when the number of lines is increased, the possibility of introducing new words is reduced, but is unquestionably linked to the monothematic nature of our contexts.}\]

\[\text{As a confirmation of this, note that āyine-temsâl, āyine – seyqal and āyine – del are three of the most cohesive pairs in the sample of the Lirica Persica Corpus, while āyine-nafas appears among the 10 most frequent pairs (D. Meneghini, «Lexical Solidarity in the classical Persian ghazal: research methodology and preliminary data», Annali di Ca' Foscari, XLII, 3, 2003, 171-204, tables on page 188).}\]

\[\text{The list that follows is the result of the processing of the verses of our corpus. We processed the transliterated verses using a software application that}\]
identifies the lemmas and then orders them by their frequencies: therefore, the transliteration system of the lists follows the Lirica Persica criteria (D. Meneghini, V. Zanolla, R. Zopolli, *Outline of a Persian-English Dictionary*, Venice, Cofoscarina, 1997, 49-58).
We subsequently extracted the nouns from this list, excluding those with a propositional value such as *bar*. Given the purpose of our work, we did not consider the other classes of words when organizing the semantic fields. After applying this filter we found ourselves with a set of 91 lemmas. Just less than half of the lemmas with f ≥ 20 are nouns therefore. Here is the list
with the lemma preceded by the frequency and followed by a general translation:

1510 ayına mirror  37 baharī spring
447 del heart  37 gharī shame/modesty
174 hayrat amazement  37 tamāq looking at anything
170 nafas breath  35 eemr life
165 qawwar pearl/substance  35 darī door
131 jalva manifestation/splendour  34 gārdī dust
129 rang colour/manner  34 gabanān dew
128 bidel  31 kār action/thing
125 jay place  31 sobh morning/dawn
114 ab water  31 surat image/form/figure
109 hōsn beauty  30 honar art/virtue
104 cāsm eye  30 ḥāyāh shame/modesty
103 zang rust  30 parda veil/curtain
98 temsāl image  30 saya shadow
92 xanq house  29 ḥā sigh
90 naqsh a painting  29 hāvās desire/concupiscence
85 xayāl apparition/vision  29 zangār rust
83 ṣafa purity/brightness  28 ṣafi pure
79 gol flower  26 ṣawāq desire/affectio
74 ruyāl face/aspect  25 ēraq sweat
73 āynādar mirror holder  25 ḥabāb bubble
73 hastāli existence/life  24 aṣār sign/result
70 sar head/top  24 dam moment/breath
64 eglām world  24 kodurāt being turbid/anguish
63 eṣar appearing  24 mesāl similitude/model
62 gobar dust  24 pardgāz furbishing/polishing
59 jāhān world  24 xorşid sun
57 oaks reflection  23 eebrat example/wonder
52 dagl branch  23 ātesg fire
52 negah glance  23 çaman meadow
50 didar sight/vision  23 damān skirt
50 nāz blandishments/amorous  22 gaflat unconsciousness/ignorance
playfulness
48 tahayyor astonishment/wonder  22 sang stone
47 dast hand  22 ṣame candle
46 šayqal polisher  22 yād memory
45 moqā wave  21 emkan possibility
43 mawj wave  21 kolfat pain
43 ṭay foot/leg  21 nīrang sorcery/fascination
43 vāhm imagining  21 qadam footstep
41 naqar seeing/viewing  20 eeqū love
41 xāk earth  20 aşg ear
40 didā eye  20 jone ṣum madness
40 māhv erasing/annulling  20 āb night
40 rāgh road  20 taqafol negligence
40 ğuξi impudence  20 xaṭṭ writing/line
39 tahqīq ascertaining the truth

Those listed here are the key lemmas of Bidel’s poetics of the mirror; this is confirmed among other things by the fact that they reappear several times in the list in derived and/or compound
forms: *bi-nafasi, bi-šafāyi, bi-temsāl, čaman-ārāy, čaman-pardāz, heyrat-negāb, mahvuyyat, nafas-suxte, nafas-dāri, nafas-nāme, nafas-naqqā, naqī-band, tamāšā-gāb,* etc., to quote some cases only.

My proposal for subdivision into semantic fields requires a premise: the meaning attributed to the terms I will organize is the main one. Obviously, inside the distinct contexts, each term can acquire different nuances, assume a metaphorical or symbolic sense, and negate its prime meaning in that mechanism of reversal of functions that is so characteristic of Bidel’s poetics. Nevertheless, the prime meaning is always present: it provides the backdrop for the immediate reading, the direct reference, the necessary starting point for any subsequent semantic or conceptual elaboration. In this sense, a so called simplified organization of the lemmas is useful and plausible at this point of the study.

I identified 8 fundamental nuclei through an initial subdivision into semantic areas.

**Actions** (concrete and abstract, linked to appearing and seeing): *‘arz, jelve, xayāl, valīn, mahv, tahqiq, ebrat, tamāšā, yād, negāb, nazār, didār, nirang,* and indirectly ḫosn, beauty, as it is seen and appears and nāz intended as a way of manifesting beauty. A total of 15 lemmas, 647 occurrences (806 including ḫosn and nāz).

**Obscuring elements:** nafas, zang, ḡobār, dāḡ, gard, parde, dāmān, sāye, āb, zangār, kodurat, xaṭṭ and dam when used to mean «breath». A total of 13 lemmas, 606 occurrences (630 including dam).

**States of mind and feelings:** heyrat, tahayyor, šuxi, šarm, ḥayā, šowq, bavas, ‘eqā, qaflat, tāqafl, kolfat, joun. A total of 12 lemmas, 487 occurrences.

**Structural elements:** gowhar, āyinedār, ṣeyqal, pardāz, safā, šāfī. A total of 6 lemmas, 419 occurrences.

**Traces and images:** ‘aks, mešāl, temsāl, naqš, qadam, aşar. A total of 6 lemmas, 314 occurrences.

**Parts of the body:** del, čašm, dide, ruy, dast, može, pāy, surat, ‘arag, aşk. A total of 10 lemmas, 874 occurrences.

**Natural elements:** āb, xaḵ, gol, mouj, bahār, šabnam, ḫobāb, şobāb, xworp-šid, āteš, čaman, sang, šāb. A total of 13 lemmas, 516 occurrences.

**Indicators of manner, time and place:** rang, jāy, xāne, basti, ‘omr, jahān, ‘alam, sar, rāb, dar, emkān and dam when used to mean «moment». A total of 12 lemmas, 674 occurrences.
There are four lemmas that cannot be attributed to one of the fields described. These are Bidel (f. 128), ŝam‘ (f. 22), honar (f. 30), and kār (f. 31). Bidel (the taxalloş) is a flexible lemma, adaptable to any context. ŝam‘, the «candle», is generally a character present in a convivial atmosphere or in an amorous context (as a witness or metaphor of the lover) but neither of these frameworks results from our categories. When a number of contexts have been read it can be seen that the candle participates in the idea of vision, its flame is a mirror, it represents unawarness, veils the mirror or facilitates its use. As dāग, the «mark», it is a very poetically ductile figure, used with functions of, and inside extremely diversified images (as will be exemplified by the contribution of R. Zipoli, in the subsequent article). Honar is «art», «ability» and «virtue», often set against ‘eyb, «defect», «absence»; this is another lemma that cannot be adequately placed in our contexts. Finally, failure to insert kār into one of our fields is linked to the vagueness of this term which can be adapted to the most varied contexts.

Of these semantic fields, the first 5 are closely associated with the poetic image of the mirror while the last three constitute the foreseeable background of the lyrical poetry to which our verses belong.  

Some general trends worth noting are already evident from this initial subdivision. First of all there is no prevalent field: there is a slightly greater number of lemmas in the «actions» field compared with the subsequent fields and if we look at the sum of the frequencies (647) it is lower than that of the field regarding «parts of the body» (874).

The set of «actions» associated with seeing and appearing (or negation of these actions in terms of mahv and nirang) is composed of well-connoted lemmas that cover a wide area of concrete and abstract meanings, from imagination to exemplification, from fantasy to memory, and from research to contemplation. It should be noted that the adjectives rowsan (38) and peydā (23) are present among the most frequent lemmas (also in derivatives and compounds), indicating luminosity and visibility features that enrich the field in question.

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7 Compare the Lirica Persica common vocabulary data: all the lemmas in the last three fields are present there, except «rang» and «emkān» (D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, Main Page > Corpus > Browse > Common Vocabulary).
The «obscuring elements» are closely linked to the poetics of the mirror and are therefore unquestionably characteristic: the bright and pure surface of the mirror is attacked by a wide range of substances that can be mainly traced to breath, rust and dust, but also enriched by more original presences such as marks, curtains and clothing, shadows and lines of writing. The function of these elements in the corpus is extremely ramified and complex however: often the substances that cover or dull the mirror lead to an alternative and truer vision and awareness, in a reversal of roles which is typical of Bidel’s poetics.

The group of lemmas related to «states of mind and feelings» brings together a series of words linked to different situations; among these, a feeling is notable – in terms of frequency – which is typically evoked by the mirror. It is amazement, followed by shame, by unawareness (or ignorance) and then by love; impudence, pain and madness complete the picture of the main sentiments that gravitate around the mirror. Furthermore, among the most frequent lemmas is ǧafel with 28 occurrences (but being an adjective it is excluded from our list) increasing the consistency of the theme of unawareness so dear to Bidel and, as we know, so often combined with the image of the mirror.

Closely linked to the field of obscuring elements, is the field with the «structural elements» of the mirror which is, however, singularly deficient as regards the number of lemmas: in fact only very few of the constituent parts of the mirror, material and immaterial, occur with a certain frequency.

The field of «traces and images» is also quite meagre with just a few essential terms to indicate reflection, image, trace, painting, etc.

As far as the «parts of the body» are concerned, apart from the heart as metaphor of the mirror in a great many of our lines/contexts (as well as in classical Persian poetry), we have three terms linked to sight (čašm, dide and može), the «sweat» which is associated with shame, the foot which is linked with the footprint, the face associated with the reflection and with beauty and, finally, tears associated with love’s suffering.

These last two fields as a whole draw from the lexical canon of the ghazal and do not appear to be specifically associated with the presence of the mirror. With the seventh semantic field we approach the «natural elements». This refers to the group of key lemmas of classical Persian poetry, with a few exceptions typical of Bidel’s work: wave, bubble, stone and dew.
We can propose the same consideration for the indicators of manner, time and place.

The following chart can better show the distribution of the occurrences in the different fields.

![Chart showing distribution of occurrences](chart.png)

In conclusion, it is evident that the mirror motif in our corpus is developed to a highly ramified thematic level in which the elementary dynamics of the reproduction of the image is only a tool for expressing more complex concepts, linked mainly to the sphere of mystical vision, understanding, knowledge and self-awareness.\(^8\)

ABSTRACT
This article analyses the line-contexts containing the word āyne (mirror), retrieved from Bidel's ghazals. This word presents a very rich and complex system of uses, meanings, allusions and connections with other specific words and poetic images. After finding all the line-contexts, the question is to set out a methodology in order to analyse the grammatical, semantic and rhetorical functions of āyne, also identifying the contextual features of the theme. So far we have transliterated, translated and processed more than half of the lines containing āyne. On the basis of this material, we propose a subdivision of the most frequent nouns (f ≥ 20) into semantic fields.

KEYWORDS