

Exploring Hegelian Dialectics in Ghani Khan's Poem Reedi Gul (The Flower)

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Keywords	Abstract
Alienation, Dialectics, Self-Consciousness.	<i>This paper explores the Hegelian concepts of alienation, self-consciousness, and the dialectical progression of history through a critical analysis of Abdul Ghani Khan's Pashto poem, Reedi Gul. For Hegel, art and literature are products of the alienation process through which subjugated, non-thinking beings (slaves) externalise the true spirit (Geist), ultimately progressing towards self-consciousness. Drawing on this framework, the study situates Khan's poetic journey as a dialectical movement from not-knowing to knowing, aligning with Hegel's vision of the evolution of consciousness. The poem reflects a shift from primal freedom to historical enslavement through morality and materiality, culminating in a romantic unity between the finite and the infinite. A tabulated model mapping thesis, antithesis, and synthesis was employed to structure the analysis. The findings reveal that Khan, like Hegel, embodies a "rational mystique", achieving self-realisation through the alienated symbol of the poppy flower.</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

Beauty never remains unappreciated but will somehow get prized and acknowledged one day. Ghani Khan elucidates this theme in his short poem titled *Reedi Gul* (The Flower). The poem develops the idea of the poet coming across a lovely poppy flower in his journey through a vast and barren desert where it stands solitary with nobody to appreciate its beauty. The poet immediately strikes an empathic connection with the flower through self-identification. The Hegelian dialectic gets developed from the very beginning that helps understand true status through a process of thesis, antithesis and finally synthesis. The thesis of the poet is that a lovely flower standing alone will suffer from a deep sense of solitude and be deprived of appreciation. However, the flower develops an antithesis by correcting the poet and letting him know that it is not at all unhappy in its solitary state to stand in wilderness, as it is the only noticeable object of astounding beauty and radiance. Had this flower been given any offer of being shifted to the Persian garden, it would certainly have rejected even that for fear of being surrounded there by countless flowers with no beholder having time to cast a look upon it. It is this very wilderness and solitariness that turns it into the loveliest and most radiant of all existence there. The poem ends on a note leading to synthesis when the flower vouchsafes the poet with precious advice to shun all dejection for being solitary and companionless since a beautiful and creative soul like him can never remain unappreciated. Someone will come there to acknowledge his real worth. Khan is as unappreciated as the flower.

The poem shows that Khan follows a journey of realisation like a mystic and philosopher who associates self with every phenomenon and entity in the universe with the aim to find the truth. In Hegelian terms any entity remains simple and finite until it develops a relationship of harmony and balance with the Absolute and infinite (Geist). Hegel, however, does not explicitly refer to this process, which has rather been derived from Fichte. Hegel's own system is that of negation and sublation (Hegel, 1977). This moment of absolute connection comes through synthesis. The Absolute Spirit manifests itself as spirit in a flower which is objective and three-dimensional. When the poet strikes a connection with the flower, he actually establishes a relationship of synthesis with the flower by associating self with the Absolute:

Once, some years ago, I wandered	Yawa wrazi yaw sahra ki pa khkaar
In the wilderness, to find	wutey wum rawan
A rose in blooming beauty,	Yaw gulab I walaarr wuleed prrakidu
Laughing gently in the wind (Sahibzada, 2014).	khkuley khandaan

Hegel's philosophy (1770-1831) revolves around the concepts of self-consciousness, alienation and stages of historical progress (Knox, 1967). This study explores Khan's poem Reedi Gul (The Flower). Hegel's philosophy is called dialectical philosophy. This dialectical process evolves throughout history between the abstract reality of Absolute Spirit (Geist) and its objective forms like art and nature. Hegel calls this dialectics taking place between subject and subject, between subject and object, between master and slave and between conscious and not-conscious being (Hegel, 1977). One achieves self-consciousness when a subject confronts another subject or when a subject comes across an object or when a conscious being faces a conscious or not-conscious being. This is the dialectical system of Hegel.

Hegel interprets the creative process in dialectical terms. For instance, a poetic composition comes into being when a poet writes or externalises something from within his or her soul. It is just like the Absolute Spirit or Geist, who also creates through externalisation or the creation of the universe from within, like a poem. So is the universe created by the Absolute Spirit (Hegel, 1975). Similarly, Absolute Spirit also manifests itself in history as free spirit at the primal stage and becomes Absolute at the philosophical stage (Hegel, 1977).

1.1. Significance of the Research

This study proves that Pashto poetry of Khan has attained as high a level as is expected from literature of any widely known language. His poetry needs deeper analysis by more scholars in order to let the world know of the standard and thought processes of a lesser known and spoken language like Pashto.

1.2. Research Objectives

This study explores:

1. Means of gaining self-consciousness by the poet in Reedi Gul (poppy flower)
2. Significance of alienation as a creative process.
3. Symbolic representation of the poppy flower in Reedi Gul.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The building block of Hegel's philosophy is dialectics. Its different concepts have been covered in the succeeding paragraphs:

3.1. Hegel's Dialectics

- a. **Thesis:** Hegel believed that the starting point of philosophy is logic which is the basic thought.
- b. **Antithesis:** Every thesis or basic thought has its opposite which Hegel calls antithesis.
- c. **Synthesis:** It is the ultimate end of the dialectics of thesis and anti-thesis (Hegel, 1894).

3.2. Self-Consciousness and Alienation

According to Hegel, our creativity is the alienation of an idea from our mind in the shape of an object which may be a piece of prose, poetry or sculpture. It is by getting conscious of the creative work in an objective state that we achieve self-consciousness and self-discovery, which ultimately leads to the absolute (Rae, 2012).

3.3. Hegel's Order of History

- a. **Original History:** It is the state of nature and falls in the realm of complete freedom.
- b. **Reflective History or the Yoke of Necessity:** It is the recognition of the rights of others (morality) who have been turned into slaves through the instrument of control.
- c. **Philosophic History:** Its primal institution is family, followed by civil society and lastly is the state which stands for God Himself (Hegel, 1888).

Hegel associates these three stages with art, religion and philosophy:

- a. **Art:** It is the state of mind which has the intuitive contemplation of itself.
- b. **Religion:** It is the knowledge of truth in the form of representation (Schlitt, 1990).
- c. **Philosophy:** It is the highest stage of unity between finite and infinite through the dialectical process of gaining consciousness.

3.4. Art and Aesthetics

Art is a manifestation of Geist through some objective form to express freedom (Hegel, 1998). Hegel's concept of art and beauty is beauty as an idea in the mind which is actual; then it is manifested through creative work, and finally it is reflected through different genres of art. According to Hegel aim of art is not to simply imitate mundane life but to show us absolute freedom, which was there in our mind as a concept, and this is the ideal or absolute beauty (Ameriks, 2002). Beauty is the sensuous manifestation of an idea, but philosophy is the highest form of beauty which is not sensuous (Hegel, 1965).

3.5. Absolute Freedom, Slavery, Recognition and Reason

Absolute freedom is possible through the condemnation of slavery. Loss of freedom and falling into slavery is the second stage of history which is developed from the natural state to the ethical and moral state. Responsibility for the state of slavery lies at the door of the one who

gives in to the master and accepts slavery rather than the one who conquers or subjugates him (Marxists, n.d.).

Hegel's concept of recognition is very interesting; it says that we get recognition through our consciousness of recognising others and accepting someone as other than ourselves. This entails that one is always in need of social experience to get recognised by the very self (Pinkard, 1994).

Everything has an essence which is geist. Reason enables us to grasp this geist which Hegel calls self-consciousness existing as in and for itself. Human beings are also the product of this geist and self-conscious spirit. Only human beings possess this characteristic of rationality, which is nowhere there on any other planet of the universe (Zuckert, 1977).

3.6. Master-Slave or Subject-Object Dialectics

Hegel's master-slave dialectics is inherent in two independent "self-consciousnesses" that encounter each other and engage in a life-and-death struggle. Struggle is inevitable because both see each other as a threat to survival (Solomon, 1988). The evolutionary process of this asymmetrical relationship is given below:

a. Subject-Object Relationship: Hegel calls this Unity of Opposites, such as "day", which must have the concept of "night" to understand the concept of "day". Similarly, humans become self-conscious through awareness about the consciousness of something else. There develops a master-slave relationship when one is a thinking or conscious being and the other not-thinking, not-conscious being.

b. Subject-Subject Relation or Two Subjects Confronting Each Other: This relationship results in failures to recognise each other as conscious entities, and Hegel believes that they are mesmerised. This subject-subject confrontation also inspires both the entities not to lose their state of being subjects. However, in the end, one accepts superiority for fear of death.

3.7. Otherisation and Asymmetrical Relationship

When the master frustrates the desire of the slave to be recognised as a thinking being or a subject, the slave begins reflecting on himself as a subject, as the "other", which the master ignores as "other", called "otherisation" by Hegel. Ironically, history recognises not the master but the slave. Master thus loses his place in history (Williams, 1992).

3.8. The Concept of Labour – A Dialectical Irony

Hegel's concept of labour is fundamental to understanding the idea of self-creation, which is more aesthetic (Riedel, 1984). Thus, he develops human civilisation, through which he discovers himself. Labour is thus the creation and expression of geist, mind. This is "Alienation", which gives us poetry or works of art.

3.9. Critique on Hegel

Although Marx was influenced by Hegel, he critiqued Hegel that it is the material things which construct the universe, not the abstract. The dialectical process which Hegel expounded as taking place in history was actually cultural and economic, and the root of this process was class struggle (Leopold, 2007).

3.10. Ghani Khan

Pashto poet Ghani Khan was an anti-structuralist who refused to accept dogma and authority of the religious seminaries (Awan & Ali, 2014; Munir, 2018). Such people remain lost in the material world and are impressed by the impermanent aspects of the world (Sardaraz et al., 2021). This made him a mystic in the true sense who sought meanings of existence and relationship with the divine (Ahmed et al., 2021). He held the human soul to be immortal (Zakir & Ramzan, 2022). His dialecticism enabled him to explore the immortality and mortality of the human soul without any pessimism (Safa & Sahand, 2022). Khan is the closest to Keats of all the Western poets by sharing many attributes like his proclivity for suffering, love of nature and beauty, and musicality, with some differences (Bacha, 2010).

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study follows qualitative research methodology, which is considered ideal for interpretive analysis of poetic texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The study also emphasises exploring the subjective and symbolic dimensions of the text (Creswell, 2014). Keeping in view the objectives of how one attains self-consciousness, creation as a product of alienation and symbolic representation of the poppy flower, the research applied a thematic approach for data analysis. Data comprises different concepts of Hegelian philosophy and Khan's poem Reedi Gul (The Flower). The poem was picked from Shabizada's English translation titled "The Pilgrim of Beauty" (2014). Since the building blocks of Hegel's dialectical philosophy are thesis, antithesis and synthesis, a conceptual framework based on Hegelian dialectics was therefore developed. The following table reflects the paradoxical relation of thesis, antithesis and synthesis:

Table 1: Model of Hegelian Dialectical Process

Concept	Thesis	Anti-thesis	Synthesis
Master-Slave Relationship	Subject/Conscious/Thinking being	Object/Not-Conscious/Unthinking being	Struggle/Fear of death/Acceptance of slavery/Self-consciousness/Otherisation
Art/Aesthetics	Idea/Geist/Mind/Universal reason	Alienation/Otherisation	Creation/ Labour
History	Nature/FREEDOM	Morality/Yoke of necessity/slavery	Philosophic history/Unity of geist object
Philosophic history	Family/Domain of love	Civil society/Polarization of rich and poor/	State/ Reconciles individual and collective
Art	Symbolic	Classical	Romantic
Religion	Oriental Religion/Only one is free	Greek-Roman Religion/class is free	Christianity/Union of finite and infinite
Consciousness	Sense Certainty	Perception	Understanding
End of history	Infinite/Subject	Finite/Object	Collective subjects/Finite-infinite reconciled/Oneness with God (geist)

5. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1. Attainment of Self-Consciousness

Khan uses Reedi Gul to gain self-consciousness. It is the ultimate end of Hegel's dialectical process that begins on the thesis of having consciousness of being "I am" as a subject (the poet), that is the poet in the poem when he comes across the flower ("You're a flower that has no meaning/for the loved one's tresses long... ").

The next step of this consciousness is when the flower responds to the poet's inquiry, "It smiled gently and then whispered/"Khan, why should you thus grieve?" This is actually advice for the poet to hold heart, and with this, the poet comes to know of the consciousness of the flower, which Hegel calls the stage of mesmerisation.

In mesmerisation, the poet is overcome by the feeling that the poppy flower is a completely conscious and thinking being that has the power to correct even the poet. The flower would never trade the state of solitude for the Persian gardens.

Khan arrives at Hegel's concept of the Unity of Opposites towards the end of the poem. He gains self-consciousness when it is dawned upon the poet that since the flower is "...is a flame of blazing beauty/and of colours of all hues", thus the poet is also a miracle of God. With this the poet attains realisation, and identification is achieved.

5.2. Alienation as Creation

Hegel's concept of alienation carries paradoxical connotations. It is the externalisation of one's internal ideas and concepts. This externalisation of the idea from within one's own self is also a creative process in the shape of a poem or a masterpiece of art that contributes positively towards civilisation (Hegel, 1975).

At the start of the poem, Khan says that during his journey through a wild desert, he found a poppy flower as lonely and solitary as the poet himself. The poet thus immediately identifies himself with the flower for its loneliness. The way the poet has been made an alien by the society and isolated through this alienation might have happened with the flower because it is also all alone in that vast and barren desert.

Hegel's condition of alienation, which means turning an individual into an outcast, is fulfilled. However, the next condition of alienation, being a creative process, gets fulfilled when the flower replies that though it is all alone, even then the poet has hopped on it to appreciate its beauty, which would also happen one day with the poet. The very fact of getting appreciation means being recognised as a beautiful object:

Do not grieve in your wasteland;
To appreciate your beauty,
There will ultimately come,
From a far-off place a wanderer,
Like some wretched Ghani Khan (Sahibzada, 2014).

Alienation results in recognition. History proves that all those who were alienated, like being forced to live alone, always contributed positively towards history and civilisation. The slaves in Egypt who were alienated from the ruling class were tasked with making pyramids. The pyramids have made those alienated slaves immortals to this day.

5.3. Symbolic Representation of the Poppy Flower

a. State of Freedom: Like Rousseau, Hegel also believes that the primal stage of history is complete freedom and a state of nature. The poppy flower represents that state of complete freedom when it says even in the desolate desert.

b. Beauty/Aesthetics: For Hegel, beauty is the harmonisation and unification of finite with infinite. Reedi Gul is the representation of spirit in finite form, and once it is recognised as the poet recognises the beauty in a flower, then the unity between the finite and infinite is achieved. This also builds his concept of aesthetics. He says that beauty exists first as ultimate spirit or geist in the mind; second, it gets translated into art as finite spirit, and third, when someone recognises the finite as beautiful, the ultimate is achieved.

c. Master-Slave Relationship: Hegel believes that there develops a master-slave relationship when one subject confronts another subject that is also a conscious and thinking being. Reedi Gul also shows that Khan's initial reaction to the flower was that of pity. He was about to fall into a master-slave relation, but then the poet himself turns into a slave and object when the flower becomes his master to make him wiser. This relationship is reversed when the poet realises that he is as beautiful and conscious as the flower itself.

d. Alienated Being: Being alone in the wild desert is actually the alienation of the flower from its type. The poet also identifies himself with the flower when he equates his state with the flower. The first level of alienation is the flower apparently representing an outcast, and the second is that of creation and a masterpiece of beauty.

e. Art: For Hegel, art is the first stage of human civilisation. Humans turn their own creation into idols and worship those. The second stage is known as the classical age when unity between finite and infinite is achieved to a larger extent but not in entirety. The third and last stage is the Romantic stage, when complete unity is achieved. Reedi Gul also represents the last romantic stage because the poet achieves complete oneness with the flower, and the flower also accepts this connection.

6. RESULTS

Khan was piqued by the existential questions. His themes revolve around gaining self-consciousness through the world outside his mind. He poses questions about humans like, "Who am I?" He tries to find answers like Hegel by asking himself what this world is here for or who we are.

Hegelian dialects lead him to the conclusion that the world is actually one supreme reason called idea. Khan looks for achieving oneness and unity through the association of the opposites, such as thesis and antithesis, in his poem The Flower.

Khan seems to have been triggered by the question of being self-conscious. This self-consciousness comes through gaining awareness about the external world. It is not possible to be aware of one's own existence without getting an understanding of the outside world.

Khan was ostracised and alienated by the critics of his time. It was through his deep connection with nature and the world around him that he achieved recognition. Similarly, this alienation has also turned him into a great poet by virtue of giving him themes for his creative poetry. Thus, it is not a sin or crime to be alienated but a blessing.

Khan sees phenomena or entities in the world of nature as possessing a complete spirit, like Reedi Gul (poppy flower). This spirit never remains unrecognised but will become a source of attaining oneness between the finite and the infinite. Khan sees phenomena or entities in the world of nature as possessing a complete spirit, like Reedi Gul (poppy flower). This spirit never remains unrecognised but will become a source of attaining oneness between the finite and the infinite.

7. CONCLUSION

Ghani Khan (1914-96) is one of the greatest Pashto poets of the 20th century. He is known for his revolutionary and philosophical poetry. Reedi Gul (The Flower) is the powerful manifestation of the absolute truth through the existence of its conscious being in a wild desert. Whether he was influenced by Hegel or not, it seems probable that being an erudite reader, he might certainly have read him. This poem is a manifest display of Hegelian dialectics which Khan expertly uses to bring home the concept of self-consciousness, alienation and other forms of ultimate reality.

Acknowledgement: Deep gratitude is due to my supervisor and teachers of the English Department at Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar Campus, for assisting me in this research. Clarity on various concepts would not be possible without their timely guidance.

Author's Contributions: This article is part of my PhD thesis, for which an internal defence has already been done, and at present the thesis is in the stage of external evaluation. My co-author is my PhD supervisor, who has guided and directed my research from the beginning.

Conflict of Interests: The authors declare that there is no competing interest.

Funding Information: This research is part of my PhD research thesis; therefore, no specific grant was received from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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