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# Academia Open



*By Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo*

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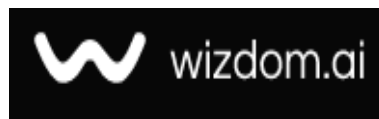
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# **The Aesthetics of Artistic Imagery in the Wisdom of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in Nahj al-Balagha**

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## **Abstract**

General Background: Artistic imagery is a central element of rhetoric that translates abstract thought into perceptible expression within Arabic literary tradition. Specific Background: In Nahj al-Balagha, the wisdom of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) presents a distinctive rhetorical model grounded in figurative and sensory representation. Knowledge Gap: Despite previous rhetorical studies, limited research has examined the aesthetic structure and integrated functions of artistic imagery in his aphoristic rulings through a focused descriptive-analytical approach. Aims: This study analyzes the composition, types, and aesthetic, semantic, and persuasive roles of artistic imagery in Imam Ali's wisdom. Results: The analysis shows that simile, metaphor, metonymy, allegory, and sensory, mental, and kinetic imagery embody moral and philosophical meanings in concrete forms, creating a unified expressive system that combines beauty, intellectual depth, and value-oriented guidance. Novelty: The study demonstrates that artistic imagery constitutes the structural core of Imam Ali's rhetoric through an organic unity between form and ethical content. Implications: The findings position Nahj al-Balagha as a complex literary and rhetorical model for aesthetic and critical studies in Arabic and Islamic literature.

### **Highlights:**

- Identifies sensory and cognitive figurations as structural components of aphoristic discourse.
- Demonstrates integration of moral philosophy with figurative composition.
- Establishes proverbial sayings as a comprehensive rhetorical system.

**Keywords:** Imagery; Rhetorical Aesthetics; Nahj Al-Balagha; Imam Ali; Arabic Literature

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## Introduction

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, employed a unique rhetorical style that is unsurpassed in its literary and rhetorical wealth, and that combines beauty (eloquence and eloquence) with depth of meaning and significance, making it one of the most important references in Arabic and one of the most important reference accounts in speech aesthetics (sense of language) [1] [2]. In this respect, the more "artistic image" becomes a key factor not only for decorating the text, but also to bring an abstract idea into a sensual images related to conscience, deepening the intellectual reaction [3]. Exploring these aesthetics in Imam Ali, peace be upon him, rulings represents a methodological need in the understanding of the deep artistic dimensions relevant to the aesthetic writing of his texts and the language usage to build imaginary worlds that assist the conveyance of his educational and orientational messages, (al-Hilal & Saeed 2016). This study attempts to study this rhetorical phenomenon to uncover the peculiarity of Imam Ali in addition to his contribution to the richness of Arabic and Islamic literature.

### Importance

The significance of the examination of aesthetic aspects of artistic imagery in quotations of Imām ‘Alī (p.b.u.h) can be summed up in a few central points:

- Emphasizing the aesthetics of rhetoric: This research focuses on the value of rhetoric as an intellectual and artistic work beyond the mere rhetorical text to the artistic creative level [4].

However, in analysis of artistic image, the reader not only obtains the content of the message, but also gain knowledge that builds on the hidden meanings and deep connotation which is reflected in the texts while potentially neglecting the apparent meaning of the words [5].

- Rhetorical and critical studies revitalized: As a rhetorical text, the Qur’ān remains understudied, and this study contributes a qualitative assessment of a nascent methodology with which to analyze it to the recent writings in critical methods in contemporary rhetorical and critical studies [6].

- Recognizing the effect on emotion and intellect: According to the study, the artistic image in Imam Ali's rule is not limited to external beauty, but rather penetrates the recipient's emotions and intellect and thereby reinforces the authority of the discourse [7].

- A model of literary studies: This research is a model of study to literary study for other religious and literary text and it can inspire the researcher to apply this path in examining the aesthetic character of the classic texts [8]

### General objectives

This study aims to fulfil the following specific objectives:

The composition of "artistic image" and its constituent elements from the perspective of Nahj al-Balagha in the ruling of Imam Ali [9]

– third, to analyse the rhetorical technique to built the artistic image like simile, metaphor, metonymy and allegory from the example of ruling of Imam Ali [10] [11].

- Enlightening the aesthetic and semantic functions of artistic imagery in the expression of the educational, moral, and humanitarian meanings implicit in the Imam's sayings [12].
- Showing the specificity and uniqueness of artistic imagery in the artistic type of rhetoric as opposed to other literary and rhetorical texts [13].

Research procedures and methodology

This study will be based on the descriptive-analytical approach, which is the most suitable approach for rhetorical phenomena studies in literary texts [14]. The idea behind it is to precisely depict the phenomenon being researched (the artwork), in order to analyse it and break it down into its fundamental elements to be able to expose its meanings and functions.

Methodological procedures:

Gathering the scientific substrate: The judicial rulings narrated from Imam Ali (peace be upon him) are collected from Nahj al-Balagha, based on clear artistic images, utilizing the help of what has been addressed in this regard [15].

Picture classification and rhetorical analysis: From the artistic images, we classify the pictures according to the rhetorical type (simile, metaphor, metonymy, allegory) and use the rhetorical and critical principles that are applicable in the Arabic language [16].

Discovering the meanings and functions: After analysis, the implicit meanings and beauty and edifying functions of each picture are discovered; and each picture has its own link through its meanings to the general climate of Imam Ali's reign and his aims.

Comparison and conclusion:

The results of the study are compared with previous studies, and the conclusions highlight the fact that the uniqueness of the artistic image in the rhetorical approach.

There is a strong body of research linking the visual rhetoric to the viewer's experience with the image [3]. The rhetorical study also helps in uncovering the intricacies that link the Holy Quran and the rhetoric approach.

## Theoretical and Previous Studies

The chapter has the purpose of establishing the theoretical framework of the study, and to monitor the most relevant studies related to the subject of artistic imagery in general, and in the literature of Imam Ali (PBUH) in particular, as a necessary prelude to the analysis of the scientific material of the research.

Artistic Imagery: Theoretical Studies Artistic imagery is a core dimension of all rhetoric and literature. This is not just a stylistic device; it is a source of the meaning and a way from the abstract world of feelings and ideas to go down into the material life, to get to the real world [11]. Arab rhetoricians have devoted a lot of attention to the aesthetics of language, differentiating between rhetorical elements like simile, metaphor, metonymy and allegory, that compose artistic imagery [9].

section One: Imagery—the rhetorical invention

The present section of the research aims to define the concept of artistic imagery (within the mind), where artistic imagery is not just a mental sense of language and it is in fact a vision or a sensory symbol that profoundly conveys meaning, especially in the context of the ruling of Imam Ali [3]. The paper will overview definitions of artistic imagery in old and modern Arabic criticism, with the complexity of it is having (combination of word and meaning, emotion and idea. This research study will also attempt to investigate the rhetorical arts in terms of salon imagery as being seen as sensory, mental or psychological and that all these dimensions can play a role in giving the recipient an holistic vision.

Section Two: The components of the artistic composition of the image in the statements of Imam Ali.

Here we examine the *riṣālī-yi bilāghikārī* of the Imam (peace be upon him) in the formation of his own artistic pictures in the *Nahj al-Balagha*. The focus will be on:

- Simile as a conceptual abstraction and representation: a typology of simile (i.e. stately simile, and representative simile) based and how this type of simile leads aid to a connotation of condensed meanings to reality in the mind that yields to the optimal effectiveness and clarity of rulings [16] Amongst the most illustrative and one of anthropological types of rhetorical devices Similes help us in portraying sensory scenes effectively [16].

- Metaphor as a motor Imagery and Meaning: Analysis of Mechanical Metaphysics and Declarative Metaphor, and the scope that it places on linguistic meaning and how it gives life to meanings and stimulates the imagination of the addressee [10] [11]. This indirectness due to metaphor makes room for deeper interpretations.

- Metaphor and metonymy as rhetorical depth: a review of metaphor and metonymy as rhetoric devices that convey the meaning implicitly and, therefore, provide a wider scope for interpretation, which makes text more fascinating and influential [9]

Third section: Artistic images in the reign of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and their ornamental and meaningful role.

As depicted above, this paper discusses the artistic imagery in the reign of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, including various functions that it plays (beside the aesthetic dimension) into deeper semantic and effective dimensions. The details will be centered around:

The aesthetic function as an attractor and influencer, the artistic images are a part of the role by how it can attract and influence the text, raise sentiments and emotions in the auditor, rendering them more prone to the message [3].

- The conceptual role as a carrier of meaning: examining how artworks become carriers of meaning that is morality, social, philosophical, and embedded in the memory of the viewer [12].

- The image is a persuasive and guiding act: What is the extent of the persuasion of the artistic image to the recipient to guide him to adopting some values or perceptions through direct and indirect influence [7]. Artistic imagery as a tool of persuasion strengthens the sense of meaning in the Arab consciousness [5].

B. Previous studies

In the Moral Science(1)Paraphraser:Among the previous works on pictorial art in Nahj al-Balagha or in the literature of Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

- Khalil Abdulsada Ibrahim al-Hilal and Hawra Abd Ali Saeed, Metaphorical Imagery in Nahj al-Balagha [16]: This research is crucial as it proves to be one of the most essential references in simile seeking in Nahj al-Balagha, where they explain that simile is one of the most active rhetorical images in illustration and clarity; and that the Imam uses it to confirm and establish ideas in the mind of the audience in persuasive situations [16].

- "Graphical Analysis of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib's Diwan by Abdurrahman Al-Mustawi from Metaphor Study Paradigm" Ana Dani Yanti [10] This study investigates metaphor in the sayings of Imam Ali peace be upon him and makes a graphical analysis of this phenomenon, one of the dominant elements of artistic imagery.

- nour al-Din Dahmani [11], The Aesthetic Function of Artistic Imagery in Light of the Traditional Understanding of Metaphor: This research establishes an important theoretical background on the aesthetic function of artistic imagery based on the inspiration of metaphor from Arab heritage, which helps in establishing the concept of artistic imagery in the present study.

- "A Study of How to Critique the Artistic Image in Literature" by Suleiman Alomirat And this paper is based on he researches; and method of analysis envelope a rhetorical image and its affect on the recipient and a methodological and clear hypothetico-deductive frame works for analysing artistic images [3].

The Influence of Artistic Imagery in the Syntax: An Example of Poetry by Miskin al-Darami [7], This study sums up the influence of artistic imagery in the syntax in general which can be used for their influence in the discourse of Imam Ali.

Connotations of Conditional Style in Arabic: An Applied Study in the Will of Imam ALI,pp- { 417-432 } " Prof. Sayyid Hussein Sidi et al. Template for a Paraphrase in Native Language [12]: This title is a linguistic analysis of Imam Ali styles in his will, focusing on the type of condition and conditional style (grammatically stuff), so of course it is not so much about artistic aspects of his expressions.

- "The aesthetics of Minor and Major Literature in Imam Ali's Speech (AS)" by Sayyid Muhammad Reza Ibn al-Rasul and Fahimah Sultani Nejad [4]: This study shows that, as a dominating feature of Arabic literature, the aesthetics of Imam Ali's rhetoric deserved to be studied [4].

The Sermons of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him: A Thematic study in Nahj al-Balagha [2]: In this research, the artistic images used by Imam Ali in his sermons are analyzed in Nahj al-Balagha.

- "An Analytical Study of Imam Ali's (peace be upon him) Political and Ethical Approach in the Light of Nahj al-Balagha" by Professor Dr. Ahood Hussein Jabr —: The paper analyzes Imam Ali's approach as an input that offers a new way of looking at the contexts where artistic images may emerge.

- Art Imagery and Intensifying the Meaning in the Arab Mind: This research deals with artistic imagery and how it helps in the intensifying of meaning that is one of the main pillars of Imam Ali's rhetoric according to a theme.

– "Talbi Composition and the Rhetoric of Poetic Imagery (A Reading of Imam al-Shafi'i's Divan)" by Aziza bin Siddiq [17]. Although it centres on the Imam 'Al-Shafi'i's Divan, but it lends a certain completeness of the theoretical framework for the rhetoric of poetic imagery.

Using Semiotic Analysis Approach to Ethical Messages of Imam Ali A Semiotic Analysis of Artistic Imagery of Islamic Studies — a comparative nature of research paper). As one of qualitative researches, this research answers the question of how the ethical messages of Imam Ali could be analyzed in terms of the semiotic imagery in pictorial imagery.music [8].

"The Stylistic and Aesthetic Dimensions in the Rulings of the Commander of the Faithful, Peace Be Upon Him, in Nahj al-Balagha" (Refereed); This article is highly related to your topic as it directly examines prodigy and qualities in the rulings of Imam Ali.

- "A Rhetorical Perspective on the Systems Problem: A Rhetorical Critique" Muhammad Ibrahim et al. This paper is a literary scrutiny for the notion of systems which is the core idea in Gramscian and Brechtian aesthetic configurations of artistic images [14].

- "The Quranic Rotation in the Method of Rhetoric: A Study in the Rhetorical Background of Images in the Rhetoric of Imam Ali" [Qurani.] Written by Muhammad Zaki Jawad Al-Amidi [15]: This study deals with the connection between the Quran and the method of rhetoric, which can be beneficial for determining the rhetorical context in which the images of Imam Ali were found.

## Result And Discussion

Subcategories and Types of the Artistic Images in the Judgments of Imam Ali (peace be upon him)

The chapter then elaborates on the forms of artistic imagery which takes place in Imam Ali (peace be upon him) rulings in Nahj al-Balagha, where the eloquence of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) did not pertain to one type of imagery, but rather it included sensory imagery that evokes direct perception and other mental and psychological imagery that engenders reflection and awareness.

Section One: An Invitation in Symbol and Image

One of the most important types of artistic imagery in Nahj al-Balagha is sensory and visual imagery, as Imam Ali (peace be upon him) represents abstract concepts in concrete and apparent forms which are very easy to perceive and imagine for the recipient [16]. This kind of image is a paragon of rhetorical eloquence and in it the desire to sense to feel the emotional and intellectual experience from the Imam to the recipient by the senses [18]. For example, Imam Ali describes the world as a "dream of one who is sleeping" or "plant," which does not endure, so that this visual image is an emblem of the temporality and vanity of the material world. These images, far from being mere description, bring a rich semantic field that allows for contemplation and reflection. Research has shown that among the various means of rhetoric, simile is the best vehicle for clarifying and presenting sensory scenes, and therefore it has proven to be a better tool for reinforcing and cementing the imagery in the recipient's mind, especially in a rhetorical context [16].

section Two: Visions of the Mind

Rhetorical and artistic image is not just a sensory image, instead it depicts mental and psychological aspects as well—so Imam Ali (PBUH) uses such words and structures to represent abstract ideas and complex philosophical concepts with images that are perceived by the mind and conscience [3]. Such forms of imagery are meant to evoke thought and provoke consciousness with the intention of creating interpersonal transformation and/or change of the psychologic and cognitive order of the person [5]. It is inspired by the verses of Imam Ali who had portrayed human soul in different images, for example, as the "mirror of existence" or "ship" navigating the sea of life which presented the whole idea of good and evil penetrating in human soul and the nature of inner conflicts battle of human soul [10]. These mental images manipulate the brain of the recipient greatly, magnifying meaning in his mind and encouraging him to pause to think deeply and seriously.

### Third section: Nestor Troya Sensory Loaded spacial/temporary imagery

The speech of Imam Ali (A) includes a lot of kinetic, time, and place rhetoric that attempts to give life and motion to its texts and to clarify important concepts related to being (existence), change and evolution [1]. The dynamic visualization is created in the image of life – flowing stream, or the image of death – irresistible force one cannot escape from in his description. The linkage of events to times and places adds a historical—the temporal and spatial image—reality to his discourse. One of respectful style of Imam Ali approach- evocation of the previous events (e.g. scenes from the past, etc.) or upcoming (e.g. events speech) subjects associated with a specific destination with the person concerned will can even imagine as if he/she is in the story where (s)he is present as the main character. The intertwining of time, place and movement unfolds a distinct rhetoric in these interactions that render texture and timeless value to such a text.

## Chapter Four

### The Meanings and Roles of Artistic Imagery in the Rulership of Imam Ali (peace be upon him)

This chapter presents an analytical study of the meanings and intentions of art imagery, and the ways in which the artistic image exceeds its artistic function in Imam Ali (peace be upon him) rule to apply educational, persuasive and value-based function.

#### section One: The Complementary Role of Art-Related Visuals

The imagery aspect of rhetoric is not a decoration for the text, it has a fundamental aesthetic role in attracting the recipient as well as stimulating his/her curiosity [7]. This beauty is not in and of itself, but an instrumental beauty towards greater educational goods .

The images he uses to illustrate piety, justice, or patience are not merely descriptions of these traits but are also practical imperatives to reflect these characteristics, and so, the aesthetic impact is supplementary to the educational impact [6]. This combination of aestheticism and education renders Imam Ali's rule a complete ethical academy.

Imam Ali imaginative images are effective means of persuasion and impact. Through embodying abstract meanings in pictures so vibrant and alive, the Imam is enabled to cross the border of the mind to the

conscience, thus making his reasoning so much stronger and his exhortation more captivating. While the image does not convey information literally, the recipient is invited to touch and engage with the image, thus fostering a more intimate grasp that strengthens their belief (and the attention to the call for action) [14]. For example, some scholars state that rhetorical devices, such as simile and metaphor, play a critical role in making discourse more persuasive and memorable. In addition, "figurative way of delivering sermons" plays a significant role in creating effective persuasive power [19].

### Third section: Arty Iconography in light of human and ethical principles

The aesthetic image in the ruling of Ali, peace be upon him, is beyond a literary and rhetorical dimension to become an area for the illustration of the sublime human and moral values. They are a complete manifestation of the world view of the Imam with regard to life and death, justice and injustice, humanity and its place in existence. Images countering poverty and wealth, power and impotence, life and the next are not mere fleeting/images, it is the reflection of integrated value-system aiming to create a virtuous society and a wholesome human being [12]. They have significant meanings, provoking thoughts about the true values of life while also demanding the compliance with some moral values such as justice and goodness, thus we can say, rhetoric here serves a humanitarian and moral preaching message [13].

## Conclusion

In sum, this study affirms that in the approach to rhetoric, "the aesthetics of artistic imagery in the rulings of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, are not rhetorical embellishments or fleeting rhetorical devices in the rhetoric of Ali, but rather the spirit and substance of Ali's rhetoric," in the words of Prof. The research, as we have argued, embraces the wealth of the rhetorical approach with these artistic imageries; whether they are sensory which embody abstract meanings in apparent forms, or mental and psychological which arouse the mind and spirit, or kinetic, and temporal and spatial images which provide life and movement to the discourse!! The set of images was not a terminal unto itself, but rather a highly efficient vehicle for accomplishing a number of functions. We would read about various categories and types of illustrations concerning both paperbacks and hardcovers, and how on the one hand, they aesthetically enriched the text and made it attractive and influential, and on the other hand, they executed deep pedagogical functions and instilled moral and human values in the hearts of the children's audience. It was also prominent in its persuasive and influential role in reinforcing arguments with evidence and guiding understanding. By the artistry and skillful portrayal of imagery in the style and content of his rhetoric, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, not only presented an unprecedented style of Arabic expression, a new way of engaging with the Arabic language, rather he presented a holistic world view of existence and humanity where the method of writing became a never ending and inexhaustible gravitational source for literary, rhetorical and intellectual research and discussions for centuries to come.

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