

Mirroring Attar's Poems in the Painting *Sheikh San'an and the Christian Girl of the Qajar Era* through Erwin Panofsky's Theory of Iconography

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Extended Abstract

Painting influenced by literature is one of the manifestations of the relationship between art and literature in the field of interdisciplinary research in comparative literature. The Qajar period, considering the tendency of the court towards lyrical and mystical stories, had the illustration of these concepts previously proposed. This approach can be seen in the painting "Sheikh San'an and the Daughter of Tersa" in the painting of the Qajar period as an unnumbered example, introduced at Christie's auction.

The necessity and importance of the research in terms of examining the design method, painting style, and symbolic concepts influenced by Attar's mystical literature, are worthy of study and reflect the cultural and artistic characteristics of the Qajar period. The main question of the research is as follows: How are the symbolic elements influenced by Attar's poems depicted in the painting in question, and what impact did they have on the art of painting and iconography of the Qajar court? How can it be applied to the stage of reading and studying Panofsky's image? In this study, by studying the interpretation of the Qajar painter of Attar's poems and the literary text of his poem, an attempt is made to reach the inner meaning of a work of art with the three stages of Panofsky's reading.

Research Objective

The present study aims to identify the meaning and hidden layers of the painting

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Sheikh Sanan and the Daughter of Tersi and its relationship with literature in an interdisciplinary manner. The purpose of this study is to express the comparison of the views of Attar and the painter about the moment of meeting Sheikh Sanan and the Daughter of Tersi. In proposing the different stages of the test by the Daughter of Tersi to prove Sheikh Sanan's love, the poet has proposed tests, and the painter has depicted them.

The present study is of a descriptive-analytical type and in the field of qualitative research and is based on the iconographic reading in the theory of Ervin Panofsky with the painting Sheikh Sanan and the Daughter of Tersi and its relationship with Attar's poems. The statistical population of the present study is the painting Sheikh Sanan and the Daughter of Tersi with the property number Lot289. It is at Christie's auction. Data collection was done through library methods and by using a card-taking tool and downloading the online version of the image. The purposive sampling method was selected by examining the painting of Sheikh Sanan and the Daughter of Tersi from the Qajar period and related to Attar's poems for comparison. The reason for choosing this work is the theme of the Sheikh's exams in a single image; in the present study, the painting in question is first introduced and then its themes are discussed and analyzed with Attar's poems and Erwin Panofsky's theory of iconography.

One of the essential features of Iranian painting in the centuries after the establishment of Islam is its connection with Persian literature and poetry. The painter draws inspiration from various literary themes. He depicts the characters and scenes of stories and embodies the words of the poet or writer in the language of calligraphy and color. Farid al-Din Mohammad Attar Neyshaburi (627-537 AH), an Iranian poet and mystic, included a story in the middle of a long and unique story in "Mantiq al-Tayr". This story is mystica and is related to Sheikh San'an; Sheikh San'an's Masnavi was composed by Attar in the format of 410 verses. Sheikh San'an was one of the main characters in the mystical poem Mantiq al-Tayr and the main hero of the story. Throughout his life, he was a famous elder of his era and spent about fifty years in prayer in the Kaaba, and four hundred perfect disciples learned the path of conduct from him. He performed fifty Hajj, Umrah, and Tamattu' and did not abandon any tradition of Islam and was always performing obligatory acts such

as prayer and fasting. Among his great deeds is healing the sick. However, the Sheikh suddenly had disturbing dreams for several consecutive nights in which he traveled to the city of Rome and prostrated before an idol. He traveled to Rome to discover and interpret these dreams, and there he fell in love with a girl from Tarsus.

This painting was influenced by the culture of court iconography of the Qajar period and the favorite subjects for images in the decoration of palaces of this period. In this painting, the artist consciously approached the story; was aware of the mystery and symbolism of the image and used allegorical signs to show the different parts of the Sheikh's test in the story and tried to depict different stages in the limited space of the painting. Studying this painting in accordance with the opinion of Ervin Panofsky, a student of the science of image, determines that this painting is influenced by the visual rules of the Qajar period in its external features and is influenced by mystical literature. The main characteristic of the work is that it is decorative and represents a romantic-mystical story at first glance, but it identifies the different stages of mysticism and Attar's thoughts by considering the hidden meaning in the work with concise visual symbols and shows that behind the appearance of the love story lies a mystical meaning. The story of Sheikh Sanan tells of a love to reach the secrets of the universe and the earthly love of the timid girl was a prelude to rejecting the veil from the face of submission to the everyday and material world; this earthly love was a prelude to Sheikh Sanan's inner transformation and the necessary purification of his soul to reach divine love, and earthly love reached heavenly love. The form of the painting above is cut into a chevron, which was suitable for the arrangement and decorations of palaces in this period, and the artist consciously used it for the sacredness of the altar and the sanctity of love. The elements used in the work are allegorical and all briefly and concisely depict each stage of the test. Reading the work with Panofsky's theory, it finally seems like this: in the first stage of description; the work was influenced by the appearance and appearance of the court icon painting of the Qajar period, in the second stage of analysis; with brief and concise elements, it deals with the visual narration of Attar's poem of the story and depicts earthly love, and in the third stage of interpretation, it becomes clear that the outward trace of the story shows an earthly love, but inwardly, a mystical and divine love was intended, and the romantic and material test was for the Sheikh to reach a spiritual love.

Keywords: Qajar, painting, iconography, Sheikh Sanan and Daughter Tersa, Attar, semantics; Erwin Panofsky.

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