

## Investigating Expressive Aspects in Iranian Painting (Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb)

By

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### Abstract

Shahnameh is the most valuable literary collection in the history of Iranian literature, which has always been a very effective source of the growth and prosperity of Iranian painting. As a result, Shahnameh's writing has always been at the top of the attention of kings, courtiers, and art lovers. The growth path of Iranian painting can be seen in the middle periods. Painters always tried to depict the relevant pictures with seriousness and precision based on the most important poems of the Shahnameh in terms of events and incidents. From the Ilkhanid period to the Safavid period, Iranian painting had the peak of creativity and innovation in composition, coloring, and design. The painter of these pictures has always tried to do justice to the subject to show feelings, emotions, and emotions after choosing epic poems, wars, and celebrations. The Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasab can be considered a perfect choice for examining paintings in terms of expressiveness and excitement in the path of maturity and expression of these periods. While investigating the factors of the formation of expressive aspects of painting, to understand and identifying the expressive or expressive aspects in Iranian painting, this research sought to answer the question, in which period were the most expressive elements and concepts? And basically, in which part (theme, design, or color) did the expressive features appear? Since poems related to that image have been used in these images, these images can be considered a kind of illustration of a literary text. The results got from this research showed, on the one hand, the influence of the paintings of the periods before Tabriz II in the paintings of the painters of the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb. It showed the maturity of the paintings in expression and excitement.

**Keywords:** expression - painting - Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb - Mohammad Siah Qalam

### Introduction

Although more than half a century has passed since the studies of Iranian visual art historiographers and in the continuation of those, academic studies and research have been conducted in authentic Iranian art, especially Iranian painting. But little by little, we realize the power of vision and strength of authentic Iranian painting, especially in the middle centuries. This growth and excellence in those centuries has always happened on a path full of ups and downs. There have been extensive political and military developments in this turbulent artistic path, followed by huge cultural developments. The people of Iran have shown special reactions. Although the Iranians were defeated by the Arabs in the 7th century until the Mongols in the 13th century, their seriousness and dynamism left no stone unturned in the growth and development of culture and art. Iranian painters painted based on the discovery, intuition, and manifestation of various manifestations of Hazrat Haq, which they nurtured in their imaginations based on their own beliefs (like poets). They believed in the unity of existence in the entire universe; therefore, when creating their artwork, they tried to use imaginary elements or change the real element to an imaginary one. In applying color,

they tried to create fantastic effects with the colors of gold and silver to add harmony and beauty. These painters did not draw slimes and snails before designing their works, but they created them unconsciously while performing their works. This imaginative and emotional spirit in the Iranian painter made him try to increase excitement and emotion in the audience by arranging the color palette, performing the figures, and showing the events in the painting. Therefore, his effort was to turn the natural world into an imaginary world full of emotions, which, by using allegory and mystery and creating a connection and continuity between these two spaces, made the dimension of the divine and transcendental world more tangible for the audience. Carefully, in the middle periods of Iranian painting, it is thought that from the school of Baghdad to even the students of Behzad in the school of Tabriz, they all reached a consensus that the direction of movement in Iranian painting should always be forward, and progressive, and they should be diligent in creating new methods. Therefore, following this lofty theory and firm belief, we find that the foundation, characteristics, and parameters of the past painting are such that when we analyze it, we see consistency, complexity, and rich beauty as if we are watching the future. Expressionist artists try to depict internal pressure and the necessity of expressing different emotions in different subjects with design, color, or both. Emotions in different genres, such as violence, horror, arrogance, sadness, laughter, or screams, with a deep look, create conditions so that the audience receives the desired feeling better and deeper through extremes and changes in the elements. As a result, the artist consciously or unconsciously sacrifices the visual and visual elements of the work as a sacrifice to the outline and bold colors. In this article, while examining the ideas and goals of expressionist painters, which are directed towards human and human worlds, an attempt is made to understand the fundamental commonalities in the works of painters of the middle periods of Iran with expressionist painters. The depth of the expressive look that these painters had in their works, whether intentional or influenced by the conditions and events of that time, should be analyzed and criticized in expression in the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb.

## **Research Literature**

### ***Definition of Painting***

"Illustration means writing, depicting, drawing, and painting. Illustration usually refers to a set of arts related to books, such as illustration, gilding, poetry, and even arts independent of books, such as calligraphy, etc." (Yaqub Agand, 2015: p. 22). "Regarding the origin of the art of painting, it should be said: the fine art of painting, which has decorative features and has been popular in the Near East for a long time, is called the art of painting. But painting in Iran is an art that existed in this land from the distant past until the Islamic era and was usually used to illustrate scientific, medical, religious, and especially literary books. (Yosef Ishaqpour, 2010: 10)

### ***Painting Schools of the Safavid Period***

#### **• *The School Of Tabriz***

One characteristic and distinctions of Tabriz painters in this period is that, following Behzad's tradition, they had a great interest in depicting everyday life. He draws the world around him in small-sized pictures, but the common thing with his previous periods is that he still doesn't see perspective and clear shadows. (Roin Pakbaz: 91 to 93)

The good thing about Behzad coming to Tabriz was that, besides being the head of the library and bookmaking workshop, he could create good students who, of course, should be

part of the Tabriz school. Mr. Mirek and Sheikhzadeh were among the prominent painters of this period who presented precious and luxurious works in a way worthy of special appreciation and respect in the past and present. A special feature of Mirek's paintings is the precision and elegance in the arrangement and execution of plants and motifs of clothes and motifs, which show its characteristics compared to other contemporaries. Although in painting the figures and characters, you are free from Behzad's way of working.

Sultan Muhammad was among the other successful painters of this period, who had a special mastery in painting horses and saddles and covering saddles and figures, and also took a successful step in characterizing the figures. (Arthur Iham Pope, p. 106)



*Meraj Prophet, Sultan Muhammad, Khamsa Shahi, Tabriz, British Library, London*

Another painter is Mozafarali, some of whose works have a special affinity with the works of Sultan Ali. In his works, performing the figures compared to those of Sheikhzadeh, Agha Mirek, or Sultan Mohammad, has reached a high level of emotion, expression, and expression. Mir Seyed Ali, also one painter of this period, is the son of Mir Naqash. He prepared the great edition of Hamza Namah, which Humayun launched. The hunting scene of the Khanom Miogens collection, which is assigned to him, and the exciting and emotional pages of Hamza Nameh, some of which he executed personally, show that he had a definite role in showing excitement and feeling in creating paintings. (Ibid.: 115)

Besides figures adorned with turbans, painters of the second Tabriz period paid great attention to balance and the use of bright and diverse colors in their compositions. They also paid attention to the details of landscaping and interior architecture because of the space's complexity, subject, and figures' various states. Therefore, as you can see in most of the paintings of this period, in some places, the space even protrudes from the mainframe, and paying special attention to Safavi's long complex dresses and gowns is one feature that add to this complexity and density in the composition. (Mortaza Guderzi: 52 to 55)

The painters of this period have drawn many portraits of kings and princes, poets and women, which they have exaggerated in their depiction to make them seem ideal. Therefore, to praise this dynasty as much as possible, they spend the utmost precision and elegance in



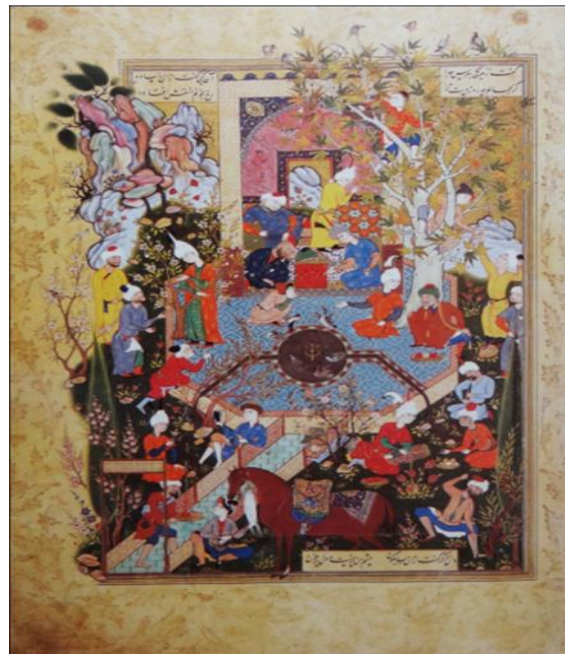
the expressions of the faces. (Mehran Hoshiar and Reza Mir Mobin, Sociological Analysis of Tabriz II, Fall 2021, p. 8)



*Key Khosro kills Afrasiab under the pretext of Siavash's blood, Abdul Aziz, Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasbi, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts*

• **Mashhad School**

During the Safavid era, the Mashhad school was the last court art established under Ibrahim Mirza's patronage in Khorasan.



*A father's advice to his son about love, Haft Orang, an unknown artist, Mashhad school*

In the works of this period, such as *Haft Orang Jami*, the design style reaches its peak of spirituality and innocence. Color accents and varied and wavy rhythm of white lines and spots have given the scene a lively mood, but the merit of the Mashhad school is because it was transformed based on the visual artistic achievements of Tabriz regarding landscapes. Paintings now do not show the background or facade of the building. Their level is completely used to show people's wide space and field of action.



*Hazrat Yusuf and setting up a magnificent wedding celebration, Haft Orang, Mashhad school*

In these pictures, the painter is trying to show his inner self by exaggerating the figures with an expressive approach, so the painter changes the youthful figures' faces, beards, and bodies. Young people are slender with long necks, elongated faces, and dimpled chins, and the faces of middle-aged and older adults with beards and gray and fawn-colored hair are closer to nature than imaginary young people. The artists of this school used muted colors because of the atmosphere in the community, and the semi-desert nature of Khorasan also significantly affected the colors' maturity and muteness. However, the precision and skill of the artists of this period are such that it creates a magnificent and luxurious atmosphere. This issue is also clear in creating these works, in a way that has given it a rather pretentious state. (Hosseini, 2014: 24)

The paintings of this period are relatively less personable. In this period, paying attention to the movements of everyday life of ordinary people, which was started by Master Kamaluddin Behzad and reached excellence by Mir Seyyed Ali, is of the first importance, especially in these works of the Mashhad school; much attention is paid to the nomadic life, including the life of shepherds. This has given a calm and acceptable atmosphere to the works of this type. Some paintings in this school have complex and strange features that are accompanied by flashy compositions and steal the viewer's attention from the principal subject. The artist has been trying hard to create illusory pictures. (Yaqub Agand, 1998: 392)

Regarding people's faces, it should be said that they were mostly Mongolian and were executed in half-faces and three-faces. Contrary to what was expressed in the figure's exaggeration, people's faces do not express specific feelings and emotions. (Shakiba Ahmadi, 2019)



***Qazvin School***

"The Qazvin school covers the period from transferring the capital to Qazvin by Shah Tahmasab until transferring the capital to Isfahan by Shah Abbas." (Soltanzadeh, 2008: 34)

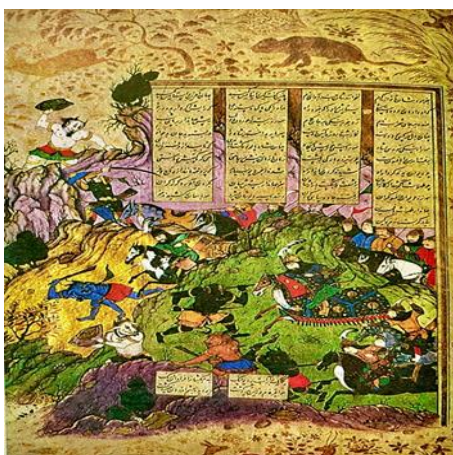
The Qazvin school continued throughout Shah Tahmasab's stay in power and his son Shah Ismail II's accession to the throne. With the cessation of government support for artists, changes took place in the art of painting, which paved the way for the emergence of the Isfahan school.

Apart from the school of Herat, Tabriz, and other schools, the Qazvin school of painting has characteristics that distinguish it from other styles. For example, the speed of creating an effect reduced the attention to color and the strength of the design and linear elements in the picture.



*A leaf from the Shahnameh, Soltani cut, Qazvin school, unknown artist, 1000 AD*

In this school, the most interesting thing for painters is the delicate bodies of young people, dervishes, and farmers, whose faces are often depicted in a three-sided manner, and full-faced faces are never seen in the work of Qazvin style painters, and no human is depicted from behind.



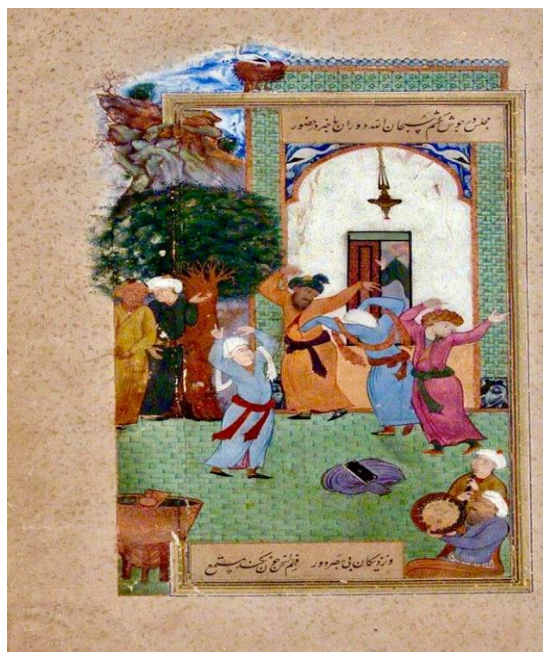
*War of Tahmowth with Diwan, Shahnameh of Shah Abbasi, Reza Abbasi, Qazvin, Chesterbiti Library*

In the works of the Qazvin school, the effects of Western painting can be seen because of the familiarity of Iranian painters with Western painting. There are natural subjects in the works of this school. The intensity of decorations and details was reduced, and the images of nature and princes were depicted more. Single faces became very popular. "The subjects were mostly chosen from ordinary people, and luxurious clothes are not seen in the paintings, and the clothes of women and men are not much different in the paintings" (Latfi, 2018: 32).

• *Isfahan School*

"The last school of painting during the Safavid era is the Isfahan school of painting, which was established after transferring the capital to Isfahan by Shah Abbas Kabir. The beginning of the Isfahan school of painting is attributed to the end of 997 AH. But this type of attitude started at least ten years ago. "Most of the work of the painters of this period was to depict the traditional life of the people and courtiers and to depict people wearing luxurious clothes, and it is also that the style of drawing in the way of penmanship is of particular importance." (Mehdi Hosseini et al., 2015: 30)

In the Isfahan school, because of the artists' efforts and excessive attention to single-faced paintings, painting in the old style, in which many human figures are working, is falling from prosperity. In bookmaking, close cooperation with the arts is gradually decreasing. The images force themselves to the margins more clearly than before. The gilding of the books is often superficial and superficial, the colors are sometimes of average quality, and the pictures with figures are entirely normal and lack any glory.



*Dervish dance, a leaf from Golestan Saadi, 11th century, unknown artist, Isfahan*

In this period, the influence of European art on Iranian painting becomes more visible, the painting of single figures, shadowing, observing perspective, and color and oil paintings are among the influences of European art. Like his good friends, Shah Abbas did not hesitate in ordering a magnificent edition of the Shahnameh... In the beautiful illustrations of this edition, one can see the masterpieces of the veteran master Sadeghi Beyk and the magnificent



compositions of Reza Javan. The Shahnameh of Shah Abbas is available in the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library. Shah Abbas ordered it in 1019 AH, containing forty-four-leaf illustrations. Among the followers of Reza Abbasi, the most famous are Moin Moswar, Muhammad Qasim, Mohammad Yusuf, and Mohammad Ali. Afzal Hosseini is one of the famous painters of these days, whose independent paintings have a powerful expression in romantic issues and decadent tendencies of the times. Mohammad Moin Mosev is one of the most talented students of Reza Abbasi and is one of the last traditional artists of the Isfahan school. Although most of his contemporary artists, such as Mohammad Zaman and Alikli Jebedar, were strongly influenced by European art, he protected his works from the influence of European art because of the special respect he had for his master's tradition.



*Razm Kavus with Shah Hamavaran, a leaf from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, 11th century, Oxford University - Ashmoulin Museum*



*A monkey riding a lion, illustrated by Moin Moser, Isfahan, 1116, Smithsonian Museum*

One of the artistic phenomena of this period is the tendency to show strange things, which sometimes even leads to caricature, which gives a unique aspect to Iranian art. For



example, a dervish with a monkey-like face or many such cases with other subjects are examples of the interest of painters in this period to represent more social issues expressively and show emotions in the execution of works. (Manli Mirquaid, 2013: 7)

Another characteristic of the painting of this period is the avoidance of images with subjects and stories, and more emphasis on imaginative and personal themes. (Atfe Nikko, Frank Jahangard, 2015)

The title "Expressionism" was used in 1911 to distinguish a large group of painters who, in the first decade of the 20th century, based their work on the representation of intense emotional states and rebellion against the oppressive and hypocritical systems of the governments, and the inhuman regulations of the factories, and the infection of cities and communities. To achieve their goals, these artists created harsh and alarming colors, repeated and excited brushstrokes, and distorted shapes out of the frame with a deep view, far from order and order, and they left everything that was soothing, eye-catching, and balanced out of their work scene. Thus, between 1905 and 1913, the school of expressionism with a special understanding of the special art of Vincent van Gogh and led by painters such as Kokoshka, Emil Nolde, and Kirchner was born in the city of Dresden under the name of the "Bridge Group." (Amirkhani, 2008: 8) Expressionism is the name of an art school. Expressionism is a new way of visual expression in which the artist uses sharp colors, crooked shapes, and rough lines to induce his intense emotions. The formation period of this school was from around 1910 to 1935 AD, but this method has been associated with visual arts since the distant past. It has been manifested in various forms in different periods. For example, the Tabriz school in Iranian painting and the Song school in Chinese art are called expressionists in the art of Iran and China. Expressionism as a stylistic description of modern art is usually defined to describe certain artistic movements in Germany and divided into two major groups: The bridge and the blue rider are divided." (Rezaei, 2018: 16)

### *Iranian Expressionist Artists*

#### • *Mohammad Siah Qalam*

Mohammad Siah Qalam (according to the narration of Mohammad Ghiyathuddin Naqash) is a famous and unknown artist of the second half of the 9th century of Hijri or the Timurid period. Siah Qalam's life and works are still shrouded in mystery after a long time, and researchers still haven't found his true identity after a long time. Siah Qalam is a nickname that was given to his paintings later, and the reason for that is the dark color that can be seen in his works. It is impossible to say anything accurate about the identity of Mohammad Siah Qalam. Still, his works are so unique that they have occupied the minds of the audience and researchers for a long time.

#### • *Ahmad Amin Nazar*

Ahmad Amin Nazar's view of Iranian painting art, especially the designs of Mohammad Siah Qalam and Reza Abbasi, is clear in the works of this artist. The grotesque world of Mohammad Siah Qalam and the designs of Reza Abbasi, which are not based on book illustrations, along with the trend towards Chinese painting, seek to show emotions and feelings that were rare in Iranian painting. The same expressive expression in Amin Nazar's powerful penmanship has become a tool for expressing the state of contemporary man in his works. Jalal Sattari, a prominent writer and researcher, writes: "Each of Amin Nazar's works should be watched carefully so that all the subtleties and details carved with a solid pen can be seen, and it is especially important that how can an artist who has a fluid and dynamic

mind and a capable hand create a new design with the authority of elements from the heritage of his land."

• ***Bahman Mohasses***

The name Bahman Mohasses is tied to Iranian expressionism. He was an artist who could never live passively away from society and events. He saw the pain, suffered and suffered and painted, and finally died in a hotel in Rome in ignorance and seclusion. Mohassas traveled to Europe in 1944, settled in Italy, and studied art with Ferruccio Frazzi at the Academy of Art in Rome. This period of life resulted in several groups and individual exhibitions in and outside Sao Paulo and Paris. In 1953, Bahman Mohasses returned to Iran, hoping to start a new movement in his country's art and took part in several exhibitions and conferences. The valuable works of this painter and sculptor are mostly kept in Italy, America, and Iran. Sadness, sadness, and loneliness can be considered the dominant feelings and emotions that embassies tried to show in his works of contemporary man.

• ***Hannibal Alkhas***

The figurative paintings of Hannibal Alkhas form an important part of the experience of modern Iranian art. This artist of Assyrian origin, during his artistic life, could mix the narration of Iranian art with mythological allegories, and by using the religious atmospheres of El Greco and the expressionism of Marc Chagall, he formed a style that is completely personal and Iranian and modern.

***Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb***

"One characteristic of the Shahnameh is that by carefully examining its illustrations, one can understand the growth and evolution of the art of painting in the Safavid period because the greatest painters of this period took part in creating this Shahnameh. The Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb was completed at the end of Shah Ismail Safavi's life and within twenty years. The peak of creativity and innovation can be seen in the work style of famous masters of this period in the paintings of this Shahnameh. A group of painters, calligraphers, and gilders of that time in the Tabriz library worked hard to prepare this manuscript, which Sultan Muhammad probably supervised for twenty years. This Shahnameh comprises 258 paintings of the highest quality in calligraphy and writing. (Shad Qazvini, 1993)

"Each page of the Shahnameh has its composition based on the verses written in it. The important feature of Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasabi is one-handedness and coordination of performance in the performance taste, which shows the adherence to the performing traditions of the Tabriz school in all its artists. Also, integrating the vertical and horizontal system in the layout grid and the periodic geometric system in the composition of the elements has given the pictures their special excitement." (Qassimi, 2018)

***Illustrations of the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb***

Tahmasabi's Shahnameh is a great art gallery where you can see the evolution and development of Safavid painting art. One part of these pictures is the emotional presence of Ferdowsi's poems in different parts of the pictures, which can be considered a comprehensive description related to that picture. The verse closest to the image is exactly the verse that describes the scene's event, which is the so-called illustrated verse. These poems give the audience the harmony of verbal and visual elements beautifully. Many of the pictures in the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb include epic and war scenes, where the painter used a variety of cold and warm color palettes for the soldiers' clothes. These scenes are mostly drawn at the height of excitement, emotion, and poetry. Scenes of soldiers fighting, headless and lifeless

figures of soldiers, demons, and wild animals are placed in the central part of the picture, which shows the painter's great attention to the emotional aspect of the main subject of the poem.

"In the paintings related to battle and war scenes, hills with cold spectrum colors can be seen in the middle or upper half of the image, which shows the introduction of Chinese elements." (Mortazavi, 1400)

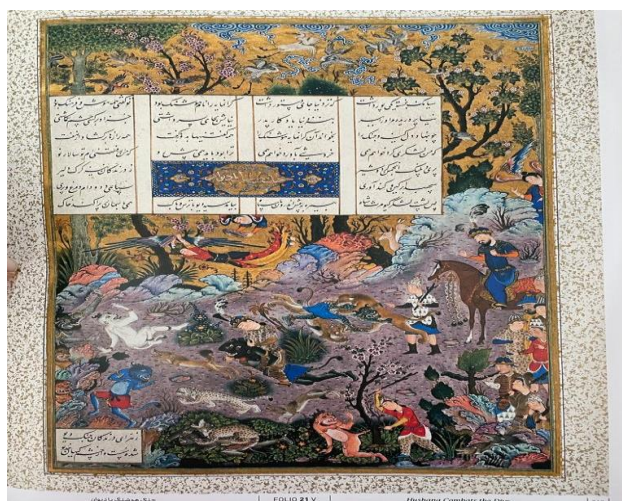
The presence of women in the pictures is seen in the interior of the mansions, and their absence in the pictures of the battle and bloodshed shows the painter's tenderness and hookah and the gentle spirit of the painting.

"In the scenes of war and battles, you can see scenes that use bright colors that increase the emotional load of the picture. A part of the 13th verse of Surah Saf (Nasr Man Allah and Fatah Qarib) is engraved on these pictures, which are Shiite symbols of this Shahnameh. Another important factor in many paintings (ceremonies and battle scenes) is the crowding of the figures, which are drawn to emphasize the excitement and movement of the scene. The limited living conditions of the women and children of the court are quite noticeable in the way they are placed and composed on the roofs and behind the windows. (Shaistefar, 2013)

### *Analysis of Shahnameh's Paintings*

#### **• Hushang War with Diwan**

According to Shahnameh, Kiyomarth was the first human and the first king. His reign is golden for the peace and reconciliation of all animals and humans. Until the golden age came and the first grudges formed in Ahriman's heart, and he became jealous of Kiyomarth. Ahriman had a wolf-like child with a large body, organized a large army, and thought of attacking Hushang. Siamak was the son of Keumerth, who was the reason for his father's peace. When he realized Ahriman's thoughts, he prepared an army of humans and other creatures and went to fight against Ahriman's wolf-like son. Unfortunately, Ahriman threw Siamak to the ground with his claws and killed him. The first person who sought revenge was Hoshang, the son of Siamak, who, when he reached his greatness and power, prepared an army of humans, fairies, and other creatures and rushed to the demonic war that this time luck was with Hoshang. He ran like a lion against a black demon and tore his father's blood off his head.





**Analysis of the Picture:**

The atmosphere of the war and conflict with the Houshang Corps and the demons, which resulted from the demons' jealousy, can be well felt in the painting's atmosphere. The dominant space of the lower half of the picture, which is the ground scene and the conflict, is full of purple and blue colors, which can be fully felt by the painter's intention in choosing this color to induce a sense of negative space. This choice conveys a sense of campaign and war atmosphere to the audience. In the upper half of the picture, we see heartwarming scenes of a heaven-like atmosphere with warm and exciting colors, which shows the deliberateness of the painter in creating a contrasting color space. The presence of demons with contrasting colors of black, white, red, and blue, along with the grotesque design of their faces, inspires excitement in the viewer. The general atmosphere of the painting is a combination of warm and cold colors. The conflict and the campaign's atmosphere in the lower part of the image, which is formed with cold colors, is placed in front of the warm colors of the magnificent trees and angels and birds in the upper part of the image. The painter of this painting intended to convey the news of the victory of the good army (Hoshang) over the evil army (Divan) to the audience. The greenness and freshness of the color in the leaves of the trees, as well as the background of the upper part of the picture compared to the short and dull trees of the lower part, along with the effort and excitement seen in the birds, seems to be intended to induce a happy feeling of the sweet end of this battle.

**• Tahmurth's Victory over Diwan**

After Hoshang went to the demonic war and finally defeated the black demon, he reigned under the command of Yazdan and tried to improve the world. But Hoshang also finally had his time and said goodbye to the world, and his smart son Tahmurt sat on the royal throne in his place. According to the stories of the Shahnameh, when Tahmurt became the king, he promised to cleanse the world of evil and cut off the hands of demons everywhere. Even though he had been defeated several times, the bad-tempered demon did not give up his grudge and was always trying to destroy happiness and comfort and plague plants and animals. Tahmurth thought of a solution, entrusted the work to his knowledgeable and benevolent guide, "Shidasab," and finally captured Ahriman with a spell, rode him for 30 years, and rode around the earth on Ahriman. When Divan saw this situation, they were looking for a plan to take the throne from him. When Tahmurth learned about their plan, he got angry, fought them, put two-thirds of them under a spell, broke the other third with heavy maces, and threw them on the ground.

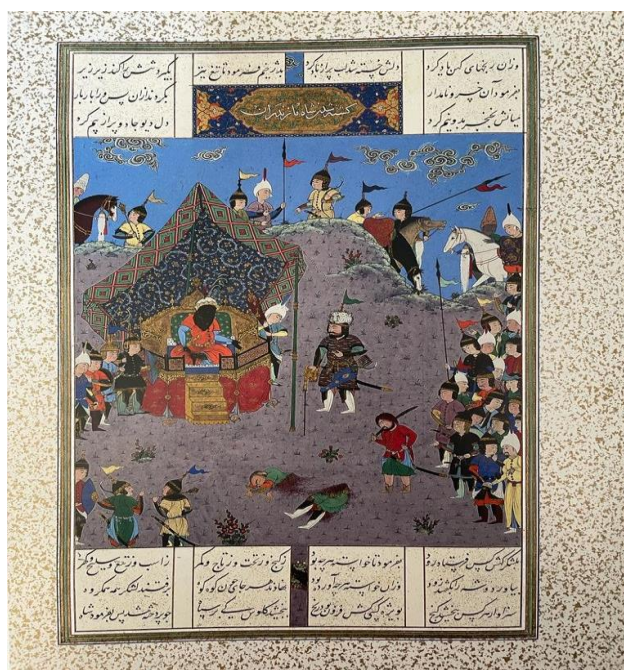


**Analysis of the Picture:**

A fight scene is depicted in a vertical frame, and the lyrics are placed in the lower part and slightly on the upper right side of the image. The background image can comprise two parts. The main part of the foreground is gray, which includes most of the background, and the second part is golden, which is in the background. The main part of the fight, which is in the center of the picture, is centered on Thamworth riding a horse, Thamworth holding a heavy mace in his hand, and beating on the head of a black demon. The painter of this picture has tried to show the face of Divan as scary and full of terror. Divan's standing, sitting, or lying figures show their fear and terror of Tahmurth's troops. On the right side of this scene, it shows some cavalymen from the Tahmurth Corps wearing clothes composed of dark blue, red, and brown colors, which show that the expressions of the faces are taken from Chinese paintings. The black demon, with a wounded state and a face full of terror, sees himself under the heavy mace of Tahmurth, and the expression of his eyes shows the fierce blow of the mace, which the painter conveys this feeling well to the viewer. In another part, a white demon lies on the ground and hides his face in fear behind his hands. One of the interesting points of this painting and some other paintings is the figure of demons because, like the painters of the Abbasid school, they are drawn short with an enormous head, which is reminiscent of a kind of expression. The rich colors used to cover the figures of soldiers and horses, in contrast to the cold and lifeless colors of the demons, can represent the contrast between evil and malice versus purity and innocence. Another noteworthy point is that cold colors, such as gray, are used in the foreground of this fight, while warm colors are used in the second background.

**• The Death of Shah Mazandaran**

After the war between the army of Iyan and the army of Mazandaran, Rostam brought himself close to the Shah of Mazandaran; without delay, the king chanted magic and turned himself into a stone slab. No one had the strength and arm to lift that slab except Rostam. Rostam brought the petrified Shah to King Kikavus of Iran and threatened him to finish the magic or else he will cut the stone into pieces with a blade and an ax. The Shah of Mazandaran got scared and returned to his original state, and the Shah of Iran ordered him to kill him.



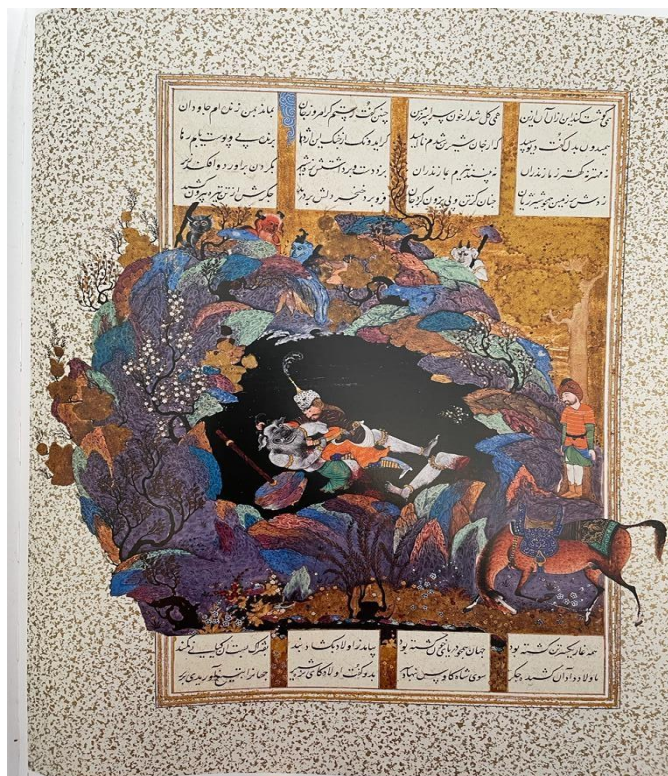


**Analysis of the Picture:**

In this picture, there is a relative balance between the elements, and few roles and elements are used. Like many scenes of war, fighting, and killing, the background of the picture is gray with a slight purple tint. Iranian painters usually kept the background of their works as simple as possible and are full of neutral colors to convey the expressive and expressionistic part of their works. In this way, the intense colors of red, green, orange, and blue can be seen more clearly in the clothes of the involved figures. Therefore, the painter has showed his sensitivity to the audience with the special arrangement of colors in clothes, aprons, and other elements, as well as the use of motifs and decorations of the Keykavus stand. This picture, one of the bloodiest and the most expressionistic pictures of the Shahnameh, is not an exception to this rule. The half-cut figure of Shah Mazandaran with white boots and green clothes, and red sleeves, shows the most expressiveness in the purple-gray background. This is the main desire of the painter of this painting to strengthen the expressionist part of his work.

**• Seventh Labor: Killing Rostam, the White Demon**

As we know from Seventh Labor, when Rostam entered Haftkoh's cave to kill the white demon, he saw darkness like hell. When his eyes got used to the darkness, he growled and woke up the demon. The demon took the millstone and went to Rostam, and Rostam cut one of the demon's hands and one leg with a blade, and he was gloved with him. The ground was covered with blood. Finally, Rostam lifted the demon by the neck and hit it on the ground, and he died. So he plunged the dagger and took out his liver.



**Analysis of the Picture:**

This picture is placed in a vertical frame, the upper and lower parts assigned to two equal tables of poems related to this picture. The background of this picture is composed of two completely different parts in terms of color usage. Only one black color is used in the middle part, where the main subject of the painting is located, and the outer part uses various colors. In this picture, like many other pictures where the painters drew a specific pattern for



themselves, Rostam's fight with the demon was performed in a colorless frame (neutral or dark) without the slightest stain. In terms of intensification of excitement and sense of expression, the painter fills this space with a density of color and crowd. This technique helps the painter convey these two characters' conflict and expressionistic situation to the audience.

With a beautiful and exciting arrangement of mostly purple, blue, and orange colors, it conveys the feeling of joy and happiness resulting from Rostam's victory over the White Devil to the audience. The blood-red stains on the demon's clothes, the chaotic state of the demon, and the demon's severed leg. Finally, the face full of fear of other demons behind the rocks can be the artist's best effort to move the picture forward to create a sense of fear and terror in the audience.

• **Getting Caught and Killed by Faramarz**

When Afrasiab ordered an attack on the Iranian troops, he sent an army with 30,000 soldiers under the command of his son, Sorkha. When Sorkha faced Faramarz (Rostam's son), Faramarz galloped toward him with a spear. Sorkha felt he could not compete with Faramarz, so he retreated with the help of his troops. Faramarz rushed after him and threw him from the horse to the ground. He took him to his father Rostam, wrapped in a coat, along with the bodies of the killed. Rostam ordered Tus to take away the hot pot and put his head in the pan like siavash. Sorekha started crying and begging Tus, but it was no use.



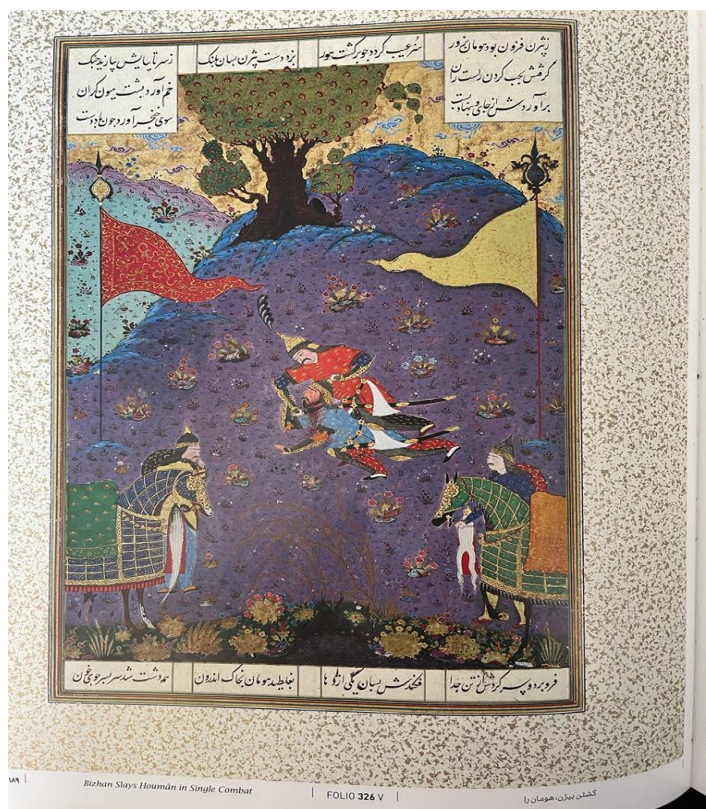
**Analysis of the Picture:**

The artist has depicted this battle in a vertical frame, and the poems' inscriptions are in the upper and lower parts of the painting. The main scene of the battle between the two armies takes up most of the space in this picture. The picture comprises two parts: the part is related to the purple-gray hill, which includes the battle scene that contains most of the figures, and the second part is the blue sky on top of this hill. The most important part of the

picture is the middle part, which contains the dead bodies of Red Army soldiers. The severed heads and the blood coming out of them, the bodies split in half, and the dark red color of their blood are the height of the painter's excitement and emotion, which he tried to convey to the audience. The painter has even selected warm colors for these figures; the orange and red colors in their clothes have doubled the excitement of the painting.

• ***Killing Bijan Homan***

Homan took part with all his brothers in the war of twelve sides. After the confrontation between the two armies, neither side made any advance for several days. In the end, the patience of the names of Avaran was exhausted until the war broke out hand-to-hand. First, the names of Iran and Turan were Bijan and Homan, who fought a duel far from the camp. The outcome of the battle was Homan's defeat and his death.



***Analysis of the Picture:***

This fight is painted in a vertical frame. This painting has reserved a little space for the table and the inscription poem. The background of this image comprises 3 hills with three colors purple, turquoise, and cream. Most space in the image is allocated to the purple part of the background, which contains all four figures of this image. The painter of this painting has tried his best to show the excitement and joy caused by the victory of Bijan and the Iranian army over the Turan army. A very good arrangement of warm and cold colors can be seen in this picture. The green, red, purple, blue, cream, and gold colors in this picture inspire a heartwarming and exciting audience feeling. The important part of the story is in the lower half of the picture. Bijan, wearing an exciting orange dress, stands behind Homan's figure (in a cold, pale blue dress). The artist of this picture has tried to convey the utmost horror and excitement to the audience with a dagger in Bijan's hand and showing Homan's cut-throat and blood-gushing.



## Discussion And Conclusion

Despite the existence of a lyrical and poetic atmosphere, which is the inevitable result of their influence from the poems of great Iranian poets, Iranian paintings have expressive and expressionistic features that may seem far-fetched at first glance. By carefully examining and scrutinizing these paintings, expressionistic signs can be recovered in the design field and in the way of using color. In this thesis, the results got result from the analysis of the characteristics of different periods of Iranian painting and western expressionist painting in the second and third chapters, which is a suitable introduction to analyze and analyze the selected paintings from the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb in expression in the fourth chapter. The second and third chapters clarify that the western expressionist artist shows his subject in a more scientific way in the painting. Still, the Iranian painter has more mystical and human aspects in mind.

The similarity that both painters have is that they do not believe in the exact representation of nature. Both try to create imaginative, emotional, and spiritual effects in different genres by changing the shape and color of objects and nature. Getting to know the characteristics of painting in different periods and continuing to know the elements and parameters of expressionist painting in the West provided a good background. In the fourth chapter, he analyzed and examined the characteristics of expressiveness and sensationalism in the paintings of Shah Tahmasb, with a more detailed look outside the lyrical aspects, at the heart of the paintings. This treatise analyzes and criticizes Majalisi's illustrations from the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb in expression. By examining the country's conditions during that period, it can be seen that this Shahnameh was an example of the political and social conditions of the Safavid era, which was made in the shadow of great artists. The most important factor in this Shahnameh's growth and excellence is the experience, design, and coloring techniques of its master artists, who have achieved this excellence by receiving valuable teachings from the painting greats of previous eras, especially Behzad. At first, if we take a more general look at the Safavid era painting, its body was formed by painters who resulted from great experiences from the Herat school. This synergy and the spirit of creativity and innovation in them caused them to have the least influence on Chinese and Mongolian art. Finally, especially differently, they created paintings that present to the audience a space full of expressiveness and expressiveness with their special compositions, unconventional forms, and strong colors. The analysis and investigation that was done in the second chapter for the characteristics of paintings in different periods of the painting clearly show that Iranian painting in its middle periods (especially in Herat and Tabriz II schools) in terms of creativity and innovation and also the creation of expressive scenes has been at the highest level of perfection. This spirit helped the painter to depict scenes full of difficult and important events well. Our country has seen continuous attacks and wars from the Seljuk period until the Safavid period, especially from neighboring countries. These conditions put artists' and painters' biological and even artistic situations under its radius. The impact of these conditions on the spirit of painters, on the one hand, and the great desire and enthusiasm of the kings of these periods to depict the killings, wars, battles, and epics of the Shahnameh added to the growth and strength of the emotional and expressive aspects of the paintings. The painters of these paintings were trying to attract the attention and support of their main audience (kings). First, they should choose a theme from the Shahnameh poems that is closer to the scenes of war, fighting, celebration, and stomping, so that it can have more maneuverability in terms of the theme to implement the expressiveness of the image. Second, in the execution of paintings, they tried to design portraits and human figures, demons, and even scenes full of sadness and horror, full of excitement, sadness, terror, joy, etc. third, it is



easy to see that the painter has deliberately tried to increase the expressive aspect of the painting by choosing his color palette for the clothes and creating an atmosphere of contrast.

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