

Analyzing the Symbolic Motif of Gol-va-Morgh According to Gilbert's Mythological Method and with Artistic Samples from the Safavid to Qajar Periods

Abstract

The essence of Islamic arts is painting and the motif of Gol-va Morgh (flower and the bird) plays a small part in the realm of Iranian-Islamic arts and crafts. This feature is derived from the worldview and ideology of Islam and the origin of its artistic creativity has a pre-textual system of representation. The story of the Gol-va Morgh can be analyzed with the method of Panofsky's iconology. Nonetheless, here we are faced with a theme that does not evidently deal with a specific story or event. Therefore, in this step, the analysis of the content of the work should be completed in a methodical and systematic manner, thus, in the present article, Gilbert Doran's mythology method is applied by the author. The findings of the research indicate that the roots of Gol-va Morgh can be found in archetypes, mythology and mystical-romantic literature of Iran. In the repeated encounter of the Gol-va Morgh, a cycle that continuously creates and elevates can be distinguished. In every presence of this motif, a power or force that leads to a new creation is identified; subsequently, the archetypal theme of the Gol-va Morgh is the phenomenon of "new creation".

Research objectives:

١. Scrutinizing the symbolic motif of Gol-va Morgh according to Gilbert's mythology.
٢. Examining the symbolic role of Gol-va Morgh in the Safavid to Qajar period.

Research questions:

١. How is the symbolic motif of Gol-va Morgh presented according to Gilbert's mythology?
٢. How is the motif of Gol-va Morgh presented in the art of the Safavid to Qajar periods?

Keywords: narration, motif of Gol-va Morgh, mythology, Safavid and Qajar eras.

Introduction

The essence of Islamic arts is painting and the motif of Gol-va Morgh (flower and the bird) plays a small part in the realm of Iranian-Islamic arts and crafts. This indicator is derived from the worldview and ideology of the Islamic religion; moreover, the derivation of its artistic creativity has a pre-textual system of representation and its roots can be traced in the archetypes, mythology and mystical-romantic literature of Iran. From the Qajar period onwards, the interpretation of flowers, lovers and lovebirds is based on metaphorical literature. In this process, objects give shape to a meaning by imitating nature in a natural or oriental way, or they imitate nature exactly and call it western and realism. In the meantime, the influence of the Song school and the rule of several centuries of the Mongols on Iran was and still is not without influence. The traces of Chinese art in the form of patterns, paintings, motifs and oriental themes can be observed in the plateau of Iran during many centuries and the historical periods of the Ilkhanid, Timurid and Safavid rules; thus, it is considered as the source of the original Gol-va Morgh motifs. Consequently, in the compilation of the book "Manifal al-Haiwan", "Ajayib-ul-Makhluqat", "Varqa" and "Golshah" and several other famous and written works remaining from the time, traces of the spoken motif with its oriental origin can be detected. The audience's encounter with a multitude of the "Gol-va Morgh" patterns works with the type of meaning-oriented or form-oriented view of Iranian painting made the writer to study the theme and motif of such works from basic principal; thus, the writer followed the pre-texts of the beginning and creation of the work and finally understood its features. Without derivation for the fundamental questions in the field of creation, understanding and criticism of lasting works of art in the style of Gol-va Morgh, even with the selection many descriptive and purely historical data, a suitable answer cannot be obtained. Some artists prefer the field of action to the field of opinion, but then again, if any enthusiast of such fields is asked to give a brief explanation about Gol-va Morgh motif, what will they respond? Remaining away from analysis and being close to the description of every work of art means being on the slope of decline and death of the work of art; Mirfendersky mentions this issue in his treatise on the decline of art. A methodical and systematic description and analysis of each work of art will be useful for admirers.

Research history shows that so far no independent work with this title has been published so far. However, several works have investigated the role of Gol-va Morgh motif in the Safavid and Qajar

periods. Jahanbakhsh and Sheikhi (۲۰۱۵) in an article entitled "Research on the role of Gol-va Morgh and its use in traditional arts of Iran (Zandiyeh and Qajar period)" investigates this motif and indicates that the painters took a role model in this representation of nature. Panjeh Bashi (۲۰۱۵) in an article entitled "Analytical and comparative study of the motif of Morgh (bird) in Lotfali Mirzaei's Gol-va Morgh paintings" has studied the mentioned motif as a case study in a specific historical period. In the mentioned works, the topic of the current research has not been directly addressed; and so, the authors intend to investigate this issue in a descriptive and analytical way while relying on the data of library sources.

Conclusion

The results of these studies are analyzed in such a way that since humans, birds and trees can be considered as representatives of the three main living creatures, they can be reflected as representatives of all living things in the world. In the meantime, the mutual relationship between man and tree from a physical point of view represents the shared affiliation between the underground and the earth, and similarly the mutual relationship between man and the bird finally leads to the combination of the two archetypes in question; the archetype of man and tree, and the archetype of man and bird, with a realistic approach, both representing all human creatures and the entire world. In the next stage, by combining the theme of the archetype of man and tree, which means creation, and the theme of the archetype of man and bird, which means ascension, it indicates a rising arc that includes human life from the beginning to the end, this arc covers the whole world and all creatures. In fact, the archetype of the bird and the tree is based on the mutual relationship between these two components, by following the continuity of the mentioned reciprocal association, the explanation of the exact content of the archetype in question is facilitated and accelerated; in such a way that a creation takes place near the tree, and the resulting bird elevates the creation to the highest level of its essence, and this is constantly repeated. Whenever the Simorgh rises from the tree of life, a thousand branches grow from the tree, and every time it sits on the tree, a thousand branches will break and the seeds of all plants will be scattered; moreover, in religious traditions, every time Gabriel rises from the Sedra al-Mantahi tree and a new modesty is conveyed to a prophet, and whenever he sits on the tree, it means that another ascension has occurred. This is how the repeated encounter of the bird and the tree

establishes a cycle that continuously creates and elevates. Behind every meeting of a bird and a tree, there is a power or force that leads to a new creation. Subsequently, the theme of the bird and tree archetype are the representation of a "new creation".

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