

Persian translation of this paper entitled:  
تبیین مفهوم همانندی اثر هنری با جهان هستی براساس  
نقد حکمی

is also published in this issue of journal.

## Original Research Article

# Explaining the Similarity of the Work of Art with the Universe through Theosophical Criticism\*

Javad Aghajani Keshteli<sup>1\*\*</sup>, Habibollah Sadeghi<sup>2</sup>, Mehdi Pourrezaian<sup>3</sup>

1. Ph.D. Candidate in Art Research, Faculty of Art, Shahed University, Tehran, Iran.

2. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Art, Shahed University, Tehran, Iran.

3. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Art, Shahed University, Tehran, Iran.

Received: 17/01/2021

accepted: 28/04/2021

available online: 22/11/2021

## Abstract

**Problem statement:** Theosophical criticism has been developed from the Iranian thinker's and sages' opinions. There are scattered discussions and rules about art and the artist in the views of Iranian thinkers and philosophers. The theosophical criticism is criticizing artworks by these criteria; extracted rules and regulations from ancient Iranian mystical philosophical wise sources. The lack of written sources on art criticism using the views of Iranian sages and mystics highlights the need for this research. In this research, two questions have been answered: First, what is the concept of imitation of an artwork expressed from the real world based on theosophical criticism? How is the similarity of artwork with the eternal world expressed through the lens of theosophical criticism?

**Research objective:** This study attempts to present Iranian scholars' views in art and art criticism on the issue of compatibility and similarity of work with the world. This article deals specifically with the similarities between a work of art and the universe (whether modeled on natural resources or the eternal universe.).

**Research method:** In terms of purpose, this study is a kind of basic theoretical research and in terms of nature, it is a qualitative study using content analysis. The method of data collection in this study is bibliographic. The sample of this study is the poetic works of Iranian mystics and sages, which belong to the post-Islamic period from the texts of the fifth to ninth centuries AH. Due to the multiplicity of mystical wise sources, five divans of poetic texts were selected as a sample through the purposive sampling method.

**Conclusion:** The results of the research have shown that the closer the work of art is to the source of nature or the more it is in harmony with the world of creation, the more beautiful, ideal, and better it is. The more an artist can align his work with the real world using the example of the universe, the more artistic he is. The artist must be a man of humor and imitation. He must have the power to draw and illustrate the real and strange world.

**Keywords:** *Art Criticism, Theosophical Criticism, Alignment of the Work with the Real World, Imitation, Humor.*

\* This article is extracted from "Javad Aghajani Keshteli"'s doctoral dissertation entitled "Explaining of foundations of Theosophical Criticism Of Art as a new method ,using the Hermetic approach" which is done under supervision of Dr. "Habibollah Sadeghi" and Dr.

" Mehdi Pourrezaian" and advisement of Dr. "Alireza Fouladi" at the Faculty of "Art", "Shahed" University in 2021.

\*\* Corresponding author: +989126164586, aghajani\_j@yahoo.com

## Introduction

Iranian literary, legal, mystical, and philosophical texts have sparsely discussed art, artistic style, its techniques, and some methods of art criticisms such as criticism of form and meaning, truth and permissibility, beauty, and ugliness. Iranian mystics, sages, and thinkers such as Farabi, Ibn Sina, Mulla Sadra, Nezami, Rumi, Attar, etc. have written about these categories many times in their writings and poems. Extracting the opinions of these sages and mystics about art and criticism can acquaint researchers with the vision of Iranian thought.

Explaining the criteria in the field of art criticism based on the opinions of Iranian sages and mystics can be named Theosophical criticism. Theosophical criticism is intended to critique works of art by using the criteria, rules, and laws governing the ancient jurisprudential, mystical, and philosophical sources of Iran. Theosophical criticism, like old and new approaches to art criticism, is both evaluative and non-evaluative. Both evaluate the works and describes them. The purpose of writing this article is to obtain the views of Iranian scholars in the field of art and art criticism, and specifically on the issue of imitation in the visual arts by answering the following questions:

- a) What is the concept of imitation of an artwork expressed from the real world based on theosophical criticism?
- b) How is the concept of similarity of an artwork with the eternal world expressed through the lens of theosophical criticism?

Criticism course that is taught today in art universities or used to critique and evaluate works of art, is a critique that has been compiled based on the opinions of Iranian thinkers. However, issues related to this field can also be mentioned in the works and writings of Iranian scholars. Therefore, the significance of writing this article is that the criteria and components used for

criticism have been extracted from the opinions of Iranian thinkers and scholars. In this sense, an attempt has been made to study and analyze the view of Iranian sages and mystics on the issue of imitation and the creation of works of art.

## Research method

This article is basic theoretical research based on its purpose and in terms of nature, it is qualitative research using content analysis. This study was carried out systematically to analyze the content of the concepts in the texts of Iranian sages and mystics qualitatively. The thematic scope of the present article is visual art criticism. Due to the selection of ancient theological and mystical texts, the time range of the article was limited to the 5th to 9th centuries AH. The method of data collection was bibliographic. To this purpose, written sources related to Iranian sages and mystics were sought and identified. The sample studied in this study included the works of Iranian mystics and sages belonging to the Islamic period from the texts of the 5th to 9th centuries AH. Due to the multiplicity of theological-mystical sources and the similarity of the texts, at least in literary form, five divans of poetic texts from male poets were studied and analyzed.

These 5 sets of poems in historical order are: Khamseh Nezami Ganjavi, The Mantiq al-tair Attar Neyshabouri, Masnavi of Maulana Jalaluddin Mohammad Balkhi, Golshan Raz Sheikh Mahmoud Shabestari, and Haft Orang Jami, The selection criteria for these texts were as follows:

- A) Iranian sources and works should belong to the 5th to 9th centuries AH. The reason for choosing the works was the peak of the brilliance of wisdom and mysticism in this period
- B) A collection of poems should be written by wise poets.

C) Poetic texts need to deal with art.

To select the samples from the statistical population, situation and purposeful sampling methods were used. In this method, after getting acquainted with the ancient resources available in the target community and scrutinizing the selection criteria mentioned, the systems that were more relevant to the subject were selected.

The data collection and analysis method was performed qualitatively and extracted related verses and anecdotes from sample sources were identified, reviewed, classified, and analyzed.

### Research background

Bolkhari Ghahi (2009) examined the views of Muslim scholars in Islamic wisdom and art in austerities, worship, and mystical conduct. In issue 9 of Journal of Pazhuhesh Nameh-e Farhangestan-e Honar, he stated that "from the point of view of traditionalists and experts in Islamic art, the nature of motifs and forms in these mystics should be sought in the teachings of the Qur'an, narration and especially mysticism."

In another article written by Qayyumi Bidhendi (2011), the relationship between Islamic art and Islamic mysticism was examined. In issue 12 of the Journal of Islamic History and Civilization, he analyzed this relationship based on historical evidence and he wrote that many scholars of Islamic culture and art, from modern traditionalists to politicians, were looking for a meaning related to the teachings of theoretical mysticism and Islamic wisdom behind the appearance of Islamic art. In Qayyumi Bidhandi's article, the Sufis' story about criticism and beauty was re-read. "Light", "sound" and "color" are some of the terms that Ebrahim Kaanani (2014) studied in Masnavi in his doctoral dissertation. This dissertation was presented under the supervision of Esmat Ismaili at Semnan University and explained how light,

sound, and color elements were interrelated in an interactive process in the context of discourse space. In this paper, the researcher sought to discover the meanings and concepts of light, sound, and color in Masnavi. Hashemiyan and Bozorg (2016) in an article entitled "From Islamic Wisdom to the Wisdom of Islamic Art; A Research on the Attractiveness Pattern in Religious-Art Communication" considered the perception of beauty as the attraction of achieving beauty and introduced it as a variable and with different levels. Artist's work is more attractive, in artistic-religious messaging, if the artist can display a higher degree of beauty in the form of the tangible. In particular, in artistic-religious messaging, to the extent that the artist can display a higher degree of beauty in the form of the tangible. Weathers, McCarthy & Coffey (2016) wrote in issue 51 of the Nursing Forum that among Islamic arts, there is a tendency towards mysticism. Mysticism has a special place in both art and literature. The mystical article also considers the mystical vision to be the cause of the health of society. In this article, the relationship between mysticism, art, and the development of art as a mystical practice in the path of liberating ideas and developing skills was examined (Painter, 2007). This article was published in the second issue of the Journal of Spirituality in Education.

The connection of these articles with the present articles refers to the type of artistic criticism view used in the theological and mystical texts. Shahram Pazouki (2013) showed the connection between art and mysticism in his book "Wisdom, Art, and Beauty in Islam" published by the Academy of Arts. Examining the state of art and mysticism and referring to mystical anecdotes such as "Chinese and Roman painting", he mentioned that art is the basis of mystical and non-artistic conduct. This artlessness is the basis of all the arts

in Eastern philosophy and wisdom. In general, it can be said that the sources studied in this field, in short, include the mentioned studies. In each case related to past research, a brief overview was provided; but in general, each of the previous researches has dealt with the issue of art in Iranian theological and mystical literature from a specific point of view. Most of the studies have focused on the development of principles related to mysticism and wisdom in art. This article deals with art in the views of Iranian mystics and sages with a new and critical vision.

Criticism and critique have been considered by the people of thought and opinion from the distant past. Criticism is still accepted as an independent science and not as a branch of science. Criticism can be considered as a technique or industry that relies on scientific methods and strategies. Past criticism was evaluative while new criticism describes most artworks. Criticism is generally divided into evaluative and non-evaluative friends in terms of purpose (Fig. 1).

Evaluative critique evaluates, judges work of art; whether the non-evaluative critique describes, analyzes, and explains the work. Criticism is both in terms of the Latin origin of the word (criticism) and, ideally, judgment. Thus, the act of arbitration is the first condition for theorizing about criticism (Dewey, 2012).

Barrett (2014) believes that critical judgment includes these criteria: Evaluation of the critiqued work, the argument for evaluation, and the criteria

on which these evaluations are based. Criticism is the criterion and effective factor for making the artist, the art, and the audience. It is a bridge between the artist and the audience of the work of art and the critic is the bridge architect. If he consciously chooses the bridge which will stand as long as there is an artist and an audience (Ayatollahi, 2007).

Art critics deal either with works of art or the artist and the audience. Criticisms, then, refer to one of these triangles based on approach. Today, it is difficult to separate one of the vertices of this triangle. In addition to the types of criticism, the tendencies and artistic currents related to real things in art, such as realism, naturalism, impressionism, and the like, shows imitate nature or otherwise imitate objects or surrounding nature has been of interest to artists. Poussin argues that since painting along the boundaries of nature is immaterial, the act of imitation is valuable only when it is controlled by a rationalist theory (Venturi, 2005, 154). The theory of imitation of nature takes on a more popular form in Vazari's theory. Vazari knows that imitation of nature can be a parallel action of nature itself, but this view is no longer valid (ibid., 127). Reconstruction of the art imitation theory in the form of the representation of art theory gives it a wider generality, what is the concept of representation of the concept of imitation (imitation) has a wider scope (Carroll, 2014, 43).

Critics who are inclined to this kind of critique

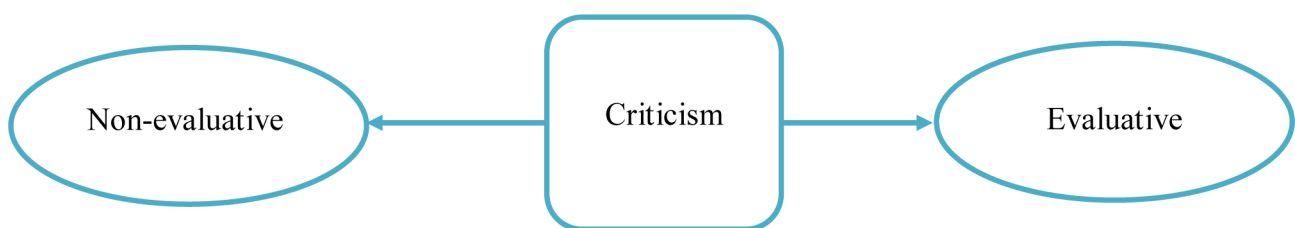


Fig 1. Types of criticism in terms of purpose. Source: Authors.

also seek to see to what extent the work of art conforms to the real thing. In this type of work, the art is examined with reference to the outside world. In his book "On the Theory of Simulation", Bolkhari Ghahi (2014) writes that from the researchers' point of view, the Pythagoreans believe in basic concepts such as the idea of likeness to God, imitation or mimesis, the correspondence of the small world with the big world, rhythm or harmony of number theory. Tetractys argues that heritage is based on the mythical concept of mimicry. Imitation, whether it is formed from the real thing, whether from the tangible world or rational forms, has been interpreted as imitation by Muslim scholars.

Farabi has also used various terms such as allegory, comparison, and appropriateness synonymously with imitation (Maftuni, 2011, 29). According to Fazilat (2017), Ibn Sina's view on imitation can be considered in one of three ways.

1. Things that really exist in objects.
2. Things that are said to exist.
3. There are things that are thought to exist.

The concept of imitation is much more general to Islamic sages than it is to philosophers, and so to limit the meaning of imitation as Plato intended, Mimesis has often been interpreted as imagination (Taheri, 2012, 11).

In the book, "History of Beauty", Eco (2013) writes: The true nature of beauty is determined not by beautiful components, but by beauty beyond the senses.

In any case, many theorists and thinkers have written about the theory of imitation or simulation, as well as the adaptation of the work to the real flow. Table 1 summarizes some of the theories.

Table 1 shows that the views of Iranian sages and philosophers on imitation of the eternal world or the adaptation of the work to the real world can be summarized and analyzed in this way.

Thinkers and proponents of the theory of realism believe that imitation of nature is the basis of artistic work. Plato and Aristotle also agree, with a slight difference, on how the artist imitates the real world, that the artist is an imitator. According to Plato, the work that the artist creates through imitation has a lower value than nature and the real world. However, Aristotle has a different view and considers the production of the work to be more valuable. Aristotle says that man enjoys imitation by nature, although this does not mean that imitation is the only source of indulgence (Eaton, 2007, 57). Pythagoras and his followers believe that the order in works of art, especially music, is based on the geometric and numerical order in the creation of the earth and the sky. The Neoplatonists consider the perceptible world to be a reversal of the rational world and in the same way, in the hierarchy of the creative artist, she/he imitates. Christian theologians also consider the human artifact to be a lower and inferior type of creation. The traditionalists are also somewhat followers of Pythagoras and Plato in this area. Ibn Sina does not consider imitation worthless. Mulla Sadra introduces the beauty of the world as a product of beauty in the eternal world. Mystics of existential unity also consider the creation of things to have arisen and taken from a single source. They believe that the end of creation and beauty is with the Almighty Creator. In his book, Structure, and Interpretation of text, Ahmadi (2003) refers to the issue of imitation and maintains that the power of human imitation is greater than that of all animals. Man first learns through imitation. Imitation is a tool of human education and also forms the pleasure of knowing. According to the theories presented in Table 1, the verses extracted from the samples under study were analyzed to clarify the answers to the questions of this study. In the first stage, verse

Table 1. The focus of critics of work-oriented critics with the view of adaptation to the real world. Source: Authors.

Thinker/stream of thought	Important topics
Realists / Naturalists / Extroverts	Modeling the pattern is the artist's strength. This pattern can be the whole world and part of nature.
Plato	Art is an imitation of the real world and the real world is an imitation of the reality in the world. The real world is the proverbial world where the essence of everything is. The value of art is lower than nature.
Pythagoreans	The principle of the universe is based on order. The world is beautiful, and whatever is created on this basis (numerical and geometric order) is beautiful.
Aristotle	Imitation is not merely an imitation of reality; Rather, the artist's mind is involved. Tragedy is an imitation of human movements and behaviors.
Plotinus	The principle of art in the world is reasonable. The perceptible world is a dumping of the rational world, not the world of nature.
Christian theologians Augustine / Aquinas	Human art is a lower form of the creation of the universe. It is imitation.
Traditionalists	The world has a special order. This is a mathematical order. The Almighty Creator creates these stars and planets in a mathematical way. Therefore, math imitation is beautiful. God is the perfection of beauty.
Democritus	The essence of art is an imitation of nature.
Herbert Reid	The Geometric and mathematical proportions in nature are the criterion for assessing the beauty of the work.
Ibn Sina	Imitation in art is useful for teaching and learning. Imitations are valuable.
Khwaja Nasir Tusi	The main factor in creating poetry is imitation and its tool is the poet's imagination.
Suhrawardi	The perceptible beauty in the material world is light from the source of the light world
Mulla Sadra	The beauty of this world benefits from the beauty of the eternal world.
Mystics in favor of the unity of existence	All objects, beings, and the universe come from the same source. It is the source of the Almighty Creator. The Almighty Creator is the end of beauty. So all beings enjoy beauty.



analysis is divided into two parts. In the first part, the verses related to the adaptation of the work to the eternal world and its analysis are done, and in the second part, the verses related to the adaptation of the work to the real world are analyzed.

**1. Adaptation of the work to the eternal world in the opinions of wise poets**

According to the Greek sage, Plato, the truth of all the objects and phenomena we perceive and receive in this world through the five senses exists in a world called the proverbial world.

The creator of this world, based on an eternal order, has created the universe and created an ideal principle and model for everything. Artists use this knowledge to reflect this order in the world.

The moaning sound of Sorna and warning of Dohol is a miniature of Resurrection horn to be blown<sup>1</sup>

"The wise told these tunes/ we adopted from the heavens, stars, and the moon

People get the song of heavens/ to sing along by Tambour or by their own"

(Rumi, Masnavi)

The sound of trumpets and drums is taken from the trumpets of Israfil, the melody is taken from the rotation of the universe and the song of the people is taken from the rotation of planets and stars. In fact, the order in the cosmic system and the movement of the stars have inspired musicians. Music is created from the existing order.

Fig. 2 shows the components of wheel rotation and the cosmic system on the inspiration of music in the above verses.

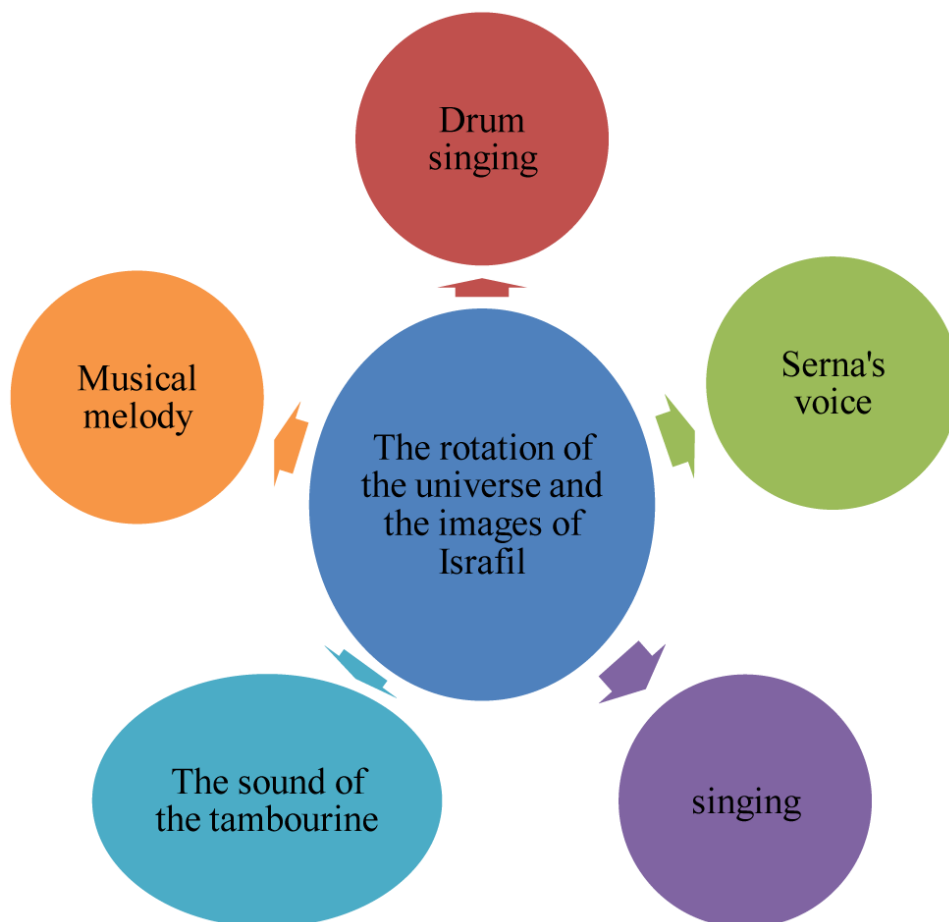


Fig. 2. The effect of the rotation of the universe and nature on music. Source: Authors.

Iranian sages and mystics are also called Neoplatonists because in writing the creation levels, many of them have followed Plotinus. Plotinus considers the levels of creation to be threefold, namely, intellect, and soul. All creatures, objects, and phenomena came into being from these three stages.

Iranian scholars consider Uhd to be the one God who is omniscient and everything in the world is a picture of him.

"God created every particle as a mirror/ to reflect the image of the creator<sup>2</sup>

Whatever excellent in your sharp eyes/ shall be his nice picture in disguise"

(Jami, Yusuf and Zulaikha)

In terms of matching and comparing these verses, we can put them together with verses from Masnavi.

"Where were we? While the life teacher/ poured wisdom is heads by a pitcher

As he created the universe from nil/ spread the life down the sea and uphill

He made lights from stars for the night/ and distinct temperaments that make each other right

Every creature bears a reflection of his extreme/ as if passerby observes the moon image in a stream"

(Rumi, Masnavi)

Or at a lower level, according to Attar Neyshabouri, reason, which was created by the Creator, has caused the creation of other beings. Suhrawardi also believes that beings, creatures, and everything that exists in this world are all flashes of Gabriel's song, which in comparison can be considered equal to the level of intellect in the level of Plotinus. Simorgh is a symbol of the same intellect among Iranian mystics and poets.

"Once upon a time, the phoenix/ flew overnight in China gracefully

It lost a feather while flying/ to put every corner of China in frenzy

Every individual got an impression/ inspired to start his own profession

Chinese Art Gallery now keeps the feather/ that's why we seek knowledge as far as China and further All the innovations occurred from its blessing/ every patterns and color formed the feather dressing"

(Attar, Mantiq al-Tair)

All creation came from God. What is known as nature and beings is a picture of Almighty God. These verses refer to him using the term of goodness and manifestation. In fact, God had goodness, so He revealed Himself and created beings. Imitation, whether it is formed from the real thing, whether from the tangible world or rational forms, has been interpreted as imitation by Muslim scholars. In the discussion of the rational world, it can be written that in this type of imitation, not only the principle of the work of art but also real beauty is located in a world outside the tangible world (Fig.3).

In fact, the Almighty Creator created other manifestations through reason. The mentioned verses can be explained by Ibn Arabi's interpretation in such a way that the sciences were first created and recorded in the fixed nobility, and in each period, everyone takes and reveals a part of these sciences and arts.

Fixed lords were created at the beginning of creation and in the world of intellect, and in every period and time, according to the time, a candle appears on the earth. From the point of view of "Sheikh Mahmoud Shabestari", that world (fixed lords) has no end.

"The spiritual world has no extremity/ it is never limited except by infinity

Any implications inferred by connotation/ would merely be a simulation

What is the perception from the otherworld resembles a shadow



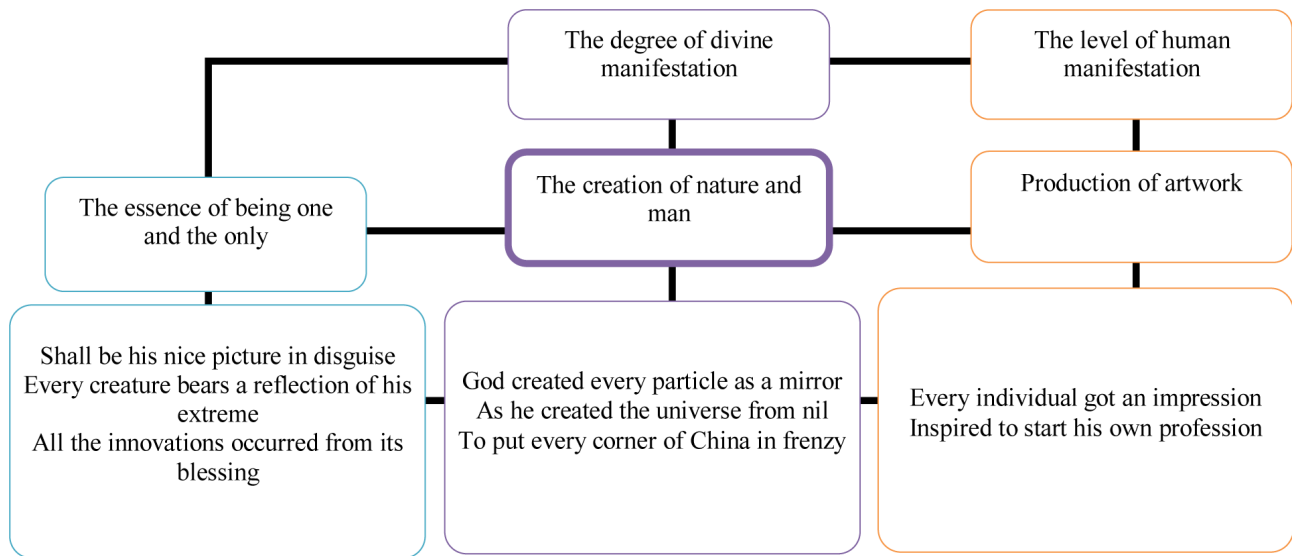


Fig. 3. The order of goodness and manifestation and the importance of creation. Source: Authors.

It may be considered as infants to the navy/ the perceptions from heavens to the world below" (Shabestari, Golshan-e Raz)

These verses of Golshan Raz Shabestari are similar to Plato's theory of the proverbial world. Everything that exists in the world of proverbs is the principle of truth and the source of light. Everything that is perceived and received in this world through the five senses is a shadow of that main truth. In fact, the principle and source are likened to the midwife and the mother, and what is here before that principle is like a child. If we take a brief look at the treatises and writings of Iranian philosophers and sages, we will find that these thinkers have paid more attention to music than other arts. Perhaps the reason for this is that the principles and bases of proportions and measurements used in music separate it from art and include it in the mathematical subset and because of the existing classification of sciences in those periods, such as the classification of sciences into primary sciences, intermediate sciences, and social sciences, music is included in the category of mathematics as well as the second category. Poets have also used this theme in their poems.

"Bravo cuckoo bird-like Moses/ hurry to play panpipe of wisdom

As the music master admired by all his heart/ the tunes of this heavenly kingdom"

(Attar, Mantiq al-Tair)

Works of art are inspired by creation. It is the music of creation and the universe that the musicologist has used.

As can be seen, in Table 2 creation is defined and described based on a musical order. In the first part, the rotation of the planets and stars with an order is introduced (Gabriel), from which the basis of music is taken. The pattern of works of art is taken from the eternal world. In fact, what exists as a work of art (especially music) is taken from the order of the world.

## 2. Adaptation of the work to the real world (accurate representation of the face)

Attention to proportions and details of the face has been repeated many times in the poems. According to this group of poets, a skilled illustrator is a person who could deal with the details of the face and depict it with circumstantiality. In most of these verses, depicting the face of a character is

Table 2. Summary of the eternity of the exemplary pattern of works of art. Source: Authors.

Explanation	Source	Samples
Music in this world is derived from the celestial world and rotation of the universe, the stars, and asteroids. The musical order is like the cosmetic order.	Masnavi	The cry of the trumpet and the rumbling of the drum are nothing compared to the universal trumpeter we learned them from the turning of the time
All beings are images of God.	Haft Awrang	A sharp look finds beauty in everything
All the phenomena of this world are a picture of the almighty creator.	Masnavi	Look well and it's his features all
Simorgh refers to Gabriel, from whose glorious glory all beings are created.	Manteq-O-Teyr	All creation is the effect of its artistry
A reference to the proverbial world of Plato and the world of sensations and works of art, which is interpreted as deception and shadow.	Gulshan-i Raz	The sensible things as his shadows
Musicians borrow from the music of creation.	Manteq-O-Teyr	Thanks for the musical tone of the creation

used to show another important person in the form of a story. In such a case the image had to match the original face to enable the viewer can know that person or look for.

"He took a fine piece of paper cautiously/ drew the picture of Khosrow flawlessly  
He worked on the drawing for a while with regards/ and attached it to a tree branch afterwards"

(Nezami Ganjavi , Khosrow and Shirin)

Here is a detailed depiction of Khosrow Parviz's face to attract the Armenian Shirin. This role is depicted by Shapur, the painter of Khosrow's court. Shapoor and Farhad studied art at the same

time and place. Farhad is a lithographer. Farhad has a skill in carving and creating a role on stone. As he, like his fellow Shapur, is busy creating precise designs, Farhad is commissioned to carve Khosrow and Shirin designs on Mount Biston.

"He rushed toward the hillside/ then sat in awe and started carving with respect

He paid homage to the mount/ and created a portrait so perfect

He carved Shirin's face on the rock/ as if Mani had created in Arjang book

Then he applied his sharp hatchet/ he reproduced the kings' and his horse's figure"

(Nezami Ganjavi, Khosrow and Shirin)

In these verses, Farhad first carves Shirin's face on a stone. Shirin in this story is considered by both Khosrow and Farhad but Farhad can't get his hands on Shirin and only illustrates her face on the stone. Shabdiz is also Khosrow's horse, to which the young king pays special attention. As Nezami has said in these verses, Farhad, after depicting Shirin's face, also carves images of the king and his horse. Nezami has made Farhad look like the Iranian prophet painter Mani. In the story of "depicting the face of a maid on paper and the Egyptian caliph falling in love with this woman from the image", Rumi introduces this image accurately and like the original.

"The Egypt caliph was told by spies/ that the Mousel governor got a nymph from the skies  
He has a slave girl by his side/ second - to – none is she worldwide  
Her beauty may not be described ever/ a picture of her is illustrated in this paper  
As Keyghobad observed her image dressed to nine/ he got amazed and dropped his cup of wine"  
(Rumi, Masnavi)

In this story, Rumi talks about Mosul's maid who

has a beautiful face. Someone comes to the Caliph of Egypt and shows the photo of the beautiful face (Negar) to the Caliph of Egypt and then tells about her beauties. As the caliph loses his temper and sends a messenger to bring the maid to Egypt. The pretty faces described in these poems are so much detailed that they look like pictures. The reason is that if these beauties are not described as presented in their pictures, showing their faces will be considered a futile masterpiece. Because the king is supposed to reach the essence of the story by seeing the image, which is the essence of the image or the main face of the person. [Fig. 4](#) can guide the audience to better understand this.

The importance and attention to realism in these verses and anecdotes can be seen quite clearly. The work of art must match its model and pattern. This shows the importance of the artistic currents of realism, naturalism, extroversion, and the like. Styles and currents make the artist create his work according to the pattern and model.

The shutters and verses in [Table 3](#) indicate the importance of accurate drawing of faces. In fact, the importance of "realism" and the conformity

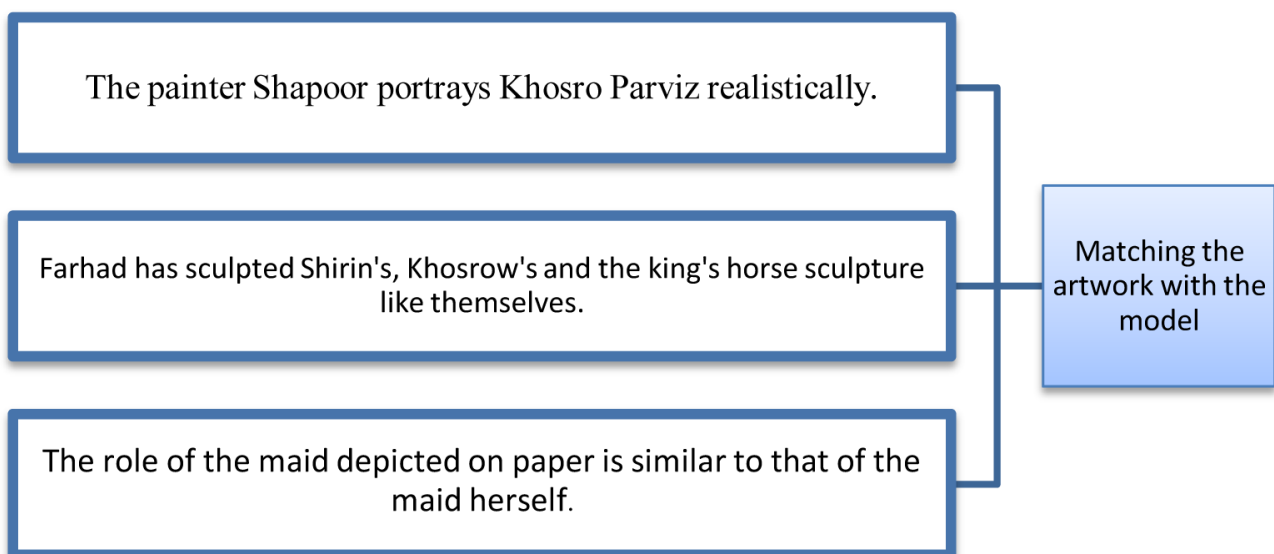


Fig. 4. Adaptation of the work to the real world. Source: Authors.

Table 3. Accurate representation of face and it's features. Source: Authors.

Samples	Source	Explanation
He drew the picture of Khosrow flawlessly	Khamsa	Accurate and realistic drawing of Khosrow Parviz's face
He carved Shirin's face on the rock He reproduced the king's and his horse's figure	Khamsa	Drawing Shirin's face on the mountain Drawing the face of Khosrow and his horse on the stone
A picture of her is illustrated in this paper	Masnavi	The role of the maids is accurately drawn on paper

of the image with its principle, whether nature or man, is important. An artist is successful when he can produce his work objectively and like a model. The perfection of the artist is to be able to create a work like the following pattern at the right time.

### Result & Conclusion

As mentioned before, the theosophical criticism arises from the views of Iranian thinkers and scholars about art. It is a critique whose components are extracted from the ancient Iranian tradition.

Theosophical criticism of art sheds light on some aspects of the triads of artworks, the artist and the audience independently. Iranian sages and mystics consider the origin of the work of art to be the eternal world. By receiving patterns from the eternal world, the artist designs and creates them according to what is in the galaxy, the rotation

of the stars, the planets, and the cosmic order. Theosophical criticism includes a wide range of topics from the basics of art and its critique, and this issue is due to the multiplicity and diversity in the verses of Iranian scholars, which according to their theories about discussions about art has taken shape. This article only addresses these two issues. Other verses show the importance and attention of sages and mystics to other hidden sides of art.

But based on the type of view in this article and considering the two questions raised in this article, this conclusion has been reached. The more beautiful the work of art is as much as it is in harmony with the source of nature and the world of creation. The more the artist can make his work in accordance with the real world by following the example of the created world, the better the artist is. If the artist is a formalist, he must be familiar with the illustrating rules and

know how to draw the details of the face, and be able to use it as a principle. The artist must be able to paint in the best possible way by imitating nature, in a realistic and naturalistic way. He must have the power to draw and illustrate nature and the real world. If the results are compared with the opinions of scholars and critics in Table 1, it can be seen that the wise Iranian poets have a Platonic and Neoplatonic view in this discussion. Imitation in these verses, both from the eternal world and from the real world, has been considered as the basis of the creation of art. The importance of adapting the artwork to the real world has been so much so that some artists are known for their specialty in this field.

## Endnote

1. Dohol : A kind of big drum (Moein Encyclopedia Dictionary).
2. Creator: Who creates the world, God.

## Reference list

- Ahmadi, B. (2003). *The text- structure and textural interpretation*, sixth edition. Tehran: Markaz Publishing.
- Ayatollahi, H. (2005). *Shive-ha-ye mokhtalef-e naghd-e honari* [Different methods of art criticism]. Tehran: Soore Mehr.
- Ayatollahi, H. (2007). Honarmand, Honar-naghd, Mokhatab [Artist, Art-Criticism, Audience]. *Journal of Pazhuhesh Nameh-e Farhangestan-e Honar*, (4), 6-19.
- Barrett, T. M. (2014). *Criticizing art : understanding the contemporary* (K. Ghabraei, Trans.). Tehran: Nika Publishing.
- Bolkhari Ghahi, H. (2009). Naghd-e naghd [Critique of Criticism (Critique of the views of traditionalist thinkers about Islamic art)]. *Journal of Pazhuhesh Nameh-e Farhangestan-e Honar*, (9), 115-132.
- Bolkhari Ghahi, H. (2014). *About mimesis: theory of art in Greek Philosophy and Islamic philosophy*. Second edition, Tehran: Hermes.
- Carroll, N. (2014). *Philosophy of art : a contemporary introduction* (S. Tabatabai, Trans.). Tehran: Farhangestan-e Honar.
- Dewey, J. (2012). *Art as experience* (M. Olya, Trans.). Tehran: Phoenix.
- Eaton, M. M. (2007). Locating the Aesthetic (A. R. Tagha, Trans.). *Ziba Shenakht*, (17), 53-62.
- Eco, U. (2013). *History of Beauty*, third edition (H. Bina, Trans.). Tehran: Matn.
- Fazilat, M. (2017). *Osul va tabaghebandi-ye naghd-e adabi* [Principles and Classification of Literary Criticism], Second Edition. Tehran: Zavar.
- Hashemiyan, S. & Bozorg, H. (2016). From Islamic Wisdom to the Wisdom of Islamic Art; A Research on the Attractiveness Pattern in Religious-Art Communication. *Practice of Wisdom*, 8(27), 201-234.
- Kanaani, E. (2014). *An Analytic Study of Speech Functions of Light, Sound and Color in Masnavi: A Semio-Semantic Approach*, Unpublished ph.d's thesis, Semnan, Semnan University, Iran.
- Maftuni, N. (2011). *Akhlagh-e honar az negah-e farabi* [Ethics of Art from Farabi's Perspective]. Tehran: Farabi Cinema Foundation.
- Pazouki, Sh. (2013). *An introduction to the philosophy of art and beauty in Islam*, Third Edition, Tehran: Matn.
- Qayyumi Bidhendi, M. (2011). A Reexamination on Relation between the Islamic Arts and Mysticism on the Historical Evidences. *The Journal of Islamic History and Civilisation*, 6(12), 175-189.
- Taheri, M. (2012). Barresi-ye ara-ye aflatun va arastoo dar naghd-e mohakat [A Study of the Opinions of Plato

and Aristotle in the Critique of imitation]. *Kavoshnameh (Journal of Exploring Persian Language and Literature)*, 13(24), 9-42.

- Venturi, L. (2005). *Storia della critica d'arte* (A. Madani, Trans.). Tehran: Faza.
- Painter, V. Ch. (2007). The relationship between

spirituality and artistic expression: cultivating the capacity for imagining. *Spirituality in Higher Education Newsletter*, 3(2), 1-6.

- Weathers, E., Mc McCarthy, G. & Coffey, A. (2016). Concept analysis of spirituality: An evolutionary approach. *Nursing Forum*, 51(2), 79-96.

**COPYRIGHTS**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with publication rights granted to the Bagh-e Nazar Journal. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



**HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE**

Aghajani Keshteli, J., Sadeghi, H. & Purrezaian, M. (2021). Explaining the Similarity of the Work of Art with the Universe through Theosophical Criticism. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 18(102), 15-28.

DOI: 10.22034/bagh.2021.268864.4771

URL: [http://www.bagh-sj.com/article\\_131262\\_en.html](http://www.bagh-sj.com/article_131262_en.html)

