



Analyzing the Female Identity and Feminine Features in Painting Works of the Second Half of the Qajar Period (in the Works of Kamal-ol-Molk)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the female identity and feminine features in painting works of the second half of the Qajar period (in the works of Kamal-ol-Molk). The research method is descriptive-analytical, and the research type is qualitative. The statistical population is the study of Kamal-ol-Molk school's works according to women's status, and the data collection instruments and data utilized are library resources. According to studies, Iranian society was confronted with a new experience during the reign of Nasser al-Din Shah and the increase of ties with European societies. The ubiquity of photography and printing allowed the painter to experiment with many topics. The entrance of European works gave artists from other nations a new perspective, as well as new styles, accessories, and methods. When we compare Falgir Baghdadi's painting to another work by Kamal-ol-Molk named Ramal, which was made before that of Falgir Baghdadi, we can see the contrast in perspective and attitude toward women. The way ladies dress in Ramal's picture is more traditional, and their veiling and manner of relationship with the male are distinct from Falgir Baghdadi's painting. The way women recline in front of Falgir, the less or more open covering of women by Falgir Baghdadi, and the freer interaction between men and women are notable. Falgir's artwork, which shares the same material and subject matter as the tablecloth, embodies the presence of a distinct sort of lady.

Keywords: Kamal-ol-Molk School; Qajar period, Falgir Baghdadi painting, Ramal painting

INTRODUCTION

Qajar art, like older art, is dependent on the assistance of monarchs and influential individuals. Since the Shah was the embodiment of the Qajar authoritarian authority, it is instructive to study the involvement of the monarchs in the sociopolitical and cultural events of their period. The most notable element of Qajar painting was that, like all socio-cultural expressions of the Nasserite era, it was a hybrid phenomenon that was neither entirely Iranian nor entirely European. The conflicting stylistic aspects of Qajar art, especially because they belong to two distinct and regular visual systems, come together to produce a cohesive hybrid school that separated itself from Iranian painting and concluded in absolute naturalism through three or four generations of painters (Amir Ebrahimi, 2005, p. 123).

The expansion of Western communications, urban renewal, the establishment of railways, electricity, telegraph, and telephone, familiarity with new arts and techniques such as photography and cinema, and the establishment of schools such as the Dar al-Fonun and the

Mustazarfa Arts in Iran from before the reign of Nasser al-Din Shah and the good-natured and ill-fated minister Amirkabir until the end of the Qajar dynasty. These technological and social advancements, together with the adoption of European culture, ushered in a new age in Iranian art and literature, which had hitherto served primarily to impress and entertain the monarchs. In quest of new forms that expressed the cultural and literary facts of the moment, literary language evolved. The development of new phenomena such as news reporting and printing, as well as the language and image of people in poetry and painting, directed to realism, and the magnificent style of court painting, which was marked by stereotypes and artificiality, gradually, and particularly under the impact of photography, aimed at observation and accuracy in natural and social phenomena. The development of trade and commerce led to the formation and consolidation of a new middle class, which later played an important role in the Constitutional Revolution. Modern architecture and urban planning, the construction of royal gardens and palaces, and the construction of streets and boulevards in the style of European cities gave a new face to the aristocratic part of the city.

As a result, Iran, which had not entirely emerged from the feudal age, needed to go forward as quickly as possible in conjunction with the world community. In such conditions, it is natural for new and old to collide, and possibly a form of schizophrenia or psychic division has persisted in all socio-cultural phenomena and patterns of life and thinking among Iranians since then (Afsarian, 2016, p. 70, 71).

The middle hundred years of the Qajar monarchy (1925-1785) corresponded with the nineteenth century, and the second half of that century coincided with Nasser al-Din Shah's reign (1848-1897). The profound and fundamental changes in the West that signified the start of a new age in nineteenth-century Europe and later across the world were, in reality, a feeble reflection of the tremendous and frightening transformations in Iranian society at the time. The pursuit of glory and the building of the central government's and power's foundations revealed an interest in the growth and flourishing of art. Most Qajar paintings are "statues of authority" of rulers and courtiers, according to this perspective. Other reasons that affected the establishment and evolution of the intriguing school of Qajar art and realistic painting of this period were the peculiarities of the age in which these monarchs lived, as well as their own personal motives - notably Nasser al-Din Shah's.

In the shadow of his autonomous personality, the painter of the second half of the Qajar era rose from the status of a mere artisan and became a creative artist with a more open hand in choosing the topics of his work. An artist who, in past eras, depicted the Shah's splendor and heroism using a set of preset conventional ideas and regulations, in keeping with the society that has been grappling with the conflict between tradition and modernization, he freed the painting from the monopoly of the court and drew it among the people by picking topics from the ordinary people and presenting scenes from their everyday life as well as a fresh reflection of the beauty of women in works of this time. The shift in Iranian painting that occurred during the Qajar period, particularly in the second half, lasted many years and formed a school whose practice and approach to Iranian painting and orienting the tastes of the audience of paintings is still effective now. Accordingly, the present research aims to analyze the female identity and feminine features in painting works of the second half of the Qajar period (in the works of Kamal ol-Molk).

Theoretical foundations



Kamal ol-Molk

The perspective mirror was unknown to Kamal ol-Molk before the image of the hall, and he learned its laws while working, and he learned and practiced what it needed to train for a long time. The Hall of Mirrors is a masterwork by Kamal ol-Molk, with chandeliers, crystal prisms, elegant tables and chairs, enormous patterned rugs, wavy and long lace curtains, and branches of trees that hang on the window, and strangely whispers the wind in the hall's ear. In the painting of the Hall of Mirrors, Kamal-ol-Molk has crossed the line into poetry by including the theme of astounding quiet in the conflict of lights and shadows.

Kamal al-Molk became a painter in Nasser al-Din Shah's court ten years after his tutor. Muzaffar al-Din Shah dispatched Nasser al-Din Shah on tour to Europe as a reward for Kamal al-killing Molk's in 1275. He traveled to Paris, Rome, and Vienna when he was nearly fifty years old. Kamal ol-Molk traveled to Europe and painted masterpieces by Rembrandt and Thyssen, as well as met German and French artists. He returned to Iran shortly after, on Muzaffar al-Din Shah's orders, and resumed his role as royal painter. He traveled to Iraq in 1280 after being unsatisfied with his position in the court and being separated from his wife. Some of his greatest works, such as the Falgir Baghdadi Jews, the Baghdadi jeweler and his apprentice, Karbala Square, and the sleeping Arab, were created there. In 1290, Kamal al-Molk took a significant stride forward with his wealth of expertise, and his name will long be associated with the art of teaching in our nation. He created a school (Mustazarfa Industries) on the south side of Bagh Negarestan this year at his recommendation and with the support of Ibrahim Hakimi (Hakim al-Molk, a member of parliament and one of the Qajar period's ministers). In 1306 Kamal al-Molk relocated to Hosseinabad, Neishabour, to get away from the court and everything else bothering him in the city. He continued to paint for a long time after that, dying in 1319 at the age of ninety-three, "as a national hero," according to Willem Flora (Afsarian, p. 87, 2016).

The second half of Qajar painting

The second phase of the Qajar painting occurs during and after Nasser al-Din Shah's reign. Iran's interaction with Europe was increasingly broad in the second part of the nineteenth century. Iran, on the other hand, is a part of international history because of the colonial practices of Maghreb powers, particularly Russia and Britain, and its fate is intermingled with that of other countries. In addition to internal processes, the confluence of these forces produces significant and deep societal changes, the consequences of which will explode in the Constitutional Revolution. Development of the printing industry, establishment of Dar al-Fonun (new education), creation of the modern army, the emergence of the newspaper, expansion of democratic ideas, contact with Western culture and translation of European literature and sciences, changes in Persian publishing and order, the emergence of photography, which more than painting represented the daily life of the people of the time, and especially the work of this industry in the art of painting all belongs to the same period and coincides with the long reign (fifty years), Nasser al-Din Shah. The formal and traditional painting did not suit the cultural and aesthetic demands of the time in such situations. The limits of court art become increasingly obvious.

Nasser al-Din Shah's reign (1264-1313AH) was a reasonably quiet and tranquil time, and courtiers, princes, nobles, and the wealthy were able to engage in artistic pursuits and luxury. The monarch had a taste or at least claimed to have it, as well as an interest in art. He still has a few plans and travelogues to complete. The blossoming of fine arts and crafts was produced by



the progress of Iranian society in connection to the West, the Shah's relative but long-lasting serenity and art-friendliness, and the courtiers' and aristocracy's imitation of him to the art-friendliness of the combination of these causes.

Nasser al-Din Shah founded the "Assembly of Industries" in 1273 AH, where painters worked. These artists were Mirza Bozorg Shirazi and Haji Mirza Yahya Khan Taghavi. Mirza was a miniaturist, a florist and grower, a gilder, and a simulator. Sania al-Molk Ghaffari (Abul Hassan Thani) and his thirty-four pupils in the same assembly of industries drew the illustrations for "One Thousand and One Nights," the largest illustrated book of the Qajar era. During the Qajar dynasty, he was the first Iranian artist to study in Europe. Sani al-Molk was a naturalist and naturalist artist who expressed all manifestations of nature in the shape and form he observed, according to the surviving works and instances of his work. (Zeka, 1987 '84). He was more interested in people, which is why he left a big number of single-faced people behind. Unlike past Iranian painters who had cerebral and interior vision, his worldview is Western.

The painting had become independent of the court at this point and was no longer as aristocratic as it had been. And, as the surviving instances demonstrate. There is a fresh sense of environmental awareness. Painters are more concerned with depicting common people and situations, and there is no news of wealthy people making dry and stiff motions and movements. In general, the painter departed from older painting traditions in a number of ways. The exact and careful confrontation with nature was Kamal ol-Molk (and his followers') most important creative function as a turning point in Iranian painting. Traditional Iranian painting has always existed in an anti-naturalist environment, owing to the mystical element of the work. However, after the efforts of previous painters in the direction of naturalism, Kamal ol-Molk entirely abandoned the tradition of the symbolic view of nature, and his work developed from a crude naturalism to a mature naturalism, occasionally turning to realism in the process.

One of the most prominent genres of Qajar era painting was court iconography or simulation, which contributed significantly to the development of the painting art from the beginning of the series' inception. Indeed, in court iconography, the major expression of Qajar era art was summed. The king's iconography served as a link between him and society. Fath Ali Shah's reign, which began in 1211 AH, ushered in a new era of Qajar face painting. Fath Ali Shah had an appealing face, lovely eyes, a thick and long beard, and the jewels he wore in his garments and headgear gave him a nice look, according to all reports. He commissioned a number of artists to represent his face and figure in various situations, indicating that he was aware of the attractions. Mirza Baba and Abdullah Khan were among the most prominent of these artists, while Mehr Ali, who produced at least 10 oil works by Fath Ali Shah and also painted portraits of court women, should not be neglected. However, such curtains lacked a signature and are still available today (Pakbaz, 2008, p. 153).

Femininity concept

Changes in the identity of Iranian women occurred throughout the Qajar period as a result of the development of Iranians' ties with European nations. From the middle of the Qajar century, waves of these social movements swept over Iran, affecting the identity of Iranian women to varying degrees. The first stream emerged from religious inclinations coming from Islam, clerics and imitators, and the second current arose from religious tendencies arising from Christianity, clerics and imitators. The second trend represented secular thought inspired by intellectuals, the



upper classes, and the court, all of whom had connections to the outside world and were impacted by it. These two modes of thinking had differing effects on people's social lives (Zahed, 2005, p. 10).

The organization and institutions of Iranian society underwent significant changes throughout the Qajar era. One of the most significant events in Iranian history, culture, and society is the establishment of new intellectual advancements among a group of women in Iranian society, as well as some modifications in their conventional status and function in society. Many various causes and events contributed to the intellectual developments and revolutions in the position and function of Iranian women throughout the Qajar era. Far from any excesses or simplifications, it appears that, to varying degrees, a collection of reasons and elements emerging from religious, national, and Western views and currents prompted Iranian women to be distinct from women of their preceding generation among the different groups of women in the Iranian society of the Qajar era and with different degrees. The notion of modernity, Islamic awakening, the formation of social movements, and other factors in a society with religious and national reasons led to certain changes in the system, structure, and political, social, and cultural interactions of Iranian society during the Qajar period. The progressive growth of the problem of women and the attention paid to their political and social rights in society has been one of the most significant developments in Iran's recent history (Abbasi, 2014, pp. 76-77). For the first time during the Qajar dynasty, women took part in regular and organized collective action in an attempt to affect society's broad socioeconomic strata. Women frequently used their intelligence with another talent to make their husbands appear enticing. In this aspect, Figueroa says that no woman in Iran today has any benefits or privileges. Due to their enormous numbers, even the Shah's official women are not accorded more credit than informal women and have frequently succumbed to the status quo.

Method

The research method is descriptive-analytical, and the research type is qualitative. Data collection tools and data used in this research method came from library resources and documents registered in universities, as well as articles registered, extracted, or a careful study of the first category of resources in this field, catching, summarizing, and comparing and analyzing data with one another. The approach to assessing qualitative data is based on research data and statistical samples. The statistical population is an examination of Kamal-ol-Molk school's works based on women's status.

Findings

Falgir Baghdadi's painting

During his tour to Mesopotamia in 1319 AH, Kamal-ol-Molk created a painting by Baghdadi, which is one of his most successful works. This period's works are more consistent and mature than the preceding one. The composition of works from this time shows more movement and attention to the links between levels and divisions of space. The trip's highlights are the unfinished *Sleeping Arab*, the *Baghdadi goldsmith*, *Karbala Square*, and the *Jewish Falgir*. The picture depicting Jewish fortune-telling is cheerful. At the same moment, the figures are all smiling and twirling. The primary space of the work has a proper movement that is the consequence of the visual structure of the work, and it has a particular place among Kamal-ol-compositions Molk's in this regard and is regarded as one of the painter's successful works (Image 1).





Figure 1. Falgir Baghdadi by Kamal ol-Molk - oil painting technique - 1316 AH 1277 AH

When Kamal ol-Molk had the opportunity, he created important and moral paintings other than portraits of individuals; for example, on his journey to Saudi Arabia and Baghdad, he created a Baghdad fortune-telling painting with the subject: Wajih's daughter and mother visited a Baghdad Jew to inquire about her inheritance. In their chamber, the fortune teller and his companion are seated on a kilim and sharing a box. Next to the horoscope book, the handkerchief is busy describing the girl's astrological. When she hears her good omen, the girl, who is also a bit ornamented, elevates her hair with a taffeta tent and places her two hands on each other on her knees, smiling. A hookah and a wooden chair are on one side of the room, and he is leaning on a napkin bed on the other: in fairness, this place is so warm and amusing, and the occupants are so cool that one can almost hear their voices. The spectator quickly becomes hooked to the malice of this form of deception because even though they are involved in the superstitions of their profession, they have employed this method of pickpocketing and desire. Although the goldsmith's workshop's luxurious, clean, and the radiant environment was its flaw, this flaw in the Jewish Falgir painting has become valid and original, and the characters' (mother and daughter) happy spirit and comfortable life in natural harmony with the affluent environment reflects what surrounds them.

This artwork has a strong sense of sensory expression. The smiles on the faces of the two men and two women in the photograph, as well as the mood that reflects the people's dialogue, are quite evident. The eye is drawn to the middle of the board and among the audience by the triangle composition, whose vertices are two old men and a young girl. The artist has created an acceptable vision of his work by considering the unique light source of lighting and three-dimensionality and the warm hue surrounding the painting area. There is no additional adornment in this work, and the subjects of the painting are the same individuals who live in the village, dressed in the same manner and engaging in the same everyday social interactions. He utilized a wicker chair, a hookah, a few books, a glass of medication, and a box to fill the area surrounding the painter, which at first look, did not catch much attention. The way men and women sit in the picture, as well as the subjects' eyes and gaze trajectory, well portray the emotion and atmosphere of interaction between them, and as can be observed, all of this points to a popular environment rather than a wonderful and ideal atmosphere.

2. The painting of a clergyman fortune teller

Mohammad Naghashbashi signed this artwork, which was most likely produced around 1309 AH. Like ancient Jewish art, this painting reflects a social and realistic viewpoint. The observer can obtain a better understanding of the topic of the painting by looking at the accessories of a fortune teller, who is his better depiction, in the area in front of the picture. The materials, especially the creases in the elderly man's cloak and garments, and the volumes on the table and the tiny book in the handkerchief are expressive lovely and convey the actual significance of these items. In a light design and shade, the old man's hands and face are precisely and forcefully produced. The painting is straightforward in terms of color, but because of its tiny size (about 55 x 45 cm), it necessitates a great deal of attention to detail in terms of engraving, color, and nature payment. The characters are well-developed and have a reasonable relationship with one another (Image 2).



Figure 2. Fortune teller, by Kamal ol-Molk. Oil painting technique - 1309 AH 1270 AH.

As is clear, in past years, a huge exhibition in Rome was formed, in which famous painters' paintings were displayed. Sheikh Ramali, with two old women, one of Kamal al-outstanding Molk's paintings, has been consulted by the Iranian government. Sticks, corner boxes, rugs, miniature tables, pens and wallets, and other equipment are all beautifully illustrated. The fortune-teller and the other two persons, as well as the right side of the painting, which contains the napkin and its equipment, have a decent composition, but the painting, in particular, has a disorganized empty space that detracts from the overall composition. However, when compared to the hunting board painting from the year 1302 AH, it is obvious how far the old-fashioned painting and the painting are in terms of art and identifying design, shape, light shadow, and color. The most recent picture signed by a painter by Kamal ol-Molk is "Ramal" (1309 AH), which is regarded as the strongest composition of Kamal-ol-Molk people until that point and demonstrates his command of color and perfect interpretation of nature.

When we compare the painting of the Baghdadi fortune teller to another work by Kamal al-Molk, Ramal, which was painted before the Baghdadi fortune teller, we can clearly see the difference in perspective and attitude toward women. The way ladies dress in Ramal's picture is more traditional, and their veiling and style of contact with the guy in Ramal's painting differ from the image of Falgir Baghdadi. The way women sit in front of the fortune teller, the less or more open coverage of women by Falgir Baghdadi, and the freer interaction between men and women are all remarkable. The presence of a distinct sort of lady is embodied in the fortune-



telling picture, which shares substance and subject matter with the tablecloth. Two ladies are present in the piece, one of who is middle-aged and the other perhaps young. The middle-aged woman has abandoned her flash, but she still uses the corner of her tent to separate herself from the fortune-teller. The second young woman has taken off her earrings but is covering her face with a veil so that just her eyes are visible. She is separated from the fate teller by a tiny table placed between her and the guy.

Unlike the fortune-telling painting, the space of this piece is fairly hefty and dry. There is no hint of closeness between the individuals, and their gazes do not rotate, causing the elderly gentleman to stare at the ground. This appearance is similar to a colorful photograph. The intricacies are depicted with attention. The faces and bodies appear to be stuck in time.

However, when he compares this work to Kamal-ol-more Molk's recent work, we witness a metamorphosis, and in Kamal-ol-current Molk's work, life is flowing, and it cannot be understood only as a color image. The character placement is more mature and ingrained than in the previous work owing to the sort of lighting and light shadows. Placing a young woman's face in the light in front of a fortune teller's face in the dark with bright shadows might imply their character portrayal.

Conclusion

The Enlightenment and popular revolutions swept Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as economic advancement and scientific discoveries and the transition of Europe into a modern world. The Qajar dynasty ruled Iran at this time. In a few words, 19th century Iran can be described as Iran at the turn of the century, economically poor, backward, sparsely populated, scattered and disconnected in terms of communication, and cut off from the rest of the world in terms of trade, politics, international relations, order and culture.

The social and economic status of Iranian society during the Qajar era, as well as the growing industrialization in the West, prompted certain government officials and educated individuals to consider changes in the country. Abbas Mirza, Crown Prince of Fath Ali Shah, led the initial reform initiatives inside the Qajar monarchy, followed by the Ghaem Magham family, and finally, the society's intellectuals.

Reforms in the country were initially limited to military affairs, and attempts were made to send representatives from such nations to Iran to achieve these advancements through the creation of diplomatic ties with the then industrialized countries. They provided training to Iranian soldiers so that they could withstand foreign attacks and keep their independence. Meanwhile, the ups and downs of European military delegations helped to lay the path for societal and political reform. Furthermore, the visit of Qajar monarchs and politicians to the West cleared the way for the influence of European ideas and thinking, as well as prepared the basis for Iranian society to adopt Western civilization. The early part of the Qajar period saw a trend of traditional Iranian society toward civilization and modernity as government officials and officials became more familiar with the new European mentality.

The establishment of new scientific and educational facilities prompted a desire to translate European publications, and so the translation of European books in numerous subjects began, hastening and facilitating the modernization process in this age. In addition, the transition of the home school system into schools based on the European model, as well as the substitution of new



educational techniques for old ones, cleared the way for a shift in the cultural scope of education. Furthermore, there have been advancements in the sphere of women's rights.

With Nasser al-Din Shah's reign and the increase of links with European societies, Iranian society underwent a transformation. The ubiquity of photography and printing allowed the painter to experiment with many topics. The entrance of European works gave artists from other nations a fresh perspective, new styles, accessories, and methods, while painters' visits to the West gave rise to a new way of thinking in the area of painting. In the face of all these changes, the painter of this century, who has a conventional grounding in the art of painting, seeks to adapt to new trends in this field. The Iranian artist was first influenced by European art; yet, while employing European artists' styles, the spirit of Iranian painting was still obvious in the works, and the artist attempted to achieve a balance between traditional and modern techniques. However, the artist, as a member of society, was able to use his abilities and capacity to pick new ideas from the world and events around him as a result of societal developments that led to the blooming of unique human talents. The taboo of power was considerably undermined during this century, in the shadow of the shift from tradition to modernity, and owing to social, political, cultural, and other developments in numerous domains, the components of power were molded differently. As a result of the formation of these circumstances, the painter was able to develop an individual identity in which he might exercise initiative and creativity and become a simple artisan or a court artist.

A painter who has developed his personality and is in possession of his own identity was able to disregard the ancient tradition's frames and do's and don'ts and chose the topic imaginatively. It is no longer about the paintings of kings and princes in an idealistic and symbolic state; however, the moods and dwellings of the people in the streets and bazaars have been the attention of Iranian painters and artists and have been addressed as the topic of the work, rather than idealistic and symbolic paintings of monarchs and princes. Such motifs may be seen in the works of artists from the Kamal-ol-Molk school.



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