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Comparative Study of the Themes of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh in Old and Contemporary Iranian Miniatures

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Abstract

One of the main sources of Persian painting is literary works. Epic literature, and especially the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, has been noticed more than other literary types because it narrates the chivalry of the kings and national heroes of Iran as well as the Iranian people. In different periods, the Iranian artists benefit the themes of this valuable book; one of the main pillars of Iranian literature. But the encounter of artists to this work varied in different periods. This study examines this encounter. By conducting a case study, this research inspects old Iranian miniatures of Tahmasbi Shahnameh and their adaptation in terms of contents and literary themes with works of contemporary Iranian artists, namely Hossein Behzad, Majid Mehregan, Ardeshir Mojarad Takestani, Mohammad Baqer Aghamiri, and Mahmoud Farshchian. The research has been carried out through descriptive-analytical and comparative approach. The main purpose of this study is finding out how the old and contemporary Iranian painting encounter with the themes of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh as the main basis of Iranian epic literature. Therefore, the present study seeks to answer this question; what are the differences and similarities between the old and contemporary miniatures regarding epic Iranian literature? And what are the causes of these differences and similarities? The findings of this research show that similarities and differences are a function of social and economic conditions and also changing the artist and audiences place.

Keywords: Old miniatures, Contemporary miniatures, Shahnameh Tahmasbi, Ferdowsi.

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Introduction

The literature and art are the main foundations of the culture of the nations, which can be very effective in understanding that culture. Whenever these elements are combined and create an exquisite effect, they are struggling both in their consistency and in maintaining their culture. The history of painting in Iran shows that one of the main sources of inspiration in Iranian art is the rich Persian literature and there is a close relationship between them, so, much of the painting works are in a continuous exchange are formed with literature. In different periods, there has been a close interaction between Iranian literature and painting. But the type of the encounter of the painters has changed in different periods. Until the tenth century, painters were deeply involved with literature, but in the second half of this century, they turned to new experiences beyond the scope of visualization of literary works, and gradually the importance of work, and group system of writing was reduced. In the second half of the tenth century, we encounter a new phenomenon in Iranian painting, and it is a separate and independent painting and drawing. At the very least, the link between literature and painting was loosened especially in Isfahan School. By departing from the book's scope, the painter recorded daily events and landscapes as monographs and designs (Pakbaz, 2006: 157). New paintings are essentially a glance at the past; artists of this stream have tried in various ways to adapt their work to the present, but often used poems by poets such as Ferdowsi, Nizami, Saadi, and so on. Therefore, it seems that in the contemporary period parallel to the developments in literature, the relationship between literature and painting has been different and has been diminished from earlier. This research, in order to better understand the painting of Iran in the old and contemporary period of Iran, aims to study the role of epic literature. Therefore, it seeks to answer these questions that what are the aspects of the difference and similarity of this encounter (epic literature and painting) in ancient and contemporary Iran? What are the causes of these differences and similarities?

Research Methodology

The research method of this research is a descriptive-analytic approach with a comparative approach. First, two cases are presented in the description stage, including the miniatures available for writers, a selection of the Tahmasbi Shahnameh related to the old paintings of the book of Shahnameh by Stuart Cary Welch and works by contemporary painters (Hossein Behzad, Majid Mehregan, Mahmoud Farshchian, Ardeshir Mojarad Takestani). The selected samples are selected from the available works based on the theoretical foundations of the research. Therefore, according to the volume of the paper and the variety of works from the Shahnameh Tahmasbi, 10 images were selected and from the contemporary works, 10 works were selected together. Then it was analyzed with 14 indicators and the similarities and differences were identified.

Iranian Epic Literature

Epic, in Persian language, means bravery and courage and in literary terms a long poem and a narrative that has been written about a serious subject in a formal and elevated style (Daad, 2008: 205). Epic in Arabic means the intensity of work, bravery, and courage also. The epic in Arabic literature was said only to the odes that the poets sing in their honors. In Persian, epic includes all types of martial and heroic stories. The epic poem can be short, which is called an epic anthem in Persian. The long epic poem is called the epic story, which in Persian is also called epic (Khaleghi Motlagh, 2007: 1-3).

The history of Iranian epics from the point of view of Zabihullah Safa comes from the time when the Iranian people came to the Iranian plateau. This tribe is one of the Indo-European nations, gradually scattered from the middle of Asia and the valley to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. When the Aryans came to Iran, they brought stories from their ancestors. Over time, these stories have undergone changes in intellectual and

ideological aspects as well as in the environment. Among these, one can refer to the mythological story of Jamshid, the story of Fereydoun and his son.

Therefore, issues such as national narratives, religious myths, historical facts, the history of Iranian heroes, the description of the struggles and defenses, the heroic stories, territorials, and the aristocratic pride became the source of the development of the national epics of Iran and evolved. Thus, the Iranian national epic, from the days prior to the Aryan migration to Iran, began to emerge as new elements gradually it evolved and developed, and this evolution and development was expanded with social and religious and national events, and narratives and the epic tales, written and oral, which gradually emerged, reached the limit of perfection and greatness at the end of the Sassanian era (Safa, 1954: 85).

According to Safa, the most important historical works of the Sassanid era and a book whose contents have undoubtedly been quoted in a large part of important Islamic histories of the third and fourth centuries and subsequent periods is "Khwaday-Namag" which means king is a new pronoun in the Pahlavi language. God's Word or the Shahnameh in Pahlavi's language was a book in the history of Iran from the Keyumars to Sassanid kings, in which stories, national and religious narratives, and historical facts were gathered. The origin of these stories was Avesta and the ancient oral stories. These stories were gradually perfected, and some religious myths were added to them, and the dynasty of kings and pilgrims was arranged and ordered, and then generations came into existence, which could be edited in historical books, and with such a way went to Khwaday-Namag. For Safa, epic poems are often based on written narratives, namely, the Shahnameh or the news of the kings that existed in the fourth and fifth centuries in Khorasan, but the source of those prose books, beyond some of the papers and documents previously written in the language, were Pahlavi or Arabic translations of oral narratives based on a group of narrators from Khorasan, Sistan, and Transoxiana. But the main source of all the fictional and historical books of the fourth and fifth centuries, with which the epic poems were made, was narratives and written Ahadith protected in large families. Gradually, the results of the studies of scholars appeared in large books in the narratives of Iranian stories and history in Persian, called Shahnameh, or in the names of great archers such as Garshasp Nameh and Faramarz Nameh and so on. These books form the basis of the true Persian epic poems. The Shahnameh books are written in imitation of Khwaday-Namag, and their name is the same as the translation of Khwaday-Namag in Pahlavi, the Shahnameh. Among them, it can be referred to Abolmouid's Shahnameh, Abu Ali Balkhi Shahnameh, Abu Mansour Mohammad bin Abdul Razzaq Shahnameh (Safa, 1954: 88-89).

Ferdowsi's Shahnameh

Prior to Ferdowsi, Massoudi Marwazi was the first to turn Persian epic narratives into the Persian verse. His Shahnameh was the first one which deals with national issues. Iranians thought of this work as their national history and was very respected by them (Ravandi, 2004: 131-134). Daqiqi the great poet of Iran wrote the Shahnameh of Abu Mansouri and soon became famous, but he did not create the only thousand couplets of Goshtasp and Arjassp, that was killed by one of his servants and could not finish this great work, and Ferdowsi continued it (Safa, 1954: 90-92).

The largest epic and historical epic poem in Iran is Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, one of the largest and most beautiful epic works of the world. The work of it lasted for about thirty years. The subject of Shahnameh is the history of ancient Iran from the beginning of the civilization of the Iranian race to the extinction of its reign by the Arabs (Khaleghi Motlagh, 2012: 134-135). This historical period of Iran is divided into fifty Shah's periods, and in total it can be distinguished three distinct periods: mythological, heroic and historical periods. The mythological period is of the Keyumars period, Houshang and Tahmourth, and Jamshid and Zahak until the advent of Fereydoun. This period is the time when the government is found and people find food and clothing and housing, and the discovery of fire and the learning of agriculture and craft. In this

period, the struggle between human beings and the Demons is the basis of the stories that this struggle finally ended in favor of human beings. In the heroic period the description of the uprising of Kaveh Ahangar and Fereydoun, the son of Abtine, is against Zahak's uprisings. This period begins from the Kaveh uprising and ends with the murder of Rostam and the monarchy of Bahman son of Esfandiar. This is the most important and best part of the Shahnameh and the real epic part of Iran and contains the finest example of Persian poetry. The historical period is the third part of the Shahnameh, which in this period narratives and fictitious imagery, and extraordinary people make habits and abnormalities almost disappear and the historical subjects and facts are replaced by them, and the national epic finds a historical method (Safa, 1954: 204-216).

Iran's Miniature

The discussion of old Persian art often brings the miniature art to the minds. The most famous examples of Iranian visual art can be found on the pages of "Manuscripts" and "Muraqqa". The peak of this art was from the eighth to the eleventh century, but the works of the prehistoric and postmodern monuments such as wall painting, screen printing, Qalamdars (pen cases) etc. in the later centuries are also less well-known as Persian paintings (Pakbaz, 2008: 575).

The naming style of Iranian painting schools have been based on the centrality of the ruling empire, wherever the place was the concentration of power and the accumulation of wealth and the seat of government of the country, artists from all around, willingly or reluctantly or by compulsion came there. This method of naming and categorizing Iranian painting schools has been popularized by Western scholars which has become more or less commonplace in Iranian studies (Tavousi, 2011: 7).

Roueen Pakbaz divides the history of Iranian old painting into three distinct but continuous periods. The continuation of the ancient traditions of the first century AD to the thirteenth century of this long period of excellence of Asian traditions in Iranian painting has begun since the Parthians. From this time on, the two-dimensional specializations and the way of representing the bodies through the shaping lines and colored surfaces of the flat, as well as the use of plant and geometric arrays are among the general principles of Iranian painting. The themes of these works are mostly the scenes of hunting, the symmetrical roles of the angel riders and elements such as the tree and the ivy appeared in Parthian and Sassanid wall paintings many times. In the era of Arab domination and the invasion of the Mongols, the tendency toward Central Asian traditions and the influence of Manichaeism can be observed.

The second period is the flourishing of painting, which dates back to the late thirteenth century until the late seventeenth century. This period of influence has become less of a foreigner, and the emergence of the more authentic schools can be observed. This period begins with the domination of the Mongols in Iran and coincides with the Timurid era and the peak years of the Safavid authority. In this period, with the Kings' support of art and painters, mostly literary books were illustrated. With the arrival of the Mongols in Iran, it was possible for the painting of China to reach Iran. In Shiraz, which was protected from the assault of the Mongols, the image traditions before the Mongols continued. But in Tabriz, the capital of the Mongolian Ilkhanid, an eclectic art composed of Chinese, Byzantine, and Iranian elements emerged, one of the masterpieces of this period, which can be found in the Shahnameh of Demot. The influence of Iranian painting on the oriental painting brought the poetic attitude to nature. In the late Safavid school of Isfahan, the style based on the allegorical space and the use of the pure line and color was reduced and somehow changed the linear design. This was a complete non-observance of the principles and conventions of the past and the choice of new subjects due to the loosening of the link between painting and poetry and the emergence of unauthorized functions in the book.

The third period was the development of eclectic practices, which included the late seventeenth to late nineteenth century. This period of traditional painting was adapted from European naturalism to new forms. During this period, relations between Iran and Europe are growing, and this acquaintance with European art leads to the emergence of a Europe where, along with their acquaintance with Europe and their art, direct contact with European painters residing in Isfahan draws paintings of the New Jolfa and Indian Mughal also included. The court iconography during this period is another branch of this evolution (Pakbaz, 2008: 575-577).

Contemporary Miniatures of Iran

In the early days of Reza Shah's (1878- 1944) reign in Iran, a part of the cultural renewal program was devoted to the revival of traditional arts and crafts, and as a result, a new movement was created in painting. A group of old painters and industrialists rose and competed with the current trend of academic realism and a semi-photo which as influenced by the European painting. New miniatures have a look of the past, but artists have tried to adapt their work to the taste of time. As a result, some distinctive features have emerged in the new painting. For example, faces became more beautiful and diverse as well as more Iranian. Artists also tried to introduce the color, the environment and the agents of the current world into their works. The contemporary miniature was officially begun by Hadi Tajvidi, and the most significant face was Hossein Behzad (Pakbaz, 2006: 187-198).

Selected Works in this Research

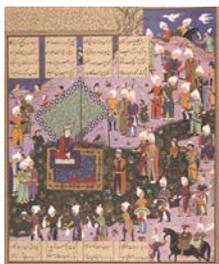
The works of this research have been selected from Shahnameh Tahmasbi, one of the most valuable illustrated manuscripts of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. This work was written at the Shah Tahmasb I Safavid (Tenth Anniversary) in Tabriz. The most prominent painters of that era are Sultan Mohammad, Aghamirk, Mirmousor, Mirseyed Ali, Mozafar Ali and several others who have participated in the compilation of 258 ones. King Tahmasb donated this precious book to Ottoman Sultan Selim (Pakbaz, 2008: 328).

Of the valuable illustrations of this book, 10 works from Shahnameh by Stuart Cary Welch have been selected on various subjects, as listed in Table 1. In this table, the features that are relevant to the subject matter have been studied, which includes the work, title of the work, descriptive, literary themes, and the explanations for each image are in the final column of this table.

Table 1. Encountering Epic Literature and Old Painting

	Work	Work Title	Work Description	Literary Themes	Explanations
1		Ferdowsi at Ghaznavi's court	Asadi, Onasori, and Farokhi, with Ferdowsi at Mahmoud Ghaznavi's court	Introducing Ferdowsi and showing his skills against the three great poets of the Ghaznavi's court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addressing details - Complete the details by introducing the storytelling in the text - Real story, not fantasy or mythical - Image and subject coordination

2		Ferdowsi's story from the Islam	Allegory of Islam to the ship and the only way to save the man	Expressing religious belief in the form of parody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addressing the full details expressed in poetry in the picture - Bringing the narration in the text - Expression of beliefs in the form of a real allegory - Image and subject coordination
3		Keyumars Court	Description Keyumars Court The First Iranian King and the Feasts of the Court's	Historical Expression of the Kingdom of Iran (Describing the Court of Keyumars, the First King of Iran)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See details in the picture above the text - Historical description of government in Iran - Bring text in the image - Subject and image coordination
4		Sade Feats	Describing Houshang (the successor to Keyumars) and Describing the Importance of Fire	Describing the Intelligence and Courage of Houshang, the successor to Keyumars, How to Kill Dive, the Fire, and Its Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present the historical trend of the kingdom of Iran - The myth on how to get to the kingdom and discovery the fire - More important to the king to the fire itself in the pictured and selected poems, not the reason - Addressing details and expressing its validity
5		Defeating Tahmuras Divan	Describes Tahmuras's courage and skill in defeating Ahriman	The king's battle court with evil and evil deeds and the Divan as its symbol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addressing details - Image and text coordination - The use of myth themes - Trying to apply all the details on one page

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The battle of the king and the forces of evil
6		Fereydun tests his sons	Fereydun examines his three sons in a war with the dragon	A powerful dragon's description and the pride of three sons of Fereydun and its defeat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of the symbolic powers of the myth as the evil force - The skill and cleverness of kings and princes against evil forces - Addressing details - Use the rotation order in the form and break the box - Emphasis on the brilliance of the princes
7		Zal arrives at the Mehrab's house in Kabul	Zal arrives at Kabul	Mehrab character is described and Zal goes to Kabul to marry Roodabeh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - True story based on happiness. - Addressing details - Text and image coordination - Description of the House of Happiness
8		Quarter of Rostam: Rostam kills the Magic Woman	Forth Khan of Rostam: killing Magic Woman	The description of the fourth Khan of Rostam and his vigilance against the magic woman as evil devil who had become a beautiful woman who intended to kill Rostam, but with the name of God This trap was released	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rostam's heroic deeds description - Use of good and evil symbols - Use the myth - Awareness of the hero - Use epic elements

9		Nowzar's Battle	The War of the Qarren of the Commanders of Nozar with Afrasiyab	Explaining the Battle of the Heroes and the Surrender of fate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addressing to the details - Image and text coordination - Based on the historical story of Shahnameh
10		Golbad was killed by Fariborz	Fariborz, son of Kikavos, of kill Golbad of Turan troops	Two commanders from the Iranian and Turan Corps fought on the sidelines of the war. Both of these territories were fought and the Iranian commander raised his flag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The historical aspect of Shahnameh - Good and evil campaign - Brave Iranian - Address detail in the picture

In the study of the miniatures of Shahnameh Tahmasbi, common features are observed. All of these works are in a collection of a book and are not independent. In all these works, the artist was bound to use the text of the lyrics in the image, so the artist's hand was limited in addressing the subject and depicted the exact scene in detail. In other words, since the images belong to a book, the works are in the form of narrative and dynamical sequences and have followed Ferdowsi's Shahnameh process. In the image itself, both the title of the work and its image processing are in the form of a narrative, as an example, it can be noted in Fig. 10 of Table 1 that Golbad was killed by Fariborz. It is from the margins of Iran and Turan's war. This marginal battle is depicted in the image without the troops, as well as the death of the Golbad and the manner of the incident is quite clear.

He drew a blade on his neck
It was two halves to tune in
Come down from the horse and open the strap
Take Golbad from the horse
Loosen from him the steel strap
(Ferdowsi, 1994: 118)

The artist, according to the poems, has illustrated this event. "Blade on his neck", "Two halves", "Taken up to the tension", "Falling from the horse", "take from the horse" are the elements used by the artist and with full details and complete harmony, the imagery is embodied and from that narrative is made.

Other common features of these pictures can be the common themes of the battle of good and evil, the battle of the national hero with super-elements such as dragon and witch woman (figure number 8), also the issue of kings (figure number 5). In these works, the mythological parts of Shahnameh and its historical parts are used.

Addressing the tales of the Iranian kings and national heroes is another common feature of these paintings, which has been made in a small, skilled style.

Contemporary Iranian Painting

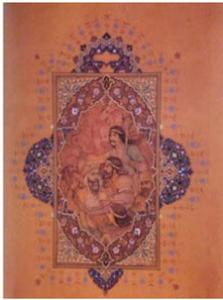
The constitutional movement, its social and cultural consequences, and the wave of it affected literature and painting. In the early days of Reza Shah's reign, a part of the Cultural Renovation program was devoted to the revival of traditional arts and crafts; as a result, a new movement was created in painting. A group of old painters and artificers with the current trend of academic realism and a semi-photo influenced by European painting was completed with which was the influence of it. The late Qajar and the early rule of Reza Shah continued to be a reproduction of the copy of the Isfahan school. Some cultural renewal programs have begun to revive traditional arts and a new movement in painting. Thus, a generation of old painters competes with the academic method while influenced by it.

The new painting was officially started with Hadi Tajvidi, who taught at Sanaye Mostazrefeh Conservatory. Outside the conservatory, Hossein Behzad in Tehran and people such as Hossein Haj Mosor Al-Maleki and Mirza Aqa Imami in Esfahan had significant artistic activity. Isa Bahadori was head of the Isfahan Conservatory in Isfahan, and under his supervision, masterminded artist such as Mahmoud Farshchian and Houshang Jazizadeh were trained. The Conservatory of Fine Arts of Tehran later developed under the direction of Hossein Taherzadeh Behzad, and with the training of great professors it was able to make a big contribution to the modernization of the life of traditional visual arts. Among the artists of the next generation are Majid Mehregan and Abbas Susanabadi. In the current period, with the activities of artists such as Mohammad Baqer Aghamiri, Ardeshir Mojarad Takestani and Mohammad Ali Rajabi, it was able to give a new boom to the peripheral activities of contemporary painting and make it more dynamic (Pakbaz, 2006: 187-198). Table 2 deals with the selected works of contemporary Iranian art.

Table 2. Encountering Epic Literature and Contemporary Painting

	Work	Work Title/ Artist	Work Description	Literary Themes	Explanations
1		Rostam and Sohrab/ Hossein Behzad	Battle of Rustam and Sohrab	The battle between the father and the boy who does not know each other and the son is killed by his father	-Not paying attention to details -Depending on the text in the image -Switching the margin and addressing the main subject

2		Kaveh Blacksmith's uprising / Hosein Behzad	Kaveh Ahangar revolt against Zahak Mardoush	Kaveh is the symbol of the hardworking and oppressed people who rise up against oppression and win.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of attention to the text -Attention to individuals -Not paying attention to details -Not binding on the text in the image -Eliminating margins and addressing the core issue
3		Goshtasb and Dragons/ Majid Mehregan	War with the dragon Qaiser's bet for the marriage of Goshtasb with Katayun, the third daughter of the Qaisar of the Roman	Goshtasb in defeating the dragon and kills it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the center of his hometown - War of a hero with a fantasy and powerful creature - The theme of the national chapel - Not paying attention to details and margins
4		Battle of Rostam and Div / Majid Mehregan	The encounter of Rostam in Haf Khan battle and kills him	Rostam's passing from Haft Khan to save King Keykavous of Iran. Rostam fights with Div and kills him.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not pay attention to details - Emphasis on the power of the hero - Do not go to the margins and focus on the main subject - Pay attention to the hero of heroic actions
5		Goshtasf The Hero / Mohamad Baqer Aghamiri	Goshtasb's victory on the dragon	Description of heroic deeds of Goshtasp and killing the dragon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasize the hero and his heroic deeds -Use imaginary creatures - Main theme is the national champion

6		Epic Fereydoun/ Mohamad Baqer Aghamiri	The uprising of Fereydoun and Kaveh against Zahak	Fereydoun and Kaveh rose up among the people and rose up against Zahak's oppression and defeated him.	-The general theme and not paying attention to details -No using the text in the image -The theme of the national heroes
7		Zal and Simorgh / Ardeshir Takestani	The life of Zal son of Sam along with Simorgh on Alborz Mountain	Sam took his son Zal through his appearance, with white hair on his head and face, in fear of blaming people to the Alborz mountains and Simorgh grew up him like his children,	- Do not use the box and the margin - General Issue - Addressing a scene, not a narrative - Using the main subject and not paying attention to details
8		Siavash / Ardeshir Takestani	Siavash and his horse Shabrang	Siavash, the son of Kavous, is one of the most oppressed characters in Shahnameh who taught heroism from Rostam	- The main topic in the center - No margin and details - Image is not narrative
9		Battle of Sohrab and Gordafarid / Farshchian	Battle of Sohrab and Gordafarid Iranian female warrior	Gordafarid was Gojdaham's daughter, fought with Sohrab and was captured by her, but managed to defeat Sohrab	- No use of text in the image - The subject of a woman - By her deception the general issue and lack of detail
10		Rostam and Dragon Wars / Farshchian	Battle of Rostam and Rakhsh with Dragon	Explanation of the Rostam Pahlavani and killing the Dragon with the help of Rakhsh in Khan III, on the way to reach Mazandaran and	- Not affiliated with the text inside the image. - Emphasize the hero and his arrogant actions - Use imaginary creatures - Theme of the national champion

				save Kikavos, King of Iran	- By her deception the general issue and lack of detail
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In the works selected by contemporary artists, there are common features. Selected works are depicted in a single-image format and removed from the scope of the book and the artist has been limited to the title of work and has refused to bring the text in work. What is important in these works is the subject of the work. For example, in the works of Majid Mehregan (Figures 3 and 4), only the subject matter has been addressed and the marginal detail has been avoided. In these works, the protagonists and the alertness of the national heroes against evil symbols are discussed. Among other features of this work, the woman was referred to as the subject of the work, as can be seen in Figure 9, which is the battle of Gordafarid and Sohrab.

For example, in miniature no. 2 of Table 2, entitled "Kaveh Resurrection," depicts the story of a revolutionary man named Kaveh Ahangar who stood up against Zahak Mardoush's oppression. People have been paid special attention in this work, and Kaveh is all the more prominent. The group that has fallen is those who have disappeared from Zahak, but Kaveh, who has risen from them and with his courage and science, have called for opposition to Zahak and has given fear and terror on the face of Zahak Mardoush. There is no text in this textbook and it only by knowing the story and narration of Shahnameh that one can notice its content. There is no mention of the details of the old type of painting, and the theme of the subject and its people are considered.

Table 3. Similarities of old and contemporary miniatures of Iran in encountering with the epic literature

	Index	Old miniatures	Contemporary miniatures	Description
1	Importance to the poet	✓	✓	In both periods, Ferdowsi has been considered as a poet of poetry, such as Old No.1 and No. 2 in Contemporary
2	Using the historical aspect	✓	✓	In both periods, artists have used the historical process of Iran alongside the aesthetic and imaginative, such as the 10th image of the old selected paintings and the number 3 of contemporary art.
3	The issue of national hero	✓	✓	National heroes such as Rostam are the subject of the old and contemporary miniatures.
4	Symbolic battle of good and evil	✓	✓	In both periods, symbolic battle can be seen: Rostam and Div, Rostam and Dragon

5	The battle of man with man	✓	✓	In both of the paintings, there are themes of the battle between Iran and Turan and their armies.
6	Using myths	✓	✓	In both periods, artists have used myths that have taken an important part in the epic literature.

Table 4. The Differences between old and contemporary miniatures in Iran encountering with epic literature

	Index	Old miniatures	New miniatures	Description
1	Women's Submission as a Theme	-	✓	In the selected old artworks of this research, women are not the main subject of work, while contemporary ones it can be seen (see Figure 9 in Contemporary Painting).
2	Expression of religious aspects	✓	-	In the image of Old No. 2, the subject of Shi'ism is discussed and in contemporary art, this theme is not seen.
3	Social customs	✓	-	Sadeh feast In the figure 4 of the old works.
4	Existence of text in image	✓	-	In all of the old images selected, this research uses text in the image, but not in contemporary ones.
5	To pay attention to detail	✓	-	Use of pictorial details such as trees, flowers, plants, animals, people and ... along with the main theme in old paintings such as Figure 3, but such details are not seen in contemporary works.
6	The subject of the king'	✓	-	Kings in the old paintings have been the subject of many paintings, but in the contemporary painter, at least in the selected works of this research are not seen.
7	The general theme	-	✓	In the old works, the story is depicted in detail, as in Figure 7, but in contemporary ones, only a general theme is presented (see Figure 4).
8	Narrative themes	✓	-	In the old painting, the main subject is expressed in narrative form, while the themes

				are depicted in single-image in contemporary painting.
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Conclusion

According to the indices set forth in Table 3 and 4, there are similarities and differences in encountering epic literature and old and contemporary Iranian miniatures. The research findings indicate that among the 14 indicators listed in Table 3, six similarities and eight differences were identified. From the works of these two groups of works, the indicators such as the issue of national hero, honoring and paying attention to the poet (Ferdowsi), the use of myth, the use of the historical aspect of Shahnameh, the symbolic battle of good and evil, the battle of people with each other, are the similarities.

Differences between these two groups of works are also on the indicators, such as paying attention to details in the old paintings such as Figure 8 of Table 1, which deals with the issue of the death of the Golbad by Fariborz, all the details of the incident are in the picture. Fereydoun and Golbad fight fiercely with each other in front of the armies and in the battles of war; Fereydoun with the sword, he has eliminated his opponent, and their fight was on the horse, and Fereydoun's strike has hit Golbad's neck. However, in contemporary works, the only major issue is that such as Figure 4 of Table 2, which is the only main subject of the Rostam and Dragon war, and other details are avoided. Therefore, in contemporary painting, it can be concluded that the subject is more important than the narrative of the story, and in the old paintings, this is the opposite. One of the reasons that can be said about this is the dependence of old artworks to the book, while contemporary painting has been done in a single-image format and removed from the scope of the book.

In the old miniatures the poems taken from are depicted in the picture, and this feature can also be classified as a detail in these types of illustrations. But in contemporary painting, we do not see this, and it seems that the contemporary artist has shared his audience in understanding the work of art and has given him a special position. The issue of women is seen in contemporary scenes, but this was not the case in the selected works of old miniatures. In the old miniatures, some of social customs such as the celebration of the Sadeh, as well as the religion and exhortation of the Mohammad (peace be upon him), appear in the selected paintings, which could be a function of the official Islam which took place during Safavid times.

Both old and contemporary Iranian miniatures have been influenced by socio-economic conditions. For example, the subject of the kings' position as the main theme in the Shahnameh titles was Shah Tahmasbi, that portrayed is the court of kings and their wars and promises, along with the names of national heroes such as Rostam but relatively less. While contemporary painting, which has understood the kingdom less and it is influence of by events leading to the revolution and national heroes, has benefited from national figures derived from Shahnameh such as Rostam and Sohrab.

Other examples of this comparative study are the interpretation of the artwork depicted in the old paintings depicted according to the poems and details, to a narrative that was intended for the arts, such as the Figure 8 from Table 1. But in contemporary painting, if the title of the work is taken, different interpretations of it will be created which is close to or far from the artist's intentions. As an example, the Figure 8 of Table 2 noted that regardless of the title, in the minds of the audience, some interpretations such as Sohrab, Ali Akbar, and ... are created which, with the main title, "Siavash" is very different. Therefore, these analyzes can be shown in the Table 5.

Table 5. Matching the indices of Iranian old and contemporary painting encountering with epic literature

Old miniatures	Contemporary miniatures
Narrative- oriented	Subject-oriented
An interpretation	Many interpretations
Doing work in a group	Personalize work style
Dependent on the book	Independent from the book
The kings and their deeds are the main themes	National and religious heroes and revolutionary and heroic deeds are the themes

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