

Persian translation of this paper entitled:
بررسی وجوه شکل‌گیری مرقع هفت اورنگ ابراهیم میرزا صفوی با رویکرد تحلیل گفتمان نورمن فرکلاف
is also published in this issue of journal.

Original Research Article

Discourse Study of the Formation of Haft Awrang (Seven thrones) Ebrahim Mirza Safavi by Norman Fairclough's Discourse Analysis Approach*

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Received: 19/12/2024;

accepted: 21/02/2025;

availableonline:21/03/2025

Abstract

Problem statement: Persian painting (Miniature) is one of the rich sources of Iranian art and Islamic civilization, with the Safavid period being the most brilliant era in Islamic art. Studying the works of this period is important for recognizing cultural and identity background of Iran and its influences on Islamic art. The “Haft Awrang “ by Ibrahim Mirza, known as Jami Freer, is the last outstanding illustrated manuscript (muraqqa) with royal standards, created under the patronage of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza during the Safavid period. This manuscript was created amidst political and social changes during the reign of Shah Tahmasp and limitations imposed on the support of art and artists. It seems to have been created in a free region, away from the prevailing transformations and ideologies of its time.

Research objective: This research, through a historical and discursive perspective and by study the contextual and social-cultural factors, aims to investigate the factors influencing the formation of Ibrahim Mirza's “ Haft Awrang “ manuscript based on the discourse analysis approach within the theoretical framework of Norman Fairclough in three levels: description, interpretation, and explanation and is developmental in objective.

Research method: This research is descriptive-historical-analytical in terms of purposes, relying on historical review and information obtained from the social and political contexts of the time when Ibrahim Mirza's manuscript was formed. The research method of analysis is qualitative.

Conclusion: By historically examining the contextual and social factors in the formation of the manuscript and analyzing them within Norman Fairclough's framework, it was found that Ibrahim Mirza, due to his political position, royal relations, and different worldview, played a central role in the creation of this work. Additionally, the political and religious changes in the Safavid ruling power influenced the themes, images, and content of the manuscript, resulting in an artistic work with distinct characteristics compared to its time.

Keywords: “Haft awrang” manuscript, Ibrahim Mirza, Persian painting (Miniature), Safavid, discourse analysis, Norman Fairclough, Muraqqa creation.

*This article extracted from Master's thesis of “Samaneh Naghieh” entitled “Discourse study of Haft Awrang Ebrahim Mirza Safavi by Norman Fairclough's discourse analysis approach” that under supervision

of Dr. “Hojat Amani” which has been done at Sepehr Higher Education Institute of Isfahan, Faculty of Art, Isfahan, Iran in 2024.

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Introduction

Persian miniature painting is one of the richest sources of Iranian art, and Iranian miniatures reflect the artistic, human, and social characteristics of the environment in which they were created. To understand the internal structure of artworks and to examine the extent and manner of the influence and impact of artwork on the society in which it was created, studies in art sociology are necessary. Nowadays, with new analytical methods, outstanding artistic works, in addition to their valuable technical position and artistic quality, provide the ability to interpret the culture and insights of their people and society. Understanding the artworks of Persian miniature, especially from the Safavid period, is significant as it represents one of the brightest periods of Iranian art and Islamic civilization.

One of the characteristics of the Safavid era is the political, religious, and economic transformations, along with its flourishing artistic life, supported by the kings and princes of the Safavid court. The Safavid kings, aware of the power of art to strengthen their rule, supported the arts. However, this support varied due to the changing political, social, and cultural conditions. After Shah Tahmasp's turn away from art and the imposition of many restrictions on artists, Prince Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, one of the prominent artistic figures of the Safavid princes, made significant efforts to support and preserve the art of this period. The *Haft Awrang* of Ibrahim Mirza, created in his library and in the Mashhad school, stands out from contemporary works with its innovative and creative illustrations. Considering that Persian miniature painting reflects the cultural layers of its time, and sociological analysis provides a more positivist approach compared to purely historical research, this study aims to explore the potential of illustrated works in identifying the social and political conditions of a specific period in Iranian history. From a sociological perspective, the roots of artistic events are linked to social values and community events. The sociology of art accepts the premise that artistic works do not emerge in a

vacuum but are socially created. Therefore, to understand other dimensions of artistic works and how they are formed, an interdisciplinary approach is needed that combines text analysis and social analysis.

Theoretical Foundations

• Miniature painting and the support of art in the safavid period

The Safavid dynasty is one of the most influential dynasties in Islamic-Iranian art. The Safavids placed great importance on painting, resulting in artworks of this period characterized by delicacy and innovation, heavily influenced by the art of preceding eras, particularly the Timurid period. Iran during the Safavid era underwent significant political, social, and cultural transformations, and Safavid kings always sought to maintain a balance among the various political groups in the country. This led to complex relationships between the people, the rulers, and the artists of the time. The Safavid kings and princes placed considerable value on art and artists, but their support was not always stable and varied depending on the power and attention of the rulers during different periods. The role of art patrons during this period was crucial in the expansion and quality of Iranian painting. A turning point in the history of Iranian painting was established by Shah Ismail I, who transferred artists from Herat such as Behzad to Tabriz (Azhand, 2008, 367). Among the royal family, figures such as Shah Tahmasp, Sam Mirza, Bahram Mirza, and Prince Abu'l-Fath Sultan Ibrahim Mirza were significant patrons of the arts. Their connection to the artistic and cultured court of Herat, along with their personal vision, talent, and interest, led to an unprecedented flourishing of art during the Safavid era (Suchak, 2008, 33). Valuable manuscripts such as the *Shahnameh* of Shah Tahmasp, the *Khamsa* of Nizami, and the *Haft Awrang* of Ibrahim Mirza were illustrated during this period.

• The Haft Awrang of Ibrahim Mirza

The *Haft Awrang* of Ibrahim Mirza is one of the

famous manuscripts of the Safavid period and a masterpiece of the Mashhad school of miniature which commissioned by Ibrahim Mirza between the years 963 to 972 AH. It contains 28 miniatures without any signatures or dates and is housed in the Freer Gallery of Art's Islamic collection in Washington, D.C., also known as the "Jami Freer" (Azhand, 2015, 163). This is the most beautiful illustrated version of the Haft Awrang by Mowlana Nur al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Jami, a mystic, poet, scholar, Sufi, and follower of the Naqshbandi order in the 9th century AH, encompassing his most prominent didactic thoughts. The Jami Freer was written over nine years by five calligraphers: Shah Mahmood Neishaburi, Rustam Ali (Behzad's nephew), Moheb Ali (Rustam Ali's son), Malek Deylami, and Sultan Mohammad Khandan. The illumination and illustration apparently began after the writing was completed. The artists and illuminators of this artwork include Aqa Mirak, Muzaffar Ali, Mirza Ali, Abdullah Muzahhib Shirazi, Ali Asghar Kashani, and Sheikh Mohammad (Azhand, 2015, 147).

- **Abu'l-Fath Sultan Ibrahim Mirza (947-985 AH)** who was a Safavid prince, the son of Bahram Mirza (Shah Tahmasp's brother), and a prominent figure in the culture and art of the Safavid era, held a high position with Shah Tahmasp and was appointed governor of Mashhad at the age of 16. The creation of the Haft Awrang Jami Freer in his royal library is a testament to his dedication and enthusiasm for supporting the arts and artists. The Mashhad school, one of the Safavid miniature painting schools and considered a transitional period from classical to new styles of Iranian painting, flourished under Ibrahim Mirza's patronage in Khorasan.

- **Discourse analysis and Norman Fairclough's Discourse Theory**

Discourse analysis is a set of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used in various types of studies and to explore different social domains (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2021, 17). Interdisciplinary analysis can describe, interpret, and explain the text

or situation considering all existing and possible relationships and connections (Bashir, 2020, 20). Norman Fairclough's theory is one of the most famous theories in the field of discourse, which examines the relationship between internal and external criteria of the text and the dominant power of the society in which the work was created and his approach is text-oriented. He identifies text, interaction, and social context as three elements of discourse and suggests three stages for his method of discourse analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough, 2007, 117). The description stage focuses on the themes, relationships, and apparent identities of the text. The interpretation stage analyzes the cognitive processes of the participants and their interactions, clarifying the interaction between text and context. Texts are created and interpreted based on common-sense assumptions, which are part of the contextual knowledge and give value to textual features (Fairclough, 1989, 140). The explanation stage pertains to the processes of creating and interpreting discourse. At this level, the text is considered part of the social activity process and is analyzed concerning the social background and context. One of Fairclough's distinctive features is designing a three-layered model for discourse analysis, which encompasses three levels:

- Text (speech, writing, visual forms, or a combination of these).
- Discourse practice, which includes the creation and consumption of texts.
- Social practice (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2021, 120).

Research Background

Research on Ibrahim Mirza's Haft awrang has been conducted from historical and formal-structural perspectives of the illustrations. The article "Semantic Analysis of the Old Tree Motif in the Illustration of Alexander's Nosebleed and His Rest from Jami's Haft Awrang" (Rahmati, Zakariyaye Kermani, 2022) uses semiotics to analyze the text and image to uncover the implicit meanings of the old tree motif in the mentioned illustration.

The article “Comparative Study of Paradigm in the Illustrations of the Freer Haft Awrang and the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp, Analyzed Based on the Theory of Reflection” (Hashemi, 2021) examines the differences in the frame’s function in the Haft Awrang and Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp illustrations, with a sociological analysis of these changes based on the theory of reflection. The article “Analysis of the Book Illustration Process of the Jami’s Haft Awrang Preserved in the Freer Collection, Known as the Jami Freer” (Safarian & Changiz, 2020) studied the book illustration process of this manuscript. The article “Folkloric Analysis of Color in the Cultural Context of the Safavid Era” (Farrokhfar & Taher, 2021) examined the use of color within the Iranian cultural context in the Haft awrang illustrations. The article “Analysis of the Relationship between the Perceptual System of Artists and Social Factors in the Early Safavid Era” (Afarin, 2019) analyzed the sociological factors influencing the perceptual system of artists of this work, discussing artistic conventions, the Safavids’ historical conceptions of nature, and the preferences of Ibrahim Mirza and internal and external competitions as results of this change. The article “Structural Analysis of the Illustrations of Jami’s Haft Awrang in Sultan Ibrahim Mirza’s Artistic Workshop” (Aziminejad, et al., 2017) provided an analytical examination of the form, structure, and composition of the Haft Awrang illustrations in the context of the Mashhad style’s characteristics. The book “The Tabriz and Mashhad-Qazvin Schools of Miniature Painting” (Azhand, 2015) explored the Mashhad school and the historical background of Ibrahim Mirza and the artists of the Haft awrang Freer. The book “Iranian Poetry and Painting, Patronage of Iranian Art” (Simpson, 2003) described the twenty-eight illustrations of Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft awrang, providing brief explanations for each illustration. In the reviewed sources and studies, some research addresses general features while others examine various dimensions. However, none have analyzed

the emergence of this manuscript from a discourse analytical perspective. Consequently, this research aims to investigate the formation and emergence of Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft Awrang using Norman Fairclough’s discourse analysis approach.

Research Methodology

Considering that Persian miniature painting reflects the internal cultural layers of its time, Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft awrang is a collection of painted images and literary texts that reflect the social and cultural discourses of its era. Hence, this research delves into the sociology of art and interdisciplinary discourse analysis studies, aiming to integrate text analysis and social analysis with a specific historical and discursive method and approach. This research employs Norman Fairclough’s discourse analysis approach to investigate the emergence and formation of Jami’s Haft awrang, which is a developmental study in terms of its objective and descriptive-historical-analytical in nature. According to Fairclough’s method, at first, the study described the general features of the text in Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft awrang, and then at the interpretation level, it examined the processes that created the text and events within it. By conducting historical analysis and interpreting the obtained information, the explanation level explores how the work was shaped based on the dominant discourse in society. This research relies on historical analysis and information gathered from the social, cultural, and political contexts during the formation of Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft awrang as a document for investigating and explaining its formation aspects, and the research method is qualitative.

The Life of Ibrahim Mirza

Sultan Ibrahim Mirza Safavi was one of the cultured and sophisticated princes of the Safavid dynasty. From birth to the age of ten, he lived with his father, and after his father’s death, he was under the care and guardianship of his aunt, Mahin Banu, also known as Princess Sultanam

Khanum, the sister of Shah Tahmasp and Bahram Mirza (Afwashita & Ashraghi 1994, 37). Shah Tahmasp, noticing that Ibrahim Mirza showed no signs of ambition during his upbringing in the court, appointed him as the governor of Mashhad, a crucial city in the Khorasan province (Hosseini Qomi, 2004, V.2, 381), and out of great respect, married one of his daughters, Princess Gohar Begum, to him.

During his adolescence in Tabriz, Ibrahim Mirza benefited from the companionship of numerous artists in the court, and Shah Tahmasp devoted himself with a special interest to his education and encouragement (Simpson, 2003, 16). However, in the second phase of Shah Tahmasp's reign, changes occurred in the Shah's character as a patron of the arts, leading him to piety and zeal, causing his disinterest in the arts. In 963 AH, Shah Tahmasp issued a decree, "The Repentant Free from Sin," prohibiting the promotion of any non-spiritual art throughout the realm (Kenbay, 2010, 85). The radical tendencies of this period led to the dominance of Shiite religious themes in the artworks, which explains the commissioning of falnameh manuscripts during the second period of Shah Tahmasp's reign. Shah Tahmasp, aiming to balance power, shifted his support towards the clergy, leading to a reduction in financial support for various social classes, including artists. Consequently, some artists left Iran in search of new patrons, heading to the Mughal court in India or to the court of Ibrahim Mirza, where they worked in his library, establishing a new center for artistic creation (Azhand, 2015, 24). Carrie Welch writes about this: "Despite his intense zeal, Shah Tahmasp was enamored with his nephew Ibrahim Mirza, sending remaining court artists to serve him and refraining from interfering in his library matters. However, Shah Tahmasp's feelings towards Ibrahim Mirza fluctuated. When in a good mood, he indirectly enjoyed pleasures denied to himself through Ibrahim Mirza, but when out of sorts, he withheld even the little he had granted" (Welch, 2005, 25).

Welch also mentions Ibrahim Mirza's dismissal

from governing Mashhad: "Unlike his uncle, Ibrahim Mirza had a free spirit and innocently enjoyed art and music. However, he acted recklessly at times, such as when he sheltered a musician who had fled from the Shah's wrath, drawing the Shah's ire. As a result, in 973 AH, he was dismissed from governing Mashhad and deprived of royal painters and calligraphers, being exiled to Sabzevar" (ibid.). Towards the end of his life, in 982 AH, Shah Tahmasp once again paid attention to Ibrahim Mirza, inviting him to Qazvin and appointing him as the Ishik Aghasi-Bashi (head of the royal pages) of the High Court, entrusting all court affairs to him until the Shah's death (Hosseini Qomi, 2004, V.1, 567-588).

The Worldview of Ibrahim Mirza and the Choice of Haft awrang by Jami

Prince Ibrahim Mirza spent his childhood and adolescence under the tutelage of great artists at the court of Tahmasp, which cultivated an art-loving and artistic personality in him. He entered the field of art, especially poetry and painting, with personal interest and excelled in poetry criticism, rhetoric, and literary techniques, and he was forefront of his time in explaining the connection between Sufism and love (Simpson, 2003, 16). He followed the Safavid dynasty's approach in supporting art but, unlike his grandfather and uncle, he had a free spirit and was devoid of prejudice. Ibrahim Mirza's most significant artistic endeavor was the creation of the Haft awrang Jami Freer which due to his interest in Jami, was not influenced by the negative indoctrinations of his grandfather, Shah Ismail, against Jami, and he ordered its illustration. According to historical documents, the Safavids came to power twenty years after Jami's death, and due to their religious prejudices, they considered Jami, a prominent figure of the Naqshbandi order, as a heretic and an immature individual. Shah Ismail's intense hatred even led him to attempt to burn Jami's tomb, which he failed to do (Afdhah-Zadeh, 2000, 138-139). Zarrinkoob writes in his book "The Value

of Sufi Heritage”: “Before the rise of the Safavid dynasty, a significant characteristic of the intellectual structure during the Timurid era and until the mid-Safavid period was a serious inclination towards Sufism” (Zarrinkoob, 1983, 62). However, in the mid-reign of Shah Tahmasp, due to the influence and dominance of Shiite scholars from Lebanon and Bahrain in the governmental apparatus and Shah Tahmasp’s conflicts with neighboring countries, and the criticisms from Shiite scholars for his absence in Sufi gatherings, this inclination gradually waned (Binyon, 2017, 300). On the other hand, the Safavid era was a period of interaction between popular Islam, Sufism, and Shiism, rooted in the Sufi path of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili. Therefore, it can be inferred that Ibrahim Mirza, a Safavid prince raised in this context, certainly had an interest in the Sufi path and thus had no interest in power-seeking and territorial expansion. He also used his wealth and power to promote culture, help people, and ensure community welfare, as he would sit and converse with the people and address their problems during his reign (Afwashta & Ashraghi 1994, 37).

Jami, a renowned literati and poet of the 9th century AH, lived during one of the magnificent eras of Iranian civilization. Prominent figures like Mir Ali Shir Nava’i and Behzad were his contemporaries, and Jami played a significant role in the flourishing of the cultural and literary life of his time. He devoted his wealth to helping the needy, ensuring public welfare, and promoting culture (Zarrinkoob, 2000, 288). Considering that Jami was one of the great figures of the Naqshbandi order, solitude in the community was a principle he highly regarded. This principle emphasizes the importance of attending to people’s issues over seclusion and mere worship. Thus, the foundation of this order lies in engaging with the social life of the community and harmonizing with the people. Jami believed that a true seeker is one who, through companionship and interaction with rulers, guides them to ensure the people’s interests and demands their rights (Ahrar, 2001, 170). Therefore, Jami’s poetry addresses themes such

as the authenticity of humanistic thoughts, love for humanity, knowledge, and justice, and protests against the oppression and tyranny of rulers, as well as the hypocrisy and bigotry of false sheiks. Additionally, Jami was aware of the plunders and bloodshed committed by the Mongols in the name of religion, and since he was fully satisfied with the relative peace and welfare under Sultan Hussein’s rule, he considered justice and support for the people against oppressors as fundamental conditions for kingship. Given the characteristics of Ibrahim Mirza and Jami mentioned, it can be interpreted that Prince Ibrahim Mirza, due to his historical awareness and the close geographical proximity of Mashhad to Herat, was fully acquainted with Jami’s era and worldview, and shared similar beliefs with him. Consequently, he chose to illustrate the Haft awrang, which encapsulates Jami’s finest educational thoughts. One of his reasons for illustrating Jami’s Haft awrang was his dissatisfaction with the second period of his uncle Shah Tahmasp’s reign. After the age of thirty, Shah Tahmasp made changes within the power structure to maintain his sovereignty and took religious and political actions, such as defeating the Uzbeks and expelling them from Khorasan and the East, pushing back the Ottomans through the ‘Amasya Peace Treaty’ in the West, and supporting clerics to balance power. These changes led to a decrease in his moral and financial support for various social strata, including artists. Moreover, due to his religious prejudices, he directed all his wealth and attention towards promoting Shi’ism, which his father Shah Ismail had declared as the official religion of the country at the beginning of the Safavid dynasty. Therefore, Ibrahim Mirza illustrated this work as a social statement protesting the prevailing discourse of the time, advocating for attention and moderation towards the people.

From another perspective, Jami was a Muslim whose poetry contained mystical and ethical content, aligning with shared religious concepts such as justice, piety, and spiritual conduct. Additionally, Safavid Shi’ism was based on Iranian-Turkish

culture. For this reason, Ibrahim Mirza, as a Safavid prince, chose the Haft awrang in line with the objectives of the Safavid government to demonstrate the religious and political legitimacy of the Safavid rule. It also served as a symbol of attention to Iranian and Islamic culture, aimed at strengthening the cultural foundations of the country during that period.

Themes of Haft awrang by Ibrahim Mirza

In terms of thematic examination of the manuscript, the illustrations in the Haft awrang by Ibrahim Mirza include narrative and allegorical scenes, each reflecting specific ideologies. In the religious and mystical illustrations, some images refer to mystical allegories such as divine love and annihilation in the way of God in Jami's poetry, as Jami, as a Sufi Muslim, used Quranic stories to convey his message. In the Haft awrang, which is replete with stories and allegories, he elaborated on the secrets and mysteries of Sharia and Tariqa (Zarrinkoob, 2000, 239). Given that the Safavid period is known for emphasizing Shiite religious teachings and the Safavid rulers consistently sought to guide culture and art towards reinforcing Shiite religion and Islamic values, choosing these illustrations can be seen as part of the Safavid rulers', including Ibrahim Mirza's, efforts to promote these values.

By examining the types of gatherings depicted, the range of themes in this version becomes apparent. The earliest illustrations in this artwork, which coincide with Ibrahim Mirza's ascension to power and his marriage to Shah Tahmasp's daughter, are filled with themes of celebration, joy, and love. The later illustrations, however, are full of turmoil and excitement, ending with the story of Alexander's death, which signifies mourning and lamentation.

This could refer to Ibrahim Mirza's removal from the governorship of Mashhad and the subsequent closure of his library to execute new versions. Although there is no indication of the simultaneity of Ibrahim Mirza's rule and his marriage, several gatherings, including the entry of Aziz and Zulaikha

into Egypt (Fig. 1) and Prophet Yusuf and the grand wedding celebration (Fig. 2), can be associated with his marriage.

Additionally, selecting these stories could reflect the importance of loyalty and love in royal marriages and a way to showcase their grandeur and splendor. Thus, the impact of social, political, and cultural changes during the production of the manuscript is clearly evident in the choice of themes and the artist's perspective.

Visual Features of Haft awrang by Ibrahim Mirza

Most artists of the Haft awrang manuscript were second-tier painters who began their work in the royal workshop of Shah Tahmasp. After the decline of the Tabriz school due to political changes in Tahmasp's reign, they played a role in establishing the Mashhad school by being invited to Ibrahim Mirza's library. Therefore, there are similarities between the illustrations of Nezami's Khamsa and Jami's Haft awrang. Nevertheless, new tendencies are observed in most of the Haft awrang illustrations. The compositions of the Mashhad illustrations contain astonishing and novel arrangements that are not seen in the compositions of the first half of the 10th century in Iran. These include the division of the scene into entirely separate geometric pieces, like canopies and separating tents, with human figures and animals visible through them. Most of the frames in this collection are broken, and the proportions and organization of the compositions have transformed. This lack of framing and spiral compositions brings fluidity to the composition and dynamism to the human actions in the images. The unique coloration of the entire Haft awrang manuscript showcases the exceptional taste and creativity of Iranian artists. The increased movement and liveliness in the composition and color during the Safavid era indicate political, social, and cultural changes due to the dominant political-religious spirit of Shah Tahmasp's period. Sheila Kenbay writes in her book "Persian Painting" about the

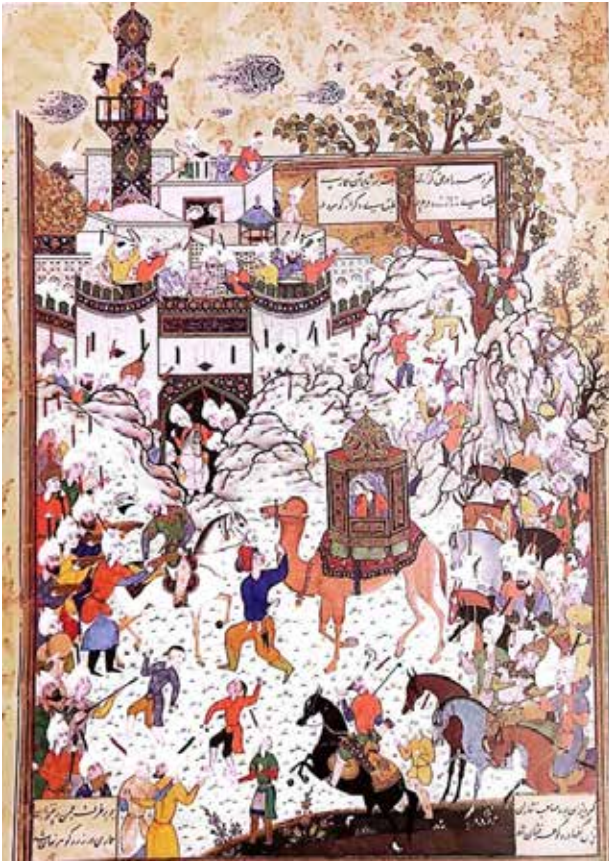


Fig. 1. Miniature painting of the entry of Aziz and Zulaikha into Egypt's capital, 963-972 AH. Source: Simpson, 2003: 38.



Fig. 2. Miniature painting of Prophet Yusuf and the grand wedding celebration, 963-972 AH, Attributed to Sheikh. Source: Mohammad, Simpson, 2003, 49.

Mashhad school: "In the illustrations of this period, heads are smaller relative to bodies, faces have elongated and moved away from the oval shape. The Taj Haidari or Qizilbash twelve-section hat, the main indicator of the illustrations' association with the Safavid period, has been replaced by smaller turbans" (Kenbay, 2010, 87). Natural landscapes in this manuscript are painted with great detail as the most important visual elements, which can be related to the emotional and intimate approaches of Ibrahim Mirza's court. One of the features of this manuscript is the depiction of architectural structures with high precision and complete details, combined with natural elements, presenting beautiful examples of harmony between natural landscapes and architecture. Simpson refers to the prevalent features in the Freer Jami as diverse focal points in the illustrations and the high level of the human factor, making it sometimes difficult to easily recognize the characters (Fig. 3) (Simpson, 2003, 11). In the Haft awrang, alongside depicting the lives and activities of various social classes, unlike previous versions, women and children of the nobility and other social classes are freely illustrated in urban, rural, and palace environments (Fig. 4).

In terms of innovation, there are numerous fresh examples of scenes, moments, and specific objects, such as the blazing tree in the illustration of Alexander's nosebleed and his repose (Fig. 5) and the peculiar tree in the illustration of Majnun in a goatskin observing Layla (Fig. 6). The depiction of everyday life scenes and ordinary people, which Behzad began in the Herat school and had a very faint presence in the Tabriz school, was reused in the Mashhad school. Considering the social and political conditions of this time, it can be concluded that giving importance to depicting ordinary people and secondary scenes in the illustrations of Haft awrang by Ibrahim Mirza was a reaction against the injustice and favoritism of Shah Tahmasp in granting privileges to specific groups. This work was illustrated as a social statement to attract the government's attention to people's lives by portraying the daily lives of ordinary people.

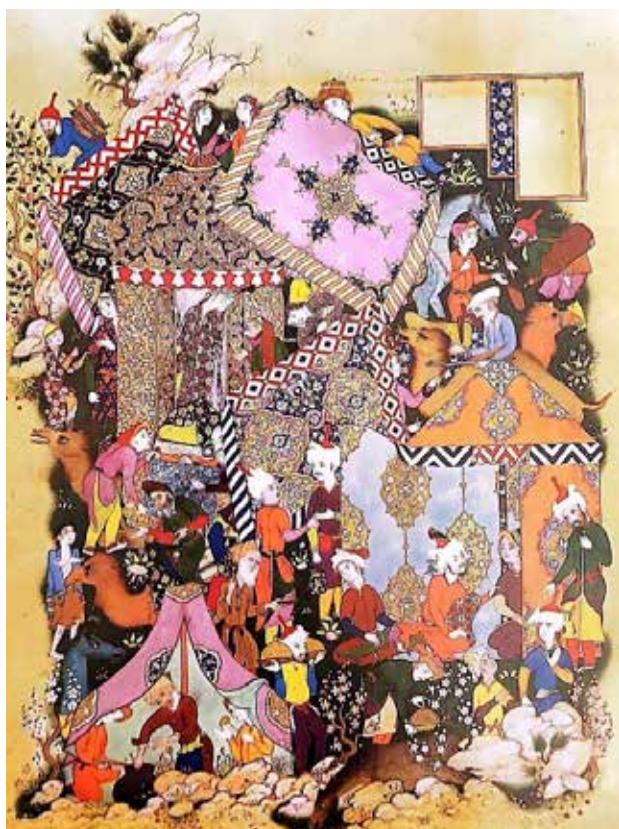


Fig. 3. Miniature painting of Majnun and his approaching towards the resting place of Layla's caravan, 963-972 AH, Attributed to Sheikh Mohammad. Source: Simpson, 2003, 73.

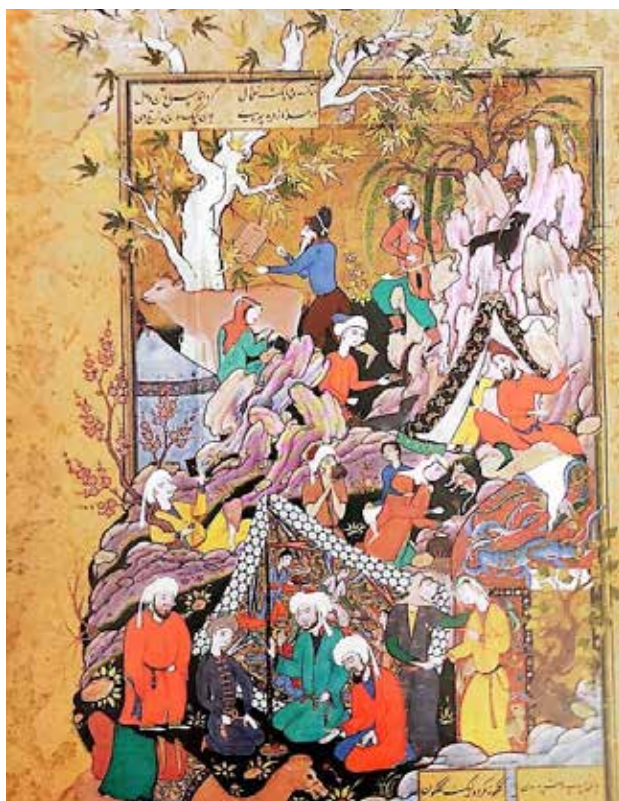


Fig. 4. Miniature painting of Qays and his first glance at Layla, 963-972 AH, Attributed to Mozafar Ali. Source: Simpson, 2003, 71.

The colorful and iconic visual diversity forms the basis of the illustrations in Haft awrang, and the visual features of the illustrations indicate the artistic freedom of the painters under the supervision of their new patron, Prince Ibrahim Mirza.

Reasons for the Innovations in Haft awrang by Ibrahim Mirza

During the reign of Tahmasp and the atmosphere of the Tabriz library, young and ambitious artists were not allowed to innovate and exercise individual creativity. This was partly due to the presence of top-tier artists like Behzad and Sultan Muhammad, and partly due to Shah Tahmasp's personal taste, as he had been trained by great masters in painting and calligraphy since childhood (Bahramnejad & Munshi Qazvini, 2000, 144). By examining the structure and themes of the illustrations in Jami's Haft awrang, the artistic freedom of the painters in the Mashhad court compared to Shah Tahmasp's court is evident. According to historical documents, the reason for this freedom was the personality differences between Ibrahim Mirza and Shah Tahmasp, the artistic taste, and the innovative logic and thinking governing the Mashhad library. This resulted in a cheerful and lively atmosphere in Ibrahim Mirza's library and distanced the young painters from Shah Tahmasp's rigid and prejudiced court (Sadeghi Bik, 1948, 255). Another reason was the artists' interactions with their eastern and western neighbors and the influence they received from their artistic movements. The second half of the 10th century AH coincided with the changes of the 16th century in Europe and the rise of the Renaissance and Iranian artists, due to the visits of Western painters to the Safavid court, became acquainted with Western painting, leading to changes in Iranian painting. One of the notable points in this artistic work is the incomplete correspondence between Jami's poetry text and the image. The illustrators of this work even exercised content freedom in some illustrations. For example, in the illustration "Majnun Approaching Layla's Caravan" (Fig. 3), attributed to Sheikh Mohammad and one of the most distinct illustrations of Jami's Haft awrang, the artist seems to



Fig. 5. Miniature painting of Alexander's nosebleed and his repose, 963-972 AH, Attributed to Sheikh Mohammad. Source: Simpson, 2003, 81.

have focused more on creating a unique and elaborate image rather than a narrative illustration.

Overall, the social and political changes during Shah Tahmasp's reign and Ibrahim Mirza's and his library artists' desire to create an identity-rich work different from what existed in the libraries of previous patrons, including Shah Ismail and Shah Tahmasp, led to the innovative and distinctive formation of this artistic work.

Conclusion

This research, through historical analysis of the context of the creation of the Haft awrang manuscript by Ibrahim Mirza during the second period of Shah Tahmasp's reign, based on Norman Fairclough's method of analysis at three levels: description, interpretation, and explanation, described the text in terms of subject, themes, and visual features. Simultaneously, individuals, processes, and events that created the text were interpreted, and how it was

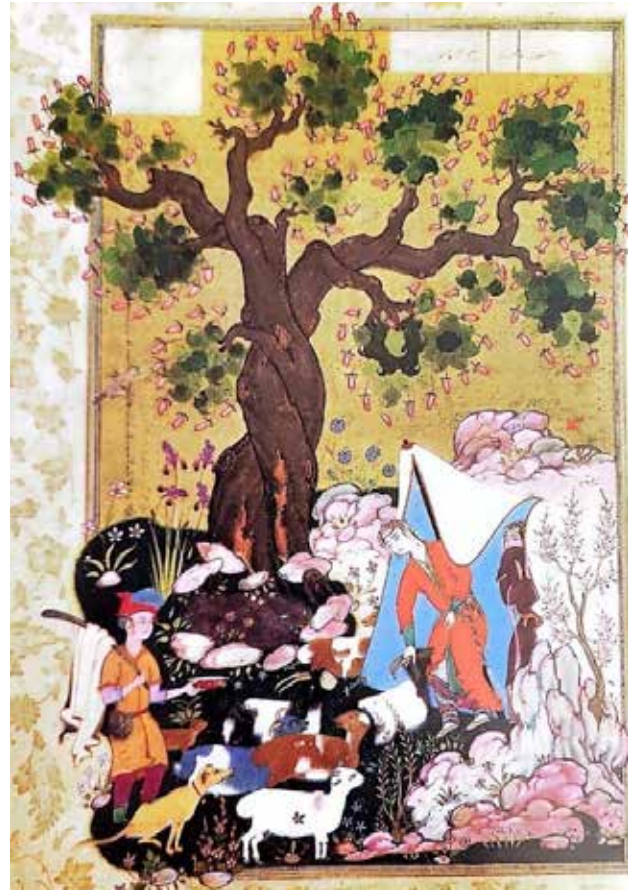


Fig. 6. Miniature painting of Majnun in a goatskin observing Layla, 963-972 AH. Source: Simpson, 2003, 74.

formed based on the dominant discourse in society and the interaction between text and social structures was explained. The aspects of the formation of Haft awrang by Ibrahim Mirza, according to the analyses, are as follows:

The historical context of the Safavid era and the presence of a culture and tradition of art patronage at the court, with the connection of kings and princes to visual arts and their awareness of the power of art in consolidating ruling power, leading to the use of art as a primary tool for strengthening and legitimizing power. Ibrahim Mirza, as a Safavid prince, supported this project to consolidate and reflect the cultural and political power of himself and the Safavid government.

Shah Tahmasp's disinterest in art due to changes in his temperament and the political and religious structure of the Safavid regime, led to the migration of artists from his court. Ibrahim Mirza, with his cultural personality, close relationship with the

Shah, and high status in the Safavid power structure, continued the tradition of supporting miniature painting.

The presence of Ibrahim Mirza as the main axis of the manuscript's creation, with his refined and artistic personality, established an equipped library with a lively and non-prejudiced environment, demonstrating his practical support as an art patron for Iranian miniature painting. Young and creative artists could freely create new and innovative images based on their artistic perception and the conditions of Ibrahim Mirza's court, culminating in the creation of the Freer Jami manuscript as a distinctive and contemporary masterpiece, rivaling other Safavid manuscripts.

Ibrahim Mirza's political position as the governor of Mashhad provided the financial resources and necessary facilities for this grand artistic project. His familial proximity to Shah Tahmasp, and the Shah's recognition and trust in Ibrahim Mirza, despite his strong prejudices, did not interfere with his library affairs.

The significance of the manuscript's creation coinciding with Ibrahim Mirza's marriage to Shah Tahmasp's daughter, possibly choosing the romantic stories of Yusuf and Zuleikha and Layla and Majnun to reflect royal marriage celebrations and romantic relationships.

Ibrahim Mirza's profound interest in the worldview and themes of Jami's poetry, as he, like many Safavid princes and elites, was influenced by Islamic mysticism and Iranian Sufism and the mystical themes of Jami's Haft awrang aligned with his mystical worldview. Through this manuscript, Ibrahim Mirza might have intended to promote Islamic-Iranian culture, reflecting Safavid policies in consolidating Iranian-Shiite cultural identity. Moreover, by illustrating Jami's thoughts, ethical teachings, and political views towards rulers, Ibrahim Mirza expressed a form of protest against the governance and statecraft of his time.

The social, class, and cultural structures of the Safavid period influenced the artists' artistic

understanding and aesthetics, and consequently, the structure and themes of the manuscript's illustrations.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

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ERRATUM

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Discourse Study of the Formation of Haft Awrang (Seven thrones) Ebrahim Mirza Safavi by Norman Fairclough's Discourse Analysis Approach

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Article Information: This article was previously published in Bagh-e Nazar, Year: 2025, Volume 22, Issue 142, Pages 89-100. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/bagh.2025.493725.5721>

Erratum Text: In the above article, the affiliation of the author Samaneh Naghieh was incorrectly listed as: "Lecturer, Department of Art, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran"

The correct affiliation should read:

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Editorial Office of: *Bagh-e Nazar*

Erratum Publication Date: 2025/11/09

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Naghieh, S. & Amani, H. (2025). Discourse Study of the Formation of Haft Awrang (Seven thrones) Ebrahim Mirza Safavi by Norman Fairclough's Discourse Analysis Approach. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 22(142), 89-100.

DOI: 10.22034/BAGH.2025.493725.5721

URL: https://www.bagh-sj.com/article_215739.html?lang=en

