Kiarostami's Visual Style and the Influence of Iranian Painting

Khatereh Khodaei

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Film Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
or the Degree of Master of Arts (Film Studies) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

June 2011

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Khatereh Khodaei

Entitled: Kiarostami's Visual Style and the Influence of Iranian Painting

And submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts (Film Studies)

Complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respects to originality and quality.

Read and approved by the following jury members:

Setrag Manoukian External Examiner

John Locke Examiner

Peter Rist Supervisor

Approved by

Date Graduate Programme Director

Date Dean of Faculty

Abstract

Kiarostami's Visual Style and the Influence of Iranian Painting

Khatereh Khodaei

This thesis investigates the visual style of filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami through the lens of Iranian art. Kiarostami's films are widely noted by Western critics for their originality and poetic sensibility, both evident in a distinctive aesthetic approach that harkens back to Iranian painting. In order to explore this connection, my research draws upon a variety of sources—including Iranian art history, aesthetic theory and criticism, along with interviews with the filmmaker—that situate Kiarostami's films within a wider cultural and historical context. I argue that, while there has no doubt been a significant European influence upon Iranian painting, Kiarostami's work represents a deliberate attempt in Iranian modernism to develop more distinctive visual approaches outside of the European tradition.

Acknowledgements

Woven into the heart of this dissertation, with every word and line, is a palpable sense of gratitude towards an artist without whose original angle of perspective, the sheer joy of research would not have manifested itself. To my dear friend and life-long mentor, Abbas Kiarostami.

I am heartily thankful to my supervisor, Peter Rist, whose encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final stages enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject. My parents deserve special mention for their support and prayers. My Father, Hossein Khodaei, is the person who laid the foundation for my inquiring nature, showing me the joy of intellectual pursuit ever since I was a child. My Mother, Parvaneh Foroughi, raised me is sincerely with her caring and gentle love. Alireza, Taraneh, and Shahrzad, thanks for being supportive and caring siblings.

Words fail me in expressing my appreciation to my friends, Farshid Solimanpour, Farbod Honarpisheh, Alireza Tadjalli, Shani Hormozi, Denis Wong and Abigail Lapell who supported me in different periods of my study. I am indebted to my friend Hassan Yazdi, who has made available his support. And I would like to dedicate this thesis to my dear friend Omid Yaghmazadeh.

Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the project.

Table of Contents

List of Figures…… vi

Introduction……1

Chapter 1: Persian Art and Perspective……. 6

Chapter 2: And Life Goes On……... 18

Chapter 3: Feeling Reality in a Poetic Way……...41

Chapter 4: Conclusion……69

Appendix A: Interview with Abbas Kiarostami…… 72

References……..79

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: Why Is That Sufi in the Hamam 9
FIGURE 2: Naser e_Din Shal in the Mirror Hall (Golestan Palace) 12
FIGURE 3: Shahrestanak, by Kamaal-al-Molk 13
FIGURE 4 18
FIGURE 5 20
FIGURE 6: The Monk and the Peasant 21
FIGURE 7a. / FIGURE 7b. 23
FIGURE 8 24
FIGURE 9 25
FIGURE 10: *Sindokht talks to Saam* 26
FIGURE 11: Manzareh Arefaneh 28
FIGURE 12: Golgasht 29
FIGURE 13: Golchin e Eskandar Soltan 29
FIGURE 14. 30
FIGURE 15 31
FIGURE 16: A young monk is visiting the dervish 33
FIGURE 17 34
FIGURE 18 35
FIGURE 19 35
FIGURE 20: The murder of Uayna and Raiya 37
FIGURE 21 38
FIGURE 22 38
FIGURE 23 39
FIGURE 24: A painting by Reza Abbasi in 1637 40
FIGURE 25 42
FIGURE 26: Khosro and Shirin 44
FIGURE 27: Rostam and Rakhsh 45
FIGURE 28: Alexander in a banquet 46
FIGURE 29 49
FIGURE 30: "Moragha Golshan" 50
FIGURE 31: The Court of Gayumarth 52
FIGURE 32 56
FIGURE 33: Miniature from Klileh Demneh 57
FIGURE 34 60
FIGURE 35: Majnun Eavesdrop on Layla's camp 61
FIGURE 36: Aidin Aghdashloo's Intercession of Anggels 62
FIGURE 37: Farah Osuli's A Glance of Love 63
FIGURE 38: Nasser Oveisi's Five Bowls Dans 63
FIGURE 39: Jalil Ziapour's My Father Applies Henna 64
FIGURE 40: Sohrab Sepehri's Trees and Houses 66
FIGURE 41: Sohrab Sepehri's Trees 67
FIGURE 42: Sohrab Sepehri's Abstraction 67
FIGURE 43: A photo by Abbas Kiarostami (Snow White) 68
FIGURE 44: A painting by Abbas Kiarostami 68

Introduction

Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami has captured the attention of Western audiences and critics for a number of reasons, including the originality of his films, his poetic sensibility and his distinctive visual style. In all of these elements, especially the visual style, the influence of Iranian art is evident. My thesis explores this connection in order to create a better understanding of the relationship between Iranian visual art and film. This research focuses primarily on three of Kiarostami's films: *And Life Goes On* (1991), *The Wind Will Carry Us* (1999), and *Five Dedicated to Ozu* (2003). In order to conduct this research, I draw upon Iranian art history and aesthetic theory, as well as criticism and scholarly analysis inside and outside of Iran. Using a variety of approaches allows me to highlight Kiarostami's visual style and his relationship with painting. The aesthetics of Kiarostami's work has been a central theme of my research on Iranian cinema.

It is well known that Iran enjoys one of the most productive film cultures of our times; what is less appreciated by contemporary audiences, however, is the relationship between Persian[1] art and cinema. While film scholars and critics have written extensively on Kiarostami's cinema, there is currently no English-language research documenting the connection between Iranian painting and Iranian film. This project contributes to current research on Iranian cinema in two ways: first, by analysing Western sources along with

[1] The name *Iran* has been in use natively since the Sassanian era (6th century B.C.) *(*Mackenzie 1998), and came into use internationally in 1935, before which the country was widely known as *Persia* (Kianush 1998).

Persian art and reception theory, my thesis represents an original approach to the work of a contemporary filmmaker. Second, because there are currently no studies exploring the relationship between painting and film in an Iranian filmmaker's work, this research provides a basis for future work in this area.

This research uses a variety of methodological approaches. Interviews with the filmmaker are complemented by a literature review of Iranian and Western critical reception and aesthetic theory. I also draw upon the history of Iranian art, further contextualizing the contemporary investigation. Using an empirical approach has allowed me to consider the director's personality and the intentions behind his aesthetic choices. Comparing the use of perspective in Iranian painting and European painting after the Renaissance, we find a marked difference in the approach to frontality, depth and perspective. While there has no doubt been a significant European influence upon Iranian painting, Kiarostami's work represents a deliberate attempt in Iranian modernism to develop more distinctive approaches outside of the European tradition.

Maybe Kiarostami did not intend to reconstruct Persian paintings in the scenes of his films, but it is certain that he has lived in the atmosphere of Persian art, with Persian poetry and culture, and has felt a Persian carpet under his feet. In addition, he is also influenced by a Haiku-style Far-Eastern look. Like any other Persian artist, Kiarostami does not take his gaze away from the sky, sunlight, wind and clouds and his heart beats for that hidden eternal element in the sky; this desire and quest influences all his works. As an artist faithful to both nature and human nature, Kiarostami has transformed the direction of film, through experimentation and innovation, by raising questions and inspiring dialogue, and by breaking expectations and intermingling simplicity and depth

(Kiarostami, *Ten on 10*). As a result of these efforts, Kiarostami moves passive film viewing into active experience, allowing audiences to create meaning and participate in the overall significance of his films. And at the core, the philosophy of Persian artists is deeply interwoven into the image and content of his film.

As Kiarostami has noted in Jean-Luc Nancy's book, *The Evidence of Film* (2001), his work may be seen as sharing certain affinities with Persian miniaturist art, something he attributes to the shared natural and national landscapes of Iranian artists (Nancy, 82).

Kiarostami frequently employs a 'perpendicular' angle, approaching the subject at 90 degrees. In the next chapter, we will see that perspective did not exist in Persian paintings up to the 11th century AH (17th AD)[2]. Paintings dating back to that time all have a 90 degree position towards buildings and nature. It was only later, under the influence of Western painting, that Persian painters learned perspective. However, they very soon returned to their Eastern/Persian identity as seen in the works of contemporary artists returning to original Persian painting in the post-modern period.

On one hand, Persian arts and literature are interconnected; the artist and poet describe with a similar language a world whose general form they have inherited from their ancestors. Whether it is done with a video camera or on a canvas, illustrating Persian poetry creates special qualities for the artwork. The inclination to pure

[2] The Hijri calendar (Islamic calendar) is a lunar calendar. It contains 12 months in a year that are based on the motion of the moon, and is only 354 or 355 days; therefore, it shifts with respect to the Gregorian calendar. Hijri refers to the departure of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca in AD 622. The Islamic calendar is the official calendar in some Arabic countries (Eghbale Ashtiani 284).

aestheticism never resulted in Persian artists ignoring human and humane values. Protagonists and different events in Persian painting—examples of which we often encounter in Persian literature as well—have originated from the depths of collective memory. In the history of Persian painting, we encounter different lyrical, mystical and ethical themes which**,** mostly describe "generic man"'. The portraiture of characters also has an arbitrary and generic quality. According to Moghadam Ashrafi, Artists tried to connect characters to their context and to illustrate the whole diversity of the numerous men and details of their everyday lives. And at last, the ordinary man appears and moves to the centre of attention (128).

The attempts of Persian artists have long been directed towards the idealistic creation of exemplary patterns. An artist was more inclined to illustrate his ideal world and imagination. Even if he paid attention to the world around him, he would not care so much for the three dimensional space, light, shades or colours. Yet he was able to illustrate everything in an acceptable way with the simplest lines and purest colours.

For an Iranian artist, nothing in nature has any priority over other objects. No part of a painting catches the exclusive attention of the eye. The faithful mind of an Iranian artist believes that everything in the universe is God's creation and as such, an avoidance of prioritisation is omnipresent in Persian painting. Abbas Kiarostami has told me that he believes this shows a kind of respect to viewers' minds, giving them the chance to put on a macro lens to pay more attention to every part of the page where God is present; this is why he frames everything in long shots and never uses spot lighting. (See Appendix A: Interview with Abbas Kiarostami.)

For me, as an Iranian and a student of cinema, there was always this question of why scholars pay so much attention to Kiarostami's cinema. There was definitely something other than the poetical ambience of his films that attracts their attention. They spoke of the originality of the films, for instance, in the words of David Bordwell: "A film tells its story not only through dialogue and actor performances but also through the director's control of movement and shot design" (Figures Traced in Light 318). On this basis, I conclude that this originality is Iranian and has its roots in Persian arts. By examining Persian painting in subsequent chapters of this thesis, we will recognize undeniable similarities between Kiarostami's visual style and that of Persian painting. I hope this research opens a new perspective in the field as well as a door to further researches.

Chapter 1: Persian Art and Perspective

This chapter examines traditional Persian painting and its history, the impact of Western painting on Persian painting and how perspective evolved within it. In order to preserve its originality or what is called its identity, Persian painting has gone through many ups and downs during the past centuries. In recent years, a number of books have been written on Persian painting, the most important of which have been published in English or French. Occasionally, there have also been other books on painting with partial reference to Persian art (Tajvidi 1). However, many of these, according to Akbar Tajvidi, are not so much interconnected with the world underlying Persian art due to the Western backgrounds of their writers. In many instances, they have used measures applied in the art of the West for justifying what is particular to this art (2). In writing this chapter, I have tried to study both subcategories of Persian and Western art, and wish to express my gratitude for the efforts of scholars pioneering in this research.

There are several books on Persian painting studying it in chronological order, starting from cave wall paintings and going through an analysis of patterns on unglazed or glazed pottery before reaching the art of our times. These include books such as *Naghashi Irani az kohantarin roozegar ta dorane Safavian* (Persian Painting from Antiquity to the Safavid Period) by Tajvidi and *Naghashi Iran az dirbaz ta emrouz* (Painting in Iran from Antiquity to Today), by Rouin Pakbaz. A case study of these books falls beyond the scope and intentions of this chapter.

After much study of a wide range of old Persian painting, I can say with some hesitation that there are two ways of looking at Persian painting:

1. One in which the temporal and local sequence is summarized in one space, and this is the most obvious fact about Persian painting. In fact, this art does not reflect the existing world but an imaginary one, an art beyond time and location whose creatures are created according to a generic and eternal pattern. In the well-known book, *La Peinture Persane* written by Basil Gray, we see the story of a character going to a bath-house in consecutive frames (Why Is That Sufi in the Hamam). The outside, roof, inside and even the back of the building are simultaneously shown in a single plane. In fact, the temporal and local sequences are disturbed and are all shown in a single space and time. The perspective is shattered and the story of the protagonist follows from a multifaceted view. As Tajvidi writes,

> It should be pointed out that in Persian painting and miniature[3], the basis of the artistic work is to create, in a small place, a monad of the world that falls in reach of human beings. [...] There is no doubt that the poetical spirit and the mild atmosphere imbued with mysticism created by poets such as Hafiz was a powerful motive in propagating this way of thinking. (118)

[3] A miniature in traditional Persian painting is a small image either included as a book illustration or part of an artistic work. From the 13th century, miniature painting became an important type of Persian painting, a tradition culminating in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Discussions about Iranian painting often bring to mind miniature art. In fact, the most prestigious and worthwhile Iran visual art samples can be found in scrapbooks and manuscripts. However, various fields of visual and decorative art have flourished in Iran. For instance, wall painting along with chromatic tore became widespread from the Parthian era in Iran and was common until recent years.

Proofs demonstrate that the custom of mural painting has more ancient roots than book illustration. Mural painting was the most important among the visual arts, though its importance diminished after Mongolian hegemony. Wall painting again gained prominence in the Saffavides era, but remained subordinate to miniature. The connection between these different forms receals a continuity of visual traditions in Iran (Pakbaz, 8).

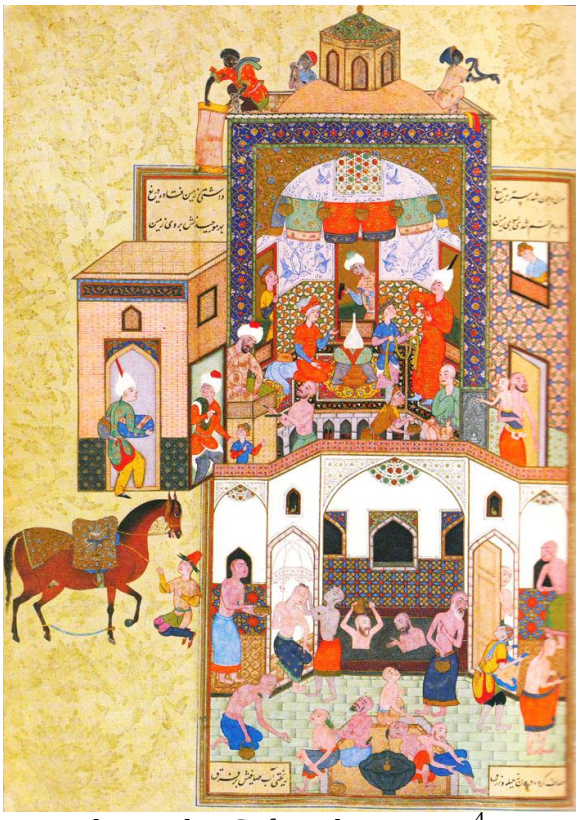

FIGURE 1: Why Is That Sufi in the Hamam[4]

2. In Persian coffeehouse painting, there is another kind of gaze. In this imaginary world, there is a perspective of place and rank. For instance, the place of the king is predominant and the rest are marginal. Instances of such painting can also be seen in Egyptian bas-reliefs.

In Persian traditional painting, instead of the real world we are confronted with the imaginary, imaginative and allegorical world which is ideal. Generally speaking, the most important characteristic of Persian painting is the manifestation of the superiority of the allegorical and imaginary world over the sensible and objective. Among different idiosyncrasies of such painting, one can point to the following: removal of perspective,

[4] The name of each painting is used where applicable.

expansion of spaces from bottom to top, arrangement of the scene according to spiritual and material rank, expansion of light or absence of the source of light in the scene, use of various bright flat colours, restraint in imitating reality or in the depiction of volume or shades, simplicity of forms, equal value of man and nature, ignorance of temporal sequence and simultaneity of events, removal of local distance, accordance with literature and book illustration and a dialogue with different mystical and fictional works as well as books of poetry.

It may thus be argued that the qualitative concept of space, for an Iranian artist, is profoundly deeper than the superficial understanding of the world afforded by the five senses. The artist has a spiritual connection with the "heavenly" world, beyond the material world, where shape, color, time and space exist in a sublime form. This world has been described as similar to an ideal world or limbo like the world that we experience in dreams (Nasr 1968).

Henri Corbin mentions in his research that if we are to paint the world with its streams of life-bestowing water, plants, clouds and other elements imbued with incredible forces and sacred glories, such a world cannot be depicted through pictorial illustration; we rather need an art that deals with symbols, or in other words, we need to portray it symbolically. The same research indicates that, "[W]hen material and causal relations between phenomena are not possible through interpretations based on material and formal causes and extend beyond such framework, one has to consider the relations and links between insights and subjective manifestations. These are realities and phenomena which exist but their existence is of a different kind... ' (Tajvidi 129).

Evolution of Perspective in Persian Painting

There is no perspective in Persian painting up to the 17th century AD, i.e. the reign of Shah Abbas and his successors. From the mid-17th century, which marks the start of the Western influence on art, the use of perspective evolves and from the time of Reza Abbasi and his students onwards, a primitive kind of perspective enters works of art. From the late Safavids period, at the time of artists such as Mohammad Zaman, Ali Gholi Beyk and others, the influence of the West increases, both because of the artists who travel to Iran and work there and also because, in the time of Shah Abbas and his successor Shah Safi, a connection is revived between Iranian and Indian artists. Indian artists became familiar with perspective earlier through the prints and engravings coming from the west. This incomplete perspective continues till the time of Qajars, when it reaches a kind of balance. As the horizon descends in artworks and painted trees start to resemble their real counterparts, distant figures are portrayed smaller and smaller.

It did not take long for a hybrid art to be born out of a mixture of Iranian and European traditions. Was it a liberating solution typical of the history of Persian art or an inclination towards decadence? Avoiding judgment, one can still regard this new tendency as a result of a preceding realism. Persian painting had familiarised itself with the real world and now wanted to represent objects the way they were seen. Thus, it tried to learn the way of doing this through observing and copying European examples. It is a different problem how successful it was in doing this (Pakbaz 10).

Throughout the 19th century, we can trace the gradual development of perspective in Persian paintings. In the works of the artists of the time, especially at the time of

Nassereddin Shah, the differences become visible. An example of this can be found in the works of Mahmood Khan Malek-al-Sho'ara, and Kamaal-al-Molk, the prominent Persian artists. In Kamaal-al-Molk's painting "The Mirror Hall" (1885-1890), one of his most famous works, the perspective is wrong and he is unaware of it (Fig. 2). Years later, at the time of Mozaffareddin Shah, he travels to Europe and learns perspective. On his return to Iran, he founds the Kamal-al-Molk Art School. In this period, the perspective of artworks is flawless. Travels to and from Europe increased as the books and resources on practical perspective became more widely available. From the late 19th century onwards, we no longer find problems of perspective in the paintings of Persian artists.

FIGURE 2: Naser e_Din Shal in the Mirror Hall (Golestan Palace), by Kamaal-al-Molk

FIGURE 3: Shahrestanak, by Kamaal-al-Molk

As a result of familiarity with basic principles and materials of Western painting, the imaginative and ideal space of Iranian art fell away and the imaginative gardens and emotional space devoid of corporeal qualities—which resulted from the refutation of perspective, volumetric space and in general of whatever makes the image resemble reality—gave way to a three dimensional visualized world. In his book *Jostojooye Hoviyat dar Naghashi-e Moaser-e Iran* (A Quest for Identity in Contemporary Persian Painting) (2006), Morteza Goodarzi writes, the concern for identity began with the birth of contemporary Iranian painting starting with the Second World War and the establishment of the Faculty of Art at Tehran University. Such concern has continued without interruption up to the current date. What is significant is that although the form and content of western painting has had an increasing influence on original Persian painting for several centuries, soon after this influence started, the Iranian artists become conscious of the fact and searched for a way towards finding an identity (Goodarzi 5).

As mentioned above, Western-style perspective does not exist in Persian miniatures. In his book, *The Blue Room*, the contemporary poet and artist Sohrab Sepehri writes in the same regard,

> Perspective did not mean anything to our art. Perspective and the use of shades show a fascination with illusion and the outer world… The discovery of perspective was contemporary to the Renaissance, to the discovery of the mortal worldly man. The Renaissance attitude towards man was a scientific one. Man came to the centre of the stage and pushed aside other elements. In the Renaissance, there was a discord between man and God. Depicting depth with the use of perspective and shades was compatible to the ideals of the time. (63)

It is certain that in original Persian painting there is a preference for eschewing the use of formal systems. Persian artists are not so attached to one form as to another; they do not imbue one flower more than another with delicacy. They are egalitarian with their pen: the same red they use in the King's dress, they give to a flower blooming on a mountaintop. They treat portrait and rocks with a similar delicacy. Beauty and beast are depicted with the same fineness. The creator treats its creatures with equal kindness and in Sohrab's words, "there is no place for jealousy, for the eyes" (58). The devout mind of the Persian artist believes that the entire world is created by God and he gives no preference to any of his creatures. He is not selective and to him, everything in nature has the same importance.

This approach in Persian art evokes some of the distinctions between Eastern and Western sensibilities, as suggested by writers like Sohrab Sepehri and Aidin Aghdashloo. A Westerner differentiates things, weighs things, analyses to select. The Eastern artist knows that everything in the universe has its own place. All existence is his spiritual dwelling; he believes that when the human soul is pure and transparent, nothing in the world is unpleasant to him. The Persian painter asks his audience to be patient and accept

every pattern. The devout mind of the Persian artist, consciously or not, knows that perspective contradicts equality. Therefore, he does not point to anything particular in nature, even man. The Persian painter tries to place the entire universe in one page; in fact, for him, the subject of his work is nothing more than an excuse for depicting the whole.

Persian painting had always paid attention to the 'ideal beauty', the perfect and particular beauty. It was not so much concerned with the parts or individuals as it was with the whole and the universe, writes Aidin Aghdashloo. Thus in Persian painting one has to follow the artist to arrive at a delicate and small sample of the collection of rules and imaginable beauties (159). Sohrab says in this regard that the Eastern man reaches life from within, interacts and sympathizes with nature. Sohrab writes, "The Easterner does not select, he does not choose; Selecting is to immolate, to ignore" (56).

The repetition of patterns is another characteristic of Persian painting. Symmetry in Persian patterns is not complete. It is "incomplete" in the same way as is nature. This is to say that the patterns are never exactly mirrored, although they seem so. Symmetry in Persian patterns is congruent with mystical beliefs. The repetition of God's glory can be seen in them as if the path reaches unity through symmetry. In miniatures, symmetry is considered a pattern in itself. Now if there is no symmetry in a miniature, the floral patterns around the page will be symmetrical. The buildings are always symmetrical. Symmetry is also manifested in epigraphs and mosaics. While European art depicts a single moment, a frozen movement and a trace of light, Eastern art illustrates a continual quality.

Here, unity and continuity appear and image and thought are connected with one another; religion, poetry, philosophy, painting and music turn into different tones of a single song sung in quest for the life-bestowing spirit, the eternal promise, the dignified sanctum and promised paradise. From the viewpoint of formal quality and exquisiteness, such unity can be found, for instance, in Persian book illustration. More ambiguous and complicated examples can be found in the relation between poetry and painting, between word and image (Aghdashloo 157-8).

Rouin Pakbaz writes that, in referring to this style of painting, the terms decoration and ornament are usually utilised. These terms refer to a beauty originating from the two-dimensional quality of visual elements (which is among the fundamental qualities of Persian art) but do not properly convey the spiritual aspects of this art (9). Arthur Pope writes,

> Maybe we are not quite off the mark if we describe the art of Iran as 'the art of absolute pattern', that is, an art that should be dealt with like music or architecture. In truth, the most important examples of decorative art is understood as a kind of visualized music; for this art originates from the beauty and perfection of elements and nicety of composition in an effective and meaningful way and never represents objects through their main qualities pertaining to their exterior or animating aspect. (3)

In Persian painting one of the considerable facts is the way in which artists make use of "light". In this kind of painting, a single light illuminates the scene while there is no specific source for it: a light which is equally cast on everything, from human figure to plants and animals and makes objects as bright as possible. In *Mental Idols, Eternal Memory*, Dariush Shaygan writes,

> If according to Rodulf Otto, sacred art in west found two direct ways for expressing occult manifestation, through darkness and silence, which, by the help of shadows of twilight under the tall Gothic domes creates terrific magnificence,

> Persian art creates the same impression, i.e. an appearance without essence as a symbol of the life of eternal manifestations. Such multifaceted vision of reality is only possible for a multifaceted man, a man who integrates all levels of the universe in his whole being, or in other words, who is an internal world with all its characteristics and different presences, every one of which is connected with a rank of the hierarchy of being. (222)

It might not be possible to thoroughly explain the essence of Persian painting and its wonderful world and look at the continued and widespread mystery which testifies to the creativity of a nation who used to see the world from its own particular viewpoint, a viewpoint which had its roots in the culture, mysticism and beliefs of the nation.

Yet, if we consider art as a framework through which the world is viewed, old Persian painting in itself can directly convey through its pictorial expression the observations of artists who documented a grand vision in a mysterious language. Aghdashloo writes:

> if we intend to find the key to the mystery of this method, we have to go back to the origins of thought and the myth of artist and to look at the image which serves as a metaphor for such thought; an image that has gone through much change in the past millennia making an inexperienced researcher suspicious of the continuity of the Iranian race. But in truth, despite its inner variety, the image is not as scrappy as it appears to be [...] and unifies and gives form to the artist's quest in search of the 'paradise'. (157)

Chapter 2: *And Life Goes On*

And Life Goes On...(1991), with the original Persian title *Zendegi va Digar Hich* (*Life and Nothing More*), begins with a version of perpendicular framing in motion, which attracts the audience's attention from the very beginning, even before the title. Peter Rist remarks: "I saw a Kiarostami film for the first time, *Zendegi va Digar Hich* , and it was love at first sight. From the very first shot, with the camera viewing cars stopping at and passing a tollbooth, perpendicularly, as if from another booth or a surveillance position, I knew I was watching something unique" (2001).

FIGURE 4

Life and Nothing More is a motion picture about "life," which itself is nothing but a path; a path leading to no specific destination. It just goes on, with all its distinctive features, in the continuity we observe, even after the catastrophe of an earthquake.

And Life Goes On is the middle film of a trilogy, preceded by *Where Is the Friend's Home?* (1987) and followed by *Through the Olive Trees* (1994). A huge earthquake has intervened, and the director of the first film (played by an actor, and never named within the film) travels by car with his young son to find out whether the two children who acted the main roles in the previous film have survived. They seem to live in a world that is so ordinary; along the way they come across people who are carrying their belongings, food supplies, heaters, etc. There is no dreadful footage of mangled bodies and uncontrollably hysterical victims that we usually associate with natural disasters. You only see people who have experienced tragedy, but continue to live and endure. Here, life goes on for those that survive in spite of it all. There is still the need to fill one's life with love and joy and pleasure. One man talks of his plan to get married in his hometown, despite the disaster. The son talks to his friend about watching a soccer game. He becomes very excited by the building of an antenna at one of the nearby villages which will allow him to watch the game.

Along the course of the film, we confront several shots framed within a window. The protagonist's gaze to the outside nearly always originates from the inside of a car—"the automobile carries around the screen," as Jean-Luc Nancy puts it (66). Kiarostami observes life, the life which goes on, and the continuity which is shown through the medium of a motion picture "toward those screens that like eyes open onto the outside" (Nancy 64).

FIGURE 5

As mentioned, there is no priority in Iranian miniatures, and different elements of the painting are of the same value to the painter. If a specific subject suddenly attracts the viewer in a painting, it is the result of its composition, and the painter does not play a guiding role here. “The Monk and the Peasant” (Fig. 6) is a work by Mohammadi from 1579. Many experts believe that Mohammadi was distinguished for his style and selection of ordinary subjects (Pakbaz 96).

He had a talent for reflecting human posture and movements. He drew shapes by delicate thin long lines, and was one of the most prominent real style painters, a style initiated by Kamaloddin Behzad. Behzad and his followers were extremely interested in painting their living environment and other ordinary daily affairs. In fact, they were trying to represent a thorough picture of their surrounding world in a small frame; therefore, they used to fill the whole page with figures, architectural ornaments and landscape details.

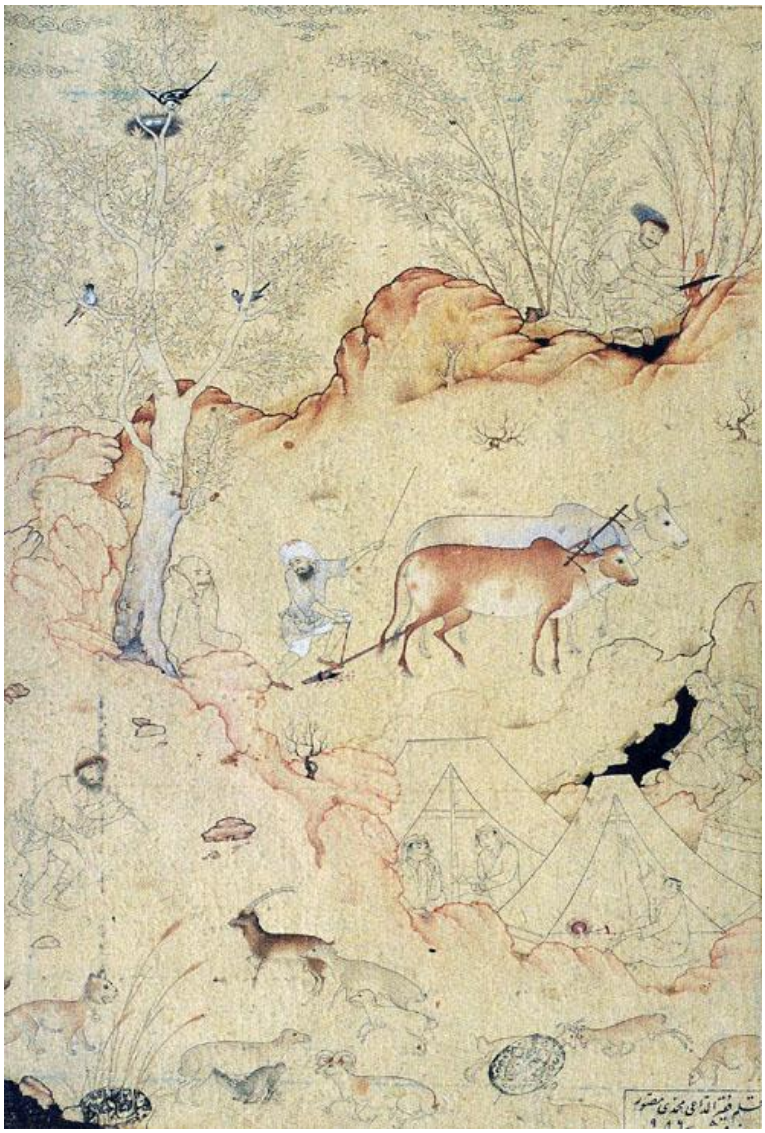

FIGURE 6: The Monk and the Peasant[5]

However, in their realistic approach—as in the works of their predecessors—no three dimensional techniques are used (perspective, shading, etc.). Also the tradition of creating conceptual spaces is in force here. In other words, spaces are defined by abstract

[5] Most of the miniatures mentioned can be found in several references in the bibliography.

signs of the real world. But, due to the number of relations and incidents, the spatial structure of the picture has become more intricate. Levels seem to be closer or farther than where they really are due to the effect of shapes and colors, so that the space is two-dimensional but has depth at the same time, and is integrated yet discrete. Each part of space is where a specific and usually independent incident takes place. There is no coherence of time and place between different incidents, yet an aware viewer can see everything at a glance. Creation of such multifold spaces, which is certainly influenced by Iranian mystic vision, represents a glorious era of a coherent aesthetic system in Iranian miniature paintings (Pakbaz 93).

In "The Monk and the Peasant"(Fig. 6), the peasant returns the dervish's look while he keeps plowing ahead. Since he is duty-bound to accomplish his daily task, he asks the monk with his eyes to forgive him for not being able to stop over. A little lower, a woman is spinning in a tent, and two other women are having a face-to-face dispute in another tent. The whole painting well illustrates the contrast between the monk's quietude and the daily flow of life. Even though there is no written evidence, the entire picture conveys this message. The artist's name in the corner written in calligraphy reveals several months of effort to complete the painting (March 1578- Feb. 1579), and also shows his modesty by signing the opus as "in need of blessing".

Through the scenes of the film *And Life Goes On* we can see the normal course of life in the aftermath of the earthquake, where everybody is doing his or her share, as if a disaster cannot make daily habits slip out of our minds. Within a small frame, these scenes present a thorough picture of everyday life. In this context, the surrounding world

is rendered “ordinary” but never meaningless, though Kiarostami imparts his ideas without imposing his own meaning onto the scenes.

We observe life through the images of this film, by which nothing and no one is of higher priority or greater prominence than any other. Jean-Luc Nancy notes in *The Evidence of Film* that the film exhibits “no or little point of view; the image is always closer or further away than anything that could fix a point of view-and it is therefore not possible for the spectator of the film to identify with a certain point of view: it is a true model of what Brecht called distanciation” (66).

FIGURE 7a.

FIGURE 7b.

In Fig. 7a, from the moving car window, we can see a tent belonging to some of the earthquake survivors and a lady who is hanging the washed clothes. On the left side of the frame there is a man who is also moving in the same direction, but a few frames further on, as we can see in Fig. 7b, we lose the man and our eyes continue their journey. Although most of the time the sense of in-framing is affected by seeing through car windows, nothing is ever emphasized in the film. As always Kiarostami exhibits nature,

perhaps even more this time; a genial and comforting nature, in which you can find life, even in her rage. Alberto Elena writes about the approach of the film towards nature: "*Life and Nothing More* … was, moreover, a real turning point in Kiarostami's films in terms of his attitude to nature and its increasing importance in his films" (99).

FIGURE 8

The main subject is surviving an earthquake, a catastrophe that occurred in Roudbar, a region in the north of Iran. We see shots of ruins, dust, pebbles and rocks strewn on the road, abandoned things, spades and trucks. Nevertheless, the film never lets you neglect the fact that you are watching a film, a representation of reality and not the reality itself. And it does so by the use of precise frames, and the sheer brightness of its image, employing green, khaki and indigo blue in different chapters of the picture. Nancy remarks that: "everything underscores that it is the fiction of documentary … in the very specific and precise sense of the technique, of the art of constructing images" (Nancy 68).

Just as you see the young couple marrying one day after the catastrophe, merry and effervescent shimmers amid their house, even though the “camera is positioned perpendicular to the house, creating a deliberately flat image” (Chaudhuri 86).

FIGURE 9

Fig. 9 is another shot from the film. By comparing the frames of this shot with those in the painting *Sindokht talks to Saam* (Fig. 10), along with the parallel or vertical lines in both images and the colors used, we can find many similarities in the images. In *Sindokht talks to Saam* we witness written elements that are of great importance in the whole composition. Rouin Pakbaz explains the general rule as being the positioning of two or four inscriptions on the top and the bottom of the page, by which a symmetrical geometrical structure is created in the image. If one draws a vertical line to connect the

top inscriptions to the ones on the bottom, the space is then divided into a number of proportional parts. Usually, the main characters and incidents are placed in the middle of

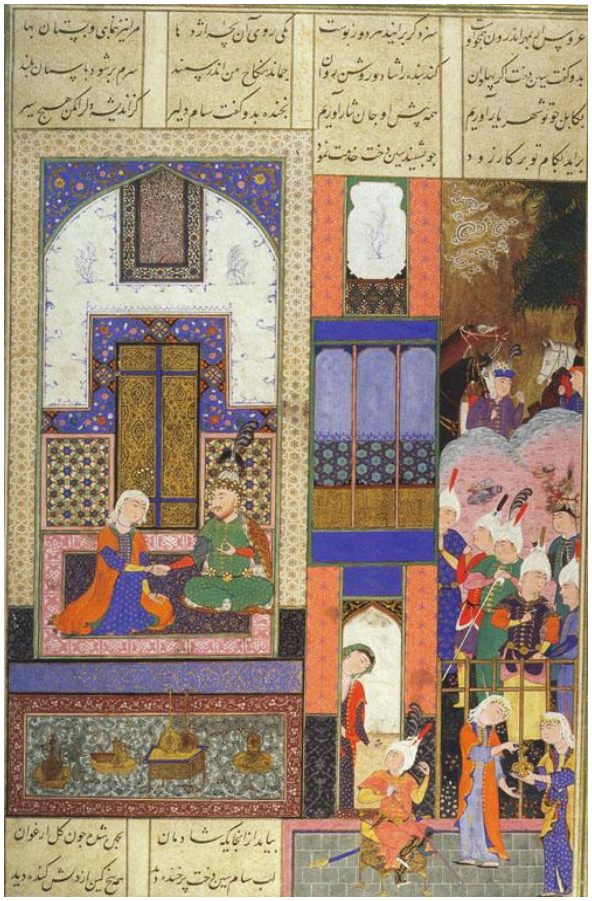

FIGURE 10: *Sindokht talks to Saam*

one of these parts. Sometimes, the main structure is composed of horizontal or diagonal elements, while pure symmetric structures are avoided (73). Sectioned spaces as well as a great number of moving objects and humans are the features widely used in such paintings. However, these numerous features never lead to confusion. In fact, painters of that era were using geometric methods of composition and the interaction of colors to

link different parts of the image, in a bid to reach an overall unity. In general, a painter has to put the whole story in one frame, a constraint that filmmakers do not face.

The book *Le chant du monde, L'Art de l'Iran Safavid* describes the painting "Sindokht talks to Saam" this way:

> Sindokht (Roudabeh's mother traveling from Kabul) talks to Saam (the king of Zabolestan). The couplets on the top of the image cited from Ferdowsy's poetry book, Shahnameh, reflect a part of the conversation between Saam and Sindokht. The men on the right center of the image are Saam's courtiers, who are standing on a roadside higher than the ground level. On the top right hand there are Sindokht's escorts, taking care of the horses. The three beautiful women on the bottom right side of the frame are carrying gifts for Saam. From all the details illustrated in this image, only architectural details of the palace and the wine and dine setting on the carpet are described in Ferdowsy's poems. In addition, here we can find signs of abstract Islamic patterns on all these objects. (Melikian-Chirvani 190)

Andrei Tarkovsky, in his book *Sculpting In Time: Reflections On The Cinema*, describes what he calls "the logic of poetry in cinema" as related to the capacity of cinema to become a genuine innovative art form. Tarkovsky believed that the process of thought can be abstract and hence its conceptual reflection in film, rather than presenting a prescriptive narrative logic, should mirror this fluidity of cognition and perception (Tarkovsky, 18). *And Life Goes On,* with its camera angles and its framings, with the righteousness it applies to the image and with all the fantasy-like bright colors, is declaring: I am a film about a truth called "life" which always goes on.

"Manzareh Arefaneh" (ca. 1393) (Fig. 11) is an unusual miniature in which no human figure is present, a pure landscape painting. Such works are entirely composed of mountains, trees, waterfronts and birds. Despite the fact that during that era

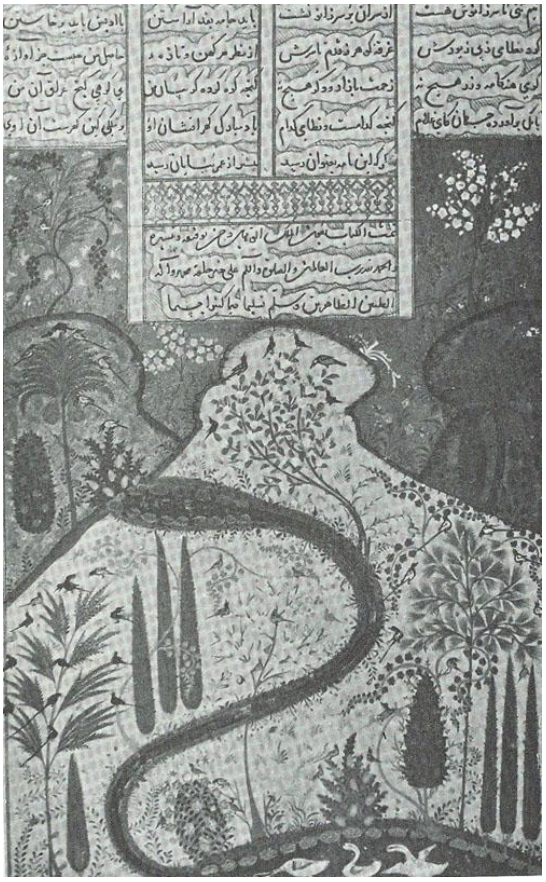

FIGURE 11: Manzareh Arefaneh

(ca. 1393), human organs and features were of great importance to painters, we can see that in these miniatures there is no sign of human or animal patterns, except the presence of birds. The still shots from *And Life Goes On* in Fig. 14 and Fig. 15 are similar to the painting "Manzareh Arefaneh"and the two paintings on the next page (Golgasht and Golchin e Eskandar Soltan), not only with their snake-like paths, but also according to the angle of view. The painting in "Manzareh Arefaneh" was painted in 1393 in Behbahan. Dr. Mohammad Agha Oghlu is the first person who has collected and interpreted these kinds of paintings. He believes that the mountain is an impression of the Alborz Mountains (Tajvidi, 122), the mountain range where Roudbar's earthquake took place.

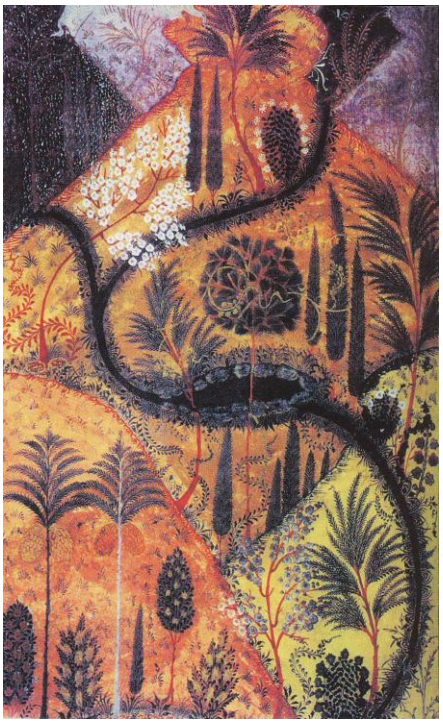

FIGURE 12: Golgasht

FIGURE 13: Golchin e Eskandar Soltan

FIGURE 14.

FIGURE 15

In “A young monk is visiting the dervish” (Fig. 16), a painting in which a young monk visits his master the dervish, we have a reflection of an ordinary day of life, though it can resemble parts of a classical literary work. In Fig. 17, we witness the sympathy and compassion between an old woman and the film’s protagonist. Putting the old lady in the threshold, gray/beige background colors and the perpendicular angles resulting in a flat image are the similarities between this scene and that in “A young monk is visiting the dervish”. In the screenshot in Fig. 18, we have blue, orange and green colors in a gray background, and the division of space by horizontal or vertical poles, with a lady in one of these frames, and again a perpendicular camera angle. In Fig. 19, which provides another view of the same shot, there is a boy who is helping others to collect their stuff left from the earthquake, again from an absolutely perpendicular angle. A doorframe in

the opposite wall makes it possible to simultaneously show inside and outside of the building.

"A young monk is visiting the dervish", kept in the Louvre museum, bears no signature on it, but clearly demonstrates Far Eastern features. This painting is possibly related to the era after the conquest of Iran by Mongols. The Mongol rulers facilitated the transfer of Indo-Chinese tradition to Iran (Pakbaz 60). In the book *Seir-e Terikh-e Naghashi Iran* (Persian Miniature Painting), translated by Mohammad Iranmanesh, it is pointed out that in Iranian painting after the Mongols, though many ambitious experiences in calligraphy and composition were doubtlessly influenced by Chinese art, the composition of body postures and movements remained Iranian. While the techniques used for drawing mountains, clouds and waterfronts are adopted from Chinese art, they are mainly used to fill the empty gaps or as a means to picture the distance in an absolutely non-Chinese manner (100-101). Although characters are placed on the foremost part of the scene, they are rarely seen frontally. Now, the horizontal line is stretched out due to the presence of a golden sky; this way, human acts and the magnificence of nature are of the same value. As Basil Gray argues, this powerful painting style originates from a challenge between Iranian innate tradition and the skills adopted from Indo-Chinese art (30).

FIGURE 16: A young monk is visiting the dervish

FIGURE 17

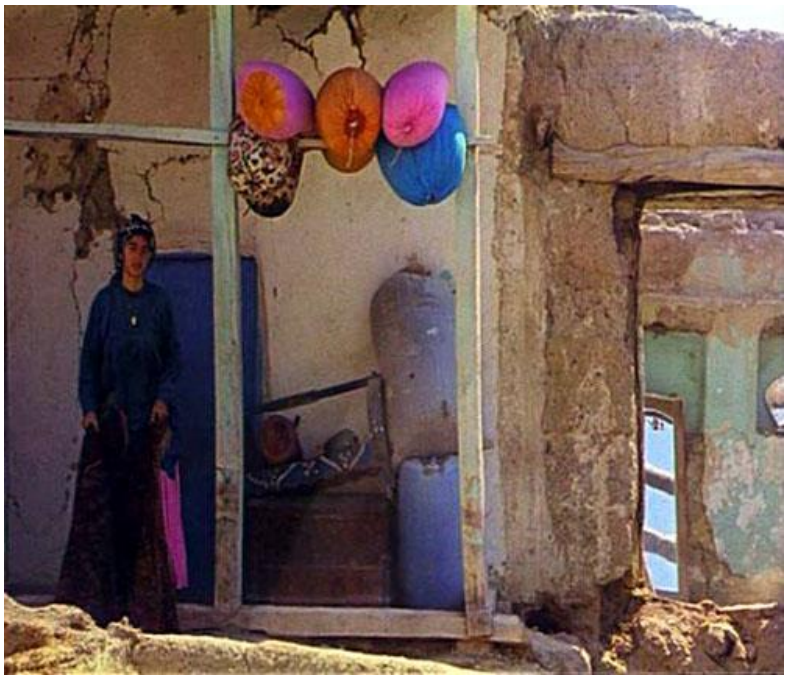

FIGURE 18

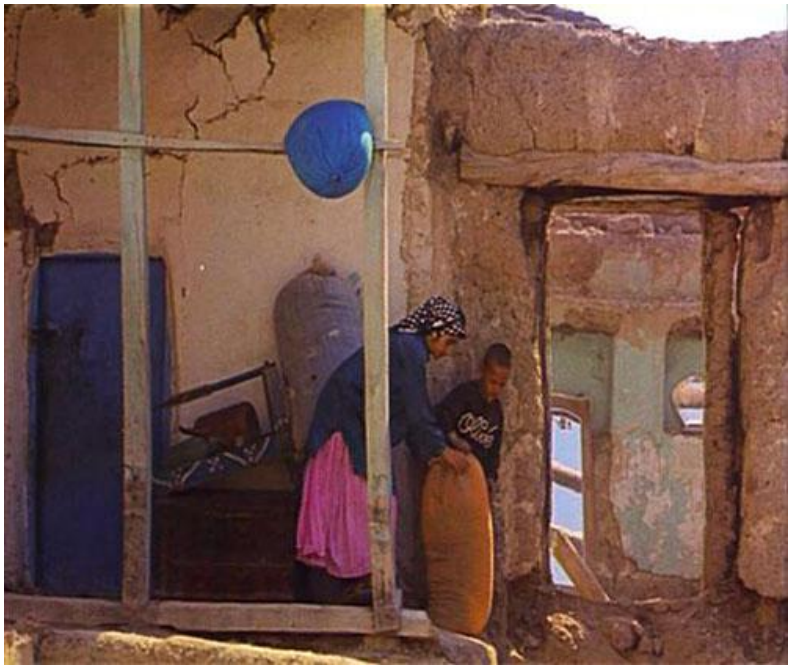

FIGURE 19

Fig. 20 is a painting from 1565 entitled “The murder of Uayna and Raiya” by Sheikh Mohammad. This painting depicts an atmosphere of war in which everyone tries to survive. Coloured accents, diverse rhythms of lines and white spots all give the work an active quality. Similarities between “The murder of Uayna and Raiya” and the still shots in Fig. 21 and Fig. 22 include delicate curved lines, skinny young people with long necks and pieces of rock. In general, paintings of this period represent characters that are totally irrelevant to the main theme of the story yet occupy an important position in the scene. With the elimination of the background as well as backstage profiles, a broader area has been created for human acts (Pakbaz 94). The painting shows a battlefield from which everyone is trying to escape alive. Figures 17 and 18 show scenes taken after the deadly earthquake of Roudbar city, in which the struggle of mankind to survive is present, as well.

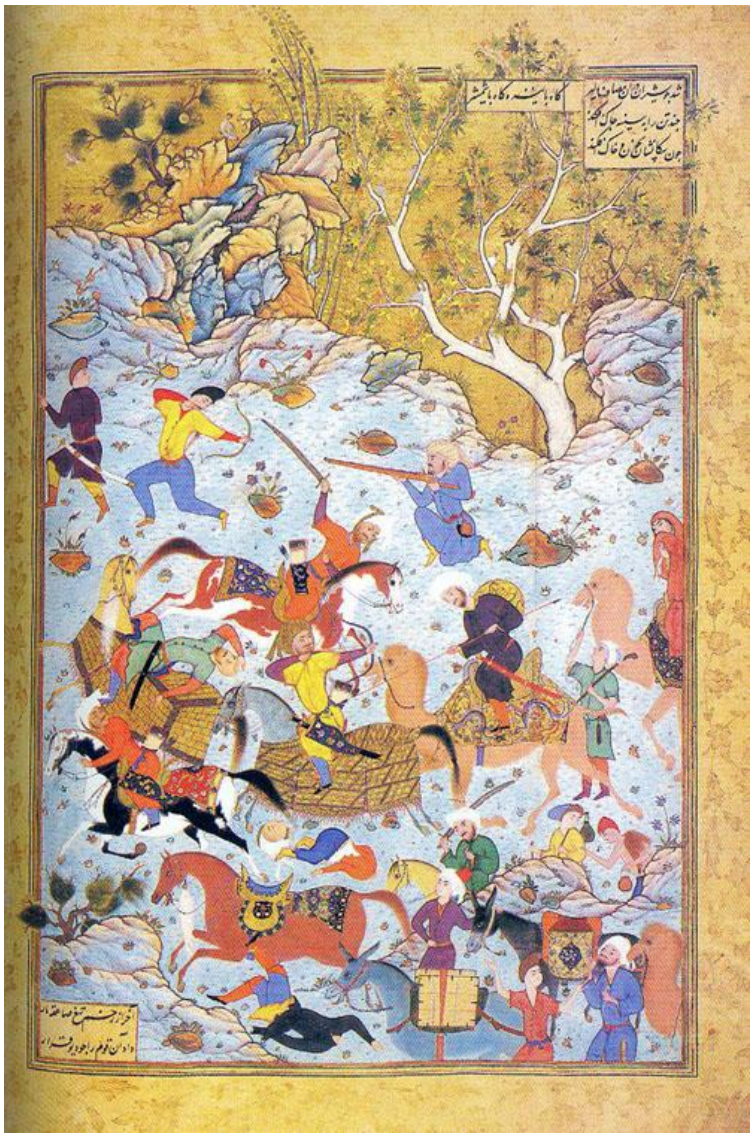

FIGURE 20: The murder of Uayna and Raiya

Among the sketches bearing the signature of Reza Abbasi (1565-1635), we can see the spirit of an artist who is sick of circles of courtiers. In his paintings, which initiated a new style on the basis of the visual value of lines, most characters are often isolated from their surrounding environment. Combinations of color and spatial structures have been simplified in his works, with brown, purple and blue colors being frequently

FIGURE 21

FIGURE 22

repeated in his paintings. Rouin Pakbaz explains that it was during the time of Reza Abbasi when Europeans started approaching Iran. Although he used to paint European characters every now and then, he never utilized shading or perspective in his paintings (123). This way, Reza Abbasi intentionally neglected accurate and elaborate aesthetic rules shaped throughout several centuries. Tents and human characters, brown, gray and blue colors, wine cup and water jug—representing a contrast between the male and female genders—are some of the similarities between Fig. 23 and Reza Abbasi's painting "Teymur and Mour" (Fig. 24).

FIGURE 23

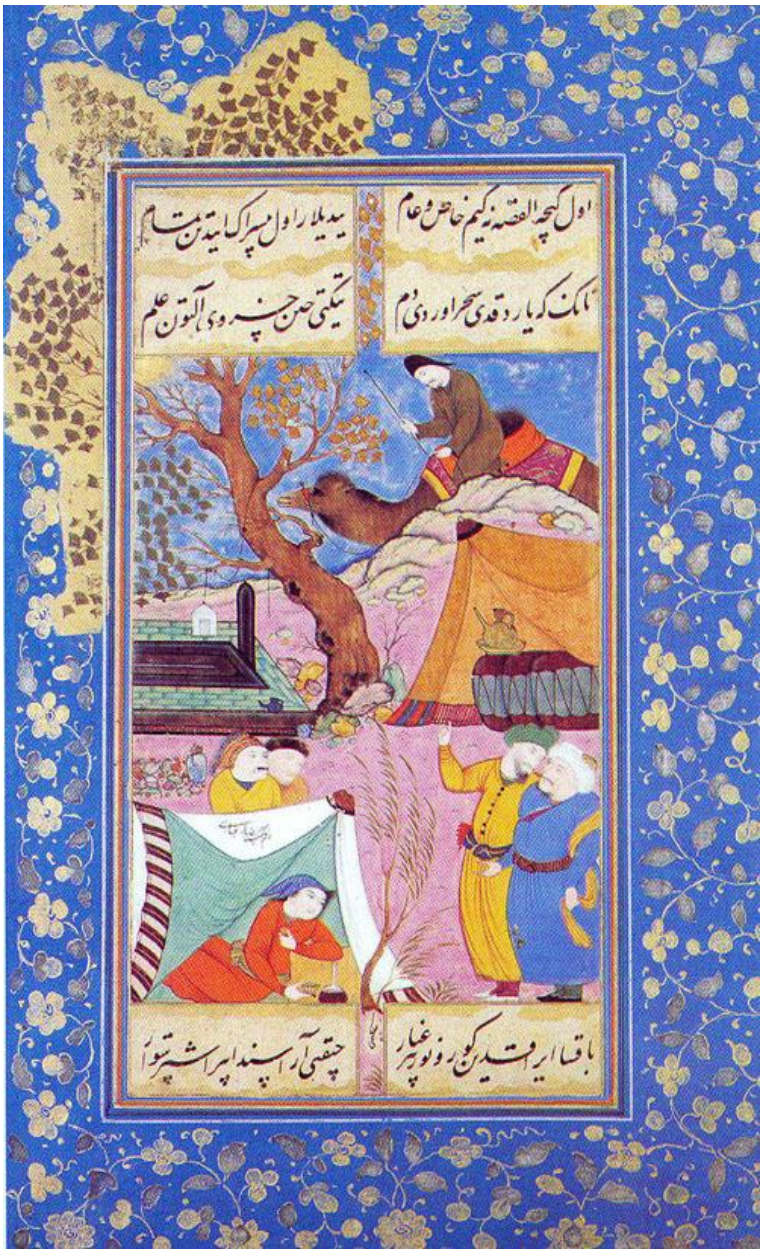

FIGURE 24: A painting by Reza Abbasi in 1637; from the book *Makhzanol Asrar*.

Teymur and Mour

Chapter 3: Feeling Reality in a Poetic Way

In *The Wind will carry us* (1999) a group of documentary filmmakers of whom we see only one (Behzad Dourani) arrive in a remote Kurdish village (Siah Dareh) to document the locals' mourning rituals anticipating the death of an elderly woman. When the men reach the village, they are greeted by a young schoolboy, Farzad, who has been assigned by the local contact to be their guide. As the film proceeds, it gradually becomes clear that Kiarostami's story is not really going to be about the death ceremony or the filming of it, but about what Behzad sees and what is on his mind. Periodically Behzad is interrupted by cell-phone calls from his impatient producer, Mrs. Godzari, back in Tehran. In order to get adequate reception for the call, Behzad has to jump into his car and drive up to the top of a local hill where the cemetery is located.

The film starts with a static shot in a twisting road, with winding pathways being frequently repeated in it. When Behzad, trying to find cell phone reception, climbs a hill up to the village cemetery, we follow the car as it ascends this twisty road, which is repeated five more times throughout the film. This scene is recorded in a long sequence with minimal camera movements composed of a number of delicate and precise pans, along with a conversation with the gravedigger. The zigzag path is again repeated in the movement of an apple in a scene where the apple, which is Farzad's share, slips out of Behzad's hand down on the ground. Such a repetition is in some cases so evidently present everywhere that it takes an abstract form. Similar to the impression left from the

repetition of rhymes in a poem, it seeks aesthetic objectives that are stylized rather than naturalistic expression (Eslami 113).

FIGURE 25

In “Khosrow and Shirin” (Fig. 26), Emperor Khosrow comes across Shirin, who is washing herself in a fountain. The painting is from 1524-1525. The story says that Shirin, who is on a hunting expedition, finds herself alone at a water fountain and decides to stay for a wash. Khosrow, who is on his way to Armenia, incidentally encounters her. The scene is in fact a picture of the second couplet on the top right side of the frame; a water stream at the bottom of the frame, dry hills in ochre, the color of Iranian hills, a golden sky, and a single tree in the center. Melikian-Chirvani believes that the single tree is a symbol of an Iranian, an inhabitant of dry lands, who is the center of his/her own world. The scene, with Shirin having a bath in the fountain and Khosrow being

flabbergasted by witnessing so much beauty, is so influential that even nature cannot remain indifferent toward it. Rocks on the top left side symbolize faces that are turning away in shame. This is a kind of commentary in Iranian painting, as if nature is not indifferent to these incidents (Melikian-Chirvani 176).

An illustration from Shah Tahmasb's Shahnameh ("Rostam and Rakhsh," Fig. 27) depicts the hunt of a lion by Rostam's horse, called Rakhsh, while Rostam is napping himself. The similarities between the single trees and the twisty roads in these three paintings on the one hand, and the hills and single trees in Kiarostami's film, on the other, are undeniable. The paintings are exactly similar to the hill that we saw in *The Wind Will Carry Us*, where the village cemetery was located with a single tree on the top. "Alexander in a banquet" (Fig. 28) is from Nezami's book, painted in 1525. The image represents its spirit—Alexander in a banquet in a garden with a running stream in it.

Kiarostami uses special strategies to evoke a sense of audience self-awareness. This concept is achieved through the use of formal and stylistic devices such as the long take, camera movement (or, the lack therefore), sound, editing, performance, story structure, dissociation, and repetition. These elements are used not for the overall progression of the film's narrative in the traditional sense, but rather to add dimension and give the audience something to interact with and experience. Through the recognition of these devices, we are constantly reminded of our status as spectators and the film as a work of art. However this is not to say that Kiarostami's films are not heavily grounded in our social reality. The use of these devices can also be argued to represent a more truthful reality: the duration of a shot, the lack of frequent elliptical cuts, and the repetition of a specific locale. These are all common elements in our everyday lives.

FIGURE 26: Khosro and Shirin

FIGURE 27: Rostam and Rakhsh

FIGURE 28: Alexander in a banquet

Like other Kiarostami's films, *The Wind Will Carry Us* uses the technique of repetition, and the art of obfuscation to create the effect of poetry on film. In *The Wind Will Carry Us*, Kiarostami has taken advantage of the accumulation and recurrence of motifs and elements, which are familiar to the audience to some extent. In fact, the

audience gets used to them as a result of recurrence. However, the director never allows the addressee to *set* his/her own direction or position. Gradually the pieces of the mosaic come together, but the audience can never succeed in getting a sufficient overview of the whole picture, which is mysterious (Tesson 27).

Another strategy of Kiarostami in *The Wind Will Carry Us* is preventing the audience from getting accustomed to the characters by any means. This is not only done by giving up the devices usually used for making the audience familiar with characters, but also by the presence of 11 characters in the movie who in practice are partially or totally invisible. We never see Behzad's colleagues, the dying old woman, the gravedigger or those talking to Behzad on the phone. Mehrnaz Saeid Vafa quoted Kiarostami as saying that, "In cinema, it's been accepted that the identity of character is not necessary" (67). In *The Wind Will Carry Us*, we are given mostly reaction shots, without seeing clearly what is going on and what is being observed. This goes against conventional story telling in film or literature, and Kiarostami frequently does this because he wants to involve audiences; he wants us to imagine and add our imagination to the film, to create our own story.

It is not incidental that the longest and most dynamic scene of the work is barely evident. Behzad and the girl who has attracted him enter a cellar to milk livestock, where they have a long conversation. The scene lasts from 1:07:45 to 1:12:33, but we clearly see neither the girl's face nor their position in the cellar. There are even long shots of absolute darkness. "The scene is breaking, frightful, evocative. Everything of value has been driven underground and into the darkness and dust - love, beauty, poetry" (Walsh, 1999).

It seems that he tries not to involve his imagination while building up the story of his film, to let the audience form their own story on the basis of their own experiences and views. The presence of a story, an angle or an emphasis can prevent the formation of a new view in the audience, a new view which leads to the creation of a new story. There are two scenes in which Behzad, while shaving his beard, faces the camera as if we are in the mirror's place. Each of these scenes lasts two minutes, creating an impossible yet eternal profile. This goes to show how Kiarostami chooses specific, non-traditional perpendicular camera angles to shoot. There is certainly no conventional pattern to these choices. There is no reflection in this scene, because it's not "he himself" but us who have to watch the act of shaving, while in our minds we are eagerly looking for Behzad's main intention of taking pictures in the mourning ceremony (that was none of his business), so that unlike him we can manage to have a correct understanding of the ceremony (Nancy 13). Nancy says, "Kiarostami mobilizes audience's eyes: He attracts the eyes and inspires them, he makes the eyes conscious" (12). Relating to this, Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa observes, "It also entails a use of shallow space in which the actors address either the camera or the offscreen space as if it were a mirror […], which is also the method often used for establishing a sense of depth in Persian miniatures" (59).

Again, we are looking at life through the car windows, this time within the natural environment of Kurdistan province. The film is full of long shots from nature that come into our sight as the car is advancing. We only lose sight of these natural scenes occasionally after each turn of the road. Beautiful static shots with the camera overlooking mountain tops, a conversation over the fact that cars get tired like human beings, a particular look at nature, technology and humans, a kind and just look. The first

view of the village shows some women scrutinizing the strangers. Scenes of balconies and doors, as well as alleys and people in teahouses are mostly taken from a perpendicular angle, with wonderful frames that are in fact an opening to life, a repetition of colourful doors and fantastic outfits of women. As if the promised paradise is right here, it is exactly this very village and the nature around it (Saeid Vafa, 60). Steven Woodward says in his book *After Kieslowski*, "Kiarostami's intentionally adrift souls, like the engineer (Behzad Dorani) in *The Wind Will Carry Us* are redirected by their meetings with others toward nature's bliss, that is, heaven on the Earth, which is for the Iranian director possibly the only heaven we have" (198).

FIGURE 29

"Moragha Golshan" (Fig. 30) is a piece of work by Kamaloddin Behzad, the most prominent Iranian painter of his time (c. 1450 – c. 1535), a stylish artist famous for his innovations in creating proportional parts. In the painting, the artist's devotion to the natural beauties of the world has reached an ultimate fascination. The image shows a Utopia, a Garden of Eden. The variety of trees and flowers, different facial features, the blue sky with large clouds in it, and a composition of colors of outfits, faces and walls, all make this miniature a masterpiece.

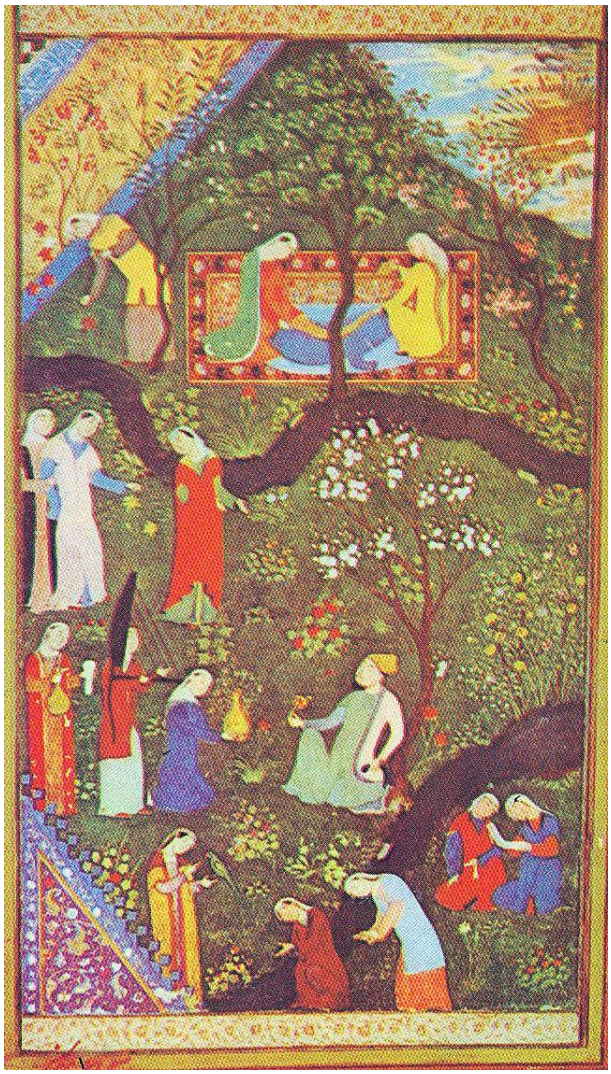

FIGURE 30: “Moragha Golshan”

Melikian-Chirvani describes “The Court of Gayumarth” (Fig. 31) this way:

> If we look for someone as important as Behzad himself in the Safavid era miniatures, he can only be Sultan Mohammad. The painting is created during 1544-1545. With the first look, one can easily realize that it has been a unique work of that period of time, with soft delicate lines used to show eternity. The image immediately incorporates the inscription in it, in which the sun is described, into the golden sky. (60)

The painter has recreated the Utopian heavenly world in his mind in a perfect way. Sultan Mohammad was interested in the mere meaning of the poem, while the painting encompasses more details. Here clouds are drawn with a technique used in China more than three centuries earlier, where spring clouds and vegetation, as well as Kiumarth and his escorts, inform the viewer of a universal spring, the genesis of a new social system for people with different skin colors, which is in conformity with Ferdowsy's poem, too. Melikian-Chirvani correctly refers to the Persian word "Aein" (rite) to describe the painting, and quotes Inju Shirazi as saying that the literary value of the word has no precise equivalent in French. Moreover, one of its aspects is related to formalities and ornamentations (60). *The Wind Will Carry Us* talks about a specific ceremony held in parts of Iranian Kurdistan. It is a ritual of death, which is in fact a part of life in the director's eyes.

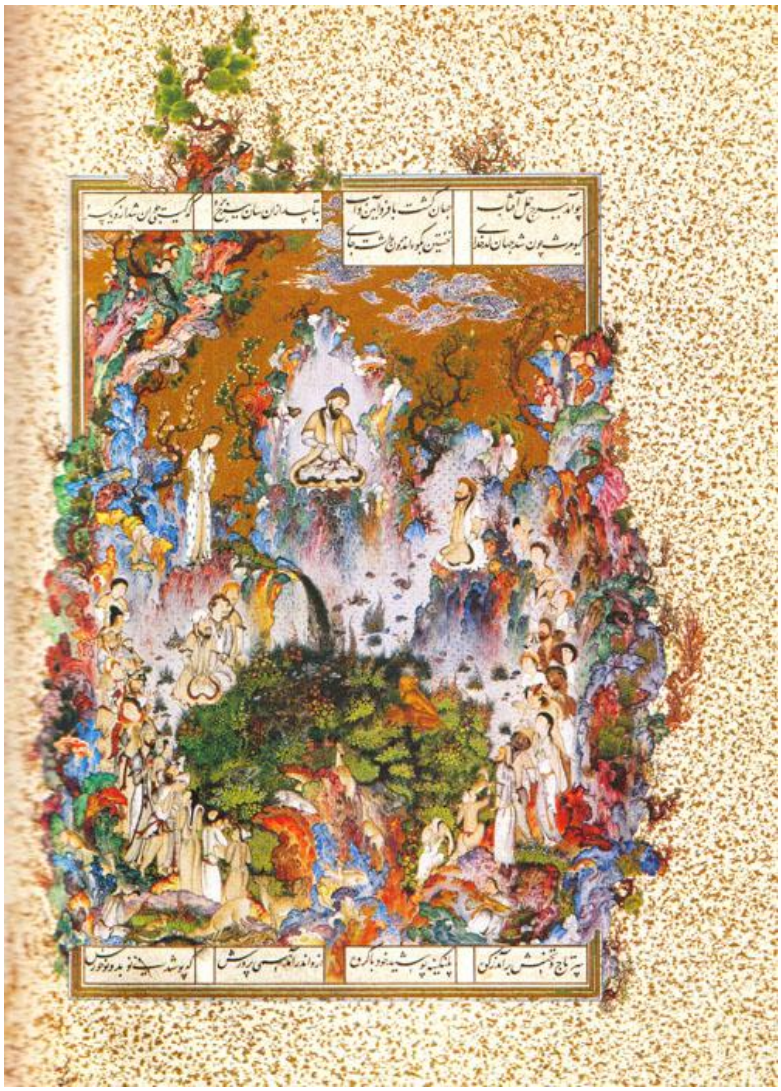

FIGURE 31: The Court of Gayumarth

The title of this film is in fact a reference to a poem by Forough Farrokhzad[6] (1935-1967), the modern Iranian female poet. Also, in the first sequence of the film there

[6] In my night, so brief, alas

The wind is about to meet the leaves.

My night so brief is filled with devastating anguish

Hark! Do you hear the whisper of the shadows?

is another reference to the poem “Where is the Friend's Home?” written by Sohrab Sepehri, to both remind the audience of the previous trilogy, and prepare them for another pictorial poem. Kiarostami's films are usually referred to as poetic, while this is his first film in which characters recite poems for each other. This strategy can carry countless

---

This happiness feels foreign to me.

I am accustomed to despair.

Hark! Do you hear the whisper of the shadows?

There, in the night, something is happening

The moon is red and anxious.

And, clinging to this roof

That could collapse at any moment,

The clouds, like a crowd of mourning women,

Await the birth of the rain.

One second, and then nothing.

Behind this window,

The night trembles

And the earth stops spinning.

Behind this window, a stranger

Worries about me and you.

You in your greenery,

Lay your hands – those burning memories –

On my loving hands.

And entrust your lips, replete with life’s warmth,

To the touch of my loving lips

The wind will carry us!

The wind will carry us!

meanings in different layers; for example, Iranians all deal with poems no matter to which social or cultural class they belong. They even use poems in their daily talk, whether as a proof of what they say or as a means of conveying the message (Chershir 2000).

The old doctor working in the heart of nature, the young well-digger and the young engineer from the city, all reveal their views of life and their main concerns in the form of poems. Poems of prominent poets like Omar Khayyam, Sohrab Sepehri and Forough Farrokhzad are recited over beautiful natural scenes, as if they are parts of a poetic painting.

In the book *Abbas Kiarostami: le cinéma à l'épreuve du reel*, Didier Coureau describes the scene: we see an automobile in the distance and hear the narrator. The distance created between the car and the sound reminds the viewer of the presence of manuscripts in the Chinese landscape paintings. Poetry has been frequently used in Iranian miniatures. Illustrations of poetry books became very popular in the post Islam period, and gradually couplets from poems emerged on the scene of the paintings. Cheng explains the insertion of manuscripts into paintings as follows:

> The poem written on the empty space of the painting is not just a simple, artificial fake statement [...]. The poem, with the help of its rhythm and content, clarifies the procedure through which a painter's thoughts end up on canvas. [...] Thus a poem, even when it doesn't have any visual value, still gives the viewer the capacity to put it somewhere in between earth and heaven. (Ragel 128)

Fig. 32 is a vertical angle shot when an infuriated Behzad spots a turtle on a grave in the cemetery—Kiarostami illustrates his sadness and anger with this shot. Persian poetry and mysticism are full of symbols, allegories and similes, as well as ironies and signs. The poet seeks to reveal a more profound meaning by taking advantage of

metaphors, as if the secret of the world can only be discovered through such metaphors (Saeed Vafa 58). Saeed Vafa apparently believes that it is due to political, religious or cultural constraints, or even personal taboos, that Persian poetry and visual arts are full of metaphors and allegories (58). "In *The Wind Will Carry Us*, the scenes in which Behzad kicks the turtle, watches the dung beetle or throws the thighbone into the stream all function in this manner, condensing a meaning and a character's attitude into a single image" (Saeed Vafa 61).

"Miniature from Klileh Demneh" (Fig. 33) is a painting attributed to the master Khalil, one of the paintings of a copy of Kelileh Demneh. The artist, in combining different parts in his book illustrations, has taken advantage of a poetic approach in representing various natural views (Tajvidi, 133). Kelileh Demneh is an old book with animal personifications in it, with the theme of its paintings being mainly composed of animal characters. In Fig. 33, the adventures of four friends are cited, with patterns of a calm world full of peace and tranquility. Each of these animals is a symbol of a central theme, which is both referred to in the book and reflected in the paintings.

Ahmad Karimi Hakak argues that one aspect of Kiarostami's cinematic style is his ability to illustrate the sense incorporated in Persian poetry, in a bid to create poetic scenes in his films. Hakak believes that aesthetic elements of Persian poetry are rooted in ancient history, and are more delicate and exquisite than the samples recited in the film. Therefore, prior to the adaptation of poems in the film, Kiarostami tries to give a visual identity to Persian poetry by utilizing a special technique (Karimi Hakak, 2005). It is also

FIGURE 32

FIGURE 33: Miniature from Klileh Demneh

argued that the advantage of Kiarostami's creativity in adaptation of poems written by Sohrab Sepehri and Forough Farrokhzad lies in the fact that he has expanded the scope of textual transformation. Adaptation is the transformation of something old into a new text. Sima Daad refers to the fact that Kiarostami's adaptation is in a theoretical domain, with its borders being expanded from an inter-textual potential to a trans-genetic potential (Daad, 2005).

Kiarostami's films ask the audience to think of themselves and the environment around them, in order to achieve a vision or an insight (Kiarostami, *Ten on 10*). The result is an interactive cinema in which there is an agreement between the filmmakers and the addressees, so that we can understand our position as the audience as filmmakers do, in front of and behind the camera. In Kiarostami's cinema, it is not exciting, artificial special effects, but human beings and their affairs, that are the main axis.

Five Dedicated to Ozu (2003) is a manifestation of Kiarostami's highest carefree flight, increasingly involved in a determined quest for what he himself calls "to disappear in order to deny all the vital elements for a common popular cinema" (Kiarostami, 2002). The 74-minute digital work is composed of 5 single long shots of 15 minutes each. The fixed camera takes five scenes of the landscape. The first part shows a piece of driftwood off the coast, floating on the waves, permanently bobbing up and down, wave after wave. In the second part, people are walking on the beach; some pause for a look at the sea and then keep moving ahead. In the third part, first we witness indistinct shapes on the beach in winter, and then a pack of dogs and their relationships. The forth episode consists of a flock of noisy ducks crossing the frame on the beach. And the fifth part is a pond at night

time, with frogs croaking, the reflection of the moon in the water, a light shower and then rainfall (Fig. 34).

In the book *The Cinema of North Africa and the Middle East*, Gönül Dönmez-Colin says of *Five Dedicated to Ozu*: "Kiarostami strips his film of narrative elements to provide a space for the audience to contemplate" (64). Altoon Sultan, one of the audience members, writes, "I was struck by how I made a narrative out of the elements presented on this stage; a meeting that would ordinarily be unnoticed becomes a grand drama" (2009).

In the book *MOMA, Highlights Since 1980*, it is emphasized that "*Five*'s sound track has no dialogue, but it is intricately mixed and includes incidental sounds, completing a film that is at once meditative and filled with the very real drama, humor, and vitality of life" (Roberts and Lowry 262).

Kiarostami, in the documentary *Around Five*[7], refers to the work as something in between photography, poetry and cinema, and adds, "We should set our imagination free about everything, and based on conjecture, bring back the value that something has had and has lost. With this in mind, I think we should extract the values that are hidden in objects and expose them by looking at objects, plants, animals and humans, everything."

By excluding his imagination from the process of capturing natural scenes, Kiarostami in fact allows the audience to set its imagination free. Breaking the information into pieces and then refraining from exposing these pieces, deliberately going off the mainline, the search for and utilization of repetition techniques taken to the

[7] *Around Five*: Abbas Kiarostami's reflections on film and the making of Five

2005 / 54 min. / In Iranian w/English subtitles an MK2 production

ultimate level—as well as other available tools used to achieve a kind of "spacing" between the work and the audience—all show that he wants to establish a creative cooperation with an enthusiastic audience. His films are, more than anything else, works about tolerance (Elena 194-189). He is an artist who is trying not to produce films for consumption in its general passive sense. Rather, he intends to encourage us to think, ask, interpret and become active partners in a process he has initiated (Andrew 30).

"When we reveal the world of a film for its audience, they in turn learn to create their own world through their enriched imagination. As a filmmaker, I rely on this creative intervention, otherwise, the film and its audience would die together. Flawless stories that work without impediment have a big shortcoming: They work too well to let their audience intervene" (Kiarostami, *The wind will carry us*, DVD attachment).

FIGURE 34

Iranian poetry, philosophy and mysticism, and consequently visual arts, are structured such that it seems they haven't been intended from the beginning to achieve a realistic structure with a rational perception. Contrarily, in European paintings, the necessity of perspective is felt because the goal is to convey a realistic depiction. Later, when painting was utilized to transmit personal world, they reached an abstract mentality, something already present in Iranian miniatures (Fig. 35). The criteria for Iranian artists was this abstract mentality and not objectivity. They sought to depict something beyond reality, and this may explain why they never felt the necessity of perspective. Miniature can be regarded as the root of modern art, especially abstract style (Ajand 17).

FIGURE 35: Majnun Eavesdrop on Layla’s camp

Many contemporary painters who have tried to recreate the world of miniatures have ultimately been unable to follow that view and that philosophy, and instead they have recreated visual elements of miniature. They have also tried to use modern techniques, rhythm, context and style in their work, in a bid to create modern Iranian pieces of art (Fig. 36). However, there are only a few fine works inspired by this philosophy.

FIGURE 36: Aidin Aghdashloo's Intercession of Angels

In the modern era, when many Iranian painters are shifting to an abstract atmosphere in their works, the dominant element is the form, not the meaning, and the technique behind the form. Nevertheless, in the post-modern era the painter demonstrates a larger concept by means of the form. We see many paintings of this era that, though modern, still carry the Iranian identity with them (Fig. 37), (Fig. 38).

Many contemporary Iranian painters have reached abstract style through realistic spaces. The context they were working in gradually turned to a context totally lacking

perspective, though it was still inspired by nature.

FIGURE 37: Farah Osuli’s A Glance of Love

FIGURE 38: Nasser Oveisi’s Five Bowls Dans

FIGURE 39: Jalil Ziapour’s My Father Applies Henna

One of the most prominent painters, whose works have had a considerable impact on Kiarostami's pictures and films, is Sohrab Sepehri.Sepehri (1928-1980) was a contemporary Iranian poet and painter, who occupies a high position in contemporary Iranian arts and literature owing to his focus on mystic thoughts, as well as his creative efforts to utilize aesthetic achievements of both the East and the West. Not only does Kiarostami directly refer to his poems in the films *Where is the Friend's Home?* (whose title is adopted from one of Sohrab's poems) as well as *The Wind Will Carry Us*, but also the effects of pictures recreated by Sohrab in his poems are frequently repeated in his films.

As a painter, Sohrab Sepehri began his work with a series of simplified landscapes. His first watercolour or gouache paintings are reflections of his poetic

experience in the world of objects. Free fast movements of the brush, mixture of colours, and utilization of focusing elements in a two dimensional space are some of the features of his works. By discovering the value of positive empty spaces in composition and use of more limited colours, he showed great interest in the aesthetic sense of "Zen" paintings.

Paintings of tree trunks and abstract geometric shapes are as exceptional and unexpected in Sohrab Sepehri's works as his paintings of still life and desert architecture landscapes. Sepehri was swinging between portrait and absolute abstract, between an aesthetic approach to reality and the rationality of organizing images, and mostly was linking his numerous visual experiences to each other with an emphasize on the principle of emptiness (DVD, Iranian modern art movement). The photo and painting by Kiarostami in Figures 43 and 44 reveal similarities not only of subject matter, but in an approach split between natural and abstract representation. In his photos, paintings, and verse, Kiarostami avoids depicting extraordinary things; the daily and seasonal cycles of nature are the focus, like stems in the snow (fig. 43) (fig 44).

FIGURE 40: Sohrab Sepehri's Trees and Houses

FIGURE 41: Sohrab Sepehri's Trees

FIGURE 42: Sohrab Sepehri's Abstraction

FIGURE 43: A photo by Abbas Kiarostami (Snow White)

FIGURE 44: A painting by Abbas Kiarostami[8]

[8] This pencil painting is from his personal collection.

`

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Throughout the preceding pages, based on studying art history as well as analysing crticts ideas, I have established Kiarostami's status as a multidisciplinary artist, and shown that his work is imbued with the poetry of his country which is interconnected with its art..

Abbas Kiarostami has been considered a significant artist not only for his poetic sensibility but also for original visual style. Throughout the previous chapters, I have tried to demonstrate the similarity of the images of three of his films—*And Life Goes On*, *The Wind Will Carry Us*, and *Five Dedicated to Ozu*—with Iranian miniatures.

Various similarities between these two art forms have been discussed. the perpendicular angels of Kiarostami's camera recalls. A lack of spot lighting, use of natural and human elements, simplicity of forms, and a tendency to view the real world through an ideal lens are all elements common to Iranian art and poetry which distinguish Kiarostami's approach as a kind of visualization of poetry,.

Although Abbas Kiarostami is not trying to recreate Iranian miniatures in his films, both Kiarostami and Iranian painters seek to illustrate an ideal world. This is done by the elimination of fancy ornamentations, with its visual translation in cinema being perspective, camera angle, use of light and camera movements, in a bid to involve the viewer's imagination.

Kiarostami himself believes that the base of all art is essentially poetry. Poetry breaks daily routine and elevates life, in a sense providing an escape from daily routine.

Therefore, if we interpret art in this way, poetry becomes the ultimate in art. In Kiarostami's opinion, art is a form of poetry, or at least, that is what it should ultimately be. His expectations of photography, painting and cinema are that they should in the end bring themselves closer to poetry. The content has always led the director to find the form. He also believes that perpendicular angle of filming is the most natural angle, and that natural and realistic works can engage the viewer's ideas, which pays the ultimate respect to the audience's thoughts (See Appendix A, Interview with Abbas Kiarostami). From his words, it can be concluded that the similarities between his works and Iranian painting has been subconscious rather than intentional. However, he is deeply affected by Iranian poetry, which is interconnected with all other arts including painting.

During my research, I found out that many researchers and authors believe that in Iranian miniatures the painter is trying to build an ideal world rather than an imagistic one. An ideal world, in particular divine, can only be perceived through imagination and fancy—where imagination is the platform for the genesis and evolution of ideal features, while the artist's imagination can only reach such a level by the means of purification (Nateghifar 38). Many experts on Iranian miniatures believe that the same confusion between imagistic and ideal has led to the creation of some works outwardly similar to a piece of miniature, but which may not be called miniatures because they lack the main features of traditional miniatures.

Cinema, while it may be considered a global and in some sense even "universal" language, is nevertheless profoundly influenced by the distinctive cultures into which it enters—the local rituals have an impact on it, just as the medium of film in turn

influences that culture. My examination of Kiarostami's films in light of Iranian painting illustrates some of the specific if subtle ways that the language of cinema takes the form of the host culture, adopting itself to its values.

In brief, my intention in raising this argument in this chapter was to suggest that the same philosophy with which Iranian artists created the world of miniatures in ancient times is now shaping the world of Kiarostamis`s films. Since both these fields of art are rooted in the same culture, then this similarity in the philosophy of art is not coincidental. It is hoped that the topics raised in this thesis pave the way for other researchers to pursue further investigation in this specific field.

Appendix A: Interview with Abbas Kiarostami about the subject of my thesis

K.K. : In your opinion is it correct to say that the base of all Iranian art is poetry?

A.K. : I don't know whether I should narrow it down to Iran, in my opinion the base of all art is essentially poetry. Poetry breaks daily routine and in fact you could say that it elevates life and in a sense it is an escape from daily routine. Therefore if we interpret art in this way, poetry becomes the ultimate in art.

The form of expression, which is the aesthetics of any poetry, as well as the content, must be free from daily routine and should expose us to a world otherwise concealed from the human eye; therefore, art is a component of poetry and this is not the case solely in Iran. And if Iranian cinema has found exposure, at least in comparison to countries in the region, in my opinion it is because we possess poetry and poetry is a form of thought, it is a sort of outlook, free from daily routine.

K.K.: What characteristics can be attributed to bringing poetry into a picture?

A.K. It is not possible to bring poetry into a picture. In my opinion art is a form of poetry or at least that is what it should ultimately be. My expectation of photography, painting and Cinema is that they should in the end bring themselves closer to poetry. Art cannot bring poetry into a picture and has no obligation to do so but should rather compose a pictorial poem, independent of the original. I should also add that what I call poetry should embrace a new discovery of life and truth. For instance rhythmic stories

cannot be inclusive of this. In fact I believe that all art should render new information about ourselves and the life around us.

The next thing [to consider] is form; if the form has nothing new to offer, we will not be able to listen or to contemplate. Therefore there is need for originality in the form in order to attract the attention of the audience.

How can we be expected to see, when our minds are clogged up with repetitions and clichés! Classical poetry is not to blame, it is rather our own minds that have become blind and blocked. Therefore, in order to employ our ears and our attention, innovation is a necessity.

But in terms of how form can be achieved, I have never personally thought about the form of my work. The content has always led me to find the form.

K.K: Why do you always choose a perpendicular angle (vertical to the subject)?

A.K.: Because this is a human outlook. We may at times witness an event from the top of a tower but I believe that day to day events bear a human level.

KK. : I don't mean level, but rather the angle, why vertical?

A.K.: Because this is the best suited angle for viewing a film.

K.K: This can also be seen in your paintings…

A.K: And right now in our interview I have chosen an angle directly facing you, therefore this is most natural and if someone else has chosen a different angle, that's where the question should come up. In certain moments, for the sake of creating excitement or displaying a nightmare, the camera may be repositioned irregularly out of the usual norm but in a normal well fitted situation it is only reasonable to chose the more suitable angle and directly face the subject. In my work, I try to take geometrical lines

into consideration. In day to day life, we have become accustomed to lines that cross each other at a 90 degree angle and so, it is quite natural that we utilize the same principle as much as possible.

K.K.: So then, you consider this to be the most natural angle to use?

A.K. : Yes, because I want to reach everything through the prism of day to day life.

K.K.: Rarely have I seen anything in your paintings that becomes the focus of attention. It is as if everything is equally important. Or on the same note, lighting. There is no light that as the center of attention but we do see other filmmakers who work in the same poetic genre, but play with lighting to create the desired setting. Their source of lighting is clear and they make use of it.

A.K.: Well, this is the respect I pay to my viewers. I try to show the subject in a more panoramic setting and not to chose my lens or angle in order to accentuate what I wish them to see. I allow the viewers to collaborate with me and chose what I want them to see.

In my film, Shirin, I am certain that all the viewers are fixed at one point, the eyes of the actors. But if initially I had the notion that eyes were of the utmost importance, I would have taken extreme close up shots and we would have ended up with a different picture altogether, in which case we would have dissociated ourselves from the complete human. It is only natural that we observe the person from this distance, that is a view, wider than a passport size photograph. But I am certain that viewers will turn their attention to the actors' eyes.

I do not impose this choice by the selection of my lens but it is rather the viewers who chose it with their own lens. That is to say that in a more panoramic environment, the second choice, which is the use of a micro lens is exploited by the very viewer. This is something that Ozu employs frequently, everything is lapsed in long shot. Just like the theatre, where you are free to pursue any character or even if you are bored by a conversation between two actors, you may turn your attention to the background or elsewhere. This is freedom of choice, in a sense, which is ultimately respect paid to the viewer and to poetry.

When you are filming a scene, you are a live being deciding for lifeless nature; you are choosing and through this choice you are delivering a message. Therefore during the making of it, my mind is omnipresent. Thereby, when the viewers watch the screen, I will once again utilize their minds, whatever I create is meaningless, without the subjectivity of the viewer. The viewer's mind is constantly at work and this is a parameter that is most certainly an addition to the film, in fact this is the moment that it becomes exposed.

The viewer is not solely an eye. He has thoughts and memories. If a film does not associate the viewer to a certain picture, a memory outside of that environment and that world, then it is not worthy of the merits we give to it.

Constructive thought is separated from the film and is replaced with the thoughts of the viewer. The mind of the viewer is not necessarily similar to that of the filmmaker, but the viewer must experience that association and add his own imagination to the film, before it can belong to the viewer.

Therefore I essentially believe that we do not have viewers who are not creative; a viewer with an eye. Because he is alive, he has no choice but to make an association with a picture and the precision of the viewer makes its own film which may be something close to the filmmaker's or far off. But this film will most certainly be a different film.

K.K.: So you don't focus on anything in particular?

A.K.: I cannot understand these lens facilities in cinema. It seems that films are constantly trying to display realism, but for instance I find it hard to believe that someone who is "blurred" is able to shoot a gun while the focus is on the tip of the gun!

This tactic is employed as a visual effect, but I don't sacrifice the human for the sake of a film effect.

K.K.: Would you care to comment on Haiku, spaces with the absence of human characters - the Far East …etc.

A.K.: In my view, empty spaces like those are part of day to day life. For instance, take our conversation, the moment in which I walk out of frame to pour myself a cup of tea is a part of our conversation, even if your link with the conversation is interrupted in my absence and you choose an interjection to the day before or the day after. It is still part of this relationship, the link between you and yourself. In my opinion, the cinema that does not provide a breathing space and includes everything within the frame of the picture, is artificial, it is a show and an imposition on the viewer. These empty spaces bear significance in life, in architecture for instance, or in the typesetting of a book, or on a plane when you pay more money to travel business class and so on.

Ultimately my model will bear a link to life itself.

K.K.: How about repetition?

In my view, repetition is a form of highlighting something, in order to see it better and attain a better understanding of it. One form of it used in cinema is integration, zooming and taking close up shots, which I don't believe in, meaning that I can't conceive taking the camera that close.

K.K.: In Iran, repetition and symmetry is common…

A.K.: Symmetry is also utilized for the sake of better understanding and seeing it better.

In the opera I worked on, I used symmetry because the operas that I had watched before were so cramped that I didn't know where to look. I tried to pick a decorating style with geometrical symmetry. It is the same with architecture, this is all for the purpose of better visual understanding, in a manner in fact that restricts variety.

I think that this stems from the great creation of the great creator; god, and man; his creation. In the formation of the human being, god has observed perfect symmetry.

This is where aesthetics becomes functional.

I think that the creation of man can be a provenance for the correct look towards anything we create in relation to human beings.

K.K.: Well, don't you think that this is a completely eastern way of thought?

A.K.: No, because of what I see in western productions, in machineries and in architecture, everything is symmetrical.

K.K.: But how about art?

A.K.: Look we do have malaise in art- when I say malaise I don't intend to negate it- because that is all a different concept. That art expresses an internal protest. Naturally it breaks all the rules, all the rules of creation, and in doing so, it must follow a purpose.

But unquestionably, in repetition and symmetry you reach serenity which fits well with nature.

K.K.: A comment on landscape please.

A.K.: Again, this is related to your prior question on the absence of human characters. I'll be arch and mention that in order to see the absence of humans, not that I want to contradict it or choose not to see it, but in nature there is the absence of humans. The absence of something usually has two meanings: It could mean space or the absence of something that no longer continues to be. Now this absence of humans may have one meaning for me and another for you. In any case the absence of a human character can be explained or interpreted in two different ways:

How refreshing that it is absent or what a pity that it is.

K.K.: You mean that it is not much more important than other elements in nature?

A.K.: If you say "how refreshing that it is absent" you essentially find the meaning of loneliness.

References

Aghdashloo, Aidin. *In Do Harf* (These Two Words). Tehran: Did, 2008.

Ajand, Yaaghoob. *Khial-e Sharghi* (Eastern Immagination).. Tehran: Saba, 2005.

And Life Goes On. DVD. Dir. Abbas Kiarostami. Kanun and Alireza Zarrin, 1992.

Andrew, Geoff. "Drive, He Said." *Sight and Sound*. Oct. 2002, p. 30-32.

Binyon, L., Wilkinson, J., Gray, B.. *Seir-e Terikh-e Naghashi Iran* (Persian Miniature Painting). Trans. Iranmanesh, M., Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1988.

Bordwell, David. *Figures Traced in Light: on Cinematic Staging.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Chaudhuri, Shohini. *Contemporary world cinema: Europe, the Middle East, East Asia and South Asia*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.

Cheshire, Godfrey. "Poetry and Sufism." Indyweek.com 2000. 8 Oct. 2009. <http://www.indyweek.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A15283>

Daad, Sima. "Adaption, Fidelity, and Transformation: Kiarostami and the Modernist Poetry of Iran." Iranheritage.com 2007. 2 Feb. 2009. <http://www.iranheritage.com/kiarostamiconference/abstracts_full.htm>

Dönmez-Colin, Gönül. *The cinema of North Africa and the Middle East.* London: Wallflower Press, 2007.

Elena, Alberto. *The Cinema of Abbas Kiarostami.* Trans. Belinda Coombes. London: Saqi Books, 2005.

Eslami, Majid. “The Freshness of Repetition: Where is the Friend’s Home? Thirteen Years Later.” *Film International,* n. 26-27 (Autumn 1999-Summer 2000): 108-113.

Eghbale Ashtiani, Abbas. *Tarikhe Iran* (History of Iran). Tehran: Maharat, 2001.

Five: Dedicated to Ozu. DVD. Dir. Abbas Kiarostami. MK2 Productions, 2004.

Goodarzi, Morteza. *Jostojooye Hoviyat dar Naghashi-e Moaser-e Iran* (A Quest for Identity in Contemporary Persian Painting). Tehran: Elmi Farhangi, 2006.

Gray, Basil. *La Peinture Persane*. Genève: Skira, 1997.

Hunter-Blair. Austin: University Of Texas Press, 1989.

Iranian Modern Art Movements. DVD. Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007.

Karimi-Hakkak,Ahmad.” From Kinetic Poetics to a Poetic Cinema: Abbas Kiarostami and the Esthetics of Persian Poetry.” Iranheritage.com 2005. 2 Feb. 2009 http://www.iranheritage.com/kiarostamiconference/abstracts_full.htm

Kianush, K.. “Persian or Iran”www.art-arena.com 1998. 6 Aug. 2010. <http://www.art-arena.com/history.html>

Kiarostami, Abbas. *Snow White.* Tehran: Abbas Kiarostami, 2005.

Kiarostami, Abbas. *Photo Collection.* Tehran: Iran Art Publishing Co., 2000.

Kiarostami, Abbas. “Ten par Abbas Kiarostami.” Official website of the film 2002. 12 Dec 2009 <www.mk2.com/ten/home.html>

Mackenzie, D. N.”Eram,Eranshahr”. www.iranica.com 1998. 6 Aug. 2010. <http://www.iranica.com/articles/eran-eransah# >

Melikian-Chirvani, Assadullah Souren. *Le chant du monde, L'Art de l'Iran Safavid 1501-1736.* Paris: Musee dmu Louvre, 2007.

Ashrafi, M.. *Accompaniment of Painting and Literature in IRAN*. Tehran: Negah Press, 1988.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Evidence of Film : Abbas Kiarostami***.** Bruxelles: Yves Gevaert, 2001.

Nasr, Sayyed Hossein. "*Alam-e Khial va Mafhoom-e Faza dar Miniature Irani* (The World of Imagination and the Notion of Space in Persian Miniature)," *Iranian Archaeology and Art*, No 1 (1968): 12-19

Nateghifar, Fatemeh. *Khial-e Sharghi* (Eastern Immagination). Tehran: Saba, 2005.

Pakbaz, Rouin. *Naghashi Iran az dirbaz ta emrouz* (Painting in Iran from Antiquities Till Today). Tehran: Zarin and Simin, 2006.

Pope, Arthur Upham. *An Introduction to Persian Art Since the Seventh Century,* A.D.. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931.

Pope, Arthur Upham. *Masterpieces of the Art of Iran*. Trans. Parviz Khanlari. Tehran, 1959: 3.

Ragel, Philippe. *Abbas Kiarostami: le cinéma à l'épreuve du reel.* Yellow Now, 2008.

Rist, Peter. "Iran 2000." www.offscreen.com 2001. 15 Dec. 2009 <http://www.horschamp.qc.ca/new_offscreen/iran2000.html>

Roberts, Rebecca and Glenn D. Lowry. *MOMA, Highlights Since 1980: 250 Works from the Museum of Modern Art, New York.* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008.

Saeed-Vafa, Mehrnaz and Jonathan Rosenbaum. *Abbas Kiarostami*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003.

Sepehri, Sohrab. *Otagh-e Abi* (The Blue Room). Tehran: Soroush Press, 1998.

Shaygan, Dariush. *Bothaye Zehni va Khatereh haye Azali* (Mental Idols, Eternal Memory). Tehran: Amir Kabir Press, 1976.

Sultan, Altoon. "Thoughts on Seeing Abbas Kiarostami's 'Five: Dedicated to Ozu'." altoonsultan.blogspot.com 2009. 2 Jan 2010 <http://altoonsultan.blogspot.com/2009/11/thoughts-on-seeing-abbas-kiarostamis.html>

Tajvidi, Akbar. *Naghashi Irani az kohantarin roozegar ta dorane Safavian* (Persian Painting from Antiquities to Safavid Period). Tehran: Culture and Art Office Press, 1973.

Tarkovsky, Andrei. *Sculpting In Time: Reflections On The Cinema*. Trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair. London: The Bodley Head, 1986.

Taste of Cherry. DVD. Dir. Abbas Kiarostami. Iran: The Criterion Collection, 2000.

Ten on 10. DVD. Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. 2004; Iran/France: Zeitgeist Video, 2004.

Tesson, Charles. "Le Secret Magnifique: A Propose de Le Vent Nous Emportera d'Abbas Kiarostami," Cahiers du Cinema, n. 541 (Dec. 1999).

The Wind Will Carry Us. DVD. Dir. Abbas Kiarostami. Iran/France: New Yorker Video, 2002.

Walsh, David. "A Dry Bone in a Stream" wsws.org, 1999. 21 Sept. 2009 <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/sep1999/tff2-s28.shtml>

Welch, Stuart Cary. *Persian Painting: Five Royal Safavid Manuscripts of the sixteenth*. New York: G. Braziller, 1976.

Woodward, Steven. *After Kieślowski: the legacy of Krzysztof Kieślowski*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009.

Zizek, Slavoj. *The Fright of Real Tears, Kryzstof Kieslowski Between Theory and Post Theory*. London: BFI, 2001.