

en-earth). The painting is remarkably powerful in attracting the viewer to the immaterial world and death, is a symbolic concept used therein that highlights the mystical aspect of the text against others (epic, for example). The most important feature of this work of art is its successful depiction of visible tangibles and helping understand some conceptual opposite dualities. By means of these dualities and associating the meaning to each one, the painting has transcended the mere representation of text and highlights the solidarity of the people with mystical beliefs in an attempt to approach a cultural-social significance.

**Keywords:** Semantics, Semiology, Behzad, Mantiq al-tir, Semantic Differential, Algirdas Julien Greimas.

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## Semantic-Semiologic Analysis of the Mourning Painting 'Son's Mourning at the Father's Demise'

### Abstract:

Miniature Painting is one of the most important Iranian artistic genres, which is closely tied with literature, and in the history of Iranian art, some literary texts have been illustrated in this manner several times. Among these, one can refer to the book 'The Conference of the Birds'. This text, also known as *Mantiq al-tair*, is a celebrated literary masterpiece written by poet Farid ud-Din Attar, commonly known as Attar of Nishapur, a poet of the 6th century AH / 12th century, who lived in Neyshabur and presents a mystical and preaching attitude in his works. In the late 9th / 15th century, Behzad, a painter of Herat School, illustrated some of the *Mantiq al-tair's* stories, one of which was 'Son's Mourning for the Father's Demise'.

This painting depicts a group of people taking a coffin to the cemetery, to bury the deceased; so the work is a scene of public mourning, and it can be referred to as a Mourning Painting. The painting is semantically and figuratively important in the history of Iranian art.

The paper at hands reviews this Mourning Painting based on Greimas' semiotic square and the generalization of twofold oppositions. At the end of the twentieth century, Greimas tried to provide a clear definition of the process of producing meaning in three levels (deep, middle and surface structure). According to Greimas, the analysis of a text or a language should begin with the deep structure, i.e. the abstract data level, and proceed to the surface structure, i.e. the level where meaning and objective data exist. This paper has taken a descriptive-analytical method of research and the results indicate that here: 1) the textual relations seek to express 'sadness – happiness' opposition and explicitly display the people's Islamic religion. 2) On one hand, the deep structure reveals all relationships in the entire structure and on the other; it increases the audience's accuracy. 3) Through raising constant-variable duality, the forms of human figures, animals, vegetation and objects seek to oppose the mourning tradition in the past and that time (late Timurid period).

But the movement from the detail towards the whole can reveal the implicit meaning in this work of art. For example, the flag, as a component, refers to a major discourse (mourning) in a religious, cultural and social situation, and the grave refers to the class inequality as well as the abstract concepts of rich and poor. 4) Using culture-nature duality, the composite structure in the up/down direction of the painting depicts the funeral and burial traditions, while the left/right one poses material-spiritual duality. Nonetheless, through illustrating peripheral and decorative elements such as tree and birds, the center-periphery direction of the painting suggests the cancellation of inside-outside duality. 5) The structure of distance, as a symbol of time, rests on the private-public duality. 6) Finally, upward/downward movements of the colors highlight the heaven-earth duality as a symbol of magnificence and grandeur of the other world.

But the movement from the detail towards the whole can reveal the implicit meaning in this work of art. For example, the flag, as a component, refers to a major discourse (mourning) in a religious, cultural and social situation, and the grave refers to the class inequality as well as the abstract concepts of rich and poor. 4) Using culture-nature duality, the composite structure in the up/down direction of the painting depicts the funeral and burial traditions, while the left/right one poses material-spiritual duality. Nonetheless, through illustrating peripheral and decorative elements such as tree and birds, the center-periphery direction of the painting suggests the cancellation of inside-outside duality. 5) The structure of distance, as a symbol of time, rests on the private-public duality. 6) Finally, upward/downward movements of the colors highlight the heaven-earth duality as a symbol of magnificence and grandeur of the other world.

It could be argued that the painting is interpretable through the semiotic system of producing meaning in relation to oppositions and relationships based on the semantic square function. The painting encompasses them all by means of expressing the structuralism of life-death duality. However, the artwork contains more than one sub-dualities and oppositions (such as happiness-sadness, constant-variable, nature-culture, plurality-singularity, material-spiritual, private-public and heav-

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