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Reflecting the Philosophical Components of Mulla Sadra in the Content and Form Beauty of "Isfahan School of Paintings"

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Original Research Article

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Abstract

Problem Definition: In his philosophical components, Mulla Sadra expressed beauty in such a way that the influence of these thoughts was reflected in the artworks of the Safavid era, especially in the "Isfahan Painting School". Reza Abbasi and his students formed this school's most essential artistic trend; in their works, motifs and topics related to the surrounding world and the cultural-artistic society of that time can be seen. In terms of the use of visual elements as well as the content, it corresponds to the philosophical-mystical components of Mulla Sadra, especially in the viewpoints related to beauty and love. The paintings and Muraqqa pieces attributed to Reza Abbasi and his followers form the statistical community of the present research, which are studied to evaluate how the "philosophical components of Mulla Sadra" appear in the paintings of the Isfahan School. The study question is: "What is the relationship between the philosophical components of Mulla Sadra and Isfahan School of Painting in terms of beauty by focusing on Isfahan School of Painting works"?

Objective: The present study aims to discover the beauty hidden in the illustrated works of the Isfahan School of Painting and to match them with Mulla Sadra's views on beauty.

Research Method: This study applies a descriptive-analytical method with a comparative approach, which was done by collecting library-documentary data. The statistical population includes a selection of the most distinguished paintings and Muraqqas of the Isfahan School, which Reza Abbasi and his students created.

Results: The analysis shows the elements used in the paintings and Muraqqas attributed to Reza Abbasi and his students reflect the beauty in both form and content and can be traced back to the mystical-philosophical components of Mulla Sadra. In these works, the external and internal beauties, some of which are shown as codes and symbols, show the social-cultural situation of the Safavid period and the philosophical-mystical thoughts of that time. In other words, the works of Reza Abbasi and his students, as an outstanding example of the Isfahan School of painting, are related to the components of Mullah Sadra in terms of beauty.

- Keywords

Mulla Sadra's Philosophy, Isfahan School of Painting, Reza Abbasi, Love and Beauty, Content and Form Beauty

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بازتاب مؤلفههای «فلسفی ملاصدرا» در زیباییهای محتوایی و صوری آثار نقاشی «مکتب اصفهان»*

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Introduction

«Mulla Sadra» known as «Sadr al-Mutalahin» is one of the philosophers of the second half of the Safavid era who paid more attention to beauty than other Islamic philosophers and dedicated the seventh volume of his famous book «Asfar (journeys)» to the expression of beauty and art. He is also greatly influenced by philosophers before him, such as Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Suhrawardi, in defining beauty. From Sadra's point of view, beauty is an admirable issue and the source of absolute beautiful beauty. Among the effects of beauty on the wise soul are being enjoyable and creating friendship, love, and admiration; beauty is an objective and universal issue. In his opinion, beauty is concomitant with existence; After all, it has the characteristics of existence, such as principality, gradation, unity, etc. According to Mulla Sadra, the origin of art is the manifestation of some supreme names such as Ahsan-ul-khâliqîn and Mosawer, etc., and imagination is the origin of almost all works of art. Sadra discusses the power of imagination, which plays an essential role in artistic creation, and he believes that what is found in perfection, form, and beauty in this world are all representations of what is in the supreme world; therefore, the worldly beauties are representative of the over-worldly beauties and the over-worldly beauty is the representative of the heavenly beauties in the divine essence. The influence of Mulla Sadra's thoughts on his contemporary intellectual and artistic trends is such that by reviewing the works of prominent artists of the Isfahan School, one can read his components, especially in the discussion of beauty and love; among them are the paintings of Reza Abbasi, who are known today as the most influential artist of the Isfahan School, and many of the artistic directions of this school were formed based on his work style. Since Mulla Sadra connected «beauty» with «love», therefore, to find the form and content beauties of the Isfahan School and their connection with Mulla Sadra's views, it is possible to take advantage of particular works attributed to Reza Abbasi and his most important students, because the concept of «love» is hidden in their paintings and they are closely related to «beauty». The question of the present research is: «What is the relationship between Mulla Sadra's opinions about beauty and the form and content beauty of the works of the Isfahan School of painting, focusing on the works of Reza Abbasi and his students»? It seems that the theoretical components of the paintings and Muraqqas attributed to Reza Abbasi and his students, along with the use of visual elements arranged correctly by the artist, can be traced and adapted to Mulla Sadra's views on beauty, which is theorized along with love.

Research Method

The nature of the current research is developmental, and the research method is descriptive-analytical using a comparative approach. The method of data collection is in the form of library documents. In this research, the components of Mulla Sadra regarding beauty are first stated. Then, his intellectual connections regarding beauty with the Isfahan School of painting and especially the works of Reza Abbasi and his followers are discussed. Beauty in the components of Mulla Sadra is the foundation of love, and after various stages, it ends in the final love and the beautiful image represented in the heart of the lover and the beloved, and their union, and finally dissolving in the true lover; therefore, in the current research, different dimensions of beauty will be analyzed both externally and internally.

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Research Background

Many studies have presented Mulla Sadra's philosophical views on beauty, among which is the book entitled «Asfar (journeys)» written by «Mulla Sadra» (2013), which describes the collection of thoughts of Mulla Sadra regarding love, beauty, and art. In the book entitled «Philosophy of Art in Mulla Sadra's Knowledge of Love» «Imami Jomeh» (2009) has discussed the relationship between existence, love, beauty, and art. Using the opinions of «Sadr al-Mutalahin», he believes there is a connection between the actions of a lover in pure love and an artist in creating a work of art, and the lover pays attention to beauty and art in his actions. In the article entitled «Aesthetics in the Philosophy of Sadr al-Mutalahin», «Hashemnezhad and Nemati» (2011) dealt with Mulla Sadra's views on beauty and its wisdom principles, but no analysis has been made regarding the reflection of Mulla Sadra's views on beauty with the Isfahan School of painting. It was also found in some articles related to the present research in terms of form and content that are related to mysticism and other worlds; For example: «Shaistefar and Karimi» (2022) in the article «Reflection of Masnawi Manavi poems related to the stories of the Prophets in Safavid era paintings« to express the multidimensional spaces, lack of dimension, the use of form or form in the Safavid era paintings which is influenced by the vision of Islamic mysticism. And also through the beauties of this world, they have paid attention to the realm of the kingdom. In another article «Mafi-Tabar» (2021) with the title «Imaginary signs of pleasure in female court portraits of the Zand and Oajar eras in comparison with the painting of the Isfahan school» to explain that female single portraits in the Zand and Qajar eras, women with a standing posture, rhythmic movements and Of course, they are depicted less delicately, decorated with ornaments and precious coverings. While the female organs in the Isfahan school of painting are depicted in interaction and harmony with other elements of the scene, and women usually sit in solitude in the outer space, free from showing off and immersed in their own thoughts, and do not pay attention to the outside world. The article entitled «Manifestation of Love in Iranian-Islamic Painting (exploring the story of Khosrow and Shirin)», by «Rahnavard» (2003) is organized into two parts: the overview of love and the effect of love on the form and content of the painting of the story of Khosrow and Shirin. Although love is presented briefly from Mulla Sadra's point of view, the adaptation of Mulla Sadra's components regarding beauty with the paintings of the Isfahan School has not been made. A book by «Babaei» (2007) entitled «The Fairy Face of Wisdom, Aesthetics in the Sadra School», has pointed to the background and definitions of beauty and beauty in transcendental wisdom, which includes the levels of beauty and love from Mulla Sadra's point of view, divine names and attributes, and divine manifestation and its relationship with beauty, the relationship between prayer and beauty, essential movement and beauty, art in Mulla Sadra's wisdom, and in general, the ontology of art and beauty and their relationship with the components of his transcendental wisdom, however, it has not been analyzed the case study of the current research. In the first chapter of his book entitled «Aesthetics in the Works of Ibn Sina, Sheikh Ashraq, and Sadr al-Mutalahin», «Hashemnejad» (2013) discussed what aesthetics and art are and addressed issues such as the origin of beauty, the end of beauty, the origin of art, the relationship between art and imagination, the relationship between art and knowledge. The rest of the book chapters dealt with similarities and differences regarding aesthetic issues in the opinions of Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, and Mulla Sadra. In the books and articles that have discussed Mulla Sadra's transcendental wisdom, art, love, and aesthetics, none have discussed in detail the connection and adaptation of Mulla Sadra's components with Isfahan school painting. Only

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«Imami Jomeh» (2009), in the book entitled «Philosophy of Art in Mulla Sadra's Knowledge of Love», made a brief reference to Mulla Sadra's views and the Isfahan School of Painting concerning the knowledge of life. Therefore, from this point of view, novelty might be observed in the current research.

Theoretical Foundations of Research

1. Mulla Sadra and his theory about beauty: «Mohammed bin Ibrahim Qawami Shirazi», nicknamed «Sadr al-Din» and «Mulla Sadra» and known as «Sadr al-Mutalahin», was born in Shiraz in a well-connected and famous family around 979 A.H. (Nasr, 1992, 53). As an influential philosopher, Mulla Sadra has left his works, which, according to the opinions of his predecessors, presented new thoughts in philosophy and mysticism (Nasr, 1992, 65-82). In his definition of beauty, he was influenced by philosophers before him, such as Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Suhrawardi, and in his works, he mentioned some components of Ibn Sina, such as beauty in order (Husn al-Nazm), beauty in composition (Husn al-Ta'lif), beauty in symmetry and unity (Husn al-l'tidal). «This love means intense enjoyment of a beautiful face and excessive affection for a person who has a delicate appearance, proportion of body parts, and pleasant composition because it exists in the souls of most people without pretense or formality, just like the existence of natural things» (Mulla Sadra, 1981, 172). Delicate appearance, proportion, and good combination are the expressions used here. Among the other expressions that Mulla Sadra used to describe beauty are appreciation (Istehsan), Harmonious (Mozoon), Delicate (Latif), Ghonj (Coquetry), and Dalal are the words that Mulla Sadra used to describe beauty. Also, the word «Husn (beauty)» is one of the keywords in the aesthetics of the Islamic world. Mulla Sadra says in «Asfar»: «Al-Jamil Howa Al-Dhi Yustahsan» (Mulla Sadra, 1987, 128). Among the effects of beauty on the wise soul is being enjoyable and creating friendship, love, and admiration; beauty is an objective and universal issue. In his opinion, beauty is concomitant with existence; after all, it has the characteristics of existence, such as principality, gradation, unity, etc. According to Mulla Sadra, the origin of art is the manifestation of some supreme names such as Ahsanul-khâliqîn and Mosawer, etc., and imagination is the origin of almost all works of art. Sadra discusses the power of imagination, which plays a vital role in artistic creation. He believes in a separate imaginary world to which ordinary people are connected when they sleep and dream, and mystics are connected to it when they are in the wake and revelation states. Humans can represent their observations from science and fantasy in artistic formats (Hashemnezhad, 2013, 140-182). Mulla Sadra says that what is found in this world of perfection, form, and beauty are all representations of what is in the supreme world; therefore, the worldly beauty is representative of the over-worldly beauty, and the overworldly beauty is the representative of the heavenly beauties in the divine essence (Imami Jomeh, 2009, 240). «Babaei» has divided beauty from Mulla Sadra's point of view into sensual beauty, imaginary beauty, illusory beauty, and rational beauty:

- «Sensual beauty» belongs to the world of senses and understands their sensory powers.
- «Imaginary beauty» is related to the world of imagination and is understood by human imaginative faculty. One of the inner powers of a human being is imagination, which is also called Mosawareh.
- «Illusory beauty» belongs to the world of illusions, and illusionary powers benefit from it. According to Mulla Sadra, this world returns to the world of fantasy.

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- «Rational beauty» is related to the world of reason, and the rational powers understand it. The world of the reasons is the world of the pure hereafter, free from matter and any form, both sensory and imaginary (Babaei, 2007, 110-116). The components of Mulla Sadra are related to beauty; some are related to form, and some to content. In the present research, visual correspondents were found, which are analyzed; however, regarding the hidden content components, except for a few cases, no visual correspondent was found, which is given here only for the purpose of helping and explaining the research.

2. Isfahan School of Painting: With the coming to power of Shah Abbas I Safavid, a number of artists served the king, and the Royal Library of Isfahan and its related art workshops were formed quickly (Azhand, 2014, 57). The evolution process of painting in the Isfahan School physically has passed a path that is not dissimilar to the evolution and formation of the Philosophical School of Isfahan. In the painting of Isfahan School, the figures are no longer instances and are closer to the real world. The early foundations of the Isfahan School of Painting reached the necessary consistency and evolution from around 995 to 1038 A.H. following the change in the attitude of the religious and governmental institutions. However, creativity and innovation with a specific style that is a combination of past elements, in an entirely Iranian and personal expression in the form of «unifoliate» works and by emphasizing the script and its values in the external and formal structure. depicts a world whose theoretical expression is presented in Isfahan Philosophical School (Javani, 2006, 171). One of the most influential artists of the Isfahan School was Reza Abbasi, who revolutionized Iranian painting with his innovation in the design and selection of novel subjects. He continued the realism tradition of «Behzad» and «Mohammadi» and tried to depict the movements and places of people; however, he never resorted to naturalistic techniques such as highlighting and perspective. The most famous of his followers are: «Moein Mosawar», «Mohammed Qasim», «Mohammed Yusuf», and «Afzal Al-Hosseini» (Pakbaz, 2002, 254-255).

Selected Works of the Isfahan School to Analyze the Content and Visual Characteristics

Since the ideas and teachings of religion play a fundamental role in designing and creating works of art, it can be said that what was created and discussed in the Painting School of Isfahan originated from the dominant ideas and thoughts of that era. For this purpose, in this section, to explain the beauty of form and content in the painting works of the Isfahan School, the characteristics of the works of prominent artists of this school are analyzed. The statistical collection includes 12 paintings of manuscripts and Muraqqas related to Reza Abbasi (Figs 1-8) and his followers (Figs 9-12), which are more related to the issue of love and beauty and Mulla Sadra's opinions and are more critical in terms of composition and execution.

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Fig 1. Khosrow looking at Shirin. Source: Canby, 2014, 118.



Fig 2. A girl wearing a veil Source: Canby, 2014, 69.



man sitting with bare feet.
Source:
Soodavar,
2002, 270.



Fig 4. A youth in a blue robe. Source: Canby, 2014, 33.



Fig 5. A man with a sword. Source: Canby, 2014, 140.



Fig 6. In the presence of Master Golshan Muraqqa. Source: http://golestan palace.ir.



Fig 7. In the presence of Master 1039 A.H., ink, transparent and matte color and gold on paper, Golshan Murarqqa. Source: http://golestanpalace.ir.



Fig 8. The young man giving the fruit to the old man. Source: Canby, 2014, 56.



woman, unknown artist, ink. Source: Swietochowski & Babaie, 1989, 50.



Fig 10. Two loved ones, Rashid's artwork. Source: http://rezaabbasimuseum.ir.



Fig 11. Dervish banquet, attributed to Afzal.
Source: Soodavar,

2002, 284.



Fig 12. Banquet in nature, unknown artist, School of Isfahan.
Source: Hosseini Rad, 2005, 519.

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Reflecting on the Components of Mulla Sadra concerning the Beauty of Content and Form in the Selected Works

Beauty in Mulla Sadra's thoughts returns to his transcendental philosophical wisdom's primary and underlying components. The first and most fundamental principle in transcendental wisdom is the principality of existence, and because beauty is equal to existence, every ruling that exists for existence is also actual for beauty, such as the principality of beauty, the gradation of beauty, the unity of beauty, etc.

- **1.** The components of Mulla Sadra concerning the beauty of content: In his opinion, while expressing the beauty of the form, Mulla Sadra deals with the beauty of the internal content. These are:
- **1.1. Shamayel-e Latif (Delicate Appearance):** In some statements of Mulla Sadra, Shamayel Latif is part of external and sensual beauty, and in others, it is part of internal beauty.
- **1.2. Husn-e Kholq (Good Temper):** As a human being has an external face whose beauty is connected to each of its parts, the inside of a human being has elements that must be related to the beauty of morality, and these elements are: knowledge, rage, lust, and reason. The power of knowledge leads to the ability to recognize truth and untruth in words and beliefs and to identify beautiful and ugly actions. Moderation of the powers of lust and rage is determined by maintaining them under the rules and regulations of the Sharia, and wisdom and moderation of the powers of reason and justice are determined by the ability to maintain the power of rage and lust within the framework of religion (Imami Jomeh & Ahmadi, 2017). The beauty of morals is one of the non-appearance beauties that the lover, when feeling it by the beloved, experiences tender and virtuous love, and the artist tries to express the external and internal beauty in romantic paintings with symbols and signs.
- **1.3. Subtility in the nature and tenderness of the heart and soul:** Mulla Sadra believes that those who have a precise nature, gentle heart, clear mind, and compassionate soul, their lives are not devoid of love and interest in beauty (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 544). Virtuous love causes soul tenderness and heart enlightenment (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 546). Mulla Sadra states an affectionate and tender heart creates love and beauty.
- **1.4. Moderation in temperament:** Those with a moderate temperament will be more qualified to receive God's grace, the same as the different degrees of the soul (Sajadi, 2000, 74).
- **1.5. Moderation in behavior and virtue:** Moderation is the power of rage, courage, and bravery that is liked by morality, excess in this power causes arrogance and wonder, and excess in it causes qualities such as fear and humiliation. As for the power of lust, its moderation is a virtue, and its excess causes immorality, and excess causes lethargy. From the moderation of the power of reason and justice, prudence and certainty of opinion are obtained, and from its excesses, cunning and deceit, and exaggeration, stupidity is obtained. Mulla Sadra defines moderation in the powers of lust and rage by keeping them under the rules and regulations of Sharia and wisdom and moderation in the power of reason and justice by the ability to maintain the power of rage and lust in the framework of religion. Mulla Sadra also enumerates the characteristics of each of these powers that can be considered moral criteria of beauty or ugliness (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 449-451).
- **1.6.** The attribute of mercy in the human soul: Sadr al-Mutalahin discusses the connection between human beauty and virtues. In most cases, the beauty of people indicates their human virtue because when the brightness of the soul reaches its perfection, this light

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spreads to the body as well, and it is for this reason that it is said that the face and eyes are the mirror of the inner person. Also, it is for this reason that the effects of rage, joy, and sadness are visible in human appearance (Imami Jomeh & Ahmadi, 2017).

- **1.7. Istihsan:** According to Mulla Sadra, «Istihsan» means seeking to receive, recognize, and discover different aspects of beauty, both physical and spiritual, in the beloved, which can be accessed in tender love. Tender love is the source and origin of the Istihsan and praise of the beloved image (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 544).
- **1.8. Union between lover and beloved:** Mulla Sadra believes this union is not physical contact because connection differs from unity. Also, love is a description of the soul and not the body; union in love requires the constant presence of the lover and the beloved, and the meaning of the union of the lover and the beloved is the union of the soul of the lover with the appearance of the beloved and the need for the constant presence. Therefore, the beauty of the appearance and character of the lover causes such a union during a complex process. One love expert said that «love is an excess of enthusiasm for union» (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 549).
- **2.** Mulla Sadra's components concerning external beauty: Mulla Sadra expressed external beauty in his opinions, which are:
- **2.1. Proportion of body parts and good composition:** Mulla Sadra introduces love as intense lust when faced with a beautiful face and excessive love for someone who has a delicate appearance and proportion of body parts and goodness of composition (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 543-544).
- **2.2.** *Ghonj* (Coquetry), and *Dalal*: Sensual love for a human person, if the source of it is not the excess of animal lust, but the admiration and praise of the lover's image, the beauty of the body, the combination and moderation of temperament, morals, the appropriateness of his gestures, the cuteness and coquetry (Ghonj and Dalal), such love is considered one of the human virtues (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 545). Ghonj and Dalal is a state of cuteness, coquetry, and a particular mood that takes on a figure with the body's rotation, causes beauty, attracts the lover, and creates beauty in the image.
- **2.3. Proportion of gestures and actions:** Proportion of gestures and actions, in Mulla Sadra's opinion, comes next to Ghonj and Dalal, and they are in the image of things that happen from moment to moment and are not a fixed item like good composition. Instead, the figure manifests beauty in different moments in its states and behavior and in the representations it takes (Imami Jomeh, 2009, 130). Therefore, the appropriateness of gestures and actions in Mulla Sadra's aesthetics is the moderation and appropriateness of behavioral states. Representation of human states, gestures, manners, and moods is one of the characteristics of Isfahan School.
- **2.4.** Moderation in body size, uprightness, and tallness: According to Mulla Sadra, beauty is tallness and uprightness, along with moderation in body size and proportion of body parts (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 545). A body that is neither fat nor thin but moderate in body size, which is more beautiful in appearance and is one of the external beauties.
- **2.4.1. Uprightness:** The expression «Ertefa al-Qamah fi al-Istaqamah» means the uprightness and firmness of the body. Firmness in stature, moderate proportions in body size, and proportionality of facial parts with each other make the face and body beautiful, which Mulla Sadra explained as beauty in appearance (external beauty).
- **2.4.2. Tallness:** One of Mulla Sadra's criteria concerning appearance and form beauty is tallness, uprightness, moderation in body size, and proportion of body parts.

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- **2.5. Symmetry in form:** «It is not beauty that arouses lust. It is the reprehensible instinct. Rather, beauty consists of the proportion of the body parts and the symmetry (proportion) of the creation of the face in such a way that people do not complain about looking at that face» (Mulla Sadra, 1987, 182).
- **2.6. Peculiarity and defamiliarization:** It is one of the attributes that formalists consider to be a criterion of beauty for the form in a work of art. From the point of view of the modern artist, everything familiar is non-aesthetic, and it is an idea of reality that has lost its conventional source and is now introduced instead of the reality that we are separated from the familiar and ordinary world that we are used to and step into an unknown world (Ahmadi, 1995, 308).
- **2.7. Light and Color:** Mulla Sadra has an existential interpretation of light. In expressing the meaning of light and beauty, he considers them concomitant. He believes that the existence of an object is its appearance. Therefore, the existence of objects is also from the levels of light. Since the light of perfection is being qua being (Bema Howa Mojood), existence and light are two words to express the same truth. So, the presence of color and beauty is also its emergence. In verse «Allah is light of heaven and earth» [Noor: 35], he interprets «light of lights (Noor al-Anvar)» as meaning «the existence of existences (Vojood al-Voioodat)». According to him, the truth of any object is the light by which the nature of that object appears. Hence, the existence of any object is its lightness (Mulla Sadra, 1981, 253-356). The radiation of light as a subject of the lluminationism is eye-catching in Iranian art. The shine of the lights has given the art of painting a beautiful effect. «Burckhardt» introduces light as a symbol of the direct and non-theoretical manifestation of spiritual truth and believes that light is a symbol of the fundamental idea of Islam, which is unity, and there is no deeper code than light to express divine unity (Burckhardt, 2007, 169). Therefore, the artists of the Isfahan School tried to transform the potential light in their lives into reality and reflect that light in their works. This kind of thinking, which is explained in Sadra's works, is a kind of metaphysical support of the Illumination Art in the thoughts of predecessors such as Suhrawardi. Colors are the mirror of the world. Above all, the white color is an allusion to absolute existence and the essence of all levels of existence that connect all colors. On the other hand, worst of all, the color black is a sign of nothingness. Between the two boundaries of light and darkness, like the hierarchy of existence, is placed the spectrum of colors. Of course, the color black has another symbolic meaning, and it is the «essence of God», which looks dark due to light intensity. Some mystics call it black light (Nasr, 1992, 68). «Whoever reflects knows that existence and light are the same in terms of meaning and truth, and they differ in wording, and there is no doubt that existence is suitable for every existent, in terms of its existence, and perfection and God exist absolutely and purely. Therefore, light is pure. This aspect of existence with light is that the luminosity of light is in its light. If we take the luminosity and light from the light, there is no more light; it means it is not something that appears by itself and makes other things appear (الظّاهرُ بذاته المُظهرُ لغَيره)» (Mulla Sadra, 1981, 145-146).
- **2.8. Appearance attractiveness and non-refusal:** Mulla Sadra considers the objective of the external beauty of the object to be the non-refusal of the audience who encounters the external form.
- 2.9. Juvada al-Nazzam and Ashraf al-Nazzam (جُودَه النّظام و اَشرَفُ النّظام و اَشرَفُ النّظام و اَشرَف النّظام و اَشرَف النّظام و اَشرَف النّظام و الشرق : Mulla Sadra considers the order to be the cause of the unity in the work of art. The factors that make the work of art reach unity are one of the main elements of Sadra's aesthetics. Order in

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geometric shapes such as Girih Tiles, order in the elements of nature and the rhythm of lines and other components, and the exact construction of leaves are characteristics of Iranian painting, and precision in execution will be the cause of the overall unity of the design. Also, in the course of love in existence, it emphasizes the existence of order: «Whoever follows the path of divine mystics in this position deserves to have a love of creatures in an orderly manner that every love towards a lower one leads to a higher love -more completely and perfectly- and continues in the same way until it leads to a self-existent love» (Mulla Sadra, 2013, 582).

3. Synchronization of Mulla Sadra's components with formal beauty in the selected works: Mulla Sadra considers order to be the cause of the unity of the work of art. Order in the visual elements of paintings, such as architectural geometric motifs, arrangement of tree leaves, decorative elements in clothes, etc., have been used by painters. In general, it includes the order that causes the images in the paintings to reach unity, as well as the order that exists in the world and its parts, in such a way that they share in the course of love and strive with enthusiasm in a regular trend to reach higher levels. Mulla Sadra has discussed another visual element, such as light in the Qur'an verses under the influence of Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi in his philosophical foundations. Influenced by philosophy and mysticism, painters have drawn a luminous world without shadows, a world superior to the material world and full of light and beauty, the like of which can be found in the world of imagination. Gestures are another element that Mulla Sadra discusses about movement in beauty from the outside to the inside. The artist draws and portrays all the elements in a composition, including mountains and rocks, trees and branches and leaves, people, animals, and other elements in movement and prowling. Mulla Sadra presents many of his philosophical and mystical components about beauty in parallel with love, and they include the «Proportion of gestures and actions» of the lover, which means the moderation, goodness, and beauty of the behavior and actions of the lover to attract the lover, and the other is «proportion of parts and beauty in combination» which includes height, straightness, delicate appearance and proportion of parts of the face and the whole body and overall attractiveness that motivates a person to fall in love. Ghoni and Dalal are also representations and beautiful faces that the lover takes to convey meaning and a message and attract the lover (Table 1).

Table 1. Formal aesthetics of paintings based on Mulla Sadra's opinions. Source: Authors.

Selected Paintings	Mulla Sadra's component	Beauty appearance in the artwork	Synchronization of the work with the Mulla Sadra's component about beauty
	Proportion of gestures and actions in humans	Variation in the movement of Khosrow's upper body, who turned around and raised his finger to his mouth in amazement at the beauty of Shirin's face and visually shifted the direction of his gaze towards Shirin, and on the other hand, in this direction, the movement of the gaze is circulated throughout the scene by its stem and leaves, which are like an umbrella on top of Shirin's head. Despite the beauty in color and composition, the artist tried to show the appropriateness of gestures and	In the picture, Khosrow's eyes fall on Shirin's naked body, and Shirin, who has no covering on her upper body, pulls her hair to her face in shame. It is what is meant by the appropriateness of gestures and actions. Shirin's gestures and actions will attract the lover if they are based on nature, intellect, and heart. Such aesthetic movements will lead to the emergence of pure love and will open a window

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Selected Paintings	Mulla Sadra's component	Beauty appearance in the artwork	Synchronization of the work with the Mulla Sadra's component about beauty
		actions in work, sometimes in appearance and sometimes hidden in the interior.	from external beauty to inner beauty.
	Ghonj and Dalal	In the picture, the beloved tries to attract the lover by twisting his body and pulling aside the veil with coquetry and flirtatious. This turning of the body and delicate delineation, as well as showing the beautiful face and the flower branch in the hand of the beloved, which is probably from the lover's side, have added to the beauty of the image.	The face and posture are the display of movements and moods that the beloved takes to become the source of pleasure in the lover, and it is also the representation and form that the lover takes to convey meaning and a message; a message that is used to attract a lover and is the beginning of virtual love, and according to Mulla Sadra, virtual love is a gateway to real love. Showing beautiful gestures behind the veil and coquetry of the beloved is one of the particular painting subjects in Isfahan School.
	Gentle appearance of human	The attractive appearance of the young man with curly hair and delicate and beautiful delineation in the delicate execution of the fabric and body, the knot of the shawl, and the twisting of the Imama, especially the cheerful face, is an indication of Reza Abbasi's early works. A person in the prime of his youth with a gentle body is quite evident in the image.	Mulla Sadra deals with Istihsan, which refers to physical and sensual beauty and spiritual and emotional beauty. It refers to the delicate appearance and the proportion of the body parts, as well as the goodness of the composition. Inner beauty affects appearance, and by observing beauty and behavior, one can understand the inner nature and beauty.
	Tallness and moderation in size (showing not too fat or thin body)	The human body is scaled for beauty in proportion to the length and width of the skull, which usually has a height of 8 skull lengths. In the image, the artist has drawn even a little more than the 8 height of the skull to show the beauty in tall stature.	One of the criteria of Mullah Sadra in connection with the beauty of appearance and form is tallness, uprightness, moderation in body size, and proportion of body parts. A body that is neither fat nor thin but moderate in body size is more beautiful in appearance and is one of the beauties of appearance.

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Selected Paintings	Mulla Sadra's component	Beauty appearance in the artwork	Synchronization of the work with the Mulla Sadra's component about beauty
	Uprightness and gracefulness	The tall body, which is drawn with aesthetic scales, contrasts with the straight line of the body in terms of the curved composition of the sword because, from the point of view of beauty, these two show each other better than two parallel lines.	Being firm in stature and having moderate proportions in body size and the proportionality of the parts of the face with each other causes the beauty of the face and body, which Mulla Sadra has explained as beauty on the outside. Without these beauties, inner beauty, which is much higher in order, cannot be reached.
	Beauty in the light and color	The sky is golden in the picture, and the river is silvery. Gold and silver emit more light than other colors and are brilliant. The blue-tinged purple color of the background and the mountains behind with white flowers scattered everywhere add to the transparency and brightness of the artwork. The color of the face of the main character of the artwork, that is, Sheikh, is brighter than the others, and all the colors seem to emanate from the light and are beautiful.	The colors cannot be seen as long as there is no light. Under the influence of predecessors such as Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi, Sadra has discussed the light verse in the Qur'an in detail and uses its philosophical foundations. In Iranian painting, the mystical Islamic geography drawn by sages and mystics is visualized. In the paintings of Iran, including the Isfahan School, what is physical becomes spiritual, and what is spiritual is manifested with bright, light, and subtle colors and without shadows, a world full of light.
	The pure and spiritual love for the beauty hidden in the face and character	The tree, like an umbrella above the head of the master and his student, surrounds them beautifully; although their lips are closed, their gaze is fixed, and it is as if the painter wanted to define their relationship in this way. Beauty in designing the image, their polite posture, and mutual respect show the relationship of pure love and interest in education and training.	The love of the masters for the youth is an incentive for the youth to reach their intended goals, the goals that are designed to create human souls, and, in fact, it is the realization of the accurate level of the human soul. At this level, true love is very high and sublime. Finding true love for a true lover and knowledge of physical, spiritual, and royal beauty is one of the characteristics of training between masters and young people.

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Selected Paintings	Mulla Sadra's component	Beauty appearance in the artwork	Synchronization of the work with the Mulla Sadra's component about beauty
	Teaching a craft and its art and branches	The Sheikh in the picture has the role of a teacher because the notebook in front of the Sheikh on the ground tells about it. The young person also receives his advice. The movement of Sheikh's fingers and hands shows teaching to a young person.	In the teaching and learning of arts such as poetry, songs, stories, and the like, and sciences and techniques in general, a form of knowledge is obtained that provides the basis for human attention to sublime knowledge. As a result, a form of love and aesthetics is obtained, which provides the basis for human attention to natural beauty.
	Appearance attractiveness and non-refusal	Twisting in the body and curved lines and showing the body with aesthetic movement, the rhythm of curved lines throughout the body with beautiful proportions are of facial beauties that attract the audience. The status of the face is immersed in thought while he plays with the motifs on the pillow with his finger.	Mulla Sadra considers the objective of the external beauty of the object to be the non-refusal of the audience who encounters the external form. The lover first likes the beauty of the beloved's appearance and then discovers the beauty of her inner self and falls in love with the beloved. So it is clear that the beauty of appearance plays an essential role in a lover's falling in love.
Proceed to the control of the contro	Beautiful face and body	While the beloved is writing a letter, she looks closely at the lover and the beautiful man, with an innocent look, sitting on his knees in front of the beloved, watching the beauty he sees in his beloved. There is also a romantic poem in the inscriptions above and below the painting, which proves the romantic nature of the painting.	According to Sadra's opinions, love begins with the encounter with a beautiful face and body and causes pleasure. The lover is caught in true love by repeating the observations of the beloved's attractive appearance, receiving the beauty of the beloved's character and inner behavior, and combining the external beauty with the inner beauty as a result of the admiration of the beloved appearance, he falls into true love; the love that unites the lover and the beloved.
	Harmony in movements	In the image of the dervish banquet and their mystic dance to reach some perfections and receive the grace of God, some of them have received the grace and are bewildered, and some others who are striving to achieve this goal are not excluded from the rule of moving and achieving absolute beauty.	Sadra compares the whole world to a dancer in its beauty and harmony in movement. From his point of view, when the external world moves and dances, its interior is shaken, and the ends of this dance and shaking will be different in terms of honor and beauty. Finally, the higher the goal of movement for the world's interior, the more the

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Selected Paintings	Mulla Sadra's component	Beauty appearance in the artwork	Synchronization of the work with the Mulla Sadra's component about beauty
			movement and vibration of the interior will be toward absolute beauty.
	Juvada al- Nazzam and Ashraf al- Nazzam (جُودَهالنّظام و اشرَفُالنّظام)	In the painting tradition, all parts are made and treated according to a specific order. The replacement of head-parts in images is usually based on a spiral curve in many images. This curve is the achievement of unity and perfection in a specific order. Other elements are also in motion and order. Order creates unity in the beauty of the artwork. The order can be seen in the painting of a banquet in nature.	Mulla Sadra considers order to be the cause of the unity of the work of art, and the factors that cause the work of art to reach unity are among the foundations of Sadra's aesthetics. It also emphasizes the existence of order in the course of love in existence. Love in creatures is based on a solid system, and any love that is at a lower level leads to a higher love until it finally reaches self-existent love.

4. Synchronization of Mulla Sadra's components with the beauty of content: Mullah Sadra proposes a good temper (Husn-e Kholq) and moral beauty concerning content beauty. He introduces the four powers of knowledge, rage, lust, and reason, each of which, if adorned with virtue and moderation, leads to the beauty of morality hidden in humans, and these beauties, combined with external beauties, create true love. Mulla Sadra believes that those who have a moderate temper are preferred to receive form and content beauty, and also, people who have a precise nature, a tender heart, and a compassionate soul see the whole life and the world as full of love and beauty. Regarding the sensual virtues, he believes when the brightness of the soul reaches its perfection, this radiance spreads to the appearance, and the lover achieves true love by seeing the external beauty and receiving the internal beauty, and as a result, admiring the appearance of the beloved. In Table 2, the aesthetic components of Mulla Sadra are introduced and described concerning the content or hidden beauties in the images of the Isfahan School of Painting. Some cases that are related to the beauty of the content, such as good temper, moderation of temper, moderation and avoiding excesses, prudence of judgment, precision in nature, clarity, and order of mind, do not correspond objectively with the selected examples; however, the reflection of some other components that evoke visual beauty, such as subtility, tenderness of the heart and soul, goodness, purity, the attribute of mercy in the human soul, and perfection and intensity of existence can be seen in the images.

Table 2. Mulla Sadra's aesthetics in relation to the content or hidden beauties in selected examples of Isfahan painting. Source: Authors.

Beauty	Relation to Isfahan	Explanation of the theoretical components of Sadr
component	painting	al-Mutalahin
Good temper	No image correspondence	The inner face of a human being has elements that must all be good for a good temper, and these elements are the four powers of knowledge, rage, lust, and reason. Science is a light adapted from the light of prophecy in the heart of a believer, through which he

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Beauty	Relation to Isfahan	Explanation of the theoretical components of Sadr
component	painting	al-Mutalahin finds a way to God, and the difference between science and reason is that reason is a natural light that differentiates righteousness from immortality and good from evil. Lust is the movement of the soul seeking pleasure and what it likes. Therefore, the power of lust is inciting or grasping, and the power of rage is forcing to repel the harm that is contrary to lust. The beauty of morals is one of the non-appearance beauties that the lover, when feeling it by the beloved, has tender and chaste love, and the artist tries to express the external and internal beauty in romantic paintings with symbols and signs.
Moderation of temper	No image correspondence	Beings with a moderate temperament will be more qualified to receive God's grace, which is the same as the different degrees of the soul. They consider the truth to be the source of grace; its grace is always applied to creatures, and all creatures always benefit from the grace of mercy.
Moderation and avoiding excesses	No image correspondence	Moderation in the power of rage is courage and bravery, which is a good moral. An excess of this power causes great arrogance and wonder, and an excess of it causes such qualities as fear and humiliation. From the moderation of the power of reason and justice, prudence and certainty of opinion are obtained, and from its excess, cunning and trickery are obtained, and from its exaggeration, stupidity is obtained.
Prudence and certainty of opinion	No image correspondence	One of the virtues of the powers of reason and justice is the firmness and certainty of judgment.
Chastity, zeal, and modesty	No image correspondence	Mulla Sadra defines moderation in the power of knowledge as the ability to distinguish truth and untruth in words and beliefs and to recognize beautiful and ugly actions, moderation in the powers of lust and rage by keeping them under the rules and regulations of Sharia and wisdom, and the moderation of the power of reason and justice with the ability to maintain the power of rage and lust in the framework of religion. Mulla Sadra also enumerates the characteristics of each of these powers that can be considered as criteria of moral beauty or ugliness. Regarding the power of lust, its moderation is chastity, and its excess causes immorality, and excess causes lethargy.
Being delightful (Tayyib), pure, and lawful (Halal)	No image correspondence	Tayyib is a Qur'anic attribute that means something that both the senses and the soul enjoy; Its opposite is the quality of evil. Tayyib means pleasant and delightful. It is also used to indicate purity and halal attributes. Goodness is also used next to Tayyib, which means beautiful and elegant.
Precision in nature	No image correspondence	Mulla Sadra believes that for those with a precise nature, a tender heart, a clear mind, and a compassionate soul, their lives are not devoid of virtual love and love for beauty.

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Beauty component	Relation to Isfahan painting	Explanation of the theoretical components of Sadr al-Mutalahin
Subtility, tenderness of heart and soul	No image correspondence	Virtuous love makes the soul tender and the heart enlightened. According to Mulla Sadra, a tender heart causes love to arise. The emergence of love also begins with an interest in beauty, and those with a tender heart and a pure and kind soul fall in love.
Clarity and order of mind	No image correspondence	According to Mulla Sadra, a clear and orderly mind, free from impurity, causes tender love. He believes that wherever there is beauty, these qualities are present; wherever these qualities exist, love arises.
The attribute of mercy in the human soul	In Fig. 6, the artist has tried to show the radiance of the Sheikh's face with bright colors that have a mystical character.	Sadr al-Mutalahin says about the connection between human beauty and human virtues that the beauty of humans, in most cases, indicates their human virtue because when the brightness of the soul reaches its perfection, this light also spreads to the body. Also, the appearance has signs of the interior. Human beauty has many effects on God's beauty and glory.
Perfection and intensity of existence	In Fig. 6, the artist has depicted the beauty of a world other than the material world and superior to the sense world: the spring world and trees full of blossoms and green earth and dates with all kinds of flowers and plants that evoke the idea of the beauty of the higher world.	Mulla Sadra believes that the world of existence is all the descent levels of beauty, which derive from the absolute beauty of God, and step by step, they descend from the world of divine reason to the stage of sense. Therefore, the closer we get to the source of existence and beauty, we will encounter a more intense and beautiful existence: the more complete and intense the being, the more beautiful the being. The higher we go from the world of sense and matter, the greater the intensity of existence and the more intense the inner or spiritual beauties.

Conclusion

One of the issues that Mulla Sadra dealt with, but still new aspects can be analyzed through his principles, is beauty and art. According to the principles and philosophy of his transcendental wisdom, Mulla Sadra considers beauty to be original, unified and intensified. According to him, beauty is a single truth, some of which are at the highest level of beauty, and some are at a lower level. God is at the highest level in terms of honor and beauty. Beauty is a fuzzy matter, so the benefit of various creatures is a matter of levels and ranks. Beauty moves from the bottom to the top until it finally reaches the origin of absolute beauty. Therefore, it is not strange that Iranian paintings show the creation of beauty in the higher worlds. According to Mulla Sadra, what is found in perfection, form, love, and beauty in this world are all representations of what is in the supreme world. The world that these artists depict is not material. In the paintings of the Isfahan School, motifs and subjects can be seen which, in terms of visual elements and content, express the beauty of form and figure, and some of them are symbols and signs that are hidden from sight. Also, in Sadr al-Din Mohammad Shirazi's opinions about beauty, some components are related to external beauty and others to content beauty. In addition, these two groups of beauty have a mutual relationship; that is, promoting external beauty in humans causes the development of good moral attributes. Contrastingly, content beauty is also manifested in form and appearance. The reflection of Mulla Sadra's formal components can be found in his paintings, especially the Isfahan School: Mulla Sadra considers order to be the cause of unity in art. Order can be seen in the visual elements of paintings, such as the arrangement of geometric patterns

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and flowers. Body parts with a special spiral curve rhythm are also evident in the composition of painting artworks. In the Ghonj and Dalal component, the beloved exhibits movements and gestures to attract the lover, such as body movements and body curves, and showing feminine beauty, such as hair behind the cover of the veil; these are the examples that the current research has reached in the selected samples. The presence of tenderness and beauty in the body can be seen in Mulla Sadra's statements and in some selected works that attract the beloved. Moderation in the body, uprightness, and good body in the images used in traditional painting, especially the Isfahan School, such as the graphemes of Reza Abbasi, are examples of formal beauty in this research. Beauty in color and light in Iranian painting, including the Isfahan School, shows that what is physical becomes spiritual, and what is spiritual is expressed with bright, luminous, and delicate colors. Pure and spiritual love for the beauty hidden in appearance and nature is one of the characteristics with which a lover falls in love. The component of harmony in the movement of the whole universe, in all beings, including plants and inanimate objects and humans, is the movement towards perfection. In the image of the dervish banquet, the whole image is in movement and dynamics in terms of the apparent combination, both in nature and in the body parts, and this evident movement in the mystical dance of the dervish is the cause of their mystical movement towards perfection and beauty, which the current research has reached. The chain of content and form beauty ends with absolute divine beauty. However, the components of Mulla Sadra can be found in the beauty of content more in theoretical materials; for example, in the content component of «good temper (Husn-e Kholq)» which has the elements of knowledge, rage, lust, and reason, no corresponding image was found for it, or in the content component of «Chastity, Zeal», and modesty, which causes the lover to fall in love with the beloved, was not found. However, in some components, it can be explained and proved according to an image. For example, in the «perfection and intensity of existence» component in painting, especially in the Isfahan School, some levels of existence, such as the world of imagination, can be understood, which are images full of light and a world without shadows that have risen above the world of material nature and reached the world of imagination, and it makes perfection appear superior to the world of matter, and after that, it will get to the world of reason. Of course, the images of the reason world cannot be shown with color and material elements and can only be visualized in that world. Therefore, the more perfect the being, which is the same thing as beauty, the more beautiful it will be until it finally reaches absolute beauty.

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