

Preserving Sufi Poetry through Visual Arts

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ABSTRACT

Regardless the religious beliefs, Sufi poetry had brought hearts of people closer for many years. Sufi poetry is renowned for the honorability of its devout sentiments and cadenced interpretation; it has motivated the general population to look for the Love Divine. Also, it has given a striking legacy of mutual agreement for descendants. It is vital to preserve such extraordinary literature, and it is equally important to reach out this pious poetry to the general and younger generation. The author had researched on different visual arts methods through which the Sufi poetry gets preserved, and reach out to people in different regions and beliefs. With the help of these methods the Sufi poetry not only become completely understandable but also inspire and motivate people.

Key words : Sufi Poetry; Visual Arts; Preserving Sufi Poetry; Preserving Poetry; Use of Visual Arts in Preserving Old Literature; Visual Arts and Sufiism.

I: Introduction

A: Sufi Poetry

Sufi poetry has composed in numerous dialects, both for reverential private reading and as verses for music played during worship, or dhikr (Dikhr is the name of reverential acts in Islam in which short expressions or supplications to God are over and over presented noiselessly inside of the mind or aloud.) Themes and styles set up in Punjabi verse, Sindhi verse, Arabic verse and, for the most part, Persian verse have had a colossal impact on Sufi verse all through the Islamic world and is a regular part of the Sufi music. In Punjab, Sindh and different areas of India Sufi verse assumed a solitary part in keeping up shared amicability in turbulent

times. The Sufi verse in the vast majority of the territorial dialects and vernaculars of India, by the honorability of its devout emotions and musical interpretation, has roused the general population to look for the Love Divine. The neighborly and tolerant articulations of the Sufis held the support of both the Hindus and additionally the Muslims and impacted the general population's idea and sent the message of peace, affection, cooperation, comprehension and friendship. Sufi verse has offered a wonderful legacy of the collective agreement for descendants.

B: Visual Arts

The Visual Arts are artistic expressions, for example, earthenware production, drawing,

painting, figure, printmaking, graphic design, photography, video, filmmaking and structural planning. Numerous aesthetic orders (performing arts, conceptual art, textile arts) include parts of the visual arts and also crafts of different sorts. Likewise included in the visual arts [1] are the applied arts [2], for example, industrial design, visual communication, fashion design, interior design and decorative art [3].

Current utilization of the expression "visual arts" incorporates fine arts and, also, the applied, decorative arts and crafts. However, this was not the situation. Prior to the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain and somewhere else at the turn of the twentieth century, the expression "artist" was frequently limited to a man working in the fine arts, (for example, painting, sculpture, or printmaking) and not the handicraft, craft, or applied art media. The refinement has underlined by specialists of the Arts and Crafts Movement, who esteemed vernacular fine arts as much as high forms [4]. Art schools made a qualification between the fine arts and the crafts, keeping up that a craftsman could not get viewed as an arts' expert.

II: Preserving Sufi Poetry through Visual Arts

A: Objectives of the Study

1: To preserve centuries old noble literature in a way, that could remember for generations and evolves its interests among readers without altering it.

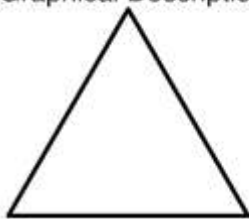
2: To attract a younger generation, so that they can study this literature with more interest and spread the pious message across the globe.

B: Preserving Methods

The examination has demonstrated that we recollect visual pictures much simpler and superior to anything with words. Utilizing visuals can make adapting more fun and fascinating. Especially when contrasted with dull learning through repetition.

We can take advantage of the brain's inherent preference of remembering visual imagery by visualizing information we want to remember. The better the user have the capacity to envision something the better the user will recall that it at a future time. When all is said in done, we can recollect visuals more viable than words as shown in Fig. 1; on the other hand, some data loans itself better to being recognized as words [5].

Graphical Description



Textual Description

a polygon with
three edges and
three vertices

Fig. 1. Comparison of Graphical and Textual Descriptions

Kinds of literature such as Sufi Poetry are a collection of words written by divine and wise Sufi scholars; these kinds of literature need a wiser mentality to understand the pious message behind it. In many cases, the novice readers find it difficult when they read it for the first time. However, after going through the roots of the poem and studying it deeply, they somehow get the idea behind the poem.

This process of tracing back to the roots of the poem is not an easy task; some readers usually get lost while tracing back the Sufi poems. Many Sufi poets such as Jalal ad-Din Mohammed Rumi, Khwaja Shams-ud-Din Mohammed Hafez-e Shirazi, Sayed Mohammed Usman Marwandi, and Rabia al-Adawiyya al-Qaysiyya, had written collections of Sufi poems that are considered as the national treasure. Their poems have been translated into contended formats, so that it can become more understandable by novice readers.

The author had carefully examined different Sufi poems and translated them into meaningful symbols. Symbols and signs help the people to understand message easily, because first of all they have a clear visual representation, and secondly there is no need of significant experience to understand them. The author had then incorporated these symbols and signs to the second medium of visual arts, which can be a photograph, video,

or graphic. However, the second medium must reflect the theme of the poem, for example, unity, love, or religion. Incorporation of these symbols to a second medium gives weight to the final artwork; it not only makes the final artwork depicting any message clearly but also makes it stand out. For example, the Fig. 2 portrays the following masnavi called "Hüsn-ü-Aşk" composed by ŞeyhGalip:

"Kim AşkHüsün'dürayn-iHüsnaşk."

Interpretation: For 'Love' is the 'Beauty' and 'Beauty' is [same as] the 'Love.'

Hüsn ü Aşk, "Magnificence and Love" takes after the fabulous affection story of two individuals, a young fellow named "Aşk" (Love) and a young woman named "Hüsn" (Beauty). The story itself is very metaphorical: it tells the basic Sufi views on life and religious philosophy. To compress the story, the previously stated line is sufficient: partners are one and the same; substance is "unity" - all creatures are "one," it is just when a man understands this all inclusive and everlasting unity would he/she be able to achieve culmination. The work is profoundly red and with sparkles deliberately: all through the story "Fire" is the most underlined and used motif [6].



Fig. 2. Hüsni ü Aşk by H. BengisuKübra.

C: Cutting edge renderings of Sufi poems

Bulleh Shah was a Punjabi Sufi writer, humanist and rationalist. His full name was Syed Abdullah Shah Qadri. Bulleh Shah's works speak to him as a humanist, somebody giving answers for the sociological issues of his general surroundings as he lives through it, portraying the turbulence his country of Punjab is going through while simultaneously hunting down God [7]. His verse highlights his magical, otherworldly voyage through the four phases of Sufism: Shariat (Path), Tariqat (Observance), Haqiqat (Truth) and Marfat (Union). The effortlessness with which Bulleh Shah has possessed the capacity to address the mind-boggling key issues of life and humankind is a huge piece of his allure.

In the 1990s Junoon, a rock band from Pakistan, rendered his sonnets Bulleh Ki Jaana and Aleph (Ilmon Bas Kareen O Yaar). In 2004, Rabbi Shergill transformed the obscure powerful sonnet Bulleh Ki Jaana into a rock/composition melody that picked up ubiquity in India and Pakistan [8][9]. Both Junoon and Rabbi's music videos contain powerful visuals (as shown in Fig. 3) that had done full justice to the poem in delivering the message behind it. Bulleh Shah's verses have been a motivation to painters also, as in the two arrangements of sketches (Jogia Dhoop and Shah Shabad shown in Fig. 4) by an Indian painter Geeta Vadhera propelled by the verse of Bulleh Shah and other Sufi writers and holy people.



Fig. 3. Junoon's Music Video (left) Rabbi's Music Video (right) based on Bulleh Shah's poem.



Fig. 4. GeetaVadhra's Jogiadhooop (left) Shah Shabad (right) based on Sufi poetry

III: Related Work

Author had experimented with the verse from Bulleh Shah's famous poem "Bulleh ki jana mai kaun" (Bulleh to me, I am not known.) It is a standout amongst the most-known Kafi lyrics composed by Bulleh Shah. This ballad is about profound aching of Bulleh Shah. The title or the redundant topic in this sonnet depends on "Bhulleya Ki jaana mai kon, ki jaana mai kon". This is about the profound excursion of self-illumination of the writer. Amid this excursion as caught in the lyric, the artist frees himself from the greater part of the trappings and social ties. The primary verse of this sonnet is:

"Chal Bhulleya, chal oathay chaliay, Jithay saaray Annaiy

Na Koi saadi zaat pachaany, te naa koi saanu Mannay"

Interpretation: I need to go where individuals could not care less about (or apparently heedless to) my societal position. Nobody cares what my standing is, (nor my tribe), and individuals will not bow to me in light of the fact that I originate from a special foundation.

Then the rest of the poem makes sense as it focuses on a personal quest and poet's search for enlightenment. The Author picked the accompanying verse from the sonnet, on the grounds that it shed light on Bulleh Shah's perspectives about theocrats, and his quest for the answers about his presence. This stanza is the most appealing stanza of the sonnet:

"Na maen aabi na maen khaki

Na maen aatish na maen paun"

Interpretation: Not from water, nor from earth neither flame nor air, is my introduction to the world

The Author used the manipulation method by incorporating the symbols of water, earth, fire, and air with his self-portraits. Each self-portrait served as the second medium of visual arts and represented the visual narration of verse's theme. The author chose the black background to represent poet's dilemma in search of the answers to his existence and his views about theocrats. Over the background, are the self-portraits, in which the author's expressions visually

narrate the dilemma of the poet. After careful analyses of the verse, author manipulates these self-portraits with the symbols and

made these self-portraits looks surreal (as shown in the Fig. 5.)



Fig. 5. Visual narration of a stanza from Bulleh Shah's poem "Bullehkijana maikon?", by the author.

IV: Conclusion

After representing Bulleh Shah's poem, the author was able to spread the message to people across the globe, who has never read anything related to Sufism. The visual narration attracted many international artists and was awarded Golden Award at International Creativity Award [10]. The artwork was also exhibited at "Unity through

Identity Exhibition" in the Kingdom of Bahrain [11] and online exhibition "Muslim Self Portrait" [12]. After the successful experimental interpretation of Sufi poetry into visuals, the author has plans to complete the series of different Sufi poetries in the form of a book that will consist of 50 to 100 Sufi poetry verses.

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Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but great actions speak to all mankind.

~ Theodore Roosevelt