**The Impacts of Painting on Poetry:**

**Pondering over**

**Sohrab Sepehri and Dante Gabriel Rossetti**

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**Abstract**

The artist is to create art, and the best art is the one in which reflects the nature, or has an attempt in representing the pure elements of nature. Poetry is a distinctive form of art, likewise the painting. Significantly, the painting has an intercourse with poetry, however on the surface, it seems to be absolutely silent, but it may talk louder. The poet makes an effort to pass the boarders to become an imagist, meanwhile it is precisely the significant point that a painter has already achieved to this great purpose. In many aspects the poem is similar to the painting, in regards to the imitations of the nature which are produced by the creative God-like minds and hands of artists. Sohrab Sepehri and Dante Gabriel Rossetti both were poets, illustrators, and painters who demonstrated art for art sake under the purpose of exploring beauty. The tendency of them were to attach painting and poetry with employing simple features, images, symbols and natural elements. The expectation of this study is to consider the impacts of painting on Sohrab Sepehri’s and Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s poems.

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**Introduction**

Closely confronting with nature is significant aspect in creating a masterpiece. The poet or the painter is usually obtaining the notions from outside, but input them through polishing and mingling the codes and images together in order to produce art. In the condition that the artist is not only a painter but also a poet, like Sohrab Sepehri and D.G. Rossetti, their significant images could represent the delightful senses of exciting emotional admiration of reality as a piece of astonished painting.

Sohrab Sepehri (1928-1980) is one of the well-known figures in the realm of poetry, and he has already practiced painting as well. He created a great amount of astonished oil paintings full of emotional impact about landscapes and nature. Sepehri’s attempt was a sort of deconstruction and defamiliarization in his both paintings and poetry. He also was interested in Chinese and Japanese arts, Zen and Haiku. He had a significant purpose by focusing on Zen, since Zen aims at the perfection and wisdom of personhood. “*za-zen*” is employed as a foundational method of *prāxis* across the different schools of Buddha way, through which the Zen practitioner attempts to embody non-discriminatory wisdom *vis-à-vis* the meditational experience known as “*satori*” or enlightenment. The everyday life for most people is a kind of transforming stage in which living is consumed by logical, dualistic paradigm of thinking with its attendant psychological states such as stress and anxiety. Zen demands an overcoming of this paradigm by practically achieving a holistic perspective in cognition, so, Zen practitioner can celebrate, with a stillness of mind, a life of tending toward the concrete events of everyday life and nature. For this reason, the Zen practitioner is required to embody freedom expressive of the original human nature. Zen thinks that the preceding is still a partial understanding of here and now which is enfolded in both zero time and zero space. This means that one time contains all times and one part contains the whole. Also Haiku" is a traditional form of Japanese poetry far back to the 9th century with a specific structure in three lines which act like a riddle.  It is a short, descriptive form of poetry means the writer uses the Haiku to describe something. Haiku poetry traditionally discusses subjects from the natural world, including seasons, months, animals, and even the smallest elements of nature. Both, Zen and Haico were among the demands of Sohrab Sepehri.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) was a British poet, illustrator, and painter. He was among the founders the [Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Raphaelite_Brotherhood) in 1848 collaborated with [William Holman Hunt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Holman_Hunt) and [John Everett Millais](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Everett_Millais). Soon, he evolved to become the main inspiration for the second generation of artists and writers influenced the movements, and the people most notably [William Morris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Morris) and [Edward Burne-Jones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Burne-Jones). His work also influenced the European [Symbolists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_%28arts%29) and was a major precursor of the [Aesthetic movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesthetic_movement). Rossetti's art was characterized by its sensuality and its medieval revivalism. He clearly stood apart from his contemporaries in his unique vision, both in his poems and in his artworks. Rossetti employed a symbolic language that was well established but had largely been discarded and forgotten. During the Renaissance, a symbolic language of allegory and pageant was common throughout Europe, despite religious differences. This language of court art was more a symbolic aesthetic of idea and reference rather than a literal representation of reality. The iconoclastic idealism of the Commonwealth and the foundation of the Royal Society under the patronage of Charles II marked the triumph of the empirical method. This was the age of reason and science, but not mysticism.

His early poetry like "[The Blessed Damozel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blessed_Damozel)" was an imitation of John Keats and under influences of Romantics. In his later works, also the Rossettian motif of the bird’s songs, white clothes, natural beauty, trees, dove, cloud, mirror and river express both the relationship between man and nature, and between man and his inner nature. This link between man and nature informs the work of the Romantics. Symbolic nature thus forms an integral part of both Rossetti's painting and poetry. Dante Gabriel Rossetti is as the painter, designer, and writer, and according to both John Ruskin and Walter Pater, he was the most important and original artistic force in the second half of the nineteenth century in Great Britain. In Whistler's famous comment, “He was a king”.  
 It would be absolutely difficult to imagine nineteenth-century, Victorian poetry, and art without Rossetti's influence. Rossetti's attempt to create a unified oeuvre of painting was also pioneering and extended conceptions of art of poetry. His later poetry was characterized by the complex interlinking of thought and feeling. Like Sepehri, Rossetti's personal life was closely linked to his art duty.

  

Some paintings by Sohrab Sepehri

 

D.G.Rossetti

**The Characteristics of Sepehri’s and Rossetti’s Painting and Poetry**

Sohrab Sepehri was a painter before being a poet. As he mentioned in his poem, his first occupation was to paint in hope to refresh the lonely hearts. By being close to nature, he had got a crystal eyes to observe the origin of reality.

*پیشه ام نقاشی است:*

*گاه گاهی قفسی می سازم با رنگ ، می فروشم به شما*

*تا به آواز شقایق که در آن زندانی است*

*دل تنهایی‌تان تازه شود ) صدای پای آب. سهراب سپهری(*

*My job is making the paintings*

*Sometimes I make a cage but with colors, sell it to you*

*To refresh your lonely heart through-*

*The song of Anemone which is imprisoned* (Sepehri – The Foot Steps of Water)

He had also painted his poems in the way that the reader could imagine what perceived from the words. Many of his famous paintings seem very simple but they experienced different styles, as if Sepehri desired to record his life. In similar manner, his poetry was like story, and demonstrated his unfamiliar life and self-willing loneliness.

*There was a woman at the door  
Standing there as ever  
I approached her:   
Her image flooded my eyes.  
Speech turned into wings of passion and knowledge.  
Shadow turned into sun.  
  
I walk out in the sun  
I was carried away by pleasing signs:   
I went as far as childhood and sands  
As far as delightful mistakes  
As far as abstract objects  
I neared picturesque waters   
And trees full of pears  
With an ever-present trunk  
I breathed with the wet truth.  
My feeling of wonder mingled with the tree.  
I perceived I abutted on the throne of God   
I felt a bit distraught.  
Man goes to seek solace  
When he feels crestfallen.  
I did too.  
  
I went as far as the table  
The yogurt’s taste, the fresh green plants  
There was bread to eat with a cup and saucer:   
My throat pined for a goblet of vodka.  
  
I returned:   
The woman was there at the door  
Standing with a body of deadly wounds.  
An empty can  
Kept paring away  
The water's throat.* ( Sohrab Sepehri- Near a distant Realm)

The structure and format of Sepehri’s works represent the especial rules of Haiku, Zen and traditional paintings of East Asia. The art of Sepehri is full of simplicity in words, beauty in images, and defamiliarization in representing life.

*ساده‌ باشیم*

*ساده باشیم چه در باجه یک بانک چه در زیر درخت*

*کار‌ ما‌ نیست‌ شناسایی«راز»گل سرخ*

*کار ما شاید این است*

*که در افسون گل سرخ شناور باشیم*

*Let’s be simple*

*Let’s be simple whether in bank or under the tree*

*Diagnosis of the secret of red rose is not our job*

*Maybe our job is*

*To float in the fascination of red rose* (Sohrab Sepehri – ‘’The Flow of Water’’. 1343)

The most of Sepehri’s paintings were by gouache, watercolor and oil painting. As well as Rossetti’s first major paintings which were by oil. Rossetti’s oil paintings is the significant displayed of the realist qualities of the early Pre-Raphaelite movement. His ‘’Girlhood of Mary Virgin’’ (1849) and ‘’Ecce Ancilla Domini’’ (1850) portray Mary as a teenage girl. His paintings were in oils with watercolor brushes, as thinly as in watercolor, on canvas which he had primed with white till the surface was a smooth as cardboard, and every tint remained transparent.

**Reality and Beauty of nature in the works of Sepehri and D. G. Rossetti**

Both Sepehri and Rossetti were painters and poets, and their fields of works were representing reality and the nature in symbolic condition and complete ways through sharpening and deepening the man’s experiences. Both were illustrator-poets as well as realist and naturalist. The most important symbol of his thought is the sun. Intimately connected to the concept of Sacred Fire, which permeates the universe. Ultimately both are the same thing, operating on three levels in different aspects: in its most pure form of light which is also pure or god-like love; in its celestial form as the sun, which bestows life; and in its coarse elemental form on earth, where it manifests itself as fire, where it radiates light and heat.

Also, Rossetti's concepts of sun or fire is a kind of desire in deity expresses a theme that would be instantly recognizable to the Renaissance mind. While river symbolizes human emotional passion, fire symbolizes the higher unquenchable passion of the spirit. Rossetti's poetry is not only based upon the specific syncretic tradition of universal love, but it is also traditional in the widest sense. It has the power within the proper context of a traditional culture. When their universe of reference is unknown, poetry and the other arts speak in obscure, and ultimately, a dead language. Yet the arts have in themselves a limited power of evoking and transmitting such knowledge, if not to the reason at least to the imagination. This is precisely the situation with Rossetti's allegorical symbolism. Magic, in other words, is an art. Syncretism may be considered as a deviation for theology, but it is indispensable to poetry.

Sepehri usually observes the things as lived ones, such as sun as a red apple, or stone as a living creature. He defamiliarized the concepts of life by hearing the breath of garden by a reverberation of the sound of darkness in below poem. His engaging the sensory system of man which is comparable by D. G. Rossetti’s.

*من صدای نفس باغچه را می شنوم*

*و صدای ظلمت را ، وقتی از برگی می ریزد*

*وصدای ،سرفه ی روشنی از پشت درخت ،*

*عطسه ی آب از هر رخنه ی سنگ ....* *([مشق عشق – صدای پای آب](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiozeHAhYvWAhWGHsAKHe0QCeQQFggpMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmashgheshgh5.blogfa.com%2Fpost-16.aspx&usg=AFQjCNEviqyZZmD81qnzRcGIa-vrCMH3yA)**[. سهراب سپهری)](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiozeHAhYvWAhWGHsAKHe0QCeQQFggpMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmashgheshgh5.blogfa.com%2Fpost-16.aspx&usg=AFQjCNEviqyZZmD81qnzRcGIa-vrCMH3yA)*

*I do hear the breathing of land   
And the voice of darkness while it fall from the leaf  
And the voice of a person’s coughing behind the tree  
And the sneeze of water from the crack of stone* (Sepehri – Homework of Love)

Rossetti’s life and work were bound up with illustration. Pre-Raphaelite focuses on the interrelations between art and literature in general, and on the creative and critical possibilities generated by pairing pictures with poetry in particular had a profound impact on Rossetti’s work.

Rossetti frequently refers to his poetry as song, as if the word sonnet suggested to him a small song, or song-et. The fact of the word sonnet being connected with *suonare* which isto play upon an instrument, and to show that the knowledge of music is of great value to the sonnet writer. Indeed, owing to the consonantal character of language plus a great knowledge of music would really be of more importance to the English sonnet writer. This also helps to associate Rossetti's love of the form with the many occurrences of music in both Rossetti's painting and poetry. The influences of poetry and music pervade both mediums of Rossetti's art. The idea that music and color are two manifestations of a single vibration derives from Rosicrucian thought.

*Sea and sky, afar, on high,  
Sand and strewn seaweed,—  
Very like indeed.  
But the sea stands spread  
One wall with the flat skies,  
Where the lean black craft like flies  
Seem well-nigh stagnated,  
Soon to drop off dead.* (Rossetti- Even So)

The element of death is essential based on the old religions which was a ritual death that ensured life. Rossetti, in his works, achieves a form of death as a symbolic death of the self, like the sacrifice of self to other, and the recovered true self of the Platonic severed souls. The vision of the Platonic descent of beauty to rescue the soul is particularly well illustrated in the Rossetti's most sonnets. The contrast between the earthly material realm, and the mythological, Platonic, and Rosicrucian image of God as the sun.

Rossetti's and Sepehri’s habit of writing poems for pictures indicates how they felt of the two arts as composing a mutually linked dyad. Both of them were looking at things in accordance to what they really were as sense, emotion, imagination, and the intellectual dimension. In his different point of views; faith could wear shoes, the plants were intelligent, the truth has got wings, and the fear was transparently clear. In his painting-poem, Sepehri believed that the man must wash the words, and words must be as pure as the wind and raining. The man, the friend, and even whole people must stand under the raining without umbrella to obtain love. His innocent-way of his views is like the innocency of an infant.

*واژه را باید شست*

*واژه باید خود باد، واژه باید خود باران باشد*

*چترها را باید بست زیر باران باید رفت*

*فکر را، خاطره را، زیر باران باید برد*

*با همه مرد شهر زیر باران باید رفت*

*دوست را زیر باران باید دید*

*عشق را زیر باران باید جست.*

*زندگی تر شدن پی در پی،*

*زندگی آبتنی کردن در حوضچه ی «اکنون» است (* [*سیاه مشق*](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwj62eCphovWAhUHDMAKHRmLC-IQFggpMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.persianlyric.ir%2F1389-12-08-15-47-05%2F22-1390-08-04-09-32-17%2F55-1389-12-10-21-15-25.html&usg=AFQjCNHwV0-nEkc41ezxhbdC9MLRYAWxNA)*. سپهری)*

*The one must wash the words*

*Words must be like wind, like rain*

*Gather the umbrellas, go under the rain*

*Thought and memories must encounter with rain*

*Let us move ahead under the rain with the whole people of the city*

*Let us meet a friend under the rain*

*Let us find love under the rain*

*Life is a continuous act of wetting*

*Life is a sort of snowing in the pool of ‘’now’’* ( Sepehri- The Black Crap)

Besides containing faithful poets, neither Sepehri’s nor Rossetti’s works could be classified among pure mysticism. They both attempt to demonstrate objective beauty, purity of nature, and unity. Love of nature, or love of beauty is the Sun-god of mythological sense, working through eternal Nature. Rossetti's message is that man is not above and outside the nature, in a Victorian scientific materialist view, the man is still intimately part of nature in an eternal, universal, and spiritual sense.

*A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals*

*The soul,—its converse, to what Power 'tis due:—*

*Whether for tribute to the august appeals*

*Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,*

*It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,*

*In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death. )Rossetti’s “The House of Life”(*

**Conclusion**

Specialized forms of literature, poetry and painting, represented culture in a way that even the upstart, best-selling novel, short story, or drama could not. Rossetti sought to combine picture and word not only to enhance the beauty of his work but also to extend its meanings by introducing a nonlinguistic form and a hermeneutic framework. Rossetti’s entrance into the Victorian publishing market was coeval with England’s Golden Age of illustration, and his association with the Pre-Raphaelite artists who changed illustration completely.

In *Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Collected Poetry and Prose*, Jerome McGann observes that Rossetti rejected literal translations in favor of fidelity in a broader sense and advocated a transparency of style, by which he means the evocation of prior syllabic metrical patterns beneath their accentual English counterparts. Noting Rossetti’s skill in the use of minute particulars and double poems in the pairing of poems and paintings, McGann argues that this gap which stands between the composite parts of the Rossettian double work is one of its essential features. (xvii- xxix)

Sepehri made the symmetrical surfaces and amalgamated them with trees, flowers, river, garden of the oasis remind myth and essence of nature. He demonstrated all his mysterious senses of his childhood in his poems and invited the reader to decipher them. His poems and painting are the journey of his life. The legacy of Sepehri and expedition of timeless and space less childish felicitous life in nature. It revived as if the nature being united with Sepehri or vice versa. His works embodied his truthful sincere expresses of his pure feeling. His expresses of nature are in two ways, one via color and water, the other by words and language. His tongue less paintings speak with their visitors, and his poems are all over illustrations.

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