THE IMAGINAL GARDEN:

IMAGINATION AND THE PERSIAN GARDEN IN THE MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHY OF SHAHAB AL-DIN SUHRAWARDI

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the past several decades, many of the gardens and parks that have been built in Iran have been affected by a lack of attention to their design and details. One reason for this flaw is an absence of awareness of the role of the notion of imagination in Persian gardens. This dissertation investigates the relation between the Persian garden and the imaginal world of Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi (1154-1191), a twelfth-century Persian philosopher. He describes the imaginal world as one that is between the immaterial and material, and between light and darkness. He refers to the imaginal world in his works, and specifically in his Persian treatises, where he uses the elements of the Persian garden to portray this world. The research studies these elements and explores the symbols and metaphors he uses to reveal his philosophical thoughts.

In order to examine the relation between Suhrawardi’s thoughts, including his imaginal world, and the Persian garden, this dissertation also investigates the elements of the Persian garden in the three arts of literature, miniatures, and gardens. One case study was chosen for each art form. The case studies have been selected from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a period in which art and architecture, including gardens, flourished, and where Suhrawardi’s concepts were taught in the schools.

This dissertation aims to determine the ideas that informed the design of Persian gardens and their elements. This could help contemporary architects and landscape designers better understand the reasoning behind their designs, and subsequently arrive at works that are both meaningful and eternal.
DEDICATION

to Baba Reza (Pedar), my father
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My PhD journey started on the date I met Dr. Marco Frascari, the then director of the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism, who believed in me and accepted me as his PhD student. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to be his student, although it was for a brief time.

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Maryam Mirsepassi

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**INTRODUCTION**

...The khanaqah had two doors, one onto the city and one onto the field and orchard. I went and shut tightly the door to the city. After closing it I went to open the door to the field. When I looked I saw ten old men of beautiful countenance seated on a bench. I was so amazed by their magnificence and splendor and so staggered by the sight of their throne, their beauty, their white hair, their garments and trappings that I could not speak...

_Suhrawardi_¹

Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi (1154-1191), also known as _Shaykh al-Ishraq_ or Master of Illumination, was a twelfth-century Persian philosopher and Sufi mystic, who believed in the existence of the imaginal world, which is discussed in his book _Hikmat al-Ishraq_. He proposed the existence of a fourth world, in addition to the three worlds described by the other philosophers of his time.² Suhrawardi’s fourth world is the imaginal world, which he refers to using different terminology: _nakuja-abad_ (نَاكْجَا آبَاد, land of no-where), _shahrستان-i jan_ (شهرستان جان, city of the soul), _iqlim-i hashtum_ (اقلیم هشتم, eighth clime), and _suwar mu’allaqa zulmaniyya wa mustanira_ (صور معلقه ظلمانيه والمستنیره, the world of dark and illumined suspended images).³

Suhrawardi writes that this world is located between the material and immaterial worlds, and between light and darkness. Its forms and features are “suspended”, and they are not

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² The other three worlds are: the world of the “dominating lights” (_انوار قاهره_, _anwar-i qahira_), the “managing lights” (_انوار مدبره_, _anwar-i mudabbira_), and the world of barriers (_برزخیان_, _barzakhyan_). These worlds have been discussed in Part One of this dissertation.

In this study, the original terms are transliterated but not fully translated. Also, the transliterations from Persian and Arabic are all simplified in this dissertation, without using diacritical marks.
attached to any physical element. He also calls it the world of souls—between the world of intellect and the world of matter\(^4\)—where not everyone is able to perceive its features.

In addition to *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, Suhrawardi authored notable Persian treatises and allegories, in which I argue the stories occurred in the imaginal world. I realized that in some of his narrations,\(^5\) in order to describe and convey his philosophical thoughts, Suhrawardi referred to certain elements of the Persian garden, namely *koushk* (کوشک, pavilion),\(^6\) water and water spring, basin, trees, birds, sky, mountains, gateways, corridors, and *divan* (دهان, the king’s sitting place). It was then that the main question of this research echoed in my mind: is there a relation between Suhrawardi’s imaginal world and the Persian garden and its elements?

The Persian garden is a significant Persian art and is an earthly image of paradise on earth. It is full of mysteries, and its imaginal characteristic intensifies its complexities. Being an eternal art, Persian gardens keep their characteristics and function after years of existence, and still surprise and amaze viewers. A great example is the gardens of the Safavid era (1501-1722). The Safavid dynasty is known as a time Persian art and architecture, including the Persian garden, flourished because the Safavid kings made considerable efforts to promote the arts. Safavid artists, poets, and architects were all disciplined in schools, where theories and practices of prominent Islamic philosophers, including those

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\(^5\) Especially in *The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing*, *The Red Intellect*, and *On the Reality of Love* treatises.

\(^6\) The main building of the Persian garden, which in Farsi means “palace”. It is widely translated as “pavilion”.

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of Suhrawardi, were taught. Moreover, during the Safavid era, a revival of Suhrawardi’s *ishraqi* philosophy occurred.⁷

Acknowledging Suhrawardi as one of the most influential philosophers in Persian history, I questioned how significant his thoughts and concepts were to the Safavid schools. Did the architects, artists, and more specifically garden builders of the time create their own art with Suhrawardi’s imaginal world in mind? Were the Safavid garden builders aware of the work of the Safavid miniaturists or the philosophical concepts of dominant figures such as Suhrawardi?

This dissertation examines the relation between the elements of the Persian garden and Suhrawardi’s imaginal world; why and how Suhrawardi used the elements of the Persian garden to express his mystical and philosophical concepts; and what the symbols and metaphors of the Persian garden elements are from Suhrawardi’s perspective. The study also examines the possible impact that Suhrawardi’s philosophical concepts has had on the Safavid gardens and their elements.

Past studies and investigations of Persian gardens have mostly been limited to the garden itself, the history of the garden, and the link between the garden and other fields of art. Also, many studies have been undertaken on Suhrawardi’s theories related to mysticism and epistemology, including his idea of imagination, and there are widely-recognized investigations conducted by scholars such as Henry Corbin (1903-1978), Louis Massignon (1883-1962), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933), and Gholamhossein Ebrahimi Dinani (b. 1934). Most of the studies thus far, have been carried out from a philosophical perspective.

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and even though there are invaluable viewpoints and interpretations, there have been no studies on Suhravardi’s notion of imagination and its relation with Persian architecture and landscape architecture in the Persian garden. Examining this relation shows how the ideas, philosophy, and thoughts were employed in the design of these gardens, and has the potential to help contemporary landscape architects and designers better understand the concepts behind the design of Persian gardens and their elements so that they can create works that are genuinely meaningful. Over the past several decades in Iran, there have been instances of gardens and parks built on the basis of arbitrary classifications, some of which consist of copies of the motifs and the geometrical patterns of the historical and traditional Persian gardens with no consideration of conceptual and philosophical details. It is my contention that the current practice in Iran has failed to understand the fundamental influence that the concept of imagination has had on Persian architecture and gardens, and that this has resulted in architectural forms and planning that have no underlying theoretical principles nor a visual resemblance to their formal precedents. A key question in this dissertation concerns the possible value of the notion of imagination in the context of the current technologies in the design of architecture and gardens in Iran. Hopefully, philosophical meanings combined with today’s technology, while also taking into account the needs of contemporary society, will lead to the design of valuable architectural and landscape architectural works in the future.

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8 One example is the Goftegoo Bustan (park), located in Tehran, Iran. This garden was built in 2003 with the intention of introducing different gardening styles such as Persian, Italian, Chinese, and English to the visitors. For the section of the Persian garden, I noticed that specific patterns of the traditional Persian gardens such as the quadripartite divisions, the main axis, and water channels and pools were copied. For more information on the Goftegoo garden in general, refer to: Mahdi Hamzenejad and Fateme Gorji, “Tabar Shinasi Park-hayi Mo’asir-i Tehran va Barrisi-i Zamina-hayi Shikl-dahanda bi Anha,” [Genealogy of Recent Parks of Tehran and Analyzing their Forming Background], Bagh-i Nazar 14, no. 55 (2018): 29-46.
Using hermeneutics, the intention of this research is to demonstrate relations between philosophical and mystical concepts with architecture and landscape architecture, as well as with visual arts such as miniatures, to provide guidance for creating gardens in present Iran.

The study uses a multi-disciplinary methodology to the research in architecture, combining a series of approaches, including landscape architecture, visual arts, hermeneutics, literature review, and specific case studies. This dissertation is structured based on four main horizons including conceptual, historical, and geographical aspects, as well as means and tools. Under the conceptual horizon, the notion of imagination and the imaginal world, more particularly Suhrawardi’s imaginal world have been examined. In the historical aspect, the mystical and philosophical history of the dominant thinkers, specifically Suhrawardi, and his influence on the Safavid schools in the sixteenth century have been studied. Moreover, the history of the material culture in the sixteenth century and during the Safavid era has been examined. The Persian plateau is the main geographical area considered for this research, where the Safavid gardens are located. Specific case studies from literature, miniatures, and gardens, from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, relevant literature review, hermeneutics, as well as my own drawings, serve as the means and tools for this investigation.

The review of the literature related to the subject of this thesis is crucial to support the originality of the topic as well as to identify the gaps. This research uses a hermeneutical approach to better understand the context of the historical pieces. Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), a contemporary French philosopher, explains that hermeneutics is neither limited to the examination of texts nor to the interpretation the authors of the texts provide. It mainly
involves the worlds the authors and the texts disclose. Moreover, the hermeneutics of imagination warrant that the image be realized as a course that involves something other than itself. This study covers the interpretation of the historical texts including religious texts (the Quran and the hadith), philosophical and allegorical texts (writings and treatises), and literary texts (poems). The study also includes the interpretation of the historical Persian gardens, and the visual interpretation and analysis of the historical miniatures and paintings, as well as my own drawings.

As mentioned above, the present study will argue for a multi-disciplinary methodological approach that examines the historical texts as well as historical architecture, landscape architecture, and arts, to acquire an understanding of the Suhrawardi’s imaginal world and the Persian garden. With regards to the mystical and spiritual concepts, the lack of historical architectural treatises in the Islamic world would pose a challenge for this research. Moreover, selecting specific art forms from the Safavid era, would also require a comprehensive study of the history of such arts. However, the relevant historiographies provide the reader with an understanding of the architecture and landscape architecture of the time, which would be different from the perception of the contemporary visitors.

10 Ibid, 178.
11 Hadith is a collection of sayings associated to the prophet Muhammad and imams. It is also considered as one of the major sources for the Muslims beside the Quran.
14 Ibid.
Mysticism had an impact on the Islamic world, including arts and architecture, but “it is not clear to what extent mysticism was present in their lives and how it impacted architecture.”\textsuperscript{15} The mentioned multi-disciplinary approach allows to give rise to a contribution to knowledge in the architecture field proper rather than within the field of architecture historiography.

This dissertation is organized into four main parts. It begins with conceptual and philosophical aspects, then moves to analysis of some examples from literature, miniatures, and gardens, and examination of one of Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises, and concludes with the design of an imaginal garden. Part One begins with the subject of the imaginal world from Suhrawardi’s point of view, and continues with a discussion of the terminology that Suhrawardi uses for the imaginal world. Furthermore, this part discusses the sources and teachers that influenced Suhrawardi’s thoughts and beliefs. It also alludes to Suhrawardi’s followers, especially those from the Safavid era, to help demonstrate how Suhrawardi’s philosophical thoughts and ideas, including his imaginal world, were relevant over time, from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries (Safavid era), and to present day.

Part Two examines the imaginal world and the elements of Persian gardens in the three main arts of Persian literature, miniatures, and the garden itself. I intentionally selected these arts for the possibilities of analysis they offer. For example, miniatures and gardens are already embedded with other types of arts, such as tiles and carpets. For this dissertation, literature and miniatures have been selected to support the study of the

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
concepts that inform the Persian garden. The research focuses on one case study from each of the three mentioned arts where the elements of the Persian garden are reviewed.

In order to establish whether Suhrawardi’s philosophies and thoughts influenced the artists of the Safavid era, I specifically chose the below case studies. I focused on the reigns of Shah Tahmasp (1514-1576) 16 and Shah Abbas I (1571-1629), 17 as they both had a significant impact on the creation of art during their time. Amongst the Safavid gardens, I selected the Fin garden, which is believed to have been built by Baha’ al-Din Muhammad ibn Husayn al-‘Amili or Shaykh Baha’i (1547-1621), a well-known philosopher, poet, architect, and teacher of the Isfahan School during the rule of Shah Abbas I. 18 With regards to the choice of miniature, I came across the illustrated edition of the *Haft Awrang* collection by Jami (1414-1492), which was one of the most admired and popular works during the Safavid era and the rule of Shah Tahmasp. Amongst all the miniatures of this collection, I selected *A Father Advises his Son about Love*. After studying the miniatures of the Safavid period, I realized that this piece displays the elements of the Persian garden more than other miniatures. Equivalently, I chose Jami’s *A Father Advises his Son about Love* poem as it inspired the mentioned miniature. 19

The research examines architectural and natural elements of these case studies to determine their relation with Suhrawardi’s imaginal world. These examples are chronologically in the order of literature, miniature, and garden.

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16 The second Safavid king from 1524 to 1576.
17 The fifth Safavid king from 1587 to 1629.
18 The Fin garden is also a UNESCO world heritage site.
19 The poem itself has been written during the Timurid dynasty (1370-1507).
In Part Three, I study the treatise *On the Reality of Love* from Suhrawardi’s mystical Persian treatises. This part provides a study on the relationship of the elements of the Persian garden such as *koushk*, chamber, door, gateway, corridor, *divan*, water spring, wall, carpet, and the four elements of water, fire, earth, and air, with Suhrawardi’s imaginal descriptions of such elements in *On the Reality of Love*. It also analyzes why and how Suhrawardi used such elements to express his concepts, and what the symbols and metaphors would represent. I selected this text from Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises because most of the elements of the Persian garden are mentioned in it.\(^\text{20}\) Similar to how Safavid miniatures were created, I used my imagination to draw my own visuals and portrayed the elements and imaginal spaces described by Suhrawardi. Just as the miniatures were formed with the imagination of their creators, and the viewer travels to the world of imagination, it is my hope that my drawings provide a similar experience.

Lastly, in Part Four, I take the reader on an allegorical journey to the imaginal garden that I imagine for today. In order to connect this part of the research to the main argument of the dissertation, the relation between Suhrawardi’s imaginal world and the elements of the Persian garden, I again chose my own drawings as a tool to create a contemporary imaginal garden. My drawings are intended to portray the garden’s imaginal elements and spaces, based on the analysis in previous parts of the dissertation, and with the aim of helping the reader participate in an imaginal journey of their own.

\(^{20}\) The elements of the Persian garden mentioned in his other treatises have been also analyzed throughout the thesis, specifically in Part Two.
LITERATURE REVIEW

So I flew with them. They said to me, “We have a long way ahead of us in terrible, frightful stages wherein no one can be secure. Actually, we may lose this state and be trapped once more in our former affliction. We must therefore bear up under terrible agony in order to escape once and for all the horrible pitfalls and thereafter keep to the right road.”

Suhrawardi

This part discusses existing writings on Suhrawardi’s imaginal world and the spread of his philosophy over time, his writings on the three arts of Persian literature, miniatures, and the garden as well as their relationship to each other, and writings on Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises, from the perspective of the imaginal world. The part is structured to be consistent with the next three chapters.

Suhrawardi’s Imagination; The Imaginal World

Contemporary scholars who have written about Suhrawardi’s philosophy and his imaginal world, include Henry Corbin, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hossein Ziai, and Gholamhossein Ebrahimi Dinani.

Henry Corbin, a French philosopher and scholar of Islam and Iran, conducted several research studies related to the works of Suhrawardi through which he introduced Suhrawardi to the West. He authored the books: The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism, Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi’ite Iran, History of Islamic Philosophy, and The Relationships of Ishraq Wisdom and Ancient Iran. Corbin also wrote an article specifically on Suhrawardi’s notion of imagination called mundus imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal in which the author identified that there is no equivalent.

expression in English or French for Suhrawardi’s imaginal world. He proposed the Latin expression *mundus imaginalis* as a point of reference, by which “imaginative” or “imagining” can be differentiated from “imaginary” to avoid misinforming Western readers. Corbin explains that Latin words and expressions provide fixed references to help distinguish the real meaning of the word from any equivalent used in other languages. In English, the term “imaginary” refers to something that is utopian; it does not exist and is unreal. In his opinion, the term imaginary, used in the past for interpreting Arabic and Persian texts, was not precise enough to correctly express the original meaning of the Persian word. He writes that the proposed new terminology *mundus imaginalis* would lead readers to a different order of things.

In this article, Corbin addresses the main concepts of imaginal such as *nakuja-abad*, eighth clime, and spiritual imagination. *Nakuja-abad* and eighth clime are the terms Suhrawardi uses to explain the imaginal world; they are discussed in Part One of this dissertation.

Suhrawardi also describes the imaginal as the world of “the dark and illumined suspended images”. Roxanne D. Marcotte, religious studies professor at Université du Québec à Montréal, investigates some elements of Suhrawardi’s imaginal world in an article titled *Suhrawardi’s Realm of the Imaginal* in order to identify the “suspended” forms associated with the world of imagination. Marcotte also provides an explanation as to where the imaginal world is cosmologically located. She outlines the eschatological role in the suspended forms and the imaginal world. Marcotte investigates the imaginal world of

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23 Ibid, 1.
24 Suhrawardi, *The Philosophy of Illumination* [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 149-50.
Suhrawardi by examining the type and function of the suspended forms contained in the imaginal world. She discusses, from the perspective of Suhrawardi, the relations amongst the suspended forms, human souls, celestial bodies, and celestial spheres.

According to Marcotte, Suhrawardi’s imaginal world is a realm in which human souls can perceive luminous and dark forms. Depending on the souls’ noble nature however, the extents to which these souls perceive the forms differ. Suhrawardi generally believed that the human soul is the locus for the suspended forms and acknowledged that in this world or in the afterlife, a body as a locus is required in order for the power of imagination to exist. In the afterlife in particular, Suhrawardi explains the attachment of the human soul to a celestial body and its location in the traditional cosmology. Based on my studies on Suhrawardi’s works related to the imaginal world, and more specifically his Persian treatises, I identify a connection between his imaginal world and cosmology. In his Persian treatises, Suhrawardi talks about the celestial spheres and their different orders in the shape of symbols and metaphors. This notion has been investigated in more detail in Part Two of this dissertation.

Gholamhossein Ebrahimi Dinani is a contemporary scholar who has written several books and articles about Suhrawardi’s philosophy, and has done notable research on the idea of ishraq wisdom.26 Specifically, in his book Thinking and Intuition of Suhrawardi’s Philosophy, Dinani tries to identify the fundamental innovations of Suhrawardi’s philosophy in the fields of logic, physics, psychology, and metaphysics. Dinani claims that based on Suhrawardi’s philosophy, the world of imagination is immaterial, but is

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26 Illuminism or Hikmat al-Ishraq
influenced by the material world. Dinani’s claim provokes questions about whether this immateriality applies specifically to the imaginal world of the Persian garden, and what is the Persian garden’s material world that influences the world of imagination.

In his works related to the imaginal world, Suhrawardi also refers to the mirror, and in particular, the concept of suspended images in a mirror. In his article The World of Imagination, Dinani states that according to Suhrawardi, clear and polished objects, such as mirrors, symbolize the imaginal, and in such classification, even a human’s imagination is considered to be a mirror. In other words, it is not the human’s imagination that innovates imaginal aspects, but the imaginal aspects are revealed through the human’s imagination. The same concept applies to the mirror—it is not the reason for the existence of a visible image appearing in it, but it is a manifestation in which the imaginal aspects appear. The mirror is a significant element in this research, not only because it is related to Suhrawardi’s concept of imagination, but also because it is an essential feature in the Persian garden, which is manifested in different forms. For example, the water of howzes (حواض), ponds, and pools in the garden all act as mirrors. There are also mirrors on the ceiling of the koushks or in muqarnas (مقرنس).

Corbin, in his book Alone with the Alone, states: “the science of the Imagination is also the science of mirrors, of all mirroring “surfaces” and the forms that appear in them. As the

29 Howz in Farsi means a small pool or pond.
30 Muqarnas is an Islamic architectural form developed in the middle of the tenth century in Iran. It is used for domes or half-domes by providing a large number of small squinches rather than one big one. This concept has been discussed in more detail in Part Two of this dissertation.
science of the *speculum*, it takes its place in *speculative* theosophy, in a theory of the vision and manifestations of the spiritual, and draws the ultimate consequences from the fact that though forms *appear* in mirrors, they are not in the mirrors.”

Gulru Necipoglu, a Turkish-American professor of Islamic Art and Architecture, in her book *The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture: Topkapi Palace Museum Library MS H. 1956*, states: “The artistic imagination is frequently praised in Timurid-Turkmen sources.” She also refers to Khwandamir (1475-1534), a Timurid (1370-1507) Persian historian, who defined a glass vessel, with representation of thirty-two different artisans, as “such a configuration that no more beautiful picture could be reflected in the mirror of the imagination.”

Considering the imagination as a mirror, the question raised in my mind is whether the same concept can be applied to the Persian garden itself. Could the Persian garden as a whole act as a mirror? Have Persian gardens been designed based on imaginal aspects, or is it the viewer who travels to the world of imagination upon seeing the Persian garden? The same viewpoint can be seen in other Persian arts, most importantly, in Persian miniatures. Could the miniature be deemed a mirror as well? Have Persian miniatures been drawn based on the imaginal world of the artist? Or, is it the viewer of the miniature who travels to the world of imagination upon looking at it? Is it the miniature that creates the imaginal aspects, or is it the imaginal aspects that emerge and are manifested in the miniature? This concept can be considered on a larger scale, such as in a monument, or in

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a smaller form, for example in small mirror pieces of *muqarnas*. Are the miniature, garden, mirror, pool, *koushk*, and *muqarnas* all the means by which one can visualize and manifest imaginal aspects?

Amongst the contemporary scholars, Marco Frascari (1945-2013), also refers to the mirror and its relation to Corbin’s *mundus imaginalis*. In his book, *Marco Frascari’s Dream House: A Theory of Imagination*, Frascari mentions about the mirror being “the gate to *mundus imaginalis*. It is the imaginable place of perspectival construction as well as the imaginal place for the fabrication of a building’s image… The mirror is a powerful tool, having the capacity to make a designer gaze clearly through a reflection, even better than by directly staring at something.”34 Frascari also explains that the architecture’s imaginal dream world can be described “by making a parallel to images in mirrors”:

In dreams and in drawings, buildings materialize as an image materializes in a mirror. The material of the mirror is not the substance of the reflected image, since it is always glass and silver independent of the reflected material. However, the image gives the subtle body of the reflected object and in this reflection the cognitive power of imagination is established as rigorous analogical knowledge. Within this imaginal world, the task of the architect is not to duplicate in graphic form a present reality (survey drawings), or future reality (design drawings), but to offer a deeper understanding of the architectonic of material and numinous meaning through synchronic and diachronic views. The task is to translate the vision on paper and then into a built form.35

Amongst the philosophers of the time, Suhrawardi was not the only scholar explaining the imaginal world. This concept has been explained in different ways and throughout history by various philosophers, such as al-Kindi (d. 870),36 al-Farabi (872-950), Avicenna (980-

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36 Abu Yusuf Ya’qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi
Al-Farabi, also known as the Second Teacher, was the first philosopher who mentioned the world of imagination. Both Al-Farabi and Avicenna did not believe in the immateriality of imagination. Ibn Arabi, the great Sufi master from the twelfth century, not only accepted the existence of such a world, but he explained its characteristics in his works. Contrary to Al-Farabi and Avicenna, Suhrawardi believed in the existence of the immaterial imagination. He made an attempt to present this concept in detail, and even dedicated a chapter of his book *Hikmat al-Ishraq* to this topic.

Amongst the above-mentioned philosophers, Ibn Arabi shares similarities in thoughts and mystical theories with Suhrawardi. William C. Chittick, an American contemporary philosopher, has published several works on Ibn Arabi. In his book, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity*, Chittick explains Ibn Arabi’s views on topics such as the celestial spheres, the human senses, and the relationship between the human’s soul and the imaginal world. Moreover, Hooman Koliji, an associate professor at the University of Maryland, has conducted research on Ibn Arabi’s notion of imagination or the “in-between”, and its relationship with architectural drawing. In his book *In-between: Architectural Drawing and Imaginative Knowledge in Islamic and Western Traditions*, Koliji investigates Ibn Arabi’s imaginal world and considers drawings as “in-between” the “world of ideas and the world of things”. Koliji states, “the drawing as a true in-between territory, mediating between the invisible and visible”, and the drawing becomes “a subtle architecture in itself”. This perspective is quite close to the viewpoint and question I have raised in this investigation: For a Persian miniature, has the painting been created based on

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37 Aristotle was known as the First Teacher.
the imagination of the artist, or is it the viewer of the miniature who travels to the world of imagination upon looking at it? According to Koliji, the painting itself is considered as something that is between tangible and intangible. Koliji also focuses on the notion of girih (گیره), a geometric form used in Islamic decorative arts, and its geometrical structure as an Islamic architectural drawing. In his investigation, Koliji identifies four main horizons: conceptual horizon, historical horizon, geographical horizon, and means and tools. For the present research, I employ the same approach in achieving the objective of this research. These main horizons have been explained in the introduction of this dissertation.

Building on Suhrawardi’s notion of imagination, it is now helpful to evaluate how his philosophical thoughts over the centuries, from his time in the twelfth century, to the sixteenth century of the Safavid era when philosophy and mysticism, as well as art and architecture, reached their zenith, and up to the present. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a contemporary scholar and professor of Islamic Studies, has also written several works on the writings of Suhrawardi, including an article titled The Spread of the Illuminationist School of Suhrawardi, where he examines how Suhrawardi’s concepts and beliefs have been disseminated. He investigates the influence of Suhrawardi on philosophers who subsequently emerged in the East and also in the West. Nasr states that for the time after the early period of Islamic history, Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi are the figures who have had the most influence on the philosophical schools of Islam. According to Nasr, in order to understand how Suhrawardi’s philosophical thoughts advanced, it is essential to investigate
their spread in the following four geographical areas: Persia, Ottoman world, Indo-Pakistani, and the West.³⁹

Both Nasr and Hossein Ziai, in their respective works *The Spread of the Illuminationist School of Suhrawardi* and *Knowledge and Illumination* confirm how the major figures and philosophers of the Safavid period have been influenced by Suhrawardi and his philosophy. Nasr in a book titled *Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia* writes: “The whole intellectual effort of the Safavid period is unimaginable without the figure of Suhrawardi.”⁴⁰

The question now is about the role of Suhrawardi’s thoughts and beliefs in contemporary philosophy, not only in Iran, but in other regions and countries. In his article *The Spread of the Illuminationist School of Suhrawardi*, Nasr wrote about the spread of Suhrawardi’s thoughts in today’s East and West. According to Nasr, in Persia for example, Suhrawardi’s teachings along with those of Mulla Sadra, continue to be an essential part of the studies of traditional Islamic philosophy.⁴¹ Nasr also states that Suhrawardi’s Persian works have endorsed Persian as a language for philosophical engagement of our present time. In the West, Suhrawardi never achieved the recognition he received elsewhere, although he is now becoming more known after the notable efforts of scholars such as Henry Corbin. It is important for contemporary students and followers of Suhrawardi to realize that understanding Suhrawardi’s *ishraqi* theosophy is challenging. This theosophy draws a world whose beauties are appreciated only by those who have the absolute sacred perspective. For a follower to become a true illuminationist, they must adhere to

Suhrawardi’s approaches and methods, and practice Sufism and spirituality. In this regard, Nasr’s article raises the question of what the difference is between the illuminationists today and those of the Safavid era? Do they share any similarities and common beliefs?

**IMAGINATION AND THE ARTS OF PERSIAN LITERATURE, MINIATURES, AND GARDENS**

As previously mentioned, Part Two of this dissertation investigates the imaginal world and the elements of Persian gardens in the three main arts of Persian literature, miniatures, and the garden. The examination of Persian literature and miniatures is done to support the Persian garden as the main concept of this research. In this section, the following literature involves how Persian literature, miniatures, and gardens, relate to one another, and what their relevance is to the concept of imagination. Specifically, what is shared and common amongst these arts? What is their origin and is it shared? How are they linked? And how does the concept of imagination play out amongst them?

According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, there is a relationship between these arts, and more generally all Islamic arts share common ground with Islamic spirituality. In his article titled *The Relation between Islamic Art and Islamic Spirituality*, Nasr discusses Islamic art and Islamic spirituality and concludes that there is a connection between the two. Nasr looks at Islamic arts over time, observes principles that are shared amongst these arts and raises the question of the origin of Islamic arts and what really constituted these shared principles. There are many studies on the history and description of Islamic arts, but Nasr identifies that the question of the origin of these arts is yet to be answered.

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42 Ibid, 12-3.
Nasr examines the question of the origin of Islamic art and attempts to identify the sources and principles that resulted in this art. He then analyzes the Divine Law (al-shari'a, الشريعة), one of the three main aspects of Islam,⁴³ and states that while it provided the setting and environment for Islamic art, the art did not originate in the Divine Law. Nasr explores the concept of Islamic spirituality and discusses how the Quran and the soul of the Prophet are the two sources of Islamic spirituality from which Islamic art originates. Finally, Nasr discusses the different art forms that have roots in the mosque and the court. He also discusses Sufism as an element that not only provided spiritual guidance, but also had a significant influence on Islamic arts.⁴⁴

While Part Two of this dissertation provides a discussion of the relationship of the Quran and the Prophet with the three arts of Persian literature, miniatures, and gardens, and the influence they had on these arts, the question becomes what else is common amongst these arts, and how does the notion of imagination relate to them?

Necipoglu, in her book The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture: Topkapi Palace Museum Library MS H. 1956, analyzes the ahistorical use of Islamic geometric patterns in the publications that arabesque was once identified as the primary “essence” of Islamic visual culture.⁴⁵ Necipoglu refers to scholars such as Louis Massignon, who defined the features of abstract ornament with respect to the nature of Islam.⁴⁶ She also refers to Garbar, who believed that arabesque did not “seem to have an intellectual or cultural content” but to have been aimed at “beautification” and “visual

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⁴³ The other two aspects are the spiritual path (al-tariqa) and the Truth (al-haqiqta).
⁴⁶ Ibid, 75.
pleasure”. Some scholars such as Ismail al-Faruqi (1921-1986), a Palestinian-American philosopher, blamed the western scholars for only considering the Islamic art as “decorative” and with lack of content, rather than understanding its “spirit” and “Islamicness”. He also dismissed miniature as emanating from “non-Islamic” impacts. The function of the abstract forms of the Islamic arts is to help the true believer understand the superiority of God. The Sufi aspect of arabesque is considered as mystical expressions which invites the soul to think and meditate. Necipoglu also makes a reference to the book of *Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* by Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, with regards to arabesque’s concept of “unity in multiplicity”, a principal belief of Sufism. They believed that this concept is “what informs all the elements of architecture in Iran.”

Seyyed Hossein Nasr provided a foreword to the book *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning* by Titus Burckhardt (1908-1984) and dismissed the interpretation of the Islamic art as being “decorative”. He states:

“Islamic art continued to be a closed book as far as its symbolic meaning was concerned. Its major art forms such as calligraphy were considered as “decoration” or “minor arts” and people looked in vain in this tradition for art forms which were central elsewhere. In addition, those who became interested in Islamic art for its so-called “abstract” nature often did so for the wrong reasons. They thought that

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47 Ibid.
48 Ibid, 76.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
Islamic art is abstract in the same sense as modern Western art, whereas the two stand at opposite poles.”52

Sheila Blair, a contemporary Canadian-American historian, in her book *Text and Image in Medieval Persian Art*, refers to Ehsan Yarshater (1920-2018), an Iranian historian, as one of the first scholars who raised the connection between Persian poetry and the visual arts.53 In his article *Some Common Characteristics of Persian Poetry and Art*, Yarshater alludes to a common aspect of Persian poetry and states: “The Persian poet is concerned more with subjective interpretation of reality than with its external manifestation.”54 Yarshater continues: “Turning now to the visual arts in Persian, we find that our observations about poetry apply almost equally well to the work of the artist. In painting, too, we are generally introduced to a picture of the world on an abstract plane.”55

The concept of imagination is a fundamental element of Persian literature, and more specifically Persian poems. Persian poets were philosophers, whose poems expressed their religious thoughts, beliefs, and ideas in a mysterious way through symbols and metaphors. Taghi Pour-namdarian, an Iranian poet and professor of Persian literature at the Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies at the University of Tehran, explores the notion of mystery and the ideas of dream, reality, and imagination in *Mystery and Mystical Stories in Persian Literature*. Suhrawardi’s idea of imagination has been discussed by Pour-

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55 Ibid, 63.
namdarian and he defines the world of imagination as the world that Henry Corbin seeks in Zoroastrian’s texts, ancient Iranian wisdom, and the works of Suhrawardi.\textsuperscript{56}

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in his article \textit{The World of Imagination and the Concept of Space in the Persian Miniature}, provides a study on the notion of space in the Persian miniature from the perspective of the world of imagination. Nasr discusses the lack of study of the symbolic meanings and metaphysical significance in Persian art. He states that most attempts so far examine the historical aspect of the Persian art and they do not really provide an analysis of what each feature of the art seeks to disclose.\textsuperscript{57} According to Nasr, the space in the Persian miniature is similar to the space of the world of imagination, which has been discussed in Part Two of this dissertation.

Turning now to the different schools of thought, and the details of miniatures, the use of different elements such as plants, characters, landscape to create an imaginal world for the miniatures reached its peak during Timurid dynasty (1370-1507) and the Herat school of thought. In the paper \textit{History of Persian Painting through Herat School of Miniature}, the authors analyze the characteristics of the school of Herat miniatures, which are in one of the most detailed and distinctive miniature styles from the fifteenth century. Studying the details and evidence related to the Herat miniature style helps us understand the reason behind the changes in different miniatures of this style throughout time.\textsuperscript{58} In their paper, the authors analyze the history of miniatures of different schools of thought such as Tabriz and Shiraz, as well as that of Herat. The miniatures of the school of Herat from the late


\textsuperscript{57} Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The World of Imagination and the Concept of Space in the Persian Miniature,” 129.

fifteenth century featured broken frame, different planes, and complex structures and arrangements. The miniaturists of this school were interested in the use of details and emphasized characters with the help of landscape and their body movement. The Herat style had an impact on other miniature schools such as Tabriz, Mavera-un-nahr, and Mogul. A well-known collection of miniatures from the Herat school is the *Haft Awrang* by Jami, from which I have selected *A Father Advises his son about Love* as one of the case studies for this research.

During the Safavid dynasty, the school of Herat was transferred to Tabriz, the capital city at the time where the Second Tabriz School and style were founded. The miniaturists of this School still adhered to Herat’s principles and traditions, while adding other elements. Khashayar Ghazizadeh in his article titled *Nature in the Miniatures of Second Tabriz Style*, examines the most important features of the natural elements of the Second Tabriz style miniatures. According to him, the miniaturists of the Second Tabriz School, while following the miniature’s principles and traditions, paid more attention to the natural elements. Ghazizadeh conducted his study by citing examples of the miniatures of the Second Tabriz School. He mentions that the beauty of the Persian miniature is to serve the symbolic expression of being; the expression of an imaginal world and space where everything is carefully and delicately arranged in its best form and beauty, and where each element refers to an inner meaning. By understanding characteristics such as light, colour, and shape, and by having a clear understanding of how to use these elements in their work, the miniature artist was able to express their perception from the cosmos and existence.

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59 Ibid, 3.
The above gives rise to questions such as what exactly was the artist’s perception from the cosmos? Whose philosophical point of view were the artists following? And were all the miniaturists of the time following the same philosophical thinking?

As part of this research aims to study architectural and natural elements of miniatures of the Safavid era and determine their relationship with Suhrawardy’s philosophy and theory, it is essential to bear in mind the significance of the miniatures drawn in previous eras and that their influence may be later seen in the Safavid miniatures. The book Masterpieces of Islamic Art: The Decorated Page from the 8th to the 17th Century by Oleg Grabar is a collection of paintings and miniatures from the eighth to the seventeenth century in which Persian miniatures from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are also depicted. These are the miniatures that were drawn based on the famous poetry and literature written in prior centuries.

Amongst the elements depicted in the Safavid miniatures, water, which had a symbolic function and meaning in ancient philosophies and architecture, as well as in the Islamic periods, has been used in different shapes and forms. Zargham and Heidari, in their article Position of Water in Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft Awrang Miniatures Version, examine water and its various forms, shapes, appearances, and functions in the miniatures of Jami’s Haft Awrang. In the group of selected miniatures, based on the theme of each poem, water was illustrated in different shapes and forms, such as a pool, a stream, or the sea. In the same works, the miniaturist attempted to reiterate the symbolic and metaphorical meanings of each element by placing them in a particular position. The various forms and shapes of water were not only derived from the architecture of the time and the personal preferences of the artist, they were also selected in a manner to be coherent and united with the rest of
the elements within the miniature. While the authors focus their analysis on water, I am of the view that the rest of the elements such as koushks, windows, doors, ivans (ایوان, porch), trees, and flowers along with their positions, shapes, forms, and even their colours need to be taken into account and discussed collectively. The cohesiveness of an illustration only becomes apparent when the entire arrangement is considered as a whole. Zargham and Heidari used a different approach from mine for their analysis of water. In Part Two, I discuss how in my analysis for the selected miniature, I highlight the element(s) of interest, and transformed the rest of the miniature into black and white. Zargham and Heidari however, changed the background completely to a cream colour and used blue to highlight water. One problem with this method is that the selected cream colour of the background is already used extensively in the original miniature. Another issue is the blue colour used for water which is not the brown colour of the water as in the original illustration. Using

Figures 0.1 and 0.2: The comparison between the two diagrams. Left: The diagram from the article “Position of Water in Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft Awrang Miniatures Version”. Right: The diagram modified by the author of this dissertation.

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actual colours in the miniature, would result in better analysis of the elements, and the reason for their selections (see figs. 0.1 and 0.2).

As the main theme of this research is the Persian garden, it will be helpful to have an overview of works on this subject. Amongst Western scholars, Donald Newton Wilber (1907-1997), and amongst the Persian scholars, Mehdi Khansari et al., authored notable books on the Persian gardens, titled *Persian Gardens and Garden Pavilions* and *The Persian Garden: Echoes of Paradise*, respectively. These works mainly discussed the history of these gardens. Irani Behbahani and Khosravi wrote a paper titled *Persian Garden between Permanence and Innovation from Ancient to Contemporary Period*, which also covers the history of the Persian garden, and provides a study of the elements of the gardens and their arrangement through different centuries from the ancient to modern times. They examine the Persian garden’s elements through different periods of pre-Islam (Achaemenid [550-331 BC] and Sassanid [224-651]) and Islam (Timurid [1370-1507], Safavid [1501-1736], Zandieh [1751-1794], Qajar [1789-1925], Pahlavi [1925-1979]). Behbahani and Khosravi’s assertion raises the question: why was the Persian garden’s geometrical pattern, such as the quadripartite divisions and the shape and location of the *koushks* in the garden, repeated century after century, and in today’s garden designs, does this unique pattern need to be repeated?

Behbahani and Khosravi refer to the Safavid gardens and their role as the main element forming and re-structuring cities. Before the Qajar dynasty and up until the early part of the dynasty, the main axis of the garden was located between the *koushk* and the gateway. However, at around the end of this period, the axis was no longer in the same location, and it did not function in the same way. In the Pahlavi period however, it is the development
of public parks that is dominant; something that was the result of the growth of cities such as Tehran, and the need for recreational spaces for residents.62

Persian gardens are referred to as the earthly reflection of the celestial garden of Paradise. The gardens of Paradise are mentioned numerous times in the Quran, and they are cited as the promised and eternal gardens for true believers. This notion is discussed in Part Two of this dissertation in more detail. According to Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003), a scholar of Islam and Sufism, everything in the gardens of Paradise “is nothing but God, since everything is finally lost in Him and His eternal glory.”63 In *The Celestial Garden in Islam*, Schimmel provides an analysis of the gardens of Paradise by citing and studying the verses of the Quran and the texts of the Sufi and mystic poets who lived in different centuries. Schimmel refers to the Quran’s description of the promised and heavenly gardens as well as to some of the mystic poets and their texts from different centuries. In particular, she alludes to some elements such as rivers, gates, doorkeeper, *chahar-bagh*, garden rugs, *kawthar*, *tuba*, octagonal pavilions, plants, trees, and flowers. Schimmel asserts that only the true lover is able to understand that the gardens of this world act as a place for the Beloved (God) to veil yet unveil Himself. It is essential that through the garden, the Beloved’s beauty be revealed to those captured by external beauty. It is only the eye of love that is capable of seeing what is behind the elements of the gardens and behind veils.64 This raises the question of whether it is only the eye of love that is able to

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64 Ibid, 39.
perceive the hidden meanings behind the elements of the garden. What about wisdom? Or, is the eye of love wisdom itself?

In *The Other Space of Persian Garden*, Solmaz Mohammadzadeh analyzes the Persian garden’s functionality and provides a discussion of the difference between Paradise and the Persian garden. She also analyzes what constitutes a perfectly ordered place and makes a comparison between such a place and the Persian garden. She writes that it is necessary to examine Persian gardens and the influence they have had on the places of our daily lives. Mohammadzadeh studies the *Haft Paykar* of Nizami (1141-1209), a twelfth-century poet and describes the Persian garden as being both an image and a place. She provides an overview of the Nizami’s *Haft Paykar* and examines the two aspects of the image of Paradise, and the place “that is perfected through absolute order”. Lastly, she analyzes the connection between the two above-mentioned aspects. According to Mohammadzadeh, the Persian garden, as an “other space” is different from ordinary and everyday places because it has some characteristics that do not follow the normal action and behavior. Also, as a real place, the garden is perfected through the absolute order.

Contrary to other studies that were mostly on the history of Persian gardens, Mohammadzadeh demonstrates a link between poems and the Persian garden. The methodology she used in her study encompasses an analysis of the allegorical works of Suhrawardi and how they relate to the concept of the Persian garden. However, Mohammadzadeh’s text does not include visual diagrams and drawings.

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65 *Haft Paykar* or *Haft Gonbad* (Seven Domes) is the fourth romance of *Khamsa* of Nizami.
66 Solmaz Mohammadzadeh Kive, “The Other Space of Persian Garden,” *Polymath: An Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Journal* 2, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 95.
For the purposes of this research, it is important to analyze the elements of the Persian garden such as water, perspective, plants, koushk, entrance gate and access paths, walls, garden axes, carpet, light and colour, text and calligraphy, and ornaments and patterns, and their symbolic meanings before examining Suhrawardi’s descriptions of such features. Thus far, few studies have been conducted and cover only some of these elements.

Mahvash Alemi, a contemporary architect and historian, discusses some of the symbolic meanings of the Persian garden’s elements in her article *Symbolism in Persian Garden; The Sense of Nature in the Royal Safavid Gardens*. She believes that the chahar-bagh (چهار باغ, *chahar* meaning the number four, and *bagh* meaning the garden) is a symbol of the cosmos; *chahar* is a symbol of the four directions of the universe, the four main elements (fire, water, air, earth), and the four seasons; the Persian garden itself is the symbol of the universe; terraces and *ivans* in Persian garden’s *koushk* are symbols of cosmic mountains; the pool in front of the *koushk* is a symbol of the cosmic ocean; different tree types and water are the most significant features of the Persian garden and have different symbolic meanings as well. Although Alemi suggests symbolic meanings for some elements of the Persian garden, other elements such as windows, doors, and gates are not discussed in her work.

As mentioned earlier in this part, water is an important element in different arts. In the article *The Role of Water in Persian Gardens*, the authors provide a study on it and its role in Persian gardens. They state that in architecture, in addition to water being a colourless liquid and the source of life, it acts as a medium between humans and architecture. The

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authors analyze different characteristics of water, and specifically the features that are not visible. According to the authors, from the ancient Persia to the Islamic period, the role of water varied. Water in ancient Persia was the main motivator and feature in the creation and design of architecture, while in the Islamic period it was the architecture that was intended to dominate water in specific orders and shapes. During this period, water took different forms based on its functionality. For instance, the shape of water in streams, pools, fountains, reservoirs, and downstream all represent the dominance of architecture over nature.68 I now question how significant the role of water is in contemporary architecture. Are today’s designs based on water as the dominant element, or is it other aspects that determine water’s functionality, or maybe something in between these two possibilities?

In the article *The Importance of Water and its Elements in the Persian Garden*, Hossein and Alireza Soltanzadeh study the different types of water-related elements, and specifically the *howz*. The environmental and climatic, as well as the cultural and functional characteristics of water play an important role in the formation of such elements. The authors provide brief descriptions of these elements namely, the lake, stream, pool, *howz*, fountain, and waterfall. Specifically, the *howz* has a variety of functions and forms, and can be considered the most important water-related element. It is used not only in gardens, but also in other types of architectural spaces, such as mosques, palaces, and houses. While *howz* is used to store water, it has climatic, visual, and ritual functionalities as well as symbolic and social purposes.69

Another element of the Persian garden is the perspective or the view of the garden. Saeide Teimouri and Vahid Heidarnattaj examine this element in their article *Nazargah, The Main Element of Persian Garden in the Illustration of the Garden in Persian Paintings*. They examine the relationship between Persian miniatures and the Persian garden from the perspective of Persian landscape architecture. I argue that studying the relationship between the Persian miniature and the Persian garden allows for a better understanding of miniatures since their subjects are inspired by the Persian garden and vice versa.

Teimouri and Heidarnattaj aim to identify the main elements of the Persian garden in miniatures that have subjects related to the garden. Specifically, the article focuses on one of the Persian garden elements: the perspective and the view. In their investigation, the authors conduct analysis on the basis of several miniatures from different eras. According to Teimouri and Heidarnattaj, the creation of a palace, *koushk*, *ivan*, or similar space decided not only the design of Persian gardens, but also determined the arrangement of platforms and levels in front of the main building, as well as the shape of the pools. The *koushk* was always designed to provide views to different directions. The main view from the *koushk* was towards the main pool and the natural elements. In the miniatures studied in this article, the miniaturist’s purpose was to create the *koushk* as the main element boasting the best view of the garden. Therefore, amongst all the Persian garden elements the features providing a view and a perspective were illustrated the most in these miniatures.70

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Teimouri and Heidarnattaj use a visual technique to analyze the selected miniatures from different eras (between fourteenth and sixteenth centuries) with the subject of garden, and examine the view and perspective from the koushk to the garden. However, what is lacking in their investigation is an analysis on the perspective of the viewer of the miniature itself.

The koushk itself is the most important architectural element of the Persian garden. In the article Pavilion in Persian Gardens; A Review on Nine-part Pavilions, Heshmatollah Motedayen, assistant professor at the College of Fine Arts at Tehran University, and Reza Motedayen provide a study on the concept of the “nine-part” koushk. A specific nine-part style is the “Hasht Bihisht” (هشت بهشت) pattern, which was commonly used during the Safavid and Qajar dynasties. In the pattern, the square or the octagonal plan is divided into nine parts or squares, in which the corners create the rooms and the spaces between the corners are the porches. The central square is located under the koushk’s dome and is the main part of it. The nine-part pattern provides a connection between the koushk and the garden thus merging them together.71 Sussan Babaie, an Iranian-born art historian, in her book Isfahan and Its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi’ism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran, also refers to the “Hasht Bihisht” pattern as being evidenced in the miniatures of the late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts, where the octagonal

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koushks are represented. The two gardens of Fin in Kashan and Hasht-Bihisht in Isfahan, as well as Chehel-Sutun in Qazvin are the only remaining examples of this pattern.

The other element of the Persian garden is its walls discussed by Seyed Amir Mansouri in his article Phenomenology of the Surrounding Wall in Persian Garden. Regardless of the time period and climate in Iran, the wall of the Persian garden has always been considered a fundamental element. Mansouri examines this from different perspectives and concludes that the wall is not only a security feature, but also a symbol to demonstrate the concepts of segregation, protection, limitation, boundary, territory, and holiness.

Suhrawardi’s Persian Treatises

In Part Three of this dissertation, I specifically focus on Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises. I chose these works not only because they relate to his concept of imagination, but also because they are where he has discussed the main elements of water, wind, soil, and fire, as well as elements such as koushk, courtyard, gateway, corridor, spring water, and basin; the same elements seen in the Persian garden. The book Suhrawardi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises by W. M Thackston consists of a collection of these treatises where the inclusion of Persian text along with the corresponding English translation making it possible to compare the meaning of the two different texts. As Suhrawardi’s works were written in twelfth-century Persian style, finding the right English 72


73 Another garden with the same name exists in Isfahan, which should not be confused with this one.

74 Sussan Babaie, Isfahan and Its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi’ism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran, 201-2.

75 Seyed Amir Mansouri, “Padidar Shinasi-yi Divar dar Bagh-i Irani,” [Phenomenology of the Surrounding Wall in Persian Garden], Manzar Journal 33 (2016): 6-11. This article has been also published in English by the author of the article. The English translation of the title is interpretive thematically and is not literal. Author’s English translation of the title has been used for the citation.

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equivalent, especially for the cited symbols and metaphors, was a challenging task. While Thackston’s work enables me to identify and use the right terminology in my investigation, the advantage of such a piece becomes more significant in situations where one Persian word could have had more than one English equivalent.

In each of Suhrawardi’s treatises, the course of departing from the material world has been narrated in the form of a journey led by a guide. According to Thackston, this journey has taken place in two respects: an external journey out of the material world, and an internal journey into the self and, therefore, outside of this world. As Suhrawardi used different symbols and metaphors for each type of journey, the question is why and how he arrived at his selections.

In addition to Thackston, Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises have been examined and analyzed from a philosophical point of view by other scholars as well. For example, Mehdi Aminrazavi, in the paper titled The Significance of Suhrawardi’s Persian Sufi Writings in the Philosophy of Illumination, examines Suhrawardi’s Persian Sufi essays from the perspective of the epistemological philosophy of illumination. Aminrazavi states that presently there are three contemporary interpretations of the Suhrawardi’s philosophy of illumination, none of which entirely explain whether his Persian Sufi writings are part of his philosophical works. Aminrazavi explains in detail Suhrawardi’s philosophical epistemology and specifically focuses on the ishraqi epistemology. He then provides an argument as to the position of Suhrawardi’s Sufi writings within his philosophical works,

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76 W. M. Thackston, Suhrawardi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises (Costa Mesa California: Mazda publishers, 1999), xvi.
alluding to them as being doctrinal pieces rather than mere literature. And to further assist him with his argument, he finally provides a detailed study of several of Suhrawardi’s Sufi treatises.

Specifically, Aminrazavi provides an analysis of seven of Suhrawardi’s Sufi narratives. He asserts that Suhrawardi’s Persian essays are doctrinal works and not literary writings. Aminrazavi believes that it would lead to the misinterpretation of Suhrawardi’s philosophy of illumination if one were to separate his Persian narratives from his philosophical works. Aminrazavi states that following the Sufi path will amount to the absolute truth allowing one to experience “illumination”. According to Aminrazavi, Hossein Ziai also views Suhrawardi’s Sufi writings as mere literary essays that should not be considered as part of his philosophical works. Aminrazavi refers to Mehdi Ha’iri Yazdi, an Iranian philosopher, who is also of the belief that Suhrawardi’s Sufi narratives are separate from his doctrinal works. According to Aminrazavi, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Henry Corbin on the other hand, believe that Suhrawardi’s philosophical works and his Persian Sufi writings should both be considered when interpreting his *ishraqi* doctrine. Suhrawardi’s philosophy, and more specifically his imaginal world, is the basis of his Persian treatises where his narrations take place in an imaginal environment.

Another contemporary scholar who has written about Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises is Mohammed Rustom, professor of Islamic thought at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. In his article *Story-Telling as Philosophical Pedagogy: The Case of Suhrawardi*, he considers Suhrawardi to be a distinctive philosopher who has produced visionary and symbolic narrations to relay philosophical ideas. According to Rustom, it is common for

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78 Ibid, 283.
philosophers to utilize the story-telling approach to convey philosophical thoughts. However, he believes Suhrawardī’s treatises and narrations are exceptional for several reasons: They are mostly written in Persian; they are created based on the Islamic philosophical and Sufi traditions; and an Angel appears in Suhrawardī’s treatises playing the role of a guide who provides a link between the reader and the text. The Angel carries the reader through the cosmic levels and far into their being.79

For his article, Rustom specifically chose one of Suhrawardī’s most prominent symbolic pieces titled The Reverberation of Gabriel’s Wing (آواز پر حبیل, awaz-i parr-i jibraʾil) for his investigation. Rustom closely examines the symbols employed in this narration and, in particular, analyzes the Gabriel’s wing. He proposes reverberation as the translation for awaz as he believes that this provides a better understanding of the “significance of the symbology” of the Angel’s wing in the context of the cosmology of the narrative.80

In one section of The Reverberation of Gabriel’s Wing, the traveler closes the door to the city and opens the door to the garden. In this case, the garden symbolizes the imaginal world, and the city represents the material world. In Part Three, I argue that the same concept has been used for the design of Persian gardens. The walls of the Persian garden segregate it from the city. The visitor who arrives at the garden will be disconnected from the material world of the city and will enter the imaginal world of the garden.

According to Rustom, Suhrawardī was unable to comprehend the Words of God until he understood the function of Gabriel’s wing. At the same time, this allowed him to become capable of reading from his tablet of being. “The tablet of one’s being is nothing other than

80 W. M. Thackston translated the word awaz to sound instead of reverberation.
a reflection of the primordial Tablet (the celestial archetype for all of the Words of God).”

He realized that there existed a correlation between the Words of God and the tablet of being. This connection led Suhrawardi to recognize that he himself is in fact a reverberation of Gabriel’s wing, which confirms a citation made by Abu Ali Farmadi (1016-1084), an early Sufi figure, at the beginning of Suhrawardi’s *The Reverberation of Gabriel’s Wing*: “of all of the reverberations of Gabriel’s wing, one of them is you.” Suhrawardi understands the Words of God and he himself is a Word of God.

In his Persian treatises, Suhrawardi used symbolic elements to represent the concepts of mysticism and philosophy, which can be understood only by those who are knowledgeable about the spiritual world. In his stories, Suhrawardi chose the imaginal world as a place where these elements are expressed, and in order for me to analyze these symbols and metaphors, I draw my own visuals from his descriptions (see Part Three of this dissertation). The challenge in depicting these visuals is to ensure the imaginal meanings are being kept and that the illustrations are not mere drawings.

In *Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal*, Corbin suggests that presently, we are witnessing a period in which scientific civilization has superiority, even over images. Rather than the image being elevated to the world in which it belongs, the image is lowered to a sensible world. Instead of using symbolic function to achieve inner meaning, the image is brought downward. The question is whether this reduction leads people to a gradual loss of their imaginal sense so that fiction becomes the only product. Also, is it possible to provide a visual description of oriental narrations without resorting

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82 Ibid, 415.
to images that have fragile roots but at the same time their role cannot be defied? Is it accurate to say that certain figures and symbolic representations shown to us have an influence on our mental images where objective reality is gained? When drawing based on Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises, Corbin’s article provided me with the caution that my drawings should not be brought down to the level of fiction and that they did not lose their imaginal meanings.

In this part, I categorize the literature related to the influence of Suhrawardi’s imaginal world on the Persian gardens into three groups. The first pertains to investigations of Suhrawardi’s imaginal world and the spread of his ideas over time. This group includes an explanation of terminology, such as nakuja-abad, the eighth clime, and the world of suspended forms that Suhrawardi made use of to describe his imaginal world. Concepts of the relationship between the imaginal world and cosmology are also discussed. The studies on the spread of Suhrawardi’s thoughts and philosophy over time, and by his followers confirm that Suhrawardi influenced the schools of the Safavid era in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A review of the literature, however, demonstrates that there is a lack of research on Suhrawardi’s imaginal world from the viewpoint of other disciplines, such as art and architecture.

The second group of literature focuses on the connection between Suhrawardi’s imaginal world and the three arts of the Persian garden, Persian literature, and the Persian miniature, as well as on the relationships amongst these three arts.

Not many investigations have been done on the relationship of the Persian garden with

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83 Corbin, “Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal,” 12.
Persian literature and Persian miniatures. I also realize that specifically, not all the elements of the Persian garden have been examined and analyzed by researchers. The published works are limited to the garden’s pattern, geometry, and a few elements such as water, windows, and perspective as a technique of representation.

The third group discusses the investigations of Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises, where Suhrawardi used the elements of the Persian garden in the form of symbols and metaphors to express his philosophical thoughts and beliefs. While the literature of this group explores Suhrawardi’s treatises from the philosophical perspective, they did not use art and architecture in their assessment.

From the lens of an architect, there is a lack of study on the influence of Suhrawardi’s notion of imagination on Persian gardens, and the present thesis will examine the specified objective in the next parts.
1: SUHRAWARDI AND THE IMAGINAL WORLD

“Please, sir,” I said, “from which direction have my lords honored us with their presence?”
The old man who was on the end of the bench answered me, saying, “We are a group of abstracted ones, come from the direction of Nakuja-Abad.”
This meant nothing to me. “In which clime is that?” I asked.
“In the clime to which your index finger cannot point,” he said...

Suhrawardi

In this part, I investigate the imaginal world of Suhrawardi and examine different terminology he used to describe it as well as his other philosophical concepts related to the imaginal world. I then focus on his teachers and followers, especially those from the Safavid era to demonstrate how his philosophical thoughts and ideas have been conveyed over time.

1.1 SUHRAWARDI’S IMAGINAL WORLD

Before discussing Suhrawardi’s imaginal world, it will be helpful to briefly look at the works he authored, which are categorized into four groups. The first group includes the four books of Al-Talwihat, Al-Muqawamat, Al-Mashari wa’l-Mutarahat, and Hikmat al-Ishraq, of which the first three texts are in Peripatetics. These long doctrinal treatises are all in Arabic. The second group includes a series of writings that are partially in Arabic and partially in Persian. The Persian pieces were translated to Arabic by Suhrawardi. This group includes nine short treatises: Alwah-i ‘Imadi, Bustan al-qulub, Hayakil al-nur, Partownama, Yazdan-shinakht, Fi I’tiqad al-hukama’, al-Lamahat, Kalimat al-tasawwuf, and Kashf al-ghita’. These works feature more detailed descriptions of the long doctrinal

treatises. The third group is a set of short distinctive treatises, mostly in Persian. The ten treatises in this group are The Treatise of the Birds, The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing, The Red Intellect, A Day with a Group of Sufis, On the State of Childhood, On the Reality of Love, The Language of the Ants, The Simurgh’s Shri1l Cry, A Tale of Occidental Exile, and The Treatise of Towers. These have been written in the form of stories to guide and instruct the public. They usually begin with a dialogue or mention what has been seen in dreams, and they portray the desire of the soul to reach the truth and God. The fourth group is a separate series, Al-Waridat and Al-Taqdisat, that includes verses and prayers which should be read in sanctification of the angels owning and protecting the objects and affairs.85

The above classification helped organize Suhrawardi’s works, and I was able to identify the main sources for my investigation of his concept of imagination. Specifically, my research focuses on his works such as the Hikmat al-Ishraq or the Philosophy of Illumination, one of the books of the first group, where he discussed this notion, and his Persian treatises from the third group that relate to his imaginal world. Some of his works such as Partownama have also been examined where there are details and descriptions of concepts relevant to his imaginal world.

In the introduction of the Hikmat al-Ishraq, Suhrawardi writes why he wrote the text: “[…] the present work has another method and provides a shorter path to knowledge than their method does. It is more orderly and precise, less painful to study.”86 He continued:

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86 Suhrawardi, The Philosophy of Illumination [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 2.
This book of ours is for the students of both intuitive philosophy and discursive philosophy. There is nothing in it for the discursive philosopher not given to, and not in search of, intuitive philosophy. We only discuss this book and its symbols with the one who has mastered intuitive philosophy or who seeks it.\textsuperscript{87}

\textit{Hikmat al-Ishraq} is where Suhrawardi discusses the imaginal world and provides an explanation as to what this world encompasses. He dismisses other philosophers’ views and argues that there are four worlds rather than three.\textsuperscript{88}

In Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises, also related to his imaginal world, he explains his philosophical concepts through stories and allegories, which were in symbolic and metaphoric format, and which I argue take place in an imaginal world. Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises are examined in this dissertation, and particularly one of his treatises has been analyzed and examined in Part Three.

As mentioned above, Suhrawardi believed that there are four worlds. He states in the \textit{Hikmat al-Ishraq}:

\begin{quote}
I myself have had trustworthy experiences indicating that there are four worlds: the worlds of the dominating lights, of the managing lights, of the barriers, and of the dark and illumined suspended images.\textsuperscript{89}
\end{quote}

Suhrawardi’s first world is the world of the “dominating lights” (\textit{anwar-i qahira}, انور قاهره). This world is the world of the intelligences. The world of the “managing lights” (\textit{anwar-i mudabbira}, انوار مدبیره) is the world of souls. The world of barriers (\textit{barzakhyan}, برزخیان) includes two domains for celestial spheres and sublunar elements. Finally, the fourth world is the imaginal world and it is a world of “the dark and illumined suspended images” (\textit{suwar...
Suhrawardi’s imaginal world is one that lies between the material world and the world of a platonic form of pure light. It is a world of immaterial shapes that acts as a realm between the world of light and the physical world of darkness.91 The imaginal world includes shape as well as dimension, and fills space. However, their concept is not similar to the shape, dimension, and space of the material world.92 Suhrawardi was the first philosopher to develop the concept of the in-between world in detail. The philosophers and mystics after him continued developing this concept.93

Suhrawardi, in his Partownama, explains that there are three realms or worlds of existence: the world of the intellect (aql, عقل), which “consists of noncorporeal essences free from matter and extension in anyway”—this world is also called jabarut (جبورت) or the “great heaven” (malakut-i buzurg, ملكوت بزرگ); the world of matter (jirm, جرم), which is known as the world of mulk (ملك)—this world is divided into two realms of aetherial (athir, اثير) and elemental (unsuriyyat, عنصریت); and the world of souls (nafs, نفس), “free from matter but take matter upon themselves”—it is known as the “lesser heaven” (malakut-i kuchak, ملكوت کوچک).94 The last world is the imaginal world, which lies between the other two and acts as an intermediate realm (see fig. 1.1). Henry Corbin, in his article mundus imaginali

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90 Ibid, 149-50.
94 Suhrawardi, The Book of Radiance [Partownama], 67-8. Henry Corbin also refers to these three worlds in his article mundus imaginali or the Imaginary and the Imaginal. See: Corbin, “Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal,” 5.

Henry Corbin, in his article mundus imaginali or the Imaginary and the Imaginal, used solely the term malakut for the imaginal world. See: Corbin, “Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal,” 5.
or the Imaginary and the Imaginal, explains that these worlds each have their own perception entity being the intellect, the senses, and the imagination, where correspond to mind, body, and soul.\textsuperscript{95}

For the imaginal world, Suhrawardi invented the Persian expressions \textit{nakuja-abad} (ناکجا آباد, land of no-where), \textit{iqlim-i hashtum} (اقلیم هشتم, eighth clime), \textit{alam suwar mu’allaha} (عالم صور معلقه, the world of suspended forms), and \textit{shahristan-i jan} (شهرستان جان, city of the soul). \textit{Nakuja-abad}, consists of two words; \textit{nakuja} which means no-where, and \textit{abad} which means land. In literal terms then, the expression means the land of no-where. The expression, as Corbin confirmed it, cannot be found in any Persian dictionary. Having a glance at the term \textit{utopia} or \textit{ou-topia}, it may seem it is the Greek equivalent of \textit{nakuja-abad}. \textit{Ou-topia} consists of “ou” which means not and “topia” which means place. Therefore, \textit{ou-topia} also means “no-place”. The expression was coined by Thomas More (1478-1535) and it is also not found in any classical Greek dictionary. It was designed to indicate the absence of any localization. As it appears therefore, both \textit{nakuja-abad} and \textit{ou-topia} seem to be equivalent. However, according to Corbin, it would be a mistranslation if the two expressions were thought to convey the same meaning.\textsuperscript{96}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{three_realms.png}
\caption{The three realms explained by Suhrawardi. Diagram by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2023.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{95} Corbin, “Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal,” 5.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, 3.
Nakuja-abad starts at the “convex surface of the ninth Sphere, the Sphere of Spheres, or the Sphere that envelops the cosmos as a whole”. Thus, once one departs from the Supreme Sphere, kuja or “where” no longer has a sensible meaning. Therefore, nakuja-abad is a place out of space, and it is not part of any other place. Leaving the where is not simply a movement from one region of space to another in the same corresponding space. It is not a physical movement. Leaving the where is leaving the natural world towards a spiritual world.

After a review of Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises, I identified that the word nakuja-abad is mentioned in The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing when an old man is asked which direction he comes from, and he responds: “We are a group of abstracted ones, come from the direction of Nakuja-abad.”

Suhrawardi defines nakuja-abad as a location beyond the mountain of qaf (قاف), which is cited in treatises such as The Red Intellect, On the State of Childhood, and The Simurgh’s Shrill Cry. Mount qaf is described as a mountain with summits and valleys, consisting of spheres surrounding our universe that is formed of emerald thus producing a green colour that appears blue. In this mountain “there is neither sun, nor moon, nor stars.” This mountain was once named the Elburz, and it was deemed to be the “mother” of all the mountains and served as a holy place for the mystical pilgrims. The qaf mountain defines a boundary that separates the visible world from the invisible one. For the pilgrims of the

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97 Ibid.
98 Ibid, 3-4.
99 Ibid, 4.
101 Corbin, Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth, 74.
102 Ibid, 73.
103 Asserted by Yaqul al-Hamawi (1179-1229), an Islamic geographer.
104 Ibid, 74.
spirit, they first need to move through the visible world and go far beyond their ordinary senses before they can begin their mystical journey.  

Tabari (839-923), an Iranian historian in the ninth century, describes a mysterious region called hurqalya (هورقليا) that has the two emerald cities of jabarsa (جابرسا) and jabalqa (جابلقا), which are situated next to the mountain of qaf. The two cities have thousands of gates, and in each gate, there are thousands of guards. The cities’ boundaries form a square with each side being twelve thousand parasangs. The occupants of the cities feed on vegetables only and although they are not angels, their faith in God makes them like angels. The two cities are dark, and they get their light from the mountain of qaf. Jabarsa and jabalqa are known to be located to the west and east of the imaginal world, respectively.

According to Suhrawardi, hurqalya, the alternate earth, stands between our sensory earth and the “intelligible universe of the Angels”. While jabarsa and jabalqa relate to the world of matter, hurqalya represents the heavens of our physical world. Therefore, hurqalya contains both the heavens and a sensory earth. “To see things in hurqalya” is likened to witnessing events of the soul, with no association to the realities of the material world.

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105 Ibid. More discussion on the qaf mountain has been provided in Parts Two and Three of this dissertation.
106 Ibid, 73.
108 Parasang is an ancient Iranian distance unit, which is about 3 or 3½ miles.
109 Corbin, Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth, 73.
111 Corbin, Alone with the Alone; Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi (New Jersey: Preston University Press, 1998), xiii.
112 Corbin, Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth, 79.
Suhrawardi refers to jabarsa, jabalqa, and hurqalya in his Hikmat al-Ishraq, and states that they are located in the iqlim-i hashtum or the eighth clime, another term he coined for the imaginal world.113

All of these are illuminations upon the managing light reflected upon the temple (body) and the spirit of the soul. These are the goals of the intermediate. These lights may bear them up, allowing them to walk on water and air. They may ascend to the heavens with their bodies and associate with one of the celestial masters. These are determinations of the eighth clime, in which are Jabulq, Jabars, and wondrous Hurqalya.114

Ancient and medieval philosophers were of the opinion that the material world in a geographical context consists of seven climes and its features can be sensed by one’s sensory organs. However, there is another universe, the eighth clime, which has shapes, colours, and visions that cannot be perceived by one’s ordinary senses. It is only through imagination or imaginative perception that one becomes capable of sensing this universe that is located outside all climes.115 The world beyond our understanding is only perceptible through imaginative consciousness.116

As discussed above, Suhrawardi also identified the imaginal world as the world of “suspended images”. He believed that this concept amounts to the existence of a relationship between the “mode of being” and the imaginal world.117 Not everyone can perceive the elements and features of the imaginal world as their nature and function do not conform to the physical world.118 The imaginal world is located above the sensible world and below the “purely intelligible” world. This enabled mystics to justify dreams

113 Suhrawardi, The Philosophy of Illumination [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 160.
114 Ibid.
115 Corbin, “Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal,” 10-1.
116 Ibid, 11.
117 Ibid, 6.
118 Ibid.
and descriptions from heaven. The world of suspended images consists of an environment that provides for miraculous and spiritual visions.

Suhrwardi believed that suspended forms can be either dark or illuminated. In *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, he distinguishes between what he considers to be the suspended forms and the forms of Plato: “The suspended forms are not the Forms of Plato, for the Forms of Plato are luminous, while some of the suspended forms are dark and others illuminated.”

Suspended forms have no physical existence. They are not attached to any physical entity, and they have their own existence. They are not abstract or completely sensible. They are similar to dreams that although intangible, they can be seen. In his *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, Suhrwardi states, “These suspended images may be renewed and destroyed like the images in the mirror and the imaginative faculty.” Similar to how an image is seen in a mirror, imaginal forms are visible, but there is no physical embodiment.

The concept of suspended images in a mirror is one of the features of Suhrwardi’s theosophy of *ishraq*. The author dedicates a section of *Hikmat al-Ishraq* to the subject of forms in mirrors (*suwar al-marayaa*, صور المرایا) and their relationship to imagination (*takhayul*, تخیل). According to Suhrwardi, forms in mirrors and imaginative forms (*suwar al-khayaliya*, صور الخيالية) are not imprinted in mirrors, the brain, or in a place. Instead, they are suspended. Mirror forms are displayed in the mirror and imaginative forms are

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119 Ibid.
121 Suhrwardi, *The Philosophy of Illumination* [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 149.
122 Ibid, 150.
124 Corbin, “Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal,” 7.
demonstrated in the imaginative faculty.\textsuperscript{125} When a mirror reflects an object, the object’s existence is not dependent on the mirror as the mirror may be broken or removed. The mirror is a place where the object’s image manifests.\textsuperscript{126} Suhrawardi believed that the reason for the appearance of images in mirrors is “luminosity”. He states that “Images occur only with smooth bodies, since the parts of rough bodies have dark pits, with only small areas being free of these pits.”\textsuperscript{127}

The doctrines of religions have employed descriptive means and the power of imagination to establish a connection between the tangible and the intangible.\textsuperscript{128} In the Quran, the imaginal world is mentioned as an in-between world. It states that in addition to heaven and earth, God created what is between these two, which implies the existence of a domain considered to be the soul that lies between spirit and body:\textsuperscript{129} “And We did not create the heaven and earth and that between them in play.”\textsuperscript{130}

The Quran also refers to the two worlds of the seen and unseen. Based on the Quran’s verses, God is the only one who is aware of seen and unseen aspects:\textsuperscript{131} “[He is the] Knower of the seen and the unseen—the All-Great, Most Exalted.”\textsuperscript{132}

The world of the seen is within reach for everybody and there are no promised rewards to the believers of this world, while the world of the unseen is for true believers, and the

\textsuperscript{125} Suhrawardi, \textit{The Philosophy of Illumination} [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 138.
\textsuperscript{126} Corbin, \textit{Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth}, 81.
\textsuperscript{127} Suhrawardi, \textit{The Philosophy of Illumination} [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 154.
\textsuperscript{128} Akkach, \textit{Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam; An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas}, 30.
\textsuperscript{130} The Quran 21:16.
\textsuperscript{131} The Quran 23:92, 13:9, 64:18.
\textsuperscript{132} The Quran 13:9.
faithful ones are assured of precious rewards. The world of the seen is perceived exactly with our senses. On the contrary, the world of the unseen is comprehended with the spiritual or with our imagination. The Quran uses the elements of the seen world to illustrate what true believers can expect from the unseen world.

Suhrawardi has referred to the concept of unseen and hidden things in one section of the *Hikmat al-Ishraq*. According to him, the prophets and saints may learn about the unseen in different ways, such as through written lines, hearing sounds, or seeing beautiful human forms. The unseen things may “descend upon their souls” or be suspended images. Suhrawardi writes, “what is experienced in dreams are self-subsistent images” such as seas, mountains, sound, and scent. As mentioned earlier, imaginal or suspended forms are neither attached to any physical being or place, as they are self-subsistent. If they were not self-subsistent, everyone would be able to see them. In the same section, Suhrawardi writes that in the heavens hearing is not dependent on our ears, and the same applies for seeing and smelling.

Another term Suhrawardi invented for the imaginal world and discusses in his *On the Reality of Love* treatise is the *shahristan-i jan* or the city of the soul, on which more details are provided in Part Three of this dissertation.

Suhrawardi also explains the relationship that exists between his imaginal world and some of his philosophical concepts such as the spiritual journey of the soul, the outer and inner senses, celestial spheres, and the cosmos. Suhrawardi discusses these concepts in his

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133 Akkach, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam; An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas*, 29.
134 Ibid.
Persian treatises in the form of allegories and with the use of symbols and metaphors. These are also discussed in more detail in Part Three of this study.

1.2 Suhrawardi’s Theories through the Centuries

This section discusses Suhrawardi’s ishraqi philosophy, and his teachers and followers as well as where his philosophical thoughts originated from and how they spread during the following centuries.

Suhrawardi’s ishraqi philosophy benefits from the theories and thoughts of Sufism. Sufi’s objective is to provide one unified entity of body, soul, and spirit. This unification occurs in the imaginal world and becomes a mirror displaying a whole. In *The Language of the Ants* treatise, Suhrawardi explains that when Junayd (830–910), a famous Persian mystic, was asked what Sufism is, he responded with the following verse: “He sang to me through the heart, and I sang as he sang, and we were everywhere they were, and they were everywhere we were.”

Suhrawardi was influenced by Sufi al-Ghazali’s *Mishkat al-Anwar*, in which he discusses light and imam. Suhrawardi arrived at his own conclusion on the link between the two. The Peripatetic doctrine of Avicenna is another concept that Suhrawardi criticizes but yet uses in the formation of his ishraqi philosophy. In the late stages of his life, Avicenna focused on the “Oriental Philosophy”, wherein cosmology allows the traveler to go through

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140 Ibid.
the cosmos during their spiritual journey and pass limitations and restrictions in order to become free.\textsuperscript{141}

Platonism, Pythagoreanism, and Hermeticism philosophies are some of the pre-Islamic sources that Suhrawardi employs as the basis of his \textit{ishraqi} concepts.\textsuperscript{142} He references the Greek philosophers Plato, Phytagoras, and Hermes as those who share with him the same beliefs and philosophy about light.\textsuperscript{143} For example, in \textit{Hikmat al-Ishraq}, Suhrawardi refers to Plato and Hermes as philosophers whose works are inherently based on the science of light.\textsuperscript{144}

Suhrawardi was also influenced by the ancient Persians and their knowledge of wisdom. In particular, Suhrawardi employed the symbolism and terminology of Zoroastrianism for his light and darkness concepts. He did not consider himself a follower of Zoroastrianism, but rather one of the Persian sages, who cherished some of its teachings and at the same time believed in the philosophy of the Divine principle.\textsuperscript{145}

While the identities of several of Suhrawardi’s teachers are known, there is no precise information available on the areas they covered. It is believed that Majd al-Din al-Jili was Suhrawardi’s first philosophy and theology teacher.\textsuperscript{146} The second teacher was Fakhr al-Din al-Mardini (d. 1198), who is believed to have been his most influential master in philosophy.\textsuperscript{147} Another philosopher who significantly influenced Suhrawardi’s works,

\textsuperscript{142} Nasr, \textit{Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardi, Ibn ‘Arabi}, 60.
\textsuperscript{143} Ebrahimi Dinani, \textit{Sho’a Andisha va Shuhud dar Falsafa-yi Suhrawardi} [Thinking and Intuition of Suhrawardi’s Philosophy], 17.
\textsuperscript{144} Suhrawardi, \textit{The Philosophy of Illumination} [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 2.
\textsuperscript{145} Nasr, \textit{Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardi, Ibn ‘Arabi}, 60.
\textsuperscript{146} Hossein Ziai, \textit{Knowledge and Illumination} (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 16.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
specifically his “non-Peripatetic” philosophical pieces, was Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi (1162-1231). Suhrawardi and Baghdadi strived to redefine many of Avicenna’s philosophical thoughts in a well-ordered fashion.\textsuperscript{148} Zahir al-Farisi is another master of Suhrawardi, and together they are thought to have examined the works of philosopher Umar Ibn Sahlan al-Sawi (d. 1058).\textsuperscript{149}

Ibn Arabi, another Sufi philosopher, poet, and mystic at around the same time as Suhrawardi, shares similarities in thoughts and mystical theories with him. He also investigated the concept of the imaginal world. Suhrawardi introduced the notion of the imaginal world about half a century before Ibn Arabi.\textsuperscript{150} According to Ibn Arabi, people who do not understand the concept of the imagination, know nothing and they do not have any knowledge.\textsuperscript{151} Similar to Suhrawardi, Ibn Arabi also believed that the imaginal world is a world between the spiritual and material worlds, which are opposite worlds. Their features, such as high and low, light and darkness, invisible and visible, and intangible and tangible, contrast with one another. The imaginal world, however, has the features of both. It is neither spiritual nor material.\textsuperscript{152} In Ibn Arabi’s view, the human soul is linked to the imaginal world, which functions as a realm between the spiritual and material worlds and has the features and characteristics of both.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, 19.
\textsuperscript{150} Paul S. MacDonald, Nature Loves To Hide; An Alternative History of Philosophy (Alternative Books, 2018), 123.
\textsuperscript{151} Chittick, Imaginal Worlds: Ibn Arabi and the Problem of Religious, 12.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, 71.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
The soul is an in-between world beyond which is the spirit, and underneath which is the body. This in-between world is not earth or heaven, material or immaterial, tangible or intangible. It is the imaginal world. Ibn Arabi believed that in the world of microcosm, the relationship between the human body and spirit is similar to the relationship between earth and heaven.

Imagination allows the recognition of God using a combination of the spiritual and material worlds. It can be used as a means to describe invisible realities with traits that relate to the material world. It is a tool for a spirit to express itself. The imaginal world enables spirits to manifest themselves, while bodies of the material world are elevated to the spiritual.

Ibn Arabi describes his imaginal visions as incidents that mostly appeared in dreams. He explains that these incidents arose during either sleep or in the state of wakefulness. It is, however, vague as to what state he was doing during such incidents. Ibn Arabi uses his imaginal perception to employ various poetic descriptions.

It is worthwhile to provide a brief discussion of Ibn Arabi’s views on topics such as celestial spheres and the human senses. He makes a link between the soul’s ascent (mi’raj) and the celestial spheres. He associates each celestial sphere with a prophet. For instance, the sphere of Venus, the third of the celestial spheres, is the place where prophet Joseph

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155 Ibid.
156 Chittick, Imaginal Worlds: Ibn Arabi and the Problem of Religious, 73.
157 Ibid, 71.
158 Ibid, 83.
159 Ibid, 84.
160 Ibid, 90.
161 Ibid, 67.
settles. In this same sphere, poets use the divine presence for their poetic inspiration and the traveler of the spiritual journey employs their knowledge to understand the imaginal world.\textsuperscript{162} According to Ibn Arabi, Paradise is located between the sphere of the fixed stars and the starless sphere. In his view, while our world is elemental, Paradise is natural.\textsuperscript{163} Ibn Arabi writes that just as a mirror shows an image of a person who stands in front of it, the cosmos is a reflection of God.\textsuperscript{164}

With regards to the five senses that perceive the imaginal world, Ibn Arabi, similar to Suhrawardi, considers them to be different from those in the material world. In Ibn Arabi’s opinion, the eye of the material world sees objects as if the person is awake. He also believed that the eye of the imaginal world sees as if the person is asleep and dreaming. The “unveiler” is the person who while awake sees what a dreamer observes in their sleep.\textsuperscript{165} As Ibn Arabi states, there are two different eyes. One is the eye of imagination, and the other is the sensory eye. He believes that distinguishing between these two eyes is difficult, and even true believers may not be able to easily achieve it.\textsuperscript{166} In comparison, Suhrawardi believes in the existence of the outer and inner eyes.\textsuperscript{167} Also, in one of his Persian treatises, \textit{A Day with a Group of Sufis}, he classifies the eye into three types for “those who look at the heavens and stars”; the physical eye (that of the common people), the eye of the heavens (that of the astrologers), and the eye of logic (that of the people of reality).\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, 80.  
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid, 112.  
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid, 70.  
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid, 84.  
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{167} Suhrawardi’s belief in outer and inner senses has been discussed in Part Three of this dissertation.  
The followers of Suhrawardi and his *ishraqi* school are known as *ishraqiyun* (اشرافيون), and they continue to live in Iran. The first member of this group was Shams al-Din al-Shahrazuri (d. between 1288 and 1304), who authored commentaries on two of Suhrawardi’s works; *Al-Talwijat* and *Hikmat al-Ishraq*. In particular, he was the first to provide a commentary on *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, where many other followers and philosophers refer to in their works.

Qutb al-Din Shirazi (1236-1311) wrote the second major commentary on Suhrawardi’s *Hikmat al-Ishraq* and it was included in the first printed version of the *Hikmat al-Ishraq*. and as a result, all readers of this book have also come across Shirazi’s comments on this piece by Suhrawardi.

The imaginal world was not precisely established by Suhrawardi. In fact, it was a concept that his followers, such as Qutb al-Din Shirazi, developed over time. According to Shirazi, the imaginal world is an intermediate realm situated between the world of bodies and the world of souls. While the imaginal world could at times be similar to our world, it could also be identical to the world of souls.

By the fourteenth century, the philosophy of *ishraq* had become a part of the philosophical knowledge of Persia, and thereafter, it played an important role in Islamic countries where the influence of the Persian culture was significant.

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169 Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 218.
171 Ibid, 3.
173 Ibid.
Starting in the thirteenth and up until the sixteenth century in Persia, there were many *ishraqi* philosophers, who were influenced by Suhrawardi’s school of thought, which peaked after the emergence of thinkers such as Mir Damad (1561-1631/32) and Mulla Sadra during the Safavid era.\(^{175}\) Moreover, during this period, the followers of the Ibn Arabi’s school of thought, as well as the Islamic-Shiite philosophers, were drawn to Suhrawardi’s works.\(^{176}\)

All the philosophers of the Safavid era were either Sufis or mystics.\(^{177}\) The era was a period of many mystical and philosophical movements, which came together and resulted in many innovative concepts and knowledge.\(^ {178}\) Moreover, art and architecture flourished in Iran during this period. Safavid poets, artists, and architects were also philosophers and mystics whose works were informed by the philosophical thoughts they encountered at the Safavid schools. In particular, the Safavid kings Shah Tahmasp (1514-1576) and Shah Abbas I (1571-1629), encouraged the creation of artworks such as miniatures, carpets, and architecture as well as gardens. The interest in the artworks was in such way that according to Michele Membrê (1509-1594), an Italian merchant, Shah Tahmasp for example, had dedicated a separate space for the Safavid artists and painters within the royal territory.\(^ {179}\)

\(^{175}\) Ibid, 4.
\(^{176}\) Ibid.
\(^ {178}\) Ibid, 3.
In the middle of the sixteenth century, the Isfahan School,\(^{180}\) a well-known Islamic philosophy faculty which is associated with a major revival of the *ishraqi* philosophy, was first established by Mir Damad in the city of Qazwin, Persia’s capital at the time. Shah Abbas I then changed the capital to Isfahan, and Isfahan became the main centre of this school until the eighteenth century.\(^{181}\) The history of the Isfahan School goes back two centuries prior to the Safavid dynasty, and its basis is found in the Shiraz School.\(^{182}\)

While one of Mir Damad’s titles is the “Third Teacher,”\(^{183}\) he chose the pen name *Ishraq* to prove his dedication to Suhrawardi and his *ishraqi* school. He is also believed to be an expert in Avicennan Shiite philosophy.\(^{184}\) Both during his lifetime and after, Mir Damad had the admiration of many experts across a range of subjects. He was a highly respected figure by both Shah Abbas I and Shah Safi I (1611-1642)\(^{185}\) and he played an important role in the courts of these kings.\(^{186}\) Mir Damad’s works, similar to Suhrawardi’s, are in both Arabic and Persian. They comprise complex language and they are not easy to understand.\(^{187}\) As a dedicated follower of Suhrawardi’s philosophy and thoughts, Mir Damad not only belongs to the *ishraqi* school, but his philosophical views on the subject of “time” exceeded the norms “in a radical and definitive fashion”.\(^{188}\)

Shaykh Baha’ al-Din Amili (1547-1621), another figure of the Isfahan School who is known as Shaykh Baha’i, was a philosopher, theologian, architect, mathematician,

\(^{180}\) The term was coined by Henry Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

\(^{181}\) Ibid, 4.

\(^{182}\) Ibid, 5.

\(^{183}\) The “First Teacher” is Aristotle, and the “Second Teacher” is al-Farabi.


\(^{185}\) The grandson of Shah Abbas I, who became the king of Persia after him.

\(^{186}\) Ibid, 230.

\(^{187}\) Ibid.

\(^{188}\) Ibid, 243.
alchemist, poet, and Sufi. He had an influence on philosophy, as well as on other fields such as architecture, jurisprudence, and Arabic literature. He wrote ninety works on Islamic sciences. He was one of the masters of Mulla Sadra and the teacher of other prominent figures, such as Sayyed Ahmad Alavi (d. between 1644-1650), Mulla Muhsin Fyd Kashani (1598-1680), and Mulla Muhammad Taqi Majlisi (1627-1699), of the ishraqi tradition. Although there is no direct proof showing that Shaykh Baha’i was a follower of Suhrawardi, being one of the main figures of the Isfahan School along with Mir Damad, and also being the teacher of Mulla Sadra, two followers of Suhrawardi, show that he was exposed to Suhrawardi’s philosophy and thoughts. His father was the Shaykh al-Islam of Mashhad and Herat during the rule of Shah Tahmasp. Shaykh Baha’i lived in Herat for fourteen years and after the death of his father, became the Shaykh al-Islam of Herat. He was also the Shaykh al-Islam of Isfahan for a short period of time during the rule of Shah Abbas I. Kashkul is one of Shaykh Baha’i’s important works and includes his favourite poems and writings and reveals his way of thinking. In this work, he refers to the imagination and explains that the imaginative faculty is not enough to see a dream. It needs other faculties such as memory and reason. Shaykh Baha’i is noted for his architectural works, which include the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, located in the centre of Isfahan, and the

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190 Mehdi Amin Razavi, *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), 126.
191 Shaykh al-Islam was a title and position of the clergy in that period. He had to attempt against the cruelty and teach the rules of Islam to the people.
195 Built between 1598 and 1629.
Imam Mosque,\textsuperscript{196} located in the south side of this square. He is also believed to have been the architect of the Fin garden in Kashan,\textsuperscript{197} one of the case studies for this research.

Sadra al-Shirazi (1572-1640), known as Mulla Sadra, also followed Suhrawardi’s philosophy. He is one of the main figures of the Isfahan School,\textsuperscript{198} and a student of Mir Damad. As with Suhrawardi, Mulla Sadra also believed that there is an immaterial world, but they differed on what constituted imaginal forms. Mulla Sadra believed imaginal forms are in the soul, and they come from the soul. He views the soul as a “super-sensible” entity that consists of all the sensible perceptions merged into one.\textsuperscript{199} Despite having different views on certain topics, Mulla Sadra still used Suhrawardi’s teachings and laid out his view of the universe.\textsuperscript{200} In present day Iran, it can be said with certainty that every ishraqi philosopher has been influenced by the teachings of the school of Mulla Sadra.\textsuperscript{201}

Turning now to contemporary scholars, Henry Corbin, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Gholamhossein Ebrahim Dinani have produced several works on Suhrawardi’s teachings, including his concept of imagination. They have played a significant role in introducing Suhrawardi’s philosophy and his imaginal world to the East and West. Details about some of their works are provided in the Literature Review part of this dissertation.

As mentioned in this part, Suhrawardi believes that there are four worlds rather than three. He calls the fourth world \textit{alam al-mithal} (عالم المثال) or the imaginal world; a world that is

\textsuperscript{196} Built between 1611 and 1629.
\textsuperscript{198} Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The Place of the School of Isfahan in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism,” 13.
\textsuperscript{199} Marcotte, “Suhrawardi’s Realm of the Imaginal,” 71.
\textsuperscript{200} Nasr, “The Spread of the Illuminationist School of Suhrawardi,” 5.
\textsuperscript{201} Corbin, \textit{History of Islamic Philosophy}, 220.
located between the material and immaterial worlds, between light and darkness. Suhrawardi delicately invented the terms *nakuja-abad, iqlim-i hashtum, alam al-suwar mu’allaga*, and *shahristan-i jan* to describe his imaginal world. Using *nakuja-abad*, Suhrawardi explains that the imaginal world is not only independent of the physical place but is also a place outside all places. Suhrawardi writes that the imaginal world is a realm in addition to the seven climes that previous ancient and medieval philosophers believed in, and he call this domain *iqlim-i hashtum* or the eighth clime. He also refers to the imaginal world as the world of *alam al-suwar mu’allaga*, as these forms do not depend on any physical beings and are suspended in the world of imagination. Lastly, as the imaginal world is the world of the soul, it is not surprising that Suhrawardi called this world *shahristan-i jan* or the “city of the soul”.

While there were sources and teachers that inspired Suhrawardi and helped him arrive at his *ishraqi* philosophy, he also had his own writings and followers. The goal of his works was to show his philosophical thinking, teach his students, and help readers reach the Light of Lights, or the Divine Light. The mystics and *ishraqi* students had to worship and study in order to ascend the hierarchy of the spiritual levels and reach the upper world. One of the spiritual levels is the imaginal world; a world that is located between the material world and the world of pure light. By passing the imaginal world, one would reach the upper world or the world of pure light and the absolute God. This leads to the questions: what else relates to the imaginal world of Suhrawardi that mystics should be aware of so that they can pass through the different spiritual levels and continue their journey? Are Suhrawardi’s works mere philosophical thoughts, or do they include hidden concepts that go beyond philosophy and are yet to be unveiled?
Part Two of this study discusses the relationship between the elements of the Persian garden and Suhrawardi’s imaginal world. These elements will be examined in the Persian arts of literature, miniatures, and gardens.
2: IMAGINATION AND THE PERSIAN ARTS; LITERATURE, MINIATURES, AND THE GARDEN

Then we went to the eighth mountain. It was so high its top reached the sky. As we approached we could hear the songs of birds, and so melodious they were that we slowed our flight and descended. We saw all sorts of good things: we saw forms so delightful that one could not take one’s eye from them. We came down. They were so kind and hospitable to us that it would be impossible for any creature to describe.

When the governor of that realm made us at home and we opened up to him and made him aware of our suffering and told him all that had befallen us, he was greatly pained and showed that he sympathized heartily with us. Then he said, “There is a city atop this mountain where the king dwells. He will unburden anyone who has suffered injustice if he will but go to him and place his confidence in him. Whatever I may say of him would fall sort of what he is.”

We were relieved by these words and, following his directions, set out for the royal palace. We traveled until we alighted in the city at the king’s court. Before our arrival, however, the look-out had informed the king, and an edict had been issued to escort the newcomers into the king’s presence, and hence we were taken. We saw a pavilion and courtyard so vast we could not comprehend it visually. As we passed through, a curtain was raised and another courtyard came into view, so much more beautiful and spacious that the first paled into insignificance by comparison. Then we came to a chamber and, as we set foot inside, the resplendence of the king could be seen from afar. In that brilliance our eyes were dazzled, our heads spun, and we lost consciousness. [The king] graciously had us revived and set us at ease to speak. We told him of our trials and tribulations and related our story. We requested him to remove the remains of the fetters from our legs so that we might serve at his court, but he replied, “Only he who put them on you can remove the fetters from your legs. I will send a messenger with you to compel them to remove your bonds.”

Suhrawardi202

The investigation of the relationship between the concept of imagination and Persian gardens raises the question of whether the latter is an independent art form, or it is linked to other arts for example, literature and miniatures. As mentioned earlier, the two arts of literature and miniatures have been selected to support the concepts related to the Persian

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garden. This part provides an overview of how the Persian garden, literature, and miniatures relate to one another, and how they are connected to the imaginal world. It consists of three sections: The first section discusses the relationship amongst the Persian arts of literature, miniatures, and gardens, and the notion of imagination with respect to each one of these arts; in the second section, I chose one specific example from each of the above-mentioned arts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and dissect them; finally, the last section provides a detailed analysis of the link between these three arts and the elements of the Persian garden and examines how each element of the garden relates to Suhrawardi’s imaginal world.

2.1 Persian Arts; Literature, Miniatures, and Gardens

The history of the Persian miniature goes back to the seventh century when the first miniatures were illustrated from the books, and it took some time for the Persian miniature to find its own place as an independent entity. Around the tenth century, the link between miniature and literature started flourishing with the creation of illustrations that were based on the Shahnama, an epic poem by Firdowsi (935-1020 or 1026). Subsequently, miniatures were created based on the content of poems, some of which are Khamsa by Nizami (1141-1209), Bustan and Gulistan by Sa’di (1210-1291 or 1292), Divan by Hafez (1315-1390), and Haft Awrang by Jami.

The philosophy of imagination is a fundamental element of Persian literature. Dominant Persian poets, such as Rumi (1207-1273) and Jami, were philosophers and Sufi mystics

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204 Jalal al-Din Mohammad Balkhi, also known as Mawlana. For more information, see: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Sacred Art in Persian Culture,” in Islamic Art and Spirituality (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 114-133.
and they used poetry to express their religious beliefs. Poets’ descriptions of nature, objects, and humans are found in the works of the painter. In addition, the painter also attempts to find and apply their own visual equivalent of such metaphoric language used in poems.\textsuperscript{205}

Similar to Persian poets, Persian miniaturists were also either Sufi mystics or they became one after comprehending wisdom and the mystic meanings of the Persian literature.\textsuperscript{206} The miniaturists were also calligraphers. The unity between poem and miniature enhanced harmony and balance of the two arts, and led to the creation of a special, magical, and beautiful imaginal world.

The use of different elements of nature, such as the garden, flower, tree, the four elements of water, fire, earth, and air, and their related manifestations such as seas, mountains, and winds are considered to be the most important features of Persian literature.\textsuperscript{207} The widespread use of nature in Persian poetry is not a coincidence but rather is rooted in Persian culture. Persian poets with the inspiration of the natural elements of the Persian garden tried to express mystical meanings in their works, and using symbols and metaphors, the poets portrayed the garden as a world of imagination.

Persian literature contains the description of the garden and its features and also symbolizes a perfect garden. While the actual Persian garden cannot be separated from its image in Persian literature, the garden’s symbolism goes beyond the physical space, and portrays a perfect garden that also includes humans. For instance, the word \textit{bagh} (گاه, garden)

sometimes refers to the beloved.\textsuperscript{208} As the image of the garden in poetry evolved into symbolism, so did earthly notions transform into immaterial, spiritual, and mystical concepts.\textsuperscript{209} In Islam, the Islamic gardens are considered to be a reflection of God.\textsuperscript{210} The Islamic poets benefited from the elements of these gardens and expressed their affection for their beloved.\textsuperscript{211} Similarly, Persian poets described real gardens on the basis of the celestial archetype described in the Quran, and they added their own visual experience of the gardens for which there is no detailed description in the Quran.\textsuperscript{212}

In their works, Persian poets have emphasized two significant aspects of the earthly gardens: the garden’s physical appearance and the relationship between the garden and human. The physical characteristics of the garden become the subject in the poem and the garden compels poets to practice their descriptive skills and examine their appreciative attitude. The garden was built to be described and praised, and the creator of it was also to be admired.\textsuperscript{213}

The earthly garden merges man and nature, as seen in how they both follow the same life cycle. Man observes their own life cycle in the changes of the nature in the earthly garden through the year. It is the order of natural cycles that adjusts the irregularity of chaotic daily life.\textsuperscript{214}

\textsuperscript{208} Mohammadzadeh Kive, “The Other Space of Persian Garden,” 86.
\textsuperscript{210} In this research, “Persian garden” is used to refer to the gardens of Persia in both pre and post-Islamic eras. On the other hand, “Islamic garden” is only employed in reference to Islamic contexts.
\textsuperscript{212} Hanaway, “Paradise on Earth: The Terrestrial Garden in Persian Literature,” 50.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid, 44.
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid, 62.
The imaginal world exists in the Persian garden. The main purpose in designing the Persian garden was to create an imaginal space, revealing heaven, leading to the creation of a relationship between humans and the imaginal world. The Persian garden, such as the Shahzadeh garden in Kerman, located in the middle of the desert, presents an imaginal world and portrays a comprehensive view of the ideal and eternal garden of Paradise. (see fig. 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Shahzadeh garden from nineteenth century, Mahan, Kerman, Iran. Source: Mehdi Khansari, M. R. Moghtader, and Manouch Yavari, The Persian Garden: Echoes of Paradise (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2004), 16. Image credit: © Mage Publisher (George Gerster), used with permission. Copyright owner’s permission required for re-use.
The gardens described by poets, were symbols of the garden of Paradise, and not merely green earthy gardens. The English word “Paradise” (firdows [فردوس] in Arabic and pards [پردیس] in Farsi) originates from the Avestan word pairidaeza, which was the earthly reflection of the celestial garden of Paradise. Garden and Paradise are amongst the fundamental elements of imagination and thought in Persian culture and manifest not only in poetry, but also in other Persian arts. Persian paintings and miniatures always contain images of Paradise and gardens and reflect the natural elements in the imaginal world.

The imaginal forms of Persian miniatures, the harmonious colours of Persian carpets, and the integration of Persian poetry and music are mostly realized in the earthly gardens of Paradise, or, in other words, Persian gardens. In the heavenly Persian garden, its mirror-like water adds to its imaginal aspects. The colourful flowers, the calm sound of fountains and the small melodious waterfalls create a symphony; a symphony of nature. A great example is the Shahzadeh garden in Mahan, Kerman. In the ivan of the koushk, the visitor sees the beauty and reflection of the mirror mosaics (ayeneh-kari, آینه کاری) located on the ceiling, as well as the beauty of the howz and its four water channels. Each element of the earthly gardens resembles Paradise; the streams represent the river of kawthar, the gardener signifies the Ridwan (رضوان), and the plane tree or chinar (چنار) symbolizes the Tuba tree. This comparison of the earthly gardens and Paradise has been written about

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217 A heavenly fountain mentioned in the Quran.
218 In Islam, Ridwan is an angel, who protects the gates of heaven.
219 Tuba tree is a heavenly tree mentioned in the Quran. According to Suhravardi, Tuba is a big tree located at the qaf mountain.
extensively by Persian poets.220

For the purposes of this investigation, I believe it is helpful to discuss the notion of Paradise and its relationship with the Persian garden. The creation of a Paradise-like space is the primary motivation for Iranians designing a Persian garden; a space that is filled with happiness and vitality as it contains flowers, plants, trees, grass, and water. In the mystical and classical Persian literature, the garden has a heavenly meaning, and it is a pleasurable place for human beings. The garden is an eternal space for contemplation and discovery.

In the Quran, Paradise is al-janna (الجنة) or “the Garden”. Studying Islamic gardens, along with the description of “the Garden” in Quran, confirms that the former were built and designed based on “the Garden”, and there are numerous similarities between the two.221 The Quran refers to Paradise or al-janna several times and describes it as a garden with fruitful and shady trees, protecting koushks, fountains, and streams of water. This garden is promised to the true believers of God.222

Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey, in which they will have from all [kinds of] fruits and forgiveness from their Lord, like [that of] those who abide eternally in the Fire and are given to drink scalding water that will sever their intestines?223

Although the Quran does not provide a detailed description of the elements of the garden of Paradise, it promises of the pleasures awaiting true believers.224 The shade from the

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221 Mohammadzadeh Kive, “The Other Space of Persian Garden,” 86.
223 The Quran 47:15.
224 Hanaway, “Paradise on Earth: The Terrestrial Garden in Persian Literature,” 44.
branches of the trees, the waters from the fountains, the endless fruits, and the protective koushks are some features of the garden of Paradise mentioned in the Quran. Only true believers who constantly think of God and who are dedicated to al-tariqa (الطريقة) or the spiritual path, are able to reach Paradise. Islamic garden art, similar to other sacred arts, helps visitors in this process and journey.  

In the Quran, Paradise is sometimes referred to as the garden of Eden described as the gardens “beneath which rivers flow”, and “pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence.” Eden is also believed to be the garden where Adam lived after he was created by God. While some scholars differentiate between these two gardens, some critics describe Eden as part of the ultimate Paradise.

According to the Quran, “Peace” is the only word spoken in the garden of Paradise. Also, the earthly gardens of Paradise are meant to offer beautiful and peaceful environments where visitors can disconnect from the stress of the world and experience peace. Persian gardens, as an enclosed and defined space, includes the cosmos and Paradise. Order and harmony are key elements of Persian gardens and can be appreciated with the help of geometry, colour, numbers, and materials. The function of these two elements supports a peaceful space within Persian gardens.

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226 The Quran 98:8: “Their reward with Allah will be gardens of perpetual residence beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them and they with Him. That is for whoever has feared his Lord.”
227 The Quran 9:72: “Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allah is greater. It is that which is the great attainment.”
The gardens of Paradise inspired rulers and kings to create similar gardens.\textsuperscript{231} The Garden of Iram (Iram of the Pillars)\textsuperscript{232} is an example of a “perfect” garden on earth. It is recognized as an earthly garden competing with the garden of Paradise, and it is the basis for the design of real gardens on earth.\textsuperscript{233} This garden, also mentioned in the Quran, is known as having been built by Shaddad, the King of South Arabia. The ancient books, which discussed the gardens of Paradise and their pavilions, inspired Shaddad to try to build something similar. As he started the construction, God sent a messenger to warn him not to compete or confront the absolute power. Shaddad, however, ignored the advice and proceeded. Upon the completion of Iram, Shaddad appeared at the gate of the garden in order to go inside, but before he could, the garden vanished by the order of God. The garden was not destroyed but became hidden.\textsuperscript{234}

As mentioned above, the word Paradise originates from the old Persian word \textit{pairidaeza}, whose main roots are \textit{pairi} and \textit{daeza}, meaning “around” and “wall”, respectively.\textsuperscript{235} It means walled-around, or walled garden, which emphasizes the importance of walls in the Persian garden—the garden is always behind walls that protect it against the harsh winds and winters. In the space within the walls, there are flowers, fruits, the shade of trees, and the flow of water in the streams and fountains. On the outside, however, is the desert and the realities of life.\textsuperscript{236}

The Quran also mentions that the garden has opened gates with doorkeepers:

\textsuperscript{231} Schimmel, “The Celestial Garden in Islam,” 17.
\textsuperscript{232} 2500-2250 BCE
\textsuperscript{233} Hanaway, “Paradise on Earth: The Terrestrial Garden in Persian Literature,” 45.
\textsuperscript{234} Mohammadzadeh Kive, “The Other Space of Persian Garden,” 89.
\textsuperscript{236} Hanaway, “Paradise on Earth: The Terrestrial Garden in Persian Literature,” 63.
When they will come to Paradise its doors will be opened for them and the angels appointed to it will say to them: Peace be on you from every difficulty and from everything you dislike. Your hearts and your actions were pure, so enter Paradise to remain there forever. 237

The believers will say when they enter Paradise: Praise be to Allah who was true to the promise that He made to us on the tongues of His messengers. He had promised to enter us into Paradise… 238

The doorkeeper, *ridwan*, assesses those who would like to enter the garden, and as a result, no one is able to enter the garden without God’s permission.

The main structure of the Persian garden is based on the Paradise quadripartite divisions where a *koushk* is located at the intersection of the main two axes. Due to its quartered concept, the order is called *chahar-bagh* (چهار باغ) or four gardens. The history of the quadripartite division goes back to the pre-Islamic period, when Persians believed that the earth is divided into four sections. The quadripartite order was first seen in the garden of Pasargadae of the Achaemenid Empire in the sixth century BCE. During the Sassanid era (224-642), this order was used in hunting gardens with a *koushk* at the centre of the two main axes 239 after which the order was then passed on to the gardens of Samarkand in the Timurid era (1370-1506). 240 Since there are no Timurid gardens left, the only information available about them is in existing miniatures and travel diaries and archeological studies. 241 The quartered pattern is noticeable in these gardens confirming they are inspired by the original pattern of Persian gardens. 242 Moreover, the gardens of the Timurid dynasty

237 The Quran 39:73.
238 The Quran 39:74.
significantly influenced the design of gardens in subsequent periods.\textsuperscript{243} After Islam, the concepts of four heavenly rivers and the image of heaven were explained in the Quran. As a result, the quadripartite of the Persian garden became more established.\textsuperscript{244}

The reference to the gardens of Paradise and their quartered pattern is found in the \textit{sura ar-Rahman}\textsuperscript{245} of the Quran. Al-Qashani (d. 1335), a Sufi scholar of the fourteenth century, is well-known for two of his works; the Quranic and the influential commentaries on one of Ibn Arabi’s books.\textsuperscript{246} In his Quranic commentary, al-Qashani explained that the four gardens are split into two pairs of a higher part and a lower one. The lower ones are the gardens of the Soul and the Heart, and they are reserved for the “Righteous”, and the higher ones are the gardens of the Spirit and the Essence, which are for the “Foremost”. Each garden has its own fountain and fruit. The olive is the fruit in the garden of the Soul and dates are the fruit of the Heart. Fig is the fruit of the Spirit, and Pomegranate is the fruit of the garden of Essence (see fig. 2.2).\textsuperscript{247}

One of the main elements of Islamic gardens is the quartered layout with the square pattern of water channels and pathways. The two principal axes divide the garden into four main sections following the same pattern—the square grid inside each section subdivides their respective squares into smaller squares. The main \textit{koushk}, or the main \textit{howz} of the garden is located at the intersection of the two main axes. All other smaller \textit{howzes} are located at

\textsuperscript{243} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{245} The Quran 55.
\textsuperscript{247} Clark, “Underneath Which Rivers Flow,” 83.
the sub intersections. Therefore, all the elements of the Persian garden follow the same pattern and the ideal order of the whole garden.248

Number four is considered a symbolic number for various reasons. It represents the four main directions, the four seasons, and the four main elements—water, air, fire, and earth.249 These ancient beliefs were also restated in Islam. In Suhrarwádi’s Persian treatises, he refers to the four main elements as “four different things” or four fetters, which do not let the human soul be released from the material world.250 The fetters can only be detached by those who placed them there originally.251 After analyzing Suhrarwádi’s Persian treatises, I identified that the number four is mentioned in some of his treatises including The Sound of Gabriel’s Wings, where the narrator says, “my mill consists of four levels”.252 In this context, four represents the four main elements of nature. Also, in The Red Intellect treatise, the storyteller explains that he was created in the form of a falcon with his eyes stitched, and “four different bonds” (fetters) were put on him and ten wardens watched over him.253

![Figure 2.2: Al-Qashani’s explanation of the four gardens of Paradise. Diagram by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2019.](image)

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250 Thackston, Suhrarwádi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises, xx.
251 Ibid, xxi.
Moreover, the number four represents the four humours (bile, black bile, blood, and phlegm) and four temperaments (hot, cold, dry, and wet) proposed by Galen (129-216).\(^\text{254}\) Galen, a Roman-Greek scientist and philosopher, followed by Avicenna,\(^\text{255}\) who also had an impact on Suhrawardi’s thoughts.

Number four is also a symbol of a cube, a great example of which is the Kaaba (کعبه). In Arabic, Kaaba means cube, and for Muslims, the Kaaba is the centre of the world. The Prophet of Islam describes four rivers of water, milk, honey, and wine, being observed in his *mi’raj* or ascent to the heavens. These four rivers have been described in the Quran.\(^\text{256}\) In the Islamic gardens also, the four streams, which flow from the central pool, represent the four heavenly rivers.

Although the quartered pattern of Paradise is referenced in the Quran, Ibn Arabi believed that Paradise includes eight gardens in which everyone will be rewarded based on their actions. The concept of eight gardens may originate from the two gardens mentioned in the Quran, each of which has two fountains, two types of fruit and consists of four sections.\(^\text{257}\)

\begin{verbatim}
But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens
So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
Having [spreading] branches.
So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
In both of them are two springs, flowing.
So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
In both of them are of every fruit, two kinds.
So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
\end{verbatim}


[They are] reclining on beds whose linings are of silk brocade, and the fruit of the two gardens is hanging low.\textsuperscript{258}

Eight gardens may also represent the ultimate perfection as it exceeds the number of seven spheres.\textsuperscript{259} As such, eight is another symbolic number in the Persian arts and garden. For instance, the term \textit{hasht bihisht} or eight heavens is not only in poetry, but it has also been used for the name of the Persian gardens (Hasht-Bihisht garden in Isfahan). In some of the Mughal gardens, the octagonal \textit{koushks} were built according to the Quran’s descriptions of the eight gardens and the sacred number eight.\textsuperscript{260}

The number eight plays an important role in Suhrawardi’s philosophy. For example, he proposes the eighth clime to be the imaginal world, and he also uses the number eight in \textit{The Birds} in which he describes eight mountains where the eighth setting has a \textit{kou}shk and a huge courtyard. The narrator describes passing through the courtyard, where another courtyard comes in sight, “so much more beautiful and specious” than the first one, and it has a chamber where the king is sitting.\textsuperscript{261}

Besides literature, Persian gardens have also had a significant impact on the composition of Persian miniatures. Between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries and during the rule of the Timurids and Safavids, Persian artists and painters portrayed the elements of the Persian garden in miniatures. They depict elements such as water streams, \textit{howzes}, animals, different types of trees and plants, as well as people engaged in activities such as hunting, playing games, dining, gardening, or playing music.\textsuperscript{262}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{258} The Quran 55:46-54.
\textsuperscript{259} The seven spheres are: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, and Moon.
\textsuperscript{262} German Bazin, \textit{Paradeisos: The Art of the Garden} (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1990), 40.
\end{flushleft}
Gardens in the Safavid miniatures link the material and spiritual natures—the tangible and intangibles—and this is a characteristic of the world of imagination. Safavid miniatures, with the help of all its elements and details, including the elements of the Persian garden, depicts an imaginal world which allows human being to go beyond the limitations of this earthly world.

The Persian miniaturists were able to establish a connection between the material and imaginal worlds. They transformed the two-dimensional surface of a miniature to an image that complies with the concept of imagination and raises the observer from a material existence to a spiritual world. Therefore, the observer sees a world beyond the material world that has its own time, place, colours, and forms. This eternal and magical world allows the observer to discover and understand the artist’s insight on the spirituality of the imaginal world.

The Persian miniaturists used their spiritual perception and through their proper placement of elements, they created beautiful and imaginal artworks. The technique and layered perspective used in Persian miniatures helped Persian artists create an imaginal world that is not limited to the material world and allows the painter to see things from different perspectives simultaneously. Time does not exist in the miniature and the piece is drawn in uniform light. Since it is not limited to the material, time, or place, the painter is able to visualize the miniature intuitively.

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266 Nasr, “The World of Imagination and the Concept of Space in the Persian Miniature,” 133.
Space in the Persian miniature is similar to space in the world of imagination, and it has its own time and movement. The forms and colours in Persian miniatures are an exact reflection of those of the world of imagination. In particular, the colours gold and lapis used in Persian miniatures are not determined based on the choice of the artist. They are based on an “objective reality” that originates in the movement between the two-dimensional and three-dimensional plane where it is never absolutely three-dimensional. At the complete three-dimensional, the miniature would not be seen as an illustration of malakut (the intermediate world) and it would simply be a mirror image of mulk (the physical world). The movement of the miniature between the two planes leads to the creation of joy; a feature of the Persian spirit, which is itself a reflection of Paradise.268

Persian artists used their creativity and skills to create a Paradise-like garden by using symbolic elements such as mountains, clouds, water, trees, shrubs, cypress and plane trees, and colourful flowers and blossoms. The spring in Paradise is eternal, and the garden of Paradise is constantly flourishing. To resemble the concept of Paradise, Persian miniaturists always depicted the garden in blossom in the spring. The Persian garden is also linked with the arrival of spring or nowruz (نوروز).269 The beauty of spring is a reminder of love, and the beloved. In both the garden of Paradise and the earthly gardens, all trees and flowers call and welcome the beloved.270

The Persian miniature reflects the imaginal world and might be compared to a small piece of mirror reflecting the entire universe. In the mirror, the motion is always in action. On the contrary, in the miniature, although it looks like the image is frozen in space and time,

the elements of the miniature are not only suspended in the imaginal world of the miniature, but they also move between the two planes of the two-dimensional and three-dimensional. The size and scale of Persian miniatures were not only considered for their aesthetic aspect, but they were also used strategically. After Islam, due to the restrictions placed on paintings, artists drew compositions in a smaller size in books. This allowed them to practice their art while, at the same time, concealing their artworks in the texts of books.271

Persian miniatures were produced in the Persian courts, where artists depicted epic and romantic subjects without any religious influence. With the growth and expansion of Sufism, Sufis became more involved in the production and development of the courtly arts such as miniatures and music. Many examples of such arts can be seen in the Safavid and Qajar (1785-1925) dynasties.272

Persian miniatures are drawn based on the events from the clashes of early Persian heroes such as Shahnama, or the spiritual narrations of Kalilah wa Dimnah and the works of Nizami and Sa’di.273 The epic scenes become part of a mystic world similar to that which Suhrawardi described for heroes in his narratives. In the spiritual and moral tales, the events also occur in an imaginal world, where all elements including animals and plants, are depicted based on the nature of Paradise, and not the physical world. Persian miniatures, with any of the two themes, portray an art of the imaginal world that is in-between and does not belong to the physical world.274

All elements of Persian miniatures, such as plants, landscapes, koushks, tiles, and carpets,

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273 Ibid.
274 Ibid, 132.
were drawn with delicacy and fine details. The landscapes were typically mountainous and the *koushks* and buildings were usually shown in a detailed and sophisticated fashion, where the interior blended with the exterior.\(^{275}\) The clothing and architecture were based on the design of their time.\(^{276}\) The motifs of the tiles, and the lattice of the doors and windows were shown in detail.\(^{277}\) Persian artists used bright and contrasting colours in their miniatures.

All human figures were the same size, and it seems that the physical proportions and dimensions were not of importance. The main figure of the story was sometimes drawn larger or located at the centre of the scene.\(^{278}\) Besides human figures, animals and creatures, such as dragons, snakes, and *divs* (دیو, demons), were also commonly depicted in Persian miniatures that were based on mythical literature. In hunting scenes, there are lions, elephants, and birds.\(^{279}\) In depictions of love stories, horses were popular, and they were shown sideways. The style of miniatures varies based on the school. Amongst all the styles there are two from the Safavid era, namely the Herat School and the Second Tabriz School. The Herat School is the most notable school of the Timurid era, and its name derives from Timurid’s capital city where the school first flourished. The style of the school was purely Persian, with almost no influence from Chinese or Christian traditions.\(^{280}\) The Herat style features many different characters, flowers, and plants that are portrayed with realistic

\(^{275}\) Jamali, “Colouring the Words Reproduction of Persian Literature through the Art of Iranian Miniature,” 35.


\(^{278}\) Jamali, “Colouring the Words Reproduction of Persian Literature through the Art of Iranian Miniature,” 35.

\(^{279}\) Ibid.

\(^{280}\) Teimour Akbari and Pouria Kashani, *Tarikh-i Hunar-i Naqashi va Miniature dar Iran* [The History of Painting and Miniature’s Art in Iran], (Tehran: Subhan-Nur, 2009), 72.
details. Landscapes were also drawn precisely. The Herat miniaturists used expert compositions, complex spacing, and various colours, and they were experts in depicting figures. Bihzad (1450-1535)\textsuperscript{281} was one of the most significant artists of the school. He was inspired by Persian poets, especially Jami, who was the last Persian classical poet and mystic, and the author of \textit{Haft Awrang}, and their masterpieces.\textsuperscript{282} Bihzad, along with his colleagues, produced some of the greatest Timurid arts, such as \textit{Khamsa} of Nizami.\textsuperscript{283} The miniatures of the Herat style were mainly inspired by nature and showed gardens in springtime that were always in bloom and full of flowers and blossoms. The \textit{koushks} were decorated with patterns of plants and geometric forms and there was no trace of shadow in these miniatures.\textsuperscript{284}

At the beginning of the Safavid era, Shah Ismail I (1487-1524) selected Tabriz as the capital city. As a result, the main city for the school of miniature moved from Herat to Tabriz. However, the influence of the Herat School was still present in Tabriz and other eastern cities.\textsuperscript{285} The Second Tabriz School thus became the miniature style of this time, and it was based on the school of Herat in combination with the First Tabriz School. The use of various colours—especially gold—dynamic characters, and court-life themes are features of this style. The characters were dressed in Safavid clothes.\textsuperscript{286} In the Second Tabriz School, the use of texts and illustrations together continues. These illustrations go beyond

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{281} Kamal al-din Bihzad was a famous Persian miniaturist during the Timurid and Safavid eras.
\item \textsuperscript{282} Jamali, “Colouring the Words Reproduction of Persian Literature through the Art of Iranian Miniature,” \textit{43}.
\item \textsuperscript{283} David J. Roxburgh, “Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting,” \textit{Muqarnas} 17, no. 1(2000): 125.
\item \textsuperscript{285} Akbari and Kashani, \textit{Tarikh-i Humar-i Naqashi va Miniature dar Iran} [The History of Painting and Miniature’s Art in Iran], 96.
\item \textsuperscript{286} Jamali, “Colouring the Words Reproduction of Persian Literature through the Art of Iranian Miniature,” \textit{43}.
\end{itemize}
the texts and into the margins of the books. This shows the mindset of the artists whose desire is to depart into the beyond, where there is no limit. 287

In the next section on the case studies, I have selected one work each from Persian literature, miniatures, and gardens to analyze and support the main argument of this dissertation, the relation between Suhrawardi’s imaginal world and the elements of the Persian garden. For literature, I have selected Haft Awrang by Jami from the fifteenth century; the Persian miniature to be analyzed is A Father Advises his Son about Love from the illustrated edition of Haft Awrang from the sixteenth century; and I will discuss the Persian garden of Fin, which is also from the sixteenth century.

I have chosen the miniature A Father Advises his Son about Love from the Haft Awrang collection, because, after making a comparison with other miniatures of the same era, I observed that most of the elements of the Persian garden were displayed in this work, which results in a more comprehensive analysis of the elements of the Persian garden. This miniature was created during the rule of Shah Tahmasp. I have selected Jami’s Haft Awrang, and specifically A Father Advises his Son about Love poem, as the miniature was based on this poem. Finally, for the Persian garden, I have chosen the Fin garden as it is one of the remaining Safavid gardens, believed to have been built by Shaykh Baha’i, a Safavid philosopher and architect, and a follower of Suhrawardi, who lived during the rules of both Shah Tahmasp and Shah Abbas I.

For this research, I visited the Fin garden in Kashan, and the Hasht-Bihisht garden 288 and

287 Ibid, 45.
288 For more information on the Hasht-Bihisht garden, see: Sussan Babaie, Isfahan and Its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi’ism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran.
the Chehel-Sutun garden-palace\textsuperscript{289} in Isfahan on multiple occasions including in 2008 for photography and in 2013 and 2019 for validating the research.

\section*{2.2 Case Studies}

\subsection*{2.2.1 Persian Literature: Haft Awrang of Jami; A Father Advises his Son About Love Poem}

One of the well-known mystical Sufi writers and poets in Persian literature is Mawlana Nur al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Jami (1414-1492). He used the pseudonym “Jami”, due to his place of birth as well as to show respect for Shaykh Ahmad Jami (1048-1141), a Persian Sufi and mystic. Jami’s artistic activity occurred during the rule of Sultan Husayn Bayqara Mirza (1470-1506) and his art-lover minister, Amir Ali-shir Nava’i (1441-1501).\textsuperscript{290} Sultan Husayn, the last ruler of the Timurid dynasty, was an avid supporter of the arts and collected works of art and literature. He created an environment where poets and painters were able to work freely and, as a result, the period of his rule is known as the peak in Persian art and literature.\textsuperscript{291}

Most of Jami’s poetic works are considered to be a veil hiding and protecting his philosophical thoughts, which were the outcome of his involvement with Sufism, and more specifically the philosophy and theories of Ibn Arabi.\textsuperscript{292} The major works of Jami are three

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{289} For more information on Chehel-Sutun garden-palace and specifically its wall paintings, see: Sussan Babaie, “Shah ‘Abbas II, the Conquest of Qandahar, the Chihil Sutun, and its Wall Paintings,” \textit{Muqarnas} 11 (1994): 125-42.


\end{flushleft}
divans (دیوان) with hundreds of ghazals (غزل), and seven masnawis (مثنوی) which form a book entitled Haft Awrang. As ghazal’s main theme is love, Jami’s divans convey the idea of love (ishq, عشق) in two forms: the real (haqiqi, حقیقی) and the metaphorical (majazi, Mejazi). Ibn Arabi’s theories and beliefs are present in Jami’s longest didactic masnawi from Haft Awrang, Silsilat al-dhahab. Jami was influenced by Ibn Arabi’s teachings and theories and created forty-seven quatrains on his concept of “the unity of existence” (vahdat-i vujud, وحدت وجود). He also included Ibn Arabi’s statements in some of his works such as Silsilat al-dhahab, Tuhfat al-Ahrar, and Subhat al-Abrar. Throughout his work, Jami mentions Ibn Arabi’s name only twice and that is in Silsilat al-dhahab, but he also authored many works about Ibn Arabi’s writings. The sixteenth-century Sufis of Naqshbandiyya (نقشبندیه), one of the major Sufi orders, used Jami’s works as a reference in order to better understand the intended meaning of Ibn Arabi’s philosophical thoughts.

Haft Awrang (هنفت اورنگ، Seven Thrones), a collection of poems by Jami, is divided into seven chapters. Although not clearly stated, Haft Awrang seems to have been written between 1468 (the year Sultan Husayn Bayqara rose to power) and 1472 (the year of

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293 Ghazal is a type of poem with a repeated rhyme. It has a fixed number of verses. The main theme of ghazal is on love.
294 Masnavi is a type of poem with independent rhyme for each line (couplet). It is mostly used for long narratives such as Shahnama.
296 Farah Fatima Golparvaran Shadchehr, “Abd Al-Rahman Jami: Naqshbandi Sufi, Persian Poet” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2008), 87.
297 This Sufi order is associated with Muhammad Baha ad-din Naqshbandi Bokharayi (1318–1389).
298 Ibid.
299 The seven chapters of Haft Awrang are as follows:
1. Silsilat al-dhahab (The Chain of Gold) 2. Salaman va Absal (Salaman and Absal) 3. Tuhfat al-Ahrar (The Gift of the Nobles) 4. Subhat al-Abrar (The Rosary of the Pious) – whose structure is based on Nizami’s work Makhzan al-Asrar. 5. Yusuf va Zulaykha (Joseph and Zulaykha) – whose structure is based on Nizami’s Khusrau va Shirin. 6. Leili-o Majnun (Leili and Majnun) 7. Kheradnama-i Eskandari (Eskandar’s Book of Wisdom)
Jami’s pilgrimage to Hejaz).\textsuperscript{300} Jami was a distinguished spiritual writer when he wrote his \textit{Haft Awrang}, a work that led to recognition of his influence on Ottoman literature.\textsuperscript{301} In the creation of \textit{Haft Awrang}, Jami made an effort to compose a work similar to \textit{Khamsa}, that was written three centuries earlier by Nizami.\textsuperscript{302}

Jami’s main purpose in writing \textit{Haft Awrang} was to express the fundamental thoughts of Islamic Sufism. According to Sufism, God is manifested everywhere, and he is the only absolute origin of beauty, purity, goodness, and above all, he is the creator of love. Jami joined the \textit{Naqshbandiyya} sect during his youth, and in 1457 he became the “Wise Man” and guide of this sect in Herat.\textsuperscript{303} There were two reasons for Jami’s admiration for the \textit{Naqshbandiyya} sect. One was their concept of \textit{khalvat dar jam} (خلوت در جمع), in which one experiences an inner privacy with God despite being within a group of people. The second reason was that members of the sect were obligated to do manual labour if they were to be granted membership to the group.\textsuperscript{304}

God’s perfection is reflected in the material world, and as such, the ultimate purpose of every element of Sufi orders, including \textit{Naqshbandiyya}, is to be spiritually displayed in “the unity of God”. One challenge of Sufi mystics is to go beyond the expectations of daily life to reach the upper being and the love of God. The same view links Jami’s seven \textit{masnawis} together. Jami’s faith in Sufism, based on spiritual excellence and achieving

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\textsuperscript{300}“Hejaz” is the ancient name for the western part of Saudi Arabia where Kaaba is located. Ali Asghar Hekmat, \textit{Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Rahmān Jami} (Tehran: Tous, 1974), 185-6.


\textsuperscript{302} Farah Fatima Golparvaran Shadchehr, “Abd Al-Rahman Jami: Naqshbandi Sufi, Persian Poet” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2008), 134-5.

\textsuperscript{303} Marianna Shreve Simpson, \textit{Persian Poetry, Painting, & Patronage: Illustrations in a Sixteenth-century Masterpiece}, 10.

the intellectual climax, is evident throughout *Haft Awrang*.

Similar to other Sufi poets and philosophers, Jami’s works include mystical symbols and metaphors, and therefore, can have more than one interpretation. In *Silsilat al- dhahab*, *Tuhfat al-ahrar*, and *Subliat al-abrar*, Jami realizes that his thoughts and arguments are not easy to comprehend. As a result, he specifically highlights the educational aspects of his works and explains his philosophical thoughts and problems with the help of stories and allegories, which include human and animal features.\(^{305}\)

*Silsilat al-dhahab* (سلالة الذهب, Chain of Gold),\(^ {306}\) the first section of the *Haft Awrang*, consists of three parts or *daftars* (دفتر) and the themes include mysticism, theology, and common problems of society. Jami conveys these themes either directly or in the form of stories. The theme of the second *daftar* of *Silsilat al-dhahab* is about mystical love. In this part, the two forms of love, real (*haqiqi*, حقیقی) and metaphorical (*majazi*, مجازی), are identified through allegories and stories related to Sufis. Jami expresses his opinions and ideas about what true love and false love mean.\(^ {307}\) In Persian Sufi literature, there is an emphasis on human love from which the love of God is ultimately derived.\(^ {308}\) Jami did not use Ibn Arabi’s philosophies in this *daftar*.

*A Father Advises his Son about Love* is a poem from Jami’s second *daftar* of the *Silsilat al-dhahab* in *Haft Awrang*. This poem is the story of a handsome boy who asks his father, a man of knowledge and excellence, to assist him in finding his desirable loved one. The


\(^{306}\) Composed in 1485


father tells the boy that visual beauty is perishable and encourages him to think of love as being more than based on physical appearances. The father emphasizes the differences between physical and spiritual love, and the fact that everyone sees beauty differently.309

2.2.2 Persian Miniature: Illustrated Edition of Haft Awrang; A Father Advises his Son about Love Miniature

A large number of Persian drawings exist today as they were placed into albums from the beginning of the fifteenth century.310 The entirety of Jami’s Haft Awrang, including A Father Advises his Son about Love, was transformed into a collection of calligraphies and illustrations during the Safavid dynasty and by the order of Ibrahim Mirza (1540-1577).311 The son of Bahram Mirza (1518-1550) and the nephew of the Safavid king, Shah Tahmasp, Ibrahim Mirza had both the dynamism and the attraction of his ancestor Shah Ismail and aesthetic idealism of his uncle Shah Tahmasp. Shah Tahmasp appointed Ma’asoum Beig Safavi to be Ibrahim Mirza’s master to train him for the administration of the country’s affairs. Sultan Ibrahim Mirza was selected by Shah Tahmasp to be the ruler of the city of Mashhad in 1555.312 Due to his interest in Jami’s poems, Ibrahim Mirza organized a team of skilled artists between 1556 and 1564 to produce the calligraphy for a special edition of Haft Awrang and to decorate its pages with illuminations and paintings.313 Sultan Ibrahim Mirza prepared such a glorious work of art in an attempt to demonstrate how Persian

309 Jami’s Haft Awrang has not been translated to English, except for the books of Salaman and Absal and Yusuf and Zulaikha, which has been translated by Edward FitzGerald and David Pendlebury, respectively. For the original Persian texts of A Father Advises his Son about Love poem, refer to Appendix C.
311 Simpson, Persian Poetry, Painting, & Patronage: Illustrations in a Sixteenth-century Masterpiece, 9.
312 Ibid., 12.
313 The illustrated version of Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft Awrang, which includes 28 paintings, is one of the important art works after Shah Tahmasp’s Shahnama with 258 paintings.
miniatures and literature are the key elements in the Persian culture. Ibrahim Mirza had a significant impact on the creation of art works by establishing rules for both poetry and painting to come together in works such as *Haft Awrang*. During the Safavid dynasty, Ibrahim Mirza’s *Haft Awrang* was considered to be one of the most important and brilliant remaining works of art. Ibrahim Mirza was assassinated in 1576 by the order of Shah Ismail II (1537-1577) upon the rise of his sovereignty. Although most of the classical Persian poetry was depicted after their literary creation, *Haft Awrang* is an exception and was illustrated during Jami’s lifetime. Jami appreciated their works as his messages and philosophical thoughts were clearly illustrated. Jami’s popularity diminished after his death, especially after the Safavid period, a dynasty, which did not support the *Naqshbandiyya* sect. However, the production of the illustrations of *Haft Awrang* continued during Shah Ismail I, the first Safavid king, and became known in Iran in the early sixteenth century. After Ibrahim Mirza, the existing documents and one of the *waqf* (وقف, endowment) seals on the *Haft Awrang*’s collection show that Shah Abbas I endowed the piece to the tomb of Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili (1252/3-1334) in Ardabil, and twenty years later, it was rediscovered in the Muqul empire.

The illustrated edition of *Haft Awrang*, known as *Freer Jami* (accession number F1946.12), is currently in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The work was purchased by the institution from Hagop Kevorkian.

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315 Ibid, 11.
318 Ibid, 12.
(1872-1962) in 1946. The owner prior to Kevorkian is unknown.\textsuperscript{320} The height and width of both the poem and the miniature of \textit{A Father Advises his Son about Love} are 34.2 cm (13 7/16 in) and 23.2 cm (9 1/8 in). The materials used are opaque watercolour, ink, and gold on paper (see figs. 2.3 and 2.4). Malik al-Daylami is known to be the calligrapher and Mirza Ali the painter.\textsuperscript{321}

\textsuperscript{320} I contacted both Freer Gallery of Art and Hagop Kevorkian Foundation to inquire about who were the previous owner(s) before Hagop Kevorkian, but there was no information readily available.

\textsuperscript{321} Due to COVID-19, I was not able to see \textit{A Father Advises his Son about Love} miniature and the other pieces of the \textit{Haft Awrang} in person, however, I was in contact with the Freer Gallery in Washington DC where the miniature is kept, and they were able to provide the required information.
2.2.3 **Persian Garden: Fin Garden**

Located in the city of Kashan, the Fin garden was built during the Safavid dynasty under the rule of Shah Abbas I. Before becoming the king of Persia, Shah Abbas I spent the early years of his life in Herat and was later appointed governor of Herat by Shah Tahmasp. Shah Abbas I restored the power of Iran and provided a chance for the growth and development of art, architecture, culture, and Islamic beliefs. Later, Shah Abbas II (1633-1666) and Shah Safi (1611-1642) each added buildings to the garden, such as the main *koushk*, the main entrance gate, and one of the baths (see fig. 2.5).

During the rule of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar (1772-1834), a Qajar king, garden design flourished. The Qajar’s *shotorgalo* (شترگلوب) its front pathway, the *howz-joosh* (حوض جوش), the *howz* (حوض) added, the garden design.

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322 According to Dehkhoda, *shotorgalou* is a path of water located under a river and includes two wells and a connection in between. Water goes down from one and comes up from the other. Refer to [http://www.vajehyab.com/dehkhoda/شترگلو](http://www.vajehyab.com/dehkhoda/شترگلو)

323 Persian word *howz-joosh* is a pool that water from underground channels comes up to it in the shape of boiling. It is also called boiling pool.
of twelve-fountains, the shahnishin's (شاهنشین) room, the bala-khana (بالاخانه) of the main entrance gate, and the small bath were all built during his time (see fig. 2.6).

Figure 2.6: Fin garden during the rule of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar. Source: Mehdi Khansari, M. R. Moghtader, and Manouch Yavari, The Persian Garden: Echoes of Paradise (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2004), 82. © Mage Publisher (Manouch Yavari and M.R. Moghtader), used with permission, copyright owner's permission required for re-use.

324 According to Dehkhoda, Shahnishin is the name of a room in palaces which Shah himself has used it. This room usually had five or seven doors. Refer to http://www.vajehyab.com/dehkhoda/شاهنشین

325 Bala-khana is the name of a room located at the second or third floor.


The builder of the Fin garden is believed to be Shaykh Baha’i, who was a Persian Sufi, poet, philosopher, and architect, who established the Islamic Isfahan School. Shaykh Baha’i lived in Herat for fourteen years. As such, he was exposed to the Herat School. After the death of his father, he became the Shaykh-al-Islam (شیخ الإسلام) of Herat.

### 2.3 The Link Between Persian Literature, Miniatures, and Gardens: A Father Advises his Son about Love Poem and Miniature, and the Fin Garden

Having provided background information on the above-mentioned case studies, the final section of this part dissects the links amongst these three pieces, and the relationship of each with Suhrawardi’s imaginal world. This is accomplished through analysis of the elements of the Persian garden, namely, perspective, water, plants, koushk, entrance gate and access paths, walls, mountains and rocks, main axes, frame, light and colours, text and calligraphy, as well as ornaments and patterns such as tiles, fabrics, girih, and Persian carpets.

As stated in the previous section, there is a relation established between the literature and the miniature. With regards to the connection between the miniature and the garden however, there is a lack of direct source. I argue that the miniature and the garden are linked due to their cultural context.

In Persian miniatures, more specifically in A Father Advises his Son about Love, material nature is not illustrated exactly. The beings and objects depicted have shapes and colours; however, they lack other characteristics of materials such as weight, volume, and time-dependency. This absence is in fact a feature of the imaginal world. The painter, with the help of such characteristics, made a journey through the appearance of the world of nature.

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and strived benefit from art’s techniques and tricks to carry the observer to the imaginal world. *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature includes features where various and colourful elements have unity beyond their appearance. All the elements have emerged from a unique origin and are linked together. Each element is a certain sign of a hidden secret, and each part, while being linked to the whole, has a special dignity.\(^{329}\) *A Father Advises his Son about Love* has not only illustrated a story, but it portrayed the trees, flowers, and other elements of the garden as well as architectural features, which remind the viewer that heaven is inherent in the nature, and where human is looking for it in themselves.\(^{330}\)

The Persian garden’s elements are also tied to one another. Although they have their own meanings and functions, each element becomes more meaningful when they appear together—that is when they all create the imaginal world of the garden.

The next sections are an analysis of the elements of the Persian garden mentioned above. In that regard, I considered two different techniques. The first approach involves focusing only on the element(s) of interest. The second method includes highlighting only the element(s) under examination and transforming the rest of the miniature into black and white. For my research, I chose the second technique and I analyzed elements such as *koushk*, trees, flowers, and figures. In my opinion, this method made the visual analysis clearer.

*PERSPECTIVE*

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In order to draw humans, birds, flowers, trees, mountains, water, and architecture, the painter used variable distances and selects a distance for each object to be appropriate to the image, both at the whole and in detail.\(^\text{331}\) The distance of the artist, as well as his point of view are not the same but are chosen to ensure the best and most complete representation of each element.\(^\text{332}\) A great example is *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature. In this miniature, humans are illustrated mostly in a three-quarter portrait, even though they are seated, standing, or active. The figures distance or activities do not affect their sizes. Characters are shown picking flowers and fruits, playing music, stealing nestlings from a bird nest, or playing chess. Other individuals are reading poetry, listening to music, watching the chess game, or writing a poem on the wall. It is only the gardener who is working hard at the bottom right corner of the scene (see fig. 2.7).

The painter does not intend to represent bodies and elements based on their physical locations. Plants, flowers, trees, and buildings are drawn from the front view (see fig. 2.8), while platforms, courtyards, and pools are drawn from a top view (see fig. 2.9). This is evidence of a non-material world being represented in this painting. The physical size, scale, and distances are not valid in the imaginal world of miniature. The difference in size and distance is also the result of the limitation of man’s vision in the material world, as man does not exist in the world of imagination.\(^\text{333}\)

In the miniature, the place of the painter and his perspective are continuously changing.\(^\text{334}\) Changes in the viewpoint, frequent alterations in the angle, distance, and size, use of various colourful surfaces, and shifts from one level to another, as well as benefits from

\[^{331}\text{Ibid, 57.}\]
\[^{332}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{333}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{334}\text{Ibid, 58.}\]
the frame and, sometimes, breaking the same with certain elements of paintings, result in breaching the norms of material time and place amounting to an imagined space presented where objects are weight-free and suspended.\textsuperscript{335}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{335} Shayegan, \textit{Botha-yi Zihni va Khatirih-yi Azali} [Mental Idols and the Eternal Memory], 13.
121

views his front scene merely from one point, while such limitation
Figure 2.7: In *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature, humans are illustrated mostly in a three-quarter portrait, even though they are seated, standing, or active (except for the three figures highlighted in red that have been illustrated from the side). Humans are also all the same size. Moreover, they are portrayed in different groups and each character is occupied performing an activity. Original figure modified by the author.
In the Fin garden, visitors see the space of the garden for the first time from behind the entrance wall, which has small holes in it, thus allowing the viewer to get a sense of the space of the garden without seeing it completely.\textsuperscript{336} After entering the garden, the viewer finds themselves on the main pathway leading to the \textit{koushk}. On each side of the path, there are tall trees, which draw the eye to the \textit{koushk} and block the view to other parts of the garden. The location of the pathway and the tall trees provide a single point of view of the \textit{koushk}, causing the garden to seem larger than it actually is.\textsuperscript{337}

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\textsuperscript{336} For more information, refer to “Entrance Gate and Access Paths” section of this part.
Water

Water is an essential element in Islamic gardens from both physical and spiritual perspectives. Mystics describe water as the secret of the light of existence, which always flows and influences the whole world. In Iran, due to the hot and dry climate, water has always been a holy, precious, and worthy element, and this goes back to before the arrival of Islam. Holding different ceremonies and celebrations to cherish its existence have always been part of Iranian traditions.

The Zoroastrian religion had a special respect for nature, and more specifically for water, which was protected by the goddess of water, Anahita, whose symbolic and mystical character is visible in the design of the Sassanid’s palace-gardens. In Avesta, in Aban Yasht and Tir Yasht, the holiness and importance of water and Anahita are acknowledged several times.

The Temple of Anahita, which was built during the Sassanid dynasty, was a place to revere her. The temple has a cubic-shape that is open to the sky, and has a pool at its centre. A platform is located around the pool as a place to pray, to stand during the ceremonies and to see one’s reflection in the water. Moreover, the temple was built to express the holiness of water, and it was designed without a roof to be open and reflect the sky. Light

341 Avesta is the collection of Zoroastrianism texts.
343 Anahita Temple is located in the city of Bishapour, an old city in Kazeroon of Fars province of Iran. The temple was built during Sassanid dynasty. Only some of its ruins are remaining today.
345 Ibid, 60.
also was one of the requisites of this temple. The water in the temple’s channels seem like a rainbow to observers and worshipers, due to its refraction from the doors’ frames (see fig. 2.10).³⁴⁶

During the Islamic period, the holiness and purity of water was emphasized in the Quran and hadith. In Islamic philosophy, water is considered not only to clean the physical body, but it is also used as a means to wash off sin.³⁴⁷ In the Quran, water is described as the

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origin of the material world\textsuperscript{348} and it is identified as the basis of life,\textsuperscript{349} a tool to cleanse and wash,\textsuperscript{350} and an element on which human beings depend.\textsuperscript{351}

As stated in the Quran, the two concepts of water and mercy are linked together. Water is believed to be a sign of God’s mercy:\textsuperscript{352} “He […] sendeth down water from the sky, and thereby quickeneth the earth after her death.”\textsuperscript{353} Rain and revelation represent mercy and life-giving, and they are both received from God. In Islam, water is a necessary element to perform ablutions before praying.\textsuperscript{354}

In the Quran, believers are invited to heavens with trees of which rivers flow underneath.\textsuperscript{355}

The gardens of Paradise have been described several times,\textsuperscript{356} and the phrase “gardens beneath which rivers flow” has been repeated on numerous occasions.\textsuperscript{357} God promises such gardens to true believers:

But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness,- we shall soon admit them to gardens, with rivers flowing beneath,-to dwell therein forever. Allah’s promise is the truth, and whose word can be truer than Allah’s?\textsuperscript{358}

Say, ‘Shall I inform you of [something] better than that? For those who fear Allah will be gardens in the presence of their Lord beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and purified spouses and approval from Allah. And Allah is Seeing of [His] servants…”\textsuperscript{359}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{348} The Quran 11: 7.
\bibitem{349} The Quran 24:45, and 21:30.
\bibitem{350} The Quran 8:11.
\bibitem{351} The Quran 23:18.
\bibitem{352} Emma Clark, “Underneath Which Rivers Flow,” 84.
\bibitem{353} The Quran 30:24.
\bibitem{355} The Quran 48:5: “And that He may admit the believers, men and women alike, into gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein to dwell forever, and acquit them of their evil deeds; that is in God's sight a mighty triumph.”
\bibitem{356} There are over one hundred and twenty references in the Quran.
\bibitem{357} Clark, “Underneath Which Rivers Flow,” 85.
\bibitem{358} The Quran 4:122.
\bibitem{359} The Quran 3:15.
\end{thebibliography}
A heavenly spring or fountain called Kawthar (کوثر) is also mentioned in the Quran and promised to the Prophet: “To you we have granted al-Kawthar.”

In Persian miniatures, artists used silver to illustrate water, to both reflect the light and to convey the spiritual meaning of this element. In *A Father Advises his Son about Love*, the colour of water appears brown, and it is possible that silver was used, although there is no document that supports this (see figs. 2.11 and 2.12). Silver and its reflective characteristic make it similar to a mirror and, as a result, water represents the imaginal world in its best way in the Persian miniatures. In Persian gardens, the water of the larger pools is also dark, providing a better reflecting characteristic. It reflects both the sky and the image of the building in front of it (see fig. 2.13).

In Suhravardi’s view, the existence of a mirror or any transparent or reflective object is

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360 The Quran 108:1.
362 I contacted the Freer Gallery of Art and sought information on the use of silver in the miniatures of *Haft Awrang*, including *A Father Advises his Son about Love*. In their database, there is no mention of silver. Watercolour, ink, and gold were the only used media stated.
a symbol and manifestation of an imaginal form, and human’s imagination is an example of this manifestation. It is not the human’s imagination that creates the imaginal forms, but these are the imaginal forms, which are manifested in a person’s imagination. The mirror is not the reason for the existence and appearance of a visible thing. The mirror is a symbol in which the imaginal form manifests.\textsuperscript{365}

In Suhrawardi’s \textit{The Red Intellect} treatise, the mirror is referenced in the battle between Rustam and Isfandiar, who are the two main figures from \textit{Shahnama} of Firdowsi.

In this treatise, Suhrawardi explains that if a piece of mirror is placed in front of the

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{howz_reflection.jpg}
\caption{The \textit{howz} and its reflection, Emamzadeh Ebrhim, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{365} Ebrahim Dinani, “Alam-i Khayal” [The World of Imagination], 16.
Simurgh (سیمرغ),\textsuperscript{366} due to the mirror’s special feature, “any eye that looks into it will be dazzled”.\textsuperscript{367} As such, Rustam used a polished iron breastplate and helmet, and covered his horse with mirrors. He then went to the opposite side of Simurgh to fight Isfandiar. Simurgh’s reflection in the mirror struck Isfandiar, dazzling his eyes. Rustam won the battle with the help of the mirrors and their reflections. In another treatise, \textit{A Day with a Group of Sufis}, Suhrawardi mentions that if the rays of the sun hit a mirror or a similar object, the mirror acts as “loci and receptacles for the Sun’s light”.\textsuperscript{368} In the Persian garden (for example Hasht-Bihisht garden), the mirror mosaics are used on the koushks’ ceilings or in muqarnas (see fig. 2.14). The garden’s water acts in the same manner as the mirror (see fig. 2.15). They both reflect the sun’s rays and are considered “loci for the Sun’s light.”

\textsuperscript{366} Simurgh is a mythical flying creature in Persian culture from antiquity. It is also stated in the \textit{Shahnama} of Firdowsi and Sufi poetry and literature. Suhrawardi refers to Simurgh in his Persian treatises, such as \textit{The Language of the Ants} treatise, where he describes it as a creature that “flies without moving, and he soars without wings. He approaches without traversing space. All colours are from him, but he himself has no colour. His nest is in the orient, but occident is not void of him. All are occupied by him, but he is free of all. All are full of him, but he is empty of all. All knowledge emanates and is derived from his shrill cry, and marvelous instruments such as the organ have been made from his trilling voice. His food is fire, and whoever binds one of his feathers to his right side and passes through fire will be safe from burning. The zephyr is from his breath, hence lovers speak their hearts’ secrets and innermost thoughts with him.” (see Suhrawardi, “The Simurgh’s Shrill Cry,” in Suhrawardi; \textit{The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises}, ed. and trans. W. M. Thackston (Costa Mesa California: Mazda publishers, 1999), 92.)

\textsuperscript{367} Suhrawardi, “The Red Intellect,” 27.

\textsuperscript{368} The same concept applies to the Moon. The Moon also functions in a similar way as the mirror. (Thackston, \textit{Suhrawardi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises}, 38.) In another treatise, \textit{The Language of the Ants}, Suhrawardi describes the Moon as a “pure, polished, and black” body, which has no light of its own, but when it is located in front of the Sun, the Sun’s light emerges in the mirror of the Moon’s body. (Thackston, \textit{Suhrawardi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises}, 89.)
Figure 2.14: *Koushk*’s ceiling and *muqarnas* of the garden of Hasht Bihisht, Isfahan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.15: Water reflection of the Qajar’s *shotorgalou*. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
In *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature, the painter has shown that the origin of the water is in the mountains. After passing through a certain path from behind the building and through a hidden channel, water enters into the *howz* at the front of the building. It then flows towards the two sides of the *howz* and out into two streams. Various parts of the garden are then fed by the pouring water. However, the areas to which water leads are not entirely visible (see fig. 2.16). A series of fountains are in the middle of the *howz*. The miniaturist tried to paint the elements of the water in the best and most complete manner. He painted the *howz* from a top view and the fountains from the front. The streams are also drawn in different shapes, not only to be matched with the other elements of the miniature, but also to function as a link between them (see figs. 2.17, 2.18, and 2.19).  

Water is a fundamental element in the design of the Fin garden. Similar to how it is portrayed in *A Father Advises his Son about Love*, water enters the Fin garden by way of a hidden path from outside the garden. Then, through the underground, water comes out...  

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and pours into the pool where it is subsequently divided into different branches reaching out through the entire garden (see fig. 2.20). The main pool is located in front of the koushk identical to what is seen in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* (see fig. 2.21).

One significant aspect of the Fin garden is the manner in which water is used. Kashan, the city where the garden is located in, has a dry climate. The water in the howzes, fountains, koushk, and the blue tiles that have been used within the garden, attract everyone’s attention (see fig. 2.22). The water system of the Fin garden is designed in a way that all the fountains shoot the water to the same height (see fig. 2.23). Water enters the garden from three branches that originate in the spring of *Soleymanieh*.370

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370 A water spring located outside and at the south of the Fin garden.
Figure 2.20: Water in the Fin garden. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.21: The main pool of the Fin garden located in front of the koushk. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure 2.22: One of the fountains in the Fin garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.23: In the Fin garden, all the fountains shoot water to the same height. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
One branch of the waterway enters from the east side of the garden and streams into the Qajar’s shotorgalou (see fig. 2.24). The second one flows into the Safavid’s shotorgalou through an underground channel (see fig. 2.25), and the third one, after passing from below the shahnishin’s room, runs into the howz-joosh (see figs. 2.26 and 2.27). All three branches, after exiting the garden, are joined together to irrigate farms.
Figure 2.26: The Howz-joosh. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.27: The Howz-joosh and the long pool in front of it. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
In *A Father Advises his Son about Love*, the *howz* has been placed in the centre of the image (see fig. 2.28). The history of the *howz* goes back to the pre-Islamic era, when the *howz* was built in front of the main *ivan* of some public buildings and monuments, not only as a ritual and symbolic element, but also as a visual and aesthetic feature. In Islamic architecture, the *howz* was designed and built in front of notable mosques or other important buildings. As such, the *howz* became one of the main elements of Persian architecture, and especially in the Persian gardens, it was designed to be located in front of the main *ivan* of the *koushk*. A *howz* can be designed in different shapes. The fountain in the middle of it emphasizes the water’s movement and creates a sound that adds to its beauty. The *howz* at the centre of the courtyard symbolizes the significance of water in the universe.

In the Persian gardens, the *howz* is located on the main axis of the

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garden. It is typically placed on a slope and gravity causes water to flow out of the *howz* in waterfalls. The *howz* of Persian gardens is typically elevated, and is always full of water so the viewer sees a transparent and mirror-like flat surface with no edges. An example is the Safavid’s *shotorgalou* in the Fin garden. In Persian gardens, the fountain located at the centre symbolizes the waters of the spirit, representing the continuous revival of the soul just as how the spring water refreshes itself repeatedly.\(^{373}\)

In Suhrawardi’s *The Sound of Gabriel’s Wings* treatise, he describes a garden with a *howz* that has eleven levels. He explains that the *howz* did not have much water in it, and there was sand at its bottom. The overall shape of the *howz* was “rounder than a ball” with no opening. The lowest or the first level had little sand at the bottom, with a few animals around the edges, and no “buttons” on it. The buttons represented the *Maghrebi* turbans, which the Sufis of the time were wearing. The second level had “many luminous buttons on it”, and there was only one button on each of the remaining nine levels. None of the levels had any colours. All the levels were translucent, and their details were clearly visible (see fig. 2.29).\(^{374}\)

The eleven levels were managed by ten old men. The top or highest level, which was greater in size than the other levels, was managed by the old man seated at that level. This old man was also the master teacher of the second old man. The second level from the top was managed by the second old man, and so on down to the ninth level. The two bottom levels, the tenth and eleventh, were the ones with water and sand, and they were managed by the old man answering the narrator’s questions. Suhrawardi’s intention here was to use

\(^{373}\) Clark, “Underneath Which Rivers Flow,” 84.

\(^{374}\) Suhrawardi, “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing,” 11.
ten old men to symbolize the cosmos in the following order: the Great Sphere of Diurnal Motion, the Sphere of Fixed Stars, the Sphere of Saturn, the Sphere of Jupiter, the Sphere of Mars, the Sphere of the Sun, the Sphere of Venus, the Sphere of Mercury, the Sphere of the Moon, and the Sublunar region (including the Spheres of Ether and Zamharir). By using the elements of the howz and water to symbolize the cosmos, Suhrawardi reinforced the meaning of the howz itself, as the water in the howz reflects the sky and the cosmos.

Figure 2.29: The howz with eleven levels, described by Suhrawardi in The Sound of Gabriel’s Wings treatise. The howz and paving stones are drawn from the top view. The eleven levels of the howz and the surrounding plants are drawn from the front view. Dimensions: H: 19 cm, W: 28 cm. Medium: watercolour and gold flakes on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m². Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2021.

Thackston, Suhrawardi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises, xviii.
A variety of plants have been symbolically incorporated into *A Father Advises his Son about Love* and each of the different trees and flowers illustrate a certain meaning and impression.

In Islam, similar to water, the tree is also a holy element and is mentioned in the Quran and hadith. Muslims and hadith refer to a tree called *Tuba* as a tree that only grows in heaven. In the Quran, the term *Tuba* is mentioned only once: “Those who have believed and done righteous deeds - a good state [Tuba] is theirs and a good return.”

The *Tuba* tree is considered to be a magnificent tree in Paradise—providing shade and shelter—and it is more pleasant to the eye than the cypress. In Suhrawardi’s *The Red Intellect*, he describes the *Tuba* tree as the third wonder; a tree, which is in heaven and full of flowers and different varieties of fruits, and everyone benefits from its branches. In this treatise, a Shaykh describes the *Tuba* tree to Suhrawardi: “‘What is the Tuba tree and where is it?’ Suhrawardi asks. ‘The Tuba tree is a huge tree,’ Shaykh said, ‘Anyone who is celestial can see it when he goes to paradise. In the midst of the eleven mountains, I spoke of is a mountain, and it is on that mountain.’”

The nest of the *Simurgh* is located at the top of this tree. When the *Simurgh* flies over the earth, its wings bring about fruits on the plants and trees of the earth.

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376 The Quran 13:29.
Since the main topic of *On the Reality of Love* is love, Suhrawardi explains the connection that exists between plants, more specifically ivy, and the concept of love, which has been discussed in more detail in Part Three.

In *A Father Advises his Son about Love*, the discussion about love occurs in a blooming garden; a place for lovers in both Persian literature and Persian art. In the garden a plane tree, a cypress, a Persian juniper, and flourished trees are seen. At first glance, it is not easy to locate the father and son in this miniature, but upon closer examination, they can be seen seated underneath the big plane tree. The father is next to the wall of the octagonal terrace in a brown cloak, and the son is seated next to him in an orange one (see figs. 2.30 and 2.31). By painting the plane tree beside the building, the elegance of the branches become more obvious. This tree is a symbol of the father’s wisdom and knowledge as he provides guidance to his son. The cypress trees have also been shown at the lower corners of the image (see fig. 2.32).

In Iran, the plane and cypress are the most common trees. The plane tree provides extensive shade and protection, while the cypress is more praised by the poets. The plane tree has been a symbol of the wealth and prosperity of nature, blessings, and gifts from the gods and spirits. Iranian people believe that the plane tree is the king of trees, and their ancient ones bless the land.

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and family with fertility and cause pregnancy and health for the women.\endnote{381}

Figure 2.31: The plane tree in \textit{A Father Advises his Son about Love} miniature. Original figure modified by the author.

\endnote{381}Yahaghi, \textit{Farhang-i Asatir va Dastanvariha dar Adabiyat-i Farsi [An Excyclopedia of Myths and Fables in Persian literature]}, 304-5.
The plane tree is also holy for the Islamic mystics, and they compare its leaf to the hands of the *Five Holy People*.\(^{382}\) Moreover, the leaves of the plane tree resemble the human

hands and fingers. The deciduous trees, including the plane tree, lose their leaves in the fall.

This is the phase of leaflessness (bi-bargi, بی برگی), which symbolizes the perfect saint being in complete desperation and helplessness in front of God by not having even a leaf or barg (برگ, grief or sorrow).\textsuperscript{383} The tree can also be compared to a heart. As the tree in the garden is shaken by the wind (baad, باد), the heart is also moved by the force of recollection (yaad, یاد).\textsuperscript{384}

The cypress is another type of tree notable in this miniature. In pre-Islamic Persian myths, the cypress used to be the holiest tree, and it symbolizes eternity. There is a story that Zoroaster planted the 3000-year-old Kashmar’s cypress.\textsuperscript{385} Furthermore, the Achaemenid Emperors were proud of planting cypress with their own hands.\textsuperscript{386}

Similarly, amongst the trees that exist, cypress and plane trees are the main type in the Fin garden. Cypress trees have been planted at the edge of the pathways. These trees not only frame the koushk for the viewer, but they also invite him towards the koushk itself.

The miniatures of the Safavid era contain big, tall trees with lots of leaves, a good example of which is the plane tree in the Haft Awrang, and more specifically in A Father Advises his Son about Love. This tree is not only a habitat for the birds, but also an essential iconic element of the miniature.\textsuperscript{387}

Persian juniper is the type of tree located at the top left corner of A Father Advises his

\textsuperscript{384} Ibid, 27.
\textsuperscript{385} The Kashmar’s cypress is located in Khorasan, eastern part of Iran, south of Mashhad.
\textsuperscript{386} Javaherian, “Kohan Ulgu-i Gumshudih Bazdidi az Bagh-i Irani,” [The Lost Archetype of Persian Garden], 6.
\textsuperscript{387} Simpson, Persian Poetry, Painting, & Patronage: Illustrations in a Sixteenth-century Masterpiece, 15.
Son about Love (see fig. 2.33). Similar to the cypress, the Persian juniper symbolizes eternity. It grows on the mountains and adapts itself to harsh climates. The miniature also shows fruits such as pears, apples, oranges, and pomegranates, on bowls and plates rather than on trees (see fig. 2.34).

In the miniature, the garden in springtime is represented, similar to the miniatures of Herat style. The rest of the trees are in bloom (see fig. 2.33) and the garden is full of blossoms and flowers, such as poppies, irises, tulips, hollyhocks, violets, and roses (see fig. 2.35).

The symbolic and metaphorical role of the rose is significant in Persian poetry. It is a symbol of the beloved in general and signifies the beloved’s face, cheeks, and forehead. The beloved’s tears are identified with rose water, and the rose garden is where the beloved lives.\textsuperscript{388} Roses can be also associated with figures who are capable of delivering the Divine Revelation.\textsuperscript{389}

Figure 2.33: The Persian juniper and other types of trees in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature. Original figure modified by the author.
Figure 2.34: Fruits in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature. Original figure modified by the author.
Figure 2.35: Various types of flowers in A Father Advises his Son about Love miniature. Original figure modified by the author.
Koushk

In *A Father Advises his Son about Love*, the koushk is located at the central axis of the image. The shape and volume of the koushk are not clear, and only one of its facades can be seen. It includes an ivan with a window and two groups of people in it. The koushk’s ivan is the focus of the painting and it is where the main message of *A Father Advises his Son about Love* poem can be found. In the ivan, the chess game is being played between a middle-aged man and a youth, with one onlooker, and one person sitting outside of the koushk watching the chess game sneakily. The chessboard is located at the centre of the ivan emphasizing the importance of the game. Traditionally, the chess game symbolizes a relationship between the lover and beloved, but it is also a metaphor for life. Another individual seems to be an upset youth who is writing a poem on the wall of the ivan. He is describing his love for his beloved who he thinks will come one day and will see his true

Figure 2.36: The koushk in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature. Original figure modified by the author.
feelings (see fig. 2.36).

In the design of the miniature’s koushk and ivan, there appears to be a mixture of brick and coloured tiles. The dimensions of the facade of the koushk follow the rules of the golden rectangle. The window, located on the central axis of the image, frames part of the mountain, and emphasizes the relationship between the interior and exterior of the ivan. The ivan has a deep meaning in Islamic thought. It is a transitional space between the building and garden and provides shelter from the sun. The history of the ivan goes back to the pre-Islamic period, however, after Islam, it was mostly used in mosques. The ivan is considered to be an intermediate space between the immaterial and material worlds.\textsuperscript{390} Therefore, in Persian gardens, the ivan is a place for the soul to move between the building and the garden, and symbolically, between body and spirit.\textsuperscript{391} At the left corner of the koushk is an old man, whose left foot is hanging off the window, showing its material aspect and the notion of an easy way of accessing the other world.

As in \textit{A Father Advises his Son about Love}, the koushk of the Fin garden is also located at the central axis of the garden (see fig. 2.37). It presently has two storeys, however in the original design, it was a three-storey building. The third floor of the koushk was destroyed twice, and it was never re-built after its last demolition. While the walls of the first floor have small openings and windows, it has more wall space in comparison to the second floor (see fig. 2.38).

This arrangement provides a better view of the garden from the second floor and makes the structure lighter on the higher floor. The semi-open ivans of the koushk play an


\textsuperscript{391} Ibid, 23.
important role in the relationship between the koushk, the pools, and the garden (see figs. 2.39, 2.40, and 2.41). The main (front) facade of the koushk is made out of brick, mud, and tiles in blue, dark blue, white, and yellow. It also consists of wooden windows and railings with the girih pattern (see fig. 2.42). Unlike the front facade, the two side facades of the koushk have less tile-work and the back facade has no tiles at all (see figs. 2.43 and 2.44).

In On the Reality of Love, Suhrwardi describes the koushk as having three storeys consisting of different chambers.\(^{392}\) He also writes of a nine-storey koushk, for which he did not provide any description. The Birds treatise is another source in which he discusses the koushk, which appears to a traveler along with a vast courtyard.\(^{393}\)

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\(^{392}\) See Part Three for details of the three-storey koushk.

Figure 2.39: The plan of the first floor of the koushk showing the location of the ivans. Diagram by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2023.

Figure 3.40: One of the koushk’s ivans, and its relationship with the pool and the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.41: The ivans of the koushk and their relationship with the main pool and the garden. Dimensions: H: 38 cm (15 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: pen on paper. Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2023.
Figure 2.42: The front (main) facade of the koushk is made out of brick, mud, and tiles in blue, dark blue, white, and yellow. It also consists of wooden windows and railings with the *girih* pattern. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.43: The side facade of the koushk. There are less tile-works used in comparison to the front facade. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.44: The back facade of the koushk. No tile-works are used on this facade. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
**The Entrance Gate and Access Paths**

In the *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature, the main entrance of the garden is located at the bottom left. A long and narrow path leads to the entrance of the garden. A rather short brick wall at the end of this pathway is where a passer-by jumps over to gain access to the centre of the garden. This wall prevents easy entry into the space of the miniature (see fig. 2.45).

![Image of the gate and entrance path in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature.](image)

Figure 2.45: The gate and the entrance path in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature. Original figure modified by the author.
Similar to the entrance in *A Father Advises his Son about Love*, access to the space of the Fin garden is just as restricted—this garden has a space called *hashti* (هشتی)\(^{394}\) at the entrance to which is surrounded by a wall blocking the view of the person who has just entered the garden. The existence of such a wall prevents easy viewing into the space of the garden at first glance (see figs. 2.46, 2.47, and 2.48).

The concept of the gate is also seen in Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises. He used the symbolic element of the gateway in *On the Reality of Love* to express his philosophical thoughts about the journey into the inner self or microcosm. In this treatise, he portrayed five gateways in detail. These gateways have been examined and analyzed in Part Three of this dissertation.

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\(^{394}\) In Farsi, *hashti* means eight-sided. In the Persian gardens, it is an area between the main gate and the main space of the garden. *Hashti* can also be found in Persian architecture, houses, and mosques.
The first architectural element of a garden is its walls. In Persian literature, most of the poets refer to this wall as a veil that hides the interior. In Persian architecture, anything desired is concealed behind veils, curtains, or covers. The walls of the Persian garden protect, hide, and cover the valuable treasure inside, and isolate the garden from its surroundings (see figs. 2.49 and 2.50).

In addition to the symbolic and metaphoric meanings of the walls of the Persian garden, they also provide security. As such, it is not surprising that these walls are often free from any motifs, and have simple and plain geometry and design. On the contrary, the walls of the *koushk* and other buildings inside the garden have detailed decorative elements. The walls of the Persian garden have been precisely designed, and provide an enclosure that is not associated with a sense of captivity instead of security, nor do they create fear to prevent concentration and imagination.

In the Fin garden, the walls protect the garden and the palace of the king (see fig. 2.51). They separate the garden from the surroundings, which is a city. Unlike the walls in the miniature that are made of brick, the walls in Fin are made with adobe. Within a short time of entering the garden, one forgets about the place they occupy in the world, as the garden itself is a complete world of its own.
Figure 2.49: Fin garden exterior walls photographed from outside the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.50: Fin garden exterior walls photographed from inside the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.51: The exterior walls of the Fin garden protect the garden and the palace of the king. Original figure modified by the author.
In *A Father Advises his Son about Love*, the walls of the garden form an octagon with a forty-five-degree angle, and are made out of brick (see fig. 2.52).

As mentioned earlier in this part, the number eight represents the eight gates of the heaven in Islam. The walls are not to scale, and they appear shorter based on a comparison of the

![Image of the garden with walls forming an octagon and a forty-five-degree angle.](image)

Figure 2.52: The exterior walls of the garden in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature. Original figure modified by the author.
wall and the human. The only element that comes into physical contact with the wall is the water, which in the form of two streams flows towards the outside of the walls to the other parts of the garden (see fig. 2.53). Initially, it appears that the wall separates the space inside the garden from the space outside. While these interior and exterior spaces are part of the garden as a whole, closer examination reveals that there is, in fact, no firm separation. For instance, a youth is attempting to enter the interior space by easily jumping over the wall (see fig. 2.54), or in a second instance, it is observed that the left foot of the father is hanging off the edge of the wall (see fig. 2.55).

Suhrawardi refers to the element of wall in his treatises. He writes that a wall of pearl surrounds a water spring at the fourth gate in *On the Reality of Love*. This is discussed further in Part Three of this dissertation.

Figure 2.53: Water flows towards the outside of the garden’s wall.

Figure 2.54: A youth attempting to enter the interior space of the garden by jumping over the wall.

Figure 2.55: The left foot of the father hanging off the edge of the garden’s wall.
*Mountains and Rocks*

The mountain in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature is located at the top left of the image, and is the main source of water for the garden (see fig. 2.56).

![Image of mountain and rocks from A Father Advises his Son about Love miniature](image.png)

*Figure 2.56: Mountain and rocks in A Father Advises his Son about Love miniature. Original figure modified by the author.*
The mountain is a symbol of height, growth, greatness, and glory.\(^{399}\) It is a holy place and the centre and axis of the world. Going up the mountain is likened to ascending towards the sky. In Islamic beliefs, the mountain is also a symbol of the Prophet of Islam and it was where he was chosen to be a prophet.\(^{400}\)

\(Qaf\) is a mythical mountain out of which God has created other mountains. There are other worlds beyond this mountain and only God knows about them.\(^{401}\) No human being lives on this mountain, which is the house of sun and light.\(^{402}\) \(Qaf\) is a mountain that encompasses the world. In *The Red Intellect* treatise, Suhrawardi explains that this mountain is a realm from which the narrator came, and to where he will return.\(^{403}\) In my view this is, in fact, the description of Paradise.

\[\ldots\text{When you are delivered of your bondage you will go there, for you have been brought from there, and eventually everything that exists returns to its initial form.}\]^404

As mentioned in Part One, the \(qaf\) mountain is considered the eighth clime or the imaginal world and it includes eleven mountains. To reach \(qaf\), one must pass all the eleven mountains. The first two have special characteristics. One is hot and the other is cold. The third mountain is where the Pearl-that-glows-by-night is located. This pearl gets its light and brightness from the *Tuba* tree. By passing each mountain and going to the next, the traveler will eventually return to their starting point. This journey is likened to a compass:


\[^{400}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[^{401}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[^{402}\text{Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mu’jam al-Buldan*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar Ahya’ al-Trath Al-Arabi, 1979), 298.}\]

\[^{403}\text{Mehdi Jalali, and Fatemeh Rezadad, “Kuh-i Qaf: Ustura ya Vaqyiat”, [Mountain of Qaf; Myth or Reality]. Ulum-i-Hadith 45-46 (2007), 52.}\]

\[^{404}\text{Suhrawardi, “The Red Intellect,” 23.}\]

\[^{404}\text{Ibid.}\]
“… one leg of which rests on the centre of the circle and the other on the line of the perimeter. No matter how much it revolves it still comes back to the place it started.”

At the middle of these eleven mountains, there is another mountain where the Tuba tree and the nest of Simurgh are located (see fig. 2.57). Suhrawardi, in The Red Intellect, explains that the qaf mountain is the first of the seven wonders. The only way to pass this mountain is to become Khizr (خضر).

Khizr is a spiritual person, who is referred in the

Figure 2.57: The Qaf mountain is described by Suhrawardi in The Red Intellect treatise as one of the seven wonders. Dimensions: H: 19 cm, W: 28 cm. Medium: watercolour and gold flakes on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m². Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2021.

\[405\] Ibid.
\[406\] For more information on the rest of the wonders, see Part Three. Also, refer to Suhrawardi, “The Red Intellect,” 22.
Quran as “one of Our servants to whom we had given mercy from us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge.”

**MAIN AXIS:**

In the *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature, the garden, the main *howz*, the *koushk* and its *ivan*, the entrance wall of the garden, and the horse are all located on the main axis of the painting. Amongst all these elements, the *howz* is located at the centre (see fig. 2.58).

In the Fin garden, the main access paths are located on the main axes of the garden. Both access paths and the water channels overlap (see fig. 2.59). In the first design of the Fin garden, the concept of the main axes was important, but over time and under different rules, the idea of main axes faded and this is observed in both the garden and buildings that were added later. The concept of the main axis in Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises is the same but a little different than the two mentioned artworks. In the author’s descriptive stories, he portrays a journey in which the traveler goes from one location or space to another. For instance, in *On the Reality of Love*, Suhrawardi explains that the traveler has to pass a nine-storey *koushk*, a three-storey *koushk*, five gateways, and a forest, to reach the destination, which is the City of the Soul. The main axis in the Suhrawardi’s story is the path of travel or “the spiritual path”.

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410 The journey and the travel path of the *On the Reality of Love* has been more analyzed in Part Three of this dissertation.
Figure 2.58: Elements such as the koushk and its ivan, the howz, the entrance to the garden, and the horse, are located on the main axis of the A Father Advises his Son about Love miniature. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.59: In the Fin garden, the main access paths and the main water channels overlap. Original figure modified by the author.
From the late fifteenth through the sixteenth centuries, miniaturists began painting beyond the limits of the frame as though it were broken. This is seen in miniatures of the Herat and Tabriz styles. This is also seen in *Haft Awrang*. The frame in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* is drawn broken on the top right of the miniature using a plane tree in order to emphasize the greatness of the tree. The frame is completely open on the left side. Also, the two front legs of the horse are located right at the bottom of the frame (see fig. 2.60). Although the left part of the frame is broken, the composition is still balanced. In the illustrated edition of *Haft Awrang*, the poems are also framed.

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but unlike the miniatures, they are not broken.

In the Persian garden, especially in the *koushk*, the frame is seen in different forms and shapes such as windows, doors, and openings in *ivans*. They also appear on the facade of the *koushk*, where tiles and brickwork have been designed in a way to emphasize the recessed and protruding areas.

The windows frame the garden from the inside of *koushk*. They have an imaginal or in-between role in the garden and connect the two worlds of inside and outside. An example of a window is *orosi* (ارسی)\(^{413}\), which is a type of window with an interlocked pattern such as the *girih* modes from the seventeenth century.\(^{414}\)

Furthermore, the frame is seen in the *howzes* and pools of the Persian garden. The outer edge of the *howz* frames the water inside, which reflects the garden, trees, the infinite sky, the cosmos, and the upper world (see figs. 2.61, 2.62, and 2.63).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2.61:** Comparison between the frame in the window and in the *howz*. Diagram by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2021.

\(^{413}\) A vertical opening wooden window with interwoven pattern and coloured glass. See Mohamad Karim Pirnia, *Ashnayi ba Mimari-i Islami-yi Iran* [Introduction to the Islamic Architecture of Iran], ed. Gholamhossein Memarian (Tehran: Iran University of Science and Technology, 1999), 355.

\(^{414}\) For more information on *orosi* and *girih* and their relationship with imaginal, refer to Koliji, *In-between: Architectural Drawing and Imaginative Knowledge in Islamic and Western Traditions*. For more information on the *girih* itself, see Gulru Necipoglu, and Mohammad Al-Asad, *The Topkapı Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture: Topkapı Palace Museum Library MS H. 1956* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995).
Figure 2.6: The window from the inside of the *koushk*. Hasht-Bihisht garden, Isfahan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.63: The *howz* frames the water inside, which reflects the garden trees, sky, and the cosmos. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
**LIGHT AND COLOUR**

In Persian miniatures, the light is not shining from a certain point, and does not shine from a special angle on the objects. All the elements of the Persian miniature are sources of light and have no shade.\(^{415}\) In addition to the clear and rich colours, the artist used gold and silver to express the divine-quality of the work. Such a space, being free from corporality and full of light, passes through the material perception of an observer and attracts his heart.\(^{416}\)

The entire page of *A Father Advises his Son about Love* is painted. The Persian painter used certain types of colours, including gold and possibly silver. He consciously refused to apply shading. The artist of Persian miniatures was not intending to imitate reality.\(^{417}\) The various and colourful elements of the miniature are unified through the use of colours. This conforms with the ideology of the Muslim artist, who considers the whole universe to be from a unique origin, despite all the existing variability.

The artist, with his viewpoint of the world, applied all the elements of nature in his work. The freshness of the trees, plants, and flowers, the brilliance of the golden background, and the gemstone colour of the land, all remind of the heavenly and eternal effect of these works of art.\(^{418}\)

In Persian gardens, the elements of light and colour are used in different ways. Since they are mostly in locations with high temperatures on the Persian plateau, the sun’s light is considered to be an important element. In the Fin garden, the role of light and water together

\(^{415}\) Shayegan, *Botha-yi Zihni va Khatirih-yi Azali* [Mental Idols and the Eternal Memory], 82.
\(^{416}\) Ibid.
\(^{418}\) Ghazizadeh, “Tabi’at dar Nigarihay-i Maktab Duvum Tabriz,” [Nature in the Miniatures of Tabriz II Style], 60.
is significant. Water reflects the light. The builder of the garden, with the help of light and shadow, attempted to create a luminous world to represent an imaginal world. As in *A Father Advises his Son about Love*, the entirety of the Fin garden is illuminated from the inside. There is a range of colours due to the selection of different kinds of flowers and plants, the blue tiles of the *howzes* and streams, as well as the coloured tiles in the facades of the *koushk*—all of this results in the creation of a colourful and gem-like scene for the observer in the garden.

One of the prominent colours in Persian gardens is green, which is considered the highest colour in the mystical experience. The mystic travels through black, a colour of confusion and disorientation, and is ultimately met with the green light which is associated with the Prophet of Islam.⁴¹⁹

Suhrwardi is best known for his philosophy related to light. In *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, he writes about the relationship between light and colour. He discusses other views and concludes that, “It is clear from what has been said that rays are not colour but that colours are not actualized without them. This is not a topic that we consider to be especially important. Even if it turned out that they were right about it, it would not disturb us.”⁴²⁰

Suhrwardi also discusses specific colours in his Persian treatises. In *The Red Intellect* treatise, he references colours such as red, black, and white. In the treatise, the narrator sees an elder person whose face was red.⁴²¹ Red symbolizes divine intellect.⁴²² The elder explains that his colour is actually white and luminous, but because he was thrown in a

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⁴²⁰ Suhrwardi, *The Philosophy of Illumination* [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 70.
⁴²² Amin Razavi, “The Significance of Suhrwardi’s Persian Sufi Writings in the Philosophy of Illumination,” 276.
black pit, he appears red as white turns red when it is mixed with black. Suhrawardi writes that the source of all colours is the Simurgh. In The Language of the Ants, he refers to the Simurgh and states that although all colours are from him, he himself has no colour. In the science of optics, all colours can be seen in the rainbow. Kamal al-Din Farisi (d. 1320), Persian scientist, provided explanation and analysis on the colour of the rainbow. According to Farisi, colours are the phenomena of light as a result of refractions and reflections. “Colours are lights and do not have an ontic reality in themselves.” The colours of the rainbow “results from two refractions of the decomposed white light and of one reflection in each rain droplet.”

TEXT AND CALLIGRAPHY

The art of writing is seen in both Persian art and architecture. It has a specific place in Islam, and the art of drawing was added to books afterwards. All the prominent painters were initially calligraphers, and they were aware of calligraphy techniques while they were drawing.

In the Haft Awrang collection, the miniatures and the texts are interconnected. They complete each other and one cannot exist without the other. In this collection, two adjacent pages contain the poem and the miniature of A Father Advises his Son about Love. The left page (verso) displays the miniature, and the right page (recto) shows the poem and the

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426 Ibid, 35.
calligraphy (see fig. 2.64). A few lines of texts are also visible on the miniature. As mentioned earlier in this part, the miniature is based on Jami’s poem, which is about a dialogue between a father and his son. This dialogue is expressed in two separate poems.

The first poem consists of a conversation in which the son asks his father some questions, and the second poem is where the father provides answers to his son. In the Haft Awrang collection, the artist depicted the miniature A Father Advises his Son about Love between these two poems. The first five lines of the recto page are the continuation of the first poem.

Figure 2.64: Two pages of the illustrated edition Haft Awrang of Jami. The left page (verso) presents the A Father Advises his Son about Love miniature, and the right page (recto) shows the poem and the calligraphy. The author used Adobe Photoshop to have the two images placed side by side, similar to the original collection. Source: National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Freer Collection, Purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1946.12.52. © Freer Gallery of Art, National Museum of Asian Art, used with permission. Copyright owner’s permission required for re-use.
Each line consists of two couplets. From the sixth to the last line is the second poem, and it continues on the next page. The miniature is located between the couplets of the first poem, and three of the couplets were written on the miniature, two of which are at the top and one is at the bottom (see fig. 2.65). The miniature also shows a youth writing verses on the wall of the ivan expressing his love and the painful feelings due to being separated from his beloved (see fig. 2.66).
Figure 2.65: Calligraphy in *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature. The miniature is located between the couplets of the poem, and three of the couplets are written on the miniature, two of which are at the top and one is at the bottom. The miniature also shows a youth writing love verses on the wall of the *ivan*. Original figure modified by the author.
These verses are a commentary on Jami’s poem and along with the verses, a person is also painted on the wall signifying the beloved.428 The youth’s verses are:

“I have written on the door and wall of every house about the grief of my love for you. That perhaps you might pass by one day and read the explanation of my condition. In my heart I had this face before me. With this face before me I saw that which I had in my heart. May your grief ...”429

The miniature A Father Advises his Son about Love illustrates Jami’s key message about love, and the distinction that exists between material love and divine love.430

During the Safavid era, text and calligraphy were mostly used on the tiles and brickwork of Islamic architecture and buildings such as mosques and tombs. For the gardens of this period, coloured tiles with islimi (اسليمی) patterns and sometimes with paintings were used. Islimi is a type of motif with the shape of spiraling ivy and tendril.

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428 Simpson, Persian Poetry, Painting, & Patronage: Illustrations in a Sixteenth-century Masterpiece, 27.
429 Ibid.
430 Ibid, 17.
The artist of the *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature used different patterns with a variety of colours throughout to illustrate tiles, the texture of the walls, paving, fabrics, and plates and bowls of fruits.

In the miniature, the artist portrayed the tiles using the most common motifs and patterns of the time. Dark blue tiles are used at the top of the *koushk’s* wall on the battlements, as well as on the background of *islimi* patterns at the two top corners of the arch of the *ivan* where flowers in yellow, red, white, light blue, and light green are drawn. A lotus flower with cream colour background is shown at the centre of the top left corner. The same dark blue tiles have been used around the window frame and also on the middle of the *ivan’s* interior wall. The bottom of the *ivan’s* interior wall is covered with different types of tiles with orange hexagonal patterns. Simple light blue tiles are seen around the arch of the *koushk*, and the bottom of the exterior wall of the *koushk* is covered with burgundy tiles that have pink *islimi* patterns (see fig. 2.67).
During the Safavid era, the art of tiling reached its zenith in Iran. The Safavid kings embraced the art of tiling and promoted its use in architecture. For example, in the Fin garden, excluding the Fin Bath, tiling is used in the howzes and streams as well as the I of the koushk. The islimi patterns with white, light blue, dark blue, yellow, and red are drawn on the tiles at the two top corners of the arches of the I of the koushk. Tile work is also used on the two vertical walls on the sides of the central opening of the koushk (see fig. 2.68). The interior walls and ceilings of the Fin garden buildings are not tiled but are painted.431 The patterns used for the paintings are either geometrical or they are drawings of different scenes. The Qajar’s shotorgalou has more paintings on its interior walls and ceilings in comparison to that of the Safavid. The Shamsa (شمس) pattern has been painted at the centre of the underside of the dome of the Qajar’s shotorgalou. Shamsa is a specific geometric pattern with a circle at the centre, which turns into a star at the edges. Under the ceilings of the Qajar’s shotorgalou, the geometric patterns that originate from the shamsa, cover the rest of the ceiling (see fig. 2.69). Under one of the ceilings, there are paintings of

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431 excluding the Fin Bath.
different scenes, such as a battle or the space of a garden. These paintings are depicted in the same style as Persian miniatures, but instead of using different colours, the artist has used only light blue (see fig. 2.70). The paintings on the interior walls and ceilings of the main koushk are simpler than the Qajar’s shotorgalou and they do not have the same level of detail (see fig. 2.71).

Figure 2.69: Top right: The geometric patterns under one of the ceilings of the Qajar’s shotorgalou. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.70: Bottom right: The geometric patterns under the other ceiling of the Qajar’s shotorgalou. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure 2.71: Bottom left: The paintings of the ceiling of the main koushk are simpler and do not have the same level of detail as the Qajar’s shotorgalou. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
In *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature, the use of pattern is also visible on the brickwork of the *koushk*’s wall. The wall of the garden, however, shows simple and regular brickwork with no specific patterns (see figs. 2.72, 2.73, and 2.74).

Figure 2.72: The patterns of the *koushk*’s wall and the walls of the garden. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.73: The brickworks of the *koushk*’s wall.

Figure 2.74: The simple pattern of the garden wall.
As discussed in the “Wall of the Garden” section, the exterior walls of the Fin garden do not have any decorations, while the walls of the main koushk and the buildings inside the garden have more detailed motifs and patterns. The builder of the koushk used recessed brickwork on the I to add to the aesthetic appeal of the building (see figs. 2.75, 2.76, and 2.77).

In the miniature, the walls of the entrance path are covered with two different types of geometrical girih patterns that alternate. The third type of girih pattern is seen at the top of
the entrance gate. With a closer look at the miniature, I observed that the *girih* pattern is also used to cover the bottom part of the *koushk*’s window (see figs. 2.78, 2.79, 2.80, and 2.81).

Figure 2.78: Right: The *girih* patterns used on the walls of the entrance path, at the top of the entrance gate, and on the bottom part of the *koushk*’s window. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.79: Top left: The *girih* patterns on the bottom part of the *koushk*’s window.

Figure 2.80: Middle left: The *girih* patterns at the top of the entrance gate.

Figure 2.81: Bottom left: The *girih* patterns on the two walls of the entrance path.
In the Fin garden, the use of girih is seen on the wooden windows and railings of the koushk (see fig. 2.8), and simple geometric patterns are used for the interior wooden doors.

The artist of *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature painted two types of patterns for the paving (see fig. 2.83). The first, which has geometric patterns in light blue and white-cream lines, is used for the paving the garden (see fig. 2.84), and the second type, simple light green rectangular patterns, is used for the paving of the entrance path (see fig. 2.85). In the garden area, the artist depicted the boundary lines around the howz and its streams with geometrical patterns in burgundy and light green. The boundary lines and the patterns stop where the streams reach the garden’s wall (see fig. 2.84).

In the Fin garden, the paths are paved with small rocks and geometrical lines (see fig. 2.86). The paving continues up to the garden’s buildings. Inside the buildings, the paving stones are in the shape of square and rectangular stones with a smoother surface (see fig. 2.87).
Figure 2.84: Paving with geometrical patterns in light blue and white-cream lines. Geometrical patterns in burgundy and light green used for the boundary lines around the howz and its stream. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.85: Paving of the entrance path with simple light green rectangular patterns. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.83: Two types of patterns used for the paving. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.86: The garden paths are paved with small rocks and geometrical lines. Diagram by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2023.

Figure 2.87: Inside the buildings are paved with rectangular stones. Diagram by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2023.
In *A Father Advises his Son about Love* miniature, the artist used patterns on different types of fabrics, such as cushions, clothes, the saddle pad of the horse, and the Persian carpet on the floor of the *koushk’s ivan* (see fig. 2.88). Two types of cushions are illustrated in the miniature. One is green with *islimi* patterns on which the observer of the chess game leans (see fig. 2.89). The other type is drawn in orange, light blue, and yellow patterns and can be found at the bottom right of the garden on which an individual leans (see fig. 2.90). The artist also used patterns on the clothes of people depicted in the miniature. These individuals belong to an upper echelon of the hierarchy in the palace or society. Those with simpler coverings are part of the lower-class (see figs. 2.91 and 2.92). The saddle of the horse, located right at the bottom centre of the miniature, is also covered with fabric showing a battle between the *Simurgh* and another mythical creature. The saddle pad is dark blue with yellow *islimi* patterns and white, red, and purple flowers. The centre of the saddle pad’s fabric is yellow, and its side lines are light blue both with *islimi* patterns (see fig. 2.93).
Figure 2.88: Middle right: Patterns on different types of fabrics. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.91: Middle left: Patterns on the clothes of the individuals belong to an upper hierarchy in the palace or in the society. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.92: Bottom left: Simpler clothes with no pattern belong to the lower-class group of people.

Figure 2.89: Top left: The green cushion. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.90: Top right: Cushion with orange, light blue, and yellow patterns. Original figure modified by the author.

Figure 2.93: Bottom right: Patterns used on the saddle’s cover and the saddle pad. Original figure modified by the author.
In the miniature, the use of patterns is also noticeable in the design of the Persian carpet which covers the floor of the *koushk’s ivan* (see fig. 2.94). The artist depicted the carpet with a white background, blue *islimi* patterns, and red flowers. The background of the centre part of the carpet is cream with blue *islimi* patterns and red and purple flowers. The background of the side lines is also cream with cream *islimi* patterns and red and blue flowers (see fig. 2.95). In the Persian garden, the Persian carpet is to be placed at the centre of the *ivans* or rooms of the *koushk*. The art of the Persian carpet developed based on the mosaics of Persian palaces. These coverings provided a cool reception area to those coming in from hot temperatures. In wintertime however, there was a need to cover the cold paving with a woolen material, which gave rise to the Persian carpet, and the Sassanids were the first dynasty to produce such carpets. The Safavids followed what the Sassanids began and produced carpets with the garden as the subject.

Figures 2.94 and 2.95: Patterns on the carpet of the *koushk’s ivan*. Original figure modified by the author.
In particular, the patterns of the Persian carpet were inspired by the elements of the Persian garden, such as its plants, symmetry, quarter order, and patterns. In the early seventeenth century and during the rule of Shah Abbas I, Persian carpets, which were called *chahar-bagh* or four gardens, became prominent (see fig. 2.96). The pattern of these carpets was inspired by the pattern of the Persian garden’s four divisions based on the two main axes.  

The cypress tree with a bended tip, or *boteh-miri* (بته میری), was a decorative motif used frequently in the patterns of Persian carpets as well as other arts.  

The element of the carpet has been mentioned by Suhrawardi as well. In *On the Reality of Love* treatise, Suhrawardi uses the symbolic element of carpet to describe the fifth gate. His explanation of this element is analyzed in Part Three of this dissertation.

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As mentioned above, the arts of Persian literature, miniatures, and the Persian garden are interrelated. These three arts, each with their own definitions, meanings, details, symbols, and metaphors, were influenced by one another throughout history, and what is shared between them are the elements of the Persian garden and the imaginal world.

Philosophers, or artists following these philosophers, made every effort to express the idea of imagination in their works, but due to the political environment they lived in, they were not able to disclose different concepts of Islamic philosophy, including the concept of imagination, to the public. They had to express them in a mystical way. Poets, whose works were a means of revealing their thoughts about society were only able to express them in a mysterious way, and only certain people understood their writings. The mystic poets created their works under the influence of nature and the Persian gardens. The Persian miniaturists, under the influence of both poetry and the garden, illustrated their art, and the builder of the Persian garden was influenced by philosophy and a poetic description. With regards to the question of whether the Safavid garden builders were aware of the work of the Safavid miniaturists or the philosophical concepts of dominant figures such as Suhrawardi, although there is no direct source to develop the mentioned connections, I argue that they are linked due to being exposed to the cultural context of their time.

The Persian garden is amongst one of the finest and most significant Persian arts and is considered an earthly image of spiritual reality. The purpose of creating Persian gardens was not only limited to the material world, but also was a mystic expression of the reality of heaven; a concept that is merely understood and perceived by certain people with the necessary wisdom. As such, the main intention of the design of Persian gardens was to
create an imaginal world to illustrate heaven, and to represent and reflect the eternal
garden of Paradise on earth. The Persian garden and its elements combine to act as an
imaginal world. The elements themselves also represent an imaginal world. For instance,
the *girih* window is an imaginal world in-between the world of inside (inside the *koushk*
or the chamber) and the world of outside (the *koushk’s ivan*).
3: SUHRAWARDI AND ON THE REALITY OF LOVE

... If I were to tell you of my province and describe the marvels that are there, you would not understand or comprehend. Nonetheless, it is a province which is the last of our provinces. Someone who knows the way can reach it in nine stages from your realm. I shall tell you of that province in such a way that you may understand.

Suhrawardi

This part of the dissertation examines Suhrawardi’s treatise On the Reality of Love. This piece belongs to the third group of Suhrawardi’s works and mystical Persian treatises. In this text, Suhrawardi discusses the elements of the Persian garden more than in his other writing. In addition, the treatise focuses on the theme “love” as do the poem and miniature case studies discussed in the previous section. I will analyze the relationship between the elements of the Persian garden with Suhrawardi’s imaginal descriptions in On the Reality of Love; elements such as koushk, chamber, door and gateway, corridor, divan, water spring, wall, and carpet.

This part also presents my drawings of the imaginal elements and spaces that Suhrawardi describes in On the Reality of Love. To create these, I utilized my skills as an architect and based them on my own imaginal depictions in the analysis in previous parts of this dissertation. Amongst different mediums, I intentionally chose watercolor for my drawings, as it has the element of light embedded therein and provides the reflection of light from the surface of the paper. I argue that this is a significant feature in the imaginal world of Suhrawardi, knowing that he was the master of illuminations. The drawings are

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neither entirely three-dimensional, nor purely two-dimensional. The intention was to portray the imaginal world as something between the two planes.  

3.1 Suhrawardi and the Spiritual Journey

Suhrawardi was of the view that one would feel lost or disoriented if they had a mystical encounter without much knowledge of philosophy. According to Suhrawardi, when people become an expert in both philosophy and spirituality, it is then that the existence of this world becomes dependent on their existence.  

As referenced in Part One, the third group of Suhrawardi’s works classified by Henry Corbin includes Persian treatises—narrations and stories accompanied by spiritual and symbolic allegories written with the purpose of teaching and guiding the public.  

Suhrawardi based the format of his narrations on Avicenna’s treatises, with the main distinction being that Avicenna’s recitals were written in Arabic, and Suhrawardi wrote in Persian. Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises are about the conversations between the narrator and an elder who acts as a spiritual guide. They discuss philosophical and mystical topics in a mysterious way and in the form of symbols.  

Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises are spiritual and symbolic allegories that take place in the imaginal world. They are a set of stories that include hidden meanings that are only visible

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435 I drew the initial drawings with black pen on paper, but for the final illustrations, I used watercolour on watercolour sheets of 300 g/m², in 19 cm (7.5 in) by 28 cm (11 in), and one in 28 cm (11 in) by 38 cm (15 in). I selected these sheet sizes for better clarity and appearance. I also used gold flakes to display where the emphasis of the drawings should be.

436 Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, 1993), 217.

437 Thackston, Suhrawardi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises, xiv.

438 The recitals of visual nature were not common as they would provide limited flexibility in literature and poetry. Instead, mathnavi and ghazal were used for mystical philosophy as didactic and lyric forms, respectively. (W. M. Thackston, Suhrawardi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises, xiv.)
in the world of imagination and not to the outer senses. Each story describes a specific spiritual experience and reveals certain symbols and metaphors. This helps the reader understand the features of *ishraqi* philosophy, and the spiritual beliefs of the author himself.

Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises describe stages through which a soul needs to pass, in order to be released from the bonds and fetters of the material world. For the human soul to reach Absolute Perfection, it must disconnect from the material world. In Suhrawardi’s works, this disconnection is represented in the form of a journey. For instance, in *The Treatise of the Birds*, the spiritual journey of the man from his place of origin, to the material world, and then back to his origins again, is symbolically and metaphorically explained. In the story, a group of birds is captured in a trap. They try to first free themselves but encounter obstacles and eventually, through spiritual cleansing, overcome hardship and free themselves. The story represents man’s attachment to material world, where they have difficulties going back to their spiritual origin and instead settle in captivity. Suhrawardi finds this the greatest threat to man’s spiritual journey. In order for human to free themselves from this material world, they require a guide or a master to provide directions on this journey. Having a guide, who knows the path to the Final Land, is necessary for someone who intends to ascend the spiritual mountain and reach the summit.

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442 *The Treatise of the Birds* was first written by Avicenna. Suhrawardi then rephrased and translated it into Persian. (See: Thackston, *Suhrawardi: The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, xvii-xviii.)
443 Amin Razavi, “The Significance of Suhrawardi’s Persian Sufi Writings in the Philosophy of Illumination,” 271.
444 Ibid, 273.
445 Ibid, 274.
446 Nasr, “The Place of the School of Isfahan in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism,” 10.
is the final destination of all spiritual journeys to reach the absolute God. In other words, Final Land is the Paradise promised to the true Muslims.

A person’s spiritual journey can be either internal through the microcosm and the inner self, or external through the macrocosm, the cosmos and celestial spheres. Suhrwardi’s first five Persian treatises discuss external journeys in different forms and arrangements, and include allegorical descriptions of the cosmos and the celestial spheres. In these treatises, Suhrwardi followed the celestial system described by Ptolemy, and used different numbers to represent the spheres. The numbers each represent a specific celestial order. However, the manner by which each sphere is presented differs in each treatise.

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447 The Quran and hadith were the primary references in Islam for the concepts related to cosmology. The cosmic elements such as the earth and heaven, the Tablet, the Throne, the Pen, and the Footstool, are mentioned in the Quran. (See: Akkach, Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas, 1-2.)

448 Thackston, Suhrwardi: The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises, xvi.

449 Ibid, xvii.

450 Ibid.

451 The numbers such as seven, eight, nine, ten, and eleven, each represents a specific celestial order. See: Thackston, Suhrwardi: The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises, xviii.

- The order of number seven: 1. The Sphere of Saturn, 2. The Sphere of Jupiter, 3. The Sphere of Mars, 4. The Sphere of Sun, 5. The Sphere of Venus, 6. The Sphere of Mercury, 7. The Sphere of Moon
- The order of number eight: 1. The Sphere of Fixed Stars, 2. The Sphere of Saturn, 3. The Sphere of Jupiter, 4. The Sphere of Mars, 5. The Sphere of Sun, 6. The Sphere of Venus, 7. The Sphere of Mercury, 8. The Sphere of Moon
- The order of number nine: 1. The Great Sphere of Diurnal Motion, 2. The Sphere of Fixed Stars, 3. The Sphere of Saturn, 4. The Sphere of Jupiter, 5. The Sphere of Mars, 6. The Sphere of Sun, 7. The Sphere of Venus, 8. The Sphere of Mercury, 9. The Sphere of Moon
- The order of number ten: 1. The Great Sphere of Diurnal Motion, 2. The Sphere of Fixed Stars, 3. The Sphere of Saturn, 4. The Sphere of Jupiter, 5. The Sphere of Mars, 6. The Sphere of Sun, 7. The Sphere of Venus, 8. The Sphere of Mercury, 9. The Sphere of Moon, 10. Sublunar region (including the Spheres of Ether (Suhrwardi used the Farsi word Athir) and Zamharir)
- The order of number eleven: 1. The Great Sphere of Diurnal Motion, 2. The Sphere of Fixed Stars, 3. The Sphere of Saturn, 4. The Sphere of Jupiter, 5. The Sphere of Mars, 6. The Sphere of Sun, 7. The Sphere of Venus, 8. The Sphere of Mercury, 9. The Sphere of Moon, 10 and 11. The Sphere of Ether and Zamharir

452 Ibid, xvii.
The internal journey is best described in the treatise *On the Reality of Love (risala fi haqiqat al-ishq)* in which, Suhrawardi describes it in the sequence of the main elements of creation, the outer senses, the vegetal senses, and the animal senses. This treatise is written based on Avicenna’s *Treatise on Love (risala fi’l-ishq)*. A detailed discussion of this internal journey is provided in section 3.3.

### 3.2 SUHRAWARDI AND THE GARDEN

After a study of Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises, I observed that he repeatedly references gardens. For example, in *The Treatise of the Birds*, he describes a garden with all its elements. He alludes to a group of birds that are on their way to the eighth mountain or the Mount *qaf* and fall upon a garden at the seventh mountain:

> Therefore we alighted on that mountain, where we saw beautifully decorated gardens with pleasant edifices, pavilions, trees laden with fruit, and flowing water. It was so beautiful that it bewitched the eye and seduced the mind from the body. The songs of the birds were the like of which we had never heard, and there were aromas and scents that had never reached our nostrils. We ate and drank our fill of fruit and water and settled in as though to stay forever, but just then a voice arose saying that we must prepare to leave, for there is no security without precaution and no fortress stronger than skepticism.  

Suhrawardi then describes how the birds continue on their journey until they arrive at the tall eighth mountain, which is full of “good things”. At the top of the mountain, there is a city where the king resides. The birds come across a *koushk* and a courtyard through which they pass. Behind a curtain, another beautiful courtyard leads to a chamber.

> … a pavilion and courtyard so vast we could not comprehend it visually. As we passed through, a curtain was raised and another courtyard came into view, so much more beautiful and spacious that the first paled into insignificance by comparison. Then we came into a chamber and, as we set foot inside, the resplendence of the

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king could be seen from afar. In that brilliance our eyes were dazzled, our heads spun, and we lost consciousness.\textsuperscript{454}

In another treatise, \textit{The Sound of Gabriel’s Wings}, Suhrawardi talks about the garden and describes a \textit{khanaqah} (خانقاه), a Sufi meeting place, with two doors—one opens to a city, and the other to a field (\textit{sahra}, صحرا) and garden (\textit{bustan}, بوستان). The narrator closes the door to the city or the material world, and opens the one to the field and garden, or the spiritual world, in which he observes ten old men from \textit{nakuja-abad}.\textsuperscript{455} At the end of the treatise, the door to the field and garden is closed to the narrator and the ten old men disappear. The door to the city opens,\textsuperscript{456} and the narrator returns to the material world.

In \textit{On the Reality of Love} however, Suhrawardi does not make reference to a garden specifically. Instead, he describes certain elements such as \textit{koushk}, chamber, door and gateway, corridor, water spring, \textit{divan}, carpet, and the main elements of creation including water, air, earth, and fire, which are all elements of the Persian garden. While Suhrawardi describes these in stories taking place in the imaginal world, such elements are symbolic with complex and deep mystical meanings. This following section provides a detailed study of \textit{On the Reality of Love}.

\section*{3.3 Suhrawardi and \textit{On the Reality of Love}}

As mentioned in Part Two, Persian poets, mystics, and philosophers have used secrets and mysteries symbolically in their works. \textit{Ramz} (رمز) or secret is “any sign, mentioning, or

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{454} Ibid, 6.  
\textsuperscript{455} Suhrawardi, “The Sound of Gabriel’s Wing,” 9-10.  
\textsuperscript{456} Ibid, 19.
\end{flushleft}
expression having a meaning and concept beyond what is seen”457 or “a dialogue or speech between two or more people hidden from others.”458

Islamic mystics and philosophers have strived to pass on these secrets to other generations in stories or poems.459 Only those who know the language of ramz are capable of understanding the ramz itself. In their works, poets and philosophers often express their secrets in the “language of birds”, which has been taken from the Quran’s narrations.460

Suhrawardi alluded to the language of birds in his The Red Intellect treatise and explained it in an allegorical manner:

One of my dear friends asked me if the birds understand each other’s language.
‘Yes, they do,’ I replied.
‘How do you know?’ he asked.
‘In the beginning,’ I said, ‘when the form-giver wanted to bring me into actuality, he created me in the form of a falcon. In the realm where I was were other falcons, and we spoke together and understood each other’s words.’461

In On the State of Childhood, Suhrawardi explains that the divine secrets should not be revealed to those who are not able to understand such mysteries: “It is a mistake to say certain things in certain places,” he said. “It is also a mistake to ask certain things of certain people….462 Furthermore, in his Hikmat al-Ishraq, Suhrawardi states that the mysteries

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457 Pour-namdarian, Ramz va Dastanha-yi Ramzi dar Adab-i Farsi [Mystery and Mystical Stories in Persian Literature], 4.
460 The Language of Birds has been stated in the Quran in verse 27:16: “And Solomon inherited David. He said, ‘o people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty.’”
are to be told only by those who have the knowledge to teach the Divine Book: “… seek
the mysteries thereof from one who holds the authority to teach the Book.” 463

Symbolic and metaphoric words and expressions are used extensively in Persian literature
and poetry to express secrets. In particular, allegorical words and numbers often convey a
specific concept and meaning. In The Sound of Gabriel’s Wings, Suhrawardi emphasizes
the use of symbols: “My untutored one, don’t you know that all these are symbols? If taken
at face value, all the Incoherents produce nothing.” 464

*On the Reality of Love* treatise is based on the story of Jacob, Joseph (Yusuf), and
Zuleikha465 in the Quran.466 Love is one of the main themes, and Suhrawardi employs
symbolic elements to represent the lover and the beloved.

*On the Reality of Love* begins:

> If there were no love and no grief from love, who would have heard the many
> beautiful words spoken by you? If there were no breeze to snatch away the tresses,
> who would have shown the lover the beloved’s cheeks?467

Suhrawardi believes that the Arabic root of *ishq* (عشق, love) is *ashiqa* (عشقه, ivy), a type of
plant that grows from the roots of trees. At first, *ashiqa’s* roots harden in the soil, then they
bud and grow, and subsequently twist around the trunk of the tree, until the whole tree is
wrapped, which leads to the tree’s death.468

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463 Suhrawardi, *The Philosophy of Illumination* [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 155.
465 Zuleikha, stated in the Quran as the wife of Azeez, was in love with Yusuf (Joseph) the Prophet. Hafiz and
Rumi, the great Sufi mystic poets, have mentioned poems about her. For Rumi, Zuleikha's obsession is an
example of a true deep love that any person can have for another. In On the reality of love, Suhrawardi
mentions her name while Love tries to explain about the land that he belongs to.
466 The Quran 12.
468 Ibid, 72.
Suhravardi also writes about the “seed of the heart” planted in the celestial kingdom or *bagh-I malakut* (باغ ملکوت). When this seed is nourished by the “water of knowledge” and the “blasts of God’s breath”, it matures into many “spiritual branches”, and experiences perfection. Then, love appears from a corner, twists around the tree, and draws all the “moisture of humanity”, after which the tree turns into an “absolute soul”. The tree is now a part of the “divine garden”.469

In *On the Reality of Love*, Suhravardi expresses that the first thing God created was a shining pearl known as Intellect to which God gifted three features, namely Beauty (*husn, حسن*), Love (*ishq, عشق*), and Sorrow (*huzn, حزن*). In the story, these features are represented by three brothers: Beauty, the eldest brother, first went to the city of Adamic existence and from there he went to see Joseph; Love, the middle brother, went to Egypt and Zuleikha, and Sorrow, the youngest, went to Canaan and met Jacob. The peak of the narration is in section six where Suhravardi describes “a spiritual map of the universe.”470 In this section, when Love meets Zuleikha, he is asked where he is from. Love replies by starting to describe the land he belongs to and explains that only those who know the path may find that land. He continues to describe a city that has a three-story *koushk* with special features and several chambers and explains that there are five gateways through which the traveler must pass in order to reach the Final Land.

My discussion of *On the Reality of Love*, will now focus on the elements of the Persian garden, their features, characteristics, mysteries, and symbols.

469 Ibid, 73-4.
470 Amin Razavi, “The Significance of Suhravardi’s Persian Sufi Writings in the Philosophy of Illumination,” 280.
Suhrawardi describes particular elements related to the Persian garden to express his mystic concepts including a nine-storey koushk above which there is an arch called shahristan-I jan or the City of the Soul. At the gate to the city, there is a gatekeeper, Jawed Khirad (جاوید خرد) or Eternal Wisdom. In order to reach the city, one has to free the six ropes from the four arches, “make a harness of love”, and find the path to the microcosm. In the city, there is a three-storey koushk.

While Suhrawardi does not provide a description of the nine-storey koushk, he describes the three-storey one in detail: on every floor there are chambers and each has a divan. The first floor consists of two chambers, and someone is sitting in the first, which has a divan made from water. His nature is based on humidity. He is very intelligent but suffers from forgetfulness. In the second chamber of the first floor, the divan is made of fire with someone sitting whose nature is based on dryness. He is very quick, unclean, and is not forgetful. The second floor also has two chambers. The first chamber includes a divan made of air with a governor whose nature is based on coldness. He is a liar and he speaks nonsense. The second chamber consists of a divan made of vapour where someone whose nature is based on heat is sitting. Sometimes he is like an angel and sometimes like a devil. On the third floor, there is only one chamber with a divan made of pure and clean earth and with someone sitting who has a balanced nature and is famous for being trustworthy (see fig. 3.1). These chambers and their divans have been built on the basis of the main elements of creation namely water, fire, air, vapour, and earth.

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471 Suhrawardi used the Farsi word bukhar.
Figure 3.1: The three-storey koushk and its chambers, described by Suhrawardi in his *On the Reality of Love* treatise. Dimensions: H: 38 cm (15 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: watercolour and gold flakes on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m². Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2021.
Suhrawardi in his Persian treatises and *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, refers to the four elements of creation: water, fire, air, and earth. In *On the Reality of Love*, he mentions these elements as “four different things” or “four natures.” In the same treatise however, he adds an extra element, vapour, and describes five elements. He describes these elements in the chambers of the three-storey *koushk*.

In the *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, Suhrawardi explains and also criticizes what the Peripatetics believed. According to Suhrawardi, the Peripatetics believed that the nature of water is cold and wet, air is hot and wet, earth is cold and dry, and fire is hot and dry. They also believed that unlike dryness, it is easy for wetness or moisture to change shape or be divided.

Suhrawardi argues that this is not the case in reality for the element of fire:

> ... fire turns into air in a moment, and its barrier becomes so subtle that light can no longer be made evident in it. Once heat is no longer predominant in it, only air remains. One of the properties of heat is that it makes things more subtle. If fire did remain fire or retained the heat that had been in it, anything that it encountered in a straight line would be burnt, but this is not so.  

He also argues that fire is not dry due to desiccation and states that desiccation happens when there is a lack of humidity, however, a lack of humidity makes the fire subtle, and not dry. Suhrawardi categorizes elements into three types: opaque, translucent, and subtle. He explains that fire is a form of light and states, “The fire that possesses light is noble because of its luminosity.”

As explained above, on each level of this *koushk*, there are two chambers. The number two refers to Gabriel’s wings in *The Sound of Gabriel’s Wings*. In this treatise, Suhrawardi

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474 Suhrawardi, *The Philosophy of Illumination* [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 125.
475 Ibid, 125-6.
476 Ibid, 128.
quotes the Quran’s verse, and emphasizes the nobility of the number two. He explains that this number is the closest to number one. Therefore, it is nobler to have two wings instead of three or more.477

In Suhrawardí’s portrayals of the *koushk* and its chambers, I noticed a theme of contradiction. On the first floor, there are two chambers, one built from water and the other fire, and the person sitting in one is forgetful and the other has a good memory. The second floor of the *koushk* includes two chambers—one of air and the other of vapour. The nature of the persons sitting in these two chambers is based on coldness and heat, respectively. While there is a contradiction between the elements of the first two floors, the third floor of the *koushk* consists of only one chamber and it is made of earth. This represents balance and equilibrium. Earth also plays a symbolic role for the *qaf* mountain. In the *koushk* described by Suhrawardí, similar to the *qaf* mountain, the traveler must pass through different chambers and contradictions in order to reach the top floor, or in other words, the summit.

Two contradicting things such as black and white, hot and cold, or dry and wet, cannot simultaneously be present.478 Suhrawardí suggests that if there were no conflict between contradicting objects, people’s existence could not have been achieved. He believed that the emergence of various elements in this world would not have been possible without the acceptance of contradiction.479 While there is a contradiction amongst the elements of the *koushk*, Suhrawardí’s intention was to express the unity that exists amongst them. Despite

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478 Ebrahimi Dinani, *Sho’ā’ Andisha va Shuhud dar Falsafa-yi Suhrawardi* [Thinking and Intuition of Suhrawardí’s Philosophy], 196.
479 Ibid, 200.
the contradictions seen on each floor, absence of each element would prevent the formation of the *koushk*’s structure.

The *koushk* of the Persian garden is one of the most exclusive Persian traditional buildings. It is a delicate and skilled contemplation of functionality and beauty. The structure is not separated from the main elements of creation. Water, fire, vapour, air, and earth are found in all the materials and spaces of the *koushk*. Water, after passing through the garden, enters the *koushk* area and manifests inside a pool located at the centre of the *koushk*. With the help of porches and windows located on all four sides, the air is directed inward flowing through all interior areas and chambers. Fire and earth manifest their presence in another manner—the brick walls of the *koushk* are created by shaping wet clay, which is then hardened by fire. The presence of fire itself used to be seen in the fire temples in pre-Islamic Persia, and the *koushk* structure in the Persian garden has been taken from the fire temples of the Sassanid era. Sassanid fire temple’s architecture was a four-vaulted building with a dome. At the centre of those temples, fires used to burn and be admired. In the Persian garden, fire has been replaced by water, but the presence and influence of fire persists (see fig. 3.2).
In the Quran, garden and fire are contrasted, and the contradiction between them is also seen in Islamic culture. Muslims believe that the afterworld is based on their conduct, behaviour, and actions on this earthly world. As mentioned in Part Two, what is waiting for the true believers is the garden of Paradise; a garden that is full of fruit trees and flowing rivers. In contrast, what is waiting for sinners is the burning fire of hell: “As for those who.disbelieve and deny His signs, they are the people of the fire of Hell, who will live there eternally.”

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481 The Quran 2:39.
Traditional Persian buildings were designed based on a spatial hierarchy and so moving from one space to another was never meaningless. The main goal of this hierarchy was to ensure the observer is ready prior to entering each space. Such spatial hierarchy is also seen in the levels and floors of the koushk of the Persian garden, but with the difference that spaces were built on top of each other rather than next to one another.

As mentioned in Part Two of this dissertation and under the Koushk section, the koushk usually consists of two or more floors, the main purpose of which was to provide the means to watch scenes of the garden and surrounding areas from a higher vantage point.\textsuperscript{482} Moving up each floor, the structure of the koushk becomes lighter and lighter, and the number of windows and openings increase;\textsuperscript{483} similar to On the Reality of Love, in which the koushk has two chambers on the first and second floors, which include more walls and structure. The third floor of the koushk’s structure becomes lighter as it has only one chamber.


\textsuperscript{483} Ibid, 66.
Amongst Suhrawardi’s treatises, *On the Reality of Love* represents an example of one’s journey into the inner self or microcosm. In this narration, Suhrawardi used different symbolic elements and scenes to convey this internal journey. Doors and gateways for example, are one of these elements. In *On the Reality of Love*, Suhrawardi portrays five gateways and, similar to the chambers of the *koushk*, each has someone sitting there. The first gate has two doors, with each door including an almond-shape *divan*, and a white and black curtain with several ropes.

![Figure 3.3: The first gate, described by Suhrawardi in his *On the Reality of Love* treatise. Dimensions: H: 19 cm (7.5 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: watercolour and gold flakes on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m². Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2021.](image-url)
This gate is served by the Look-out who is able to see many years ahead (see fig. 3.3). The second gate also has two doors, each of which has a twisted and long corridor, and a circular divan at the end where the master of news and information sits (see fig. 3.4). The third gate has two doors and two corridors and leads to a chamber, in which there are two divans where someone is sitting. He has a servant named Air, who goes around the world on a daily basis (see fig. 3.5). The fourth gate is bigger than the first three and has a water spring at its centre with a divan in the middle. The spring is surrounded by a wall made of white pearls.

Figure 3.4: The second gate, described by Suhrawardi in his On the Reality of Love treatise. Dimensions: H: 19 cm (7.5 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: watercolour and gold flakes on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m². Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2021.
Someone seated on the divan is known as Taster, and he is capable of making a distinction between the “four different things”\textsuperscript{484} (see fig. 3.6). Suhrawardi describes the fifth gate as one made of carpet, and it extends around the city. Someone sits on the carpet and is known

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.5.png}
\caption{The third gate, described by Suhrawardi in his \textit{On the Reality of Love} treatise. Dimensions: H: 28 cm (11 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: watercolour and gold flakes on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m\textsuperscript{2}. Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2021.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{484} The four different things mentioned here are considered as sweetness, sourness, saltiness, and bitterness.
as the *Distinguisher* who also governs the “eight different things” (see fig. 3.7).

Suhrawardi’s five gateways are representatives of human’s outer senses. While these senses are amongst the tools and means of cognition, they are the primary means of communication in the material world. In both *Partownama* and *Hikmat-al-Ishraq*, Suhrawardi classifies senses into two types: outer and inner.\(^{485}\) According to Suhrawardi,

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\(^{485}\) Suhrawardi, *The Book of Radiance* [*Partownama*], 29. Also, Suhrawardi’s inner and outer senses, and their different subdivisions, are categorized based on Avicenna’s classification. (See: Nasr, “Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi al-Maqtul,” 392.)
outer senses are classified into five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. He considers sight to be nobler than the others as it is used to receive light from the planets and enables one to see their surroundings, and identify the shape and volume of objects, lights, shadows, and colours. Suhrawardi believes hearing to be the most delicate one, since it is through hearing that one understands music, songs of nightingales, and the sound of water pouring. In Suhrawardi’s view, however, touch is the most essential sense because it allows animals to protect themselves from danger. Touch is a sense that covers

![Figure 3.7: The fifth gate, described by Suhrawardi in his On the Reality of Love treatise. Dimensions: H: 19 cm (7.5 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: watercolour and gold flakes on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m².](image)


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486 Suhrawardi, *The Philosophy of Illumination* [Hikmat al-Ishraq], 133.
487 Ibid.
488 Ibid.
the entire surface of the body; it is stronger in some parts, while weaker in others. It enables one to perceive “the eight different things” Suhrawardi references in On the Reality of Love: wetness, dryness, heat, coldness, lightness, heaviness, softness, and roughness.

According to Suhrawardi, it is the soul rather than the eye that sees objects. One is only able to see the upper world if the soul detaches from the outer senses. Similarly, in order to hear sounds and smell odours, there is no need for the physical ears and nose. In A Day with a Group of Sufis, Suhrawardi states that the outer senses have to be closed in order for the inner senses to perceive: “When the inner eye is opened, the outer eye should be sealed to everything.” This is similar for all the other senses.

The second group of senses classified by Suhrawardi is the inner senses, and they are also divided into five types. These senses help analyze and process information that the outer senses have acquired. The first sense is the common sense (hiss mushtarık, حس مشترک) in which all the tangibles are gathered together, like a pool where water comes from five separate streams. Fantasy (khayal, خیال) is the second sense, and it is a place where common sense is collected and stored. The third sense, apprehension (wahm, وهم) commands sensible things that are not perceived by the outer senses and the fourth is imagination (mutakhayyila, متخیله), which synthesizes and processes information, and its functionality goes beyond that of apprehension. Memory (hafiza, حافظه) is the fifth sense, and it is where apprehension is saved and preserved. The inner senses provide a link between the

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489 Suhrawardi, The Book of Radiance [Partownama], 29.
491 Suhrawardi, “A Day with a Group of Sufis,” 40.
492 Amin Razavi, Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination, 96.
493 Nasr, “Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi al-Maqtul,” 393. See also, Mehdi Amin Razavi, Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination, 49. The English translation of Suhrawardi’s Partownama used the following terms
material and immaterial worlds.\textsuperscript{494} Suhrawardi did not refer to the inner senses in \textit{On the Reality of Love} and only represented the outer senses by using symbolic elements.

In \textit{The Red Intellect} treatise, Suhrawardi mentions ten wardens, which represent the ten outer and inner senses. The five inner senses are symbolized by five wardens facing towards the narrator. The other five wardens face away from the narrator and represent the outer senses.\textsuperscript{495}

In total, Suhrawardi discusses five gates and eight doors in \textit{On the Reality of Love}. These numbers are not random and include hidden meanings and concepts. Doors and gateways, elements of the Persian garden, have been referenced frequently in the Quran. Specifically, in three verses, the doors to Paradise, and in two verses, the doors to heaven are referenced.\textsuperscript{496} In another verse, a closed door and a thick wall are metaphors for the wall between heaven and hell: “...And a wall will be placed between them with a door, its interior containing mercy, but on the outside of it is torment.”\textsuperscript{497}

\textsuperscript{494} Nasr, “Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi al-Maqtul,” 393.
\textsuperscript{495} Suhrawardi, “The Red Intellect,” 20.
\textsuperscript{496} Doors to Paradise:
- The Quran 39:73: “But those who feared their Lord will be driven to Paradise in groups until, when they reach it while its gates have been opened and its keepers say, ‘Peace be upon you; you have become pure; so enter it to abide eternally therein,’ [they will enter].”
- The Quran 38:50: “Gardens of perpetual residence, whose doors will be opened to them.”
- The Quran 13.23: “Gardens of perpetual residence; they will enter them with whoever were righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their descendants. And the angels will enter upon them from every gate, [saying],”

Doors to heaven:
- The Quran 78:19: “And the heaven is opened and will become gateways”
- The Quran 7:40: “Indeed, those who deny Our verses and are arrogant toward them - the gates of Heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter Paradise until a camel enters into the eye of a needle. And thus do We recompense the criminals.”

\textsuperscript{497} The Quran 57:13.
While the number of heavenly doors has not been specified in the Quran, in some interpretations such as *Majma’ al-Bayan*⁴⁹⁸ and *Tafsir Athna Ashari*⁴⁹⁹ as well as the ahadith⁵⁰⁰ it is established that there are eight such doors or gates.⁵⁰¹

A door is an indication of a relationship between two different spaces, or between inside and outside. The importance of the gates and doors of the Persian garden is as significant as those of heaven. Sometimes, the main gate or entrance plays a role as important as that of the *koushk*. As mentioned in Part Two, in the Persian garden, *hashti* is an area between the gate and the main space of the garden and is passed through before the garden is reached. Such spatial hierarchy is also seen in Suhrawardi’s descriptions of the five gateways.

Doors and gates mark the beginning of a journey; a material journey from one place to another, or a spiritual one.

*WATER*

A water spring surrounded by a wall of pearl inside the fourth gate is described in *On the Reality of Love*. In *The Red Intellect*, Suhrawardi refers to the Spring of Life and provides more explanation of the water spring. He writes of seven wonders⁵⁰² of which the seventh is the Spring of Life that is in the darkness, and in order for one to reach it, they should take the lead of *Khizr* and follow the path of trust. There is no specific direction to reach

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⁴⁹⁸ *Majma’ al-Bayan fi-Tafsir al-Qur’an* is a commentary by the twelfth century scholar and author Shaykh Tabarsi.

⁴⁹⁹ *Tafsir Athna Ashari* by Hossein Ibn Ahmad Hosseini Shah Abdolazimi is a Persian commentary in fourteen volumes, which is easy to read for those who are not familiar with the Arabic language.

⁵⁰⁰ The plural name of hadith.

⁵⁰¹ The number of the heaven’s doors are mentioned in hadith, and can be found in the *Bihar al-Anwar* (a collection of hadith by Mohammad Baqir Majlesi).

⁵⁰² Suhrawardi, in his *The Red Intellect*, describes the seven wonders as follows: Mount *qaf*, Pearl-that-glow-by-night, *Tuba* tree, Twelve Workshops, David’s chain mail, Sword *Balarak*, and the Spring of Life. (See: Suhrawardi, “The Red Intellect,” 22.)
this darkness. Anyone can be in the darkness already without even knowing it. The journey to the Spring of Life begins as soon as one recognizes that they are in fact in darkness. Bathing in the Spring of Life prevents one from getting polluted again. Suhrawardi also refers to the sixth wonder, the Sword Balarak (بلازاک),\(^{503}\) and writes that those who soak their body in the Spring of Life are protected from the strike of the Sword Balarak.\(^{504}\)

The Spring of Life is also mentioned at the end of the chapter six of *On the Reality of Love*, when the traveler reaches the gate of the *shahrīstan-I jan* and faces a spring in which he is asked to bathe.

*Wall*

Suhrawardi refers to the wall of the fourth gate that encircles the spring (see fig. 3.5). This wall is made of pearl, an element that is mentioned in several of Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises. Pearl-that-glow-by-night is the second of the seven wonders described by Suhrawardi in *The Red Intellect*. As mentioned in Part Two, the pearl takes its brightness from the *Tuba* tree, and is located at the third mountain of the eleven mountains of Mount *qaf*.$^{505}$

*Carpet*

The carpet is a symbolic element in the fifth gate (see fig. 3.6), which is made from carpet and represents the sense of touch. It extends around the *shahrīstan-I jan* and is where

\(^{503}\) The sixth wonder is the Sword *Balarak*. Suhrawardi explains that the only way one can get rid of the chain mail is with the Sword *Balarak*. In the realm of *nakuja-abad*, there is an executioner who has the Sword *Balarak*, and uses a sword to open the chain mails after certain time. The person wearing the chain mail might get hurt during this process. (See: Suhrawardi, “The Red Intellect,” 30.)


\(^{505}\) Ibid, 24.
someone is seated. The same concept is seen in the Persian garden, where the Persian carpet covers the floor of the chambers and *ivans*, and is in direct contact with man’s sense of touch and their skin.

**FOREST, FIRE, AND ANIMALS**

The only place that Suhrawardi describes his idea of the vegetal and animal senses is in *On the Reality of Love* treatise. After passing through the five gates and arriving at the city’s forest, the traveler comes across a fire around which there are five people. One is sitting and cooking, and another person is fanning the fire. The third one eagerly waits for the food to be ready. The fourth person removes the lighter edible portion at the top of the container and delivers it to the city dwellers. The last person, a tall individual, demands that those who have finished their food leave (see fig. 3.8).

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According to Suhrawardi, the vegetal senses are divided into three major groups: nutrition (ghaziyya, غذیه), growth (namiyya, نامیه), and reproduction (muwallida, مولده). The faculty of nutrition includes attraction (jaziba, جاذبه), retention (maska, ماسکه), digestion (hazima, هاضمه), and excretion (dafiyya, دافعه). In *On the Reality of Love*, the person who is cooking represents attraction, the one who fans the fire symbolizes digestion, the third person signifies retention, the fourth one represents both excretion and nutrition, and the fifth person is a symbol of growth. \(^{509}\)

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\(^{508}\) Suhrawardi, *The Book of Radiance* [Partownama], 28.

\(^{509}\) Thackston, *Suhrawardi; The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, xxvi.
Further in the forest, the traveler sees a lion and a boar (see fig. 3.8). The lion is engaged with killing while the boar is eating and drinking. Suhrawardi classified the animal senses into the motor and appetitive faculties. He divided the appetitive faculty itself into anger and desire. The lion symbolizes the mode of anger, and the boar represents the power of desire. The traveler tied the lion and boar together thus overcoming the animal senses.

**SHAHRISTAN-I JAN**

After the forest, the traveler reaches and passes through a nine-storey koushk that symbolizes the nine spheres of the cosmos (see fig. 3.10). The traveler has already severed the six ropes of the four arches (see fig. 3.11), which represent the six directions and the four different things or four elements, respectively. He then arrives at the gate of the shahristan-I jan and sees the gatekeeper (see fig. 3.12). The gatekeeper greets him, after which he is asked to bathe himself in the Spring of Life. As shahristan-I jan is the

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510 Suhrawardi, *The Book of Radiance* [Partownama], 29.
terminology Suhrawardi used for the imaginal world, I argue the whole intention of describing such a journey was for the traveler to reach the imaginal world. Similar to Paradise and its doorkeepers, the traveler of Suhrawardi’s *On the Reality of Love* encounters a gatekeeper that lets them enter the imaginal world of *shahristan-I jan*. According to Suhrawardi, this is the point at which the traveler is ready to learn about the Divine Book.\(^{511}\) At the end of his story, Love explains that above the *shahristan-I jan* there are other cities, to which the traveler will be led. Love continues that an explanation of such cities would not be understood by everyone.

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As examined and analyzed above, Suhrawardi, in his Persian treatises and more specifically in *On the Reality of Love*, used elements of the Persian garden as symbols and metaphors to discuss his deep mystical concepts in the form of narrations. Through this investigation, I identified that the Persian garden and its components are not only created to meet a human’s physical and sensorial needs, but there is a sublime purpose hidden in these elements to help understand and reach the upper world, the absolute God, and what is unattainable for human beings. Seeing an imaginal aspect is made possible only when one overcomes all the obstacles and reaches what Suhrawardi called *shahristan-i jan*. It is when one is able to access the spiritual Final Land.

Figure 3.12: The gate of the *shahristan-i jan* and its gatekeeper, described by Suhrawardi in his *On the Reality of Love* treatise. Dimensions: H: 19 cm (7.5 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: watercolour and gold flakes on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m². Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2021.
Suhrawardi finished *On the Reality of Love* with this verse: “Many years are necessary for one primal stone to be turned by the sun into a ruby in *Badakhshan* (بدخشان) or a carnelian in the Yemen.” 513

512 “*Badakhshan* is the proverbial source of rubies, the Yemen of carnelians. Jewels were thought to be produced by the effect of sunlight on ordinary rocks, which were ‘incubated’ inside mountains into gems.” (Suhrawardi, “On the Reality of Love,” 76.)

513 Ibid, 76.
4: TODAY’S IMAGINAL GARDEN

When the inner eye is opened, the outer eye should be sealed to everything, the lips shut to everything; and the five external senses employed in their place such that when the patient wants to hold something, he should hold it with his inner hand, when he wants to see something, he should see it with his inner eye, when he wants to hear something, he should hear it with his inner ear, when he wants to smell something, he should smell it with his inner nose, and his sense of taste should come from the soul’s palate. Once this is accomplished, he can regard the secret of the heavens continually and be informed at every moment from the world of the unseen. You have asked what he will see. He will see what he sees and should see. He will not be able to relate the things them through his own intuitive experience. Few people achieve this state because it is difficult for the unworthy to abandon this world and the worthy are but few.

Suhrawardi514

In this part, I would like to take the reader on a journey, in the form of an allegory similar to Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises, that, along with my imaginal drawings, convey my own imaginal garden. I seek to show how I, as a contemporary architect and landscape architect, imagine the imaginal garden of today.

The process for the design of this imaginal garden started with an in-depth study of relevant texts. In addition to analyzing the elements of the Persian garden through these writings and the different arts of literature, miniatures, and gardens, I visited Persian gardens in Iran. I then illustrated my own imaginal drawings based on Suhrawardi’s descriptions of these elements in his Persian treatises. I proceeded to design my own imaginal garden, and I used a combination of storytelling (inspired by Suhrawardi) and drawings. This differs from architectural designs and drawings, where solely representation is used.

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514 Suhrawardi, “A Day with a Group of Sufis,” 40.
4.1 The Imaginal Garden

On a hot summer day, sitting on the exterior stairs of the *shahnishin* room of the Fin garden, and looking at the water and fountains of the long pool in front of the *koushk*, I read the following passage from Suhrawardi’s treatise *A Day with a Group of Sufis*:

“When the inner eye is opened, the outer eye should be sealed to everything... Once this is accomplished, he can regard the secret of the heavens continually and be informed at every moment from the world of the unseen.”

I close my eyes and I find myself in a place where there is only the sound of silence and a breeze. Suddenly, I see a distinct and different space in front of me. A different but familiar space. I reach a gateway that looks very tall from a distance, but going closer, it becomes apparent that it is at a human scale. I walk through the gate and follow the long, twisted path in front of me. I do not know where I am going, but it is an invisible power pushing me forward. I look down at the pavement of the pathway. It is a combination of glass mosaic with an unknown material, located next to each other without any specific design or pattern.

I continue along the path and unexpectedly see a *koushk* (see fig. 4.1), which is completely made from glass and surrounded by a *howz*. I become more curious, and my excitement leads me to walk faster towards the *koushk*; a familiar building but with a different look. The long, twisted path directs me to the main door of the glass *koushk*, a simple door but with some ornaments visible only at certain angles.

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515 Suhrawardi, “A Day with a Group of Sufis,” 40.
Figure 4.1: The *koushk* of the imaginal garden, drawn from the top and front views. Dimensions: H: 38 cm (15 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: watercolour and gold flakes and sheets on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m². Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2023.
I see the reflection of the moon on the water of the howz, but looking above at the sky, the moon is nowhere to be found.

When I enter the building, I see an imaginal space. All the walls of the koushk are made of glass, increasing the reflection of the light rays that are passing through them. The koushk seems to be a two-storey building. The interior walls are encrusted with mirrors in some parts. They are repeated on the wall in a specific pattern that I am not able to recognize. On the rest of the surface of the glass walls, there are texts written in Farsi. I go closer. On the wall close to the entrance, it reads hiss mushtarak (حس مشترک, common sense). There are other texts also written in Farsi, unable to understand, I assume they may be related to the hiss mushtarak.

In front of the entrance door and at the centre of the koushk, there is a big, magnificent tree with many branches, leaves, and different kinds of hanging precious gemstones, such as pearls, emeralds, and diamonds. Its overall shape reminds me of the plane tree with a combination of plane and cypress leaves. Its leaves and branches are free in the space of the koushk. The ceiling of the koushk is open, and it appears that the tree has broken through the roof to reach the sky, creating an open space for the visitor standing in the koushk (see fig. 4.2).

The main floor is paved with coloured mosaics with a repeated pattern and has two open-concept chambers with a stream of water separating them. They are connected with a small path paved with different types of vibrantly coloured stones. The sound of water echoes off the glass walls, creating a relaxing and delightful experience for the visitor. I walk over the paved path, and I reach the second chamber. This space has the same encrusted mirrors as well as Farsi words carved into the walls.
similar to the first chamber. The walls are full of unknown Farsi statements, but I am able to recognize the word *khayal* (خیال, fantasy). There is also a door, not as decorative as the first one, providing the visitor with the option of not continuing on the path, and leaving the *koushk* instead. But I am curious about the rest of the spaces of the *koushk*, so I continue, and I see a hidden path at the end of this chamber going to the second level.

The second floor is also entirely made from glass, and it feels as though it is floating in the air. Since the floor is transparent, looking down, I am able to see the first level, looking above from the main floor however, the ceiling appears to be

![Figure 4.2: The ceiling of the koushk and the tree, drawn from the top and front views. Dimensions: H: 19 cm (7.5 in), W: 28 cm (11 in). Medium: watercolour and gold flakes and sheets on watercolour sheet of 300 g/m². Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2023.](image)
obstructed. The second level consists of two chambers that are connected by bridges covered with bright colourful glass. On the walls of these two chambers, I am able to recognize the two words *wahm* (وَهْم, apprehension) and *hafiza* (حافظة, memory). While the leaves and branches of the big tree reach into this space, the visitor is able to move freely around the *koushk*. This level has openings that are similar to windows. The *koushk* has a specific and unique mechanism, allowing it to turn towards certain directions. At sunrise and sunset, for example, two of the openings frame the sun and create an imaginal view for the visitor. The other eight celestial spheres are also visible through other openings at certain times.

Although I presumed that the *koushk* would only have two storeys, I became aware of another hidden path going to the roof of the *koushk*. I follow this path and I encounter a big space enclosed by clear glass with the Farsi word *mutakhayyila* (مَتَخَیَلَة, imagination) carved on it. The tip of the tree protrudes from the roof and reaches out to the sky. There are no visual borders to prevent the visitor from seeing the sky and the whole garden.

When I leave the *koushk*, the garden is in full blossom with many different kinds and colours of flowers and trees. The space of the garden is surrounded by an irregular glass wall that, while not obstructive to the view, prevents visitors from entering and exiting the garden. The path in the garden is also paved with different coloured stones and there are unfamiliar Farsi words between the paving stones.
Suddenly, I find myself in front of the main gate of the garden. I do not wish to leave the garden, but a hidden power forces me out. The sky is dark, and the garden glows similar to a brilliant gem in front of my eyes (see fig. 4.3). I have no choice other than to leave that magical and beautiful imaginal garden behind…

The imaginal garden portrayed above is described in the form of a journey from the material world of our daily lives to the imaginal world of the garden. This journey takes place in a dream and begins inside an actual Persian garden; the garden being an in-between world itself facilitates this journey. The imaginal garden appears as a familiar space to the traveler or viewer, and similar to Suhrwardi’s Persian treatises, it includes symbols and
metaphors, which have been selected intentionally to convey a message that I believe contemporary society needs.

This garden has only one gate, through which the traveler has to pass to enter or exit, and similar to the spiritual journey, they have to return to the location where they began. The garden has a *koushk*, made of glass, allowing light to shine through. The *koushk* functions as an intermediate space between the “world of light” and the internal darkness. It has five chambers symbolizing Suhrwardi’s five inner senses of *hiss mushtarak*, *khayal*, *wahm*, *mutakhayyyila*, and *hafiza*, which are discussed in Part Three. The reason for this selection is that these senses provide a link between the material and immaterial worlds, something that is missing in today’s society. The chambers are linked to one another with small bridges, representing the connection that exists between the inner senses themselves. The mirror pieces on the walls of the *koushk* act as loci and receptacles for the Sun’s light. The *koushk* is surrounded with water, and the streams of water enter the *koushk*. Water plays an important role in this garden for its symbolic and precious meaning, and by reflecting the *koushk*, the sky, and the cosmos. The celestial spheres are visible through different openings of the *koushk*. As the imaginal world starts at the “convex surface of the ninth Sphere”, the celestial order of nine spheres has been selected. The moon is being reflected on the water of the *howz* and the sun is visible through one of the openings of the *koushk*. The rest of the spheres is located around the *koushk*, where one of them is placed on the frame at the top of the image, representing the ninth sphere. A big tree is located at the centre of the *koushk*, with many branches and leaves of cypress and plane trees. These leaves symbolize both eternity and the stage of leaflessness. The tree breaks through the ceiling of the *koushk* to reach the sky and the upper world. The opening in the ceiling, as
well as the glass walls, connect the interior and exterior of the koushk, adding more to the imaginal aspect of the koushk. The reflection and refraction of sun rays from the glass surfaces and edges, the coloured glass, the mirrors, and the light and shadow from the leaves of the tree, create a magical spatial projection. They also create a mode of suspension, between the two-dimensional glass surfaces and the three-dimensional space, forming an imaginal space. Throughout the garden, there are carved texts written in Farsi that are not comprehensible. The viewer or the reader of the texts has to reach a certain spiritual stage to be able to understand them. The exterior wall of the garden is irregular and made of glass, creating no barriers to sightlines. This way, the traveler is able to see outside the garden, but is not able to reach what is beyond. And at the end, having travelled through this imaginal garden, the traveler arrives at the main gate, where they began their journey, and this compels them to leave the imaginal garden. Although the garden provides an imaginal world to the traveler, it is a temporary space and the traveler has to return to the material world.

For my drawings, I chose watercolor again similar to the drawings I created for Suhrawardi’s treatises. To portray the spaces and elements of my imaginal garden and to take the reader to the imaginal world, I combined different planes such as plans and elevations. For the imaginal garden, I used the projective geometry to show the koushk, and to create an experience, requiring the viewer to be a participant having an imaginal journey. In the first two drawings, the frame is drawn broken to make it possible for the traveler to reach the sky and the upper world. It is shown broken as it only shows a portion of the garden. In the final drawing of the whole imaginal garden, the garden is drawn as
suspended in the cosmos and the frame is not broken as the entire imaginal garden is framed inside the cosmos.

The described imaginal garden is an example of how contemporary landscape architects and designers could benefit from the philosophers who may have potentially influenced the creation of actual gardens, and use the philosophical thoughts and beliefs, in their designs in the form of symbols and metaphors. Moreover, the intention of the above descriptions and drawings of my imaginal garden is to help the reader participate in an imaginal journey of their own.
CONCLUSION

... Then, as day was breaking in my father’s khanaqah, the outer door was closed and the door to the city was opened. As merchants began to pass by, the group of old men disappeared from before my eyes. In my perplexity and regret at the loss of their company I sighed and moaned. But it was of no use.

Suhrawardi

The twelfth-century philosopher Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi believed that there is a world that is independent from physical places and is located outside of all places. He named this realm the imaginal world. Suhrawardi believed that this world is the eighth clime, the world of the soul or “the city of the soul”, and the world of suspended forms. He invented the terms of *nakuja-abad, iqlim-I hashtum, shahristsan-I jan*, and *alam suwar mu’allaqa* to describe this imaginal world.

This dissertation examines the relation between Suhrawardi’s imaginal world and the Persian garden and its elements and demonstrates that there is a link between the two. Persian gardens are considered earthly representations of spiritual reality, and they were designed to create an imaginal place resembling the garden of Paradise on earth. Amongst the existing Persian gardens, the gardens from the Safavid period are notable, as the Persian garden, art, and architecture, as well as Persian mysticism and philosophy, are considered to have reached their peak during this era. Suhrawardi’s philosophy and imaginal world inspired his followers and in particular the ones from the Safavid dynasty. His works and thinking were taught in the Safavid schools. Under the influence of Suhrawardi’s philosophy, architects, artists, and the garden builders of the time created their own art. These designers and artists illustrate the concept of imagination in their art works using

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symbols and metaphors. The belief was that only people with wisdom, who knew the “language of birds,” were able to understand them.

This study analyzes the relationship between the elements of the Persian garden and Suhrawardi’s *nakuja-abad* by examining each of these elements in the Persian arts of literature, miniatures, and the garden. These three art forms were selected as they have influenced one another, and they all feature the imaginal world as well as elements of the Persian garden. For example, Persian poets created their work influenced by nature and gardens, and Persian miniaturists were inspired by both poetry and the garden. Similarly, the builders of the Persian garden were influenced by philosophy and poetic descriptions and combined the real with imaginal aspects to create not only a material world, but an imaginal world that satisfies the needs and perceptions of the garden’s visitors.

My examination of the elements of the Persian garden, such as water, plants, *koushk*, entrance gate, access paths, and walls, disclosed that although they each have their own features and functions in the garden, they become more significant alongside the other elements. The research demonstrates that each unique element of the garden is imaginal, and acts as a *nakuja-abad*, lying in-between the material and immaterial worlds; this collectively leads to the creation of the imaginal world of the garden. Furthermore, the study shows that the Persian garden and its elements not only serve to fulfill a person’s physical and sensorial desires, but they also allow humans to reach the world beyond our material world. While historiography is important to this research, this work is particularly a new knowledge to architecture and more specifically landscape architecture.

Additionally, the research examines how Suhrawardi employed the garden’s elements to represent his imaginal world. Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises include his concept of
imagination and ideas on the imaginal world where they are expressed in allegorical and
descriptive formats. In his allegories, instead of direct statements, he describes his thoughts
in a mystical manner. For instance, he makes use of the Persian garden elements such as
koushk, divan, water, trees, mountains, gateways, and corridors, to explain his concepts.
While the elements of the Persian garden themselves are symbols and metaphors and
convey deep and complex meanings, similar to his philosophical concepts, the symbols
and metaphors Suhrawardi uses are only understood by those with the proper knowledge
of philosophy. While Suhrawardi’s stories seem to simply portray such elements in the
imagination of the reader, upon deeper analysis, the reader discovers that there are in fact
true meanings hidden behind every detail in such stories, as is Suhrawardi’s real intention.
Depicting what Suhrawardi describes in his treatises and illustrating the journeys the
traveller or the mystic goes through to arrive at the final destination is the result of what is
formed in the reader’s imagination where imaginal spaces have been transferred onto the
tangible surface of paper. Also, as part of this spiritual journey, the reader finds themselves
travelling along with the storyteller, who goes from one location to another and comes back
to their original starting point. While the reader ends up at the same location as the starting
point of the journey, they are no longer the same person. The difficulties and obstacles they
encounter along the way, transform the reader into a different person.

Suhrawardi believed that the imaginal world is a world seen only by those whose
perception is beyond that of an ordinary person, and who are capable of understanding
God’s desire. According to Suhrawardi, in order to see the imaginal forms and reach the
mountain of qaf, one has to experience the spiritual journey, suffer the difficulties, and
conquer obstacles. One would then find the imaginal world and its cities of jabalqa,
jabarsa, and hurqalya. But this is not the end of the journey. After reaching the imaginal world, the mystic still must continue ascending the hierarchy of the spiritual levels and seek the divine mysteries to be able to reach the upper world of pure lights, the Light of Lights, Divine Light, the Final Land, and the absolute God. In Suhrawardi’s opinion, to reach the Final Land of our earthly lives, it is essential to worship, study, and tolerate hardships while passing through different lands. It is finally necessary to polish one’s soul to get to the stage of transforming the stone of the carnal soul to a spiritual pearl.

Thus far, the investigations of Suhrawardi’s concepts of imagination have been carried out from the perspective of philosophy; no studies have been conducted from the point of view of architecture and landscape architecture. There has been no research analyzing the elements of the Persian garden in Suhrawardi’s works, and their relationship with the Persian garden. There have also been no attempts to illustrate the descriptive texts of Suhrawardi’s Persian treatises.

In this dissertation, my own drawings attempt to examine the imaginal garden and its elements as represented in texts, drawings, and physical gardens, to respond to the hermeneutical method of this research. While reading Suhrawardi’s *On the Reality of Love*, I imagined the imaginal world based on the descriptions of the garden elements and I drew what I imagined on the surface of the paper; both for each imaginal garden element as well as the imaginal space of the whole story (see fig. 5.1).
My imaginal drawings, similar to the miniatures, link the material and spiritual natures, tangible and intangible, and visible and invisible. These drawings are part of the imaginal world. The invisible and intangible imaginal thoughts and concepts of the architect are transferred to the visible and tangible surface of the paper, and then, built and constructed in the material world. As Frascari states in his book *Eleven Exercises in the Art of Architectural Drawing: Slow-Food for the Architect’s Imagination*, “Trained to use the interaction existing between paper and pencil, between touch and thought, architects elaborate conceptual and cognitive representations of designs. With the iterative act of freehand drawings, they mediate between the sensible and the intelligible, between the visible and the invisible parts of architecture. Their freehand drawings, vivid
materialization of touch and symbol, become charts of a cosmos suggesting an ordered system of ideas between tracing and envisioning.\textsuperscript{517} Studying and understanding the imaginal world can have an impact on the process of design thinking in the contemporary architecture and landscape architecture practices.

In today’s design of parks and gardens in Iran, what is evident is the lack of attention that is given to the use of specific designs and elements of past Persian gardens. This weakness has in fact led architects and landscape architects to produce plans and designs that have no theoretical principles or are merely mimicking the design and patterns of ancient Persian gardens.

I should state here that copying is different than being inspired by. The architects and landscape architects might use the traditional designs as an inspiration and what they mean to specific people. This is similar to the way Suhrawardi attempted to symbolically use tangible elements to describe his intangible philosophical concepts. In my drawings, I used my inspiration from Suhrawardi’s texts relevant to the imaginal world, along with the symbolic elements that have certain meanings for Iranian people, to arrive at my imaginal garden.

In the final part of this dissertation, I designed, described, and illustrated an imaginal garden based on my findings. This imaginal garden takes the reader to the imaginal world, somewhere beyond our physical world, where the qaf mountain, and the cities of jabarsa, jabalqa, and hurqalya are located, and where the imaginal world of Suhrawardi also exists (see fig. 5.2). My research, and specifically my imaginal garden, can serve as a guide for

today’s landscape architects and designers to create gardens that are genuine and meaningful, and are not mere copies of previous gardens. It will help them look for the concepts, thoughts, and ideas that have been overlooked for years and apply them to their designs to create gardens with the purpose of learning, instead of solely a place for leisure. The designers need to prepare themselves in advance to be able to design such works. Their role is not merely duplicating the present or the future realities in a graphic form. They are to offer a profound understanding of “the architectonic of material and spiritual meaning through synchronic and diachronic views”. Instead of turning an idea into a sensory phenomenon, they shape the sensory phenomenon into an idea. They transfer their ideas and what they imagine onto paper and then build them. Designing an imaginal garden is not limited to simply building a garden. The design has to contain the imaginal aspects and meanings for each element of the garden. All these elements, by their precise location next to each other, create an imaginal garden. The designers can help the traveler or the visitor to the garden reach a state where their perception goes beyond an ordinary person and, as a result, they become capable of understanding the imaginal meanings of the garden. In

Figure 5.2: The map representing a part of the imaginal world. Collage of the drawings using Adobe Photoshop. Drawing by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2023.

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519 Ibid, 40.
this regard, and with the help of new technology, it may be possible to establish eternal and everlasting works that meet the needs of contemporary society.

This dissertation could lead to further studies of new designs based on the elements of the Persian garden, and even inspire features which did not previously exist in gardens. Moreover, future studies may encompass a broader scope where Suhrawardi’s imaginal world is examined in art forms other than the Persian garden. Also, in order to fully understand the significance behind the design of Persian arts, it will be helpful to analyze not only Suhrawardi’s works, but also other philosophers’ theories that may have influenced the Persian schools over time and impacted the design of Persian gardens or other arts. Furthermore, the same concept and methodology could be applied in other cultural artworks.
APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL DIAGRAMS ON SUHRAWARDI’S DESCRIPTIONS IN HIS PERSIAN TREATISES

APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES

FIN GARDEN, KASHAN, IRAN
Figure B.1: The long pool and its fountains, located between the *howz-joosh* and the *koushk*. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.2: The link between the *howz-joosh* and the long pool. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.3: The Qajar’s *shotorgalou’s howz* and its connection to the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.4: The facade of the Qajar’s *shotorgalou* from the pathway. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.5: The ceiling *kar-bandi* of the Qajar’s *shotorgalou*. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.6: The Qajar’s *shotorgalou*’s ceiling and its *kar-bandi*. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.7: The details of the ceiling, the kar-band, and the vault of Qajar’s shotorgalou. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.8: The details of the ceiling’s kar-band of Qajar’s shotorgalou. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.9: The facade and the windows of shahnishin room towards the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.10: The facade of shahnishin room, the howz-joosh, and the long pool. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.11: The ceiling and the kar-bandi of the main koushk. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.12: The details of the main koushk’s ceiling. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.13: The Ḷavan of the second floor of the entrance building. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.14: The row of cypresses between the exterior walls and the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.15: The wall paintings of the main *koushk*. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.16: The wall paintings of the main *kouhk*. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.17: The facade of the library of the Fin garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.18: The view from one of the koushk’s ivans. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.19: The stream of water, its fountain, and the small waterfall. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.20: The fountain in front of the main koush, between the koush and the main howz. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.21: The howz (Safavid’s shotorgalou) under the main koushk. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.22: The water stream and its fountains, towards the entrance building. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.23: The trees on the two sides of the path, and the water stream at the middle of the pathway. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.24: The water stream and its fountains, located at the middle of the pathway. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.25: The water stream channel gets wider where the specific fountains are. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.26: The window woodwork of shahnishin room. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.27: The corner of the exterior walls of the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.28: The fort located at the exterior corner of the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
Figure B.29: The exterior doors of the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.

Figure B.30: The exterior doors of the garden. Fin garden, Kashan, Iran. Photograph by the author. © Maryam Mirsepassi, 2008.
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Appendix C: The Original Poem of A Father Advises his Son about Love

Love

In this section, with respect to the original poem of A Father Advises his Son about Love, I included the two relevant poems in Farsi. The first poem is the question the son asks his father, and the second is the answer the father provides (the father’s advice).

سوال پسر صاحب جمال از پدر صاحب کمال و جواب وی از آن سوال

با پدر گفت نازنین پسر
چون نهم ز آستانه بیرون پای
از یمین و یسار اهل نیاز
آن یکی آه در رنگ زند
وان دگر خون ز دیده افشاند
هر یک از درد عشق و سوز جگر
می ندام چه صورت انگیزم
گفت از هر یکی پیش جدا
آن یکی گفت ازان رخ ساده
وان دگر گفت ازان له میگون
وان دگر گفت کان خط نویز
وان دگر گفت کان قد و رفتار
وان دگر گفت کان خم ارو
وان دگر گفت ازان چه غیب
وان دگر گفت دانه آن خال
وان دگر گفت ازان دو نرگس مست
وان دگر گفت معنی بیچون
شد دلم مبتلا آن معنی
فارغ از زلف و غافل از رویم

جواب گفت گفت پدر پسر را
پدر این قصه از زبان پسر
نبست پوشیده پیش اهل ادب

Joon Neyshid gafet jahan der
ke boud reish per be uraf عرب

کا ز گهر نیک و گرتو را خبری
شور و غوغای آرای از همه جای
دعوی عشق می کندن آغاز
جبب جان را ز درد چاک زند
سوز دل ز آب دیده ونشاند
به زبان درگر دهد خبر
با که آمزز از که پرهزم
کز جمال ای زده ست تو را
رخ به خونم منفی ایجاده
چشم من پر تم است و دل بر خون
زد خطم بر صحیفه پرهزم
برده است از دلم شکبی و قرار
ساخت یشتم ز بار عشق دو تو
جان شیرینم امده ست به لب
در دلم کشت تخم رنج و ملال
دل من همچو جام باده شکست
دیدم از پرده صور پرون
می دهم جان برای ای معنی
می ندام چه چیز می جویم

Joon Neyshid gafet jahan der
ke boud reish per be uraf عرب

In this section, with respect to the original poem of A Father Advises his Son about Love, I included the two relevant poems in Farsi. The first poem is the question the son asks his father, and the second is the answer the father provides (the father’s advice).
لیک آن یکه مرغ حسن و جمال
گر چه خیزد حسینی ز روی و ذقن
نرگنس چشم ازان شود پر آب
خم ابروعه که خوانش آن روی
قدم به راه تر و بر چرخه
خط فیروزه رنگ زنگار
خال مشکین که بر چیزی و عادار
جون دم در ریش بیش به صریح
وانچه می خوانیش چه سیمین
چون نشان ستو بر راه
لب و سیلت چنان به هم کر می
رود القسه حسن و ماند ریش
چه حشیشی که آب و گل برد
پس به این خال و خت مشو مغرور
کین یوهم زنب و زینت صور است
هر چه او دل درین صور بسته ست
پی آن رو که عرف معنایست
چون صور نبست ایمن از تغییر
حسن معنی چو جواندن پاید
حسن سیرت محل تغییر است
چون تنید ان سخن پسر ز بدر
حسن سیرت گرفت با همه بیش
چشم و دل بر رضایت او می داشت
هر چه گفتی به جوان یوشیدی
حرففیز چشم معنی بین
روی او را چو روش انیله تافت
دامعا در تحلیل آن چون
دزه بود او ز نور هستی حق
هما چه تن ناظر و منظر
روی در روی یکدگر کردی
سینه ان چو دامن این چک
حسن این اقتاب هستی سوز
بود یکچند ار آمان دو مه گرار

زند از روی سوی عمدم پر و بال
رود از روی لاطفت همه تن
لاله روی ازان شود بی تاب
شود از ریش داس عمر درو
خشک چویی شود سزای تبر
اورد روی د سه کاری
نقشه مشک بود بر گلزین
مثل بعرقطاب حوالی نبیح
بینآن یا به چشم عربت بین
وزنبوی ز رو دمیده گیاه
لای پالای بر دهان سوی
گل دهد جان خویشتن به حشیش
چه گیاهی که گاو و خر بجرد
پاش از آئیش روان دنر
حالصورت زمان زمان دنگ است
بگسل از روی که همست پست است
مرد عارف به دوستی اولی ست
دام عاشقان معنی گیر
عشق آن اعتماد را شاید
عشر از عشق آن کران گیر است
کرد بیرون غور حسن ز سر
لیک با مورد عارف از همه بیش
گوش بر حکم و رای او می داشت
زه رادی روان بتوشیدی
کش شهید روند ایشین
که بر یور حق معیانه تافت
بوش از چشم خویشتن مستور
ذره در نور بود مستغرق
هر دو از الوکی شهود دور
باده از جام یکدگر خورده
دامان این چو دیده آن پاک
عشق آن صبح کفاف افزور
گرم سودای عشق را بازار
عزیزم چون به دنیا آمد و جمال
آتش اشتباق‌دان بنست
سایه از شخص می‌برد ما به
نیست ممکن بقای سایه به جای
در محبت در گراف زدی
به بهانه راه گردیدی
پای خود در گریز کردي تیز
سر آن رشته را نگه می‌داشت
نشد آبین آشنا بست
در میانه طریق پاری ماند

عاقبت چون به دنیا آمد و جمال
عشق عشاق نیز رخت بست
حسن شخص است و عشق چون سایه
جون درآید وجود شخص ز پای
آن که دایم ز عشق لاف زدی
ناغهانش به راه اگر دیدی
بر گرفتی ز دور راه گریز
غیر عرف که رو به ره می‌داشت
گر چه عشقش نماه همچون نخست
عشق اگر رفت دوستداری ماند
APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL PAGES FROM THE ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF

THE HAFT AWRANG COLLECTION

In this section, I included the pages before and after the two folios of *A Father Advises his Son about Love* analyzed for this research.
APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A

aban yasht: one of the twenty-one yashts of Avesta
ahadith: the plural name of hadith
alam al-ashbah al-mujarrada: the world of incorporeal figures
al-alam al-khayal: the world of imagination
al-alam al-mithal: the world of image, the world of imagination
anwar-i mudabbira: the managing lights
anwar-i qahira: the dominating lights
aql: intellection
aql-i surkh: the red intellect
ashiqa: ivy
al-ashbah al-mujarrada: the world of incorporeal figures
al-ashbah al-rubaniyya: lordly figures
al-mithal: the image
awaz: reverberation, chant, song, sound
awaz-i par-i jibra’il: the sound (chant) of Gabriel’s wing
ayeneh-kari: mirror mosaics

B

baad: wind
bihisht: “al-janna” (the Garden) or Paradise, it is derived from the word “vahishta” of Avesta. *vahishta* means the better world (Md. Masud Alam, “Some Fundamentals of Islam in Relation to those of Zoroastrianism,” *The CDR Journal* 1, no. 2 (2006))
bustan: garden
bustan al-qulub: the garden of the heart

C

chahar-bagh: four-gardens
D

daftiya: excretion

divan: an authority body or the court of the Ottoman Empire or the Middle East, King’s sitting place

divs: demons

E

F

G

ghaziyya: nutrition

girih: knot in Farsi. An Islamic geometrical pattern used in different ways such as orosi windows, brick-works, tile-works, etc.

H

hadith: is a collection of sayings associated to the prophet Muhammad and imams. It is also considered as one of the major sources for Muslims beside the Quran.

hafiza: memory

al-ha qiqa: the truth

haqiqa: real

hasht bihisht: eight paradises

hayakil al-nur: luminous bodies

hazima: digestion

hikmat al-ishraq: theosophy of the orient of light, the philosophy of illuminations

hiss mushtarak: common sense

hurqalya: in the subtle world, corresponds to the heavens, begins “at the convex surface of the supreme sphere”, located in the eighth clime

howz: pond, small pool
**howz-joosh**: a pool which water from underground channels comes up in the shape of boiling.

**I**

**imaginal world**: *mundus imaginalis*, the theosophers of Islam designate as the “eighth clime”

**imaginary**: unreal, utopian

**iqlim-i hashtum**: The eighth clime, the realm of subtle bodies, *mundus imaginalis, al-alam al-mithal*, the world of imagination

**ishq**: love

**ishraqiyyun**: illuminationists

**islimi**: A type of motif with the shape of spiraling ivy and tendril

**ivan**: a type of talar or porch

**J**

**jabalqa**: one of the two emerald cities situated next to the mountain of *qaf*, located in the east of the eighth clime, corresponds to the elements of the physical world

**jabars**: refer to *jabarsa*. Suhrawardi used this terminology in his *Hikmat al-Ishraq*

**jabarsa**: one of the two emerald cities situated next to the mountain of *qaf*, located in the west of the eighth clime, correspond to the elements of the physical world

**al-jabarut**: the archangelic world

**jabulq**: refer to *jabalqa*. Suhrawardi used this terminology in his *Hikmat al-Ishraq*

**jaziba**: attraction

**K**

**kar-bandi**: a geometrical pattern used under the structure of the domes

**khanaqah**: Sufi house, Sufi meeting place

**kashf**: unveiling

**koushk**: The main building of the Persian garden, which in Farsi means “Palace”. It is also widely translated as “Pavilion”.

**L**
**al-lamahat:** flashes of light

**lughat-i muran:** language of the ants

**M**

**majazi:** metaphorical

**malakut:** super sensible world, the world of the soul or angel souls, in which the mystical cities are located, and which starts at the “convex surface of the ninth sphere”, intermediate world, identical to *al-alam al-khayal*

**mi’raj:** prophet ascent to heaven

**mujarrad:** disengaged

**muqarnas:** an Islamic architectural form developed in the middle of the tenth century in Iran, used for domes or half-domes by providing a large number of small squinches rather than one big one.

**mulk:** sensible world, it is the world of phenomenon, bodies, corporeal world, physical world

**mundus imaginalis:** the Latin word for the world of imagination, the term is coined by Henry Corbin

**al-muqawamat:** the book of opposites

**mutakhayyila:** imagination

**muwallida:** reproduction

**N**

**nafs:** soul

**nakuja-abad:** the eighth clime, the country of no-where, a clime outside all climes, a place outside all places, outside of where, *al-alam al-mithal*, a term coined by Suhrawardi for the imaginal world

**O**

**orosi:** A vertical opening wooden window with interwoven pattern and coloured glass

**P**

**pairidaeza:** old Persian word from which the word Paradise is derived

**partaw-nama:** treatise on illumination
Q

qaf (Mount qaf): the cosmic mountain which is built up of celestial spheres surrounding our universe

R

ramz: mystery
ridwan: the doorkeeper of Paradise
risala fi halat al-tufuliyya: treatise on the state of childhood
risala fi haqiqt al-ishq: treatise on the reality of love
risala fi’l-mi’raj: treatise on the nocturnal journey
risala al-tayr: treatise of the birds
rumuz: symbols
ruzi ba jama’at-i sufiyan: a day among the community of the Sufis

S

sahra: field
shahristan-i jan: city of the soul
shamsa: It is a specific geometrical pattern with a circle at the centre which turns to a star in its outer part. It was mostly painted at the centre of the underside of the dome.
al-shari’a: the divine law
shotorgalou: a path of water located under the river and includes two wells and a connection in between, water goes down from one and comes up from the other
suwar al-khayaliya: imaginative forms
suwar al-marayaa: forms in mirrors
suwar mu’allaqa zulmaniyya wa mustanira: the dark and illumined suspended images

T

takhayul: imagination
al-talwiha: the book of intimations
**al-tariqa:** the spiritual path

**tir yasht:** one of the twenty-one yashts of Avesta

**U**

**V**

**W**

**wahm:** apprehension

**X**

**Y**

**yaad:** recollection

**yazdan-shinakht:** knowledge of the divine

**Z**
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