Folk foundations in Badi al-Zamannameh

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Abstract

Badi al-Zamannameh is an almost forgotten collection of poems by an anonymous poet that represents the writing style of the Safavid era and consists of 3287 verses. It is a romantic epic narrating the adventures of Badi al-Zaman, an Iranian prince, in marriage with Ghamarchehr, daughter of the Khagan of China.

The current study aimed to investigate the folk foundations of Badi al-Zamannameh by adopting a descriptive-analytical methodology and conducting library research. The theme is represented by the two major fields: influences of the oral tradition and the works of previous generations and the basic themes of folktales. The old and popular texts of Persian literature like Shahnameh, Eskandarnameh Nghali, and Hamzehnameh influenced the language used in Badi al-Zamannameh. Moreover, characteristics like having a cyclical narration, applying folksy words and phrases, referring to customs and rituals, highlighting religious themes, making characterizations similar to folktales, illustrating miracles and surprises, using special numbers, using happy endings, and leaving the narration open indicate that it has been influenced by ancient folk literary works.

Reflecting on a native culture illustrates the culture of a society and makes the collective identity known. Looking at the literary works of a nation as a clear reflection of its culture is a way to achieve this goal, which may lead the researcher to the processes of cultural transformation in society and know the audience of such works.

Keywords: *Badi al-zamannameh, folk foundations, oral tradition, the basic themes of folktales.*

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
Folk tales are a Important genre in Persian literature. The cultural and social attributes of any society have a great presence in these stories and form their narratives, or they could have a considerable role in creating stories in other genres. Popular culture is a cultural value of any society and pondering upon any country's indigenous and national culture creates a familiarity with that particular society alongside its collective and historical identity. Literary works mirror any land's culture while showing the cultural changes of that society with the passage of time. This important subject can be studied in literary texts to maintain and strengthen ancient cultural roots and use such findings to compile a rich literary history. This paper studies the effects of the quotation tradition, earlier popular works, and folk tale themes over the Badi' al-Zaman Name verse novel using the findings of this paper to emphasize the impact of societal culture and folk foundations as an important trend-making element in the creation of texts alongside the importance of cultural studies of artistic works.

This paper answers two important questions:
1. Which written or oral Persian literary works have affected the formation of the Badi' al-Zaman Name?
2. The Badi' al-Zaman Name narrative is based on which themes of folk tales?

2. Literature Review
The Badi' al-Zaman Name narrative forms with a romantic motif. It intends to describe the themes of love alongside all of its ups and downs in the path of reaching the beloved. Therefore, the poet's first action was selecting a popular subject. The folk foundations of this narrative can be explained by two major elements: the effects of the quotation tradition and earlier popular works alongside folk tale themes. When it comes to the quotation tradition, the poet uses direction allusion to quote a verse narrative from Ferdowsi; the poet begins some sections of this narrative following the same statement template as Ferdowsi; two events in this narrative are imitations of famous events from the Shahnameh; many parts of this verse presents reminders to names, metaphors, and descriptions from Shahnameh; "Eskandar" is a main character in the narrative; "Mehtar Nasim Ayar" is an important and pivotal character in this narrative with every adjective of Mehtar Nasim Ayar from Eskandar-Nâmeh; the character descriptions of Badi' al-

Zaman share similarities with descriptions of a character with the same name from Qese Hamzeh. The circular narrative design, usage of common words and phrases, references to customs and ethics, marriage ethics, code of modesty and chivalry, the religious aspect of the narrative, characterizations similar to folk tales, breaking habits, creating amazement, usage of special numbers, having a good ending with an open and unfinished narrative are some constructive elements of the Badi' al-Zaman narrative similar to folk tales.

3. Methodology
To answer the research questions, the researcher has first extracted the constructive features of the narrative by comprehensively studying of Badi-al-Zamannameh narration and Case study, After that, With genre-based approach, the obtained information has been compared to folk tales, and finally in a descriptive-analytical method, the results have been obtained.

4. Results
Folklore literature is rather rich and important in Iran. This importance is soo significant that some themes of these stories have entered other literary genres to affect their literary definitions, but this important subject has not received proper attention in analyzing these works. Analyzing the folk foundations of fiction discovers many original and lasting features of Persian literary texts, and these studies increase the historical richness of Persian literature.

Being affected by the quotation tradition, earlier popular works and folk tale themes are the most important formation elements of some popular Persian literary works. Many ever-lasting Persian works have folk foundations. This feature reflects Persian culture and literature in the Badi' al-Zaman Name verse novel. The effectiveness of Iranian national epic poetry such as Shahnameh, Eskandar-Nâmeh, and Qese Hamzeh on the Badi' al-Zaman Name verse novel shows its closeness with folk literature. The significant presence of folk foundations in Badi' al-Zaman Name defines folklore literature ad the foundation of many official literary works. These ancient stories are a tradition of Persian literature and should be analyzed based on Western criteria. Therefore, they could be studied as a part of Indigenous Iranian literature to achieve an accurate audience analysis of these works.

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