# A comparative Study of the Patterns of Hidden King's Narrations(Case Study of Three Iranian Narrations)

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## Abstract

In Iranian culture, one of the recurring narrative patterns is the narrations in which the story of the birth of a hidden king is mentioned. In this article, three Iranian hidden narrations of the King are examined. In all these narrations, first a prediction announces the birth of the next king, and then the forces for or against it seek it, the child is born, raised in secret, and becomes the king when the opponents are defeated. The study of these narratives has been inspired by a combination of methods used by Propp and Roglan. The functions and characters of the king's hidden narratives are based on Propp's method in *The Morphology of Folk Tales*. The use of Roglan's models is also important because he examined the myths that have similarities with the subject of this study and gave a general model of them. The present study shows that the three narrations of Fereydoun and Kaykhosrow in Ferdowsi's *Shahname* and Ardashir's narration in *Karname-ye Ardashir-e Babakan* can all be placed in a single model with five main functions.

***Keyword****s: narratology, Propp model, Roglan model, structuralism, myth.*

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*Extended Abstract*

### 1. Introduction
There are many stories in various cultures where an important character is born in secrecy and later rises to a prominent position. These stories include the tales of prophets such as Moses, the famous Greek myth of Oedipus, and stories that apparently have Iranian authenticity and appear in Iranian mythological and heroic narratives. However, it seems that these narratives have received less attention in Persian literature in terms of narratology and discovering their authentic patterns.

Through analyzing the main themes of these stories, explaining their differences, and removing extraneous elements that cause differences, the major structures that exist in cultures and the discourses that have emerged can be uncovered. Structural narratologists, who rely on the theories of Saussurean linguistics and the fundamental belief that literature should be examined as a language, have analyzed these narratives.

### Research Question(s)
The primary focus of this research is to conduct a comparative analysis of three biographical narratives - those of Ardeshir, Fereydoun, and Keykhosrow - with the goal of creating a comprehensive model of hidden king narratives. This is achieved by carefully examining the structures of these three narratives, including those of Fereydoun and Keykhosrow from "Ferdowsi's Shahnameh", as well as that of Ardeshir from the book of "Karnameh Ardeshir Papakan". Investigating and following such patterns can help identify neglected parts of Iranian culture and can be compared with similar patterns in other cultures in future comparative studies.

### 2. Literature Review
2-1- Formalists directed their attention towards identifying the elements within narrative texts that make them defamiliarization and distinguish them from other similar narratives. Fabula and Syuzhet were two important areas of investigation for them. Structuralists, building upon the work of formalists, pursued a slightly different approach in analyzing narratives. Rather than emphasizing defamiliarization or the literary aspects of narratives, they aimed to demonstrate that individual phenomena can be studied within a comprehensive structure. Structuralists seek to discover components within their field of specialization that are aligned with an integrated organization. Once

these components are identified, they can be interconnected in a network-like relationship with each other. This interconnection forms an all-encompassing structure, which can ultimately be viewed as the foundation of the cultural phenomena under discussion (Innes, citing Payne, 2014: 335-336).

2-2- Propp's book "Morphology of the Folktale" bridged the gap between the formalist and structuralist approaches to narrative analysis. Despite not fully subscribing to the formalist view of literature, Propp defined morphology as the study of morphemes and applied it to the structure of folktales (Bertner, 2003: 55). He employed specific methods to deconstruct the components of the structure of fairy tales and then compared these structures. Function or role is a key term in Propp's research, and one of the fundamental elements of a story.

2-3- Raglan's main objective was to analyze the heroes in myths in order to demonstrate that myths have no historical basis. He concluded that these heroes are not essentially human and that their stories are not based on historical events but are instead rooted in myth and ritual. After observing similarities in the stories of Oedipus, Theseus, and Romulus, he compared them to other Greek myths and found identifies common elements among them (Raglan, 1949: 177). He then presents his own pattern consisting of 22 points (Raglan, 1949: 178-179).

2-4- This article proposes a new pattern for hidden kingship narratives that incorporates the strengths of both the Proppian and Roglan models. The Proppian approach is characterized by its systematic and logical function of the functions, while the Roglan model focuses on the lives of specific kings. Our proposed pattern for hidden kingship narratives draws inspiration from both models and follows these steps:

1. Prophets or interpreters provide prophecies regarding the emergence of a new kingdom.
2. The birth of the new king takes place in secrecy.
3. The upbringing and nurturing of the new king occur over time.
4. The new king gradually becomes aware of his royal lineage and rightful place as ruler.
5. Ultimately, the new king eliminates or imprisons the usurper king and takes his rightful place on the throne.

### 3. Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is descriptive-analytical, which involves combining two models to analyze the narratives under study. Specifically, the study integrates Propp's model, which focuses on the morphology of folktales, and Raglan's pattern, as presented in his book "The Hero". The reason for this combination is that neither model alone can comprehensively explain the narratives being examined. Instead of forcing the narratives to conform to the existing models, the study proposes a new set of functions in a distinct pattern to better suit these narratives.

### 4. Results

The results of the study reveal that despite the apparent differences in the biographical narratives of Fereydoun, Keykhosrow, and Ardeshir, according to the narrative structuralists they share similar patterns with the mythical narratives analyzed by Raglan in "The Hero". The analysis of these three narratives based on the Propp pattern and some of Raglan's key points suggests that that there are several common functions shared by all of them. Throughout each of these stories, there are recurring mythological elements and patterns that set them apart from other narratives. For instance, the function of prophecy in all three narratives involves the act of prophecy itself, news of future events, and awareness of future events in characters' dreams. The presence of religiously significant elements like the number three and fire in these prophecies further strengthens their religious background. In the function of the birth of the king, the key point is that the hidden king possesses all the essential traits of a king, despite his kingship being concealed. The function of nurturing away from home is characterized by the repetitive element of the king being raised by shepherds and in the mountains. The function of awareness is marked by the repetitive point of the king realizing his lineage through a woman, often his mother. Finally, the function of kingship is defined by the crucial mythical point of passing through water, which is present in all three narratives.

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