



An Analysis of the role of Allusion and its types (religious and mythological) in Bakhtiari Fairy Tales

Parvin. Gholamhoseini^{1*} – **Ali. Heydari²**

1: PhD in Persian Language and Literature, Shahrekord University, Shahrekord, Iran (Corresponding author): Parvin2012gh@yahoo.com

2: Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Lorestan University, Khorramabad, Iran.

Abstract: Allusion is one of the most widely used rhetorical devices in Persian literature, both verse and prose forms - especially in folklore stories. In Bakhtiari fairy tales, allusion is a predominantly present element, both religious ones (referring to the hadiths, Quranic verses and stories of the prophets) and mythological ones, whether national (referring to the demon and Simorgh) and international (referring to dragon). In this regard, the present research investigate twenty stories from Bakhtiari fairy tales, including . In these stories, religious and mythological allusions are among the main literary devices. An example of these religious and spiritual allusions can be seen in the story of “Dal’s Daughter” (Dokhtar Dāl), where the prayer of a dervish transforms an egg and a few pieces of old cloth into a beautiful girl. Various effects of mythological allusions are also used in different ways, such as referring to the growth of plants from human blood, the healing of Simorgh, the villainy of demons and dragons. This study, a descriptive-analytical research based on library studies, investigates the use of these allusions in the aforementioned stories, by citing evidence from the stories and analyzing them.

Keywords: allusion, religious and ritual, hadiths, myth, Bakhtiari fairy tales.

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1. Introduction

In the Bakhtiari tales under study – including "Malek Jamshid and Forty Gisoo Banu", "The Familiarity of the Fairy", "The Mare with Forty Foals", "The Hunter, Shah Abbas and Karim-e Daryāi", "Shah Abbas and the Problem-Solver", "Shah Tahmasb and Shah Abbas", "Shah Abbas and the Talking Nightingale", "Shah Abbas and the Old Thorn-Gatherer", "The Human Eye", "The Valuable Inheritance", "Seven Daughters", "Naneh Mahi", "Malek Jamshid and Malek Mohammad", "The Dāl's Daughter", "The City of the Tyrant-Killer", "The Pen of Destiny", "Tamati", "The Right and the Wrong Path", and "The Pearl of Silk and the Daughter of the Fairy King" – a considerable portion of the allusions belong to the categories of religious, ritual, and mythological references. The use of allusion reflects the breadth of knowledge and the richness of cultural heritage among the storytellers, particularly the common people, while also enhancing the charm and depth of the narratives. The aim and necessity of this research is to examine how religious-ritual and mythological allusions are reflected in Bakhtiari tales. For this purpose, the researchers, given the significance of the role and function of such elements in twenty Persian-language Bakhtiari tales, have analyzed these components. The research method involves, first, collecting the tales that contain religious and mythological allusions, then classifying them, and finally examining each of these thematic categories.

The researchers seek to address the following questions during the study: What is the status of counter-discourses of religious and mythological allusions in Bakhtiari tales?

Which aspect of allusion (religious or mythological) has greater frequency and application?

2. Literature Review

In "The Structure of Allusion in the New Ghazal," Konjuri et al. (2019), examine the forms of allusion expansion in the vertical axis of the modern ghazals of Simin Behbahāni, Manūchehr Neyestāni, Mohammad-Reza Shafi'i Kadkani, Mohammad-Ali Bahmani, Hossein Monzavi, and Qeyzar Aminpour. The findings indicate that the allusions employed in the new ghazal possess diverse structures and manifest in various forms, such as parallel allusions, mulammah (blended allusions), structural allusions, dialogical allusions, and more- some of which are rare or even unprecedented. Among these poets, Simin Behbahāni, compared to others, has employed a wider variety of allusive structures, followed by Hossein Monzavi, whose creativity in this regard is particularly noteworthy.

Modarresi and Kazemzadeh's "Types of Allusion in the Ghazals of Hossein Monzavi and Simin Behbahāni" (2010) investigates the different

types of allusions found in the ghazals of these two poets. The authors conclude that the relatively extensive use of various allusions in the works of Monzavi and Behbahāni both generates new layers of meaning and plays a significant role in enhancing the imaginative quality and richness of their poetic imagery.

The findings of “A Reflection on the Semantic and Rhetorical Function of Allusion in Sa’dī’s Ghazals” by Pour Heydar Beigi and Kolahchian (2018), show that the most prominent forms of allusion in Sa’dī’s ghazals are Qur’anic-narrative references- especially the stories of the prophets- along with historical-narrative allusions (romantic stories with a dominant narrative dimension), and mythological-epic references.

In “An Examination of Allusion and the Adaptation of Qur’anic Themes and Prophetic Traditions in Amir Khusrow Dehlavī’s Masnavī-ye Noh Sepahr,” Ali Mahmoudi et al. (2017) aim to introduce the Qur’anic dimensions of this work and to acquaint readers with literary compositions inspired by divine revelation and prophetic Hadiths.

Based on the conducted research, the topic “The Analysis of the Role of Allusion and Its Types (Religious and Mythological) in Bakhtiari Fairy Tales” has not yet received scholarly attention. Thus, addressing this subject in these tales (the twenty extant Bakhtiari fairy tales in Persian) can open new pathways for exploring the intersections of rhetorical studies with literature and folklore.

3. Conclusion

The cited evidence demonstrates the remarkable use of allusion, Qur’anic verses, and hadiths in Bakhtiari tales. The frequent recurrence of these elements, beyond their aesthetic and concise function, indicates the deep-rooted presence of religion in the subconscious of the Bakhtiari people, their intimacy and devotion to the divine word, and the extent of their faith in the Qur’an. Based on the conducted analysis, further examples of religious allusions can be identified, such as reliance on God (*tawakkul*), loyalty to promises, awareness of ultimate consequences and retribution for deeds, condemnation, the value of human intentions, the assistance of Khidr to the cobbler’s son, references to Solomon’s flying carpet, and the daughter of Noah. Likewise, mythological allusions appear in forms such as the ferocity of dragons, the villainy of demons, the “life bottle” of a demon hidden inside a golden fish, references to Mount Qāf, and the Simurgh dwelling upon a tree. The abundance of such allusions reflects the degree of the Bakhtiari people’s commitment to both religion and mythology, as manifested in their tales and stories. Myths, due to the attention and interest of this community, also play a significant role in enriching both the oral and written literature of nations. Considering the

examples mentioned, the dominance of religious allusions and hadiths over mythological allusions is clearly evident.

Overall, it can be said that folklore tale -particularly Bakhtiari fairy tales - are inseparably linked with religious concepts, and religion can be regarded as one of the main cultural sources of the Bakhtiari people, shaped by the environment in which they live. In general, such literary devices contribute to making the texts deeper and more multi-dimensional, allowing readers to perceive with greater precision the meanings and emotions embedded in the work. The use of allusion not only enriches the text but also evokes more complex feelings and thoughts in the reader. This interconnection of Bakhtiari tales with allusion, in representing ideas and aspirations, is a comprehensive subject that reveals various aspects of Bakhtiari culture and mentality. These tales consistently carry profound moral, social, and cultural messages. In addition to their entertaining quality, they also serve to promote social values and norms such as loyalty, bravery, and social solidarity.