

## **An Analysis on Emphasizing Female Personalities and Qualities from the Viewpoint of Ferdowsi and their Reflections in Baysanghari Shahnameh (Two paintings of Zal and Rudabeh and the Meeting of Ardashir and Golnar)**

### **Abstract**

The literature of every population express their attitude towards individual and social personalities and categories. Fiction is one of the most central branches of literature in Iran, the study of which plays an important role in recognizing cultural elements and perspectives. Fictional characters are presented in a literary text through the attribution of individual, social and cultural characteristics among many other features. In the meantime, dissimilar views on the personality of women can be perceived in the narrative and poetic chronicles of ancient Iranian literature. Examining the role of women in most popular epic stories, role-playing and reflecting their different appearances in the stories are among the topics that has always been debated by experts and researchers. One of the literary sources that has considered this issue is Baysanghari Shahnameh. This Shahnameh is the ancient version of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh belonging to the Timurid period, the ninth century AH, completed following the principals and innovations of the Herat (Khorasan) School of Painting. This research whilst following a descriptive-analytical method and collecting information via library method seeks to address various aspects of women's personality and traits, including love, fascination, beauty, charm, monarchy, patriarchy, marriage, conceit, chastity, infidelity and unfaithfulness. Examining the two paintings of "Zal and Rudabeh" and "The Meeting of Ardashir and Golnar" in the Shahnameh of Baysanghar are the main research material of this paper. The results of this study indicate that the presence of women in the Shahnameh of Baysanghari have given a distinct fairness to this famous poetic artwork; moreover, Ferdowsi has described women in his Shahnameh with more unique features than women of his time.

### **Research aims:**

1. An analysis of female traits and personalities from Ferdowsi's point of view.

۲. An identification of obvious examples of women's personalities and traits in the paintings of Baysanghari Shahnameh.

### **Research questions:**

۱. What aspects of female traits and personalities have Ferdowsi expressed in Shahnameh stories?

۲. How are the traits and personalities of women reflected in the drawings of Baysanghari Shahnameh from Ferdowsi's point of view?

### **Introduction**

The literature of nations contains a large part of human feelings, emotions and thoughts that encompass all aspects of their individual and social life. One of the topics addressed by literary critics based on psychological theories is the characterization, analysis, and investigation of fictional characters in ancient and modern literature. These characters are occasionally smooth and simple, and at times amazing and complex, which in any case, are a model of real and factual characters of people. Ferdowsi's Shahnameh is one of these great literary treasures, a part of the epic literature of Iran. Shahnameh is a comprehensive and wide-ranging book that contains the myths and history of Iran from the beginning to the Arab invasion of Iran in the seventh century AH. The presence of women in works of art and literature offers a special tenderness and life. Especially if this presence is accompanied by obvious and important characteristics of a woman, namely beauty, cup bearer, singer, love and zeal among other features. The realization of this in epic literature is even more remarkable than other literary genres, including mystical and lyrical; since concepts such as man, war, death, blood and anger are inherent in the epic, and these alone create a dark and poisonous atmosphere in which one can never breathe. It is here that the woman reaches the cry of the poet, the singer and life with her tenderness and freshness, and her presence, creates an extraordinary and desirable transcendence throughout the story. In Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, about fifty kings, including three women who ruled this land, are mentioned within a historical concept. The women that Ferdowsi describes are more prominent than the women of their time. In Iran during the Islamic period, grave attention to the Shahnameh as a valuable literary work is noticeable. Meanwhile, Baysanghari Shahnameh is one of the illustrated copies of Ferdowsi Shahnameh that has been written in the Herat school. This valuable and exquisite book

has twenty-two drawings and was prepared in ۸۳۳ AH. by the order of Prince Baysanghar Mirza (son of Shahrokh and grandson of Timur Gurkhani). In a way, it expresses Ferdowsi's view of female characterization and feminine traits, which is depicted in the form of painting.

Regarding the background of the research, it should be said that an independent work with this title has been written so far, however, a number of works have studied women in Shahnameh. "Women of Shahnameh (Research and Narration from Azargashsab to Homay)" by Jamaluddin Haeri, which was published in ۲۰۰۴ by Payvand-e-Naw Publications in Tehran; in this book, he only introduces and describes women in Shahnameh. "Worthy words of women in Shahnameh Pahlavani" by Khojasteh Kia, which was published in Tehran in ۱۹۹۲ by Fakhteh Publications also only briefly introduces women and their stories in Shahnameh. "Ferdowsi, Woman and Tragedy" by Nasser Hariri, published in ۲۰۱۰ by Avyshan Publications in Babol is in fact a summary of articles about women in Shahnameh that has been collected without introducing any new material. The article "Analysis of Marriage in Ferdowsi Shahnameh" by Seyedeh Saeedeh Sanjari published in the Quarterly Journal of Women and Culture in the autumn of ۲۰۱۰ merely mentions the issue of the marriage of Shahnameh heroes. "The Utopia of Women, A Comparative Comparison of the Story of the City of Women in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh Alexander and the Military Alexandria with Ancient Greek Myths and Utopian Stories" by Maryam Hosseini, published in the Women's Research Quarterly in the autumn of ۲۰۰۶ only mentions the role of the main heroes of the two mentioned works. "Love and Sorrow in Female Characters" are two Persian and German epic works of Ferdowsi Shahnameh and Niblungen's poem" published by Elham Rahmani Mofrad (۲۰۰۹) in the Foreign Languages Quarterly of Azad University, Central Tehran Branch also deals with the positive and negative aspects of love and sorrow in the two mentioned works. "Social Representation of Ferdowsi Shahnameh and a Study of the Socio-Cultural Identity of the Iranian Family from the Perspective of Iranians" published in the magazine Women in Culture and Art in the summer of ۲۰۱۲ by Habib Ahmadi, Homeira Bazarfkan and Ali Arabi focuses only with issues such as the role of families in the growth and education of heroes in the Shahnameh. Nevertheless, what distinguishes this study from other studies is the aspect of studying the visual narratives of the female traits and personalities of the Shahnameh. The pictorial narratives of the Shahnameh depicted in the Shahnameh of Baysanghari depict the epic manuscript of the Timurid era, since till today no researcher has published material regarding the details and visualization of the traits and personalities of women in the Shahnameh of Basangari; therefore,

this study is an analytical-descriptive method and collects information in the manner of libraries and attempts to analyze and study some of the characteristics of women such as: love and fascination, beauty and charm, kingdom and statehood, marriage, chastity and secrecy, It depicts betrayal and infidelity from the paintings of Baysanghari Shahnameh. Also, these paintings show the good or bad traits and the effectiveness of women according to Ferdowsi. Finally, it should be noted that since in the paintings of Shahnameh Baysanghari, a small image of the women of Shahnameh are depicted; Consequently, in this research, merely a special personality trait of women has been mentioned depicted in the two paintings of "Zal and Rudabeh" and "The Meeting of Ardashir and Golnar".

### **Conclusion**

In the literature of different nations, there are diverse views regarding the personality of women. The presence of women in works of art adds a delicate tenderness. In Iranian literature, epic poems consume a long history. The women that Ferdowsi has described in the Shahnameh are more prominent than the women of their time and play the leading role in the epic of love. Of course, Ferdowsi's view of love displays the various manifestations of women's individual feelings towards heroes and vice versa. The descriptions of women's beauty in Shahnameh have more colors and glazes since this is the beauty and charm of Shahnameh in which women soon fall in love. Regarding the monarchy, a number of women performed well in this role and were sensitive, influential and mostly just to the state, and some were the basis for the formation of another monarchy. In the discussion of marriage and matrimonial events, the fact that most marriages are extramarital rather than intra-marital and women are eliminated immediately after the birth of heroes with leaving little traces behind. Regarding chastity and covering a woman, she is free from disrespect; since women, despite having hijab and preserving their feminine essence, engaged in social and governmental activities, and hijab and preserving feminine essence did not hinder their sensible demands. Regarding infidelity and betrayal of women, Ferdowsi mentions Soodabeh, the wife of Kikaus, and Golnar, the wife of Ardavan, whose betrayal is a disgrace. Another point is that it is true that some verses of Shahnameh reflect the misogyny and misery of women and show the existence of women lower than men, nevertheless in general, Ferdowsi's view of female personality is associated with a kind of highness and high position and the personality and attributes of women and role they have been shown to be more common in the more colorful

society, and by reflecting on the attitude of the creators of epic literature, one can understand the kind of fusion of cultures and their influence from each other. In the two paintings "Zal and Rudabeh" and "The Meeting of Ardeshir and Golnar" which were studied and analyzed in this research, the mentioned traits of female personality are shown by using portraiture and engraving in the composition of the paintings according to the painting tradition of the Timurid era associated with a kind of realism. This uniqueness of the women of Shahnameh, both in the positive aspects of personality and in the negative aspects of personality, has been tried to be depicted in the paintings. However, in some of the paintings, the artist's mental interpretation of the story of Shahnameh is illustrated.

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