

# **Rituals, Cultures and Symbolic Beliefs of the Iranian People with Reference to the Book "Lady of the Seven Castles"**

## **Abstract**

Popular culture recognizes the customs, beliefs, anecdotes, parables, and verbal discourse of the people; and in today's contemporary world this phenomenon manifests in various fields of humanities, including sociology, history, psychology, literature, art and religion. Literature is abundant with concepts of folklore and this has created a new approach in the field of interdisciplinary studies. Bastani Parizi is one of the writers and historians who has focused precisely on the elements of popular culture and oral literature in many of his literary works; therefore, his writings are a manifestation of folklore culture. Hence, by critically analyzing such features, one can be perceptive about the local beliefs and convictions and likewise become acquainted with the cultural history of the Iranian people. This can exclusively be studied in one of the stories by Parizi titled: "The Lady of the Seven Castles". This paper seeks to understand how the rituals and symbolic beliefs of the Iranian people are reflected in the literature of the aforementioned author. To achieve this aim, a descriptive and analytical method by relying on library data is carried out. The findings of the research indicate that this book is one of the most glorious and enduring works of Master Bastani Parizi and reflects the sources and elements of folklore including: beliefs, customs, allusions, proverbs, words and popular terms along with local arts and places that have triggered the audience so that in addition to historical awareness, they are acquainted with the customs and culture of the people of Iran, especially Kerman.

## **Research aims:**

1. Acquaintance with the book "The Lady of the Seven Castles" by the author Bastani Parizi.
2. Recognition of the rituals, cultures and symbolic beliefs of the Iranian people based on the book of the Lady of the Seven Castles.

## **Research questions:**

1. What are the features of the book: "The Lady of the Seven Castles"?
2. How are the rituals, cultures and symbolic beliefs of the Iranian people reflected in the book: "The Lady of the Seven Castles"?

**Keywords:** Bastani Parizi, Popular Culture, Cultures and Beliefs, The Lady of the Seven Castles

## **Introduction**

The study and analysis of the nature of cultures and rituals in diverse regions of Iran indicates the existence of diversity and multiplicity in such symbolic beliefs. The study of these mirrors can be seen side by side with the sources and works that have been written. In the last century, the culture and beliefs as one of the most powerful and significant themes have continually been used in many literary works. Contemporary writers have always reflected the culture of the people in their works and have applied time to express the political and social situation. One of the most famous writers in the field of popular culture and literature is Mohammad Ibrahim Bastani Parizi. Dr. Bastani has been remembered for numerous works in the field of

culture and literature of Iran, including the land of Kerman. Among his authored works, a literary work entitled the "Lady of the Seven Castles" which deals with important points about the rituals and folk culture of the Iranian people is noteworthy. Therefore, the study of this work can play an important role in recognizing the various cultures of Iran. In this study, the characteristics related to popular culture in the book "Lady of the Seven Castles" by the aforementioned author are examined. A review of the background of the present study shows that no independent work with this title has been written so far. However, several works have examined the category of popular culture among which the following books can be mentioned: There is a book entitled "Field of Cultural Studies" written by Mahmoud Ruholami in this field (1986). Another book entitled "Iranian Folk Literature" was published by Cheshmeh Publications in 2008 and is a collection of articles on Iranian myths and customs. Sadegh Hedayat also has a book entitled "Folk Culture of the Iranian People" which was published in 2006 by Cheshmeh Publications.

An article entitled "Beliefs and popular culture in Sindbadnameh" written by Najmeh Dori and Faramarz Khojasteh, which was published in 2013 in the Journal of Iranian Studies, Faculty of Literature, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. In this article, the authors address the issue that the influence of public opinion and ideas in the Sinbadnameh has made this work famous and popular over the centuries. Article "Beliefs and Elements of Popular Literature in the Novel of Suoshun" by Gholamreza Kafi and Zohreh Ameri (2014). This article examines the elements of literature and popular belief in Suoshun's novel. In this study, popular beliefs such as totem, taboo, fetishism, animism, mana, noma and superstition are first defined and explained, then the evidence is presented from the text. In the introduction, the characteristics and functions of popular literature and then the status of fiction and the position of Suoshun and its place in people's culture are stated. There are many other works in the field of popular culture and literature that cannot be enumerated in this article; However, regarding popular culture from the point of view of Bastani, it should be said that the characteristics of popular culture have not been studied in the work selected by the author and it is new and fresh in its kind. In the field of popular culture regarding Bastani only one article was found entitled: "A look at aspects of popular culture in the book of the Prophet of Thieves by the Bastani Parizi" written by Tayebeh Vatanparast. In the mentioned works, the book " The Lady of the Seven Castles " has not been studied, so the author intends to study this issue with a descriptive and analytical method and relying on library data. In this work, as its title suggests, the author has examined aspects of Iranian folk culture, especially Kerman, and has provided evidence from the book "The Prophet of Thieves" in this work. Therefore, the present study is unprecedented in its kind and no research has been done on popular culture in the book: " The Lady of the Seven Castles ".

## **Conclusion**

The writings of Dr. Bastani Parizi are full of elements of popular culture that are reflected in many of his works. The book " The Lady of the Seven Castles " is one of his works in which many cases of popular culture can be seen. The components obtained from this book are useful for identifying the culture of the people and popular beliefs such as: beliefs, customs, words, terms and proverbs, etc. The folkloric elements used in this work are placed in six main titles, which include the following: 1. Beliefs and opinions including: social and cultural beliefs (belief in the stars - belief in a creature named Al, the child behind Purification of the water basin by rain, recourse to stones and asking for help, Khidr Nabi and sheep, female infertility, cold old woman (Bardal Ajuz), asking for rain, stopping the rain, buffalo, believing in Anahita) - Religious beliefs ( Rain in religious traditions - giving vows) 2- Respected places and related legends (Dragon (Zanjan) - Niasar Fire Temple (Kashan) - Forty Girls Tower (Semnan) - Forty Girls Tower (Isfahan) - Girl Tower (Ravar) - Tomb of Baba Pira (Nahavand) - Tomb of Varju (Azerbaijan) - Bibi Hakimeh (Kuhbanan) 3- Rituals and customs including: (Increasing the water of the aqueduct - Child of Hajat Moradi - Drawing of the people of Qazgah Khalkhal - Thirteen To - Galmali Mosque - Nowruz) 4 -

Plants and trees (Pomegranate tree - Kenar tree (= cedar) 5 - Folk words and expressions 6 - Allusions and proverbs, among the indicators related to popular culture that In the book "The Lady of the Seven Castles" is used, the beliefs and beliefs, which include two main parts, They have the highest frequency and, in contrast, the title of plants and trees has the lowest frequency. The use of these elements in the works of the ancient doctor Parizi shows his love and interest in popular culture. Dr. Bastani is, in fact, a realist sociologist who understood the community around him and was aware of how to live in the community with ordinary people, or how to read content. He wrote in such a way that he could communicate with the general public and this stems from the fact that he comes from a rural environment and has experienced living well with the common people, hence he attempts to mention the popular folk culture in his community as much as possible in his works, and this point to make it clear to its audience that it is always in tune with the language of the people and has a very deep interest in living in public.

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