

An Introduction to the Affordances of Nezami’s *Haft Peykar* for Making Role-Playing Video Games

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Introduction

Besides entertainment and education, video games create a new type of communication whose attractiveness can be appropriately utilized in the reorientation of the cultural influences on the mindset of the users. Considering the rich and valuable potentials of Iranian art and literature, and considering the fact that the audience of video games is mainly consisted of children and adolescents, it is advisable to use the potentials of favorite texts of this group of audience or recreate Persian classic texts with new readings appropriate for the making of the video games. It is conveniently possible to use the fantastical elements in classic epics and romances such as Nezami’s *Haft Peykar* (literary meaning *Seven Bodies*). This genre exists in many favorite works and media in the world in different forms such as literary works, cinematic productions and video games. The potentials of these texts can be brought to fruition in addition to the educational objectives especially with local and national cultural approaches. As such, *Haft Peykar* is one of the prominent classic texts which, considering its remarkable characteristics such as having various types of challenges and adventures, can be read in a new light and used in the making of an attractive role-playing video game.

Review of Literature and Methodology

In previous research, *Haft Peykar* is studied from dramatic, narrative, literary, comparative, historical and even psychological perspectives; therefore, this study tries to investigate it in a descriptive-analytical method as a type of romantic epic literature to find its positive potentials for making video games. The study tries to answer the question how this text and similar texts can be used in the creation of role-playing video games.

Discussion

Haft Peykar is an epic text which can be studied from the different perspectives such as the story and different elements of narrative such as characters and various creatures in it, as well as its recreation of different conflicts and mental and physical challenges. It can be said that the story is of significance for making open world role-playing video games from different perspectives such as main plot, subplots, variety of themes and settings and, especially, the emphasis on the creation of an open and wide world.

Accordingly, the usual practice stage of an adapted game can be designed for the users' learning and getting skilled in hunting, exercising map-reading, getting mastery over the main characters and guiding and controlling her. In the first stage, weapons and tools for fighting against dragons and other human and supernatural creatures can be deduced from the text or added by the makers based on up-to-date graphic designs, having in mind the mentalities of today's children and adolescents. In the second stage, the presence of the hero in the competition field in the court and snatching the crown from between

two lions and killing the lions and different missions to reach the throne can be recreated. Fighting against Khan of China and the different heroes of his army can be a convenient setting for creating the third stage based on physical challenges and various types of fights. The fourth and fifth stages will consist of a selection of seven anecdotes such as the fight against different types of magic and passing through various obstacles and mental examinations based on the user's creativity to take the main character to the prince based on "Red Dome" story and also fighting against various dragons and escaping devils based on "Blue Dome" story. Destroying Rast-Rowshan and his associates in the court and eliminating the danger of the Khan of China with a combination of hand to hand fights and the use of different strategies and mental examinations and reading informational inscriptions can be the sixth stage. Finally, the seventh stage, concomitant with the "seven" in the title, can be the entrance into the cave for hunting the special zebra and using appropriate tools and entering the last phase of the story and getting disappeared.

One the other hand, a wide range of role-playing, especially combative role-playing video game audiences can be attracted by themes such as fighting for the sake of the oppressed with an emphasis on revenge, fighting lions and dragons, showing courage and superhuman abilities and concentrating on love and melodramatic relations. Additionally, these tales and themes are set in various atmospheres and places such as jungles, plains, mountains, caves and wonderful places such as Khawarnaq Castle and the seven colorful castles of the princes. The creators of the game can design settings for an open world game for the experience of various small and big

missions by the use of exaggeration in the final design and creating more diversity and emphasizing Iranian elements such as architecture, lighting and color, natural and geographical environmental attractions understandable for children and adolescents. In addition, the existence of various creatures and characters like superhuman heroes, ogres and wild beasts are concomitant with the practical necessities of an interactive game. The variety of roles in the text is a good opportunity for creating various and multiple positive and negative characters who engage in different activities such as fighting, searching, going on adventures and passing through different types of mental and physical examinations relying on different types of controlling skills.

Conclusion

In sum, one can note that Nezami's *Haft Peykar* is a romantic epic with a suspenseful narrative full of romantic and attractive themes which can be effectively used in making role-playing video games. Therefore, in the answer to the main question of the research, one can claim that this text has the potential to entertain the audience by its attractive and adventurous story which can be reflected in different types of narrative complexities in role-playing video games. Also, the variety of the settings can be used by the makers of the video game to create boundless atmospheres appropriate for role-playing open world games and to create a game with standard temporal setting. Additionally, multiple roles of the hero of the game in different settings improve its potentials for adventure and makes it possible to engage the player in the game by controlling each of these roles in different missions and to give the player a unique experience by creating some modifications in

the narrative of role-playing games, especially by creating suspense through the conflicts and using cinematic interludes.

Keywords: video game, Persian literature, romantic epic, *Haft Peykar*, role-playing games

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