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Extended Abstract

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The Potentials of Creating an Animated Spin-off from the World of the Iranian Epic with an Emphasis on the Tale of Kok Kouhzad

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Introduction

Spin-off means "taken from" and refers to a novel, radio or television program, computer game, film, or any narrative work that is based on the story or concept of another work. Spin-offs are usually based on very successful works and sometimes on secondary characters of that story and include a prequel or independent story of these characters. If the same definition of spin-offs of the stories of the *Shahnameh* is considered as the framework and part of the fictional world of the Iranian epics, then by examining the story of Kok Kouhzad, one can achieve a proper understanding of the illustrative aspects of this text.

This story is about the adventures of the teenage Rostam and an evil character named Kok Kouhzad and their conflict-filled relationship. The story revolves around Kok's victory over Rostam's ancestors and the killing of many Iranian heroes before him, and ultimately Kok's killing by Rostam.

Since the imaginative and exaggerated elements in epic stories present many technical and financial limitations in depicting them, an attempt has been made to answer the main question of what factors can be emphasized to produce the fascinating world of Rostam's adolescence in the form of an adapted animated spin-off with lower costs within the framework of the animation.

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Method, Review of Literature and Purpose

The research method in this study is descriptive-analytical and uses library documents and tools. Research has been conducted on the story of the Kok Kouhzad with comparative or manuscript approaches and attention to issues such as name and ethnology, theme, examination of the Kok's traits and characteristics in Iranian epics, etc.

Regarding the adaptation of classical Persian literature for adapted animation, more research has been conducted recently, especially on epic works, and it is still expanding; however, the story of Kok Kouhzad has not been the focus of study from this angle so far, and in previous adaptation approaches, the author has not been able to take a comprehensive look at the relationship between epic texts with common heroes and as a franchise and its subsets, such as spin-off adaptations.

From this perspective, the purpose of the following article is to introduce and analyze the story of Kok Kouhzad as a narrative suitable for making an adapted animation with a spin-off approach, using a network perspective based on shaping the relationships between epic texts under a large collection with an extensive story world including epic works along with folk and oral narratives.

Discussion

1. The fascinating story of Kok Kouhzad and Rostam: The story of Kok and Rostam is the story of a teenager who, through heroic action, saves his land and family from constant danger. It has a similar narrative pattern in many epic animations in the world and has captivated a wide audience. Accordingly, at the very beginning of the story, the audience, by identifying with Rostam, becomes aware of what Kok has done and the defeats he has inflicted on Rostam's family. First, a controlled suspense is formed about the outcome of Rostam's encounter with Kok, and in the second stage, the audience is constantly trying to create a terrifying image of this character for themselves through fantasy and before seeing this powerful supervillain during the play, which, like a mental engine, makes them eager to face the different dimensions and diverse powers of the character, who is generally violent and confrontational. It also seems that, within a framework beyond the short text of the story of the Kok Kouhzad and within an interwoven and extensive network of the overall adventures of the fictional world of the *Shahnameh* and the connection of this story with other epic stories and interactions with characters such as Sam, Nariman, Zal, Zahhak, and other heroes of various texts, many adventures will be available for spin-off approaches in the process of various adaptations.

2. Representation of epic themes in interaction with type or character: When it comes to dealing with the story of Kok in its independent form or in combination with the main stories of the *Shahnameh* and oral narratives and from a spin-off perspective, two approaches can be examined; in the first approach, by focusing more on the positive side of Rostam's character and his cheerfulness and without focusing on

Kok's life, an animation with a wide audience of children and adolescents is produced; but in the second approach, the focus is on Kok's life and showing how he becomes a frightening creature that can be considered for producing an animation with a more violent atmosphere for an adult audience. In the second approach, the spin-off perspective includes everything that exists about this character in the world of Iranian epic (the world of the *Shahnameh* and Ferdowsi's mentality and all oral and written narratives after that).

3. Epic Exaggeration; The Foundation of Animation's Attractiveness: Exaggerations magnify and emphasize the subject, character, place, and creatures, and ultimately create attractiveness in the form of images, both cinematic and television. Along with the place of exaggeration in the definitions of epic, we can consider the same function for it in animation. It can be said that the existence of various examples of exaggeration in the story of Kok Kouhzad, including exaggeration in the appearance of the hero/anti-hero and companions of both sides, along with exaggeration in describing the shape and function of weapons, as well as exaggeration in the presentation of various actions, behaviors, and situations, especially battles, has been able to provide a suitable foundation for reproducing the images required for an epic adaptation animation.

Conclusion

The story of Kok Kouhzad is important in two ways; first, it is about the childhood of Rostam and the description of the exploits of the main hero of the *Shahnameh*, which can be attractive to the audience as a spin-off of the life of the superhero of Iranian epics. Second, it is about a supervillain named Kok Kouhzad, and by focusing on the life of this antihero, and especially how this character was born, acted, and ended. Using the text of the story, along with the use of folk and oral traditions, the path of evolution of an antihero can be made a subject of illustration within the framework of epic expression and by approaching characterization, instead of focusing on the mere typification common in epic texts. Accordingly, by emphasizing the attractive aspects of the story of Kok Kouhzad in the form of narration, theme, and attention to the variety of exaggerations in the text, we can use this work as a way to enter the great world of Iranian epic stories, and by distancing ourselves from classical methods of expression and approaching the representation of stories in today's world cinema, we can make appropriate use of it.

Keywords: Kok Kouhzad, adaptation, animation, story world, spin-off

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