

## **Analyzing Satire Techniques used in *Maqama Isfahaniyah* by Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani**

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### **Extended Abstract**

#### **1 Introduction**

Laughter is a human phenomenon, the nature and of which and the difficulty in discovering the causes behind it has been the focus of both philosophers and psychologists such as Henry Bergson and Freud since long ago. There are several exploratory theories formulated around this phenomenon including the liberation theory, the superiority theory, heterogeneity, etc., with the purpose of identifying the cause behind laughter. Aside from pondering about such causes, literary satirist has managed to use this capacity to humorously express their thoughts. Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani is a literary figure and prose writer from the Abbasid era who managed to make use of humorous capacities in expressing the shortcomings of his time's society and people in his "Maqamat" (esp. in Maqamah Isfahaniyah). This study seeks to explain the techniques and mechanisms used by al-Hamadani to create satire.

#### **2 Theoretical Framework**

**Maqamah Isfahaniyah:** This maqamah (And Maqamat-e-Hamadani in general) is a rhyming prose written during the Abbasid era. It tells the story of events happened to the protagonist, Eisa bin Husham, in a single place (the mosque) during a specific time (Morning Prayer, before travelling and joining the caravan). The chain of events in this story become climactic in a comic manner, with circumstances of the protagonist becoming worse and worse to an unexpected extent.

**Satire and Satire Creation Techniques:** Originated from the Greek word, "Satyrs", satire literally means words of ridicule. This word in Arabic is *al-Fukahah* which encompasses different types of ridicule, humor, wit, joke, smut, mockery, etc. Satire is created from a type of rational and spiritual perception with the arrangement of heterogeneous elements beside each other; these heterogeneous elements are manifested in speech, acts, movements, and situations and results in reactions such as laughter, smile, and happiness. The most important means of satire creation includes situation-centered, language-centered, and imagination-centered techniques among others. All or parts of these techniques can be interpreted under theories of heterogeneity, liberation, superiority, etc.

#### **3 Method**

The present inquiry is a fundamental research with the purpose of explaining the nature of satire and studying the techniques used by al-Hamadani in Maqamah Isfahaniyah using the descriptive method and content analysis. To this aim, it is attempted to provide answers to the following question: What are the techniques used by al-Hamadani to create satire in Maqamah Isfahaniyah? First, library documents including books and articles related to satire creation were examined. After gathering library information and becoming familiar with satire creation

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mechanisms, the techniques used by the author in Maqamah Isfahaniyah were identified and extracted.

#### 4 Results and Discussion

Satire is the most important and most functional tool for transferring messages to the audience. Literary figures such as Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani were well aware of this point as well; consequently, they have managed to reflect the issues and shortcomings of the societies of their time fearlessly by adding a taste of satire to their works. In his Maqamat, and his Maqamah Isfahaniyah in particular, Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani has illustrated the spreading of superstition, beggary, public retardation, and religious prejudices in the form of a critical ridicule; he has chosen satire as the best device to transfer such messages.

#### 5 Conclusion

The techniques used by al-Hamadani in Maqamah Isfahaniyah to create satire include situation-centered, character-centered and, to a certain extent, language-centered techniques. Having been aware of language functions and literary abilities, he has managed to make great use of language to create satire. Results showed that in his use of situation-centered techniques, al-Hamadani has employed ploys such as surprises, role replacement, change of mood from spiritual to material, and climactic course of events; here, surprise has been used more frequently compared to others. Regarding the character-centered technique, it is mainly on the protagonist to create satire which is manifested in dealing with the other two characters. In general, the dominant common point among these techniques is "contradiction". Contradiction is sometimes found between two characters, between thoughts and/or the action of an individual. Another important point to note is the structure of the story and its related elements and the fact that the protagonist narrates the events himself, adding to the satirical dimension of Maqamah. The good beginning and ending and course of events happening in a single location such as the mosque are indicative of al-Hamadani's skills and abilities in storytelling and use of language.

**Keywords:** Satire Creation, Techniques, Situation-centered Satire, Character-centered Satire, Maqamah Isfahaniyah

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