

A Study of Nietzsche's Concept of *Übermensch* in *David and Uriah* by Abbas Nalbandian

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The relationship between philosophy and literature in interdisciplinary studies is very important due to the influence of philosophy on literature and vice versa. The foundation of this type of research is based on interdisciplinary studies. Interdisciplinary knowledge is essential in modern societies to address issues that cannot be addressed by a single science or discipline. Given the impact of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy in the 20th century, a great deal of studies have been conducted on the influence of his works on art, philosophy of art, philosophy of history, political philosophy, etc. Among Nietzsche's various theories and thoughts, the concept of *Übermensch* has a close connection with literature because he believed in the individual's creative power to develop new and higher forms beyond humanity. *David and Uriyah* by Abbas Nalbandian is one of the important works in Persian playwriting that, as an artistic work, covers various topics including social, political, cultural, and religious issues, opening the way for interdisciplinary studies.

2. Aim

This study takes an interdisciplinary approach to examine the conceptual application of philosophy in a play. For this purpose, a prominent Western philosopher, Nietzsche (1844-1900), and a creative playwright from Iran, Abbas Nalbandian (1947-1989), have been selected. The author of the article seeks to analyze how the concept of *Übermensch* (Superman / Overman) by Nietzsche is used in Nalbandian's *David and Uriyah*. In other words, the author aims to demonstrate that the philosophical concept of *Übermensch* has been applied in the play and both the philosopher and the playwright have utilized it for similar purposes. The playwright's portrayal of the character and his use of plot and the philosopher's explanation of the concept of *Übermensch* have led to a similar conclusion. *David and Uriyah* (1966) can be

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examined and analyzed based on this concept. Despite Nalbandian's inherent talent in playwriting, there has been limited research on his works, and they have been somewhat neglected. However, there have been a few studies on Nalbandian's existential approach in some of his works, but so far, no research has been conducted on *David and Uriyah*. This is the reason for choosing this play. The significance of this article lies in its examination of *David and Uriyah* and its use of an interdisciplinary approach in Comparative Literature to elucidate the relationship between Nietzsche's philosophy and Nalbandian's play.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The general framework of this study is content analysis of Nalbandian's *David and Uriyah*. Interdisciplinary research does not have a strong and common theoretical basis, but rather uses a combination of different concepts and methods in various fields to examine complex and challenging issues. Comparative literature and interdisciplinary studies are both research areas that are related to each other, although each has its own specific characteristics. In Nietzsche's philosophy, the concept of *Übermensch* plays a very important role. Nietzsche's *Übermensch* rejects the established foundations of society.

4. Discussion

Nalbandian is among the prominent writers and translators in Iran who exhibit a rebellious existentialist attitude along with an Absurdist function. He presents thought-provoking concepts with unique creativity. He creates enigmatic aspects and delves into historical, mystical, and mythological figures to enrich the depth of his works. One of the aspects that brings Nalbandian's and Nietzsche's perspectives close to each other is their critical view of traditions and the past. Like Nietzsche, he does not reflect the grammatical structure prevailing in society, especially its artistic space; therefore, he uses avant-garde and progressive texts in all his works. Similar to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, who embodies a rebellious personality and unconventional pleasures and loves, Nalbandian also creates characters that bear great resemblance to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*. Another influence of Nietzsche's thought on Nalbandian can be seen in the issue of the decline of religious faith, which appears in Nietzsche's thought as "the death of God," and in Nalbandian's works as an acceptance of the weariness of existence, the emptiness of life, and the lack of meaning in it; hence, in most of Nalbandian's works, the internalization of death, impermanence, and the decline of traditional ethics is reiterated. There are differences between Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and that of Nalbandian. Nietzsche, as a philosopher, examines the values and philosophical and ethical meanings, whereas Nalbandian, based on the experience of contemporary social conditions and issues, emphasizes political and social issues. In the 1950s and 1960s, Iran witnessed significant cultural and social

transformations. This era was accompanied by the emergence of new political and cultural movements, economic and social changes, and the influence of Western culture, especially Western literature and playwrights. These cultural transformations provided a suitable ground for the emergence and development of new ideas and concepts in art and literature. In this context, Nalbandian addressed the concept of *Übermensch* in his *David and Uriyah*.

5. Findings and Conclusion

Philosophical ideas like those of Nietzsche have been widely used in the works of various writers and thinkers around the world. For example, just as Nietzsche questions the foundations of Christianity and accepted traditions, Nalbandian also challenges and subverts the foundations of Iranian drama and literature. Nietzsche proposes the *Übermensch* as a way to find a new ethical path that honors life rather than rejecting it. The motivation of the *Übermensch* is love for this world and life. He seeks truth within himself and nature, not in holy books and laws. The *Übermensch* is a way of life that stands in opposition to the system of values. With a sense of admiration for individuality and strong will, David tries to prove the emptiness of the established moral principles and values of the past that have led many people to blindly follow them. In *David and Uriyah*, the audience is confronted with a work in which, through David's role of the superman, the transcendent is negated. For this reason, the audience can trace the influence of Nietzsche's thinking in *David and Uriyah*. Nalbandian, through theater, conveys his profound, often philosophical, and deeply insightful ideas to the audience.

Keywords: Nietzsche, Übermensch, Abbas Nalbandian, interdisciplinary studies, David and Uriyah

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