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STUDY OF REPRESENTATION IN AESCHYLUS' *THE PERSIANS* AND FERDOWSI'S *ESKANDAR* IN *SHAHNAMEH*

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ABSTRACT

For variety of reasons, ancient Greek considered East (Iran) as a much more powerful adversary. This type of opinion shows itself in written works of history and literature. This study discusses one of this works, a play called *The Persians*, and is to be compared with the narrative of *Eskandar* in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. In the play *The Persians* by Aeschylus, the Greek playwright, portrayed a biased picture of the battle of Salamis in terms of Hellenism with his own artistic imagination; accordingly, he became the source of later misunderstandings and wrong interpretations of later historians. Although, in this play, Greeks do have covertly a real enthusiasm for Iranian country and its riches, they represent a negative picture of Iranian. Unlike this negative representation, on the contrary, when a reader studies the narrative of Ferdowsi's *shahnameh* about *Eskandar*, he/she reads, indeed, his very positive picture and countenance. The profound distinction of these two readings causes every critic to regard and study them more carefully. Therefore, this study tries to study overt and covert reasons of negative representation of Iranian by Aeschylus, and also narrative of *Eskandar* in *Shahnameh*. Particularly, in representation of *Eskandar*, because of Ferdowsi's faithfulness to the written work that he had in order to write his poetic narration, it can be recognized that the narrative of *Eskandar* had been different from Iranian people's viewpoint which consider *Eskandar* unblest or bloodthirsty. Actually, this narration of *Shahnameh* is the one which is created by Greeks based on their own political tendencies throughout *Eskander's* era and afterwards.

KeyWords: The Persians, Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, Aeschylus, Greek, *Eskandar*

1. INTRODUCTION

From ancient Greek literature to the present, there had been many authors wrote concerning East, especially Iran's culture and civilization. In addition, the critics tried to represent and challenge these kinds of works' standpoints and perspectives. This challenge does successfully question the superiority of West civilization in order to deal successfully with it; a civilization, which is deeply indebted; however, represented East inferior than West in terms of culture. We just take it for granted that this kind of encounter or conflict refers to their covert tendency or impetus of authoritarian.

Ancient Iran, especially in Achaemenian and Medes period, was seriously regarded by Western or Greek literary men and historians. As Aeschylus play *The Persian* is, indeed, very significant among other Greek works. This play had direct and determinate influence over subsequent authors. Therefore, the negative kind of the author of the play completely pierced through following works, and became the predominant base and element for other works which were written regarding Iranian history. This study is prepared to discuss Aeschylus' representation of Iranian culture and civilization in Achaemenian era; Furthermore, in order to make this standpoint and its various cultural and historical aspects more clear, this play is to be compared with the narrative of *Eskandar* in *Shahnameh*, because the standpoint of *Shahnameh* towards *Eskandar* stirs and inspires the reader with distinguished interpretations. Yet, this distinctively positive reading of *Shahnameh* (Ferdowsi) which is in contrast to negative reading of the authors of the works of Pahlavi make every critic ponder.

1.1 EAST AND THE NECESSITY OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE FOR ITS UNDERSTANDING

Throughout the history, East's been deliberately misunderstood variously by western authors and poets. These conflicts, disagreements, and misunderstandings brought battles; consequently, cultural effects and impressions. Granted that these biased misunderstandings which Europeans (ancient Greek) had of Iran have been continuing in contemporary era. Hence the necessity of comparative literature, which has led to recognition of cultures in contemporary era, is felt much more. Comparative literature considers a discussion beyond a literary text.

For reaching covert parts or layers of texts and even omitted and altered identities, comparative literature has exploiting other fields such as history, anthropology, philosophy, linguistics, and so on. Actually, in addition to regarding intratextual and aesthetic aspects, it turns to extratextual backgrounds and some parts of the texts which lead to the recognition of ancient civilizations and establishing an appropriate relationship between past and present. Therefore, it is a transboundary and transnational discourse.

Thus, the results of comparative studies not only doesn't have unilateral and biased tendencies, but also inaugurates variety of criticisms because of their indeterminacy and relativity; therefore, it leads to the fertility of different cultures of humanistic civilizations. In addition to inaugurate new ways to the recognition of national literature, it bridges the gap among different cultures and nations. If literature, as the permanent part of any national culture, remains in its own boundaries, and does not think of growth and universality, it, therefore, weakens. But if critics deal with recognition and representation of literary texts, the closed ways of national literature is opened, consequently, enters the immensity of world literature.

One of the main discussions, which have not seriously been considered in comparative literature, is comparison between ancient Iranian works of literature and other nations. Along with the substantial influences of ancient works on each other, ancient Iranian and Greek texts are to be regarded. Another point that establishes comparative literature is the questions that are asked by contemporary generations who want to understand their own past. Thus, comparative literature is, indeed, very appropriate. The purpose of saying this statement is held in remembrance of the untrue approaches and misunderstandings of "Hellenocentric" (Briant, 2002, 517) cultures which continues to exist in one or other ways at present. Therefore, the criticism and comparison concerning opinions and judgments of ancient Greek playwrights and historians, and showing their dark points and amiss beliefs about East, especially Iran, can prevent the repetition of unusual western orientations.

Nowadays, whatever is going to be regarded, as the subject of new historical studies about ancient Iran, should be the standpoint of Western towards Iranian history is far away from what actually took place. And whatever has been introduced as historical documents is a unilateral viewpoint which only fulfilled their own ends and intentions. Therefore, critics should consider other documents and books beside ancient Greek sources, and ponder over ancient events in terms of comparative literature in order to disclose untold ones.

In Persian literary texts (Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and Nezami's *Eskandar Nameh*), Eskandar is a smart king and martial leader, and also has positive and sometimes humanistic characteristic features. On the contrary, in religious texts of Zoroastrianism, he has a mere hated countenance of history; these texts consider Eskandar as the envoy of Satan in order to enter and ruin Iran (Badi'e, 1986, 90). Therefore, every critic ponders over it in order to discover the reasons of this differentiation, when they read these different twofold countenances. Also, a text which can be compared with *Shahnameh* in terms of narrative representation is *The Persians* by Aeschylus who narrates the battle of Salamis.

Before dealing with the main subject, a brief introduction concerning the constructive elements of literary texts is to be declared in order to provide a clear background for studying these two texts, *Shahnameh* and *The Persians*. Literary texts are a part of the twisted procedure of other texts (e.g. the culture of a society) which should be studied in regard to their role among other texts such as historical, social, cultural, religious, and so on; that is to say, "extratextual components do have a significant role in creating literary texts and trends as much as item-in-text does" (Zarghani, 2010, 89). Therefore literary texts should be studied in relation to extrinsic components. Texts are brought through encounters of factors which have been created throughout a slice or an era of history. Although these texts show the type of mentality of their constructive components such as characters, this does not mean that they should be comprehended according to their authors' intentions. These texts, therefore, should be discussed and analyzed. This study, which deals with two literary texts, firstly represents theoretical standpoints regarding the methods of reading these two texts, and then analyzes the two texts.

1.2 PICTURES AND IMAGERIES AND ITS ROLE ON NARRATIVIZATION

Throughout their lives, societies adopt portraits from others under the influence of different factors, and based on that picture, they create and confirm narratives of their own social and individual life. If we consider picture as "the representation and discursive or mental phase of an individual, group, nation, or race" (Nanquette, 2011, 111), we cannot forget the role of humanistic and non-humanistic criteria of this picture. This function is, indeed, verily chief that something from reality is always displaced, and takes another countenance. In other words, these factors can influence and transform a reality from different aspects.

Actually, it has been said that “representation is not the neutral reproduction of reality; in this process, something is ever added or omitted from reality” (112). We will see that in rendering of Iranian countenance, this is the active Hellenocentric view that creates a particular portrait of them rather than the influence of Iranian themselves and their functions. The portrait of Iran in the play is actually Western centric and self-oriented perception which caused that history has not confirmed it. Whatever can be said regarding imagery and its recognition and method in studying texts is that a reader consider a text as a component among other texts, as a whole; in other words, “imageries or recognition of images, the study of the picture of “other” in a literary text, is a kind of reading of comparative literature” (100). Also, comparative literature uses sociology of literature for historical study of literary text; that is, “an intersubjective knowledge which tries to recognize and illustrate multiple relationships of literature and society” (Zarghani, 2010, 90). In this historical-sociological study, the issues of representation, its manner, and the degree of verisimilitude or its digression are to be recognized. Whatever is going to be regarded here is “the portrait of Other”; therefore, the researcher should recognized a part of covert truth from cumulative or hard-set substratums of a narrative, and tries to reveal it as far as he can.

1.3 “DIFFERENCE PRINCIPLE” AND “RELATION PRINCIPLE” IN IDENTIFYING OF THE NARRATIVE

These two principles demonstrate this subject that a text is formed in relation to its differentiation from other texts, and similarities or give and take relation with them as well, and is also recognized from this viewpoint. “Identities are formed in terms of difference, not outside of it. This leads to this sorrowful recognition that the “obvious” meaning of every term, and then, its identity can be made through its relation to Other, a relation to what that does not exist, or exactly what is without it” (Nanquette, 2011, 102-3). In other words, a narrative (a character or a nation) is revealed in other real or unreal narrations of narratives (in other characters or nations). And it is known that active narrative (the first one) leads right towards itself, and passive narrative (the second one) is taken the right. And then, it is in this point that the responsibility of the researcher or critic becomes very sensitive and heavy. Regarding the two texts *The Persians* and *Eskandar* narration, it can be considered that the former grew in a standpoint that shows Greek strife with Iranian, and is formed as the form of a drama; as Badi’e said: “the essential reason of deep and undeniable enmity of Greece with its Eastern rival has been the deep incompatibility of two world and two different kinds of thoughts in them” (1986, 28). And the story of *Eskandar* shows the incompatible or anti-Ahriman of Iran and propaganda system of Greece who tries to represent and reinvented *Eskandar* and his character as a mixture of king-hero.

1.4 THE PRINCIPLE OF “THE NARRATIVE OF OTHER” AND CREATION OF OTHERS

The aim of societies, whether ancient or modern, is receiving power. The powerful societies fulfill this aim by such principles like “the narrative of Other”. When the narrator makes and represents the Otherness of a historical character of a man or a developed nation, he can discuss it in his own desired way. “who speaks achieves and asserts dominance over those about whom he is talking” (Nanquette, 2011, 103). In other words, there is a covert and overt relationship between “creation of Others and identity” and domination. And it is the duty of imageries or recognition of images that reveal the role of different factors or operant and their intentions, and as Nanquette said: “imageries shows that this link between “representation” and power cannot be denied or omitted; however, if they are to be considered, verily it has an essential effect on the studying of the imageries of the two sides” (103). Sometimes, this relationship is, indeed, verily deep and hidden in which inversion takes place. In other words, all negative and subjective images that are characteristic features of “speaker” character are carried by the absent character, and pleasant attributes are displaced as well. Actually, “Other” is the representation of a covert and twisted type of a nation which has been subjugated and absented; that is, a person who narrates is celestial and bright, but a person whom he narrates becomes dark and monster. This inverted imagery is seen in the portrait of ancient Iran and Greece; accordingly, Greece is introduced as possessing plenteous spirituality and universal thoughts, but Iran is introduced as a purely materialistic land, and a country which becomes important, owing to the relation that it established with Greece. But it should be regarded that the era of Greek and Roman is very short in comparison with Iran” (Badi’e, 1986, 25-26). The reason of the currency of this view in modern Western world is the silence of their historians and the confirmation of this inverted representation towards East. It is necessary to say that the recognition of ancient world is closely related to the appropriate recognition of Ancient Iran; therefore, “not only the Asian history, but also the world history are to be misunderstood until the sources of power of Iran been discovered, studied, and recognized, and the domain of its effects been evaluated and understood” (25-26).

1.5 THE APPLICATION OF THE RECOGNITION OF IMAGERIES IN READING THE TEXTS AND CREATING A NEW NARRATIVE

The recognition of imageries tries to realize from the gaps in the texts that reality is not thoroughly whatever the texts try to render and show; however, reality is whatever the texts try to hide, omit, or invert in varieties

of manners (mostly linguistics). Especially when the text belongs to the literary field, reality is represented in one way or another, owing the artistic elements of imagination. Then, just the writer is satisfied, and the only intention of the text is to satisfy the writer. If, in this regard, the whole historical realities were transformed and mutilated, nothing significantly disastrous took place according to the writer's or narrator's view. And this has been of the difficulties of history and literature, and the writers could transformed some faces as fiend which actually has no chief relation to realities, and this has been the narrator's view who handled the drama. As it has been declared by Badi'e that: "the essential principle of recognition of imageries is this that the literary images cannot be recognized as the reflection of social images: image is a mirage, and the recognition of images is the study of inner illusions concerning Other" (107).

Another point says that the researcher should consider this issue that he should not exclusively accept the Western writing about East. Accordingly, the narrative texts should be considered dubiously. The texts have unbridgeable and uncovered gaps among its parts, and they should be studied in a manner that their completed aspect should be seriously suspected.

1.6 DISPLACEMENT OF IMAGES AND FLOWING OF NARRATION

In order to find out one part of a covert reality, the author (self) and Other should be displaced in a manner which Other talks about "self" or author, otherwise the same eternal images of "self" dominate the whole text and persist to be stasis. In order to modify this state and a static text turns to be a dynamic one, the place of the two sides should be flowed and undermined, and suspect the author's certainties, and establish a reasonable consistency in the text. This problem has been existed in the consistent relationship between East and West (here, Iran and Greece). And because the "teller" or "I" has been the real subject of texts, the Other has not any turn to speak. Even the dialogues that have been casted upon the tongue of Other, are selected words which have come from Western environment, and none of these words transmit sentiments and feelings of Other. As Régis Poulet confirms that "East has always been the representative of metaphysical projection or étrangeté, and not altérité or Otherness, of West towards itself" (in Nanquette, 2011, 104).

Retelling of Thierry Hentsch's words about the relationship between two concepts of East and West can be summarized. He tells about fanciful East of Westerners in which West "does not talk about East, but talks about us" (101). This statement cannot be generalized to the whole Western texts about East; however, the standpoint of many authors of ancient West about East (Iran) is their desire for dominance and manipulation.

Edward Said studies views, standpoints, books, and travel books of European authors about orientalism in his book *Orientalism*. The issues of "self" (Said, 1977, 166), "Other" (286), and "mysterious East" (62) were challenged by Said, because Westerners consider East as "primitive", Other, and "inferior" (275), and introduces them verily different and separated from "superior Western knowledge and power" (223). Therefore, he proposes critics to study ancient texts about Orient that was written by Europeans. One of those proposed texts is the play *The Persians* by Aeschylus that is about the battle of Salamis. This war took place between Greece and Iran in 480 B.C. Said declares that ancient texts of West, in which representation of Eastern countenance is dealt with, should be studied again. Iran, according to Said, is shown a star-crossed, wretched nation that is devastating in *The Persians*. The author portrays Iran's countenance with disaster, heinous, and tragic, because he said that Greeks destroy Iran's army, and defeated its commander, Xerxes. Asia becomes full of emptiness, lost, and tearful; and then, "Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant" (66). He said that "the idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe" (71). East is misshaped and misrepresented on this scene. These textual representations of East by West reveal a way with which to dominate over "East" (59). Therefore, these representations are mostly based on Western standpoint rather than the actual behavior and actions of Easterners. Accordingly, Said declares that

In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the Orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such real thing as "the Orient." Thus all of Orientalism stands forth and away from the Orient: that Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, "there" in discourse about it". (37)

While writing about history of Iran, Pierre Briant declares that,

The historian's position is all the more difficult because the nature of the evidence prevents plunging into the details of regional daily life. Nonetheless, the official Achaemenid sources by their very existence serve to remind historians not to be satisfied with the panorama viewed from the heights of the Acropolis in Athens. They demand rereading the Greek, Egyptian, and Babylonian sources, which are all too often molded willy-nilly to the chapter so regrettably initiated by Plato on the theme of Xerxes and the decadence of the Achaemenid Empire. (2002, 554)

After studying about Achaemenid history, and finding of incompetency of documents, dishonesty of judgment, and unknowing historians, Briant discloses that

It is passing strange that even in modern works this passage of Aeschylus is cited to justify a conclusion that the Achaemenid Empire was in irreversible decline and that Xerxes was extremely weak, reduced to busying himself with his construction projects of Persepolis and to wallowing in delight in the dissolute charms of harem! Furthermore, the Hellenocentric view has infiltrated Iranian studies. (517)

Therefore, for instance, in *The Persians*, Herald comes and says: "Persians, all the barbarian host is gone" (Benardete, 1991, 57). Or Queen Atusa, mother of Iranian king, Xerxes, says: "Alas, I hear the greatest of misfortunes, shame of Persians, and shrill lament" (60). In addition, Chorus say: "now all Asia desolate, void, sighs lament" (67). Atusa, also says to the ghost of Darius, The father of Xerxes, that: "succinctly, Persia is destroyed" (72). Then Darius discloses: "alas, that prophecy was quick to act. Zeus hurled against my son its lightning-end, While I expected after many years. The gods would make an end; but when a man's willing and eager, god joins in" (74). Darius adds that: "but never did I cast so great a woe upon my city. Xerxes, my son, as young in age as sense, ignored my wisdom. Know this well, my comrades old as I, all of us who held this powers, never wrought so many woes" (75-76).

Accordingly, *The Persian* was written in a literary-imaginative atmosphere. And this play has turned to be an authoritative source for later authors. Thus, based on this imaginative source, they did unfairly judge Iranian culture and civilization, and caused jealousy.

1.7 THE NARRATION OF CAPTIVATION OF WEST TOWARD EAST AND THEIR PANIC FEELING TOWARD IRAN

Greeks looked with envy at Iran, and they were full of captivation towards it. As Briant said: "The first men in history to become notorious for luxurious living were the Persians" (2002, 299). At the beginning of the play, Chorus say that: "here are the trusted: as protectors of treasure and of golden thrones" (Benardete, 1991, 49). Briant, also, said that "And numerous ancient authors like to cite the example of the tyrant of Samos, since one of their favorite topics was the relationship between power, wealth, and decadence. In their eyes, Polycrates epitomized the characteristics they commonly imputed to oriental kings, especially their love of luxury(tryphe)" (2002, 83). Chorus, in addition, continues: "and golden Sardis send many charioteers, horses by threes and by fours, fearful the sight to behold" (Benardete, 1991, 50). Or chorus refers to too much gold and riches: "and golden Babylon pours forth her crowds- borne by their ships" (51). Thus, Atusa says that,

but, unexpectedly, that dread has doubled: sums of cowardly wealth do court contempt, and indigence quenches ambition's flame, even if there's strength. Though wealth we have unstinted; yet fear is for mine eye, Xerxes, whose presence here I count the place-eye. So things stand thus. Advice my reason. Persians, old sureties: all my gains with your counsel lie. (54)

These sayings show, actually, Greek enthusiasm for Iran and its riches. Because these dialogues are made by the playwright, which are remote from the reality of war, because this war is not the defeat of Achaemenid Empire, but is a type of continuous military conflicts between Iran and Greece. And, in a series of their conflicts and clashes, it generally leads to beneficent of Iran. Thus, the Greek commander of the battle of Salamis, Themistocles, were chased and followed after the battle, because of accusation of his fellowship and collaboration with Iran or "because of my friendship with you" (Briant, 2002, 349). Afterwards, he went to Iranian court, and Artaxerxes I, Xerxes' heir, accepted him warmly as a courtier "he succeeded in holding the king's attention" (205). On the one hand Greek enthusiasm and eagerness lead them to Iran, but on the other, they were frightened by the power of Achaemenid Empire and its expansion. "The ancient authors were merely sharing in the anxiety of the Greeks, who, it must be noted, were especially intimidated by the Empire's vastness" (625). For example, Herald addresses Iran: "O

cities of Asia, O Persian land, and wealth's great anchorage. How at a single stroke prosperity's corrupted, and the flower of Persia falls, and is gone. Alas, the first herald of woe, he must disclose entire what befell: Persians, all the barbarian host is gone" (Benardete, 1991, 57). Based on the principle of Otherness, whatever Greeks love or deter were lay on the tongue of the play's characters, or made the dialogues. In every word of the dialogue, the wishes, expectations, and regrets are flowing. They would like to destroy Iran with a single strike; they would like great Iranian men to be killed; therefore, in order to quench this jealousy, they made dialogues which are said by Iranian characters in which Iran is completely destroyed.

It should be indeed added Iranian warfare, in addition to Greek fear. Thus, "Herodotus also describes the feeling of terror that the mere mention of the Medes inspired, because their numerous victories were known" (Briant, 2002, 160). There are instances of Iranian warfare in the play. Chorus asserts that "to the great torrent of heroes, there is none worthily equal, who resist, by defenses secured, the unconquerable billows of ocean: Persians are never defeated, the people tempered and brave" (Benardete, 1991, 52). Or Chorus says "the destroyer of cities now" (51); furthermore, "who in drawing the bow rely on their boldness. And the tribes from all Asia who carry the sword follow beneath the awesome parade of their king. Thus of the Persian land, of her men the flower is gone, nursed by the earth" (51). Owing to Aeschylus' play as the source of next interpretations and conclusions of later authors, Herodotus also wrote his history under the great influence of this play. Thus,

Herodotus probably got this version-repeated by many ancient authors (e.g., Justin 11.13.11-12)-from Aeschylus (lines 480-515). First of all, it is a literary theme, doubtless bearing only the most tenuous connection to reality[...]the military outcome was not catastrophic. The Persian army was practically intact; it was able to hold the countryside, even to move against the fortifications raised by the Lacedaemonians at the entrance to the isthmus[...]But Xerxes and his advisers chose a different strategy: they decided to divide their forces. Mardonius was given the job of pursuing the offensive in Greece, with the army. Xerxes returned to Sardis, along with[...]the presence of Mardonius in Greece prevented the Greeks from embarking on a cruise through the islands (Briant, 2002, 530-531)

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 THE PERSIANS AND FALSIFICATION OF COUNTENANCE OF IRAN

Unlike Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* which represents Eskandar almost positively, Greek playwright and authors represent Iran negatively; owing to these prejudices and mal intentions, even European scholars ponder over the falsehood of these narrations. As Briant said: "It is clear that the presentations by the ancient authors are shaped primarily by polemical impulses" (2002, 535).

One of the reasons of Greek negative standpoint towards Iran is the restriction of their viewpoint and their static view, because they did merely see Iran in terms of joint or common borders and its events. Briant said that on the one hand we turn to Greek sources inevitably in order to recognize history of Iran, on the other Greek established their own judgments only on the joint or common events, which took place on northwestern borders, between Iran and itself, while Iran had experienced battles, events, and victories in other borders, as the history of Babylon and Egypt witnessed. As Amelie Kurt said that "we, for reconstruction of political history of Iran (Achaemenid era), mostly relied on Greek historians, who restricted their own interests to northwest; in addition, were enemies of Iran as well. Thus, the picture which they represented is distorted" (2000, 25).

Whatever in the play concerning Xerxes and Iran's fall and destruction represents Hellenocentric prejudice. Actually, Greeks represented and interpreted the whole Achaemenid events and occurrences in terms of sheer relationship with their own land. They ignored all the other happenings that took place in the vast Empire because of their own unawareness, and considered them trifle, as represented Salamis battle disastrous and fatal. Actually "Given the choice of Ionia or Babylon, the king opted for the latter, surely because of the central importance it held in the imperial structure.[...] But even so, Xerxes did not abandon the Asia Minor front but left well-trained troops there" (Briant, 2002, 535). However, in the play, great commanders and soldiers of Iran are killed and Xerxes leaves and returns alone. Chorus says: "did you leave that Persian there, your trusted universal eye, who made his count by myriads, Batanochus's son Alpistus? [...] o woe, o woe, o miseries, you tell of woes on woes" (Benardete, 1991, 81-82). And Xerxes and Chorus says respectively: "Gone are the hunters of the pack" and "Gone, alas, fameless" (82). Whatever is important here between two governments is to be antithetical interpretations towards a particular event. For example, when an agreement between two countries is established, both sides render their own ideal and arbitrary explanations, as "it is not impossible that the 449-448 agreement was interpreted in totally opposite senses in Athens and Susa: in Athens, it was lauded as an unprecedented victory; at Susa, it was seen as a royal correction"

(Briant, 2002, 582). That is to say, “we are led to believe that if there really were diplomatic negotiations in 449, the result was not so much a Peace of Callias as a Peace of the King” (582). In other words, this agreement leads to the establishment of King’s interests, and it was verily considered as a great victory for Greeks. In *The Persians* indeed Salamis battle is regarded as a real great victory. Herald says: “O most hateful name of Salamis! O woe! how I mourn recalling Athens” (Benardete, 1991, 58).

The play renders Iran as a totally defeated and destructed country. They had a biased hostility and conflict against Iran, as “The same contrast is also found in Aeschylus, who is responsible for an equally powerful contribution to the dismal reputation of Xerxes [...]and repeats the typically Greek accusation of immoderation (*hybris*) against Xerxes” (Briant, 2002, 518). The ghost of Darius says: “Zeus is the chastener of overboastful minds, a grievous corrector. Therefore, advise him, admonished by reason, to be wise, and cease his overboastful temper from sinning against the gods” (Benardete, 1991, 77). Furthermore, although the play refers to gods and Zeus, Iranian worshiped a unique God; that is, the play is a scene to represent Greek culture. For example, Darius says: “Zeus hurled against my son its lightning-end [...] gods would make an end” or “since, Zeus, our Lord, bestowed that honor” (74-5), and the more.

According to Hellenocentrism of Aeschylus, the play consists of bad thought, bad actions, and loss of reason of Xerxes which lead to totally destruction of Iran and Xerxes himself. But based on the rules of Iranian governance, it is necessary that a king must have a pure and just mind and thought and far away from aberration. Kazazi said “in Iranian culture and temper, manner of empire and order or ethic of governance should be totally clear of dictatorship and vicious in realm of thought and insight” (2006, 63). Unlike the narration of the play, the reality of war is another thing, because the reality of leading his forces back is distinct from what is narrated in the play in terms of the destruction of Iran; thus, the issue is reversed.

Although the play considered this battle disastrous and destructive, the reality is a different thing. This literary text came to light from the imagination of the playwright. Briant asserted that: “The Greeks knew the power of the Persian army,[...] Miletus itself remained under Achaemenid dominion[...]It seems in fact that the Persians managed to take back control of the Cypriot kingdoms during the 470s” (2002, 555). But, in the play, Chorus says: “O toilsome deity, how heavily you leaped upon all Persia” and “and the cities of Sousa and of Agbatana concealed in the darkness of grief” (Benardete, 1991, 66); in addition, “O Persian land in hardness stepped” (86).

After the battle of Salamis which Iran was destroyed in the play, Xerxes listed the name of the lands that are under the control of Iran in his inscription, as Briant mentioned “

The list of countries in the *daiva* inscription (XPh \$3), though it undoubtedly dates to a later period, includes (as if nothing had happened) the Ionians living near the sea, the Ionians living beyond the sea, and the inhabitants of Skudra. It was certainly the same in 480-479. The tenor of the letter sent to Mardonius (VIII. 140) in fact implies that in Xerxes' eyes the devastation on the Acropolis and the spoils he had carried off from there were significant symbolic and political markers of the success of his expedition. Everything leads us to believe that, upon his return, bearing spoils and booty taken from Greece, Xerxes again appeared in triumph. He deposited the boot' in the various capitals of his realm, as conspicuous signs of his victory. (2002, 541-542)

But Atusa describes the return of Xerxes in this manner: “O god! how many sorrows move against me. But one torment has the deepest fang, hearing that dishonor folds about my son, Its robes” (Benardete, 1991, 78). Accordingly, by studying varieties of sources, Iranian, Greek, Babylonian, Egyptian, and the like, covert realities about Iran come to light. The western sources are unilateral and one-sided, but are not without realities. It should be ponder over that after many centuries, West tries to exaggerate Greek little victories, make them seem much more significant than it really is, and cover their failures and defeat under many great propagandas.

2.2 ESKANDAR STORY IN FERDOWSI'S *SHAHNAMEH*

Why Eskandar's personality is represented almost positive in *Shahnameh's* narration, while Iranians and religious books of Sassanid period called him accursed? What is the reason of two various faces of Eskandar? It is necessary to say that some researchers believe in two Eskandar. One of them is an Iranian Eskandar who is a Mithraic King (Hamed, 2011, 11), the other is Greek Alexander who is called Alexander the great. And some others doubt and deny Alexander's attack against Iran (140). However, this study considers only the face of Eskandar based on *Shahnameh*, and does not deal with their doubt about Alexander's attack, because of the limited aim of this study. This study deals with this issue that why Eskandar has two faces in Iranian texts: positive and negative.

The origin of these two interpretations is difference in “the origin of the narration or the original narration”. In Greek work, Eskandar has an almost positive face, and it is clear that he was considered great and conquest in his own land (Khodadadian, 2001, 623). Can we say that Greek narrations in the era of Eskandar and his substitutes were considered as the actual history and standard documents; thus, they passed to later historians and then Ferdowsi? This is the reason of correspondence between Greek historical works and Ferdowsi’s *Shahnameh*. After the dominion of Eskandar he “said to perform a celebration like Persians” (633). Later in the article, we consider this point about Iranianization of Eskandar. But the main point is here that Ferdowsi represents Eskandar as being a totally Iranian face and personality; thus, actually Ferdowsi only wrote the available text and source of his narration in verse (Safa, 1993, 191). The personalization of Eskandar was carefully done in detail and entered the historical sources during the era of his substitutes. “They made Eskandar as a unique conqueror and legendary hero, and he had been promoted to the level of a god. His compatriots believed that his mother, Olympias, had a sexual intercourse with a snake, and he was produced by this unusual and dirty relationship” (Kazazi, 1997, 48).

Regarding this issue that why Eskandar has a negative face in the opinion of Iranians and especially authors of religious work of Sassanid era, it can be said that Eskandar and his substitute could not deceive religious scholars and people, because they knew that Eskandar is an evil man who had set Avesta on fire, and this evil adjective “accursed” came from people’s beliefs; thus, nobody could not destroy this belief (Ushidary, 1999, 108). Actually Iranians believe that “Eskandar is a selfish conqueror who has a real enthusiasm to set cities on fire and kills people. He is whom that set Persepolis on fire only under provocation of a bad woman called Thaïs [...]; Thus, based on Pahlavi book called *Le Livre d’Ardaviraz*, he was regarded as person who was deceived and under the influence and provocation of devil. ‘then dirty devil deceived Rumi Eskandar ,who lived in Egypt, and ,with many suffering, sent him to Iran for attack and destruction’. The accursed and devilish of Eskandar is risen to the level that in *Kārnā mak i ArtaxŠār i Pāpakān* that he is associated with liars such as, Dahak and Afrasiab” (Kazazi, 1997, 44).

Eskandar used and established a policy during his ruling that made Iranian obedient. For receiving this goal, he exploited a policy, as if he did carefully learn it in “the school of history”; thus, he could establish his face as a positive man. This Eskandarian policy is the one which is performed, when one nation is conquering, and another one is defeated. This policy can be called as “conquering and defeated policy”.

2.3 THE WAYS OF FIXATION OF CONQUERING NARRATION

One of the issues that comparative literature concern with is the influences of governments on literary texts which have been created by the particular genius of authors or poets. But actually, some extratextual factors like governments and especially conquering foreign governments influence them as well. In other words, authors consciously or unconsciously pass a way that is usually (not always) the will of governors. By performing conquering and defeated policy, governors try to represent a type of cultural and “political continuance” in the defeated society, through maintaining the present circumstances and using other tools, in order to infuse his own expected narration, and dominate his cultural dominion over the minds of people. These narrations influence both written texts and spoken and unwritten literature, and influence the lives of the defeated nation.

2.3.1 “POLITICAL CONTINUANCE” AND ITS VARIOUS NARRATIONS

Of most important extratextual factors in the type of continuance is the policy of foreign governors which influence literature in order to represent realities in terms of his accepted narrations. The term political continuance means, in defeated country, the conquerors try to use the same local policies of the defeated country in order to dominate the situation step by step. This is the main point that this policy itself cannot be criticized, what is the case of criticism and study here is the ways and aims of using this policy that lead to varieties of results. The first narration shows that a conqueror apparently maintains the past policy and rites of the defeated country, but in his intention, he cultivates the aims of destruction and disastrous results. The second narration is the reverse of the first narration; it shows that in history, these attacks and destructions play very different roles in the fate of a nation; one becomes savior, and the other becomes accursed.

When Cyrus the Great enters Babylon in the era of conquering it, he does not interfere the religious, cultural, political, and social life of Babylon, and life continues.

At first sight, the Babylonian documentation exhibits great continuity. [...] They do not refer explicitly to political upheavals. [...] Several documents from the time of Cyrus and Cambyses indicate that the temple administrators continued to refer to regulations issued in the time of Nebuchadnezzar II, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus. Given these factors, it is not always easy to

distinguish between the maintenance of Babylonian institutions and the assumption of power by the Persian conquerors. (Briant, 2002, 71)

Political continuity, indeed, was performed and established by varieties of way which some of them are mentioned.

2.3.2 ATTRACTION OF GENIUS AND PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL RITES OF THE DEFEATED COUNTRY

It is necessary to build a bridge for cultural relationship that lead to political links. During huge attacks in history, this “connective bridge” is always intellectuals and masters of that nation. These masters of the nation, willingly or unwillingly, cause the relationship and continuity of the new power of attackers, such as the role of Abomoslem Khorasani and Barmaki family in the era of Abbasi in Iran, and Joveini family in Mongol’s attacks to and wars with Iran (Safa, 1993, vol,1/3, 16) and (Safa, 1998a,b, 65). In all battles in which Achaemenid kings won, they exploited a policy that does not tear political and cultural continuity of that nation. They welcomed masters and intellectuals in various circumstances of political, military, religious, cultural fields for continuity in ruling their own country.

it was by building on the local hierarchy and traditions that Cyrus and Cambyses attempted to impose a new authority. The Persians, for example, did not try to spread either their language or their religion. Instead, they exhibited great reverence for the local religions and sanctuaries. Each people continued to speak its own language and use its own writing system (Briant, 2002, 77).

2.3.3 Eskandar and Political Continuity

Encounter of Eskandar with Iranian is fully like this political continuity as well. For instance, in a scene, Eskandar is talking to Dara, king of Iran whose death was closely approaching, in responding to the asking of Dara, he claims that he will perform Iranian rituals and customs. Thus, this acceptance of the performances is the policy of Eskandar himself, but he introduces it as the asking of Dara in order to justify it, and gather Iranians and intellectuals around himself. He respects and buries the body of Dara after his death in the manner of Iranian custom. Dara asks Eskandar to get married to his daughter, Rowshanak, to bear a child in order to appreciate Iranian rituals, and perform rituals of fire-temple and Avesta. He executes Dara’s murderers, Mahyar and Janusiar, as well; thus, attracts the attention of Iranian. “When Iranian saw that Eskandar executes the murderers of Dara, their noble and free king, they began to praise him, and his kingdom” (*Shahnameh*, vol, 6, 404).

بزاری بر آن شاه آزاده مرد
بدان سرور شهریار زمین

چو دیدند ایرانیان کواچه کرد
گرفتند یکسر برو
آفرین

But is it possible that he follows and performs religious, national, and humanistic rituals completely; however, he is called the title accursed? These narrations have a substantial problem and missing. In other words, either this Eskandar is not the Greek Eskandar or this is an inventive narration that was written by the Greek followers of Eskandar.

Is this Eskandar a Greek anymore? absolutely not. Therefore, the original narration makes us doubt. Whether this Eskandar has never been Greek, and was a king of Arsacid Empire (Hamed, 2011, 11) or has been a Greek, and exploited conquering and defeated policy; in any case, the source of the differences of the narrations of Eskandar’s character has been approximately known. Although perhaps some do not accept sayings of authors such as Hamed, Farrokhzad, Hami, Kazzazi, and etc., paradoxical narrations concerning Eskandar, that has been produce in culture and literature of Pahlavi-Farsi, mentions an essential diversity or difference that refers to their origin. In *Shahnameh*, when Dara is near to death, Eskandar goes to Dara. Eskandar hears from Iranian masters and intellectuals that he is the child of Darab; therefore, king of Iran, Dara, is his brother; thus, his behavior and encounter is very exceptional:

Eskandar dismounted the steed, put the head of Dara on his own knee, and touched his face to see whether he is alive or not. He took off Dara’s helmet and armor, and cried because Dara was dying and no physician could cure him. He said Dara that don’t worry I swore to take your revenge on your murderers. While crying, he said that why you do not mount the steed, I seek for physicians all over the world to cure you. When you become healthy, I will leave your country. I heard from old and wise men of Iran that you and I belong to the same family and father. When Dara saw Eskandar’s behavior, said that you are a wise man. (*Shahnameh*, vol, 6, 400)

سر مرد خسته به ران بر نهاد
 بمالید بر چهر او هر دو دست
 جوشن پهلویش گشاد آن برو
 تن خسته را دور دید از پزشک
 دل بد سگالت هراسان شود
 و گز هست نیروت برزین نشین
 ز درد تو خونین سرشک آورم
 چو بهتر شوی ما ببندیم رخت
 بیاویزیم از دارشان سرنگون
 دلم گشت پر خون و جان پر خروش
 به بیشی چرا تخمه را برکنیم
 که همواره با تو خرد باد جفت

سک ندر ز باره در آمد چو باد
 نگه کرد تا خسته گوینده هست
 ز سر بر گرفت افسر خسرویش
 ز دیده بیارید چندی سرشک
 بدو گفت کاین بر تو آسان شود
 تو برخیز بر مهد زرین نشین
 ز هند و زرومت پزشک آورم
 س پارم تو را پادشاهی و تخت
 جفایشگان ترا هم کنون
 چنان چون ز پیران شنیدیم دوش
 ز یک شاخ و یک بیخ و پیراهنیم
 چو بشنید دارا به آواز گفت

And Dara advises Eskandar that he should have a good behavior toward his family, and respect Iranian customs: "therefore, you should respect Iranian tradition, such as kindling holy fire, reading Avesta, and Zoroastrianism" (*Shahnameh*, vol, 6, 402)

بگیرد همان زند و استا به مشقت

بیاراید این آتش زردهشت

2.3.4 ACCEPTING NATIONAL AND LOCAL IDENTITY

Attackers accept local identity through different manners, sometimes select local titles and names, and sometimes put local clothes on, in order to be accepted by people of the defeated country, and rub off their negative face. Eskandar does not consider himself a foreigner, and called himself alive Dara for his political continuity; thus introduces himself as an Iranian, not stranger. Eskandar said that: "After the death of Dara, I am exactly like Dara. I follow the same ways of statecraft, and add to the good deeds; so do not worry" (*Shahnameh*, vol, 6, p 404).

گر او شد نهران آشکارا منم
 به تیمار رخ را نشاید شخود

بدانید کامروز دارا منم
 فزون است از آن نیکوی ها که بود

Thus, he makes a strong relationship with king's family, and gets married with Rowshanak, Dara's daughter. The execution of the policy of political continuity had been in history in terms of respecting religious rituals. For instance, in addition to Cyrus the Great, this policy was continued by Cyrus' substitutes. It became known as a fully Iranian policy. Thus, after the domination of Egypt, Cambyses performed this process, such as "Cambyses participated in the embalming and funeral rites of an Apis, following the regulations and the ceremony that were well known, particularly in the Saite period" (Briant, 2002, 57).

2.3.5 RUBBING OFF THE SHAME OF MURDERING

The ruler of the attackers always lays the sin of their own attack at defeated nation's door, as Ganhis Khan declared that the cause of his attack is God's willing and sinfulness of Iranian (Zarrinkoob, 2012, 520). For continuity and acceptance of new power, it has been common that the conqueror lay the murdering of the defeated king at somebody else's door, other than himself and his soldiers, particularly when those people are faithful toward their own king. Perhaps being unknown of the circumstance of Jalâl ad-Dîn Khwârazmshâh murdering, king of Iran, reign in 1220-1231, and the attribution of his murdering to Kurds refers to this policy (Zeidari Nasavi, 1991, 47). In Iran, and even in Europe of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, killing of a king and princess was a big sin, as in *Shahnameh*, after murdering Siavosh, there comes: "A whirlwind comes, and the world becomes dark; therefore, they curse upon the murderer of Siavosh" (*Shahnameh*, vol, 3, 153).

بر آمد پوشید خورشید و ماه
 گرفتند نفرین همه بر گروی

یکی باد با تیره گردی سیاه
 کسی یکدگر را ندیدند روی

Therefore, they believed that the kings should not be murdered. For instance, "killing of these kinds of men is forbidden, as Rustam knows that he will be punished after killing Esfandiar" (Shamisa, 2012, 91). After the battle between Eskandar and Dara and winnig of Eskandar, he executes Mahyar and Jausiar because of killing of the king. Thus, he acquits himself, and lay this sin at Iranian's door.

2.3.6 PRETENSION TO GETTING LOCAL (IRANIAN) COLOR

The three methods that have been previously explained are being used by Eskandar in governing the country and his behavior when attacks Iran and wins. For establishing political continuity, he is taught Iranian culture by Iranian intellectuals, and uses them carefully. This issue shows two points; the first one is the collaboration of some Iranians with Eskandar for remembering the details of these types of issues, and the second one is the significance of Iranian culture itself, or the Iranian policies of governing a country which is used even by an enemy for some time to rule the country. Therefore, Eskandar speaks his speech as an Iranian king; this speech includes: appreciation of wisdom, fear of God, remembrance of death, liberality and tribute, justice, farreh, and so on which are seen in other speeches of *Shahnameh*.

Therefore, "Eskandar sat on the throne, and appreciated wisdom and wise men. He asked God help him, because a king should fear God, and resort to His companionship. All vices and virtues are temporary, and the end of all works is death. I will treat people with justice, and will answer their questions or problems. (*Shahnameh*, vol, 7, 6)

<p>که با جان شاهان خرد باد جفت جهاندار کزوی نترسد بداست رهایی نباشد ز جنگ زمان که باشد ز ما سوی ما داد خواه به پاسخ رسد چون گشاید دو لب</p>	<p>سکندر چو بر تخت بنشست گفت که پیروز گر در جهان ایزد است بد و نیک هم بگذرد بی گمان هر آن کس که آید بدین بارگاه اگر گاه بار آید از نیم شب</p>
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Therefore, we can mention a speech by Manuchehr, king of Iran, in *Shahnameh*. Although this speech is very long, only an abstract of the lines is mentioned here:

Manuchehr put the crown on his head and said that I expand justice, custom, generosity, virtues, purity, and wisdom. I use either war and anger or peace and kindness in connection with situations. I appreciate religion, God's Farreh, good fate, and wisdom. In celebrations, I am generous, like a sea, and in wars, I remove bad things from bad men. I am a king that make thrown and crown bright. I am the subject of all these arts, and I worship God. All things, such as thrown, crown, and army belong to God. I thank him, because he is my security. I follow the way of Fereidun, my ancestor, who is old, although I am fresh and new. (*Shahnameh*, vol, 1, 2,3, 135-6)

<p>جهان را سراسر همه مژده داد به نیکی و پاکی و فرزاندگی همم خشم و جنگست و هم داد و مهر سر تاجداران شکار منست همم بخت نیکی و هم بخردیست همان آتش تیز برزین منم فرازنده ی کاویانی درفش بجنگ اندرون جان ندارم دریغ دم آتش از بر نشست منست زمین را بکین رنگ دیده کنم فروزنده ی ملک بر تخت عاج جهان آفرین را پرستنده ام همه داستان ها ز یزدان ز نیم ازویم سپاس و بدویم پناه نیامان کهن بود گر ما نویم</p>	<p>چو دیهیم شاهی بسر بر نهاد به داد و به آیین و مردانگی منم گفت بر تخت گردان سپهر زمین بنده و چرخ یار منست همم دین و هم فره ی ایزدبست شب تار جوینده ی کین منم خداوند شمشیر و زرینه کفش فروزنده ی میغ و برنده تیغ گه بزم دریا دو دست منست بدان را ز بد دست کوته کنم گراونده ی گرز و نماینده تاج ابا این هنرها یکی بنده ام همه دست بر روی گریبان ز نیم کزو تاج و تختست ازویم سپاه براه فریدون فرخ رویم</p>
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Therefore, narration of Eskandar in *Shahnameh* shows the stabilization of Eskandar character in historical works (Bala'ami, 1974, 698). In other words, Eskandar could execute the methods of conquering and defeated policy to establish an idealized and positive countenance in epic narrations which is the historical narration of Iran.

3. CONCLUSION

The Persians was produced by the vengeful feeling of an author who himself participated in the battle of Salamis. This participation in a war could have been the representation of realities, but caused this battle and its results to be reversed. This imaginary view concerning Iran is the source of other narrations of Greek historians, and they represented Iran and Greek wars reversely based on Hellenism. This feeling of vengeance and dominion has been permeated through the mind of Greeks and then next centuries Europe to represent Iran as a powerful enemy but anti-humanistic. Aeschylus inserted and hid these aims in his art and drama, and laid all abnormalities at Xerxes' door. Furthermore, in the play, he reproached Iran and its army through the voice and tongue of Iranian. Something that is different in *Shahnameh*, when Eskandar attacks Iran. Consequently, the result of war is represented in terms of the thoroughly destruction of a defeated Iran and the completely victorious Greece in *The Persians*, while these completely devastation of Iran and the victory of Greece is just imaginary. In *Shahnameh*, after the victory of Eskandar, he has a humanistic and sympathetic behavior with Iranian, he delivers a speech like previous kings of Iran with the same contents of justice and generosity. Actually with comparison between Xerxes in *The Persians* and Eskandar in *Shahnameh*, we understand that these two characters with outwardly real realities but with major alterations have been tampered with by Greek historians. It reveals that the former show the intentional grudge and purpose of Aeschylus and the Greeks in representing Iran negatively or realities reversely; however, the latter represents trust and honesty in Ferdowsi, and his narration is faithful to the original source or sources. Ferdowsi managed a faithful account, and showed being completely honest about and faithful to the previous narrations and texts which he only rendered, wrote, or compose them in verse. But those preceding narrations had been basically changed by Greek historians in favor of Eskandar. It can be said, therefore, that in their deep structure, the two texts do not reveal realities, and both show the same goal, the spirit of Greek and Hellenistic European's manipulation, authoritarianism, and colonialism. And this aim is represented directly in *The Persians*; however, *Shahnameh* represents Eskandar's narration indirectly, because Ferdowsi only versified the previous texts without addition and deletion, as he himself talks about his exact process of versification in *Shahnameh*.

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Statement:

We hereby confirm that this research paper is our own original work and we have cited all sources that were used.