

Ideological Anxieties and Defense Mechanisms in the Tragic Works of Shakespeare and Ferdowsi

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Abstract

At the time of subversion and containment, the power structure applies various strategies for its survival. It manages ideological anxieties and employs defense mechanisms to contain dissident forces. Tragic works have the potential to display tensions in the power structure, its ideological anxieties of subversive forces and appliance of various strategies to survive. By comparing classical tragic works, it is possible to reach a comparative schema of the monarchist power structure. Hence, the tragic works of two national writers, Shakespeare and Ferdowsi, from two cultures with monarchist power structures and similarities in story themes have been selected. This paper has aimed to compare ideological anxieties and defense mechanisms in William Shakespeare's plays *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Othello* with their counterparts in the tragic stories in Abol Qasem Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, "Zahhak the Snake Holder", "Fereydoun and His Sons" and "Siavash". The tragic works of Ferdowsi and Shakespeare provide an exceptional opportunity to observe the operation of power; how power restrains subversion in cultural narratives and displays it to prevent its realization in reality. In addition, by displaying the subcultures, these works surpass the existing level of awareness, which is beyond the dominant culture and the subcultures. By examining cultural narratives of the Persian and the British literatures, this research has achieved a trans-cultural awareness.

Keywords: The Order of Things, the Other, Ideological Anxiety, Defense Mechanism

1. Introduction

The power structure has two parts, the infra structure and the surface structure. Economy is its base (Althusser, 1971, p. 134). On the surface, it works by two components, violence and propaganda. That means it defines itself, the Same who accepts the hegemony and the Other who does not; it distributes the wealth and the power and softly prevents subversion instead of being forced to apply oppressive forces to suppress its dissidents. Ideological anxieties and defense mechanisms are soft components that power applies for confronting dissidents and surviving its order of things. Comparing these components at the time of subversion and containment in literary texts of various cultures with a similar power structure can give us more precise images of the power structure, its function and strategies for survival. In this vista, it is possible to reach a precious awareness

beyond the dominant culture and the subcultures. For reaching this awareness, the present study compares ideological anxieties and defense mechanisms of power in those tragic works of William Shakespeare and Abol Qasem Ferdowsi that have similar monarchist power structures and story themes. Thus, the plays of Shakespeare *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Othello* are to be compared with tragic stories of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, "Zahhak the Snake Holder", "Fereydoun and His Sons", and "Siavash". In this research Iran and England refers to the two Persian and British English literatures and the locations of their cultures specifically in the selected tragic works of Ferdowsi and Shakespeare.

The two parts of the power structure has bilateral relations. Louise Althusser named the two surface parts of power, propaganda and violence, as ideological state apparatus (ISA) and repressive state apparatus (RSA) which are actually soft and intangible power versus hard and tangible power. Literature belongs to the first and is as much a convenient tool to prevent using violence for rebels and dissidents as it may initiate a revolt or lead an opposition movement.

A literary text is a cultural artifact of ideology that narrates both the dominant culture and the subcultures. It has the potentiality to reach an awareness beyond them (Sinfield, 2002). Despite their clandestine accomplice with ideology, literary texts are separated from other measures of ideology because their precious awareness opens a vista beyond both the dominant culture and the subcultures. That means literary texts are both apparatuses of power and representations of power's strategies and function. The dominant culture is as much displayed in them as the subcultures and their conditions. The tragic works of Shakespeare and Ferdowsi do the same. That is whether they are narratives to contain dissident forces in their cultures or represent the containment of subversion and dissidents, they provide us with a unique opportunity to explore the concealed layers of power and the ways it works in the Persian and the British cultures. These tragic works are replete with political and social anxieties of power and strategies to preserve its survival and legitimation, confront with dissidents, containe, other and demonize them. Shakespeare and Ferdowsi are as much pillars of race and language consciousness in their cultures as speakers of ideological anxieties of monarchist systems in their times. Their works divulge manipulative strategies of the power structure. They display the conditions of the Same and the Other against each other and disclose how power at their times managed the containment of dissidents, and in the case of subversion, how and by which means power restored the order of things.

The selected stories are parts of the collective memory of the two nations, the Persian and the British that have similar tragic themes and the monarchist power structures in their literatures, and cultural discourses. Almost all thinkers and critics consider *Shahnameh* as a part of national memory of Iranians and a document related to the past. Franklin Lewis (2019) says, "Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* would play a powerful ideological role in shaping and promoting the Persian ethnic and national consciousness, imbuing later Persianate culture with a residual Iranian pre-Islamic ethos" (p. 4). Shahrokh Mescoob (2011) explaining this collective memory says, "Collective memory or tradition runs through different generations until it finds a fertile soil to grow like a strong tree or meet a wasteland or a mirage and forsake us all" (p. 12).

This research has disclosed how the British and the Persian nations live through their tragic stories at the time of Ferdowsi and Shakespeare and how their power structures enforce its ideological bases through these narratives. Whether the tragic stories of Ferdowsi and Shakespeare were to suppress the subcultures or to represent their suppression, a comparative study of them will lead into a higher awareness beyond both the dominant culture and the subcultures.

The literary approach is cultural materialism, which with a comparative method compares and contrasts the components of ideological anxieties and defense mechanisms in the power structure of the selected tragic works. Narratives in cultural materialism are a part of the cultural history of nations and intertwined with other literary and non-literary narratives. In this approach, as much as it is possible to reconstruct and recognize the facts related to the narratives, there is also the possibility of changing and observing the changes made, for example, the condition of the race-gender-social class Other shows how much the culture of the Other and the Same has changed from the time of their publication. By examining the Other, the level of awareness surpasses both the dominant culture and the subcultures. On the one hand, cultural materialism examines challenges and faultlines and displays that power is not unified and is always subject to threats. These threats force the power to use any means, ideological or repressive, for its survival and legitimacy. On the other hand, the comparative method of this research achieves awareness beyond the Persian and the British cultures of Iran and England. This comparative research with a transcultural perspective shows how similar the performance of power in the two cultures is.

If we consider the unconscious order of things at the time of Ferdowsi following the model of Tillyard, we find some similarities. The Christian Renaissance world of Shakespeare based on the great chain of being and the divine order was not far away from Ferdowsi's half-Islamic and half pre-Islamic world that took kings as equivalents to God and even literarily called the epic as 'khodhai-nameh' that means the Book of Lords (Theodor Noldeke, 1979, p. 24). We also observe the same idea of European Renaissance and the restoration of language and nationality. As Duncan Black Macdonald (1987) stated Ferdowsi himself was under the influence of Shu'ubiyeh movement that objected to the superiority claims of Arabs and tried to preserve languages and cultural customs beside racial pride of non-Arab nations (p. 395).

The Renaissance of Persian literature and Iranianness in Ferdowsi's time in the tenth and eleventh centuries also occurred in the Renaissance age of the west, in Shakespeare's Elizabethan world in the sixteenth century that experienced an unstable background of humanism, Protestantism and nation building in English language and literary narratives. A conflicting background that started by separation from the hegemony of Rome, Latin language and the catholic church, then continued with scientific developments, colonialist explorations and economic changes. But what about gaps and discontents?

Power works by its discursive practices in institutions and sustain individuals as submissive subjects. Hence, individuals have already been subjects of ideology (Althusser, 1971) while they suppose that they are working by themselves. Whenever they desire to fashion their 'selves', they find out that their 'selves' have already been fashioned for them; they are cultural

artifacts (Clifford Geertz, 1973). But what about resistance? Despite the fact that ideological discourses interpellate individuals and they are always ready to hail it, they are simultaneously ready to refute it. Thus, the first goal of every political power is to maintain its survival. For doing so, it disseminates its anxieties among subjects to provoke public abhorrence of the 'objects' of anxieties, the Other, and preserve political dominance and labor exploitation of the ruling class.

Power knows that anxiety affects the life routines of dissidents and makes them avoid certain situations, fear unreal dangers and act fretfully. Anxiety has unconscious roots in personal fears, threats and phobias. *The Encyclopedia of Psychology* states individuals with anxiety disorder have worried thoughts and recurring intrusive concerns ("Anxiety", 2000). Therefore, anxiety has such a deep effect on the minds and acts of individuals that the power structure applies them to tackle with dissidents.

In the power structure of the tragic works of Ferdowsi and Shakespeare, there is a permanent anxiety of evil threats that might shatter the order of things. Mostly anxieties are about rebellion, riot, coup and revolution. While there is a systematic silence about class conflict, its threatening power can be felt in the anxiety of public disobedience, public resistance and parliament's (the people's) power. Subversive women, magicians and intolerance of aliens are other anxieties that the power structure struggles with them. The main source of power, the State in modern terms, is the monarchy that endorses the use of both propaganda and violence to continue its political authority. It may also improvise various plausible anxieties and disperse them among subjects. The State works by them and apply them for severe control of dissidents.

In the selected tragic works, there is a tangible evidence of ideological anxieties. The prevalent class, the monarchy rewrites and produces itself through anxieties in narratives to be survived. It demonizes dissidents and their different ideas in order to objectify them as the Other and ensure the fixation of an abhorrent image of them in the public minds. The subcultures and subversive ideas are represented in stories for being contained and abhorred. Since the meanings of texts are never fixed, it is possible to read them against the governing spirit and discursive anxieties of their ages.

Beside ideological anxieties, defense mechanism is another unconscious and psychological operation on the minds of individuals. Every individual's ego employs a defense mechanism unconsciously to distort the reality of id's unacceptable impulses, either to block them or to transform them into pleasing forms for the ego. Sigmund Freud (1894) explored the three main types of defense mechanism in his article "The Neuro-Psychosis of Defence". Conceptualization of defense mechanisms varies widely in psychology ("Defense Mechanism"); however, Anna Freud (1937) categorized the ten defense mechanisms that her father named. All defense mechanisms are responses to anxiety and reveal the management of anxiety by the ego. They are repression/suppression, projection, displacement, rationalization, denial, regression, sublimation, compensation, identification and humor.

Defense mechanisms such as projection of sin onto the Other, substitution of forbidden desire by another and suppression of passions like aggression are useful means that individuals use mentally when entangled in a psychic struggle. The range of cultural discourses that are their grounds may also differ from politics, history and religion to astronomy, demonology and witchcraft. As individuals are able to utilize such mechanisms for defending their egos, the power structure can also utilize them for defending its violent acts and its discourses against the Other; it pretends that the Other is abhorrent, dangerous and should be controlled otherwise his removal would be necessary. In the tragic works of Shakespeare and Ferdowsi, there are types of defense mechanisms such as projection of sin onto Othello and Siavash and projection of jealousy onto Othello and Garsivaz that make them commit acts against ideological norms.

2. The Order of Things and the Power Structure

Power produces and disseminates its ideal order through cultural discourses. The order of things in the power structure belongs to the Same in opposition to the Other, who may challenge it or refute it completely. If the Other takes power, he will not be able to manage and maintain it, and will lead the state to tyranny and oppression, which is itself a defense mechanism of power to take back the state from the Other and return it to the Same. At the time of subversion and containment, the Other and the Same are against each other and the state considers the Same as the owner of power and the Other as the usurper of power. In such cases, power eliminates or punishes the Other. The revival of the state is accompanied by the suppression of subversion and the containment of the Other in gender-race-class. The display of these matters with poetic rhetoric and in a dramatic form has a profound effect on the minds of the audience, both the Same and the Other, and without their awareness, it changes the motive of subversion in their minds and leads them to maintain the order of things while it also instigates them to think about changes and faultlines.

The order of things in the time of Shakespeare and Ferdowsi was based on God-centered ontology and the order in the great chain of being. In this God-centered chain, human knowledge and power move towards the divine ascension. All beings also exist in this hierarchy in certain ranks. The episteme of the divine being was prevalent in all discourses of power in the world order which separated acceptable discourses from challenging and subversive ones. That is, in contrast to the discourse of the order in the great chain of being, there were dissident discourses of the Other that were not heard and were separated from the dominant discourse in the power structure.

In the time of Shakespeare and Ferdowsi, the Renaissance and the rebirth of religion, language, economy and nationality also took place that challenged the world order in both of them. The feudal land-based economy with the presence of the king as the great feudal lord faced the world trade and capitalist economy, the first modern banking and accounting, which shifted capital from land to financial credit and goods. On the other hand, the growth of state Protestantism in the Anglican Church in

England and the spread of Shiism in Iran transformed religious principles and intertwined them with the indigenous languages and cultures to the extent that it created a nation composed of them.

The renaissance of the English language and the Protestant religion in the British society seems to be equal with the renaissance of the Persian language and the Shiite religion in the Persian society, which were able to replace Roman and Arabic languages and the Catholic and Sunni religions with the national languages and religions. That is, the change in the economic base of Persia and Britain was accompanied by changes in the superstructure of power that changed all ideological pillars and belief systems in the power structure. Commercial capitalism during the wars with India was identical to its counterpart during the war with the new world in America. The result of the collision of these two orders in literature was manifested in the form of tensions in power and ideological anxieties of change that can be seen in these tragic works. Tragic literary works are a mirror of the situation in society and the world system in a particular period and culture, apart from considering their creators as tools of ideology or, conversely, as secret materialists.

The themes of the stories institutionalize the fear of the Other in gender-race-class and the anxiety of any political and social change: that Zahhak or Macbeth cannot reform the structure of power and build a better system, that women in rank are the Other and dependent on their father or husband, that women's knowledge of things is black magical and destructive knowledge, that the race Other, despite his services to the ruling power structure, is still the Other and a source of evil and threat, that children with dual citizenship make trouble, etc. Tragic works display subversion of the ruling power structure, ideological anxieties and defense mechanisms to restore the order by containing the subversion.

The Renaissance in England was marked by fundamental changes in economy, religion, science, the humanities, colonialism, and nationality: financial capitalism versus land-based feudalism, Protestantism and Anglican Christianity versus the Catholic Church and Roman Christianity, individualism and the advancement of the humanities along with the advancement of other sciences, globalization, colonization, and nationalization with emphasis on the elements of language, race and religion. This period was the beginning of modernity, empiricism and humanism in all areas of knowledge and power.

Shakespeare belonged to the Renaissance. By living in the anxieties and tensions of power, he recreated fundamental changes in ideology, economy, and the tools of violence via the language of art. Separation from Rome and the Catholic Church meant independence of England, which not only paved the way for Protestantism and religious independence, but also led to the formation of nationalism based on the national language and the official Anglican religion. On the other hand, it confused people and established superstitions and fears of fantasies, especially witchcraft. It also paved the way for colonial militarization and conquest, which shifted financial resources from traditional feudalism to modern capitalism.

The power structure was hereditary kingdom. Beside the king was the royal advisory board. There were two houses for the commons and the lords. In both Protestant and Catholic systems, the predominant belief of the people was in the divine sovereignty while there was always the danger of revolution, the rise of the House of Commons, and republican movements. The horrific beheading of Charles I, the civil war, and the victory of military power were the result of the belief in the divine system for monarchy and the underestimation of the power of the House of Commons and the people. Shakespeare lived at the heart of these fundamental changes in Renaissance. Gender-race-class Other can be seen abundantly in Shakespeare's works. The representation of the status of women, colored people and the commons in his works shows how power defines the Others and treats them. By examining the situation of the Renaissance, which is a transition from the Middle Ages to the early stages of modern society, the Other's condition becomes more prominent in this transition.

Shakespeare's plays have political themes, as do *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, which, as John Draper states (1936, p. 75), have more political and frightening themes such as regicide at the Elizabethan age than a family meaning. Although mostly courtiers were the audience of Shakespeare's plays that acted as mirrors for princes, Shakespeare's tragedies have subversive knowledge. Jonathan Dollimore (1990) affirms the dangerous knowledge of affairs like cross-dressing: "This knowledge was challenging: it subverted, interrogated, and undermined the ruling ideologies and helped precipitate them into crisis" (p. 482). Draper (1936) mentioning the political themes of *King Lear* says: "*Lear* illustrates a miscellany of political themes, a foolish abdication, a more foolish division of the kingdom, and criminal adultery on the part of his false daughters" (p. 92). In analyzing the political meaning of the play, Elizabeth Frazer (2016) also discusses "the pressing parallels between stage and state" (p. 520) and how far the plays implement politics by theatricality.

The era of Ferdowsi (1080-980) in the 9th and 10th centuries AD was the era of the Ghaznavids (977-1116), that is the era of the Renaissance of Persian language, culture and literature, the attack on India and the evolution of the economy from feudal aristocracy to capitalism and trade with India and the war conquests. Sultan Mahmud invaded India many times and destroyed many temples and achieved many conquests. The Ghaznavid Turks migrated to India for reasons such as the expansion of religion, trade, and military affairs, while the migration of Hindus was carried out as prisoners of war or skilled workers (Salehi et al., 2013). During this period, the first class was landed aristocrats, the military and the clergy in favor of the Abbasid caliphate. This class was in conflict with the class of the Other, that is the people, the industrialists and the merchants. Economically, the Ghaznavids relied on both taxation and traditional feudalism, as well as military conquests and booty. Mohammad Nopasand et al. (2014) consider Ghaznavid capitalism to be limited and commercial (p. 123) while the economic policy of the Ghaznavids was exploitative and colonialist which led to the collapse of the Ghaznavids. Zekrollah Mohammadi (2007, p. 136) also points to the role of conquests and spoils of war from India, which, along with traditional methods and slavery of war prisoners, formed the basis of Ghaznavid economic policy.

Religiously, the Ghaznavids were followers of the Abbasid caliphs, while among the (Other) people, Shiism of the Buyids, Ismailis, and Daylamis was spreading. Although the Shiite government was recognized during the Safavid period, after the

Buyid dynasty, Shiism spread among the people in the form of sects such as the Ismailis and the Daylamis in the tenth century. Clifford Edmund Bosworth (1992, pp. 51-52) considers the tenth century to be the victory of the Shiites in the Islamic world and the western regions of Iran, while Sultan Mahmud and the rest of the kings and officers were Sunni in the Abbasid tradition. Sakineh Kashani et al. (2015, 73) consider the religious policy of Sultan Mahmud in supporting the Sunnis and opposing the Other, Rafizi, Qermati and Batenis, who were not in harmony with the Abbasid Caliph.

The power structure of the Ghaznavids was hereditary kingdom. Abolhassan Mobayan (2006, 109) says that the power structure consisted of two parts, the court and the bureau. In such a hierarchy, Shah did not come into direct contact with people except on the public day, when the Shah sat in the court and people could meet the king to express their grievances. In examining the structure of the army and its internal conflicts, Esmail Hassanzadeh (2007) points to the authoritarian presence of the sultan at the top of the pyramid, the vertical structure of power, the structure of sectarian and tribal monarchies, the stratified structure of intelligence and espionage in all elements of government and nation, and the presence of slaves. They caused inefficiency of the army, internal conflicts, riots and civil war. Saleh Pargari (2003) also considers the Ghaznavid government a military tyranny that reached its peak of power due to military conquests in India and the possession of war booty, but was disintegrated due to the lack of a complete plan in various matters. It can be said that the Ghaznavid period was a period of military and ideological tyranny, while it led to the flourishing of the Persian language and culture. Safar Yousefi (2008, 159) referred to the social policy of the Ghaznavids to be based on political authoritarianism, which considered the state as the divine right of the king and considered the people as his subjects and property.

About ideology of the power structure, divine right of kings was a pretext for their absolute power and tyranny. Bosworth (1992, 49) also refers to the idea of a divine caliphate, in which the king was considered the representative of God and there was little possibility of resisting him. In such a power structure, bad state was better than anarchy. He quotes Nizam al-Mulk saying that the subjects should never separate themselves from the circle of servitude because kings are appointed by God to power and caliphate. Behzad Oveyssi et al. (2014) consider the value system of the Ghaznavids to be divine right of kings, who, by attributing themselves to the Prophet and appealing to the Caliph of Baghdad, tried to legitimize their governmental actions and violence (p. 105). In addition, Bosworth (p. 59) describes the Ghaznavids as tyrants who ruled under military rule and terror. He likens the military power of the Ghaznavids in the tenth century to the power of the Prussian Empire in the eighteenth century. Such an army could not work with the feudal economy alone. The spoils of war in India and commercial capitalism were two important factors in the economic and military transformation of the Ghaznavid period. Such a vast system could not be maintained by military and ideological tyranny. Thus, religion beside other institutions accompanied power. Azizollah Joweini et al. (2001) have pointed to the solidarity between religion and state in *Shahnameh*, which is the result of believing in the divine origin of power, a kind of governmental theocracy that unifies religious and political concepts in a theocratic state.

Among the achievements of Ghaznavids in the field of language and culture, we can mention Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and Beyhaqi's history. *Shahnameh* has special importance in Iranian culture. The preservation and perpetuation of national identity, Persian language, and mythical, historical culture of Iranians were made possible by *Shahnameh*. Richard Foltz (2016, 59) regards *Shahnameh* to be the greatest work created in the process of Iranianization of Islam (1027-651) from the seventh to the eleventh century.

In *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, Stephan Greenblatt (1980) refers to a cultural process that through its cultural products of ideology fashions individuals. Anxieties such as subversive women, the Other, interracial marriage, rebellion, riot, coup, revolution, class conflicts, colonial disobedience, resistance, the Irish trouble, and parliamentary power were expressed in cultural, educational, and legal narratives to fashion obedient individuals: "In sixteenth-century England there were both selves and a sense that they could be fashioned.a sense of personal order, a characteristic mode of address to the world, a structure of bounded desires—and always some elements of deliberate shaping in the formation and expression of identity" (p. 1).

Tragic stories are amalgamations of both illusion and disillusion. In the discussion of exorcism and witchcraft, for example, Greenblatt refers to Harsent's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* about the issue of exorcism in society. According to Harsent, the only way to discredit witchcraft and exorcism is to show it on the stage and as tools of power that the grand interrogator, the monarch, uses against his opponents. It is what Shakespeare did. Shakespeare seems to be a spokesman for Tudor ideology, but in Greenblatt's terms (1988) he "relentlessly explores relations of power in a given culture" (p. 254).

Although Ferdowsi and Shakespeare were not contemporaries, their times have many similarities. The order of the things was hierarchical and vertical, derived from the belief in the divine ontology and the great chain of being, noting the fact that such an image was not homogeneous and that it was in contrast with the gender-race-class Other who did not have complete faith in the favorite divine image of kings. The surrender to this image was either by oppression or by its repetition in everyday discourses, which weakened the possibility of resistance. Economically, there are changes in both societies towards financial capitalism, which has been supported by colonization and militarization of other lands. Women, slaves, and the common people are in the lower ranks, and the concentration of tragic works is limited to the court and the life of the courtiers. Issues related to the Other are expressed in the margins of the main topics.

Shakespeare and other writers of his age dramatized the issues of their society. The Other in race-gender-class was one of the critical issues in the ideology of their time that drew the attention of critics toward these works for reading critically the historical condition of the Other. The Other is an umbrella term that refers to all those who were marginalized by the power structure. Representations of race-gender-class Other are the subjects of studies that have surveyed the plays from the Other's perspective. These studies reinforce the analysis of these works; for example, studies on Shakespeare's world and works for family life (Young, 2009), law and marriage (Sokol et al., 2003), gender and race (Callaghan, 2000), the condition of women

(Kemp, 2010), ideology and the Other (Drakakis, 1985; Hawkes, 1996; Henderson 2008), tolerance (Sokol, 2008), politics on the stage (Lake, 2016; Hadfield, 2004), witchcraft drama (Pudney, 2019), etc.

About *Shahnameh* many critics believed that it works as an Iranian national card. Mahmoud Sadeghi (2012) considers *Shahnameh* to be the executive regulation of Iranian culture and life, in which the customs and rituals of being Iranian are stated. Ferdowsi is the guardian of this national identity of Iranians, who in Mansourian's view has been more concerned with preserving the Persian language and culture than with preserving religious and historical ideas though *Shahnameh* contains all four components of religion, language, history and mythology. In literature review of *Shahnameh*, its epic structure has always been prioritized. It has always been the important work in the canon of Persian literature and cultural memory (Mousavi, 2021). Critics mostly associated its stories with great epics of the world, like Homer's *Iliad* (Champion, 1788), *Beowulf* (Alijani et al.) and Vergil's *Aeneid* (Hanaway, 1978). While critical studies have categorized *Shahnameh* as a national and historical epic, a book about Iranian men and their wars, and have ignored the tragic atmosphere of some stories, recently there have been suggestions for tragic themes of stories. Rahmatollah Valadbeigi et al. (2014) examined dramatic and tragic features of *Shahnameh* in the two stories of "Rostam and Sohrab", and "Rostam and Esfandiar". Mahdi Mohaghegh et al. (2011) comparing Greek elements of tragedy with tragic features of the story of Siavash divulged the tragic structure of the story. Ali Sadeghi (2018) challenged the generic tradition by applying Hegel's theory of tragedy to the book's political authority. Modern critical studies invite critics to review the stories in their shifting genres regardless of the epic structure ascribed to them. The gist of the matter is that *Shahnameh* is a paradox of national and tragic epic of Persian culture. According to Ibrahim Ighbali et al. (2008), the book's stories express the collective unconscious of Iranians and comprise its cultural archetypes. Edmund Hayes (2015) considers the entire *Shahnameh* as a tragedy of Iranian lineage which was between the two Iranian pre-Islamic and Islamic eras and is "as a dialogue between the legacy of past generations and Ferdowsi's present" (p. 371).

In addition, there has lately been a growing interest to do a comparative research on the works of Shakespeare and Ferdowsi, especially on the tragic episodes. Seyed Jafar Hamidi (2001) in a conference compared tragic elements of five plays with stories of *Shahnameh*. Khadijeh Oladi et al. (2020) studied the ethics of *Othello* and "Siavash". The play *Macbeth* holds potentialities that make it be related to various stories of *Shahnameh*. Leyla Hashemian et al. (2010) examined the play's similarities with "Rostam and Esfandiar" while Abdolreza Sayf (2001) evaluated the cultural differences of *Macbeth* and Bahram Chubineh, Roohollah Roozbeh (2020) associated didactic teachings of the play with Bahram Chubineh, and Mohammad Kazem Yousefpour (2006) compared character types of the two stories. Abolghasem Radfar et al. (2011) shifted the comparison to the story of Zahhak and compared the evil character of *Macbeth* with Zahhak. Masoomeh Khodadadi Mahabad et al. (2011) and Mohammad Khosravi Shakib et al. (2012) in the same direction examined *King Lear* and Fereydoun and discussed the catastrophic repercussions of kingdom's division.

To sum up, *Shahnameh* is a display of the voiceless Other. Both Shakespeare and Ferdowsi were concerned with political power and expressed tensions about it in their tragic works. Sometimes the way of expression at the time of restoration of legitimate order and monarchy is such that they could be considered to be either tools, spokesmen of the ruling power or secret materialists in their time who recreated the structure of power in the language of art to preserve it as a document for later ages. The Other of gender-race-class and the faultlines in subversion and containment are different in tragic stories. For example about the gender Other Siavash's mother, Sudabeh and Manijeh are subversive women who challenge the order of things. Siavash's mother escapes from her father. Sudabeh expresses her love for her adopted son Siavash, Manijeh kidnaps Bijan and brings him to the Shah's palace and takes refuge in Iran with him.

2.1. Ideological Anxieties and Defense Mechanisms

The power structure is constantly anxious about threats to its legitimacy and sovereignty. In the tragic stories of Shakespeare and Ferdowsi, there is anxiety about rebellion, coup d'etat, revolution, rebellious women, witches, aliens, republicanism, public resistance, etc., that negatively disrupt the order of things and are unable to manage and reform the affairs after gaining power. In each case of subversion, situations are not improving and this prepares the ground for restoration of the original power structure. Defense mechanisms are to restore the primary order of things. The Other in gender-race-social class is either suppressed or eliminated after the power is restored. Subversion is an opportunity to restore the existing power. Demonstrating the subversion is itself a defense mechanism. Tragic stories narrate restoration in a way that revives the power structure of the hereditary monarchy and the feudal economy.

Ideological anxieties refer to the anxieties that the state has about the Other and subversive forces. These anxieties and defense mechanisms to deal with them are two-sided, that is, when power falls into the hands of the Other, he faces the same ideological anxieties. For example, Kay Khosrow is a mad Other in Turan in order to be survived by this mechanism, then in *Shahnameh*, he is the ideal king who must manage ideological anxieties about Turan. In this study, ideological anxieties and defense mechanisms of both sides are examined. The stories were analyzed and compared based on their similarities in themes: "Zahhak the Snake Holder" with *Macbeth*, "Fereydoun and His Sons" with *King Lear*, and "Siavash" with *Othello*. In "Zahhak the Snake Holder" and *Macbeth* the power is in the hands of two murderers who usurp power and rule over the people by killing the father (Zahhak) or the king (*Macbeth*). In "Fereydoun and His Sons" and *King Lear*, the king decides to divide his kingdom among his children, which has bad results. In "Siavash" and *Othello*, both heroes are the race Other and their marriage is interracial. In all the selected stories, there are ideological anxieties and defense mechanisms to restore the order and the original power structure. For this reason, Ferdowsi and Shakespeare can be considered to some extent as followers of the power of their time, even though they narrated the Other's presence and voice. On the other hand, they were culture and change writers of

their times who with the language of literary stories consciously displayed the possibility of change and dissent, while apparently they wrote under the framework of their time.

3. The Other, the Fault Lines, Ideological Anxieties and Defense Mechanisms

3.1. "Zahhak the Snake Holder" and Macbeth

In the story of Zahhak women and people are the Other. The main anxiety is subversion of order that has happened and caused suffering and fury of the people. The uprising of Kaveh is a rare occasion that people follow a hero and dare to choose Fereydun as their king. People's defense mechanism is to revolt and restore the order in which king is the protector of them and distributes wealth and power equally among them. On the other hand, Zahhak's defense mechanism is to suppress discontents by gathering nobles and scholars to testify his justice and affirm the legitimacy of his monarchy. He is not successful and Fereydun gains the power and chains Zahhak. The images on the seals of ancient time enhance the historical antiquity of this mythical story, although it can be considered a symbol of the historical tyranny of the Umayyads and the Abbasids.

In the story of Zahhak, Jamshid's sisters are the gender Other that Zahhak has taught them magic. They themselves are not able to think or break the spell of Zahhak. Fereydoun breaks the spell of Zahhak and frees them. People are the class Other whose children fall into the hands of the king. Kaveh Ahangar is the symbol of people who stands against the tyranny of the Shah and complains. The faultline of power is between the people and the king. After his dream, Zahhak wants to replace this faultline with a fake scroll, but he cannot. Kaveh's uprising deepens the faultline. With his rise in the bazaar, change becomes possible.

In *Macbeth*, the gender Other is witches whose prophesy is correct but dark knowledge that addresses ambitious heroes to gain power. The main anxiety is subversion of order that causes the loss of security and safety. After killing Duncan, Macbeth is not able to be a just and legitimate ruler. From a thane of Duncan, he turns into a murderer who following the witches' prophesies kills and destroys to precipitate his destiny and become the king. He becomes the Other for other thanes and people. In addition, his wife is a subversive woman who encourages him to accomplish the prophesies. By doing so, both Macbeth and his wife lose their healthy minds and change Duncan's healthy state to a kingdom of terror and death. Psychosis of Macbeth and hysteria of his wife are defense mechanisms of the power structure that attempts to restore the healthy state.

In historical context, *Macbeth* refers to the Gunpowder plot and the fall of power to the illegitimate king. Witch women, like Jamshid's sisters in Zahhak's story, are the gender Others. They know magic and their science of magic is black science. If we examine the function of the play in its time, *Macbeth* depicts the greatest ideological anxiety, and that is the fall of the state into the hands of an illegitimate king. James I was the Malcolm of Scotland who came to power after the death of Queen Elizabeth. Macbeth himself, from the moment he longs to be the king, comes out of the totality of the Same and becomes the Other. His rule is a regime of usurper and terror that even at the court level leads to the assassination of the court opponents. If we look at the history of the play, the play refers to the conspiracy of the Catholics to seize power. Although they did not win in reality, the atmosphere of the time was not with them and *Macbeth* depicts the consequences of their victory.

In both stories of "Zahhak" and *Macbeth*, we are confronted with violence and crime. The anxiety of subverting the order and the fall of power into the hands of dictators is so great that they give Fereydoun and Malcolm the role of a savior for regaining power. Neither Shakespeare nor Ferdowsi considered the possibility of a republic, but considered a legitimate kingdom as a substitute for an illegitimate one. The restoration of order in *Macbeth* is done in the structure of the hereditary monarchy and in Fereydoun with the uprising of the people. Macbeth relying on the witches' prophesies and temptation of his wife, kills Duncan and Macduff's wife and children. By killing the king, he disrupts the whole order of Scotland in such a way that even the horses become wild. Revolts are taking place everywhere and he is not able to manage the things. The thanes of Scotland and the people greet the British forces. Malcolm is the legitimate king who restores the order by returning to Scotland. In both stories there is a significant similarity in the themes of the story. Similarity also exists in the Other and the faultlines between people and their rulers. *Macbeth* is a display of legitimate and illegitimate violence and power, which, according to Alan Sinfield (1986) *Macbeth* shows that state violence was justified by the propaganda of the king's divine right, and if such a right is removed, there is no difference between Duncan's imperial government and Macbeth's tyranny. Plays, such as *Macbeth*, show the ideology and violence of the monarch's state against its dissidents. Evil and tyranny are abundant in both stories. In a comparative study of the category of evil between "Zahhak" and *Macbeth*, Radfar et al. point to the similarity of the structure and signs of the two stories, and that evil is not destroyed, it returns.

3.2. "Fereydoun" and King Lear

The stories of *King Lear* and "Fereydoun" are about the division of power and its consequences. This division is about the division of territory among the children of the king rather than among the people. Anxiety of republicanism is portrayed by giving children a share. Its dire consequences are illustrated by the king's madness and the disintegration of power. Iraj in "Fereydoun" is the Other for his brothers. They believe the chief territory, Iran, has been given to him while he is the youngest brother. Fratricide subverts the order and Fereydoun's defense mechanism is to suppress Salm and Tur. Fereydoun's division of territory among them also exposes the fear of the republic. The story ends by Manouchehr's revenge and restoration of the order. He is the grandson of Iraj that kills his uncles and takes revenge.

In *King Lear*, Lear is the class Other for people. As soon as he relinquishes his territory to his daughters, he turns into the Other for the courtiers. His daughters are gender Other and unable to manage the affairs of his kingdom. The army of France as the race Other attack England and they cannot gain victory. Two other class Others are Fool and Edmund. The Fool has been

treated as a cog, a puppet of the court who could say whatever no one dares to say. Edmond as illegitimate son is the Other who can never have access to legitimate power. The first and main anxiety is the republic model of power in which all people can directly have power and wealth. The identification with Lear and Fool's humor are defense mechanisms that provide opportunity to see the result of Lear's republican decision. Although such division is at the level of his family, it directly displays the fear of republic state and the ways it would be collapsed. As Jacques Lacan (1992) stated King Lear does not realize that he cannot separate the name of the father and the king from the management and ownership of the court.

In Fereydoun's story, the ideological anxiety is the subversion of order by fratricide. The defense mechanism is to suppress Salm and Tur and take revenge for Iraj's blood. The ideological anxiety in *King Lear* lies in the division of kingdom like the republic and the participation of the king's children in the administration and ownership of affairs. The defense mechanism of the court is the king's madness, which begins with the insult to him by Goneril and Reagan. Another defense mechanism is the joke and identification with King Lear that the fool applies. He jokingly and playfully expresses all the flaws of the king and his children. The intended effect in the play is to maintain a centralized monarchy and stay away from any kind of republicanism. The tragic and sad ending of the play is to establish the fear of republicanism and the concentration of power and the state in the hands of the king. The mob, the civil war and the republicanism are other ideological anxieties felt in Shakespeare's plays such as *King Lear* and *Macbeth*.

3.3. "Siavash" and Othello

Othello is the class and race Other whose moorish background does not let him be admitted as the Same. His long term military services to the white Same cannot include him, thus he even has internalized the racist culture to the degree that he believes his blackness may contaminate the innocence of Desdemona. Desdemona is the gender Other who subverts the patriarchal order of things by marrying a moor without her father's permission. Hence, there are two anxieties, interracial marriage and a subversive girl that need to be stopped by a defense mechanism. Projection of jealousy onto Othello commences his fall. Desdemona's death is the second mechanism that introduces interracial marriage as a taboo and fixes it as a phobia. The faultline of *Othello* is the law of the white father as opposed to a black, Muslim and African slave. Despite the services he rendered to Venice, Othello is still racially inferior to white men. The discourses of Iago, Brabantio and Rodrigo are against him and show his hard situation.

Desdemona is the gender Other that violates the law of the father's property and marries Othello. She is the rebellious girl of the play. Desdemona's father considers her most important duty to be obedient to her father. Her marriage for love and without her father's permission is a subversive act. For Desdemona, however, it is not subversive, rather it is a change in ownership from father to husband. According to Othello, their marriage was based on love and did not require her father's permission. Turks are also the race Other that poses a serious threat to Venice. The word 'Turkish' means savage pagan, while the Ottoman Empire was Muslim.

In "Siavash", women are the gender Other and second citizen comparing to men. Siavash's mother is the Other who took refuge in Iranian heroes from her father. Siavash is also the Other when he takes refuge from his father and stays in Turan. Subversion of order is the first anxiety that Sudabeh accused Siavash for doing so. His refuge in Turan and his interracial marriages with Turanian girls are other anxieties that threaten the power structure. Suppression on both sides is the defense mechanism that both kings, Kay Kavus and Afrasiab apply to tackle with the problem. The main faultlines are wars between Iran and Turan and interracial marriage.

Siavash is the race Other in the court of Kay Kavus because of his mother's origin. When he goes to Turan, he is the race Other in Afrasiab's court because his father is Iranian. There is anxiety about the usurpation of the father's property in the story of Siavash and Sudabeh. Women both Sudabeh and Siavash's mother are the gender Other. There is anxiety about the enemy on both sides of Iran and Turan, which preserves the ideology of both. Siavash, who wants peace, is eventually killed and his son Kay khosrow avenges his death. Siavash's passing over the fire is the defense mechanism of power (in Iran) to separate the innocent from the guilty. The faultline between Iran and Turan with Siavash's refuge and marriage to Turanian girls deepens until it reaches its tragic peak with Siavash's death. In both stories of "Siavash" and *Othello*, the hero figure is also the Other and the faultline is racist discourses. Other critics have also mentioned the similarities of the two stories. Oladi et al. (2020) examined the similarities of many tragic components between "Siavash" and *Othello*. Masumeh Maarifvand et al. (2020) analyzing the tragedy of Siyavash based on Frye's theory of 'Mythos Tragedy' considered it a significant tragedy comparable with the greatest tragedies of the world.

4. Conclusion

By examining the selected works, this comparative research has offered an awareness of the power structure, the mechanisms and the ways it takes in works of different cultural narratives and produces the ground for changing itself by revealing gaps and faultlines. Displaying the subcultures is also a unique opportunity for surpassing the present level of awareness. There is a meaningful similarity between the components of ideological anxieties and defense mechanisms in these tragic works. Such similarity points to the fact that cultural narratives and collective memory of the two nations are very identical in the deep structure of their stories and national memory despite some differences they may have on the surface structure. On the other hand, the research results have linked the studies of literary criticism in one culture with the works of another culture and achieved a transcultural perspective.

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