THESIS TITLE

Siyâvash and Hippolytus:
The Process of Creating an Intercultural Adaptation

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ABSTRACT

This PhD project starts with two questions: firstly, what is the task of the intercultural theatre practitioner, and secondly, how do I adapt an Iranian myth for an Australian audience? I explore current refugee movements, Australia's treatment of refugees (with a focus on sea arrivals), Iran's status as a host as well as a source country of refugees, and racism. I then provide a background to intercultural theatre and present my personal definition of it. I begin with the definition of intercultural practice outlined in Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins' *Women's Intercultural Performance* (2000): intercultural theatre is 'the meeting in the moment of performance of two or more cultural traditions, a temporary fusing of styles and/or techniques and/or cultures'. I also explore the concept of intercultural theatre developed by Ric Knowles in his *Theatre & Interculturalism* (2010) and Rustom Bharucha's articulation of the problems with the term in *The Politics of Cultural Practice* (2001). Knowles offers the following definition: 'bridging cultures via performance to establish productive dialogue amongst them'. Bharucha criticises exemplifying 'a particular kind of Western representation which negates the non-Western context of its borrowing'. His extensive criticism of Peter Brook's intercultural theatre, provides a framework for considering the task of the intercultural playwright. I arrive at a position whereby I define the task of an intercultural practitioner as 'to fight racism'. I examine the works of three significant Iranian adapters of the *Siyâvash* story, my chosen material – *Siyâvash-Khâni* by Bahram Beyzai, *Mourning for Siyâvash* by Pari Saberi, and *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* by Naghmeh Samini. I then track how studying and living in Australia changed my view on adaptation. I add two British case studies: one of poet and translator/adapter Ted Hughes and one of playwright Sarah Kane. Both have adapted the Hippolytus myth, which is similar to the *Siyâvash* story. These case studies broaden my view of adaptation and translation. I then consider writing for an Australian audience, through writing my own intercultural adaptation. I am influenced by analyses of migration and racism, my own experience of migration, and Jane Elliott's education exercise in which children are exposed to racism. The exegesis accompanying the final play charts this journey. My intercultural play, *Phaedra in Persia*, combines characters from both the Persian and Greek stories of a Prince who is loved by his stepmother. My focus is on the Prince's journey from disaffection towards compassion. This personal journey is set against a political allegory of Australia's response to refugees and Middle Eastern migrants. Elliott's exercise shaped my approach to intercultural adaptation. I use her idea of reverse racism as a ploy in my allegory. The play situates the audience, whether displaced migrants or citizens of their host countries,

in the reverse situation to the one they currently inhabit. I aim to use this method to provide audiences with a better understanding of the subject of migration and the refugee crisis.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Dated 04/10/2017

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INTRODUCTION

I received my Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in Dramatic Literature from Azad University in Iran. My BA dissertation was a practice-led research project adapting Anton Chekhov's story *Rothschild's Violin* for the stage. For my MA thesis I undertook a comparative study on the *Siyâvash* story by Ferdowsi and the tragedy *Hippolytus* by Euripides, in addition to writing a play titled *The Pass*.

Siyâvash is one of the most famous parts of the Iranian national epic *Shahnameh*, written by Ferdowsi. It tells the story of a Persian Prince, Siyâvash, who is loved by his father's wife, Queen Sudâbeh. The dominant themes of the story are forbidden love, fate, betrayal, and alienation. The story resembles Euripides' play *Hippolytus* in which a Greek Prince, Hippolytus, is loved by his stepmother Phaedra, the Queen of Athens.

Shahnameh incorporates aspects of Persian mythology and Iranian history until the war between Arabs and Iranians. In the seventh century, Arabs attacked the Sassanid Empire and completed their conquest, which is known as the Muslim Conquest of Persia, or Arab Conquest of Iran. This event led to the eventual deterioration of Zoroastrianism[1] in Iran. Arabs dominated a large part of the land and imposed their language as well as the rule of Islam (Masoudi 2011: 661-668).

In the ninth century, Samanids, a dynasty of Persian <u>dehqan</u>[2] origin, dominated the country. They tried to restore the glory of Persian civilisation and culture, supporting poets and writers to re-establish the Persian language (Jafarian 1998: 91). During this era, Ferdowsi started writing *Shahnameh*. He regenerated and preserved the language by avoiding foreign words as much as possible, becoming a key figure in the Persian cultural revival. His work is considered vital in the preservation of the Persian language. Many Iranians know *Shahnameh* as a means to save Persian language, culture, history and mythology. For example, Iranian mythologist Mehrdad Bahar argues that *Shahnameh* has disseminated cultural unity amongst Iranians (Bahar 2007: 190) and scholar Said Hamidian claims that Ferdowsi represents 'the awakened conscience of the Iranian nation' (Hamidian 2004: 1). Ferdowsi's epic verses have been taught at schools and universities, and many streets, squares and places are named after him.

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[1] Zoroastrianism also called Zarathustraism, Mazdaism and Magianism, is an ancient Iranian religion and a religious philosophy.

[2] The dehqan or dihqan, were a class of land-owning magnates during the Sassanid and early Islamic period, found throughout Iranian-speaking lands.

After submitting my MA thesis, I moved to Australia to undertake a PhD in Drama. For me, it was not only an academic process, but also a journey in which I wanted to explore a new culture and challenge my research skills by working and writing in English. Likewise, I wanted to become a dual citizen of Australia, one of the most privileged of the so-called 'First World' countries and where citizenship is relatively easy to obtain.

I decided to build on my previous academic experiences and pursue a research project focussing on major adaptations of the *Siyâvash* story. I intended to take a structuralist approach, believing this to be the best way of adapting *Siyâvash* and other mythic stories for the stage. I felt my background in playwriting and theatre criticism stood me in good stead for this task. Since I started my academic studies in 2003, improving the quality of scripts – the basis of many theatre productions – has been one of my priorities. I identified that many Iranian playwrights do not write strong plots, consequently weakening other dramatic elements in general and characterisation in particular. A weak plot does not allow the characters to justify their actions and, in many cases, prevents them from evolving. Regardless of the quality of the actors or directors, the negative impact of such plots does not result in good works. To find a clue to this problem I wrote tens of articles and review critiques on Iranian performances from 2010 to 2013, which were published by newspapers such as *Farhikhtegan*, *Shargh* and *Etemaad*, paper magazines such as *Aseman* and *Tajrobeh*, and *Louh Digital Magazine*. I focussed on the writing over other elements of the productions, and analysed their plots.

As I commenced my PhD at Flinders, an ex-supervisor told me that I should not use structuralist methods, stating that this research approach is considered outdated in Australia. In Australia, the focus in research is most commonly on the performance event. But I wanted to investigate the process of developing play adaptations. I needed to find a way to bridge my interest with the current Australian research culture. Although I was awarded the Akbar Radi Prize for the Best Young Dramatist of Iran several times, I was wary about writing a play for my PhD as English is my second language. Nevertheless, I planned a practice-led research project based on the *Siyâvash* story, which would result in my own play adaptation.

The direction of this PhD project changed several times, the most fundamental shift being my decision to anchor it in practice-led work. I decided to begin with an exploration of adaptation from an Iranian perspective, examining the work of significant adapters of the *Siyâvash* story. I chose *Siyâvash* and its adaptations for various reasons: they present complex dilemmas for the characters; the theme of 'forbidden love' fascinates me; the idea of 'alienation' relates to my current situation, that of studying and living in Australia; and finally the apparent ease with which mythic stories speak to different audiences in different cultures.

The adaptations I consider are *Siyâvash-Khâni* (1996) by Bahram Beyzai, *Soog-e Siyâvash* [*Mourning for Siyâvash*] (2003a) by Pari Saberi, and *Asb-haye Aseman Khakestar Mibarand* [*The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes*] (2009 [2006]) by Naghmeh Samini. These works are major adaptations of *Siyâvash* in Iranian theatre.

To analyse these, I avoid adopting traditional research methodologies in the light of Brad Haseman and Daniel Mafes' contention that '[f]or artists and creative practitioners seeking to join the community of researchers this environment can seem unsympathetic and dismissive of their contribution' (2009: 211-12). But how does an artist-researcher work in a university, as 'guardian of knowledge-making'? More importantly, '[w]hat do universities recognise as knowledge-making' (Robson, Brady & Hopkins 2010: 190)?

Since the 1990s, it has been possible to produce creative theses in Australian universities, 'a creative work and a piece of academic writing'. From an academic perspective, 'the value of the written component lies in its capacity for easy and traditional dissemination through the academic system' (Robson, Brady & Hopkins 2010: 190). It also lies partly in 'the replication process that establishes the creative arts as a stable research discipline, able to withstand peer and wider assessment' (Barrett 2004). Writer and scholar Jerri Kroll says that the exegesis is 'a kind of insurance policy in the academic context' (1999). Although it stands differently from traditional research, 'creative *and* classically academic work can operate harmoniously as independent, intertextual and polyphonic responses to the research question/s or thematic enquiry' (Robson, Brady & Hopkins 2010: 194).

Playwriting may be the closest form of arts to literature and the closest form of writing to arts. A practice-led PhD in playwriting lies somewhere between a creative writing project and a performance as research project. The former is more common than the latter. Dennis Strand defines 'performance as research' as occurring when

> […] a production becomes an intervention in an established scholarly debate, dialogue or discourse, OR when it initiates or seeks to initiate such a debate. Any performance-as-research project must make explicit its relationship with that debate and communicate the ways in which the terms of the debate have been changed by the research project (Strand 1997: 89).

'Finding methods for artists to examine their own practice has the potential to open vast new avenues of knowledge', Dominique Hecq and Robert Banagan state. '[But] the description of practitioners' methods, engaging consistent methodologies in some form, and developing a

common vocabulary appear to be and remain the sticking points' (Hecq & Banagan 2010). Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt admit 'there is a need to generate appropriate discourses to convince assessors and policy-makers that within the context of studio-based research, innovation is derived from methods that cannot always be pre-determined and "outcomes" of artistic research are *necessarily* unpredictable' (Barrett & Bolt 2007: 3).

For this thesis, with its unpredictable nature, I use a case study-based methodology. '[T]he case study is a flexible approach, able to extract from the singular experiences of the phenomenal field, research objects that are plausible, comparable, and about which valid conclusions can be drawn', director and scholar Julian Meyrick observes. 'In prosecuting its scholarly aims it is considerate of that field and disinclined to over-trump embedded practices and their associated terms with its own supposedly superior categories and interpretive devices'. Meyrick argues that the case-study method 'arises from the *verstehen* sociology associated with Wilhelm Dilthey, Georg Simmel, Max Weber and the so-called Chicago School' (Meyrick 2014). They aimed 'to include an understanding of the point of view of the subjects of study' (Harper 1992: 139).

Michel Wievorka clarifies the relationship between 'case study' in sociology and 'case history' in medical science and puts forward this definition:

> [f]or a "case" to exist, we must be able to identify a characteristic unit, whose unity is given (at least initially) in concrete historical experiences. This unit must be observed, but it has no meaning in itself. It is significant only if an observer […] can refer it to an analytical category or theory. It does not suffice to observe a social phenomenon, historical event, or set of behaviours in order to declare them to be "cases." If you want to talk about a "case," you also need the means of interpreting it or placing it in a context. Though necessarily refering to a stock of factual knowledge, a case study cannot be merely empirical. Regardless of the practical approach for studying it, a case is an opportunity for relating facts and concepts, reality and hypotheses. But do not make the mistake of thinking that it is, in itself, a concept. A case draws its unity not from the theoretical tools used to analyze it, but from the way it takes shape, namely as a social or historical fact combining all sorts of elements into a set of comprising social roles, an institution, a social movement or a logic of community action. […] By talking about a case, we propose bringing theory and practice together in a special way (Wievorka 1992: 160).

I adopt a case study approach to give voice to the playwrights I have chosen to focus on. I consider their methodologies of adaptation as well as the plays they have written, and write an exegesis-like piece on behalf of each writer. Then I compare each writer's ideas with his/her play. This process adds a practical playwriting perspective to the analyses and helps to deepen my view of *Siyâvash* and its major adaptations.

I started my project with this question: what is the best way of adapting *Siyâvash* for a contemporary audience? I initiated with the analyses of my Iranian case studies. As I was completing this process, I finished the first draft of my own play (it is included as an appendix to this thesis). After a meeting with my supervisors, Dr Anne Thompson and Prof Julian Meyrick, the PhD plan changed. My topic was firmly rooted in Iranian culture, but they wanted me to incorporate intercultural elements that would be accessible to contemporary Australian audiences. As I remarked earlier, such changes are typical of practice-led projects, whether those involving playwriting or other forms of creativity.

However, changing the PhD plan resulted in two questions: firstly, what is the task of the intercultural theatre practitioner, and secondly, how do I adapt the *Siyâvash* story for a contemporary Australian audience? My interest in how playwrights adapt myths remained but I had to now also consider playwriting as an act of intercultural communication. The *Siyâvash* story is not well known in Australia but audiences here are familiar with its Greek version. Roman playwright Seneca has also written a play, *Phaedra*, based on Euripides' *Hippolytus*. I decided to include two new case studies: Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* (2001 [1996]) and Jean Racine's *Phèdre* as translated by Ted Hughes (1998). Both works draw heavily on Seneca's *Phaedra*. Both works have been performed in Australia. To explore intercultural arts practice, I wrote a play that could be applicable to both Iranians and Australians. My position as a migrant in Australia altered my relationship to the original myth. This meant the play I wrote was based on the recent refugee crisis.

Chapter One offers an overview of the definitions of the term refugee, a general description of *refugee crisis*, reasons for refugee waves, the status of migrants and refugees after the 9/11 attack, Australia's treatment of refugees (with a focus on sea arrivals), Iran's treatment of refugees, the status of Iranian refugees in Australia (again with a focus on sea arrivals), and also the way Australian society responds to refugees. Likewise, I give my view on racism. This perspective is followed by a background to Intercultural theatre and Peter Brook's intercultural productions. I finish the chapter with my definition of intercultural theatre which shapes my playwriting.

I chose Brook for two major reasons; firstly, he is the most discussed intercultural theatre practitioner and his works have helped theorists develop their views on this genre. And secondly, Brook worked closely with a few major Iranian texts such as *The Conference of the Birds* by Farid ud-Din Attar, and *Avesta*, the holy book of Zoroastrianism. Moreover, he had a close professional relationship with the poet Ted Hughes through which he created some of his intercultural works including *The Conference of the Birds* (1973) and *Orghast* (1971).

In the second chapter, I provide background to the *Siyâvash* story and then offer a summary of Ferdowsi's *version*. I analyse the Iranian case studies to expand my knowledge of the original source text and the possibilities others have explored in adapting it. I provide each play's history, performance context, dramatic elements, and the writer's inspirations and perspective. For this chapter I interviewed Samini and Saberi. I did not conduct dialogue with Beyzai as I found his pre-existing interview on *Siyâvash-Khâni* to be sufficiently enlightening.

In the third chapter I explain how I came to write an intercultural play for an Australian audience, presenting my research on translation, adaptation, and the relationship between them. I draw on Anglo-European theories rather than Iranian ones. Most Iranian humanities theorists have yet to contribute innovative ideas to the field, often borrowing theories from Anglo-European scholars and either translating or duplicating them. I discuss some possible explanations for this. I then analyse Kane's *Phaedra's Love* and Hughes' *Phèdre*.

I chose these texts for various reasons. In the case of *Phèdre* I was inspired by Hughes' poetic translation of the story. (Translating my poems from Persian to English formed a significant part of this PhD's creative component.) *Phaedra's Love*, meanwhile, examines several contemporary issues. Compared to the other versions of the Phaedra myth explored here, it adopts a unique approach to adapting classic stories. Kane also bases the character Hippolytus on herself. Both versions enriched my perspective on adaptation and translation.

In Chapter Four I discuss what I have taken from the previous chapters to write *Phaedra in Persia*, beginning with the obstacles I encountered in adapting the canonic work of *Shahnameh*. I present an analysis of the dramatic elements of my play and explain why and how I changed the elements of my source material through the process of adaptation. I go on to identify the non-theoretical experiences that inspired me: my then-partner, the book I have written on immigration, and my status as a foreigner in Australia. Having discussed the challenges, I then turn to how I practiced my understanding of interculturalism.

The fifth chapter is the final version of my play *Phaedra in Persia*. In this work I make several departures from the myth as it is usually told, altering the stepmother to a mother and combining characters from both Persian and Greek mythology. In a further innovation, I link

my play with our era by centralising the theme of migration. In *Phaedra in Persia* a group of fundamentalist Christians are dominating Europe so refugees jump on boats to reach the Mediterranean shores of Persia. The King of Persia, who is married to a European woman, Phaedra, does not allow the foreigners to enter the country. This causes a rift between the King and his son, Siyâvash. Phaedra's love for her son further complicates the situation for both the royal family and the country.

In the Afterword I write notes to the future directors and actors of the play. I indicate how I see *Phaedra in Persia* in Performance. I also discuss the possibility of producing it in Iran.

I am responsible for all translations of quotations that originally appeared in Persian and would like to give thanks to Dr Thompson for reviewing these and providing corrections where necessary.

1

REFUGEES, RACISM,
AND INTERCULTURAL THEATRE

The creative component of this PhD is deeply influenced by my status as a migrant as well as the current reality of global migration. I use facts, images, and debates from these to shape and contextualise my version of the *Siyâvash* story. This chapter aims to clarify various aspects of the recent *refugee crisis* as a subset of the global migration phenomena through definitions and examples from Europe, the United States, Australia, and Iran; however, Iran and Australia will remain the main focus of the research. As an Iranian resident of Australia, I have had to position myself within both the Australian and Iranian contexts of migration. This was my first encounter with Australian culture. Concentrating on the different aspects of this topic helped me to understand the concerns of all parties involved as well as the capacities and possibilities these reveal. My play, written for an Australian audience from an Iranian perspective, will be inevitably considered intercultural. In this chapter I explore theories of intercultural theatre in order to better define my stance. Intercultural theatre practice has mainly been done by Western practitioners in response to their encounter with non-Western cultures. Initially I decided to examine this genre via books and articles, but then I realised that studying practice was also helpful and necessary to clarify my perspective. This resulted in me analysing two productions by Peter Brook. I will start this chapter with a discussion of migration and refugees. The final section will present my personal definition of intercultural theatre which I adopt in writing the creative component of the thesis. The discussions I present in this chapter will also feed into my play as well as the exegetical part of the PhD, Chapter Four.

1.1. *Refugee Crisis*

The history of migration is as old as the history of humankind. It originates from 'the Rift Valley in Africa, from where between about 1.5 million and 5000 BC *Homo erectus* and *Homo*

sapiens spread initially into Europe and later into other continents' (Koser 2016: 2). There are a number of major migration events and periods in more recent history. 'Probably the predominant migration event in the 18th and 19th centuries was the forced transportation of slaves. An estimated 12 million people were forced from mainly western Africa to the New World, but also in lesser numbers across the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean' (Koser 2016: 3). This phase was associated with voluntary resettlement from European countries such as Britain, Spain, the Netherlands, and France. 'Migration associated with expansion largely came to an end with the rise of anticolonial movements towards the end of the 19th century' (Koser 2016: 3). From the 1850s until the 1930s, following the industrial progress in the United States, millions of workers moved to the western hemisphere. 'The next major period of migration was after the Second World War, when labour was needed to sustain booming post-war economies in Europe, North America, and Australia' (Koser 2016: 4). During the past years the world has witnessed one of the largest migration movements. Due to the wars in the Middle East and Africa, millions of people have left their homelands. Only in 2015, some 1,008,616 refugees crossed into Europe by sea (Maley 2016: 1). Among them, more than 850,000 reached Greece from Turkey (Kingsley 2016). As of 2016, the world is encountering the highest number of displaced persons on record ('Figures at a Glance' 2017).

The current migration movement has provoked disagreement and anger. When refugees tried to move on from Greece to other European countries, xenophobia arose and politicians started meeting to find a way to stop the wave of refugees, those who had left everything behind to find refuge in safer lands. Many were considered 'economic refugees' and many others were labelled fundamentalist Muslims and perceived to put Europe's security at risk, by spreading Islam. 'I am profoundly convinced that we are facing an organised invasion and not a spontaneous movement of refugees' (in Khan 2015), said the Czech President. 'Muslims would not be accepted because they would not feel at home', stated Slovakia's Interior Ministry Spokesman ('Migrants Crisis' 2015). Hungary's Prime Minister claimed that up to 95 per cent 'of migrants in Europe are not refugees but are merely seeking a better life' ('How Many Migrants' 2015). Denmark was 'poised to pass a law requiring newly arrived refugees to hand over valuables, including gold or jewellery, to help pay for the costs of lodging them' (Bilefsky 2016). Hungarian soldiers took selfies with the migrants after beating them (Dearden 2017). And a Hungarian camerawoman 'kicked two refugee children and tripped up a man carrying a child at the border area of Röszke' (Quinn 2015).

Criticism escalated after sexual assaults and robberies on New Year's Eve 2015 in Germany. 'More than 2,000 men were allegedly involved, and 120 suspects', mostly foreign

nationals, were identified (Noack 2016). '[I]n the two months since the incident, protests have been held in the streets by right-wing, anti-immigration groups including Pegida and HoGeSa', wrote *The Independent* (Richards 2016). The UK Independence Party leader claimed that leaving the European Union 'would help prevent Cologne-style sex attacks' (in Woodhouse & Fisk 2016). The anti-refugee sentiment was so high that the Australian former Prime Minister Tony Abbott told 'Europe to shut its borders to refugees' (in Barlow 2015).

German Muslims ('German Muslims Condemn' 2016) and German leaders (Donahue 2016) condemned the attacks. But the 2015 New Year Eve's incident put more pressure on refugees. People who were generously welcomed by Germany were now suspected to be terrorists. Under such circumstances, the term 'refugee' was questioned. What do we mean by 'refugee'? Why do people leave their homelands? And are refugees a threat to the state and the citizens of the host countries?

1.1.1. Who Is a Refugee?

The word 'refugee' originated in France in the late seventeenth century. It 'is recorded as having been used in 1573 in the context of granting asylum and assistance to foreigners escaping persecution' (Aguayo, Suhrke & Zolberg 1989: 5). The Huguenots were the first to receive the English label 'refugee'. They 'were Protestants of Calvinist stripe amidst a Catholic majority. The Huguenots had long been endangered; the so-called Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacres of 1572 were an indicator of this […] An estimated 200,000 Huguenots fled France, mainly for neighbouring Protestant countries, around this time' (Maley 2016: 45). In the early 1790s the French Revolution was followed by an internationalisation of French internal divisions. It created new waves of refugees' and the term was used to describe those fleeing France (Aguayo, Suhrke & Zolberg 1989: 9).

After the First World War the League of Nations, the forerunner to the United Nations established in 1919, agreed on the 1919 Covenant of the League of Nations to 'secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labour for men, women, and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend' (*Covenant of the League of Nations* 1919: Article 23(a)). The League continued its involvement with 'the legal and political issues related to refugees early on and established the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921 and the High Commissioner for Russian Refugees. In 1923, the word "Russian" was removed from the title, as Greek and Armenian refugees emerged as an issue' (Marshall 2011: 61). After six years 'the High Commissioner for Refugees was transferred to the International Labour Office and dealt with issues related to employment,

administrative, and financial support of the refugees' (Marshall 2011: 62).

At the end of the First World War the polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen provided help to refugees and developed the so-called 'Nansen Passport' in order to secure refugees' 'status in the host countries, contributing to the resettlement of European refugees in a new environment' (Lee 2016: 46). This travel document allowed 'refugees to move from one country to another and thereby overcome the problem of separation of families that is so often associated with urgent flight by refugees, as well as find work in states where it might be available (Gatrell 2013: 56). In memory of Nansen, The High Commissioner for Refugees office (which was returned to the League of Nations in 1930) 'was organized as the Nansen International Office for Refugees in 1931. This office was established to offer refugees material support as well as legal and political assistance' (Marshall 2011: 62).

Scholar James Hathaway in the article 'The Evolution of Refugee Status in International Law: 1920-1950' specifies three phases between the end of the First World War and when the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted: the juridical (1920-1935), the social (1935-1938), and the individualist (1938-1950). The first period is seemingly named based on Chapter III of the 1933 Convention Relating to the International Status of Refugees which defines refugees as those whom the laws of their country of residence fail to protect, and who have not obtained any other nationality (*Convention Relating to the International Status of Refugees* 1933). The social phase of definition witnessed the adoption of the 1938 Convention Concerning the Status of Refugees Coming from Germany. This convention did not consider persons who left Germany for purely personal reasons. Rather, it only applied to

> (a) Persons possessing or having possessed German nationality and not possessing any other nationality who are proved not to enjoy, in law or in fact, the protection of the German Government. (b) Stateless persons not covered by previous Conventions or Agreements who have left Germany territory after being established therein and who are proved not to enjoy, in law or in fact, the protection of the Germany Government (*Convention Concerning the Status of Refugees Coming from Germany* 1938).

The 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* was a turning point when, for the first time, the definition shifted to those seeking asylum from 'persecution'. It has been the centre of international refugee protection until today. A 1967 *Protocol* eliminated geographic and temporal restrictions from the Convention. Since then, it has not changed at all. In Article 1 of

this post-Second World War instrument, the term refugee is applied to persons who have been considered refugees under all the previous arrangements, conventions, and protocols as well as the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization. 'Most States [which are] parties to the Convention issue this document [*Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*], which has become as widely accepted as the former "Nansen Passport"' (*Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* 1967).

The classic definition of the term refugee often relates to the concepts of war and persecution. In the past two decades, however, new definitions have arisen. Climate change has threatened many individuals' lives. For example, based on a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 'millions of people would likely be uprooted by shoreline erosion, coastal flooding, and agricultural disruption' (McAdam 2013: 2). The term 'ecological refugee' was first used in the 1970s and the 'term "environmental refugee" was first used by Essam El-Hinnawi in a 1985 United Nations Environmental Programme report' (Marshall 2011: 63-64). Decades of debates, reports and articles ended in a 2008 conference at The United Nations University where attendants tried 'to build a consensus on the definition, support, and protection of these displaced individuals' (Marshall 2011: 63). But until today there has been no policy to protect ecological refugees.

Recently, scholar Alexander Betts used the term 'survival migration' for the first time. 'In particular, the idea of survival migration recognises that people may have excellent reasons for fleeing not just from persecution, but also from the effects of environmental changes, food insecurity, and state fragility' (Maley 2016: 40). The term

> refers to people who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat for which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution […] It is based on the recognition that what matters is not privileging particular causes of movement but rather clearly identifying a threshold of fundamental rights which, when unavailable in a country of origin, requires that [the] international community allow people to cross an international border and receive access to temporary or permanent sanctuary (Betts 2013: 4-5).

Some, especially in the past few years, have used the label 'economic refugee' for those who might not have t been persecuted, but who have left their homelands in anticipation of a better life. On the 9th of June 2013, Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr stated that '[p]eople are coming here, not now as a result of persecution, but because they're economic refugees who

have paid money to people smugglers' (in Robinson 2013). The statement was supported by the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (Hawley 2013). Likewise, in January 2016, the Vice-President of the European Commission claimed that most of the refugees coming to Europe were economic migrants: '[m]ore than half of the people now coming to Europe come from countries where you can assume they have no reason whatsoever to ask for refugee status… more than half, 60 percent' ('60% of Refugees' 2016). The term 'economic migrant' holds a long history. 'The Nazis routinely used the label Wirtschaftsemigranten ("economic migrants") to refer to refugees who had fled Germany, especially if they were Jewish' (Maley 2016: 8).

Those who flee their countries for the sake of earning more income can fall into the category of survival migrants. They, however, might have various reasons to seek refuge, but they receive a negative response. Despite 'efforts to distinguish between "genuine" refugees and economic migrants, […] the motivations for both groups to risk their lives in desperate attempts to reach Europe [and previously Australia] are often very similar', according to a report by the UK based Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (Dearden 2017). Likewise, in 2011 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) admitted that distinctions between 'economic migrants' and refugees are 'sometimes blurred' (*Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status* 2011: 15).

1.1.2. Why do People Flee Their Homelands?

The definitions of refugee somewhat clarifies the diversity of reasons and circumstances which lead persons to flee their countries. The majority of refugee waves are categorised as either 'anticipatory refugee movement' or 'acute refugee movement' (Kunz 1973: 131). Scholar Egon Kunz describes these two terms in his article 'The Refugee in Flight: Kinetic Models and Forms of Displacement':

> The anticipatory refugee who arrives door-to-door to the country of immigration, leaves his home country before the deterioration of the military or political situation prevents his orderly departure. He arrives in settlement prepared; he knows something of the language, usually finance and is informed about the ways by which he can re-enter profession. […] Acute refugee movements arise from great political changes or movements of armies. The refugees flee either in mass or, if their flight is obstructed, in bursts of individual or group escapes, and their primary purpose is to reach safety in a neighbouring or nearby country which will grant them asylum. The emphasis is

on the escape and at the time of passing through the border few refugees partaking in acute movements are aware that later further migration will become a necessity (Kunz 1973: 131-132).

A large number of migrants in the twenty-first century are categorised as acute refugees. Political changes and armed invasions by external powers in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Libya and other countries created one of the biggest crises in human history. In describing anticipatory refugees, scholar William Maley points out that '[r]efugees are not simply people who have experienced persecution; they can also be people who see what is coming and get out before it is too late' (Maley 2016: 7).

Some refugees, however, might not be considered as one of these types. In the past few decades globalisation has been one of the major factors for people to seek asylum in other countries. Scholar Malcolm Waters states the term 'globalisation' was first used in *The Economist* in 1959 'and in 1961 *Webster* became the first major dictionary to offer definitions of globalism and globalization. […] [But] it was not recognized as academically significant until the early or possibly the mid-1980s' (Waters 1995:2). Scholar Roland Robertson defines globalisation 'as a concept [which] refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. […] [As it] is closely linked to the contours and nature of modernity, globalization refers quite clearly to recent developments' (Robertson 2000: 8).

The International Organization for Migration reported that 'the rising tide of people crossing frontiers is among the most reliable indicators of the intensity of globalization' (in Adams 2011: 130). I do not intend to explain all the aspects of globalisation here, but the ones that directly impact refugees. Ease of travelling is one of the major consequences of globalisation. Nowadays everyone can travel from one point to another by spending only a few hundred or thousands of dollars. Today travelling does not consume much time and money. This motivates more people to move overseas. Unlike in the pre-globalisation era, the opportunity to return home remains very possible which eases the consequences of undertaking an unsuccessful journey.

Developments in communications technology allow communication across the globe. 'While telegraph and telephone seemed transformational developments in their day, it was the launch of the satellite Sputnik in October 1957 that inaugurated a genuinely new world of communications, as became clear in June 1967 with the first live global television transmission via satellite' (Maley 2016: 121). Today, even in remote areas, it is possible to watch various

shows via satellite. Likewise, the rise and development of the internet in the twenty-first century has created social media networks and websites allowing everyone with access to follow the news and connect to more people across the globe.

Nowadays we have more information about other lands, but because we are influenced by major websites and TV channels, we can form false perceptions about other countries as well as our homelands. This has convinced many to risk their lives in anticipation of a 'better life' (see Zandizadeh 2016: 16-18). After reaching the new land, many citizens of the so-called 'Third World' realise that home was not as bad as they thought, and the new land is not as great as expected (see Zandizadeh 2016: 52-53). This may end in depression, anxiety, and homesickness.

So-called 'Islamic terrorism' has arguably been the most significant reaction to globalisation. Globalisation has also increased the impact of terrorist attacks and in doing so facilitated Islamophobia. The psychological effects of a terror attack 'are out of proportion to the purely physical results' (Maley 2016: 112).

The term terrorism is being used loosely to describe many acts of violence, however, to be labelled as a 'terror attack', it also 'needs to be undertaken to pursue a political purpose […] [and the] target of violence should be non-combatants, rather than members of a security force' (Maley 2016: 112). The major reasons for such attacks relate to 'race, religion, nationality, [and] membership of a particular social group or political opinion' (Maley 2016: 113).

When al-Qaeda attacked the United States, no one could imagine the rise of ISIS and its consequences. The 9/11 attack and the 'war on terror' not only ended in creating more fundamentalist Islamists, but also forced many Middle Easterners (such as Iraqis and Syrians) and Central Asians (such as Afghans) to flee their homelands. 'The promise of the "global war on terror" was that "it was better to fight them there than here." That promise brought mass violence to Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Yemen and Somalia — in the name of peace in the West' (Kundnani 2016). But why did the 9/11 attack happen and how did it influence the status of refugees?

1.1.3. The Status of Migrants and Refugees in the Post-9/11 Era

On the 11th of September 2001 al-Qaeda attacked the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. It was the first time that the United States' national territory was attacked since 1812 (Chomsky 2002: 11). 'A total of 2,977 people were killed in New York

City, Washington, DC and outside of Shanksville, Pennsylvania' ('September 11th Terror Attacks' 2017). The 9/11 attack changed the path of history. Since then, '[b]illions of dollars have been spent to confront or contain the threat of terrorism, and the politics and legal systems of a number of states have been adjusted or modified in order to put the threat of terrorism on centre stage' (Maley 2016: 111).

In 2002 Osama bin Laden[3], the leader of al-Qaeda, wrote a letter to 'America' and explained the key reasons for their attacks, most notably the attack that took place on 9/11. He considered Americans the biggest thieves in history who 'steal our wealth and oil at paltry prices because of your international influence and military threats. […] you besiege our sanctities, to protect the security of the Jews'. He continued that under US supervision, the Muslim governments 'have surrendered to the Jews, and handed them most of Palestine, acknowledging the existence of their state over the dismembered limbs of their own people'. Bin Laden also criticised the sanctions put on Iraq: '[M]ore than 1.5 million Iraqi children have died as a result of your sanctions, and you did not show concern. Yet when 3,000 of your people died [in the 9/11 attack], the entire world rises and has not yet sat down'. In his opinion, America was 'a nation that permits gambling in its all forms […] [and] exploits women like consumer products or advertising tools calling upon customers to purchase them. […] a nation that practices the trade of sex in all its forms, directly and indirectly'. Moreover, he tried to justify attacking US civilians: 'the American people are the ones who choose their government […] Thus the American people have chosen, consented to, and affirmed their support for the Israeli oppression of the Palestinians […] [They] pay the taxes which fund the planes that bomb us in Afghanistan' (bin Laden 2002). Bin Laden pointed to the dominant role foreign powers play in regulating the world's military, financial, cultural, and political situation. He considered America as a threat to Muslim culture, values, and beliefs.

In the past two years Europe has witnessed several attacks by radical Muslims, most notably the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in which eleven journalists and a policeman were killed ('A Timeline for Terror Attacks' 2016). *Charlie Hebdo* is a satirical magazine which has continuously mocked religions and fundamentalism including Christianity, Jesus, Islam and

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[3] According to CNN, 'bin Laden was the 17th of 52 children of construction magnate Muhammad Awad bin Laden, an immigrant from neighboring Yemen, who ran the construction company the Saudi Binladin Group. Muhammad Awad bin Laden became a billionaire by building his company into the largest construction firm in the Saudi kingdom. Bin Laden married for the first time at age 17, to a Syrian cousin, Najwa. […] [In 1979 he] Travels to Afghanistan to join the jihad (holy war) against the Soviet Union. He remains there for a decade, using construction equipment from his family's business to help the Muslim guerrilla forces build shelters, tunnels and roads through the rugged Afghan mountains, and at times taking part in battle. [In 1988] Bin Laden founds al Qaeda (or "the base"), a militant group with a core goal of waging global jihad' ('Osama bin Laden Fast Facts' 2017).

Muhammad ('Prophet Mohammed' 2015). The attack was widely considered an 'assault on freedom of speech' and the media labelled it 'The French 9/11'. Many Muslim states, leaders, and individuals condemned the attack (Penketh & Branigan 2015). But it also raised an important question: did *Charlie*'s cartoons violate French law?

Article 11 of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man, approved by the National Assembly of France, states that 'the free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law' (National Assembly of France 1789). Likewise, The Freedom of the Press Law of 1881 'outlines publishers' responsibility to determine which material constitutes defamatory language or encourages hatred and violence on the basis of nationality, race, or religion' ('France's Laws against Hate Speech' 2015).

In the mid-2000s, after *Charlie* reprinted cartoons of Muhammad by a Danish daily (the cartoons were originally published in 2005 and resulted in violent protests with fifty dead in Asia, Africa and the Middle East). Muslims accused *Charlie* of inciting hatred and took it to court, but they failed: '[t]he acceptable limits of freedom of expression have not been overstepped, with the contentious pictures participating in a public debate of general interest', ruled the court (Leveque 2007). *Charlie* continued mocking Islam by renaming one of its 2011 issues *Charia Hebdo*, referring to 'Sharia' law (the Islamic religious principles and practices). The magazine's office was attacked a few 'hours before an issue hit newsstands featuring a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad' ('French Satirical Paper' 2011). No one claimed responsibility for the attack, however, 'it was apparently motivated by cartoons about Islam', wrote *Spiegel* (Simons 2012). In 2013, al-Qaeda put *Charlie*'s editor on a hit list (Lynch 2015). A week after the 2015 attack, the magazine mocked Muhammad again, in five million copies in several languages, which provoked anger in many Muslims from all across the globe (Tomlinson 2015).

The attackers were born, raised, and radicalised in Paris, but Islam, and not necessarily 'radical Islam', was the centre of most debates. France was 'concerned about potential attacks by a new wave of French jihadists returning from Syria, and had recently stepped up anti-terrorism measures' (Chrisafis 2015). The concerns were deepened after ISIS claimed that up to 5,000 'jihadists could be in Europe after returning from terror training camps abroad' (Dearden 2016). As a result, in the 2017 French Presidential Election, Marine Le Pen, the conservative leader of the Front National party, became a genuine, popular contender for President. In 2013, she had faced prosecution 'for comparing Muslim immigration to the Nazi

occupation of France' (Waterfield 2013). Likewise, after the *Charlie* incident she had claimed that '[t]his attack must instead free our speech about Islamic fundamentalism. We must not be silenced' (in Waterfield 2013). Before the election, Le Pen said if she becomes the president she will first reinstate the borders because '[m]ass immigration is not an opportunity for France, it's a tragedy for France' (in '"I will protect you!"' 2017). In the final round of the elections, Le Pen received 33.9 per cent of the votes; a historic victory for the radical right wing in France (Eleftheriou-Smith, 2017).

The 2016 the US Presidential Election was also influenced by Europe's terror attacks. The President-Elect Donald Trump shared a similar perspective to Le Pen on the topic of borders and Muslim migration. In December 2015, he called for a 'complete and total shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's elected representatives can work out what is going on' (in Moore 2015). In 2017, he dropped the word 'Muslim' from his so-called 'Muslim Ban' plan. This order suspended refugee admissions from all countries and banned citizens of six Islamic countries from entering the US – Syria, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and Iran; countries with a majority Muslim population. 'This is not about religion - this is about terror and keeping our country safe', Trump claimed (in Palazzo 2017). The courts blocked his order; however, the data shows that the citizens of the banned countries experienced a dramatic breakdown in issuance of visas (Torbati 2017). Later, in June 2017, the order came into effect ('Trump Travel Ban' 2017).

Today not only fundamentalists, but also Islam is considered a 'threat' to Western values. After a 2005 terror attack in London, 'more than half of the respondents to the YouGov survey said that Islam posed a threat to Western liberal democracy' (Johnston 2006). Another similar 2015 YouGov survey showed no considerable change (Rogers 2015). In 2013, a survey showed that '85 per cent [of Germans] agreed or tended to agree that one should be open towards all religions. They saw most religions as an enrichmen, especially Christianity, also Judaism and Buddhism, but a majority of 51 per cent saw Islam as a threat' (Lütticke 2013). Not only people, but also some governments publicly share similar views. Tony Abbott said that 'Australia and the West can no longer live in denial about the "problem within Islam"' (Benson 2015).

1.1.4.   Are Refugees and Migrants Threats to the Host Countries?

A CNN article shows that between 2001 and 2014 (the most recent data until May 2017), more than 440,000 people died by firearms (including accident, homicide, and suicide) in the United States, while the number of deaths by terror attacks did not exceed 3,500. If we exclude the

year 2001, when 9/11 happened, the number of deaths by terror attacks would be confined to 422. 'For every one American killed by an act of terror in the United States or abroad in 2014, more than 1,049 died because of guns' (Bower 2017).
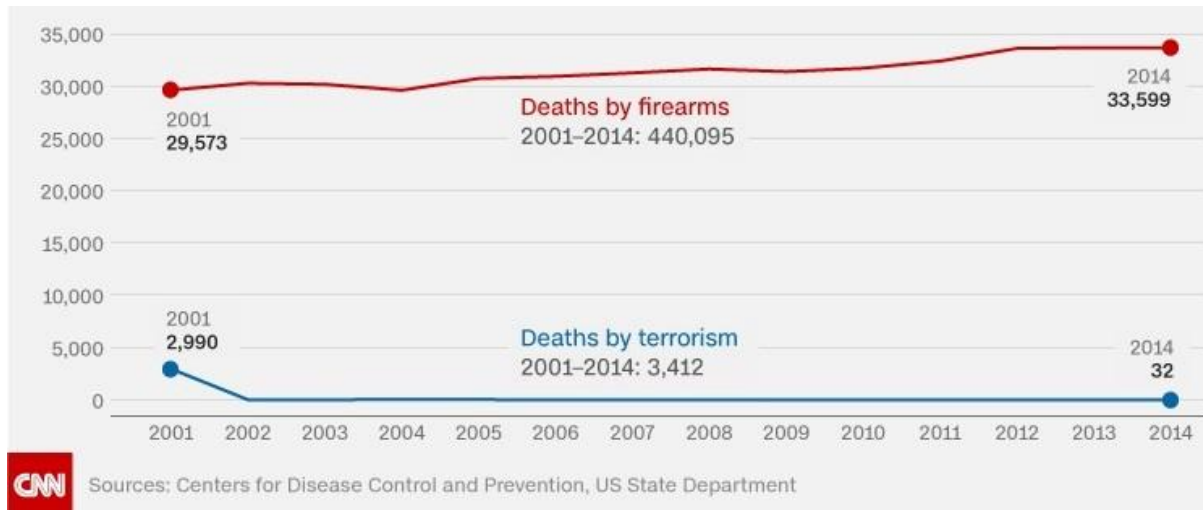
(Chart 1)

Trump's Muslim ban was a response to the 'threat' of terrorism. He claimed that the countries on the list were 'the same countries previously identified by the Obama administration as sources of terror' (in 'How Terror Attacks in Europe Are Connected to the Seven Countries Trump Banned from the US' 2017). Obama did not ban the nationals of those countries, nor did he categorise any of them as 'state sponsors of terrorism' (Jett 2016). Currently there are only three countries known by the US government as state sponsors of terrorism: Iran, Syria, and Sudan ('State Sponsors of Terrorism' n.d.). Interestingly, the leaders of these states freely travel to the US and attend the United Nations General Assembly meetings, but the ordinary people who play no role in those governments are not permitted to enter the US. Moreover, it has been widely discussed that '[t]here have been zero fatal terror attacks on [the] U.S. soil since 1975 by immigrants from the banned countries' (Mathias 2017).

Recent experience has shown that '[v]isa systems do not provide an especially effective mechanism for excluding potential terrorists from Western countries. […] [Rather,] overreaction by states may be exactly what terrorists themselves seek to produce' (Maley 2016: 112). A 2017 survey showed that the chance of being killed in a terror attack by a foreign-born on the soil of the US is only 0.00003 per cent (Willingham 2017). So why are migrants and refugees the main focus of these debates?

Fundamentally, refugees are created by borders and the system of states. They 'are not the

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consequence of a breakdown in the system of separate states, rather they are an inevitable, if unanticipated, part of international society. As long as there are political borders constructing separate states and creating clear definitions of insiders and outsiders, there will be refugees' (Haddad 2008: 7). In fact, before the twentieth century 'cultures of border control' did not exist (Zaiotti 2011: 47). Therefore, concepts such as refugee and migration were not as complicated as today. The major problem of refugees, however, is that often politicians try to manage it rather than solve it (Maley 2016: 75). 'Refugees are products of the system of states, rather than threats to it' (Maley 2016: 11).

Many of the Western countries that are against refugees today have been in wars in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and so on. These wars ended in the rise of ISIS and other similar terrorist groups (Chulov 2015). The number of suicide attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan is not comparable with the pre-wars era (Wright 2008). But Western countries do not share the burden of refugees today.

1.2. Australia's Treatment of Refugees

In the seventeenth century the first Europeans explored parts of Australia, but none of them attempted to claim the land. In 1770, English navigator Captain James Cook 'claimed the eastern parts of the continent on behalf of the British Crown […] [and] recognised its possibilities for resettlement' (Australia. Dept. of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1978: 1). Emigration from China and Hong Kong grew from the 1840s, 'when Britain established its colony in Hong Kong and forcibly "opened up" China to world trade' (Jupp 2007: 8). According to the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, 'Australia enacted legislation that both effaced its indigenous population and pre-empted immigration by those deemed disruptive to a monocultural project' (Cox 2014: 39). Until the 1950s, 'the landed gentry of mostly Protestant origin constituted the dominant migrant group [and] prescribed the criteria of "inclusion" and "exclusion" for other groups such as Irish Catholics, Aborigines and Asian Settlers' (Jayasuriya 2012: 3).

Gradually Australia transformed from a monocultural to a multicultural nation. 'Key moments for the ending of [the] "White Australia" policy occurred in 1966, 1972 and 1977' (Markus, Jupp & McDonald 2009: 6).

Since World War II there have been two revolutions in the composition of the

immigration intake. The first occurred in the 1950s, marking a shift from an intake in which over 80 per cent of immigrants came from the United Kingdom to one where immigrants from continental Europe became the majority; the second occurred over the last 30 years, resulting in the largest proportion of immigrants being drawn from Australia's region, Asia and Oceania (Markus, Jupp & McDonald 2009: 5).

The term 'multiculturalism' has its roots in Australia. Theorist Ali Rattansi states that '"multiculturalism" entered public discourses in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when both Australia and Canada began to declare their support for it' (Rattansi 2011: 7). Rattansi claims that the fact that Australia and Canada 'felt the need to embrace the identity "multicultural" and declare their support for multiculturalism provides important clues as to the general meaning and significance of these terms' (Rattansi 2011: 7). British-Australian scholar Sara Ahmed declares that in the 1980s and 1990s Australian multicultural discourse sought to 'reinvent "the nation" over the bodies of strangers' (Ahmed 2000: 95).

Rattsani's definition of multiculturalism helps to clarify the terminology. He states that multiculturalism 'refers to policies by central states and local authorities that have been put in place to manage and govern the new multiethnicity created by non-white immigrant populations, after the Second World War' (Rattansi 2011: 12).

Scholar James Jupp states that 'Australian immigration policy over the past 150 years has rested on three pillars; the maintenance of British hegemony and "white" domination; the strengthening of Australia's economically and militarily by selective mass migration; and the state control of these processes' (Jupp 2007: 7). The first one has become less significant recently, he argues. '[T]he second has been challenged by those who believe the population is large enough already; but the third remains, even while governments move away from the concept of a planned and engineered society towards notions of free markets and personal initiative' (Jupp 2007: 7).

Currently Aboriginals constitute around three per cent of Australia's population (Conifer 2017). The rest are foreign-born or descended from the settlers who arrived from the eighteenth century onwards. As of 2016, around 28.5 per cent 'of Australia's estimated resident population (6.9 million people) was born overseas' ('Migration, Australia, 2015-16' 2017). This makes Australia a migrant dominated country. Nevertheless, Australian policies are not always in favour of migrants and refugees.

A 2015 report by the Parliament of Australia showed that the country has accepted and resettled only 'over 800,000 refugees and displaced persons […] since 1945' (Parliament of

Australia 2015) – less than 11,500 persons per year. '[D]uring the 2013-14 financial year, some 6,500 visas were granted to refugees abroad who had applied to be resettled to Australia' (Karlsen 2014). The number of visas decreased to 6,002 the following year (Karlsen 2014). In September 2015 the government agreed to take 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq, in addition to the Humanitarian Annual Program of 13,750. The intake's focus was on 'women, children and families from persecuted minorities who have sought temporary refuge in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey' (Grattan 2015). '[I]t is the largest single intake of permanent resettled refugees [in Australia] since the Second World War', said Foreign Minister Julie Bishop (in 'Fact Check' 2015). A year after, only around 3,400 refugees were taken under the extended program (less than 30 per cent of the preliminary number), and Australia 'resettled around 4,600 refugees under the regular annual humanitarian intake [less than 34 per cent of the preliminary number]', according to the *Special Broadcasting Service* (Winsor 2016).

Australia's 2014 refugee statistics presents a general overview of the country's current intake status. That year, Australia's world ranking was fiftieth in terms of the total number of refugees, the sixty-seventh compared to its population, and the eighty-fourth compared to its national wealth per billion GDP (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre 2015). But why does this wealthy, migrant-dominated country not accept more refugees? Has Australia violated the international conventions by stopping the boat arrivals? How does Australian society respond to refugees?

1.2.1. 'Boat People'

From 1976 to 1981, many sea arrivals arrived in Australia from Vietnam. 'With the arrival of Vietnamese people in the 1970s, the phrase "boat people" entered the national lexicon and a spotlight was shone on people fleeing their homes due to persecution' (Phillips & Boese 2013). In addition to 2,059 boat arrivals, '[f]rom 1975 to 1982, some 200,000 migrants arrived from Asian countries, including nearly 56,000 Vietnamese people who applied as refugees' ('Australia's Prime Ministers' n.d.).

Since the 1970s, Australian politics and boat people have become intertwined in a new way. This first started in the 1977 Federal Election campaign, when Australia's response to 218 Indochinese refugees went viral. Darwin's Mayor accused them of being 'pseudo-refugees' and the federal opposition leader, Gough Whitlam, asked for more protection on the northern borders of Australia. He warned the government not to prioritise the refugees sponsored by their relatives over refugees 'ahead in the queue'. Then a Northern Territory's Labor Senator said that 'Australia is not going to open the floodgates [...] We will have to try

and find a way of showing our sympathy while stopping the flood of what basically are illegal immigrants' (in Neumann 2015).

In 1983 Bob Hawke, the Leader of the Labor Party, became the Prime Minister and stayed in power until 1991. Hawke previously had openly shown his disapproval of the admission of Indochinese boat arrivals, and any 'unauthorised refugee' who had not gone through a formal process. In December 1977, he had 'suggested that Australia only accept refugees selected off-shore' (in Neumann 2015). During 1982 to 1988 no refugee arrived in Australia via sea.

Between the years 1989 to 1991 another wave of boats reached Australia – a total of 438 persons. It raised 'concerns within the Government or the Department of Immigration about whether these boat people were 'bona fide' (they were fleeing a regime that Australia had fought against), and they were "processed" for permanent residence immediately on arrival' (Millbank 2001). This led the Government to establish the 1992 Mandatory Detention Policy in legislation. The parliament endorsed the policy in 1994. Since then, '[a]ll "unlawful non-citizens" in Australia must be detained and, unless they are granted permission to remain in the country (through the grant of a visa), they must be removed as soon as practicable' (Millbank 2001).

The Mandatory Detention Policy was introduced by Paul Keating, the former Prime Minister of Australia and the Leader of the Labor Party from 1991 to 1996. Later, in 2011, he expressed a different view. He said '[i]t's alright if you fly in on a tourist visa into our main airports and overstay or run off into the community. We won't demonise you for that, but if you arrive in a leaky boat, we will' (in Sales 2011). Until now, in most cases, 'legal arrivals' are not subject to Mandatory Detention (Phillips & Boese 2013). Keating's policy did not fully stop the sea arrivals; however, it deeply impacted the subsequent governments' policies. Nowadays he is known as 'Australia's founding father of indefinite mandatory detention' (O'Brien 2011).

In 1996, John Howard became the Prime Minister following the Liberal−National Party Coalition's victory. During 1999 to 2001 a new wave of boats arrived in Australia – more than 12,000 persons. Nevertheless, the situation changed. In August 2001 the Norwegian ship MV Tampa rescued 438 refugees in international waters near Australia, but Howard did not allow them to land in the country. It was 'the biggest [sea rescue] in Australia's history' (Marr & Doherty 2011). Australia sent these refugees to Nauru. It was the first step in adopting the so-called 'Pacific Solution' by which 'asylum seekers on board unauthorised—or irregular maritime arrival (IMA)—vessels were intercepted (usually by the Australian navy) and transferred to offshore processing centres on Nauru, and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea'

(Phillips 2012). According to the Pacific Solution, '[t]hose who came by boat after passing through a country where they could have lodged a protection claim were told they could never have permanent protection or be reunited with immediate family' (Gordon 2011). During this period, twenty-two people died in the detention camps from suicide and natural causes (Davies 2013a).

In October 2001, two weeks out from the Federal Election, Howard emphasised that national security is 'about a proper response to terrorism. It's also about having a far sighted, strong, well thought out defence policy. It is also about having an uncompromising view about the fundamental right of this country to protect its borders' (Howard 2001). In fact, he considered boat arrivals a 'threat' and connected them to terrorism and incidents such as the 9/11 attack. Howard's decision was against Australian law as well as international law. It 'heralded the beginning of a new, executive-led change in policy, which has been the underlying basis of the approach to asylum seekers attempting to reach Australia by boat ever since' (Reilly 2017).

In 2007, Kevin Rudd, the Leader of the Labor Party, promised to turn back the boats during his campaign for the Federal Election (Bolt 2013). But in February 2008, a few months after his victory, he closed the Pacific Solution (Rummery 2008). His Immigration Minister, Chris Evans, described the Solution as a 'cynical, costly and ultimately unsuccessful exercise' (in Maley 2008). Consequently, the number of maritime arrivals dramatically increased from 161 in 2008 to 2,726 in 2009. In response, Tony Abbott, the Leader of Liberal Party, claimed that

> […] if you are going to stop the flow of boat people, you've got to have policies in place which deny people the prize of Australian permanent residency. […] Now, by closing down the offshore detention centres, by abolishing Temporary Protection Visas and by stopping the occasional practice of turning boats around, Kevin Rudd put out the welcome mat for these people (in Jones 2009).

In response to Abbott, Bob Hawke claimed that there would be no way to stop them. "'We're all bloody boat people," […] [he] said he understood the frustration of many voters at "queue jumpers", but said "we have to look at the other side of the coin". […] "These people have got initiative, guts and courage and Australia needs people like that"' (Hawke 2010).

THE NUMBER OF SEA ARRIVALS SINCE 1976

Year	Arrivals
1976	111
1977	868
1978	746
1979	304
1980	0
1981	30
1982	0
1983	0
1984	0
1985	0
1986	0
1987	0
1988	0
1989	26
1990	198
1991	214
1992	216
1993	81
1994	953
1995	237
1996	660
1997	339
1998	200
1999	3721
2000	2939
2001	5516
2002	1
2003	53
2004	15
2005	11
2006	60
2007	148
2008	161
2009	2756
2010	6555
2011	4565
2012	17204
2013	20587
2014	160
2015	0
2016	0
2017	0

(chart 2)

From 2008 until July 2013 (under Labor) 'approximately 862 individuals died trying to reach Australia's mainland to seek asylum' (Davies 2013a). This number only includes those whose deaths were recorded. The Australian Government 'does not keep statistics on deaths related to claims for asylum in Australia' (Davies 2013a). In 2009, the Liberal Party attacked the Government 'claiming that lives were being put at risk' (Maley 2016: 100). As it turned out, the lives of people were not the main concern for the opposition. 'A key Liberal Party strategist told us [Washington] the issue was "fantastic" and "the more boats that come the better" […] He said the issue was significant because it was the first time Rudd had been exposed for a lack of leadership' (*Wikileaks* 2009).

In July 2013, two months out from the election, Rudd introduced the 'PNG Solution'. He 'vowed to send all new asylum-seekers to Papua New Guinea [PNG] under a regional resettlement deal, declaring future boat people will have "no chance" of staying in Australia as refugees' (Crowe & Callick 2013). Based on the agreement with the PNG government, 'unauthorised' arrivals 'found to be a refugee will be settled there'. The agreement also mentions that 'Australians have had enough of seeing people drowning in the waters to our north' ('Australia and Papua New Guinea' 2013).

The Labor Party lost the election to the Liberals. The new Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, toughened the PNG Solution by introducing Operation Sovereign Borders. Since September 18 2013, Operation Sovereign Borders has 'reduced the number of illegal maritime ventures to

Australia [to zero] and prevented loss of life at sea', according to the Department of Immigration ('Operation Sovereign Borders' 2013). There were reports claiming that Australian officials even paid smugglers to stop the boats (Doran & Norman 2015).

In a four-year-period, Manus Island Detention Centre cost two billion dollars – one million dollars per detainee (AlAzzeh 2016). A number of rape ('"I think I will Die Here"' 2016), murder (Tlozek 2016), self-harm, assault, and suicide cases have been reported from the detention centres (Doherty, Evershed & Boochani 2017), but the Government's decision to ban boat refugees from entering Australia still, as of August 2017, has not changed. Rather, tougher policies have been added.

In October 2016, the Immigration Minister Peter Dutton announced that boat people will encounter lifetime bans from entering Australia. The Liberal Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, claimed that the legislation 'is absolutely consistent with our international obligations' (Chiara Palazzo 2016).

The government has offered refugees the option of returning to their homelands, or applying for resettlement outside Australia. 'Nauru has refused to permanently resettle any refugees, and efforts to resettle a handful of refugees on Papua New Guinea have almost all failed. Australia's $55m Cambodia Solution has resulted in only one person moving [to Cambodia] and staying there' (Doherty 2016).

Australia, however, does not recognise PNG as a safe country. The Australian Government has advised its citizens to '[e]xercise a high degree of caution in PNG because of the high level of serious crimes' ('Papua New Guinea' n.d.). Moreover, in PNG homosexuality is against the law. 'Gay asylum seekers detained by Australia on Manus Island have written of suicidal thoughts, experiences of sexual assault and fear of persecution in Papua New Guinea', reported *The Guardian* (Oliver Laughland 2014). In April 2016 the PNG's Supreme Court ruled 'that restricting the movement of asylum seekers who have committed no crime was unconstitutional', however, it does not seem to be practiced ('Australia Asylum' 2016).

The US-Australia resettlement deal has been the most recent solution to the PNG Solution; a deal which was primarily described as a 'dumb deal' by Donald Trump (Anderson & Belot 2017). Based on the deal, 'the United States expects Australia to consider taking refugees from Central America and Africa and to work on reuniting refugee families in return for America taking refugees from detention centres on Manus Island and Nauru' (Daniel & March 2017).

Australia has arguably created the severest punishment for those who have escaped persecution, war, and terror. 'What makes Australia's detention system so invidious is that it combines the three elements of being mandatory, indefinite and non-reviewable', said a UN

High Commissioner for Refugees (Gordon 2011). Refugees in detentions live in a limbo with no opportunity and clear future. According to a 2015 report, Australia has violated the Convention Against Torture (CAT):

> [T]he Government of Australia, by failing to provide adequate detention conditions; end the practice of detention of children; and put a stop to the escalating violence and tension at the Regional Processing Centre, has violated the right of the asylum seekers, including children, to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as provided by articles 1 and 16 of the CAT (in Maley 2016).

It seems that Australia has kept sea arrivals in detention camps to warn other refugees about the consequences of taking such journeys. The Howard Government unsuccessfully 'sought through section 474 of the Migration Act 1958 to ensure that a wide range of administrative decisions made by immigration officials could not […] be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed or called in question in any court' (Maley 2016: 184). Likewise, '[j]ournalists are not allowed regular access to Australia's offshore detention camps' (Karp 2016). Those who reported 'on the federal government's asylum-seeker policies have been repeatedly referred to the police in attempts to uncover confidential sources and whistleblowers' (Farrell 2015).

1.2.2. Australian Society versus Refugees

In 1999, the Howard government introduced Temporary Protection Visas to those who had reached Australia by boat. This visa violated not only the 1951 Refugee Convention, but also restricted refugees' rights to travel outside the territory in which the visa was granted. Since that year, 'Australia has been the most egregious source of' such violations (Maley 2016: 27). On the other hand, the majority of Australians consider sea arrivals 'economic migrants' and 'pseudo-refugees'. In 2014, a nationwide poll showed that 59 per cent of Australians claimed that boat arrivals were not genuine refugees, and 12 per cent were unsure (Dorling 2014). The reality, however, is different. From 1976 until today more than 60,000 people have arrived in Australia via sea. 81 per cent of them 'have been found to be refugees' ('Economic Migrants or Refugees?' n.d.). A 2016 report showed 'that just 12.3 per cent of the detainees on Manus Island who have been processed were found not to have valid claims for protection' (Hall 2016). In May 2016, a poll showed that '59 per cent [of Australians] believe immigration levels over the past decade have been too high. Just 28 per cent say Australia should increase its

refugee intake amid Europe's migrant crisis' (Masanauskas 2016). As of June 2016, around 49 per cent of Australians agreed with boat turn-backs, and 42 per cent of them supported the offshore detention policy, based on 291,342 respondents (Donoughue, Ford & Blumer 2016).

Some 'critics say opposition to asylum is often racially motivated and is damaging Australia's reputation' ('Australia Asylum' 2016). Recently a journalist, who favoured banning 500 'suspicious' Iraqi and Syrian asylum seekers from entering Australia, wrote '[w]hen we take in Muslim refugees we are betting big on our security agencies being able to weed out all the radicals. We are also betting that the children of those we do take in will not radicalise, too' (Bolt 2017). In September 2016, a poll revealed that almost half of Australians agree with a ban on Muslim immigration. 'The most common reasons for wanting a ban were fears over terrorism, and a belief that Muslim migrants do not integrate into society nor share Australian values' (Kenny & Koziol 2016).

1.3. Iran: A Host or a Source Country of Refugees?

As of 2016, Iran was ranked the fourth biggest host country of refugees - after Turkey, Pakistan, and Lebanon ('Poorer Countries Host' 2017). The country has a long history of hosting refugees and displaced persons. One of the most notable refugee waves arrived in Iran in the mid-twentieth century. During the Second World War thousands of Polish people, who had fled after the German invasion, arrived in Iran (Arbuckle 2016). Afghans, however, have been the largest group of refugees in Iran since 1979. After the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, the country has also been hosting many Iraqis. Other nationals such as Pakistanis have entered Iran, but the numbers of them has never been as high as the other two (Manafi 2017).

History has also witnessed large movements of Iranians. In the eighth century, after the Arab Conquest of Persia, many Zoroastrians who were persecuted by Muslims, left Iran for India ('Az Iraniani keh Gharn-ha pish' 2012). It was arguably the most significant wave of Iranian refugees until the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution. Other waves include those who fled to the Soviet Union in the twentieth century (Heidarian 2012).

During past decades many Iranians have left the country as acute refugees, anticipatory refugees, and migrants. It has brought a dual status to Iran: as host as well as source of refugees. Here I focus on Iran's dual status from 1979 until now. This includes the Iranian Government's treatment of refugees, the reasons why Iranian refugees fled their homeland, and also an evaluation of Iranian refugees in Australia – most notably, the sea arrivals.

1.3.1. Iran: A Host Country

In December 1979, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan. During the 1980s the US, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and China supported Pakistan-based Afghan jihadists to fight against the Soviet and the secular Government of Afghanistan (Steele 2011). The Soviet armies left Afghanistan in 1989, however, the civil war continued and the Taliban took power in 1996. Two years later, the US accused Osama bin Laden of bombing their embassies in Africa. They launched several air strikes in order to kill bin Laden. Then the United Nations imposed Nations imposed 'an air embargo and financial sanctions to force Afghanistan to hand over Osama bin Laden for trial' ('Afghanistan profile – Timeline' 2017). After the 9/11 attack, the US and Britain immediately invaded Afghanistan, and NATO joined them later. The war officially ended in 2014 – 'the longest war ever fought by the United States' (Witte 2017). Since then, the country has witnessed not only the Taliban's resurgence, but also the rise of ISIS (Rasmussen 2016). These incidents resulted in several waves of refugees, many of whom chose Iran as their destination.

Due to the large number of unregistered cases, it has been impossible to assess the exact number of refugees in Iran. Reports which focus on Afghan refugees usually calculate the number of Iran and Pakistan based refugees together. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) 'estimate is that there were some 600,000 Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran by the end of 1979; that within a year this figure had risen to 1.9 million; and that by 1 January 1990 the number was 6.2 million, with a real possibility that it was even higher' (in Maley 2016: 68). After the 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan, Iran became the largest host country of refugees, according to the UNHCR ('Iran' 2002). The 2003 US invasion of Iraq increased this number and Iran remained the biggest host (Neil 2003). For almost four decades Iran has been hosting around one million documented Afghan refugees, together with two million undocumented ones ('Iran Yeki az Bakhshandeh-tarin' 2017). The most recent report by the Statistical Center of Iran indicates that in the year 2016-2017 Iran hosted more than 1.6 million refugees of whom above 95 per cent are Afghans, while Iraqis and Pakistanis constitute the majority of the remainder ('Mohajeran dar Iran' 2017).

In the 1980s Iran became host to hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who were deported by Saddam Hussein, the former President of Iraq between 1979 and 2003 ('Iran Yeki az Bakhshandeh-tarin' 2017). After the US invasion of Iraq, '[a]n estimated four million Iraqis fled their country, most after the first [Persian] Gulf War, but only about 10 percent of them are officially classified as refugees by the United Nations. Of those, about half, or 202,000 people, live in Iran' (Macfarquhar 2003).

'Unlike most of the other countries neighbouring Iraq, such as Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Iran is a party to the Refugee Convention' ('Iraqi Refugees' n.d.). Therefore, Iran is potentially a better destination for Iraqis, but because of the Iran-Iraq War, they have not been treated well. The war, initiated by Iraq, displaced millions of Iranians internally and externally, and over one million Iranians were killed (Black 2010).

At first Iran refused to settle Iraqis, but in November 2002 Iran announced that it 'will accept refugees from Iraq if they are in danger, but they will not be allowed to settle in cities' ('Iran Says It'll Accept Iraq Refugees' 2002). Contrary to this statement, 'the vast majority of Iraqis in Iran live in urban areas' ('Iraqi Refugees' n.d.). It is also true that 97 per cent of Afghan refugees live in urban areas and less than three per cent 'are hosted in the 18 Afghan refugee settlements run by the Iranian government's Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA)' ('Iran: Echo Factsheet' 2017).

Refugees have always been marginalised in Iran, but after the 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of the Taliban, the Iranian Government 'began instituting increasingly restrictive laws on Afghans, including bureaucratic hurdles, limitations on movement, deportation of minors and separation of families, and reduced access to education' (May 2016). Apart from the high level of social exclusion, '[i]n June 2001, restrictions on refugees' access to employment were tightened even further, so that all refugees except those with old work permits were classed as illegal workers and thereby subject to expulsion under a law known as Article 48' ('Iraqi Refugees' n.d.). Undocumented refugees faced difficulties with regard to healthcare, education, job opportunities, and other vital services. In 2009, Iran's National Organization of Educational Testing announced that Iraqi and Afghan residents of Iran will not be allowed to complete Masters Degrees in 22 provinces of the country. Moreover, unlike Iranian nationals, they were obliged to pay the tuition fee after being accepted in the other eight provinces ('Mahdoodiat-e Tazeh-ye Tahsili' 2009). As of 2012, Iran limited Afghan refugees' movements to the so-called 'No-Go Areas' including 14 provinces ('Mamnooiat-e Eghamat' 2012). During the same year, the BAFIA 'announced that single Afghan males had to leave the country, and that any Iranians caught providing food, shelter or work to undocumented Afghans would be punished' (May 2016). According to a 2012 report, Afghans were also prohibited from having a driver's license ('Ranandegi-e Afghan-ha' 2012). In 2009, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs officially banned female refugees from working. Likewise, it warned that employers would receive fines (and imprisonment if caught repeating the same 'crime' three times) if they hired foreigners with no work permits. Work permit holders had to visit the Government Labour Bureaus every 15 days and were banned from working in 13 provinces.

Male refugees married to Iranians and passport holders, however, faced none of the two latter restrictions. It was claimed that the Iranian Government was trying to convince refugees to repatriate ('Eshteghal-e Zanan-e Afghan' 2009).

In 2002, 'the international organizations and NGOs operating inside Iran shifted their focus from refugee response to voluntary repatriation' (May 2016). Iran had received virtually no international aid for over a decade (Macfarquhar 2003). Almost two million Afghans returned home from Pakistan and Iran; nearly four 'million others followed over the course of the next 12 years' (Farivar 2016). From 2002 to 2012, the 'UNHCR subsequently assisted the voluntary repatriation of approximately 902,000 Afghan refugees resident in Iran' ('Afghan Refugees in Iran and Pakistan' 2013). Due to the ongoing war and the lack of resources in Afghanistan, however, the number of voluntary repatriations decreased. The BAFIA declared that only 88 Afghans voluntarily left Iran during 2007-2008 ('Ravand-e Bazgasht-e Davtalabaneh' 2008). This ended in the 2012 Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) between the UNHCR and the governments of Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. 'The SSAR outlines the need for increased voluntary repatriation, but also for enhanced resettlement as a means of international responsibility sharing, assistance to refugee affected and hosting areas (RAH) and alternative stay arrangements for refugees in Pakistan' ('Afghan Refugees in Iran and Pakistan' 2013). But the government's strategies were not confined to these. From 2011 to 2015, Iran deported around three million undocumented Afghan refugees ('Eshteghal-e Gheyremojaz' 2015).

Iran's difficult economic situation severely affected refugees. In 1979 the US imposed trade sanctions which affected Iran's economy and expanded them in 1995. The situation deteriorated further when Iran refused to suspend its nuclear program.[4] Then the UN Security Council imposed more trade sanctions ('Security Council Demands Iran' 2006). Iranian currency 'reportedly lost 80% of its value … [between] the end of 2011 [and October 2012]' ('Iran's Rial Hits' 2012). Several more trade sanctions were added by the UN, US, and the world's major powers until Iran reached an interim agreement with the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - China, Russia, France, the UK, and the US – plus Germany) in 2013. In April 2015, Iran and the P5+1 agreed on the final deal ('Iran Nuclear Talks' 2015). And finally, after three months, '[t]he deal was turned into international

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[4] Iran launched its nuclear program in the 1950s, with the help of the United States. In 1970, it ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and became subjected to the verification of the International Atomic Agency (IAEA). After the 1979 Revolution, the Western countries stopped helping Iran's program, but later some of them furthered their cooperation. In the 2000s, the program raised concerns within the international community. It ended in various sanctions and a lot of problems for the Iranian Government and people. Many of the sanctions have been lifted so far, however, the country has not witnessed a notable economic progress yet.

law through Resolution 2231 approved by the UN Security Council' ('We've Never Claimed' 2015). Since then, many of the trade sanctions have been lifted, the economic situation in Iran has improved, and refugees have benefited from this.

Children constituted over 50 per cent of the refugee population in 2015, according to a UNHCR report ('Islamic Republic of Iran' 2016). In May 2015, Iran's Supreme Leader ordered free schooling for all Afghan children, including the undocumented ones. During the same year 50,000 undocumented children enrolled in schools. As of 2017, some 450,000 Afghans have obtained a visa. 'Efforts have been made to allow for less restrictive residence requirements with the "alternative stay arrangement" programme targeting refugees and changing their status into economic migrants with work permits. For undocumented Afghans, a "comprehensive regularisation plan" has been drawn up to provide them with legal status and work permits' ('Iran: Echo Factsheet' 2017). Moreover, and probably most significantly, in November 2015 the Iranian Government extended the Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) scheme to nearly one million refugees. 'Through it, refugees can benefit from a health insurance package for hospitalization, similar to that of Iranian nationals' (Jalali 2015). Later in September 2016, the government introduced the second phase of the UPHI scheme. In this cycle 'one hundred per cent of the insurance scheme's premium costs are covered by [the] UNHCR for up to 142,000 vulnerable refugees - including those with special diseases [such as Haemophilia, Thalassemia, Renal Failure, Kidney Transplant, Multiple Sclerosis, as defined by the Iranian Ministry of Health] and their family members' ('Universal Public Health Insurance' 2016).

Despite its weak economy, Iran has received little international aid to support the refugees who live there. In 2017, the European Union 'allocated almost €10 million to deliver essential assistance to Afghan refugees in Iran' ('Iran: Echo Factsheet' 2017). The following chart indicates the aid received from the UNHCR during recent years.
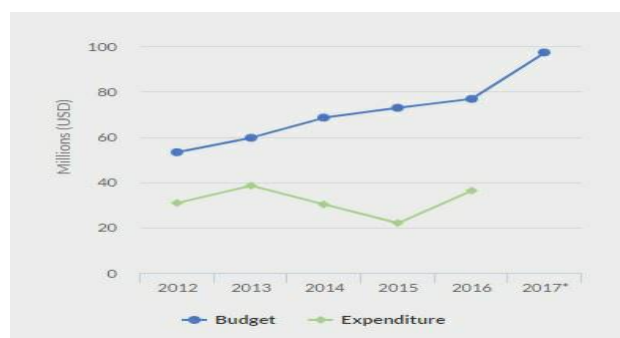
(chart 3)

To clarify Iran's situation, I would like to compare this figure with Australia's 2016

resettlement budget for 12,000 refugees – 909 million Australian dollars (Anderson 2016). Indeed, Australia allocated 75,750 dollars for each person. If we generalise this pattern of spending to the over three million refugees in Iran, including the undocumented, the government would have to spend over 227 billion Australian dollars to resettle them. In March 2017 the UN praised Iran's efforts with regard to refugees. 'Iran has sheltered approximately three million Afghans for almost four decades, a success story international officials say is "not told enough"' (McKernan 2017).

1.3.2. Iran: A Source Country

After the 1979 Revolution, many of those who were connected with the former regime or were against the revolution and its leaders fled the country. The majority of them moved to Northern America (Keshavarz 2014). The Iran-Iraq War and the oppression of any opposition to the government in the 1980s ended in more waves of migration. Members of the People's Mujahedin of Iran were the most significant migrants in that era. Mujahedin had helped revolutionaries to overthrow the former regime, but were given no role in the new political system. In 1981, after the Parliament impeached President Abolhassan Banisadr, who was linked to the Mujahedin, they began to commit terrorist and armed attacks (Khodabandeh 2011). The Mujahedin also supported Iraq during the war. This resulted in the execution of at least 1,879 imprisoned members and supporters of the organisation in 1988 together with several other political prisoners ('Vakonesh-e Reyshahri' 2016). The organisation experienced further unexpected persecution after the overthrow of Saddam as the new Iraqi Government was close to Iran. Many of the Mujahedin's members are still living in tough conditions outside Iran ('Az Baghdad ta Tirana' 2016).

During the 1980s some minor groups, including Bahá'ís, experienced persecution. They had already been discriminated against by former regimes, but their situation deteriorated after the Islamic Revolution. 'From its inception [in the mid-nineteenth century], in addition to being attacked as religious heretics for rejecting the orthodox Muslim belief that Muhammad is the "seal of the prophets" and that after Islam there will be no further divine revelation, Bahá'ís have been regarded with suspicion as agents of foreign powers sent to divide Muslims' ('The Baha'i Community' n.d.). Bahá'ís status in Iran has improved during the past thirty years, however, their religion is still denied by the government and they are discriminated against in various ways (Shahid 2017). There have also been reports on discrimination and/or harassment against other minor religious groups such as Sunni Muslims (Alijani 2015), Assyrian people (Betkolia 2017), Zoroastrians (Afshari 2005), and so on. Nevertheless, Bahá'ísm is the only

religion that has been banned. Today no one is persecuted for religious belief or practices in Iran. Some states, however, aid and support the Iranian non-Shia communities. Israel spends tens of thousands of dollars as 'gratuitous financial aid' for each Iran-based Jewish family to bring them to Israel (Farahmand 2007). Likewise, since the late 1980s, the US has established policies to encourage non-Shia Iranians to move there. 'Some Zoroastrians and Christians leave Iran for economic reasons, but every Iranian suffers from economic hardships. The US is responsible for the decrease in the number of Iran-based Assyrians. They give them green cards to pretend that Iran harasses minor religious groups', said an Assyrian Member of Parliament (Betkolia 2007).

Many LGBTI people have fled Iran. They encounter discrimination and violence. 'Iran is one of a handful of countries where homosexual acts are punishable by death.[5] 'Clerics do, however, accept the idea that a person may be trapped in the body of the wrong sex. So homosexuals can be pushed into having gender reassignment surgery' (Hamedani 2014). In September 2007, the former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad gave a speech at Columbia University in New York. 'In Iran we don't have homosexuals like you do in your country. This does not exist in our country', he claimed (in '"We Are a Buried Generation"' 2010). Iranian queers often apply through the UNHCR to migrate to Turkey, but they would usually prefer to migrate to the US or Canada. Since 2015, however, they have faced some restrictions. Firstly, Canada decided to prioritise Syrian refugees (Ghahreman 2017). And then, in 2017, the US further restricted queer refugees. 'Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender refugees from Iran have found themselves caught between a rock and a hard place after Donald Trump's executive order banning entry for people from seven [now six] Muslim-majority countries' (Kamali Dehghan 2017).

Ethnicity is also a factor in Iranians leaving Iran. Iranians are from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Persians are the dominant ethnicity, but Azerbaijanis, Gilaks, Mazandaranis, Kurds, Lurs, Turkmens, Arabs, Baluch people and many more live together. Among these, however, Arabs and Kurds are more likely to flee the country. Iranian Arabs have always suffered from social exclusion. This originates in the Arab Conquest of Persia which forced Iranians to convert to Islam. The socio-political and cultural consequences of their takeover have given rise to hatred between Persians and Arabs. Iranian Arabs are considered to represent that old conflict in modern Iran. They have been oppressed by the government and harassed by

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[5] I do not deny that it exists in the law, but I could not find any report on execution of an Iranian for her/his sexuality.

other ethnic groups, particularly Iranian Persians ('Sarkoob-e Aghalliat-e Arab' 2015). Likewise, Iranian Kurds have always been discriminated against. Some of them seek independence and want to unite with other Kurds who are mainly based in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. Although Kurdistan has never been a country, some of them claim that Iran and the other three states have occupied it (see Ooni 2017). In addition to these political reasons, many Kurds and other Iranians moved overseas following the economic crisis in Iran in the 2000s ('Kord-haye Irani' 2015).

In 2009, many Iranians expected Mirhossein Mousavi to win against Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The result was extremely different from the assumptions made when Ahmadinejad became the president for the second time. Mousavi's supporters protested in the streets for several months, but the government opposed them. According to some reports, it created the biggest wave of Iranian political refugees since the 1980s (Afshang 2009). For example, in comparison with 2008, the number of Iranian refugees in Germany increased by 44 per cent. The UN reported an 80 per cent growth in the number of Iranian refugees in Turkey. It has been said that between 50,000 to 100,000 persons left Iran after the election (Ghashghavi 2013). Since Hassan Rouhani became the president in 2013, the number of refugees and migrants has decreased. His government has tried to help Iranian political refugees to return (Alavi 2013). The following chart gives an overview of the number of Iranian refugees from 1999 until 2013, according to the Iranian Refugees Alliance ('Statistical Data on Iranian Refugees' 2014). This does not include a large number of anticipatory refugees.
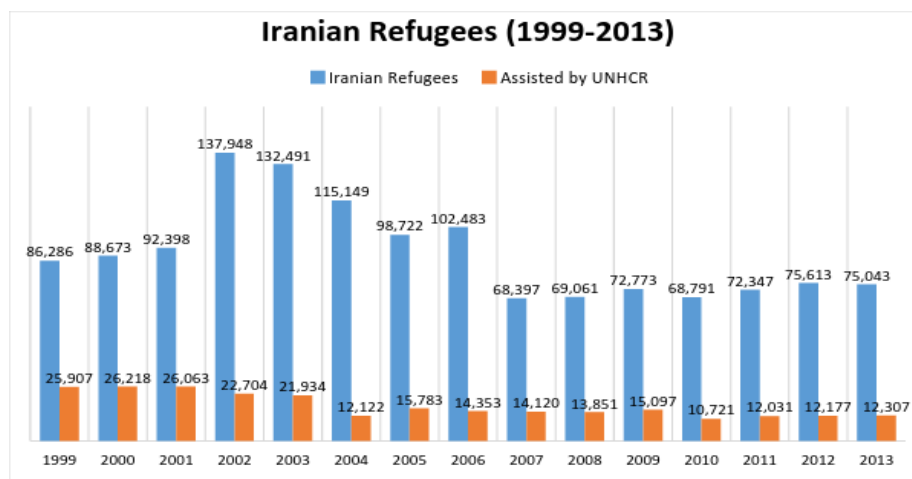
(chart 4)

It has been said that an estimated three to six million Iranians live overseas (see Ghiasi 2017, Moosavi 2012). The majority of these reside in the United States, the United Arab Emirates,

Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Sweden, according to a 2012 report (Karami 2012). It is to be noted that many of those migrants are considered anticipatory refugees who have escaped the possible threat of persecution and discrimination. Likewise, many elite athletes and educated Iranians, who are not considered 'refugees', have left the country. Despite the range of reasons that motivate Iranians to flee the country, the government has been concerned about migration waves and has tried to stop Iranians from leaving the country ('Khamenei az "Nokhbegan-e Javan" Khast' 2015).

1.3.3. Iranian Refugees in Australia

Iranian refugees in Australia are from different backgrounds, but in the past few decades two groups have been more significant; Bahá'ís and sea arrivals (some Bahá'ís arrive via sea). Bahá'ís constitute a large number of Iranians in Australia. Many of them fled Iran after the Islamic Revolution. 'In 1981 [Ian] Macphee, the Minister for Immigration, announced a Special Humanitarian Assistance (SHP) Program under which Iranian Bahá'ís and others were able to seek refuge in Australia. By 1986, 538 Persian Bahá'ís had entered Australia under the SHP program, and by 1988, some 2,500 had arrived in Australia through either the SHP or other Refugee Programs' (Hassall 1989). Unlike the recent sea arrivals, the Bahá'í community is socially respected.

Before the Australian government stopped the boats carrying refugees from entering Australia, the majority of the arrivals were 'from Sri Lanka, Iran, and Afghanistan' (Davies 2013b). In July 2013, Australia's Ambassador in Iran declared that Iranians have committed 'illegal migration' to Australia more than any other nation ('Iranian Bish az Hameh' 2013). The Iranian Government claims that this is the result of many Iranians overrating Australia as well as underrating Iran. 'Some of the refugees change their passports and pretend to be Bahá'í in order to find refuge and job opportunities in Australia', said the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ghashghavi 2015a).

Iranian asylum seekers used to journey to Australia via Indonesia. On July 18 2013, Indonesia stopped granting Iranians visas on arrival, following a request from Australia. 'Senator Carr had said a large number of asylum seekers arriving in Australia, particularly those from Iran, are "economic migrants" rather than genuine refugees' (Brown 2013). It was the same day that Australia announced that all boat arrivals would be sent to the PNG (Lloyd 2013). Some of those who were, and still are, detained were already in boats heading towards Australia, or were unaware of the new policy. In response to this, when they arrived many of them resorted to hunger strikes to protest the policy. The Australian authorities warned them

that if they stopped eating, their situation would become more difficult and they would not even be allowed to call their families (Azhiri 2013a). In some cases they also separated partners from each other, and parents from children (Azhiri 2013b).

The detention centres were not, and are not, in good condition. After the Iranian Kurdish refugee Reza Barati was murdered in February 2014, the poor conditions of the centres came under scrutiny. He 'sustained fatal head injuries as hundreds of asylum seekers pushed down a perimeter fence to escape the camp on Manus Island' ('Australia to Send Iranian' 2014). In April 2016 during an UNHCR visit to Nauru, asylum seeker Omid Masoumali protested about the conditions of his detention. Then he poured twenty litres of petrol over his body and set himself on fire in front the UN representatives (Davidson & Doherty 2016). Following the incident, the governments of Australia and Nauru 'warned others against what they described as acts of "political protest"' (Davidson & Doherty 2016).

The list of victims of crimes in detention is extensive and the types of incidents include self-harm, sexual assaults, and child abuse (Pearl 2016). The large number of incidents and the fact that these are broadcasted means the Government of Australia cannot claim that they are 'unaware' of the situation. But in response, 'Peter Dutton has dismissed the revelations and accused asylum seekers on Nauru of making false claims to reach Australia' (Pearl 2016). However, human rights groups and organisations are convinced that the government is 'deliberately inflicting suffering on people being held in immigration detention' ('Australia "Deliberately Inflicts Suffering"' 2016).

As of November 2016, a total of 928 Iranian refugees were detained by the Australian Government of whom 551 persons were inside the country and the rest were held on Nauru and the PNG ('Safir-e Ostoralia: 928 Irani' 2016). Australia claims that the governments of Nauru and the PNG are responsible for the situation in the centres ('Safir-e Ostoralia: Niroo-haye Amniati' 2016). On the other hand, Iranian officials declare that Australia does not allow them to visit the camps (Ghashghavi 2015a). During the past few years Iran and Australia have discussed the issue, but despite some verbal progress ('9Hezar Panahjoo-ye Irani' 2016), they have not yet found a solution to it. Australia prefers forced deportation while Iran claims that it will not practice mandatory repatriation (Ghashghavi 2015b).

1.4. Racism

Racism plays an important role in the *refugee crisis*. 'In most immigration countries, movements have emerged to campaign against discrimination and racism and for the rights of migrants' (Castles 2004: 869). 'Race and racial thinking stem from a basic human desire for orientation, and a need for a sense of order within society-at-large' (Young 2013: 4). Identity (a sense of self and other) emerges through 'perceived and experienced engagements in public. We recognize similarities (or differences) and process this information to better understand our environment. We use it to place ourselves in relation to others, and others in relation to ourselves' (Young 2013: 4). In other words, 'we utilize race to provide clues about who a person is' (Omi & Winant 1994: 12).

Until the late nineteenth century, race, as a concept, did not exist. Then social and political campaigns started 'to deny rights to members of minority groups' and employed 'scientific study to promote their agenda by contending that ethnic minorities were biologically different from the ethnic majority' (Young 2013: 6). The term 'racism' was created in the 1930s, 'primarily as a response to the Nazi project of making Germany *judenrein*, or "clean of Jews". The Nazis were in no doubt that Jews were a distinct race and posed a threat to the Aryan race to which authentic Germans supposedly belonged' (Rattansi 2007: 4).

> Despite the historical baggage of race, the concept is not unredeemably negative. Although divisive – as all categories are – it can be used to rally a sense of cultural pride that is not necessarily dependent upon the denigration of others. Race can be a unifying category that captures a set of cultural experiences that stem, in part, from the history of its deployment. Examples abound in colleges and universities, where social activity groups and community centers – such as the South Asian Student Association or the Cesar Chavez Cultural Center – frequently exist to recognize, honor, and support the shared (or, at least, similar) experiences of particular cultures (Young 2013: 7-8).

Scholar Harvey Young argues that '[a]n awareness of race becomes racism when a person insists that one particular group of people, one "race", is better than another' (Young 2013: 8). Ali Rattansi notes that '[f]irstly, the idea of "race" contains both biological and cultural elements, for example skin colour, religion, and behaviour. Secondly, the biological and cultural appear to combine in variable proportions in any definition of a racial group, depending upon the group and the historical period in question' (Rattansi 2007: 6). Therefore, the discussed European, American, and Australian anti-Muslim movements fall into the category of racism while Muslims share various ethnic backgrounds.

Racism and oppression are organically connected.

> Racism subsumes and reveals all the elements of dominance and subjection, aggression and fear, injustice and the defence of privilege, the apologies of domination with its justifications, the disparaging myths and images of the dominated, and finally the social destruction or social nullification of the victimized people for the benefit of their persecutors and executioners – all this is contained in it (Memmi 2014: 93).

The most fundamental aspect of racism, however, is the othering of the Other. In Euro-American culture Muslims are not subject to a normative status. They are the Other to non-Muslims. Generally, the act of othering is practiced in two ways. Firstly, the Other might occupy a different and subordinate position (ie. compared to men, in most societies women have less rights and/or economic opportunities), and secondly, she/he might be considered 'as an outsider and as a social threat' (ie. Muslims in the West) (Seidman 2013: 4). Scholar Steven Seidman states that

> Otherness signals a condition of systemic symbolic exclusion. Further, because the Other is also represented as a grave social threat, symbolic exclusion is typically accompanied by systemic patterns of social exclusion (for example ethnic and racial apartheids, Jewish, black, and gay ghettos, or refugee camps). […] figures of difference become Other if they are symbolically associated with a condition of excess and ungovernability. The Other is represented not merely as deficient or eccentric, but as defiled or fundamentally debased and grotesque. The Other inhabits an existential space between the human and non-human. Moreover, this defiled state trades on more than the anxiety of disorder; it is linked to disgust. As a moral sentiment, disgust represents a performative judgment, but as an affective state, it also suggests an unconscious process. […] To the extent that the Other is imagined as powerful and threatening chaos and calamity, political mobilization may be considered warranted to defend civil life (Seidman 2013: 6).

'[T]he world of the racist is moral while the world of the victim is evil. […] ['The good ones'] have to protect themselves, and protect their own, against contamination by this evil and against the potential (imminent) aggression of the other – to the point of needing to attack first' (Memmi 2014: 95-96). Hence, compared to non-Muslims, Muslims are more likely to kill the

defenceless; therefore, for example, banning Muslims from entering the US becomes necessary.

Some state that '[i]t is an established theory in racism studies that racism tells us nothing about the victim of racism, the imagined "other", but rather tells us something about the racist' (Hafez 2015: 21). Some members of the imagined 'other' aim to gain recognition as normal within the terms of the racist. They rationalise and internalise the racism imposed on their group. Internalised racism legitimises and/or defends the systemic acts of injustice, dominance, aggression, fear, and subjection their group experiences. It offers an 'apology for racism' in two senses: firstly, via conforming to what the racist expects from them, and secondly, via sympathising with the act of racism.

The victims of racism try to respect the values and demands of the racist. For example, some Westerners believe that 'Islamic extremism is a global problem that moderate, peaceful Muslims need to unconditionally condemn [it]' (Panahi 2015). In other words, they want 'peaceful Muslims' to prove their innocence (Engineer 2016). Some Muslims, especially residents of the West, do so (Canty 2017). Internalised racism convinces the victims of racism to distinguish themselves from terrorists by apologising and feeling guilty for what they have never done. But in reality, *everyone* should condemn terrorism regardless of her/his religious and ethnic background.

The latter sense of internalised racism can involve defending racism. In February 2016, after Trump called for a Muslim ban, a survey showed that he was 'the Republican candidate with the most support among [republican] Muslim-Americans' (Rhodan 2016). Some Muslims claimed that 'Trump is going to protect them' (in Schneider & Cooper 2017). And finally Trump received almost triple the Muslims votes than the Republican nominee Mitt Romney received in the 2012 Election ('CAIR Releases Results' 2016). Internalised racism as 'defending racism' has pushed many Muslims to turn their back on their religious ideas and values. Externalised and internalised racism co-exist peacefully. It is easy to condemn the externalised form and consider the internalised one as only a consequence of it. But I believe these have impact on each other and do not exist separately.

1.5. Intercultural Theatre

As the term suggests interaction, I prefer *inter*cultural to cognate terms such as metacultural, crosscultural, transcultural, postcultural, multicultural, transnational, and so on. Intercultural

performance studies originated 'in the 1970s and 1980s' but it took years to enter the core of theatre discourse (Knowles 2010: 6). In 1990, German scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte declared that 'it seems useless to refer to the theoretical concepts and vocabularies of translation to describe and assess intercultural performances' (1990: 284). A year after, in a series of articles titled 'Interculturalism and Performance', Una Chaudhuri suggested the term 'cultural rape' described interculturalism (1991: 193). In the mid-1990s, scholar Patrice Pavis wrote 'not only has intercultural theatre still not been constituted as a recognised territory, but we are even unsure as to whether or not its future already lies behind it' (1996: 1). Despite Pavis' uncertainty, the discourse was evolving.

In *Theatre and the World*, Rustom Bharucha admits that he does not try to theorise interculturalism. 'My interculturalism has brought me home', he writes (1993: 9). As Ric Knowles notes, '[h]is is a return, from the perspective of India, to the fundamental question of what intercultural or intracultural performance contributes to the lives and material realities of its local sources and audiences' (2010: 34).

Influenced by Walter Benjamin and theorist Talal Asad, Bharucha considers translation a method 'of avoiding ethnocentric extremities of inferiorising other cultures on the basis of incommensurable differences' (2001: 88). It is a response to universalising cultures based on their 'imagined family resemblances'. He states that from the mid-1950s '[t]ranslation provided the means by which it was possible to accept that cultures and the languages embodied in them are "different, but not so different as all that"' (2001: 88). This view clarifies the importance of interaction between cultures as a way of avoiding stereotypes and countering ignorance about the contributions that can be made by people of diverse backgrounds. Seen in this way, cultural differences appear as bonuses rather than threats, and demand communication rather than appropriation. An intercultural play should highlight the significance of cultural interactions.

In *Women's Intercultural Performance*, Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins argue that in addition to the difficulties of every theatre collaboration, 'intercultural collaboration also brings with it different expectations regarding culturally determined processes and the additional problems of working in translation (both in translation of different languages and theatre "languages")' (2000: 7). This definition relates to performance and is relevant to my playwriting project, but it also reflects my broader experience as a PhD candidate. During my candidature I encountered issues in translating both language and culture, having to translate a large number of quotations from Persian to English. Moreover, I had to submit my play adaptation in English. As a native speaker of Persian, I was anxious about both tasks. Based on

Holledge and Tompkins' definition, I see it as an additional problem inherent in an intercultural project. The translation process, therefore, was an interaction between not only two languages, but also two cultures, and performed by a bilingual PhD candidate who, over the course of the process, took gradual steps towards becoming a bicultural author. This intercultural translation process enabled me to see another side of my project and to uncover deeper layers of meaning.

Holledge and Tompkins define intercultural theatre as 'the meeting in the moment of performance of two or more cultural traditions, a temporary fusing of styles and/or techniques and/or cultures' (2000: 7). Inspired by this definition, Knowles declares that intercultural theatre is 'a site for the continuing renegotiation of cultural values and the reconstitution of individual and community identities and subject positions' (2010: 4-5). In this regard, his *Theatre & Interculturalism* attempts 'to bridge cultures through performance, to bring different cultures into productive dialogue with one another' (Knowles 2010: 1). Although my focus is on writing rather than performance, my goal is the same in terms of adopting an intercultural approach. But before explaining my idea of intercultural theatre in details I would like to discuss two major intercultural productions to analyse aspects of such practice.

1.5.1. Peter Brook and Intercultural Theatre

Peter Brook is arguably the most significant representative of intercultural theatre in the West. His works have not only helped theorists to shape their idea of intercultural theatre, but have also influenced other practitioners. *The Mahabharata* (1985) is probably his most significant work as it has drawn more praise and criticism than his other productions. Here I focus on this work as well as *Orghast* which is rooted in Iranian culture and marked the beginning of Brook's intercultural theatre work (Hunt & Reeves 1995: 170). The analyses of these productions help me clarify my perspective on intercultural theatre.

The International Centre for Theatre Research (ICTR), founded by Brook in 1970, received an invitation from the Shiraz Arts Festival,[6] funded by the Queen of Iran, to produce a work in Iran during the summer of 1971. With this funding Brook 'raised enough money [from other sources] to guarantee the first eighteen months' of the ICTR's costly projects and aims (Smith 1972: 29).

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[6] According to the *Encyclopædia Iranica*, 'for eleven consecutive years, beginning in 1967, a festival of arts, known in Persian as Jašn-e honar, took place in Shiraz and the nearby remains of the ancient imperial city of Persepolis. The Festival owed its conception to the ideas put forth by the queen of Iran, Šahbānu Faraḥ. Its over-riding purpose was to be a meeting place of the performing arts of the Eastern world with those of the West. One of the primary objectives of the Festival was the promotion of Persian traditional music, and another was the provision of a platform for the presentation of new musical and theatrical creations by native artists' ('Shiraz Arts Festival' n.d.).

Concentrating on the theme of the origin of fire, the group worked on a few texts from different cultures, most notably the myth of Prometheus (Smith 1992: 172). Brook invited Ted Hughes to write the play which was later titled *Orghast*. The word Orghast has two roots, 'org' and 'ghast', 'which Hughes offered as sounds for "life, being" and "spirit, flame" respectively. Orghast, then, was the invented name for the fire of being, the fire at the beginning, the fire at the centre, and so, metaphorically, [for the] sun' (Smith 1992: 174). The 'themes of freedom and imprisonment, light and darkness, were the roots' of *Orghast* (Smith 1972: 39). These themes constitute the core of Manichaeism, an ancient Persian religion and one of the sources of the project (Smith 1972: 38). The group also used other Iranian material to develop this production. '*Avesta* was introduced into the work through Brook's general interest in Persian culture, and in particular through his and [Arby] Ovanessian's [Iranian director] reading of Zoroastrian hymns' (Smith 1992: 178). Later, he encountered Ruhozi in Iran, an Iranian comical, improvised theatre tradition, which became another source for his production (Smith 1992: 181).

Hughes invented a language for the performance. He claimed that everything in *Orghast* was translatable and he 'didn't want to write nonsense' (in Hunt & Reeves 1995: 171). It was an experiment in 'sound structures' (Smith 1972: 91). We can trace the importance of language to Brook in his *The Empty Space*: 'in its fusion with the American idiom our ever-changing language has rarely been richer, and yet it does not seem that the word is the same tool for dramatists that it once was' (Brook 2008: 48). Brook states that in *Orghast* 'all is music, in the contrast of the letters and in the rhythm. We are working in a language that doesn't exist in order to do things we could not do in French, English, [and] Farsi. In them we are bound by literal meanings' (in Smith 1992: 177). Hughes declares that '[t]he point was to create a precise but open and inviting language, inviting to a lost world' (in Hunt & Reeves 1995: 157).

Orghast was based on mythical works and rituals, however, the characteristics of these were not important to Brook. 'I don't give a damn about ritual, about myth or about universal language or universal brotherhood. And I'm not trying to create a new myth theatre or a new formalised theatre or anything of that sort', he said in an interview in Iran (in Hunt & Reeves 1995: 171).

The Shiraz Arts Festival was an expensive event aimed at bringing prestige to Iran's authoritarian regime under which many political activists, including students, were jailed. Hence, Brook was accused of being 'bought' in order to help the regime to conceal brutal acts. He responded to this:

[…] one can't, for instance, work with money from the British Government, which comes into semi-nationalised theatres, make films with money that, even in any European company, comes eventually from American distributors, work thorough all the different financial structures of the West, and suddenly believe that the whole situation is transformed because one goes to the country which at this particular moment hits the headlines and is the symbol of police brutality. […] Before leaving Tehran, I was able to have an hour and a half alone with the Queen, when I seized the opportunity to say what had to be said on every level of Persian life, starting with censorship, without frills, without beating around the bush, directly to a person who, within a restricted field of movement, has got more influence than anyone in the country. And to me the possibility of direct confrontation with certain of the powers that be, and in particular the Queen, completely balances the account (in Hunt & Reeves 1995: 159-160).

Unlike many Iranian practitioners, Brook did not encounter any form of censorship, nor was he financially constrained. In response to the ICTR's projects in Iran, director Saeed Soltanpour wrote that 'for me as an Iranian it does not matter what Mr Brook says about Tazieh [an Iranian performance tradition] or how Mr Grotowski justifies his ritualistic theatre. Rather, I try to reveal how the organisers of such events benefit from these invitations and interpretations' (in Jahed 2015).

During the 1970s and 1980s Brook continued working on masterpieces from non-Western cultures. In 1976, Jean-Claude Carriere began adapting *The Mahabharata* for him, the longest epic ever written. He started the final draft in 1982 and continued throughout 1983 and 1984. *The Mahabharata* was first performed in 1985 at the Avignon Festival, and subsequently in Zurich, Glasgow, and the US (Hunt & Reeves 1995: 252-253).

The Mahabharata consists of three plays - *The Game of Dice*, *Exile in the Forest*, and *The War*. The story involves two families, descended from kings and gods, who engage in bloody conflicts to gain power and revenge. The warring families, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, have been instructed by the god Krishna to live peacefully, however, their continued wars result in death, destruction and misery. The story is told through two characters, a Brahmin sage Vyasa and an unnamed boy, whose conversations and dialogues reveal the plot through the boy's questions about the story of humankind. 'The entire epic is performed by twenty-two actors and six musician – the musicians become part of the action' (Hunt & Reeves 1995: 254).

Prior to finalising the play, Brook and Carriere received comments on the epic from

commentators on Indian culture, but they did not pay attention to any of them (Carriere 1985: ix). Brook and Carriere failed to understand Indian theatre and culture. 'The more we saw of Indian classical art forms, especially in the performing arts, the more we realized that they take at least a lifetime to master, and that a foreigner can only admire, not imitate,' wrote Brook (1985: xv). Because of this Brook and Carriere ended appropriating rather than adapting *The Mahabharata*. They avoided confronting the history of *The Mahabharata* and its various artistic, cultural, theological, economic, and socio-political aspects. In *The Mahabharata* '[w]e're dealing with what's true for us in the late twentieth century', said Brook (in Hunt & Reeves 1995: 261).

A large number of New York critics blamed them for continuing 'the traditional Western appropriation of Oriental material for purposes of exoticism, spectacle or making indirect political reference, without any attempt to discover the voice of that material itself' (Carlson 1996: 88). Likewise, Bharucha argued that the 'dominant tendency to dehistoricize Indian culture is the source of my discomfort with most intercultural theories of the Indian theatre' (1993: 4). He claimed that '[n]othing could be more disrespectful to theatre than to reduce its act of celebration to a repository of techniques and theories. […] Before theorizing about any performance tradition, I believe it is necessary to question what it could mean to its own people for whom it exists in the first place' (Bharucha 1993: 4).

Brook discussed his idea of 'truth' when working on *The Conference of the Birds*: '[t]he work is about something much more than theatre style, it's about revealing truth – and there's no way of dividing truth up into "spiritual" truth or "funny" truth: there's only one truth' (in Hunt & Reeves 1995: 198-199). He declared that truth is universal (Brook 1974: 3). 'If Brook truly believes that the epic [*The Mahabharata*] is universal, then his representation should not exclude or trivialize Indian culture, as I believe it does', writes Bharucha (1993: 70). But Brook filters elements of other cultures into his work in order to conduct dialogue among different cultures and theatrical traditions. As Fischer-Lichte states, he 'works with elements deriving from very different cultures, but he chooses these according to their suitability to afford meaning in cultures other than the own, original one' (Fischer-Lichte 1996: 32). In other words, he 'exemplifies a particular kind of Western representation which negates the non-Western context of its borrowing' (Bharucha 1993: 70).

'Brook accords much importance to the idea that his productions can be performed in many widely differing cultures. He takes the view that every theatrical tradition is composed of elements which can be employed even in the context of other traditions' (Fischer-Lichte 1996: 33). His goal 'is to articulate a universal art that transcends narrow nationalism in its attempt

to achieve human essence' (Brook, May 1987). His fascination for other cultures has been considered a dissatisfaction with his own culture. '[O]ne could argue that interculturalism was born out of a certain ennui, a reaction to aridity and the subsequent search for new sources of energy, vitality and sensuality through the importation of "rejuvenating raw materials"' (Bharucha 1996: 207).

In *Post-Colonial Drama* Gilbert and Tompkins argue that '[p]art of imperialism's project has been to impose the English language on colonised subjects in an endeavour to control them more completely' (1996: 164). In a similar way Brook and Carriere expand British authority via language, a cultural and theatrical colonisation of the text. Carriere admits that 'we dropped the notion of archaic or old-fashioned languages, because they carry with them a trail of inappropriate images of our own Middle Ages or ancient tales' (1985: xi). They do not consider the significance of such language in Indian culture and give no justification from within the original text in order to eradicate the original language in which the text is written. Similarly, in *Orghast* they appropriated *Avesta*. 'Hughes was willing to incorporate *Avesta* and Greek from other writers' minds, on the edge of his own experience' (Smith 1992: 185). He did not use the context that gives meaning to those texts.

For *The Mahabharata* Brook was also accused of designing his work for the international market. Bharucha claims that Brook

> does not merely take our commodities and textiles and transform them into costumes and props. He has taken one of our most significant texts and decontextualized it from its history in order to "sell" it to audiences in the West. […] our government 'bought' this appropriation of our culture through its official support of the production in Europe and America' (1993: 68).

Bharucha did not confine his criticism to Brook: '[t]oday, "Indian culture" is being reduced to a commodity by our own government and a new breed of bureaucrats, who have shaped, marketed and transported this "culture" to different parts of the world' (1993: 7). Indeed, such things would never happen, at least to this extent, without being contested by the other side.

1.5.2. Intercultural Theatre from a Personal Perspective

Migration became the main theme of my intercultural journey. Migration initiates an interaction among cultures. For me, theatre of migration denotes theatre that is *about* migration, not necessarily that which is made by migrants. Like intercultural theatre, theatre

of migration can be an attempt to bridge cultures via performance. From this perspective, theatre of migration can be a form of intercultural theatre. In our increasingly multicultural world, theatre of interculturalism 'raises issues about cultural imperialism, appropriation, and colonisation, even as it offers the utopian promise of a world where race and cultural difference do not matter' (Knowles 2010: 1-2). This is what theatre of migration seeks to offer as well.

In *The Politics of Cultural Practice* Bharucha questions the 'celebrations of hybridity' in works of writers such as Salman Rushdie and Homi Bhabha, noting that it 'may be – at times, for some people – [that] there is nothing to celebrate' (2001: 9). Therefore, he asks us to reconsider the situation of individual migrants and migrant communities 'that resist migrancy on the basis of other loyalties and bonds to family, tradition, community, language, and religion that are not always translatable within the norms of liberal individualism' (2001: 9).

Bharucha highlights what the First World media, politicians and theorists often elide when they discuss the privileges the First World has brought to migrants, but rarely what host countries have taken from those people. For example, I often hear – from both intellectual and non-intellectual Australians – sentiments along the lines of 'I am privileged to have been born an Australian'. Regardless of whether or not this is accurate, by claiming to be 'privileged' these Australians inevitably inferiorise other nationals, thus deepening cultural divisions. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for migrants to ever feel at home in the First World, experiencing instead a sensation of alienation. This is one of the consequences of cultural supremacy that theatre of migration should address.

Over the course of this PhD I arrive at a position as a playwright whereby I aim to challenge racism via theatre. For me, interculturalism is not only about interaction, but also how real action can be undertaken by people of different backgrounds in order to feel the concerns of others. Whether a feeling of inferiority or superiority dominates, I believe both sides – First World and Third World – suffer from feeling scared, threatened, and uncomfortable about ill-defined dangers.

Accordingly, I propose a question: does intercultural theatre, by contesting racism, only aim to warn white people and weaken Western supremacy? After all, racism is not exclusive to white people. Apart from different levels of systematic discrimination against specific minorities around the globe, high levels of internalised racism exist within non-white communities. Some citizens of 'Third World' countries consider non-whites inferior while some consider whites to be superior to themselves. In all these permutations, the so-called 'victims' play their role by either inferiorising themselves or allowing the 'superior' to

discriminate against them. They are both guilty, but to different extents. The task of the interculturalist is not to measure the guilt, but to eradicate it by exposing its driving forces.

All things considered, we do not need a group of actors from different cultures to perform an intercultural work. We do not need to familiarise cultures with the untold and unseen signs of their otherness. We do not need to play the role of curator and preserve cultural traditions on stage. Rather, the task of the interculturalist is to fight racism.

2

ANALYSES OF
THE ADAPTATIONS OF SIYÂVASH

According to Shahnameh *va Adabiyat-e Dramatic* [Shahnameh *and Dramatic Literature*], the first Persian dramatic adaptation of *Shahnameh* was written in 1912. Since then, Iranian playwrights have adapted the epic more than one hundred times (Foroogh 1975). The story *Rostam and Sohrâb* has been adapted more than any other story of *Shahnameh*, and the *Siyâvash* story is the second most adapted.

Adaptations of *Siyâvash* include works such as *Siyâvash va Sudâbeh* [*Siyâvash and Sudâbeh*] (1938) by Hossein Razzaghi, *Siyâvash va Sudâbeh* [*Siyâvash and Sudâbeh*] (1942) by Gholamali Fekri, *KayKâvus va Siyâvash* [*KayKâvus and Siyâvash*] (1942) by Akbar Sarshar, *Siyâvash dar Takhtejamshid* [*Siyâvash in Persepolis*] (1968) by Fereydoon Rahnama, *Az Khoon-e Siyâvash* [*From Siyâvash's Blood*] (1975) by Mahmood Kiyanoosh, *Soog-e Siyâvash* [*Mourning for Siyâvash*] (1990) by Sadegh Hatefi, *Another Phaedra in the Desert* (1993) by Ezzat Goushegir, and *Siyâvash-Khâni* (1999) by Amir Dejakam.

I have chosen to focus on three major adaptations of this mythic narrative: *Mourning for Siyâvash* by Pari Saberi, *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* by Naghmeh Samini, and *Siyâvash-Khâni* by Bahram Beyzai. The majority of the analyses of these adaptations focus on the final productions. My main concern, however, is with the process of adaptation used by each writer. I will begin by providing the background to Siyâvash's story. Following this I will summarise the plot of Ferdowsi's *Siyâvash* and continue my analysis of the play adaptations by exploring their histories, performance contexts, the dramatic elements used, and the writer's inspirations and perspectives. This account helps to understand the intracultural aspects of my source of adaptation. Moreover, I will learn from the flaws and strengths of each play in order to improve my idea of adapting the *Siyâvash* story.

2.1. The Place of the *Siyâvash* Story in Iran

The *Siyâvash* story has its roots in an ancient time. The article 'Siyâvash dar Tarikh-e Dastani-e Iran' ['Siyâvash in Iranian Literature'] lists the significant versions of the story in existence (Allami & Shakibimomtaz 2007). The Iranian historian Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838-923), who lived before Ferdowsi, tells a different version of the story (2007: 549-569), which differs from Ferdowsi's in several important ways. *Shahnameh of Sa'alebi* (1017-1021) shortens the story, changes the plot, and uses prose rather than verse (Sa'alebi 2006: 75-99). The '3500-year-old' book of *Avesta* (trans. 2012), the Bible of Zoroastrians, presents the oldest written version of the *Siyâvash* story. In Abu Bakr Narshakhi's (899-959) book *The History of Bukhara*, the historian claims that the 'death of Siyâvash' had been the subject of 'three-thousand-year-old verses', meaning that the original verses were indeed sung a total of four thousand years ago (Narshakhi 1972: 185-186). Iranian theatre researcher Sadegh Ashoorpoor states that the ritual of *Mourning for Siyâvash* draws on another ancient Iranian ritual called *Zaravokerta* which was practiced by the followers of older Iranian religions (Ashoorpoor 2010a: 54). The influence of Siyâvash, however, is not confined to ancient religions. Mythologist Ali Hasoori notes that a mosque named *Siyâvushan* exists in Shiraz, a city located in the middle of Iran (Hasoori 2006: 15). He talks about a village with the same name in Herat, Afghanistan; a city that used to be a part of Iran (Hasoori 2006: 26). In more recent times, Simin Daneshvar wrote a novel in 1969 that was based on the ritual of *Mourning for Siyâvash* titled *Savushun*, meaning 'the mourners for Siyâvash'. Today, people still perform this ritual in Shiraz. These examples reveal the ongoing life of *Mourning for Siyâvash*, which is a ritual focussing on Siyâvash and his unjust murder. This ritual focusses on vengeance and so it is also known as *Avenging Siyâvash* as well as *Siyâvash-Khâni* and *Siyâvushan*. The *Siyâvash* story by Ferdowsi is the most famous version of the story of Siyâvash.

2.2. The *Siyâvash* Story's Plot Summary

The story tells of a handsome and desirable Prince, Siyâvash, who is destined to come to a bad end. Rostam, the greatest Iranian warrior, trains Siyâvash for seven years and then sends him back to the palace. There, Sudâbeh, his stepmother and the Queen of Iran, falls in love with him. Because Siyâvash refuses to betray his father, the Queen accuses him of rape. To find out the truth, the King forces them both to prove their innocence by passing through fire, an ancient test in which liars will burn. Sudâbeh refuses to undergo the test but Siyâvash passes it

successfully. The King decides to punish his wife, but the Prince asks him not to. Later, the Turanians, the enemies of the Iranians, attack Iran. Siyâvash leads an army to defeat them. Finally, the Turanians send many spoils and trophies as well as one hundred hostages to convince Siyâvash to accept Turan's proposal to call an end to the war. Siyâvash accepts, but the King of Iran commands him to continue the war and kill the hostages. As Siyâvash has promised to preserve the lives of the hostages, he will not break the oath and goes into a self-imposed exile in Turan. At first, Afrasiyab, the King of Turan, treats him with great respect. Siyâvash founds two cities in his new land and marries two girls, the daughters of the King and his vizier. However, the situation becomes problematic when Afrasiyab's brother makes him doubt Siyâvash by telling him that the Persian Prince is planning to betray him. Afrasiyab aims to kill Siyâvash. The Prince, fully armed and supported by his own army, still does not want to break his oath. When Afrasiyab attacks him, Siyâvash neither resists nor allows his army to fight the King. Afrasiyab beheads him and a plant called Siyâvushan grows from his spilt blood. When Rostam hears the story, he kills Sudâbeh and then goes to fight the Turanians.

2.3. *Siyâvash-Khâni* by Bahram Beyzai

Bahram Beyzai was born in 1938 in Tehran. He started playwriting when he was at high school. At the age of twenty, he wrote his first major play, *Arash*, and three years later directed his first short film. Directing his play *Aroosak-ha* [*The Puppets*] in 1966, he began working with the Iranian National Television. Since 1951, Beyzai has been researching the area of drama, mythology, and cinema (Tavazoei 2004: 171-174). In 2010, he received an invitation from Stanford University and moved to the United States ('Beyzai Vadar beh Mohajerat Shod' 2016). In 2017, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate the University of St. Andrews 'to celebrate his unique, scholarly and creative contributions to Iranian culture, cinema and theater over the last 55 years' ('Bahram Beizai receives Honorary Doctorate from University of St. Andrews' 2017).

Siyâvash-Khâni was written in 1993 for 'film and live performances' (Beyzai 1996: 1), however, it was published in 1996. Since then, the play/screenplay has been republished five times. *Siyâvash-Khâni*, together with some of Beyzai's other works such as *Deebacheh-ye Novin-e Shahnameh* [*A New Foreword on Shahnameh*] (1996), *Sohrâb-Koshi* (2007) and *Azhdehâk* (1959), are all adapted from *Shahnameh*, an epic that Beyzai considers his 'guide

and primary influence' (Beyzai 2008: 137). In *Siyâvash-Khâni* Beyzai does not change the plot or characters of the source text significantly, but focusses on finding a new dramatic language.

2.3.1. Writer's Inspirations

Shahnameh has been adapted more than any other book in Iran, but none of these have satisfied Beyzai. 'All the adaptations of *Shahnameh* that I have read or seen have been done the wrong way,' he states. 'Westernizing and/or Greek [Tragedy] versions of *Shahnameh* are absolute mistakes; both as written texts and performances' (Beyzai 2008: 13). He considers Ferdowsi's work better suited to 'open-space performances than to Western covered-space and black-box theatres' (Beyzai 2008: 138). Beyzai declares that Iranian dramatists should not obey Western styles of playwriting and instead must find a different way based on their own performance legacy (Beyzai 1999: 21-22).

Beyzai states that in *Siyâvash-Khâni*, '[he] tried to write the unwritten parts of *Shahnameh*, rather than the epic itself' (Beyzai 2008: 138). He repeats this method in his other works:

> my creative works are about the history of Iran; the history of Iran and our encounter with the West in recent times […] I read this history and felt great horror. Then gradually I could hear the voices of the untold people (in Tahaminejad 2004: 138).

For Beyzai, 'there are a lot of unknown and untold things in our culture that could revolutionise our idea of Iranian traditional culture' (Beyzai 2004a: 100). But how can one tell the untold via adapting myths? He states:

> I have never said that I am writing a myth. My task is to rethink the myths that we do not know very much about. For instance, we do not know more than a couple of lines about Arash [an Iranian myth], but to create a performance we have to write about Arash and the characters around him. We have to make [dramatic] situations and humanise the characters. In other words, we need to alter the myths to present a human possibility that is imaginable, comprehensive, and accessible, to be experienced and criticised. That's not myth anymore; that is a contemporary interpretation of myth, and I have not claimed to be doing otherwise. We create the myths of our era, but time will tell whether this is true (Beyzai 2004a: 104-105).

About fifty years ago Beyzai mentioned historian Narshakhi in his report on *Mourning for Siyâvash* (It must have been his first attempt in order to find the untold part of the *Siyâvash* story). Likewise, Beyzai was the first to clarify the connection between Iranian Islamic mourning and this ritual (2004b [1965]: 30, 55).

Beyzai, directly and indirectly, has been inspired by the ritualistic performance of Tazieh. In *Namayesh dar Iran* [*A Study on Iranian Theatre*], he talks about Tazieh more than any other style of Iranian performance (2004b: 113-156). Tazieh is a 'commemorative ceremony for Imam Hussein, the grandson of Muhammad, who was martyred by Yazid, his political adversary' (Hussein 1995: 110). The story celebrates the martyrdom of Hussein, and provides the structure and meaning of the *Siyâvash* story. Instead of Hussein, Siyâvash is substituted for the martyred God. Mourning plays a major role in both stories. 'In our culture, mourning for a sacred martyr will bring us closer to God and will improve things', says Bahar (2008: 447-448). The stories tell us how two innocent reformists were beheaded because they wanted to found a utopia. Both Hussein and Siyâvash are aware of their fate (Yarshater 2005: 119).

The Arabic word *tazieh* means mourning, but this performance is also known as *Shabih-Khâni*. Shabih, meaning *similar*, describes the role of the Tazieh actor. Ashoorpoor (2010b: 21) claims that the term *Shabih-Khâni* has its roots in a religious saying: '[t]he one who makes himself similar to another person, will be that person' (Ashoorpoor 2010b: 21). The assumption is that God will reward the performers of Shabih-Khâni.

Shabih-Khâni, one can argue, produces an effect that is similar to Bertolt Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* ('alienation effect'). In Tazieh, actors always keep their distance from the roles they play to alienate the audience from the effect of their acting. Hence, they become *shabih* to the character, not the character itself. This serves to remind the audience that the actors are neither as sacred as the protagonists nor as negative as the antagonists. This technique also protects the actors playing the antagonists from the audience. There have been cases in which the audience has tried to avenge the death of the martyred hero by attacking the actor portraying Shemr, the character who beheads Hussein (see Homayuni 2001: 157; Shahidi 2001: 43). I personally have seen the actor playing Shemr trying to emphasise the difference between being Shemr and being the *shabih* of Shemr.

Apart from the content, Tazieh remains a significant performance form in Iran. This traditional performance can be practiced either in a hall or in an open-space venue. It is said to resemble the performance of *The Rug Washers of Ardehal*, which is performed in Kashan, a city in central Iran. Beyzai explains the similarities between the two performances:

[r]ituals of fertility and worshiping natures' powers used to happen at the beginning of the agricultural season. *The Rug Washers* was, and is, thus performed in autumn and is one of the tens of examples of agricultural rituals. These kinds of domestic performances continue for at least a week and occur in India as well. […][*The Rug Washers of Ardehal*] is a domestic ritual based on the story of Siyâvash; a story that mixes the themes of death and resurrection, with a sacred wedding. The ritual changed after the Muslim Conquest of Iran. Now it tells the story of Muslim martyrs Hussein and Sultanali to link these stories with the older version of the story of Siyâvash; the story of an innocent man who comes from another place, but the people of the new land betray him. He is surrounded by enemies, and the ones who try to rescue him arrive too late. What is important in the myth is not whether the innocent man accepts help or that the helpers arrive late; it is that he dies. It is not whether he is able to defeat the enemy or refuses to do so; it is that he dies. In other words, if these two characters had defeated their enemies, there would be no myth, no death and no martyrdom. They need to die so that followers of [Sultanali/]Hussein/Siyâvash can learn things from their deaths (Beyzai 2008: 144-145).[7]

When Beyzai first encountered Tazieh, he was studying literature at university.

I saw Tazieh for several consecutive days and it shocked me, but it was a gracious shock. It was what I was looking for. […] I told the university [lecturers] that I've found my thesis topic: 'Iranian Performance'. They replied that there is no [indigenous] performance in Iran and if there is, it would not be accepted as a topic of study at this university. So I left the university (Beyzai 1999: 12).

After leaving university, Beyzai started researching indigenous Iranian performance. He wrote his first articles about Tazieh between 1959 and 1961 (Beyzai 2000: 124). 'I was working on a text for Tazieh and my father said ''isn't that a text for Tazieh'''? Then Beyzai discovered that successive generations in his family had been familiar with Shabih-Khâni (Beyzai 1999: 7).

For Beyzai, Tazieh is more than an ordinary performance. He considers it highly important in terms of both Iranian anthropology and comparative mythology:

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[7] This is from an interview about *Siyavash-Khâni* that was first published in July 1997, a few months after publishing the play for the first time.

In some of them [Tazieh] you can find Iranian ceremonies as well as Iranian hidden beliefs, the beliefs other than the commonly held ones. They are also important source texts in terms of understanding Iranian popular culture and collective psychology. Moreover, we need to record the musicality of every single line [of Tazieh]. Then if we ever publish the corrected [Tazieh] texts instead of the incorrectly edited works that have been widely published,[8] we would gain an effective theatrical language; a language that we do need (Beyzai 1999: 17).

The 'ancient magic' of Tazieh amazes Beyzai; a magic that 'is linked to the primal fears and anxieties of human beings; the magic that you can find in any great performance, whether it is old or contemporary' (Beyzai 1999: 152). Beyzai considers Tazieh a ritual, and rituals play an important role in his works. 'Despite claiming to be contemporary, we are absolutely living the [ancient] rituals' Beyzai states. He continues that, 'I might have filtered the rituals [through my own perspective], but I have not made up any myself. In some of my artworks there are cases where [the audience assumes] I have made them up, but years later I accidentally discover the originals source [of those cases]' (Beyzai 1999: 96).

Some of Beyzai's creative works such as *Gharibeh va Meh* [*The Stranger and the Fog*] (1974), *Cherikeh-ye Tara* [*Ballad of Tara*] (1979), *Rooz-e Vaghe'eh* [*The Fateful Day*] (1995) and *Siyâvash-Khâni* clearly draw on the tradition of Tazieh. He considers *Ballad of Tara* 'the first Tazieh in which the protagonist is a contemporary woman, and in which a woman plays that role' (Beyzai 1999: 151).[9] He also claims that *The Stranger and the Fog* is a Tazieh 'about the universal destiny of human beings' (Beyzai 1999: 94). Beyzai adapted this performance for his screenplay *The Fateful Day*. In all these works he tries to modernise Tazieh.

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[8] Here Beyzai mentions the Tazieh texts that have been widely published in recent years. He does not see the originality in these works and so uses the phrase 'incorrectly edited' to describe them.
[9] In Tazieh men traditionally play the roles of women.

(figure 1)

Apart from Tazieh and *Shahnameh*, Beyzai was inspired by several images when adapting *Siyâvash*: 'my visual resources are those Manichaean paintings of *Shahnameh*'. One of them, shown on the cover of the first publication of *Siyâvash-Khâni* (figure 1), displays 'a dense image full of simple, bright, colourful and vivid lines that might be one of the first images of Tazieh in Iran, and probably an image of *Siyâvash-Khâni*', says Beyzai. 'The other visual source is the famous wall-painting of Panjkand [printed on the cover of the more recent publications of the play] (figure 2)'. This is an image of *The Rug Washers of Ardehal* (Beyzai 2004a: 139-141). Beyzai uses all this material to recreate the ritual in his imagination as well as his plays and screenplays.

(figure 2)

2.3.2. Formal Exploration

Beyzai did not change the original plot of *Siyâvash-Khâni*, but framed it in a novel way by including characters from five villages who enact it; he wrote a drama about drama. These villagers take the roles in *Siyâvash-Khâni* and revive the ritualistic aspects of the story in a way that recalls Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1948). Beyzai claims that:

> I did not want to perform *Shahnameh* word by word; my work is a poor performance by impoverished people who carry the spirit of the epic in their souls. What helped me were the images coloured by the words of Ferdowsi, together with the living passion of the people from five villages in my head (Beyzai 2008: 140).

Beyzai states that professional actors do not suit this text:

> for me, actors with their ordinariness restrict our unlimited imagining of mythic characters. To use actors, you need to write an ordinary text that destroys the myth; it has happened a lot, but does not help the performance (Beyzai 2008: 142-143).

Hence, Beyzai wrote *Siyâvash-Khâni* for the unprofessional actor '[who] believes in myths and has passion for them'; the ones who can engage in [ritualistic] tests after a few rehearsals. He says that '*Siyâvash-Khâni* is a work about the lives and the work of ordinary people'. With the sympathy and friendship of the audience, '[…] they will not remain ordinary because they will go beyond their limits via the performance, ritual and language' (Beyzai 2008: 143). This approach references Tazieh, in which ordinary people take the roles.

Researcher Rasool Nazarzadeh claims that in *Siyâvash-Khâni* 'all Beyzai's research on Tazieh culminates' (2005: 219). The performers keep their distance from the roles they are playing in order to remind the audience that they are only representations of the mythic characters. Similarly, they read from scrolls rather than recite memorised lines. The performers emphasise that they are from a different time and place, and have lives and relationships outside the venue that do not accord with the characters they are portraying. However, if the story makes the performers emotional, they are permitted to show their natural reactions on the stage.

Beyzai summarises what he sees as the differences between good and bad adaptations: 'thought, creativity, and possibility'. He continues that, 'no old text should be used in the original form. The original form of *Shahnameh* is not appropriate for new adaptations. There are thousands of cultural and mythological meanings in *Shahnameh* that we need to rethink' (Beyzai 2004c: 34-35).

To 'rethink' *Shahnameh*, Beyzai works on the female characters in the story. 'In *Shahnameh*, Ferdowsi hardly characterises the females. They are presented with the same values and characteristics of men' (Beyzai 2008: 143). He also states that we need to reconsider this because 'while this can happen in myth and epics, it cannot happen in performance. Performance is performance and it requires characters' (Beyzai 2008: 143). Therefore, unlike Ferdowsi's version, Sudâbeh, the main female character of the story, does not seem evil in *Siyâvash-Khâni*. In some parts of the play Rokhsâr, a countrywoman who plays the role of Sudâbeh, distances herself from the role and complains about being asked to play it; a method extensively used in Tazieh in order to alienate the audience from the effect of acting:

رخسار [تند سر بر می‌دارد] چرا مرا انگشت‌نمای مردم می‌کنید؟ کم پشت‌سر می‌شنوم؟ مردم بدل شد، پایِ کدام شماست؟ نه، من سودابه نیستم. پابرهنه رویِ ذغالِ سرخ دو می‌زنم ببینید بیشتر از هیچ‌کدامتان نمی‌سوزم!

رویین خانم تو خواندن می‌دانی رخسار خانم. همچو تو بسیار نیست. مانندان تو چندتا داریم؟

رخسار این شد گناه من؛ که بشوم سودابه؟ (Beyzai 1996: 16)

And in some other parts, the other characters step in to defend not only Rokhsâr, but also Sudâbeh:

سیاوش [...] آه سودابه چه آشوب می‌کنی؟ [فریاد می‌کند] مرا با تو چاره چیست؟

سودابه [برمی‌خیزد] هیچ جز که مرا دست دهی! من به آفتابِ رویت روشنم؛ مباد برگیری! سودابه بر تختِ گرد خویش می‌چرخد و آستین می‌افشاند و شاره‌ای زرین را با خود می‌گرداند؛ از سر خوشی فریاد می‌کشد و ناگاه می‌ماند خیره در تماشاگران ـ

رخسار رسید که بیزارتان کنم. رسید که سنگِ ناسزا بر من ببارید. من بر خویش سربلندم؛ پس چه باک؟ آنکه می‌داند، می‌داند؛ آنکه نمی‌داند، روزگاری بخواهد دانست؛ هرچند امروز بیزار شود از من، و بیزارتر! هنگامه‌سازان و بردی سراسیمه و تماشاگران گیج ـ

نخشب ما از تو بیزار نشدیم؛ از سودابه شدیم. تو خوبی رخسار خانم و ما همه می‌دانیم. شاید سودابه هم بد نیست. روزگار است که بد است و داستانِ ما همین است؛ کار این روزگار بدکردار که چه آتش در جان‌ها می‌زند. (Beyzai 1996: 62-63)

The significance of the rewriting of women in the mythic stories in Beyzai's works is such that his publisher Shahla Lahiji claims that 'he shows the untold permanent influence of women on

Iranian history, culture, traditions, and language while he avoids writing unbelievable women' (2004: 162).

Beyzai has also changed the language of Ferdowsi in his adaptation. He replaces the epic verses of *Shahnameh* with poetic prose: 'Ferdowsi's verses are written for narrating, not performing' (Beyzai 2008: 142). Nonetheless, like Ferdowsi, he avoids borrowing words from other languages. The following lines present Ferdowsi and Beyzai versions of a same part of the story in which the King asks Siyâvash to visit Sudâbeh, but the Prince resists. Firstly, in *Shahnameh*:

<div dir="rtl">

سیاوش چو بشنید گفتار شاه   همی کرد خیره بدو در نگاه

زمانی همی با دل اندیشه کرد   بکوشید تا دل بشوید ز گرد

گمانی چنان برد کو را پدر   پژوهد همی تا چه دارد به سر

که بسیاردان است و چیره‌زبان   هشیوار و بینادل و بدگمان

بپیچید و بر خویشتن راز کرد   از انجام آهنگ آغاز کرد

که گر من شوم در شبستان اوی   ز سودابه یابم بسی گفت و گوی

سیاوش چنین داد پاسخ که شاه   مرا داد فرمان و تخت و کلاه

کز آن جایگه کآفتاب بلند   برآید کند خاک را ارجمند

چو تو شاه ننهاد بر سر کلاه   به خوبی و دانش به آیین و راه

مرا موبدان ساز با بخردان   بزرگان و کارآزموده ردان

دگر نیزه و گرز و تیر و کمان   که چون پیچم اندر صف بدگمان

دگرگاه شاهان و آیین بار   دگر بزم و رزم و می و میگسار

چه آموزم اندر شبستان شاه؟   به دانش زنان کی نمایند راه؟ (Ferdowsi 2008: 292-293)

</div>

And this is its equivalent in *Siyâvash-Khâni*:

<div dir="rtl">

سیاوش   [سر بر می‌دارد] این چه فرمانی است؟ آیا پدر بر من گمانی برده؛ می‌پژوهدم و می‌آزماید؟ چه به وی گفته شده و وی چه شنیده؟ آیا دریافته پیامی را که از سودابه رسید و من پنهان داشتم پاس نیکنامی او؟ [...]

کاووس   این چه رنگ رخساری است؟ شبستان خانه توست و هستند آنجا کسانی که مهر تو می‌پرورند. برو به دیدار پردگیان که همخون توانند؛ و به دیدار سودابه که به جان اندوه‌خوار توست.

</div>

سیاوش   سیاوش با دل خود گفت: نه، از آغازِ آهنگ پایان آن پیداست. در شبستان اگر شوم چه گفتگوها برخیزد و ـ آه،
سودا به چه بازی آغاز می‌کنی؟

کاووس   سالی است آمده‌ای و سوی شبستان ننگریسته‌ای. نگفته‌ای هم‌پیوندان دارم و خویشان که آرزومندان من‌اند. گمان مکن
که چون مادرت، خورشیدرخ، از جهان بی‌ما رفت، تو را به پرده‌خانه راهی نیست.

سیاوش   [...] از شبستان چه خواهم آموخت؛ از زنان؟   (Beyzai 1996: 56)

Beyzai also states that he did not aim to use an archaic language because 'no-one would understand it' and that he 'write[s] in a language that shows the difference between the eras' (Beyzai 2004a: 118). So he tries to use a literary language that is understandable for a contemporary audience, but still preserves the sense of an ancient time. He tries to avoid using complicated language: 'that [adopting such language] would be useless because audiences could not read the text, nor listen to, or understand it' (Beyzai 2008: 141). He says when he was writing *Siyâvash-Khâni* that he was fortunate to have the living and vivid characters talking in his head. 'I do not remember if I was looking for any particular word, but there were words that tried to get me to write them. I thank them anyway' (Beyzai 2008: 141).

2.3.3. Context

Beyzai did not intend to adapt *Shahnameh* again, but ultimately returned to it in the 1990s. He had wanted to make a new film for years, but government censorship had prevented him. After three years of unsuccessful proposals, he realised that he was not going to be allowed to work. After a while, government representatives brought him a list of 'permitted topics'. He told them: 'I have written on one of these topics, on Ferdowsi [*A New Foreword on Shahnameh*], and you did me a favour by rejecting it' (Beyzai 2008: 138). Producers considered it a problematic screenplay and recommended that he work on *Siyâvash*. 'If I did not accept, they would have said that "Beyzai does not want to work"; a rumour started by my friends and disseminated by my enemies' (Beyzai 2008: 138). He wrote *Siyâvash-Khâni* in less than a month. *Siyâvash-Khâni* has not been performed nor screened. The government producers who recommended he pursue this story declined to cooperate with Beyzai and provided no explanation. Perhaps as the full version of *Siyâvash-Khâni* takes around six hours, no independent producers have so far expressed a desire to work on it. Beyzai tried to present it at the ceremony of One Thousand Years of Writing *Shahnameh* but did not succeed. '[A]fter more than a year of passing me from a ministry to two different organisations and then to a

foundation, they finally realised that it was not on their priority list' (Beyzai 2008: 139). Nevertheless, *Siyâvash-Khâni* is still considered to be one of Beyzai's most important works.

2.4. *Mourning for Siyâvash* by Pari Saberi

Pari Saberi was born in 1932 in Kerman. She moved to France when she was a teenager, where she completed a university degree in cinema. In 1954, Saberi was awarded the best university student film of the year in France. A year later, she began her career in theatre until 1964, when she returned to Iran and founded Pazargad Theatre Group with director Hamid Samandarian. Saberi has received various awards, including the French Literature and Art Cavalier Badge (Saberi 2010a: 76).

Within the last two decades, Saberi has written and directed six play adaptations based on the Iranian national epic, *Shahnameh*: *Bijan va Manijeh* [*Bijan and Manijeh*] (1995), *Rostam va Sohrâb* [*Rostam and Sohrâb*] (1999), *Mourning for Siyâvash* (2003a), *Haft Khan-e Rostam* [*Rostam's Seven Labours*] (2009a), *Morgh-e Baran* [*Rain Bird*] (2009b), and *Rostam va Esfandiyâr* [*Rostam and Esfandiyâr*] (2011a). In adapting *Mourning for Siyâvash*, Saberi presents an operatic version of the original source text which neither shows changes in the plot of Ferdowsi's *Siyâvash* nor in the language or the main characters.

2.4.1. Writer's Inspirations

Saberi's professional involvement with theatre (as a director) can be divided into two periods: before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. She started working on the world's masterpieces of dramatic literature in the pre-revolutionary era. During this time she translated a number of plays into Persian, such as *Rhinoceros* by Eugene Ionesco, *Yerma* by Federico Garcia Lorca, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Luigi Pirandello, and *Caligula* by Albert Camus. Saberi states that these translations improved her playwriting skills: 'the moments I spent on the world's great plays, [meant] I was learning how to write from some great teachers [playwrights]' (Saberi 2014a: 7).

After the Islamic Revolution, Iranian theatre experienced a hiatus for some years. During that time Saberi developed her own idea of theatre: 'one day I realised that I was lacking something and that was a form of theatre based on Iranian culture. My vast readings and great passion for Persian literature led me to poetry' (Saberi 2014, pers. comm., 8 December).

I found a wonderful dramatic potential in Persian poetry. For me, Persian poetry is a great weapon of expression. Every nation has its own means of thinking; the French are successful at novels, Germans are better at philosophy, and Iranians are the greatest at poetry' (Saberi 2005: 42).

Saberi first adapted a play, *Man beh Bagh-e Erfan* [*To the Garden of Mysticism*] (1991), about the life and poems of Sohrâb Sepehri (1928-1980), the Iranian poet and painter. Since then, all of her works have been based on Persian poetry.

Five poets have been especially important to Saberi: Ferdowsi (940-1020), Khayyam (1048-1131), Rumi (1207-1273), Saadi (1210-1291), and Hafez (1326-1390). She claims that, 'these Iranian figures talk about important issues. We need to collect them together as we collect ceramics because that collection would show our national identity' (Saberi 2011b: 8).

Iranian philosopher Dariush Shayegan in his *Panj Eghlim-e Vojood* [*The Five Territories of Presence*] studies the significance of these poets in Iranians' lives. He states that, 'Iranians are enchanted by the genius of their poets who are always present for Iranians; their presence can be traced in every Iranian's life and spirit' (Shayegan 2014: 1). Such an engagement with poetry surprised the wife of Greek novelist Nicos Kazantzakis who had visited the tombs of Saadi and Hafez in Shiraz: 'I have never seen in any part of the world a great poet's tomb become a shrine! Perhaps you [Iranians] are the only nation that has such a deep spiritual connection with their poets. You praise them so much that they have an unremitting presence in your lives' (in Shayegan 2014: 2).

But from where does Iranians' connection with poetry originate? To answer this question, Shayegan quotes a part of poet Saint-John Perse's speech at the Nobel Banquet in Stockholm on 10 December 1960:

More than a mode of perception, poetry is above all a way of life [...] The poet existed amongst the cavemen; he will exist amongst men of the atomic age, for he is an inherent part of man. Even religions have been born from the need for poetry, which is a spiritual need, and it is through the grace of poetry that the divine spark lives forever in the human flint. When mythologies vanish, the divine finds refuge and perhaps even continuation in poetry (in Shayegan 2014: 5).

Spirituality is still an inseparable part of Iranian culture. Iranians meet their spiritual needs via poetry. Moreover, many words used in contemporary Persian conversations have their origins in poetry. In this way, every Iranian is familiar with poetic language.

For Iranians, tradition plays a significant role in national culture. Iranian public intellectual Dariush Ashoori declares that, 'following the traditions of the ancients defines Iranian values and uniqueness; and breaking the traditions and [old] habits is considered a huge violation against the society's values' (Ashoori 2014: 1). In such a view, time brings more, rather than less, value to the poets of the past.

Saberi shares this point of view: 'Ferdowsi, Saadi, Hafez, Rumi, and our other philosophers and mystics might be dead, but they guarantee our survival' (Saberi 2014b: 14). She also responds to the critics on the same matter: 'those who claim they know the future but not the past, will never realise who they are, who they were, and which way they need to choose. What I say [via my works] doesn't belong to the past' (Saberi 2014a: 7).

Saberi has adapted *Shahnameh* more frequently than any other book because she feels empathy with Ferdowsi. She describes *Shahnameh* as her 'companion of nights and days':

> *Shahnameh* begins with 'in the name of the God of life and wisdom' meaning Ferdowsi believes that life is the best gift from God and we have to live wisely. *Shahnameh* reminds us of peace, the fortune of humans; love for life, not hurting the animals, and to hate war and massacre. *Shahnameh* emphasises that humans' lives and manners must draw on wisdom, and anyone who disobeys wisdom will meet an unfortunate end (Saberi 2010b: 20).

2.4.2. Formal Exploration

Saberi claims that *Shahnameh*, in comparison to other classical Persian works, has more potential for transformation into drama: '[Ferdowsi] is a great storyteller. The other ones [other classic poets] are not storytellers and I had difficulties when working on them' (Saberi 2014, pers. comm., 8 December). Therefore, most of her adaptations draw on *Shahnameh*.

Likewise, Saberi believes Ferdowsi's verse provides suitable material to create national operas: 'for fifteen years, I have been trying to develop an Iranian epic opera, because works such as *Shahnameh* have the potential to be the basis of a national theatre based on our native language' (Saberi 2009c: 15). She borrows ideas from Tazieh to develop her craft. 'Tazieh is a religious opera which utilises all [operatic] elements such as music, movement, and even bringing animals on stage' (Saberi 2010c: 8). Hence, all her works are full of music, dance,

and spectacular scene designs, all bound together with poetic language. Saberi uses a similar approach in adapting plays. Therefore, before analysing *Mourning for Siyâvash*, I turn to *Rostam and Esfandiyâr* and *Rain Bird* in order to make some observations about Saberi's style.

Rostam and Esfandiyâr draws on the *Shahnameh* story with the same title. It tells of King Goshtasp, who promises his son Esfandiyâr that if the Prince defeats the Turanians, he will become the King of Iran. Although Esfandiyâr defeats them, the King asks him to then arrest Rostam, the greatest Iranian warrior. Goshtasp knows that whether or not he appoints his son the King, Rostam will kill the Prince. At first, Esfandiyâr does not obey the King, but then he realises that there is no other way. First, the Prince asks Rostam to consider surrendering. The warrior refuses to accept this shame and tries to dissuade the Prince from his course of action. When he does not succeed, they start fighting. The invulnerable Esfandiyâr leaves Rostam wounded, leading the warrior to ask Simurgh, a mythic flying creature, for help. Simurgh heals Rostam's wounds and teaches him how to kill Esfandiyâr.

Saberi's adaptation shares the plot of the *Shahnameh* version. In the foreword to the play, she summarises her approach (Saberi 2011a: 15-18). As a re-teller, she does not aim to hide anything from her readers. As such, the majority of the poems used as dialogue are borrowed from Ferdowsi. Moreover, apart from the narrator Jarchi, the main characters remain the same as in the source text.

The adaptation differs from *Shahnameh* in two significant ways. Firstly, Saberi shortens the length of the story, and, secondly, she includes some poems written by poets other than Ferdowsi. For example, she adds four lines of *Rubaiya*t (Khayyam 2010: 152) to the beginning and end of the play (Saberi 2011a: 19, 67). Likewise, after Goshtasp and the astronomers' conversation (Saberi 2011a: 23), she inserts some lines from Hafez (Hafez 2009: 47-48). In some cases, borrowing these additional poems changes the rhythm of the text. For instance, the two lines she loans from Rumi do not fit the rhythm of Ferdowsi's language:

ستاره‌شناسان   از تناقض‌های دل پشتم شکست

بر سرم جانا بیا مبمال دست

چنان چون بود مرد یزدان‌پرست

بپاشیم بر پیش آتش به پای

(Rumi 2007: 938; Saberi 2011a: 22)   مگر پاک یزدان بود رهنمای

Saberi also uses some prose from other writers. For example, one of Esfandiyâr's dialogues is direct quotation of Muhammad Dabirsiaghi's *Bargardan-e Revayatgooneh-ye* Shahnameh-*ye Ferdowsi be Nasr* [*The Narrative Version of Ferdowsi's* Shahnameh *in Prose*]:

اسفندیار   [...] پدرت زال بدگوهر و دیوزاد است. با موهای سفید و روی سرخ به دنیا آمده است. او را از سام پنهان پنهان کردند که چون آگاه شد دستور داد وی را در پای کوه افکندند. سیمرغ او را برگرفت و به لانه برد تا بچه‌گانش از آن بخورند. بچه‌گان سیمرغ با اینکه گرسنه بودند، به خوردن او رغبت نکردند و کم کم مهر او در دل سیمرغ نشست، از خون مردار[ها] به او غذا داد تا به حد رشد رسید. پس شاهان که نیاکان من بودند او را برکشیدند و مقام و منصب

دادند. از او تو پیدا شدی. (Dabirsiaghi 2008: 220; Saberi 2011a: 41)

On the first page of the book, Saberi declares that, apart from *Shahnameh*, she wrote the play based on the analyses and words of researchers such as Muhammadali Movahhed, Abbass Attarikermani, Mustafa Azmayesh, Muhammad Dabirsiaghi, Mustafa Jeyhooni, Mustafa Soleimani, and Julius von Mohl. Nevertheless, none of these references appear as footnotes in the play. Indeed, the poets Khayyam, Rumi, and Hafez are not mentioned either.

One might consider *Rostam and Esfandiyâr* a form of plagiarism, but this perspective does not take into account cultural differences in how the work is receieved. Although Saberi does not cite Khayyam, Rumi, and Hafez, most Iranians are familiar with these poets and none would accuse Saberi of stealing their words. Saberi does not see herself in this way, either, but rather as a re-teller of what almost everyone knows. In short, the audience does not need to be notified of the poets' names. However, as not everyone would be familiar with the names or work of the researchers, it is unfortunate that Saberi did not mention them in her footnotes.

This issue becomes more complicated in *Rain Bird*, a work Saberi adapted from two stories written by Ferdowsi, *Jamshid* and *Zahhak*. In *Rain Bird*, Saberi includes poems by seventeen Iranian poets, as well as Hamlet's famous 'to be or not to be' soliloquy (Saberi 2009b: 55). Nevertheless, Saberi does not credit any of these poets or sources in her footnotes.

Two years prior to the first performance of *Rain Bird,* Saberi stated that, 'this work starts in Ferdowsi's era and ends with the Iranian poet's, Nima Yooshij, era. The story of the Iranian poets who lived during that period of time will be told and I will focus on why Ferdowsi is so significant' (Saberi 2011c: 15). In Saberi's view, '[Iranian] poets are a continuous dynasty' (Saberi 2013a: 10). In an interview, she declared that the dialogue was in verse and that the play dealt with themes of love, life, and cruelty. She stated that, 'the majority of the dialogue

was drawn from Nima Yooshij's poems, the founder of Iranian New Poetry' (Saberi 2013b: 20).

The play borrows only around a hundred lines from Youshij while it uses more than two hundred lines of Ferdowsi. Moreover, given that Nima never wrote a poem about Jamshid or Zahhak, the plot closely resembles that of *Shahnameh*. The quotations from other poets – Ahmad Shamlu, Nader Naderpour, Rumi, Aref Qazvini (1882-1934), Forough Farrokhzad, and others – influence the adaptation's texture rather than its storyline.[10] Saberi defends mixing classical and new poems together: 'the difference between the classical and new poems will not confuse the audience. I think they would enjoy this mixture. In some parts of the play we [literally] mix the poems of Ferdowsi and Nima' (Saberi, 2013b: 20). Nevertheless, like in *Rostam and Esfandiyâr*, the different rhythms of the poems create staging problems.

'Ignorance is the main theme of the play', Saberi says. It shows 'the destruction of a person by himself/herself'. Saberi declares that patriotism, for her, 'has always been fundamental to life and has formed this work. I share a mythic [form of] love of this country' (Saberi 2014, pers. comm., 8 December).

Like Saberi's other adaptations, *Mourning for Siyâvash* remains faithful to the source text. 'I have never seen a text as dramatic as *Shahnameh*. I am surprised that he never wrote a play', says Saberi. She does not even change Ferdowsi's language: 'verse is one of the best forms of expression. Theatre of the seventeenth century was in verse. Using verse does not keep you away from the realm of theatre'. She states that, 'if one would like to break the structure of poetry because of their passion for theatre, let them break it! [But] in my theatre, poetry will be fully evoked on the stage and that's my passion and desire' (Saberi 2005: 43). She considers the writing of dialogue to be an outmoded dramatic technique (Saberi 2014, pers. comm., 8 December), and claims that we do not need to perform the world's dramatic masterpieces anymore (Saberi 2009d: 16).

Saberi quotes Ferdowsi's verses word for word and neither alters the language nor the story's narrative context. The first scene of the play starts with these lines, each from a different part of *Shahnameh*:

قال   به نام خداوند جان و خرد

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[10] Ahmad Shamlu's poem *Paria* (Shamlu 2004: 163-173), Nader Naderpour's poem *Az Rome ta Sodom* [*From Rome to Sodom*] (Naderpour 2014: 776-779), Rumi's poems from his *Masnavi*, Aref Qazvini's (1882-1934) patriotic poems (Qazvini 2011), Forough Farrokhzad's poems such as *Ayeh-haye Zamini* (in Hoghooghi 2014: 225-230), and all the other poets quoted in this play do not impact on the plot.

کزین برتر اندیشه برنگذرد (Ferdowsi 2008: 1)

چنین است کیهان ناپایدار

درو تخم بد تا توانی مکار (Ferdowsi 2008: 888)

بی‌آزاری و سودمندی گزین

که این است آئین و فرجام دین (Ferdowsi 2008: 1528)

In most parts of the play, however, Saberi shares Ferdowsi's verse among her characters. In the past this method was used by some other playwrights such as Kazemzadeh-Iranshahr and Mahin Tajaddod (Rezaeirad 2008: 172). Here is an example from the eighth scene of *Mourning for Siyâvash*:

کاووس   از این دو یکی گر شود نابکار

از این پس که خواند مرا شهریار

موبد بزرگ   چنین است سوگند چرخ بلند

که بر بی‌گناهان نیاید گزند

کاووس   مگر کاتش تیز پیدا کند

گنهکار را زود رسوا کند

موبدان   خدایا ببخشا گناه ورا

بیفزای در حشر جاه ورا

سودابه   سیاوش را رفت باید نخست

که این بکرد و تباهی بجست (Ferdowsi 2008: 302-303; Saberi 2003a: 33)

Theatre critic Abdolreza Faridzadeh states that *Mourning for Siyâvash* 'is a shallow representation of the *Siyâvash* story, with no creativity or study of the untold sociological and psychological aspects of the original source text. […] the play neither moves from its mythic time to current or future time, nor reveals the meanings [of the original text]' (Faridzadeh 2004: 44). Saberi rejects both criticisms. She says that, '[w]e are the outcome of several thousands of years of civilisation. When I take a story of *Shahnameh* and situate it in the land of Iran together with a slide of [an image of] 2500 years prior to the Islamic era, it means that I don't believe in any particular timeframe. I only believe in place, in Iran' (Saberi 2004). She also states that, 'I have not changed the storyline or Ferdowsi's poems, but Ravi [the character that narrates

some parts of the play] shows my personal perspective. I believe that playwrights must have their own view on the dramatic themes' (Saberi 2003b).

The character of Ravi speaks in prose, his words drawn from another book by mythologist Shahrokh Meskoob. Even the title of the play is borrowed from Meskoob's book: *Soog-e Siyâvash* [*Mournng for Siyâvash*] (2007). In other words, Saberi's 'personal perspective' belongs to someone else. In the foreword to the play, however, Saberi states that some of dialogue is also taken from Meskoob. The following lines are some examples of that, but the reader cannot follow the references via footnotes:

نیکی   *[...] روزی اهرمن از اعماق تاریکی بیرون آمد و نور را دید که زیباست. خواست بر آن دست یابد و چون هجوم آورد،*
جنگ جهانگیر نیک و بد درگرفت (Meskoob 2007: 17; Saberi 2003a: 6).

اهرمن   *[...] پیروزی من تمام است. زیرا آسمان را پاره کردم، آن را با تیرگی آلودم، آب‌ها را ناپاک کردم، گیاهان را خشک کردم*
[...] پادشاهی را به دست آوردم. هیچ چیز باقی نمانده است: مگر انسان! و انسان تنها چه می‌تواند بکند (Meskoob
2007: 20; Saberi 2003a: 6)؟

نقال   *[...] در این دوران دلگزای آمیختگی و نامرادی و «گنبد دوار» در این تاراج ضحاک‌ها و افراسیاب‌ها، هر انسانی به فراخور*
توانایی روح خود، در گیرودار پیکاری است، برای سرنگونی اهرمنان، دیوان، راهبندان، برای بازیافتن اصل خود
(Meskoob 2007: 21; Saberi 2003a: 8). *[...] هدف بازگشت به آغاز است. [...] جمشید به یاری*
«تمدن» جهان را از آشوب و آشفتگی برمی‌کشد. کیخسرو آن را از بیداد افراسیاب می‌رهاند. سیاوش از روی گداخته‌ها
می‌گذرد تا آلودگی گناه را از تن و جان بزداید. هر سه خورشید به دست دارند. کامل زاده شده‌اند. هر هزار سال یک
بار می‌آیند (Meskoob 2007: 23; Saberi 2003a: 8-9). *[...] سیاوش، پسر کاووس، پسر کیقباد،*
چنین مردی است (Meskoob 2007:29; Saberi 2003a: 9). *گوهر شاهانه‌اش از آتش آذرخش است.*
دو گوهر را از یکدیگر زیانی نیست (Meskoob 2007: 51; Saberi 2003a: 9).

Moreover, Saberi never clarifies that she has added some of Rumi's words to her play (i.e., see Saberi 2003a: 8, 35, 36, 42, 82, 83).

Saberi focusses on wisdom more than other themes. In this, scholar Abdolhussein Zarrinkoob inspires her: 'wisdom is the eye of the spirit. An eyeless spirit will not gain the essential perfection it needs in order to experience afterlife and eternity' (Zarrinkoob 2002: 123). Saberi uses the word wisdom and its derivatives fourteen times in her seventy-nine-page play.

2.4.3. Context

In 2003, after staging *Yusuf and Zulaikha* (2001), an adaptation from Persian classical literature, Saberi staged the play *Mourning for Siyâvash*. Although both plays share the theme of illicit love, Saberi claims there had been no reason to adapt these two stories in a row, save for the fact that she was drawn to them (Saberi 2014, pers. comm., 8 December).

In order to clarify her approach, Saberi asks the question: 'has the meaning of these poems and thoughts of these poets been explained properly for [Iranian] people'? In fact, she adapts 'these works to help people stay connected with the past' (Saberi 2010c: 8). Saberi claims that the younger generation does not know their culture deeply, so the artist's task is to 're-introduce culture to people' (Saberi 2005: 43). But young people, according to my personal observation, were not interested in *Mourning for Siyâvash*. Generally, academics, critics and committed theatre audiences consider her works to be shallow and boring (Rezaeirad 2008: 172). Most of Saberi's audiences come from non-intellectual backgrounds, and is largely made up of people who are not regular theatregoers. But they did not respond positively to the performance and consequently, it did not sell well (Khovaydaki 2003: 13).

The rhythm of Ferdowsi's verse led the director to focus on music and dance. The material used for scene design were very expensive. With around thirty actors, *Mourning for Siyâvash* had one of the biggest casts in the history of Iran's contemporary theatre. The performance's expenses were high. However, as she did not focus on political themes, the government neither censored her work nor limited financial support to her. Due to her operatic scene designs and the large number of actors in her productions, Saberi mainly stages her works at Tehran's big venues such as Teatr-e Shahr and Vahdat. *Mourning for Siyâvash* was not an exception.

2.5. *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* by Naghmeh Samini

Naghmeh Samini was born in 1973 in Tehran. She has completed a BA in Dramatic Literature, an MA in Cinema, and a PhD in Art Studies. Her first major play, *Afsoon-e Ma'bade Sookhteh* [*The Spell of the Burned Temple*], was performed in 2000 in Tehran. Since 2004, she has also been writing for television and cinema. Currently, Samini is an assistant professor at the University of Tehran. She has published various books, plays, translations, and articles ('Pasdasht-e Doctor Naghmeh Samini' 2007: 85).

The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes is a free adaptation of the *Siyâvash* story by Samini. In this play, she focusses on the fire test because for her, it is 'the most imaginative part of the

story' (Samini 2009: 72). Although Ferdowsi describes this image in only a few lines, Samini develops the idea into a full-length play. She claims that '[t]his is the most important part of Siyâvash's life. The other parts show an outer drama while we could consider passing through fire Siyâvash's inner drama. It is as if Siyâvash passes through his inner fire – the fire of doubts and fears' (Samini 2015, pers. comm., 22 January). In adapting the *Siyâvash* story into *The Welkin's Horses*, Samini changes the plot, most of the characters, and the form of the language present in Ferdowsi's rendition.

2.5.1. Inspirations

Theatre director Ali Razi asked Samini to collaborate on a multicultural project about *Siyâvash*. 'If I wanted to adapt a play, *Siyâvash* would not be my choice. […] I did not know how to start this game [of adaptation] because in the myth Siyâvash was depicted as completely innocent', Samini says. After a conversation with Razi, the work became more interesting for her. They decided to stage a contemporary adaptation of *Siyâvash*. Samini declares that, 'I shared six or seven plots with Razi and we agreed on two of them. Then I tried to mix both plots. It resulted in keeping away from the mythic Siyâvash and getting closer to this contemporary version' (Samini 2006b: 14). For her, Siyâvash becomes 'a contemporary intellectual who experiences passivity, depression and fears'. To develop the idea, she used images such as 'the fire on the soil' and 'the butterflies inside of Siyâvash' that the director shared with her. Razi also helped her to develop the characters and edit the play (Samini 2015, pers. comm., 22 January)

Samini has always tried to write her plays in collaboration with directors. She confirms that she used to discuss her plays for hours with Kiomars Moradi, who directed her work for almost a decade (Samini 2006c: 71). However, she prefers not to discuss her plays with the actors. 'For me, the director is the only certain element [of the performance], not the actors. Considering our low wages [in the theatre], you never know if the actors will give up the play to participate in movies or other work' (Samini 2003b: 61).

Yet sometimes discussing the plays with the directors ended in Samini sacrificing her ideas:

> [i]f someone reads all Naghmeh Samini's works, they would say 'what a crazy person! One day she writes *The Spell of the Burned Temple*, one day *Sheklak* (2006), and the other day *Marg va Sha'er* [*Death and the Poet*]'. Should I explain in the foreword to my plays that there was a director [Kiomars Moradi] who used to invite me to embark on a new experience at the end of each year?! (Samini 2006c: 76).

Despite her collaborating directors' different ideas, Samini's works share the genre of magic realism. This critical term is used to describe 'a certain approach to subject matter and style found in the fiction of a number of Latin-American novelists, notably in the work of pre-eminent Colombian writer, Gabriel Garcia Marquez' (Mills 1989: 113). Magic realism 'designates a narrative strategy that stretches or ruptures altogether the boundaries of reality'. A magic realist work 'naturalises or normalises the supernatural' (Warnes 2009: VI, 3).

Magic realism is primarily a feature of literary fiction and has rarely appeared in Iranian drama. Samini is one of the few Iranian dramatists who has written in this genre. She admits that she has 'always liked to play with time. Magic realist ideas are inseparable from my thoughts. In the end, even my most realist ideas turn into magic'. She states: 'I only want to follow my heart. Insanity, magic, and imagination in the structure [of drama] make me feel happy. I will never stop writing in that form' (Samini 2013: 10).

This genre fascinated Samini when she read *One Thousand and One Nights*. 'In this book you can find endless stories, tales, characters, and lives' (Samini 2014a: 133). She first encountered this masterpiece when she was a university student. 'I do not want to claim that after twenty years *One Thousand and One Nights* still inspires me, but the storytelling gives me such great pleasure that I could never give it up'. She declares that 'even the audiences who prefer [other performance forms] to the stories enjoy listening to them' (Samini 2013: 10). For Samini, the task of the artist is to please the audience, and she has chosen storytelling to fulfil that purpose (Samini 2006c: 76).

Only one of Samini's works has been adapted from *One Thousand and One Nights*, the play *Talkhbazi* (1999a). In this work, the main character, Talkhak, takes the Prince on a journey for seven years, seven months, and seven days. The Prince becomes very ill and so the King decides to kill Talkhak. She asks the King to give her another chance. The King accepts and Talkhak starts telling a tale 'for one thousand and one nights' (Samini 1999a: 72). Hence, Talkhak imitates the storyteller from *One Thousand and One Nights*', Scheherazade, and shares a labyrinth of stories.

The most significant plays of Samini, *Khab dar Fenjan-e Khali* [*Sleeping in an Empty Cup*] (2003a) and *Sheklak*, are also magic realist works. Both plays connect important eras of Iran's history with contemporary political events. Inspired by *One Thousand and One Nights*, Samini makes ordinary people the focus of her work: '[c]ompared to other works of literature such as *Shahnameh*, *One Thousand and One Nights* talks about marginalised people. The stories of famous figures have been told many times, but marginalised people have untold tales

that might turn into fascinating dramas', says Samini. In her opinion, 'history is written by the historians. That's their task. The task of the dramatist is to write the untold parts of history' (Samini 2014b: 8).

Samini states that, 'at the time of writing these works we [Moradi and Samini] faced this question: are we experiencing a repetitive cycle in our history, or we are moving ahead?' (Samini 2013: 10). She thought, 'we [Iranians] are repeating ourselves' (Samini 2003b: 65). Some commentators believe that Iranian governments cause similar problems in different eras, and that Iranian people react to these problems in similar ways, resulting in widespread frustration. Nevertheless, when Moradi staged *Sheklak* for the second time ten years later, he and Samini changed the ending of the play. Samini Says '[i]f we do not believe in this possibility [of changing the conclusion], it would be impossible for us to ever move ahead. I think anyone can change in any situation' (Samini 2014c: 9).

Despite being influenced by magic realism, Samini states that she never forces herself to write in the genre. She assumes that understanding magic realism merely requires a mind 'that accepts that magic may happen at any moment' (Samini 2014b: 8).

Apart from her creative works, Samini has researched and written about *One Thousand and One Nights*. She wrote the article 'Janbeh-haye Dramatic-e *Hezar va Yek Shab*' ['The Dramatic Aspects of *One Thousand and One Nights*'] (1999b: 84-93) when she was only twenty-four years old. As the title suggests, she tried to highlight dramatic aspects of this book including the conflicts, language and characters. Three years later, she published *Ketab-e Eshgh va Sho'badeh* [*The Book of Love and Magic*] (2001) and investigated the masterpiece's origins and cultural influences. She considered *One Thousand and One Nights* a multicultural book that links cultures via its tales. Samini also co-authored the article 'Dar Jostojoo-ye Shahrzad-e *Hezar va Yek Shab*' ['In Search of *One Thousand and One Nights*' Scheherazade'] in 2007. In this, she discussed the similarities the book shares with Persian mythology.

Samini's PhD thesis, titled *Ostooreh va Kohannemooneh dar Adabiyat-e Namayeshi-e Iran* [*Myth and Archetype in Iranian Dramatic Literature*] (2008), still represents the most significant study of adapting myths in Iranian theatre. In this thesis, she analyses the connections between Iranian dramatic texts and Persian myths and archetypes using a structuralist perspective. She discusses *Mourning for Siyâvash* by Hatefi and *Nagahan Haza Habibollah* by Abbass Na'lbandian, two plays based on the myth of Siyâvash. Likewise, in the article 'Aeen va Adabiyat' ['Ritual and Literature'] (2003c: 70-85), Samini studies the ritual of *Mourning for Siyâvash* and its pre-Islamic roots. As an adapter, she considers research to be

essential as 'it discloses some of the unseen which can be used creatively' (Samini 2014, pers. comm., 8 December).

2.5.2. Formal Exploration

Samini challenges the norms of adapting myth in Iranian theatre. Most works that draw on *Shahnameh* remain faithful to the source text, their authors choosing to adapt the epic poem's most familiar parts. Samini, however, prefers to explore the untold parts of the *Siyâvash* story. 'If we consider classical literature a museum that has to be preserved via theatre, we will go the wrong way', she states. 'Our task is not to encourage people to get to know their classic literature. Rather, we need to discover our cultural disconnection [from the past] and try to find ways to connect the present era with the past; a kind of discovering/building identity via referring to the old culture' (Samini 2007: 83). Samini declares that, 'if we aim to dramatise a narrative/story for the stage, first we need to explore the work's themes, and both inner and outer meanings. We need to study it as a living creature. If we do not know all the aspects of the original source text, we will not be able to write a good adaptation' (Samini 2002: 42).

Samini says that, 'I never reproduce the myths directly, but I admit that I use mythic structures' (Samini 2003d: 63). In this way, for example, she has been influenced by Joseph Campbell's classic work of comparative mythology, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Campbell argues that all myths share a fundamental structure which he calls *monomyth*: '[a] hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man' (Campbell 1968:30).

Campbell's monomyth consists of a number of stages along this adventure. The hero begins in the ordinary world, but supernatural powers or happenings draw the hero into a *call to adventure*. If the hero accepts the call, they encounter a *road of trials*. In the most dramatic case, the hero will encounter a significant challenge which must be overcome, often with the assistance of help and advice found along the way. Should the hero survive, they earn important knowledge, self-discovery or newly-acquired wisdom – a gain or gift – which then requires the decision to return to the normal world. The hero is usually confronted with challenges on the journey to *return to the ordinary world*. Upon a successful return, the gain or gift may be applied to improve the broader, ordinary world (the *application of the boon*). It is uncommon for a myth to contain all of these stages. The stages can be presented in a different order, or the myth may only contain one, or a few of the stages. Although it could be organised in multiple

ways, there is usually a division into three sections. The first, 'Departure' (or 'Separation'), begins with the hero starting the quest. The second, 'Initiation', shows the adventures which the hero encounters. Finally, 'Return', in which new knowledge, power or gains return home with the hero to the ordinary world (Campbell 1968).

This model applies to *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes:* accused of being with his stepmother, Siyâvash has to pass through fire to prove his innocence (*call to adventure*). His mother comes to his dream and tells him that this trial will not end the story, but before she finishes her words, the Prince wakes. Mare, Siyâvash's companion, tries to dissuade him from starting the journey, but she fails. He passes through fire and begin the adventure (*leaving the ordinary world*). He encounters some characters (a headless Soldier, Soldier's Lover, Sita, Monk, Sita's Embryo, Man-Woman, and Man-Woman's Brother) along the way (*road of trials*) and asks them about the missing part of the dream (*seeking assistance*). Soldier clarifies that Siyâvash will safely pass the fire test, but in less than ten days will be asked by the King to go to a war. Then Soldier asks the Prince to disobey the King's order, which Siyâvash promises to do. However, he then faces the displaced and stateless Sita whose husband is, according to Monk, with the goddess of lust. Embryo claims that Sita cannot bear him unless she is on Embryo's father's soil. Sita asks Siyâvash to build a city which is not foreign to anyone so that she can finally bear her child. Siyâvash promises to do so. Sita also verifies that Siyâvash will not go to war and consequently will be exiled by his father. Siyâvash encounters Man-Woman, who is born to betray. He-she wants Siyâvash to listen to his-her story in order to share the missing part of the dream with him. Man-Woman has killed his-her brother because he had married a woman from a foreign tribe. Siyâvash realises years later in exile, Man-Woman or someone similar to him-her will betray and behead him. Man-Woman tells Siyâvash that if he wishes to continue his life after beheading (albeit as a plant), he must forgive his betrayer and executioner. The Prince accepts. Likewise, he realises that Mare is the missing part of his dreams (*gift*). However, there is only a small aperture for just one person to pass through fire. Due to Siyâvash's promises, Mare, who is in love with the Prince, sacrifices and turns into ashes. Siyâvash passes (*return to the ordinary world*) and fulfils all his promises (*the application of the boon*). He does not see his mother in his dreams anymore, but sometimes dreams about fire which is always followed the next morning by the welkin raining ashes and clouds looking like Mare, who call Siyâvash from the sky. The Prince remembers that if he was betrayed, he would forgive his betrayer.

Samini acknowledges that for her 'designing structure is the most fascinating part of drama, and writing dialogue is the most horrifying part' (Samini 2006c: 76). In writing *The*

Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes she had a new challenge: the director wanted to perform a bilingual play. Therefore, the work had to be translated into French by Tinouche Nazmjou. Samini was aware that her poetic language could be lost in translation but did not want to compromise her writing style simply so that the play could be made comprehensible by non-Persian speakers (Samini 2014, pers. comm., 8 December).

Samini was satisfied with the French translation of her play, however, some dialogues have become much longer in the translation which might be considered an issue. For instance, this one from the beginning of the play:

مادیان   *[...]* ماه شب‌ها در چشم‌های تو می‌خوابد: بی‌خوابیِ ماه، اگر چشم‌هایت بسوزند. پا به آتش که بگذاری، به شهرها ظلم می‌شود، به معابد، به راه‌ها، به خاک‌های تشنه که در حافظهٔ ابرها گم شده‌اند. به هر کجا که هنوز رد گام تو بر زمینش ننشسته. نرو سیاوش. تو بخواه! پای تو می‌شوم، تند می‌روم، می‌دوم، می‌جهم، می‌رویم با هم. یک جای دور. برویم حالا؟! *...* (Samini 2009: 12-13)

La jument - *[...] Tes yeux! Que ce sera cruel pour tes yeux. La lune dort dans tes yeux. La nuit – insomnia – si tes yeux brûllent, Syavash. Ce sera cruel pour les cités, les temples, les routes, pour chaque parcelled de terre assoiffée, oubliée des nuages, et qui n'a pas encore connu l'empreinte de tes pas… Pour les nuages qui après toi ne sauront plus pourquoi pleuvoir… La lune insomniaque, la désespérance des nuages, un corps tortueux à jamais glacé, sit u brûlles… N'y va pas Syavash. A toi de faire un signe! Et je serai tes jambs, j'irai vite, courant, sautant, galopant, nous irons ensemble. Nous irons loin. Partons maintenant?!...*

Moreover, the audience might face difficulties in understanding the ambiguity of Samini's language and the density of some of the elements, particularly the ones borrowed from Indian culture. Here is an example which presents a complicated context in a few lines, but does not reveal any clear link to the play's story or structure; Sita is describing the meal she was hoping to prepare for Siyâvash; a meal which includes spices from the farthest Hindu Islands, the

hottest pepper from Krishna's forests[11], and cooked with the oil taken from Shiva's snakes[12], together with some bread baked with the water of the holy river Ganga[13].

<div dir="rtl">

سیتا   چه خوراکی گرد می‌کردم برای سیاوش اگر این همه سنگین نبودم. خوشگوارترین طعام‌ها که می‌آمیختند با ادویه‌های تند دورترین جزایر هندو و سرخ‌ترین فلفل‌های جنگل‌های کریشنا؛ بعد خوب رقصشان می‌دادم با روغن رقصان مارهای گرگاه شیوا، و گندم را نان می‌کردم با آب مقدّس گنگ... (Samini 2009: 40)

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Sita - *Quel délicieux repas aurais-je préparé pour Syavash, si mes chaînes ne m'étaient si Lourdes à porter… Les plus sublimes mets mélangés aux épices des plus lointaines îles des Indeset-les piments les plusrouges des forets Krishna, puis je les aurais fait griller à l'huile dansante des serpents du basin de Shiva, et j'aurais fait du pain avec le blé et l'eau bénite du Gang.*

Samini admits that *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* was not a good experience of writing bilingually because she was 'overthinking the language' (Samini 2014, pers. comm., 8 December).

Apart from Siyâvash, none of the play's characters are drawn from the source text. Soldier, Sita, the ambiguously gendered Man-Woman (**L'homme/femme** or **مرد‌زن**), and more importantly, Mare, do not exist in *Shahnameh*. Mare could be either Siyâvash's mother or his lover; this remains ambiguous to the end. Despite Ferdowsi's negative image of the female character in the *Siyâvash* story, Mare is strong, caring, and active throughout the play. Samini considers her an 'ideal woman' because she 'is boundless, loves fearlessly, and possesses a strong identity'. She says:

> Mare is a perfect woman. And also, she's Siyâvash's identity. A mythic interpretation
> of Siyâvash's name describes him as the owner of a black horse. Hence, Siyâvash
> draws on the horse via his name. He might have been a horse totem. If so, Mare
> becomes Siyâvash's anima[14] – his feminine side. Yet, I have made changes to Jung's

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[11] Krishna is the god of compassion, tenderness, and love in Hinduism. Some people of Vrindavan, a holy town in Uttar Pradesh in northern India, believe that every night Krishna and Radha, a Hindu goddess, dance in the forest.

[12] Shiva is the Supreme Being in Shaivism, one of the main traditions in contemporary Hinduism. Shiva has a snake around her neck.

[13] The most sacred river to Hindus

[14] In Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology, the unconscious mind consists of two primary anthropomorphic archetypes named anima and animus. Both anima and animus are elements of Jung's collective unconscious theory, a domain of the unconscious which exceeds the personal psyche. Anima is the feminine inner personality

definition of anima. For him, anima works passively. But our society has proved that our feminine sides are strongly active and riven to make changes. For me, Mare is the one who sacrifices, loves, and makes changes (Samini 2014, pers. comm., 8 December)

For Samini, Siyâvash is a special character. He repeats this dialogue several times in the play: 'mercy for the betrayer, mercy for the executioner'. Before dying, at the very end of the play, he delivers this line for the last time (Samini 2009: 70). As in *Shahnameh*, Samini's Siyâvash does not resist death, but because '[h]e knows the meaning of violence' she does not consider her character's reaction a passive giving in to death. She comments: 'I am talking about a cycle of violence. Once violence is used, it inevitably leads to more violence. […] Siyâvash, and I presume everyone, would prefer a world with no violence' [he does not react to his enemies violently] (Samini 2014, pers. comm., 8 December).

Through representing Siyâvash's fire journey, Samini develops an approach that is both multicultural and intertextual. For example, Siyâvash tells his father that he will not be the first or the last to commit filicide (Samini 2009: 14). In this, he is comparing himself with Sohrâb, another character in Persian myth who was killed by his father. In addition, Samini uses 'the exaggerated mask of Far East performances' for the character Man-Woman (Samini 2009: 55). She also quotes a poem by Mexican poet Octavio Paz (Samini 2009: 24), and adapts the Indian myth Sita for her story. Hence, Samini's play becomes a multicultural work: '[f]or me, the stage is where you can realise the imagination; somewhere between two worlds, between utopia and reality, a realised utopia. For me, stage is a visible utopia', she says (Samini 2014, pers. comm., 8 December).

2.5.3. Context

In January 2006 *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* was first performed at the Iran's Fajr International Theater Festival in Tehran. It was staged in Persian and French with two actors performing all the roles – one in Persian and the other in French. They chose French as the second language, considering it a worldwide language, in order to broaden the audience (Samini 2006: 14). Because it was written in two languages, the director pursued different goals to his usual ones. He wanted the audience to be able to follow the performance via whichever

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in a man's unconscious, and its equivalent in a woman's unconscious is named animus, which is expressed as a masculine inner personality.

language they spoke (Samini 2006b: 14). The performance was captioned so if the audience was unfamiliar with one of the languages, she/he could follow it via captioning. Nevertheless, the ambiguity of the dramatic language and having only two actors for all the roles, resulted in difficulties for some audiences. At times they could not track the storyline and had to either focus on the captions or on the stage directions. Likewise, the actors' unfamiliarity with each other's language led them to concentrate on one another's movements, rather than dialogues. This could, at times, result in unnecessary moves on the stage. Moreover, it was obvious that they had no more clue how to communicate with each other. The stage design was very minimal and abstract so that the actors were the centre of the visual side of the performance. This meant that all their actions were so easily followed by the audience that even a small mistake could become exaggerated. *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* was performed in France as well as in some additional Iranian cities, but was never staged in India – the source country of some elements of the play (Samini 2014, pers. comm., 8 December). Although it was not as well received as her earlier plays *Sheklak* and *Sleeping in an Empty Cup*, this work is known as one of the most experimental adaptations of *Shahnameh* in Iran.

3

BROADENING MY VIEW ON
ADAPTATION AND TRANSLATION

After I wrote the first draft of my play, I met with my supervisors. 'You have worked on three Iranian case studies and written a play adaptation based on an Iranian original source text. Why did you not do a PhD in Iran? How does your PhD speak to an Australian academic audience?', they asked. They declared that they were not familiar enough with Iranian theatre and culture to supervise a topic so firmly rooted in Iranian culture and knowledge.

Years ago, two Iranian university lecturers who had both studied in France told me that 'choosing a topic culturally specific to Iran will be more fascinating for a non-Iranian university. Your position on Arthur Miller, for example, wouldn't be considered "contribution to knowledge" as they would know better how to study their own theatre tradition'. I based my PhD proposal on this idea. It was to be a study of Iranian stage adaptations of the *Siyâvash* story. After I changed my principal supervisor I realised that I needed to change my topic too, seeing that such a project could not move forward until the supervisors and candidate had agreed on the plan.

I felt stressed and depressed and yet it made sense that my work needed to be appropriate for an Australian context. To achieve this, clearly I needed to know more about the local culture. In other words, I had to deal with translation at a cultural as well as linguistic level. As a newcomer, I did not know how to start this journey. Only a few Iranian plays have been translated into English, and mostly by translators rather than their authors. I could not find an Iranian dramatist who had translated his or her work into another language for another culture to learn from.

Writing for an Iranian audience seemed hard enough, let alone writing for an Australian one. Even more challengingly, I knew the task I had set for myself would involve translating poems that I had written into English. However, my supervisors' comments encouraged me to view such challenges as opportunities to develop my craft as a playwright, poet, adapter and translator.

I was already involved at a practical level with the processes of adaptation and translation. I had used a large number of Persian references for analysing my Iranian case studies. Therefore, I knew I had to start with a Persian draft and then translate it into English. To write for an Australian audience, I decided to broaden my knowledge of translation and adaptation theories via the analysis of two non-Iranian case studies, Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* and Jean Racine's *Phèdre* as translated by Ted Hughes. I chose these texts as both resemble the *Siyâvash* story, and are situated in an Anglo-European cultural context.

Phèdre and *Phaedra's Love* have been staged in Australia multiple times. The performances of *Phèdre* include productions by directors such as Doris Fitton in 1961 (Independent Theatre, North Sydney, NSW), Ken Campbell-Dobbie in 1985 (Anthill Theatre, South Melbourne, VIC), Bill Haycock in 1990 (Princess Theatre, Woolloongabba, QLD), Michael Gow in 1991 (The Wharf Studio Theatre, Walsh Bay, NSW), Brett Adam in 1992 (Beckett Theatre, Southbank, VIC), and Peter Evans in 2013 (Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne, VIC). The performances of *Phaedra's Love* include productions by directors such as Julie Waddington in 2004 (Store Room, Melbourne, VIC), Julián Fuentes Reta in 2007 (PICA, Perth, WA), and Kate Gaul in 2008 (ATYP Studio One, Sydney, NSW).

The more recent Australian productions of *Phèdre* and *Phaedra's Love* were closely tied to Hughes and Kane's texts. Evans restrained 'the actors' movements so that the action of the play is propelled by the text. The words resound in a tightly held, still space; each nuance and inflection is given weight and Hughes's beautiful lean language dominates the stage' (Dezfouli 2013). Waddington centralised the theme of love in her performance of *Phaedra's Love* (in Muller-Wood 2016). Likewise, Gaul's production of *Phaedra's Love* remained faithful to the tragicomic sense of the play (Hopkins 2008). Reta's version, however, was presented by the multicultural theatre company Corazon de Vaca ('Phaedra' 2007). The Australian practitioners' views on *Phèdre* and *Phaedra's Love* showed me that the analyses of these plays would help to enrich my adaptation of the *Siyâvash* story for an Australian audience.

In this chapter, I start by explaining the relationship between translation and adaptation. I seek to establish why and how these fields are important to my PhD, a process that deepened my understanding of both. I then write about both separately. The theory I present is mainly Anglo-European. Then, I conclude the chapter with an analysis of Hughes and Kane's respective approaches to translating and/or adapting the myths of Phaedra and Hippolytus.

3.1. Translation versus Adaptation

The similarities between translation and adaptation are such that some consider them to be the same practices. As a case in point, early film adaptation theorists analysed movies 'as "translations" or even "transpositions" of literary content to the screen' (Cutchins 2014: 37). In legal terms, in Britain and the United States translation is defined 'as an "adaptation" or "derivative work" based on an "original work of authorship;" copyright, including exclusive right to "prepare derivative works" or adaptations,' is vested in the "author"' (Venuti 1995: 8-9).

Although I do not regard translation and adaptation as interchangeable terms, their similarities can and should be acknowledged. Adaptation and translation are both 'transformations'; an adapter/translator is a mediator who rewrites an original work based on new criteria. Just as translations speak to a new readership, adaptations need to speak to a new audience. Translation (as an intercultural transformation) and adaptation (as an intracultural or intercultural transformation, genre or medium transformation) bridge gaps in time and/or place. Moreover, both translation and adaptation play essential roles in establishing and understanding cultures, politics and ideologies (Krebs 2014: 1).

3.2. Translation

In the 1980s, theorists such as Susan Bassnett, André Lefevere and Lawrence Venuti wrote significantly on translation studies. Nevertheless, debates over this topic have existed for centuries. The core of all the discussions has been one question: why and how should we translate a text from one language to another?

In the late nineteenth century, Goethe wrote about three kinds of translation. The first 'acquaints us with the foreign country on our own terms'; in the second, the translator 'only appropriates the foreign idea and represents it as his own'; and in the last, the translation pursues 'perfect identity with the original' (in Schulte & Biguenet 1992: 63).

Later, other theorists argued that two major approaches to translation existed, domestication/acculturation and foreignisation. These terms align closely with the terms *freedom* and *fidelity* in translation debates. Bassnett, in the article 'Bringing the News Back Home', defined both methods:

The acculturation versus foreignisation debate has been with us for centuries. Grossly simplified, the issue hinges on whether a translator should seek to eradicate traces of otherness in a text so as to reshape that text for home consumption in accordance with the norms and expectations that prevail in the target system, or whether to opt for a strategy that adheres more closely to the norms of the source system. Acculturation, it can be argued, brings a text more completely into the target system, since that text is effectively aimed at readers with no knowledge of any other system. On the other hand, foreignisation ensures that a text is self-consciously other, so that readers can be in no doubt that what they are encountering derives from a completely different system, in short that it contains traces of a foreignness that mark it as distinct from anything produced from within the target culture (Bassnett 2005a: 121-122).

Bassnett was not the first scholar to theorise these two methods. In 1813, German philosopher and theologian Freidrich Schleiermacher categorised different translation practices: 'there are only two. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him [foreignisation]; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him [domestication]' (in Lefevere 1977: 74). Domestication and foreignisation were features of translation in different cultures. Bassnett pointed out that 'standard French literary practice inclined to acculturation' while 'standard German literary practice' favoured foreignisation (Bassnett 2005a: 121).

We can follow the traces of the German practice in more recent theories of translation. Lefevere and Bassnett wrote that 'since languages express cultures, translators should be bicultural, not bilingual' – a cultural turn in translation studies (Lefevere & Bassnett 1990: 11). Later, emphasising the role of 'otherness' in translation, Bassnett defined the task of the translators as 'to take a text written in one language, at one moment in time, for a particular readership and to render that same work into a different language, at another point in time and for a completely different readership' (Bassnett 2005b: 83).

Before Bassnett, Walter Benjamin arguably wrote the most significant article on translation, 'The Task of the Translator' (1923). Here, Benjamin highlights the 'afterlife' of a translated text. He states that the task of the translator is not to copy, paraphrase or reproduce the nontextual meanings, but to engage with the original source text, which helps the reader to see the original in different ways (Benjamin 1992: 77). In *World against Literature* (2014) scholar Emily Apter, inspired by Benjamin, describes the term 'Untranslatable'. She 'alights upon the Vocabulaire entry for Walter Benjamin's concept of *Jetzeit*, the "now-time"

discontinuous with homogenous, linear chronology, and uses the term to give the untranslatable a discontinuous, messianic temporality that "messes" with and mistranslates European periodicity' (in Vijay 2014: 402).

Recently, the idea of the afterlife of a text has resurfaced in the fields of translation, adaptation and philosophy. The essay 'What Is the Contemporary?' (2009) by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben is one the latest works which draws on Benjamin's article. Likewise, in defining adaptation, Benjamin, together with Bassnett, influenced Linda Hutcheon:

> Benjamin […] argued, in "The Task of the Translator," that translation is not a rendering of some fixed nontextual meaning to be copied or paraphrased or reproduced; rather, it is an engagement with the original text that makes us see that text in different ways. […] Recent translation theory argues that translation involves a transaction between texts and between languages and is thus [as Bassnett said] "an act of both inter-cultural and inter-temporal communication" (Hutcheon 2013: 16).

Although the idea of a translation creating an afterlife of a text looks obvious to a non-Iranian scholar of translation studies, it has influenced my process of adapting a myth for the contemporary stage. In Iran, we discuss and practice adaptation much less than it occurs in the West. The most common terms to categorise translation approaches in Iran are 'word for word translation' (which aims to adopt the closest synonyms and structures used in the original text), 'faithful translation' (which is more relaxed, but still very closely tied to the source text), 'thorough translation' (which is more flowing than 'faithful' translations, yet faithful to the original text), 'free translation' (which offers no commitment to the form and content of the original), and so on (ie see Javaheri 2012; Hajikhani & Amini 2016; Khabari 2006). The definitions of these terms remain rather ambiguous; however, free and word for word translations are not highly regarded.

The practice of adopting translation theories for adaptation is not common in Iran. This approach, however, could possibly broaden the idea of adaptation in an Iranian context. Iranian adapters encounter more obstacles when, for example, adapting canonic works like *Shahnameh*. They are compelled to either replicate the source text in a way that is widely regarded as inferior to the original, or write their own versions, leaving them vulnerable to criticisms that they have not been sufficiently faithful to a masterpiece. It is possible that the lack of theories in support of the notion of the afterlife of a text has made Iranian writers

hesitant to adapt canonic works. Such writers do not normally choose adapting over writing an original text because adaptations are likely to appear as pale imitations of their source texts or garner heavy criticism from audiences and critics. 'The Task of the Translator' fascinates me because it theorises the problem I was grappling with. For example, Benjamin writes, defining bad translations, that 'any translation which intends to perform a transmitting function cannot transmit anything but information – hence, something inessential' (Benjamin 1992: 69). Again, this may seem obvious, but my engagement with ideas like these shed considerable light on the challenges faced by adaptors and why, it seemed to me, adaptations so often proved unsatisfactory.

In Iran, readers consider the translator to be a thinker who brings a 'superior', particularly Western, theory/idea/literary work back home. Feeling inferior to the West, together with the lack of significant original Iranian translation theories, perhaps caused by internalised Orientalism, has given an esteemed intellectual and cultural place to translators. Sometimes translators' names will be the same size as authors' names on the covers and spines of books. As a case in point, Iranian translators of philosophy are often more respected than Iranian philosophers as they are deemed to have brought something 'more valuable' to the table. In terms of theorising translation, however, Iranians either repeat Western theories or adopt unclear methodologies to express their ideas. These authors include Karim Emami (1993), Ali Solhjou (2015) and Omid Mehregan (2013). Consequently, Western translation theorists are generally preferred over local ones.

The narrative changes when it comes to the so-called 'superior cultures'. From a historical perspective, the distinction between translator and writer did not exist in the Middle Ages (Bassnett 2006: 177). Following gradual change, now, at least in the Anglo-American world, translators are generally viewed as inferior to writers. Benjamin tried to bring prestige back to translators. Recent theorists of translation have sought to do the same. In the early 1990s, Lefevere wrote on 'the importance of rewriting as the motor force behind literary evolution'. He, therefore, considered translation a *rewriting* (Lefevere 1992: 2). In 2006, Bassnett and Peter Bush edited and published a series of articles on translation titled *The Translator as Writer* (2006). They tried to alter the position of the rewriter to match that of the writer. Nevertheless, they knew this had not happened and might not happen soon:

[S]o pervasive is the hierarchical division between writing and translating that in the academic world scholars are discouraged from listing their translations as serious

publications, and an article in an obscure theoretical journal can be ranked as superior to a translation of a work by Pushkin or Dante (Bassnett 2006: 177).

3.3. Adaptation

In the 1980s Edward Said declared that '[t]he writer thinks less of writing originally, and more of rewriting. The image for writing changes from *original inscription* to parallel script, from tumbled-out confidence to deliberate fathering-forth […] from melody to fugue' (1983: 135). It was, as adaptation theorist Julie Sanders noted, retrieved from 'a particular virtue out of querying the ability or even necessity of being "original"' in the late twentieth century (2006: 1).

In *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006) Sanders connects the impulse of rewriting to structuralist and poststructuralist rhetorical movements. These movements were central in various fields in the mid-twentieth century. Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978) investigated repeated structures across cultures. In the field of literature, highlighting that texts are not only dependent on their authors but also on the reader, Roland Barthes stated that 'any text is intertext; other texts are present in it' (1981: 39). Considering text as a *productivity*, in 'The Bounded Text', scholar Julia Kristeva invented the term *intertexuality* to explain a process in which every text is 'a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another' (1980: 36).

In *Adaptation and Appropriation*, as the title suggests, Sanders explores the politics of the genre. She starts with distinguishing between citation and quotation: depending on the context, 'quotation can be deferential or critical, supportive or questioning', while citation 'is frequently self-authenticating, even reverential, in its reference to the canon of "authoritative", culturally validated, texts'. Then she compares citation with adaptation, 'which constitutes a more sustained engagement with a single text or source than the more glancing act of allusion or quotation, even citation, allows'. Finally, she states that 'appropriation carries out the same sustained engagement as adaptation but frequently adopts a posture of critique, even assault' (Sanders 2006: 4).

In defining adaptation 'as an inherently conservative genre' (2006: 9), Sanders is influenced by Derek Attridge's analyses of form in novels. 'Novels offer themselves not as challenges to the canon, but as canonic – as already canonized, one might say. They appear to locate themselves within an established literary culture, rather than presenting themselves as an assault on that culture' (Attridge 1996: 69). She also borrows ideas from Adrienne Rich's

'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision' (1992) to develop her definition of appropriation: '"we need to know the writing of the past and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us"' (Sanders 2006: 9).

It has been argued that '[a]ppropriation is now a tool in the repertories of a wide range of artists' (Johnson 2014: 108). Julia Bardsley, who has worked in theatre as well as the visual arts, uses the term adaptation for something that exists in one form and turns to another, while she declares that appropriation is 'more aggressive, more robust' and more suitable for reshaping canonic works (2014: 113). Similarly, Sanders uses appropriation for exploring Shakespeare and his canonic plays (2006: 45-62).

Bardsley's view on adapting canonic texts does not always work, at least in Iran, and particularly when adapting *Shahnameh*. Reshaping this canonic epic in Iran is like rewording a sacred work. Under such circumstances, it is generally expected that the author will respect the 'sacredness' of a text and avoid manipulating it for gratuitous ends. Adapting *Shahnameh* into English sidesteps such pressures, because it is not a canonic work in English-speaking countries and possibly even gains in respect from the appreciation Iranian audiences have for signs of their culture in the West.

Sanders and Hutcheon are two of the major theorists of adaptation in recent times. They 'each argue that adaptation is always about transformation and change, and each uses the metaphor of natural selection in making her case' (Tompkins 2014: ix). Nevertheless, they see differences between the processes of adaptation. Sanders declares, 'a useful way of beginning to think about adaptation is as a form of collaboration across time and sometimes across culture or language' (2006: 47). Hutcheon, however, influenced by Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator', considers adaptation 'a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary' (2013: 9).

Unlike some theorists who only focus on adaptation as a product, Hutcheon also views adaptation as a process. Her double vision of adaptation results in two classifications: firstly, adaptation as a product which is a form of 'extended reworkings of particular other texts'; secondly, adaptation 'as a process of creation and reception' (2013: 16). As I examine the creation process in my case studies, Hutcheon's theory emerges as the most relevant. Sharing her vision, I particularly focus on the authors' points of view through critiques, articles, interviews and responses to their works. It helps to give my voice to them and learn from the analyses I write.

Finally, representing a major turn in adaptation studies, Simone Murray discusses adaptation as an industry:

[the] overwhelming focus on the semiotic richness of adapted texts and propounding of various theatrical schemas for understanding these have distracted attention from more sociologically focussed enquiries into how these various texts come to be produced, and the multidirectional distribution routes they subsequently take in accessing audiences. Contemporary adaptation is a cultural phenomenon thoroughly intertwined with legal regimes, commercial investments and status hierarchies between industry sectors and the individual agents within them (Murray 2012: 186).

Journals such as the *Silk Road Review* (established 2006) and *Words without Borders* (established 2003) have published articles on material from various disciplines and cultural backgrounds. Their approaches focus on interculturality and link adaptation and translation studies with our intercultural era. The 2013 series of essays *The Silk Road of Adaptation*, edited by Lawrence Raw, broadens discussion of crosscultural and intercultural adaptations. The Silk Road metaphor promotes 'the idea of adaptation as a process in which individuals continually have to adjust themselves to new ideas and new material'. Having applied this idea to the literary field, Raw turns his attention to 'the ways in which readers, audiences, and critics have responded' to the continuous process of adaptations (2013: 3). Similarly, Anne-Marie Scholz's *From Fidelity to History* (2013) studies the active role of audiences in cinematic adaptations.

3.4. *Phèdre*, Translated by Ted Hughes

Ted Hughes (1930-1998), born in Mytholmroyd, Yorkshire, was an English poet, writer, translator, and children's writer. At the age of fifteen, he wrote his first poems, and a year later he began publishing his poems and prose pieces. In 1956, he met Sylvia Plath, who deeply influenced him, and it resulted in their marriage. In 1957, he wrote his first major work *The Hawk in the Rain* which was the beginning of his fruitful career. Hughes' imaginative world presents mythic themes which can be traced in his literary works. He has been considered one of the greatest British poets of the twentieth century. (Sagar 2000: ix-xxxiv).

Hughes undertook translations at various periods throughout his career and it became an important part of his work, especially in the last four years of his life. He collaborated with other translators and translated, directly or indirectly, from French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, German, Hungarian, Hebrew, Italian and Russian. Hughes was not a polyglot, but was fluent

in French. He often translated mythic books: *Tales from Ovid*, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Euripides' *Alcestis*, and *Phèdre*. Neil Roberts, who has written a book about Hughes, assumes that he merely translated *Phèdre* from the original, but when translating Hughes often consulted prior translations of a work as well as the original text (Roberts 2006: 179). I will give an overview of Hughes as a translator/adapter of mythic works, and then focus on his translation of *Phèdre*.

3.4.1. Hughes and Translation

Hughes' involvement with translation began when he founded the magazine *Modern Poetry in Translation* with his Cambridge friend, Daniel Weissbort, in 1965 (Dugdale 2013: 40). Weissbort transformed 'what Hughes had intended to be, in his own words, "a fairly scrappy-looking thing" into an internationally renowned journal which became a 'unique and quietly revolutionary magazine that publishes the best of world poetry in translation' (Dugdale 2013: 40). Hughes and Weissbort shared knowledge of Eastern European poetry. Hughes 'reflected on the background of the *Zeitgest* of the 1960s, a decade in which he said the modern age "came to consciousness of itself", especially of what Hitler and Stalin had "made" or "revealed" of humanity' (Roberts 2006: 179). Later when Hughes focused on translation, Weissbort 'devoted much time to compiling and promoting' Hughes' works, first in a volume published in 1996, and then in a 'second volume of unpublished translations' in 2003, five years after the poet's death (Dugdale 2013: 40).

Hughes began his adapting career with an adaptation of Seneca's *Oedipus* in 1968. Peter Brook staged this adaptation at the UK's National Theatre Company (Weissbort & Eysteinsson 2006: 524). In this adaptation, sometimes considered a translation, he used literal translations of *Oedipus* as well as the original. Hughes said

> Peter Brook had clear ideas about the type of production he wanted, and when he found the translation [by David Anthony Turner] did not quite suit them, he invited me to go over it and adapt it […] and after some tentative false starts, we found the only way forward was for me to go back to the original Seneca, eking out my Latin with a Victorian crib and so make a completely new translation (Hughes 1969: 7).

Hughes was attracted to Seneca's Artaudian view:

> […] under the words I feel the atrocious transparent boiling of forces of chaos. Primordial forces resonate into a spasmodic vibration of words'; the words that

'designate secrets and forces, designate them in a "trajectory" of these forces, and with their power to tear apart and pulverise (Williams 1991: 116).

Hughes' adaptation follows its source material in outline and in much detail, but differs from Seneca's original in some ways. 'There are numerous omissions, usually passages of state reflection and ponderous epic simile, and some additions' (Roberts 2006: 182). For example, Hughes refers to 'parallel realities in Vietnam' in the text (Williams 1991: 116). The most considerable additions are made 'to the part of Jocasta, which is expanded from 22 to 146 lines'. Hughes is 'likely in any case to have wanted a strong female presence in a play about the consequences of the masculine intelligence destroying the (female) sphinx. These additions emphasise Jocasta's maternal role' (Roberts 2006: 182-183).

Some of the differences between Hughes' work and Seneca's seem inevitable. 'Because of the economy of Latin syntax', the original text is much shorter than its literal translations. Hughes also compresses the text, 'not by condensing syntax but by doing away with complex sentence structure and writing in a series of ejaculatory phrases, punctuated (in the form of spaces in the text) on the basis of speech rhythm rather than grammar' (Roberts 2006: 183).

Oedipus is a milestone for Hughes in translation technique as well as writing for the stage. His collaboration with Brook produced a 'vividly direct poetic text charged with a physical barbarism and viciousness, and an almost unadaptable bestial imagery' (Williams 1991: 117). Yet the work is primarily recognised as a Brook production, and Hughes received little attention at the time. Many critics did not even mention his name in their reviews, or merely introduced him as an adapter or translator. An exception was 'Ronald Bryden in the *Observer*, who praised Hughes for the best *Oedipus* translation since Yeats' (Roberts 2006: 181).

In the 1990s, Hughes returned to translation to contribute to an anthology of interpretations of the works of Ovid, the Roman poet. According to a letter he wrote to American artist Leonard Baskin, Hughes was primarily motivated by the 'money and the ease with which he could do it, estimating that he could write two tales a week'. Later he describes it as an amusing project, but 'wondered if it was useful' (in Roberts 2006: 187).

For *Tales from Ovid* Hughes refers to at least three translations: 'the Penguin Classics version by Mary Innes, the Leob edition with a translation by Frank Justus Miller, and the Elizabethan verse translation by Arthur Golding'. He also uses the original work, but makes 'no attempt to imitate Ovid's verse form'. He translates a small proportion of the tales in *Metamorphoses*, written by Ovid, but changes their order, and abandons the structure of each tale (Roberts 2006: 187).

Hughes' engagement with *Tales from Ovid* continues his interest in the myth of Venus and Adonis that is part of Ovid's collection (1997: 128-143). In an interview with Ekbert Faas he argues for the negative view of 'rational scepticism' featured in those myths. He states that Venus murdered Adonis 'because he rejected her'. Adonis is 'so desensitized, stupefied and brutalized by his rational scepticism', he says (1980: 198). He revisits this theme later in his translation of the tragedy *Phèdre*.

The other major translations undertaken by Hughes are all for theatre. In his last year he translated *Phèdre* and *Alcestis*. However, neither these nor any of his other translations achieved the canonic status of the *Oresteia,* which he translated in 1998 and was published in 1999. Classical scholar Michael Silk calls it 'the best translation of Aeschylus in the twentieth century' (in Roberts 2006: 192). It is 'the best thing I have ever done. I read it and wonder how I ever did it', says Hughes about his Aeschylus' trilogy (in Sagar 2000: xxxi).

Hughes chooses to 'not take liberties' with such an 'awe-inspiring text' but still 'there is one moment at which he can perhaps be detected shifting the balance in favour of the feminine' (Roberts 2006: 192). In the trilogy, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia for a good wind to Troy. Consequently, Clytemnestra murders him to avenge their daughter. Orestes then murders Clytemnestra to avenge his father, and the Furies, the avengers of murdered blood kin, persecute him. Athene privileges Agamemnon over the murdered women and the Furies protest to Apollo: 'are you saying that Clytemnestra, remembering Iphigenia, had no case, when she murdered Agamemnon?' (Aeschylus 1999: 175) Hughes' version of this scene is not a literal translation of the *Oresteia*. Again, he enhances the female characters' points of view.

Alcestis is Hughes' last major translation. Although he started it in 1993, his other works took up most of his time; ultimately, it became his last translation. The play is about King Admetos, 'a remarkable man' and 'saviour of his people' who is doomed to die young. One of the gods mediates to save the King and consequently Death agrees to replace him with one of his relatives. The King's old parents refuse to die, but his beautiful young wife, Alcestis, sacrifices herself. Again, Hughes' tendency to present a female point of view is evident.

It's widely considered that *Alcestis* was strongly influenced by Hughes' marriage to the poet and writer Sylvia Plath. After her death, Hughes remarked that 'it was either her or me' (in Feinstein 2001: 145). Keith Sagar, writing about *Alcestis*, saw the resonances of this feeling in Hughes' version of Euripides' play (2000: 85). Admetos, angered by his father's refusal to accept death – a refusal that results in Alcestis' death – rages at him: 'you don't deserve the life of a rat'. And continues that 'if ever you die, the world will despise you for what you failed to do'. When he leaves the stage, the chorus compares him with a rat:

The Admetos that brought Alcestis to the grave

Is like the body of a rat

Trapped with bones and sinews in the trap.

He is trying to chew it off – the whole body.

Admetos is trying to gnaw himself

Free from Admetos

In spitting out the torn flesh and the blood

Of Admetos (Euripides 1999: 46-47).

3.4.2. Translating *Phèdre*

To summarise the plot of *Phèdre*: it has been six months with no word of Theseus, King of Athens. Hippolytus, his son, aims to find him. The Prince has also fallen in love with Aricia, the granddaughter of Erechtheus, the former King of Athens. Yet Aricia is not allowed to marry anyone because Theseus thinks she may come to dominate his Kingdom. On the other hand, Phèdre, the King's wife, has fallen in love with her stepson Hippolytus. She reveals this to her nurse, Oenone. Phèdre decides to commit suicide to avoid dishonour, but she realises that Theseus has died. Choosing the King's successor divides people into two groups: one gives its support to Phèdre's natural son, and the other, ignoring the ancient law, supports Hippolytus whose mother is a foreign woman. Since Phèdre's love is now legitimate, Oenone convinces her to stop Hippolytus from taking over the country. Hippolytus frees Aricia from the law banning her from marrying. Now Troezen is his, Crete and its territories belong to Phèdre's child, and Greece to Aricia. The Prince intends to reunite them all in the name of Aricia. The Queen reveals her love to Hippolytus. Oenone tries to portray Hippolytus as evil, but Phèdre does not believe her and wants to leave all her power to her stepson. Word arrives that Theseus is alive, and Phèdre once again decides to commit suicide. The nurse tells Theseus that the Prince intends to rape the King's wife. In response, Theseus asks the God of the Oceans to vanish his son. Hippolytus accuses Phèdre of lying and confesses that he is in love with Aricia. The Prince refuses to disclose Phèdre's love because he does not want to dishonour his father. Hippolytus promises Aricia to marry her in a temple outside Troezen. A monster rising from the waves kills Hippolytus. Phèdre admits the truth and drinks a fatal poison. In the end, when Phèdre and Hippolytus are both dead, Theseus changes his mind about Aricia and accepts her as his own daughter. Then he mourns for his innocent son.

Hughes makes important alterations in the text. The most notable one concerns the long speech given by Théramène, a friend of Hippolytus, about Hippolytus' death by the sea-monster, Hughes adds descriptions such as 'the sea "a solid wall of thunder", the monster "like a giant octopus of water" and the "glowing figure of a naked god" urging Hippolytus' horses on' (Roberts 2006: 191). Roberts notes some of the significant differences between the two texts. For example, Oenone's dialogue to Phèdre in which Hughes removes the hauteur:

Pouvez-vous d'un superbe oublier le mépris?
Avec quells yeux cruels sa rigueur obstinée
Vous laissait à ses pieds peu s'en faut prosternée!

which Hughes has translated as

What about that spoilt brat's contempt?
Can you forget that face? That baleful blank.
That stone, hewn block. He hardly saw you
While you writhed at his face.

Phèdre's lines

Ce n'est plus une ardeur dans mes veines cachée:
C'est Vénus tout entire à sa proie attachée

becomes rhythmically limp

No longer a fever in my veins,
Venus has fastened on me like a tiger (in Roberts 2006: 191).

In response to the latter lines, critic Boyd Tonkin discusses the 'Protestant fundamentalism and the Jansenist determination of Racine' (Tonkin 2009). In Racine's eyes, he claims, 'the mere thought of crime is regarded with as much horror as the crime itself' (Tonkin 2009). Tonkin links his argument with 'C'est Vénus tout entire à sa proie attachée' as a 'master-key' of not only Racine, but also of the whole of French neo-classicism (Tonkin 2009).

Tonkin also states that 'many of *Phèdre*'s Anglo-American interpreters have ostensibly set out to liberate the Queen and her love from the cage of her fate, restoring to her plight a dignity that the plot tends to strip away' (2009). He declares that in Hughes's translation Phèdre's final monologue is much 'crueller and harsher' towards herself than in the French version. He claims that Hughes intensified Phèdre's 'self-mortification' by making her say: 'I was the monster in the riddle' (2009). This line has no counterpart in the source text and refers to the 'back-story' of Theseus in which he conquers the Minotaur in his labyrinth. Later, Phèdre confesses her fear of Hippolytus' revealing 'my shameless obsession, my shameless attempt/To force my lust on him'. Racine only, in a 'terse and neutral' line, has said 'un feu qui lui faisait horreur'. But Hughes alters 'the ancient theology of desire to render it as "evil"', says Tonkin (2009). Indeed, Hughes opts to focus on Phèdre's shame.

The alterations are not confined to the lines. Apparently the original name of Racine's work was *Phèdre et Hippolyte* (Morgan 2000: 209). There are also doubts about the original title of Seneca's play. For instance, the title of the play in the Penguin Classics version is translated as '*Phaedra* (or *Hippolytus*)' (1966). In translating Racine's play, Hughes keeps the common title of the play with its French spelling: *Phèdre*. Nevertheless, he alters some of the characters' names into English. He changes Hippolyte to Hippolytus, Thésée to Theseus, and Aricie to Aricia, but does not replace the other names.

Phèdre offers some interesting connections between Hughes' career and his personal life. When Hughes met Sylvia Plath, she was writing an essay on 'Passion as Destiny in Racine'. Roberts argues that the translation must have been influenced by 'the poem she wrote the day after the meeting, "Pursuit"' (2006: 192):

> *There is a panther stalks me down:*
> *One day I'll have my death of him* (in Roberts 2006: 192).

Hughes aims to convey 'an aspect of Racine's masterpiece rather than the play in its literary-historical context, or by means of an updated or personalised transcription' (Weissbort & Eysteinsson 2006: 526). It echoes Ezra Pound's quote: 'the translation of a poem having any depth ends by being one of two things: either it is the expression of the translator, virtually a new poem, or it is as it were a photograph, as exact as possible, of one side of the statue' (in Anderson 2014: 5).

3.5. *Phaedra's Love* by Sarah Kane

Sarah Kane was born in 1973 in Kelvedon Hatch, near Brentwood, Essex. She was brought up in a Christian family and became Evangelical when she was a teenager. Kane started writing short stories at high school and studied drama at Bristol University. There she tried acting and directing as well as playwriting. She wrote three twenty-minute monologues: *Comic Monologue*, *Starved*, and *What She Said*. Her first major play, *Blasted*, was a turning point in the history of British theatre (Sierz 2000: 91-93). Kane committed suicide in 1999. Her latest play *4.48 Psychosis* (1999) 'was reviewed by the majority of British theatre critics as little more than a dramatic suicide note' (Saunders 2002: x).

Phaedra's Love is Kane's second full-length play. It draws on Seneca's *Phaedra*. Kane directed this work for the Gate Theatre in a production that opened on the 15th of May 1996. She changed the plot and language of the source text, both added and removed characters, and attempted overall to render a personalised, contemporary version of the Phaedra myth.

At the time, Kane was known as the author of *Blasted*. British critics claimed both works shared fundamental similarities. For example, Paul Taylor, writing for *Independent*, considered *Phaedra's Love* a '*Blasted*-like' work (1996: 11) while sections of the media accused Kane of 're-fuelling the controversy' over her first work (Coveney 1996: 13). With this in mind, an analysis of *Blasted*, considering Kane's intentions in writing it, as well as the storm it produced in the British media, is called for. Following this, I turn my attention to the play *Phaedra's Love*.

3.5.1. Kane and 1990s British Drama

In the early 1990s British theatre was experiencing a lack of new plays on the country's main stages. On the 21st of November 1994 eighty-seven major British dramatists signed a joint letter to *The Guardian* newspaper (in Saunders 2002: 2). In response, theatre critic Michael Billington stated that, without major changes, British theatre would turn into 'a dusty museum rather than a turbulent forum where society carries on a continuous debate with itself'. For him, the problem did not stem from the lack of new talent, but from 'financial and cultural' issues: '[t]he blunt fact is that most regional theatres are either unable or unwilling to risk new work on main stages' (Billington 1994: 5).

In less than two months, on the 17th of January 1995, *Blasted*, by twenty-three year old Kane, opened at the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs in London. Kane started writing it 'when Srebrenica was under siege, and I was getting more and more depressed having been reading

about what was happening in Bosnia' (in Saunders 2009: 49-50). In *Blasted* a middle-aged male journalist (Ian) and a young woman (Cate) arrive at an expensive hotel in Leeds. Ian is a misogynist, racist, and homophobic man who engages in non-penetrative sex with Cate. When she goes to the bathroom, an armed soldier unexpectedly enters. He realises that Cate has escaped through the bathroom window. The room is struck by a mortar bomb and it results in blasting a hole in the wall. The hotel room is in the middle of a war. The soldier shares his stories of being involved in rape, torture and genocide. He claims that he has taken revenge for the murder of his girlfriend. He then rapes Ian and draws out his eyes. After the soldier commits suicide, Cate returns. She has rescued a baby, but it dies and she buries it. The situation is followed by Ian crying and masturbating, and even embracing the dead soldier. Then Ian eats the dead baby. Cate, paid after having sex with the other soldiers, returns with gin and sausage. She feeds Ian and the play finishes.

Blasted became a very controversial performance. According to critic Aleks Sierz, it 'was both shockingly radical in form and deeply unsettling in content' (2001: xii). Charles Spencer, writing for *The Daily Telegraph*, reported that *Blasted* set a record for walkouts at preview performances at the Theatre Upstairs (1995: 3). *The Guardian* featured a headline questioning whether the play was 'a deeply moral and compassionate piece of theatre or simply a disgusting feast of filth' (Elisson & Bellos 1995: 22). The media labelled Kane the 'bad girl of British theatre' (in Gardner, MacDonald & Billington 1999: 16) and Britain's 'most notorious playwright' (Bayley 1996: 20). Her first full-length play 'not only became the focus of some of the most aggressively negative reviews of the decade, but also the centre of the biggest scandal to hit theatre since Mrs Whitehouse [a conservative English social activist] tried to close Howard Brenton's *The Romans in Britain* in 1981' (Sierz 2001: 91).

In the face of such negative criticism, some playwrights offered support. Caryl Churchill wrote a letter to *The Guardian*, commenting that 'though violent things happen, I found it rather a tender play […] I find it hard to see why people are so shocked by these things being in a play rather than by the things themselves' (1995: 19). As the violence in *Blasted* was compared with that of Quentin Tarantino's films, Harold Pinter stated that those films were 'simply superficial' works but *Blasted* 'was facing something actual and true and ugly' (1995: 12). Despite many critics claiming the play was immoral and inhuman, Edward Bond drew attention to its humanity:

> […] [t]he images in *Blasted* are ancient. They are seen in all great ages of art – in Greek and Jacobean theatre, Noh and Kabuki. The play changes some of the images

– but all artists do that to bring the ancient imagery, changed and unchanged, into the focus of their age. The humanity of *Blasted* moved me. I worry for those too busy or so lost that they cannot see its humanity (in Saunders 2002: 25).

Bond's support of *Blasted* was unsurprising as he had a similar experience to Kane. When his play *Saved* was performed at the Royal Court in 1965, it received a similarly hostile reaction from the media, critics rounding on its 'sexual and physical violence'. *The Daily Express* wrote that nobody 'will deny that it is the function of theatre to reflect the horrific undercurrents of contemporary life. But it cannot be allowed, even in the name of freedom of speech, to do so without aim, purpose or meaning' (Kretzmer 1965).

Comparing *Saved* with *Blasted*, Dalya Alberge, writing for *The Times*, pointed out that in the 1960s the 'Royal Court's staging of a work [*Saved*] that referred to Queen Victoria as a lesbian was also banned' (1995: 1). *Blasted* was also compared with Howard Brenton's *The Romans in Britain* for the controversy generated when first presented. However, unlike these works, it was not

> […] censored (as was *Saved*), Kane and the Royal Court were not legally persecuted (as was Brenton's *The Romans in Britain*), despite there being even more graphic depictions of child abuse on stage – a baby being eaten on stage rather than stoned – and a brutal homosexual rape presented (Innes 2002: 529).

Saved had influenced Kane: 'when I read *Saved*, I was deeply shocked by the baby being stoned' and learnt from Bond's work that 'there isn't anything you can't represent on stage. If you are saying you can't represent something, you are saying you can't talk about it, you are denying its existence, and that's an extraordinarily ignorant thing to do' (in Bayley 1996: 20). In a conversation with the playwright Mark Ravenhill, Kane declared that 'you can learn everything you need to know about the craft of play-writing from *Saved*' (in Ravenhill 1999: 6).

Despite the media's negative reaction to *Blasted*, Kane defended her approach:

> […] what you get is a brief synopsis, and you get a list of things that happen and a little note at the end saying whether or not this particular middle-aged male journalist liked this play and whether or not you should go and see it – and it tells you nothing (in Ravenhill 1999: 6).

She continued criticising the media's response to her play:

> […] [The] week the play opened there was an earthquake in Japan in which thousands of people died, and in this country [England] a fifteen-year-old girl had been raped and murdered in the wood, but *Blasted* got more coverage in some newspapers than either of these events' and so 'much more important than the content of the play is the form' (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 130).

Kane believed that 'all good art is subversive in form or content. And the best art is subversive in form *and* content' (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 130). She claimed that 'the element that most outrages those who seek to impose censorship is form. Beckett, Barker, Pinter, Bond – they have all been criticised not so much for the content of their work, but because they use non-naturalistic forms that elude simplistic interpretation'. For her, 'form is the meaning of the play, which is that people's lives are thrown into complete chaos with absolutely no warning whatsoever'. She deliberately aimed to provoke her audience: 'I more or less abandoned the audience to craft their own response to the imagery by denying them the safety of familiar form' (in Sierz 2001: 102).

Kane's intention with regard to representing violence on stage was 'to be absolutely truthful'. She wanted to say that 'the logical conclusion of the attitude that produces an isolated rape in England is the rape camps in Bosnia. And the logical conclusion to the way society expects men to behave is war'. Kane set her play in Leeds to compare the two countries. 'Acts of violence simply happen in life, they don't have a dramatic build-up, and they are horrible', she stated (in Bayley 1996: 20).

Kane was not the only controversial British playwright to emerge in the 1990s. Dramatists such as Anthony Nielson and Mark Ravenhill, as well as Naomi Wallace, Jez Butterworth, Phyllis Nagy, Tracy Lett, Martin McDonagh, Harry Gibson and others have all been identified by Sierz as members of the so-called 'in-yer-face theatre' movement. Sierz published a book under the same title in 2000, a year after Kane's death. Introducing the new generation of British writers, Sierz named Philip Ridley's *Ghost from a Perfect Place* as the play that kicked off the decade-long movement, but he reckoned *Blasted* to be its centre point:

> [t]he widest definition of in-yer-face theatre is any drama that takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message. It is a theatre of

sensation: it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves and provoking alarm. Often such drama employs shock tactics, or is shocking because it is new in tone or structure, or because it is bolder or more experimental than what audiences are used to. Questioning moral norms, it affronts the ruling ideas of what can or should be shown on stage; it also taps into more primitive feelings, smashing taboos, mentioning the forbidden, creating discomfort. Crucially, it tells us more about who we really are. Unlike the type of theatre that allows us to sit back and contemplate what we see in detachment, the best in-yer-face theatre takes us on an emotional journey, getting under our skin. In other words, it is experiential, not speculative (Sierz 2001: 4).

Pursuing this philosophy, Kane then adapted the Greek myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus for the stage.

3.5.2. Adapting Phaedra

To summarise the plot of *Phaedra's Love*: in a darkened room Hippolytus is eating a hamburger by the 'flickering light of a Hollywood film' while surrounded by expensive electronic toys. He masturbates in a sock 'until he comes without a flicker of pleasure' (Kane 2001: 65). Phaedra, his stepmother and the Queen of Athens, reveals her illicit love for him. She performs fellatio on the Prince. 'He's depressed', as a doctor has said before, and his depression prevents him from feeling any emotion (Kane 2001: 65). Phaedra's taboo-breaking passion for Hippolytus ends in her suicide and a note accusing him of raping her. The Prince accepts his death sentence. He cannot muster the emotion to care about his royal background and the consequences of not denying the rape. In prison a priest enters his cell and tries to convince him to deny the rape. The Prince's response disappoints him: 'if there is a God, I'd like to look him in the face knowing I'd died as I'd lived. In conscious sin' (Kane 2001: 94). Hippolytus has chosen honesty as his path. 'There is a kind of purity in you', says the priest, and performs oral sex on him (Kane 2001: 97). Theseus, the King of Athens and Phaedra's husband, returns to the palace and mourns for his wife. He intends to kill his son. Strophe, the King's stepdaughter, defends Hippolytus, but Theseus, not recognising his stepdaughter, rapes her. He then kills both Hippolytus and Strophe. When the King realises the girl was his stepdaughter, he commits suicide. A vulture descends and begins to eat Hippolytus' body.

The story of Phaedra originally comes to us through Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Despite the title, which presents the male character as the centre of the work, the play's theme, forbidden

love, is based on the female protagonist's action. Phaedra is deeply in love with her stepson. She is the Queen of Athens and thus deeply conflicted, as this love would create political instability. Her nurse tells Hippolytus of her love and so he rages and insults her. Phaedra is not sure whether the Prince will keep his oath of not revealing her infatuation to the King. So, having lost all hope, she commits suicide, exacting revenge by leaving a note behind accusing Hippolytus of having raped her. The play then shows the innocent death of the Prince. For many adaptors, the storyline has proved an enthralling one.

Kane did not initially want to adapt *Phaedra*, Georg Buchner's *Woyzeck* being her original choice. The Gate Theatre had asked her to write a drama based on a European classic and she had chosen Buchner's play. As Kane was interested in depicting brutality and violence on stage, *Woyzeck* offered interesting potential. 'I've wanted to direct it since I was 17. In the end, Woyzeck's only way of expressing himself is violence', said Kane (in Sierz 2001: 109). But the theatre was already planning a season of Buchner's works. As an alternative, she tried to write an adaptation of *Baal* by Bertolt Brecht, because it was 'loosely based on *Woyzeck*' (in Saunders 2002: 72). The scene between Hippolytus and the priest in *Phaedra's Love* was originally written for her version of *Baal*. The Gate did not accept this text so she finally chose Seneca 'because Caryl Churchill had done a version of one of his plays, *Thyestes*, which I liked very much' (in Sierz 2001: 109). Kane read Seneca's *Phaedra* only once before deciding to write her own version. She did not look at either Racine's adaptation or Euripides' work before finishing *Phaedra's Love*. 'I wanted to keep [the] classical concerns of Greek theatre – love, hate, death, revenge, suicide – but use a completely urban poetry', said Kane (in Sierz 2001: 109).

In terms of form and content, *Phaedra's Love* differs utterly from the classic versions of Phaedra and Hippolytus. In Kane's view, 'art isn't about the shock of something new. It's about arranging the old in such a way that you see it afresh' (in Saunders 2002: 28). She chose *Phaedra* for two major reasons: 'firstly, that it's a play about a sexually corrupt Royal Family – which makes it highly contemporary. And secondly, that Hippolytus, as he is in the original story, is deeply unattractive' (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 131-132).

Her interest in the corruption of the Royal Family speaks to Kane's British background while presenting the unattractiveness of the character of Hippolytus befits Kane's interest in unabashedly showing the harsh truth of human behaviour on stage. In the early 1990s scandalous revelations regarding the Royal Family and the 'inappropriate' behaviour of the Duchess of York tainted public perception of the British Royals. 'While *Phaedra's Love* does not address the national context explicitly, it comments upon this indirectly' (Babbage 2011:

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198). Scholar Graham Saunders, who has written two books about Kane, says 'the play, written before the death of Princess Diana, becomes eerily resonant as the death of Phaedra elevates the Queen to iconic status while mob hysteria prevails in an outpouring of hostility against the old order' (Saunders 2002: 75). Six months after the Princess' death, Kane pointed out that 'it would be a really good time for a production [of *Phaedra's Love*] in Britain' (in Saunders 2002: 75).

There were also personal reasons driving Kane to write *Phaedra's Love*. She states that 'in some ways all of my characters are me' (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 133). For Kane, 'any piece of writing that is good or honest inevitably draws on the writer's emotional experience' (in Saunders 2002: 73). Later in an interview she declares that the play was about her:

> I suppose I set out to write a play about depression because of my state of being at that time. And so inevitably it did become more about Hippolytus. Except that it was also about that split in my own personality. […] The act of writing the play was to try and connect two extremes in my own head. Which in the end wasn't only a depressing experience but also very liberating (in Saunders 2002: 73).

Despite the fact that Kane wrote the play about her own depression, she did not consider it 'depressing or lacking in hope' (in Sierz 2001: 91). She claims that *Phaedra's Love* is about love, faith and depression. 'Many people feel depression is about emptiness but actually it's about being so full that everything cancels itself out. You can't have faith without doubt, and what are you left with when you can't have love without hate?' asks Kane (in Gardner, MacDonald & Billington 1999: 16).

Hippolytus neither cares about Phaedra's marital status nor his royal relationship with her. 'She was a human', he says (Kane 2001: 93). His idea of love portrays hopeless emotions, which involve depression as well as love. In characterising him, Kane considers honesty highly important: 'instead of pursuing what used to be seen as pure, my Hippolytus pursues honesty both physically and morally – even when that means he has to destroy himself and everyone else. The purity of his self-hatred makes him much more attractive than the virginal original' (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 132). She brings attractiveness to Hippolytus by characterising him as an unattractive personality. This method is described well in Phaedra's dialogue about Hippolytus:

You're difficult, moody, cynical, bitter, fat, decadent, spoilt. You stay in bed all day then watch TV all night, you crash around this house with sleep in your eyes and not a thought for anyone. You're in pain. I adore you (Kane 2001: 79).

Theatre scholar Laurens de Vos notes that Hippolytus' 'incessant consuming, both of fast food and sex, aims at the liquidation of the remnants of his own desire'. De Vos considers Hippolytus 'a posthuman being alienated from human feelings, spoiled by the decadence that Western life has drowned him in. As a being no longer in touch with his desire he is in fact looking at his own death' (de Vos 2011: 92).

As in *Blasted*, violence plays a significant role in *Phaedra's Love*, especially in the last scene where the audience encounters a variety of acts such as rape, murder and cannibalism. 'My main source of thinking about how violence happens is myself', says Kane (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 133). She justifies her representation of brutality: 'sometimes we have to descend into hell imaginatively in order to avoid going there in reality' (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 133).

Kane was brought up as a born-again Christian. She states that

[…] my formative reading was the *Bible*, an incredibly violent book. It's full of rape, mutilation, war and pestilence. I think because of the way I was brought up it has created a dilemma in my head about when life begins and ends and what hope really is (in McGloan, 13 March 1999: 4).

Scholar Ian Ward asserts that 'Kane's rapes are violent, cruel, and ultimately rather too familiar. It is, of course, this which makes them also unsettling. Kane's rapes are ordinary rapes; except that no rape is really ordinary' (Ward 2013: 230). Kane wants her audience 'to experience something emotionally before experiencing it intellectually' (in Saunders 2009: 30). It has been considered 'an attempt to connect with the spectator at a physical level (Campbell 2005: 80). In her opinion 'it's crucial to chronicle and commit to memory events never experienced – in order to avoid them happening'. She would rather 'risk overdose in the theatre than in life' and 'risk defensive screams than passively become part of a civilisation that has committed suicide (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 133).

Despite Kane's upbringing as a Christian (or perhaps because of it), *Phaedra's Love* is anti-religion through and through. In the sixth scene of the play, a priest comes to Hippolytus to convince him to deny the accusation of rape. It is an unforgivable sin and will create havoc

for his family, but Hippolytus replies 'fuck God. Fuck the monarchy' because 'I can't sin against a God I don't believe in' and 'a non-existent God can't forgive'. The Prince asks the priest: 'do you believe in God?' and 'how do you dare mock a God so powerful?' (Kane 2001: 95-96) The priest has nothing to say to defend himself. He performs oral sex on Hippolytus. The priest loses his religious convictions in the face of a depressed, yet honest, atheist.

Kane's favourite dialogue was from Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, where the character of Hamm, after an effort at supplication to God, shouts out: 'the bastard! He doesn't exist' (in Saunders 2002: 22). Kane has always juxtaposed religious faith and the loss of that faith:

> There was a debate I constantly have with myself because I was brought up as a Christian, and for the first sixteen years of my life I was absolutely convinced that there was a God, but more convinced […] because it was a kind of Charismatic Christian church which was very much focused on the Second Coming … that I would never die. I seriously believed that Jesus was going to come again in my lifetime and that I wouldn't have to die. So, when I got to about eighteen and nineteen and it suddenly hit me that the thing I should have been dealing with from at the age of six – my own mortality – I hadn't dealt with at all. So, there is a constant debate in my head of really not wanting to die – being terrified of it – and also having this constant thing that you can't really shake if you've believed it that hard and that long as a child – that there is a God, and somehow I'm going to be saved. So, I suppose in a way that split is a split in my own kind of personality and intellect (in Saunders 2002: 73).

Phaedra's Love differs from the classic versions of *Hippolytus* in two major ways. Kane changes the focus to Hippolytus and shows his brutality onstage. Despite Kane's statement that 'Phaedra is the first person to become active in the play', her interest is actually in representing a depressed Hippolytus (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 134). In the play, the female characters are underdeveloped. Apart from this considerable alteration, Kane challenges how tragic actions are represented. In the Greek plays, atrocities happen offstage, but in her theatre they happen before the audience.

Later, Kane decided to change her focus. Her last works, *Crave* and *4.48 Psychosis*, are markedly different from her earlier plays. 'As soon as I've used one theatrical form, it becomes redundant. So each time I've tried to do something different'. She aimed to write a play that 'could never be turned into a film, that could never be shot for television, that could never be

turned into a novel'. She admits that in *Cleansed*, her third full-length play, 'some of the stage directions were impossible', but also claims that 'you can do anything onstage. There's absolutely nothing you can't represent one way or another' (in Sierz 2001: 115).

She argues that 'if theatre can change lives, then it can change society' and 'theatre is not an external force acting on society, but a part of it. It's a reflection of the way people within that society view the world' (in Sierz 2001: 93). So, as a writer, Kane took her responsibility seriously. Her responsibility was 'to the truth, however unpleasant that truth may be' (in Stephenson & Langridge 1997: 134). She says: 'what I can do is put people through an intense experience. Maybe in a small way from that you can change things'. Kane claims that the problems she addressed were 'the ones we have as human beings'. She did not want to be a representative of any 'biological or social' group:

I have no responsibility as a woman writer because I don't believe there is such a thing. When people talk about me as a writer, that's what I am, and that's how I want my work to be judged – on its quality, not on the basis of my age, gender, class, sexuality or race (in Sierz 2001: 121).

4

PHAEDRA IN PERSIA:

A WRITER'S JOURNEY

In *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* Andre Lefevere argues that 'works of literature canonised more than five centuries ago tend to remain secure in their position' (Lefevere 1992: 19). Canonic texts are often understood to be flawless texts, and adaptations of such works are regarded with suspicion. Therefore, I was worried about adapting the one-thousand-year-old *Shahnameh*. Generally speaking, Iranian audiences prefer original texts to adaptations. Some believe Ferdowsi and other Iranian classic poets and writers created their works in the best possible way and no one can do/re-do it better (Asadian 2002). Although there are tens of adaptations of *Shahnameh*, I cannot name one, dramatic or non-dramatic, that has been well received, nationally or internationally, by audiences (Saberi's *Mourning for Siyâvash* represents a major example of failure in replicating the original source text).

Julia Bardsley asserts that '[i]f you're using classic works from the canon […] they can take quite a lot of being mucked about with, and it's their classic status that allows them to be pillaged and plundered in a particular way' (2014: 110). Despite her statement, *Shahnameh* seems to have defied attempts by Iranian adapters to plunder and pillage it. Rather, it has proved to be a constraint, confining successive writers in their use of plot and language. Bardsley sees this process from a Western cultural background in which adaptation is considered a tradition. From an Iranian perspective, however, adapting *Shahnameh* seems to be akin to committing artistic suicide. Nevertheless, I viewed adapting *Siyâvash* as a challenge, and it was one that I came to relish.

Analysing *Phaedra's Love* and *Phèdre* helped me to overcome the limits an Iranian perspective gives a writer. I also had the opportunity to render my work in English. My Australian audience, presumably, did not know about Ferdowsi and, more importantly, the canonic role of *Shahnameh* in Iran. Because of the tradition of adaptation in Western cultures, I imagined Australian audiences would be more open to alterations to canonic texts. Moreover, writing in English, I could communicate my play to a larger and more diverse audience. If I

could gain international status for my work, it would become easier to get it produced back in Iran.

In this exegetical chapter I explain my journey in creating *Phaedra in Persia* in relation to the major question: how do I adapt the *Siyâvash* story for a contemporary Australian audience? I start with an exploration of the play's formal elements. I investigate the plot, themes, and major characters together in order to reach a more dynamic analysis of them. Dramatic elements are not separable, however, I speak about language in particular because it plays a unique role in my practice as English is my second language. During all the following sections I clarify what I have learned from the previous chapters. This journey has also been twisted with some personal inspirations as well as endeavours that I discuss under the third section. I conclude this chapter with a discussion on the intercultural aspects of *Phaedra in Persia*.

4.1. Plot, Themes, and Major Characters

I started my journey by altering the plot of the *Siyâvash* story. Not only in the source texts, but also in all their adaptations, the character of the Queen falls in love with her stepson. In fact, for thousands of years this relationship has been the same. When a structure repeats itself, it no longer surprises the audience. However, I wanted to write a play which would surprise my audience, so I decided to alter the stepmother to mother. As no clear information about the Prince's mother exists in our original source texts, I assumed such a taboo-breaking relationship might have existed in the very primary versions. In changing the familiar relationship of a well-known myth, the story becomes new, provocative and surprising to the audience.

During the process of analysis, I encountered two articles concerning the identity of Siyâvash's mother which supported my alteration: the article 'Farziye'i darbareh-ye Madar-e Siyâvash' ['An Assumption about Siyâvash's Mother'] by researcher Sajjad Aidenloo (2009: 63-87), and 'Nazari darbareh-ye Hoviyat-e Madar-e Siyâvash' ['A Study on the Identity of Siyâvash's Mother'] by scholar Jalal Khaleghi-Motlagh (2009: 323-327). Both articles propose that the Queen and the Prince's unknown biological mother are probably the same character. Aidenloo claims that none of the major mythic sources have introduced Siyâvash's mother and in *Shahnameh* she disappears from the story abruptly. Therefore, he argues, she might be a missing or evolved character (Aidenloo 2009: 63-64). Khaleghi-Motlagh claims that probably in the early versions of the myth, Sudâbeh was Siyâvash's mother, but love between mother

and son later became unacceptable. Consequently, storytellers altered the mother character to stepmother. Likewise, in some sources Sudâbeh and Siyâvash's mother are from the same land which strengthens the idea of them being the same character (Khaleghi-Motlagh 2009: 325-326).

In *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* a woman, who is his mare and perhaps his mother, loves the Prince. They share an ambiguous relationship. One might assume they are mother and son, but no one can prove it. Samini states that they can be viewed as mother and son, but does not choose to clarify this in the play (Samini 2015, pers. comm., 22 January). Moreover, in her play, the mother is not a Queen, but a mare. So my idea potentially presented a unique alteration but one that is in keeping with the original story.

In both Persian and Greek original source texts the Queen is from overseas, a foreigner. Therefore, I decided to use the name Phaedra from the Greek text in my Persian one, replacing Sudâbeh, in order to bridge Persian and Anglo-Australian cultures. It not only helped to combine the characters of both stories (the Greek myth is known in Australia), but also to mix the theme of love with migration.

In Australia there are many migrants and marriages between people from different cultures. I wanted to set a single love story against the issue of migration. In the original story the King attacks the land of Hâmâvarân, a country near Iran. After his victory, he marries the daughter of Hâmâvarân's King because of her beauty (Ferdowsi 2008: 223). In my play the King has married the Queen for the same reason:

> ***Siyâvash***   *Is beauty enough to live with someone to death?*
> ***KayKâvus***   *No; but it's enough to love them forever* (Act II, Scene 3).

In *Phaedra in Persia* the King loves a foreigner and simultaneously opposes her people. He dehumanises and demonises the foreigners entering his country, yet also objectifies and reveres the exotic Phaedra, demonstrating that his racism manifests at the same time hostile and benevolent. Similar discourse has been used by the current Australian Prime Minister. 'Turnbull said that "strong borders" and one of the most generous humanitarian programs in the world "go together" because the public accepted migration when the government appeared in control of its borders' (in Karp 2016). Additionally, as discussed in the first chapter, stopping boat arrivals is often justified as a benevolent humanitarian act when it is actually part of a deeper, hostile racism towards refugees.

The original story does not focus on the matter of migration, however, *Phaedra in Persia* shows Europeans as refugees who escape a war led by a group of fundamentalist Christians called the 'Christian Army'. They try to reach the Mediterranean shores of Persia, but the King of Persia, KayKâvus, tries to stop them from entering the country:

> **Vizier**   *Since the war has become bloodier in Europe, more foreigners have reached our borders. In some cases, we don't have enough soldiers to protect the dams.*
>
> **KayKâvus**   *This puts our security at risk. Also, Persians hate European people. I'm scared of a civil war.*
>
> **Vizier**   *We've made foreigners' situation tougher, my lord. They cannot work or buy their own houses in Persia. They're not permitted to go to city centres. But none of this has made a difference.*
>
> **KayKâvus**   *Find the masterships. Pay them three times more than the foreigners pay. If they still kept smuggling, we'll jail them. Or perhaps exile them to Europe* (Act I, Scene 4).

And at times his xenophobia and racism are coloured by religious beliefs:

> **KayKâvus**   *[…] Under Zoroaster's wings, we were united again. It was Zoroastrianism that preserved the Persian Empire. And now, vindictive Christian Europeans aim to invade our country… we must be united. We should not let them use our problems against us. The Christian Army militants are crossing the borders disguised as displaced foreigners* (Act I, Scene 5).

Siyâvash is the only character to oppose the King. He does this on different occasions:

> **Siyâvash**   *Look, Father, today we have the opportunity to make a better life by welcoming them. We have the opportunity of building a country that benefits from the talents of many people and the different cultures they share with us. If we hate, we will always be living in suspicion, and they'll always be concerned about unfair laws* (Act II, Scene 3).

Most adaptations of both Persian and Greek stories portray the Prince as having a calm nature. He would rather be accused and killed than defend himself. This repelled me. I wanted the Prince to be angry and rebellious as well as frustrated and depressed. I changed him to be a character who no longer accepts his father's commands and decisions. He keeps fighting for his moral view of the political situation. In this regard, *Phaedra's Love* inspired me.

The King builds big dams on the shores to stop the boats. It does not help. He punishes the ones who help the foreigners. But it does not help either. Therefore, his Vizier suggests sending the foreigners to a Greek island. The 'good ones', who help the Persian staff on the island, will be given permission to enter Persia. The rest have no chance until they prove themselves to be *acceptable*. This idea was inspired by the Pacific Solution as well as the PNG Solution adopted by the Australian Government that I describe earlier. The idea of building dams was influenced by Donald Trump's idea to build a wall along the 2,000-mile border between the US and Mexico to stop migrants from reaching the US (Carroll, Urbany, Cummings, Pisano, Watkins, & Reyes 2016).

While the King's anti-European policies develop, Siyâvash shows his support for the displaced.

> **Siyâvash**   *We first need to educate our people about the Christian Army. Many Persian Christians and Persians with European backgrounds are fighting for the Christian Army. What makes one turn against one's own people, their own ancestry* (Act I, Scene 2)*?*

Things change when Phaedra reveals her love for the Prince. The European Queen is now suspected of betrayal as she has accused her son of rape. In the Iranian myth, as a consequence, based on the law, both mother and son have to pass through fire to prove their innocence. In the original story the Queen refuses to undergo the test. As the Prince proves his innocence, the King decides to hang her. Siyâvash worries that her death will create problems between him and his father. So he asks the King to forgive her and KayKâvus accepts his son's request (Ferdowsi 2008: 306-307). I use this ritual in my play to keep it connected with the original source text. Nevertheless, I change the *Siyâvash* story's plot. In *Phaedra in Persia* Siyâvash and then Phaedra pass through the fire safely, proving them innocent. However, unlike *Shahnameh*, in my play, public opinion remains negative about the Queen because of her status as a foreigner. I changed this feature because I wanted to show that no matter how good or evil

someone's acts are, the status of being a foreigner (refugee) condemns her or him to hostility regardless:

> **Hairdresser**   *I've heard there were some Persians among the attackers as well, but no-one talks about that. Even the Queen is affected by this misconception. As long as I can remember, people have accused her of all sorts of bad things. If she wasn't European, there'd be no such criticism. I remember once a young girl was burnt in the fire test, but everyone said 'she was innocent'. Now the Queen has passed through the fire, but they still say she betrayed the King! She wanted to leave Persia several times, but the King wouldn't let her* (Act II, Scene 2).

Focussing on migration brings a socio-political aspect to *Phaedra in Persia*. I often write about socio-political issues, but I was not sure if I should engage with political issues in adapting myth. Kane mixed the old myths with contemporary issues in *Phaedra's Love* and showed me how it can happen on stage. It inspired me to pursue the successful marriage of a contemporary sensibility and a classic work.

I empathise with Kane's belief in the ability of theatre to bring change in this world. Nevertheless, this idea has not always been appreciated. In *Theatre & Politics* scholar Joe Kelleher writes 'theatre's instrumentalism, its use as a means of guiding our actions and changing the world, does not work – never did, never will' (Kelleher 2009: 57). Likewise, playwright Peter Handke declares 'the theatre as a social institution strikes me as a useless instrument for the transformation of social institutions' (Handke 1985: 313). However, I choose to be 'political', as George Orwell notes, in that I '[d]esire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's idea of the kind of society that they should strive after' (Orwell 2004: 5). This is why I write for theatre, and the play I have been writing for this PhD is no exception. If a play does not originate in the author's deepest struggles and does not seek to make the world a better place, in my opinion it is not worth writing. So I began wanting to write a provocative adaptation and then my experience as a migrant made me want to politicise the myth. Unlike Brook, I did not want to create a version that dealt with the universal themes of family conflict. I aimed to present a personalised adaptation based on a text from my own culture.

As discussed in the first chapter, many Australians support tight border controls and many of those who arrive in Australia and Europe via sea, are from the Middle East. I decided to

reverse the situation in my adaptation. What if a Christian escapes a war in Europe in order to find refuge in the Middle East? This is the central message to the Australian audience.

It is to be noted that

> [t]he assumption that most people want to make their way to a Western country, which underpins fears of floodgates about to open, also needs to be treated with caution. […] Even in the most of urgent situations, creating acute refugee movements, a majority of those at risk tend not to move, or at most opt for internal displacement within their own countries. To leave one country for another is a traumatic decision to take. It can involve separation from family and other loved ones, the need to learn a completely new language in order to be able to function in a new society, and a loss of social status if one's achievements and qualifications are not recognised in a country of asylum. If one is caught in an environment in which there is no opportunity to put down new roots, but equally no hope of returning home, the burdens of depression can prove unbearable (Maley 2016: 9-10).

So I have two themes with a moral dimension: refugee status and *illicit* love. In the original story the Prince politely asks the Queen not to commit sin and tries to leave her chamber before anything happens between them. The Queen is concerned that Siyâvash will share it with his father. So she commits self-harm in order to pretend that she was forced to have intercourse with Siyâvash (Ferdowsi 2008: 299-300). In *Phaedra in Persia*, however, the Prince is more straightforward and the Queen does not overreact to him. Rather, Phaedra is deeply in love with her son but the Prince accuses her of betraying the King. In his judgemental view, it is totally reprehensible that his mother is married to his father but is in love with her son:

> **Phaedra** *I'm in love with you.*
> **Siyâvash** *[Shocked.] I was born out of your womb!*
> **Phaedra** *I found life in your arms.*
> **Siyâvash** *How can I believe the stories of my childhood then? Are you the lover who my father saved from death? How can one be so lost in lust* (Act I, Scene 4)?

Despite the fact that Phaedra's love is out of her control, Siyâvash harshly condemns her. I contrived this flaw in the character to help him evolve later and to further the dramatic point of the plot. In the second act KayKâvus criticises Siyâvash for being judgemental:

> **Siyâvash**   *[…] You judge everyone.*
>
> **KayKâvus**   *[*Pause*.] You don't? Interesting to see you accused your mother of betraying me, and now you accuse me of judging!*
>
> **Siyâvash**   *[*Pause*.] I didn't judge her!*
>
> **KayKâvus**   *You did. You said she was 'lost in lust'* (Act II, Scene 3).

This is a significant moment in the play which results in Siyâvash's dramatic evolution. Moreover, it feeds into the play's neutral view on love and women. All the Iranian case studies share a common weakness. In those plays the protagonists do not evolve much. They believe in unchangeable morals and decisions; therefore, the plays look like manifestos written in a dramatic form in which the good die young, having never broken their oaths. In *Phaedra in Persia* the Prince accuses the Queen of betrayal, but later regrets it. This helps to establish a flowing conversation between the father and son who now both have dramatic flaws. Likewise, all the case studies centralise *illicit* love as their major theme and punish the Queen for her love, a traditional perspective. I consider love an unintentional feeling for someone or something. Being unintentional, it cannot be illicit in the fullest sense. By presenting a love relationship between mother and son I want my audiences to encounter an unexpectedly controversial situation, but still sympathise with the lover.

Siyâvash asks his mother for forgiveness. 'With no forgiveness, we have war', she responds (Act II, Scene 4). With regard to her refusal, I was inspired by Samini's idea of stopping the 'cycle of violence' (discussed in the second chapter) as well as Siyâvash in the original source text. In the *Siyâvash* story, before the fire test, the Queen asks the King to behead the Prince (Ferdowsi 2008: 299), but it is later revealed that she is the sinner, Siyâvash asks his father to forgive her (Ferdowsi 2008: 307). Moreover, when Turanians plan to behead the Prince, Siyâvash does not deploy his army against them in order to fulfil his oath to maintain peace with them (Ferdowsi 2008: 371).

In terms of characterisation, scholar Mary Reilly argues that in the seventeenth century the distinction between 'crime' and 'sin' did not necessarily exist and Racine favoured crime over sin. In Racinian tragedies, she writes, 'if a character does feel shame, it is often for someone else's crime. Hyppolyte is shamed by Phedre's guilty passion' (Reilly 2004: 36). *Shahnameh*,

however, represents women as either devils or angels and does not allow the reader to analyse the characters. Saberi repeats this approach in *Mourning for Siyâvash*, but the British adaptations and the other Iranian ones I referenced earlier avoid such totalising judgements. I follow this same path in order to strengthen the dramatic conflicts and to bring deeper layers of meaning to the characters and to the issues I want to explore.

Kane unashamedly wrote from her own experience and convictions about the world. Her play convinced me that I could adapt the old myths in accordance with my own concerns. She was able to humanise myth in a way that was more profound than I had previously encountered, and it radically changed my view of the adaptation process.

In some ways I share empathy with Phaedra more than with the other characters. Just before moving to Australia, I fell in love. Things happened very quickly and I was close to departing for Adelaide. My lover did not consider joining me and I did not justify the situation well. Although we never started a relationship, I was ready to sacrifice as much as possible to be with her. There was no illicit love between us, but we shared other aspects of the characters in my play. She did not accept my decision, like the Prince who does not accept the Queen's in my play. I wrote her love poems, just as the Queen does for the Prince in my adaptation. That situation inspired me to characterise Phaedra based on my own emotional experiences. In some ways, she is the character most similar to me. I put my love poems in the Queen's mouth. Here is an example:

> **Phaedra** *Your bitter look has left me astounded and in suspense*
> *wondering if I would have suffered*
> *if I did not love you*
> *as I do now?*
>   Pause.
> *How pitiable our soul is, for silence is always met with silence.*
>   Silence.
> *For something to end*
> *a soul to be redeemed*
> *for pain to break out*
> *a human to be tortured*
> *hearing one sentence would suffice;*
> *tasting one kiss would suffice.*

I wonder, as of now,

who would write

from which love

from which anxiety

from which land?

Farewell to you

makes life hell.

Being with you

makes love limbo.

> She cries.

Why

does heaven sneer at me in this mayhem?

> She wipes away her tears.

I must reject disgrace. Truth is the only salvation (Act I, Scene 4).

The last major change in my adaptation occurs in its ending. The original story finishes with the death of the Prince, however, *Phaedra in Persia* ends with the King's nightmare. In my play a messenger tells KayKâvus about Siyâvash's death. Then the King finds Siyâvash alive in Phaedra's chamber. 'I die every day and come back to your dreams every night', says the Prince. 'How does this nightmare end?', asks the King. 'Break the dams', Siyâvash replies and then hangs himself. To create this ending I was influenced by *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes'* magic realism elements, particularly those about the sky, rain and clouds (described in the second chapter). I was also influenced by Ferdowsi's method of communicating omens, fortunes or metaphors through the surreal state of dreams. In the original story Siyâvash learns about his own death in his dream (Ferdowsi 2008: 365). I adapted this idea for the play. The King's nightmare is a metaphor for the nightmare of the migration crisis we see on a daily basis. The only resolution for this nightmare is for the King to 'break the dams' of his own creation, as we, similarly, need to confront the obstacles of our own creation to solve our contemporary migration problems.

I would like to conclude this section with a plot summary of the play: Prince Siyâvash, who had been trained since his birth to protect his father's legacy, returns to the palace. King KayKâvus is ill and wants him to be his successor. The King is concerned about the Christian Army which has dominated Europe and is planning to attack Persia and India. He has built dams on the shores in order to prevent them from entering Persia. Rejecting the King's request,

the Prince asks his mother Phaedra to accept the title. Phaedra, however, has fallen in love with her son. She reveals her love and Siyâvash accuses her of being in lust. Due to the rise of rumours about an *illicit* love between the Prince and Queen, the King wants them both to prove their innocence by undergoing the fire test in which the sinner burns. They both pass the test safely, but it results in deeper depression for the Prince and greater madness for the Queen. The King is concerned about rumours of Siyâvash's depression. As he decides to send foreigners to a Greek Island, he asks the Prince to manage the process. Siyâvash, who has been advocating for foreigners, disobeys the King's order and accuses his father of judging them. The King, however, reminds him of judging Phaedra for being in lust. This triggers a change in Siyâvash's thinking. The Prince plans to leave the country, but before leaving, he asks Phaedra for her forgiveness for judging her love. The Queen ambiguously accepts his apologies. After the Prince leaves, we witness the fiftieth anniversary of the coronation of King KayKâvus. This also marks two-hundred days without a boat arrival from Europe. During the King's speech on preventing foreigners and protecting the country, a messenger arrives and says Siyâvash was in the Aegean Sea when a flood broke the dam and killed him. KayKâvus, devastated, goes to Phaedra's room. Previous to his arrival, Phaedra has hung herself and Siyâvash brings down the body. KayKâvus enters. He is shocked to see Siyâvash alive. The Prince dies every day and then comes back to the King's dream at night. He tells KayKâvus that the nightmares will not end until he breaks the dams. Siyâvash brings the chair Phaedra used to hang herself. He opens the letter from Phaedra's hand, then puts it in his pocket and stands on the chair. Siyâvash hangs himself. The stage is full of water and it steadily rises.

4.2. Language

Generally, I always struggle to write, even in my native language. For this project, not only did I have to write in my second language, but also translate parts of my work from Persian into English. I consider this the main obstacle I encountered during my candidature. Writing a creative work in English was even more complicated than a theory-based thesis. I decided to start with a Persian draft and then translate it into English.

I chose the stories of Siyâvash and Hippolytus because they are common coming of age tales. Also, as mythic works which communicate meaning in ways that may be considered straightforward, they speak to a broader audience and simplify the process of cultural translation. I aimed to write for a contemporary audience and to keep the source text's original

sense of time and place. In other words, I planned to bridge two eras to signify the timelessness and placelessness of my play's themes.

In *Phaedra in Persia* I focused on modernising the language over modernising time and place. It would be a way to parallel contemporary and mythic times; a way to remind the audience that the present is not so different from the past and that the future might reproduce many features of the present. I set most scenes of the play in a palace in old Persia and set others in the main square of the city and on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Likewise, I attempted to find a dramatic language to preserve the gap between now and the past. In Iran, almost all of the dramatic works written about older times use literary prose. *Mourning for Siyâvash*, *Siyâvash-Khâni*, and *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* are some of these.

Using 'a modern form of literary language', Beyzai not only tries to show the difference between the present and the past, but also to achieve a new language for his contemporary audience. Nevertheless, the language of his *Siyâvash-Khâni* neither effectively bridges different eras nor is suitably modern for a contemporary audience. Rather, it uses an archaic language with no words drawn from other languages. In doing so, the writer's vocabulary appears unnecessarily confined. Beyzai seems, then, to be a contemporary Ferdowsi who aims to preserve Persian language. It is difficult to see the necessity of such an approach, as the language is currently freely spoken and does not face any cultural or political threat from outside forces. Here is an example of his language:

کاووس   و تو شمشیر، آرام گیر و بر سودابه ببخش؛ که اگر خونش بریزی آشوب از هاماوران برخیزد؛ و بر وی ببخش که چون در بند بودم مرا مهربانی‌ها کرد و ستوه نیاورد؛ و بر وی ببخش به پاس مهر دلم بر وی؛ و ببخش به پاس کودکان که از وی دارم؛ و بر وی ببخش که دور از خانه است در سرزمینی که هرچند گرامی‌اش دارد او و خود را هنوز در آن بیگانه می‌بیند. آری ببخش هرچند بر کاووس کی نیشخندها رود که همسرش با وی ناسپاسی کرد؛ و پادشاه را نیارد ازین پس چشم در چشم زیردستان بیندازد! (Beyzai 1996: 74)

The problem both Samini and Beyzai share relates to their use of language. The poetic prose both writers employ is difficult for contemporary audiences to understand. Samini's poetic language dominates the entire play and, in my opinion, proves frustrating for a modern audience. I learned from Samini's work not to overuse such poetic language. It neither works as a dramatic form nor makes sense to a contemporary audience. Here is an example of her language:

سیتا شاید این تویی در بطن من که زاده نمی‌شوی و نه! زاده نمی‌شوی. هر روز من سنگین‌تر می‌شوم از روز پیش و تو نمی‌دانی که چقدر دشوار است آدم این همه سنگین باشد. دشوار!... یک نفر در تو نفس می‌کشد. در ماه‌های نخستین؛ با ناباوری و شادمانی و انتظار. او یک تکه از تنت می‌شود و این سال اوّل! از او بیزاری به سال دوّم؛ هیچ سرودهٔ مقدّس زایش فرزند نیست که نخوانده باشی به سال سوّم؛ و هیچ انبان انبانه‌ای که نظر مپبون‌های معابد دور نکرده باشی و این چهارم سال(Samini...؛ پوست تنت باز و بازتر می‌شو، و این سال پنجم، و گشاده‌تر از پیش که سال ششم است. باز بگویم 2009: 42)؟

It took me a long time to overcome the fear of writing in contemporary language. I firstly wrote in prose and then had it read aloud to turn it into a conversational form. I wanted to know how people would converse in an old era. As a result, verbs and grammatical structures changed. I found a new language with some old and uncommon words, but in a modern conversational form. Gradually I changed the old conversations into contemporary ones. This is an example from the primary version of *Phaedra in Persia* which I wrote in Persian:

سیاوش غربتِ من پایانی نداره. دیدارِ شما خودِش روایتِ غربتِئه؛ سرگذشتِ سال‌هایِ دوری. چشمایِ شما راویِ فاصله‌ای‌ئه که مرزی قطور بینِ ما کشید. باری؛ خشنودم که شاد گشتین.

And its translation in English:

> **Siyâvash** *There's no end to separation. Seeing you is the tale of separation; the story of all the years of distance. But I'm happy seeing you happy.*

And after I finished the first draft, I added my revisions in English rather than translating from Persian. Here is an example of the language spoken by the King and his son:

> **Siyâvash** *You've left me alone with many questions.*
> **KayKâvus** *Ask.*
>
> Silence.
>
> **Siyâvash** *Why did you marry Phaedra if you have so many problems with Europeans? Because she was a Princess, not an ordinary person? Or because she was gorgeous?*
> **KayKâvus** *[Looks down at the ground.] She's still the most beautiful.*

> *Siyâvash*   *Is beauty enough to live with someone to death?*
> *KayKâvus*   *No; but it's enough to love them forever* (Act II, Scene 3).

I added some blank verses for the Queen. I kept them as they were because in my play she goes mad and starts speaking like a poet. Being inspired by Benjamin's idea of *afterlife*, I used modern poetry as a technique to connect the language in my play with an older time and the poetic language of Ferdowsi. Such language distances the audience from our era and makes them think about the past. Hughes' version showed me how a translation helps a text to develop through shifting from one language to another. It also provided me with ideas about how to translate poetry for the stage. Here is an example of his language in translation:

> *Phèdre*   *Where am I? What am I saying?*
> *Where did those words come from? My mind is strange.*
> *Some god has taken my senses.*
> *My face feels to be coming apart*
> *With all the turmoil. Oenone!*
> *I can't hide it – everybody*
> *Stares into my shame and its secret.*
> *I can't control this weeping* (Racine 1998: 11).

Drawing inspiration from Hughes' work and its analysis I presented in the third chapter, I decided to convey the *feeling*, not only the meaning, through my translation:

> *Phaedra*   *[…] and your name*
> *that I dare not mention,*
> *I know not*
> *which lips*
> *kiss*
> *your name…* (Act I, Scene 4)

Which is a translation of the following lines:

نامت که بر لبم نمی‌آید

نمی‌دانم

بر کدامین لب

بوسه می‌زند

نامت...

Phaedra is the only person who has a poetic voice. It helps me show her madness. It also helps her to avoid conducting a logical dialogue with other characters, especially in the second act. Likewise, as the play presents racism in reverse, I thought it would be interesting that the only character who knows Persian is a non-Persian.

Phaedra   تو را ورایِ خون می‌بینم.

عشق تصویرِ تو بود.

تو بر من الهام شدی،

و من بر عشق.

آنگاه تصویرِ تو

نقشِ رازی عیان یافت.

وای بر دودمانی

که عشق آن را براندازد...

[In Persian.] I see you beyond bloodline
you are the image of love
you were an inspiration to me
and freed me to love.
Then your true image
emerged as a secret is disclosed.
God help a dynasty that
is overthrown by love... (Act II, Scene 4).

Ultimately, language became a means to not only express and bridge cultures, but also communicate my own, very personal moments through the play.

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4.3. The Journey's Highlights

In *Phaedra in Persia* I was directly and indirectly inspired by different incidents, material, and sources. Apart from the case studies and theories, I was influenced by various things including my encounter with Australian culture, neo-Romantic music, the book I wrote on immigration, and, Jane Elliot's *Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes Exercise*.

After I moved to Australia, many friends of mine who wanted to have a similar experience asked about my journey. I told them if I knew more about this experience before embarking on it, I would, for instance, have faced less cultural shocks than I did and it would have taken me less time to integrate into the society. I did not want my fellow Iranians to suffer from the same problems. Therefore, in 2014 I started writing a book on immigration: *Sarzamin-e Namadari: Pishnahadati dar Bab-e Mohajerat* [*Step-Motherland: Tips for Immigration*] (2016).

For *Step-Motherland* I conducted more than seventy interviews with Iranians from North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, and Australia. I asked interviewees to share ten major immigration tips that they would communicate with a close friend who intends to live overseas. Those tips needed to apply to everyone regardless of his/her purpose, background, educational, emotional and financial situation, and so on. Although *Step-Motherland* shares many stories and data from the interviewees, blogs, and articles, its main goal is to discuss immigration in a general way.

The book was first distributed in May 2016 in Iran. At the time, I was more involved in the society here and hence more aware of the political situation in Australia. *Step-Motherland* focussed on immigration preparation, and handling the first year of settlement. But it also pushed me to think about the fundamental causes of the difficulties faced by immigrants. Although I could not use it as a primary source for my play, it became a part of a journey about migration, refugees, and racism - all relevant to this thesis.

Apart from homesickness, new conventions and cultural differences, feeling isolated and being identified as 'strangers' affects migrants' lives deeply. It is 'relationships of social antagonism that produce the stranger as a figure in the first place' (Ahmed 2000: 79). If migrants cannot overcome this social antagonism, they are likely to fail to find a sense of belonging in the new land and culture. This research, and the ongoing thoughts that arose, helped me to see migration from different points of view and via the experiences of others.

During my candidature I experienced racism in both internalised and externalised forms. The first day I went to the university I attended an internal Humanities Conference. A PhD

candidate, an Australian woman in her mid-fifties, asked about my nationality. 'Iranian', I replied. 'Oh darling… They come here by boat', she said patronisingly, wrongly presuming I was a pitiable refugee. I also encountered Iranians who supported the government's policies in stopping boats and sending refugees to Manus and Nauru. Although many of those asylum seekers were Iranians, some other Iranians, including some of those who also came to Australia by boat, did not sympathise with them. This situation, however, became my initial motivation to write *Phaedra in Persia*.

Feeling lonely and isolated, I dated a woman who was blonde and blue-eyed. She later admitted that she did not want her kids to have 'dark hair or brown eyes'. I am a brown-eyed man with a bunch of dark hair on my semi-bald head and I had never talked with her about marriage or having children. This very graphic encounter with racism reminded me of Jane Elliott's racism exercise.

Elliott is an anti-racism activist, educator, feminist, and an LGBT activist. She is mostly known for her Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes exercise. In this exercise she divides her participants in accordance with their eye colour. Then, through her facilitation she begins to replicate the racial prejudices in society, but delineated by blue or brown eye colour, rather than racial background. She does this to highlight the prejudicial discrimination usually targeted at minorities of race, but by using a trivial features such as eye-colour, shows the illogical and unjust manner in which race or nationality divides society.

> Elliott sets up an environment of dehumanization and learned helplessness for the blue-eyed people. She belittles, mocks, and derides people in the blue-eyed group to the point where they cannot perform simple tasks. They begin to feel stressed, confused, and physically sick. She repeatedly compares their responses to the experiences of people of color who endure racism daily (Williams 1999: 77).

Elliott's approach is rather brutal and nasty, but moving. In an interview, she claims that the Holocaust had motivated her to adopt this method:

> [o]ne of the ways they decided who went into the gas chamber was eye colour. When Martin Luther King died, I had to find a way to put my students through an exclusion exercise that would let these nice, white Christian children know how it felt to be discriminated against on the basis of something as stupid as the colour of their skin or eyes (2012: 14).

As a teacher, Elliott often used her exercise with young children. The first time she ran it, a nine-year-old brown-eyed student asked her '"[h]ow come you're the teacher here if you've got blue eyes"'? She deeply influenced Elliott: 'I learned an awful lot about my own frail ego, and violence and frustration. It taught me something about how it must be to tolerate that kind of remark every day' (2012: 14).

Elliott brought her exercise to Australia where whites and aboriginals participated. This was recorded as a documentary titled *The Stolen Eye*. The video shows 'how white supremacy belongs to a global history of colonial imperialism and racism, of which the American story is only one part', scholar Jay Gregory writes. 'The anger and pain expressed by the participants of aboriginal descent are searing, more explicit and confrontational than the behavior of the American people of color in *Blue-Eyed* [another Elliott's famous documentary]' (Gregory 2005: 105).

Elliott 'has been accused of humiliating children and waging a psychological war' (Northen 2009: 22). In response to the people who claimed that this exercise may cause psychological damages, she said:

> [t]hey should be worried about psychological damage to children - to black children, who are having the exercise run on them every day. The kids who came back for the reunion said it was the most important thing that ever happened in their lives and they'd never forget it. One former student said last week that he saw something that made him apply the exercise every day. Nathan Rutstein said: "Prejudice is an emotional commitment to ignorance." This exercise is an attempt to educate students so they are not as ignorant as their teachers (2012: 14).

Elliott's exercise opened a window to my play. In general, I decided to reverse the conventional flow of racism in my adaptation. And in particular, the second scene of the second act is directly influenced by her:

> **Hairdresser**   *So you colour your hair; but what will you do about your eye colour?*
> **Foreigner 1**   *There are some blue and green-eyed Persians as well.*

Hairdresser	*That's true. Many green-eyed ones. Our neighbour's daughter was blue-eyed. I loved her very much, but my father didn't let me marry her. 'They must be from a European background', he said.*
Foreigner 1	*You didn't love her very much then…*
Hairdresser	*I did, but when everyone is against you, you can't live peacefully. She wasn't pale though; she was olive-skinned* (Act II, Scene 2).

4.4. Conclusion: Versus Brook

In the first chapter I argued against Brook's appropriation of *The Mahabharata*. Now, one might ask, whether I have appropriated the *Siyâvash* story? Kane's approach in adapting *Phaedra's Love* is a key to this question. Moreover, Bharucha's criticism of Brook's *The Mahabharata* helps to clarify the differences between adapting a text from the creator's culture and the one from a foreign culture.

Brook universalises his original source text while Kane personalises it. I link the myth to my situation as a migrant in Australia and to my previous love relationships. From this point of view, I am personalising rather than universalising. I use an Iranian original source text and try to define my view on the matter from my cultural and personal perspectives. I have grown up in Iranian culture and have explored the origins of the *Siyâvash* story and its major adaptations. Brook, however, does not present extensive research on the background of *The Mahabharata* and its intracultural influence among Indians. He 'needs to ask: what does this epic mean to me? But this question, I believe, can be responsibly addressed only after the meaning (or meanings) of *The Mahabharata* have been confronted within their own cultural context' (Bharucha 1993: 70).

Brook decontextualises his original source text from its history and culture, and links it to his 'interculturalism' through Orientalism. His interculturalism, as Bharucha argues, is

> a vital component of globalisation, but also perhaps the flip side of it. Because, if in globalisation we are seeing the homogenisation of Western cultures into the Other of the 'developed world', in interculturalism – from the politics of my location, at least – it is possible to see how non-Western cultures have been encapsulated into the alluring Other of the Orient. […] the practice of interculturalism [from a Western perspective]

cannot be separated from the larger history of Orientalism in which it has been inscribed (Bharucha 1996: 206).

Brook claims that '[i]n *The Mahabharata* the descriptions of ultimate war are in exactly the same terms as the descriptions of Hiroshima, of Bhopal, and the way that nuclear war is described' (in Hunt & Reeves 1995: 261). I have experienced migration and its difficulties from both Iranian and Australian perspectives but Brook, as a British artist, neither sees, for example, the Hiroshima incident from a Japanese perspective, nor from an American perspective, therefore his comparisons come from assumptions, not lived experience.

> Brook has not grown up with the epic in his childhood, unlike most Indians, who have internalized *The Mahabharata* through a torrent of emotions, thoughts, taboos, concepts and fantasies. It is this internalization of 'epic reality' that enables millions of Indians to watch a television serial of the *Ramayana* – synthetic, tacky, sticky in the worst tradition of Hindu films – and transform this representation into a deeply spiritual experience (Bharucha 1993: 70).

Beyzai and Samini try to tell the untold parts of the Siyavash myth. Beyzai preserves the ritual from the epic and returns to the open-space style of traditional Iranian performance, and Samini focuses on the untold journey of the fire test. Likewise, I altered the stepmother to mother which is probably a missing part of the original story.

Brook is accused of being an Orientalist who has found non-Western material very helpful in order to garner money for his works. One might argue that his approach is not particularly economic, but his major intercultural works, as discussed in the first chapter, required a great deal of money to be produced. *The Mahabharata*, *Orghast*, and *The Conference of the Birds* are all adapted from an Oriental perspective, and are financially supported by the governments of Iran and India.

It is hard to find Brook's appreciation for his non-Western material. He does not value the language of the source texts. He asks Hughes to invent a new language (if language is a means to express culture, as discussed in the third chapter, how can we 'invent' a language with no deep connection with *Avesta*?), and at another point Carriere completely denies the archaic nature of Sanskrit because it reminds him of the Middle Ages. The language I use, however, is connected with Ferdowsi through a history of adaptation of which I have learned. I use my own

poetry, some poems still in Persian, and try to link my culture to the migration *crisis* through my experience as an Iranian migrant.

Hughes and Brook in *Orghast*, like Beyzai in *Siyâvash-Khâni*, use Manichean elements as a source of inspiration (in Hunt & Reeves 1995:157). Unlike Hughes, Beyzai's is an intracultural attempt to discover the roots of his culture, rather than an attempt to invent a completely new language. The visual and written resources help him to meet the challenge of incorporating ancient ritual into a contemporary adaptation. Brook and Hughes, however, invent an 'open and inviting language, inviting to a lost world we wanted to explore' (in Hunt & Reeves 1995:157). But why do they not learn the language of the lost world instead? This question becomes even more important when we consider the fact that *Orghast* was performed in Iran where that lost world exists.

Samini widely researched her source text and its various adaptations to avoid repetition and fuel her creativity. I have undertaken a similar process in adapting *Siyâvash*, and can confirm that research helped me to discover unfamiliar elements of the story and its history. My study on the background of the *Siyâvash* helped to explore the intracultural gaps between the current era and the past in order to explore the nature of Iranian cultural identity. This approach assisted me to incorporate contemporary aspects in *Phaedra in Persia*. As a case in point, KayKâvus's monologue is an intracultural attempt to show how Iranians view this character; a view which cannot be found through written texts, but through Iranians' intrinsic, accepted cultural ideas about him:

> **KayKâvus** *I've always done things based on the law to bring peace to this country. You don't know me well and future generations will inherit this not knowing* (Act I, Scene 5).

Apart from Brook, the other case studies of this thesis do not represent my definition of interculturalism either. Among them, only *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* mixes characters from different cultures. In my definition of intercultural theatre, introduced in the first chapter, including characters from various cultures does not necessarily bring an intercultural status to the work but it can be an initial step towards it. Samini combines elements of Persian and Indian cultures. The Fire Test exists in the mythologies of both cultures and it functions in the same way. Nevertheless, Samini does not fight against racism. Therefore, *The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes* does not represent interculturalism to me. In general, *Phaedra in Persia* opposes racism, and additionally uses secondary characters to show how broader cultural and political racism

becomes internalised, a phenomenon which I discussed in Chapter One. This can be seen in the beginning of the second act:

> **Foreigner 1** *Don't you think some of us deserve such chaos?*
>
> **Foreigner 2** *What do you mean?*
>
> **Foreigner 1** *We are barbaric people. Look how brutal our tortures are; guillotine beheading is so normal back there. We ask Christians to confess in the church and then arrest them for what they admitted. We can't even trust each other. To be honest, I'm more scared of our own culture than the war. That's why I'm not gonna go back. And I don't want the Persian Empire to let more Europeans in.*
>
> **Foreigner 3** *There were no problems to migration until you arrived, but now everyone should be stopped?*
>
> **Foreigner 2** *You're worse than Kâvus.*
>
> **Foreigner 1** *Be honest man. You talked about these things last night. We all had bad days back in Europe. Why should those people bring their culture here* (Act II, Scene 2)*?*

What Brook offers in his intercultural theatre, is an exhibition in which he connects very general ideas of different cultures under 'universal themes', while I connect my Iranian source text with an Australian audience through a personalised and intracultural approach informed by anti-racism, as well as my status as a migrant in Australia. People are inseparable from their cultures. Due to the connections and internalisation one has with her/his own culture, she/he cannot appropriate it. But it is very likely to happen when one tries to adapt a text from a foreign culture in order to present one's ideas and concerns.

5

PHAEDRA IN PERSIA

Based on Old Myths & Ugly Truths

Dramatic Personae

Siyâvash, Prince of Iran

Phaedra, Queen of Iran and Siyâvash's mother

KayKâvus, King (Shah) of Iran, Phaedra's husband and Siyâvash's father

Vizier

Hairdresser

Maid

Messenger

Foreigners

Soldiers

ACT I

1

Phaedra's Chambers in the Palace

Phaedra and Siyâvash upstage. Siyâvash looks indifferent. Phaedra is wailing. All of a sudden, she runs towards the other side of the stage yelling and seeking help. Before exiting, the doorway frame catches fire but Phaedra leaves unharmed. Witnessing the scene in calm and peace, Siyâvash does not move.

2

King's Hall

KayKâvus and Phaedra are sitting on the throne. Siyâvash arrives. Phaedra looks physically unwell.

KayKâvus	God bless you, Siyâvash. Thank you for joining us, jewel of Persia!
Siyâvash	Thank you! I'm happy to be with you.
KayKâvus	It's now a hundred days since you've returned. Time flies! Your mother and I have wished for your return. We're happy to be with you too. How happy the end of separation is.
Siyâvash	There's no end to separation. Seeing you is the tale of separation; the story of all the years of distance. But I'm happy seeing you happy.
Phaedra	That's true. Not seeing you was hard. It's always been hard. But now with you here, so handsome and strong, I think it was all worth it.
KayKâvus	Certainly! I reassure myself that the years of your absence have made you the one to protect my legacy.
Siyâvash	Your words embarrass me. Your legacy needs someone like you.
Phaedra	But you'll have no choice, as your father didn't. [*Pause.*] I feel a bit unwell.
Siyâvash	What has happened?
Phaedra	It's not important. Perhaps I should listen rather than talk. [*Continues in Persian*: I don't know to be either happy or sad for having you here…] نمی‌دونم از بودنت خوشحال باشم یا غمگین... [*Silence.*] Please keep talking.

KayKâvus [*To Siyâvash.*] All these years I tolerated the pain of your distance to have you now as my successor. It was never easy for me to leave you to Rostam – the world-famous hero – to learn war and carousal. One has children to give meaning to life. But we after the first cries of our baby gave you away. And then, sat counting the years in anticipation of your return.

Siyâvash Those days away furthered my power but depressed my soul. My hope is now for the days not yet passed. Even so, I don't believe I deserve what you have in mind.

Phaedra [*In Persian*: I'm sure my illness will end in my death.] شک ندارم این بیماری به مرگم ختم می‌شه. [*In English.*] Please pardon me. I should go back to bed.

Siyâvash Do you need help?

Phaedra No, thank you. I need to rest.

Phaedra steps out.

Siyâvash What's happened to my mother?

KayKâvus [*Taking a deep breath.*] It is strange. Illness has never touched her before now; but as you can see, since your return, she's taken to bed. I don't know what's happened to her.

Siyâvash It's strange to me. I remember the first time I saw her, she hugged me with vigor. Her arms were like a young woman's arms. It's hard to believe she's ill.

KayKâvus I wanted to talk to you with her present.

Siyâvash If her presence is required, don't rush.

KayKâvus It doesn't matter. She's aware of what I'm going to tell you.

Siyâvash I'm all ears.

KayKâvus I can't remain the King forever. Physicians have warned me that I won't last long.

Siyâvash Why are you all ill?

KayKâvus But what's happening to me is different from what your mother is going through. My incurable illness has lasted many years, while she'll get well soon.

Siyâvash What illness?

KayKâvus It's from the wars. I'm suffering from an old wound. It bleeds.

Siyâvash Does my mother know about it?

KayKâvus	Not that it's incurable.
Siyâvash	I wish I could do something…
KayKâvus	Ironically, it's only you who can do something.
Siyâvash	How? Tell me, please.
KayKâvus	You could take on the responsibility of all my affairs little by little.
Siyâvash	But…
KayKâvus	Now that my pain has grown worse, your return is the best news I could have had. My fear was always that death would take me before my time. Now, with my mind at peace, I shall adorn your head with the crown. [*Silence.*] Why are you silent?
Siyâvash	Sorry, but I don't think I'm the right one to fill your role.
KayKâvus	Say nothing. You've work to do once I've gone.
Siyâvash	That mission belongs to you, a lord in this world. I'm no match for that.
KayKâvus	Do you want me to leave the throne to a stranger?
Siyâvash	I just need you to leave me to myself.
KayKâvus	No more words Siyâvash. I don't wish to start the day like this.
Siyâvash	I've dedicated myself to succeeding you on the throne so far, but it can't go on. I can't ignore my own needs anymore.
KayKâvus	What's happened to you? Why do you speak this way?
Siyâvash	I didn't choose to be a Prince. Better to choose someone from the nobility or another royal family.
KayKâvus	What are you saying? The Europeans are getting ready to attack. In the past, I called upon Rostam to deal with war, but he's too old now. If you refuse, who can I send to war?
Siyâvash	Europeans have enough problems of their own not to attack.
KayKâvus	You must have heard of the Christian Army's plan to dominate the whole of Persia and India.
Siyâvash	We have always been fighting them.
KayKâvus	We had to protect ourselves.
Siyâvash	Really?! No spoils of war then?!
KayKâvus	Siyâvash! I can't believe it's you saying this! I'm ill and have no desire to attack them; it's to defend the country.
Siyâvash	Interesting! Both sides attack but it's named 'defence'!

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KayKâvus	War is evil. You never know why it happens.
Siyâvash	And like borders, it divides people.
KayKâvus	We can't live without borders. They protect our privacy. Just as we build a wall around our houses, we have to build one around our country.
Siyâvash	You've mistaken public and private lives! It ends in more wars and displacement. I don't want people to live away from their homeland.
KayKâvus	Sometimes war is inevitable. Europeans are making chaos and now are trying to draw us into it. Haven't you seen their attacks? Haven't you seen them beheading our ambassadors in their countries? Or attacking our people in Persia?
Siyâvash	That is a false accusation. We can't accuse Europeans just because we can't find the attackers.
KayKâvus	What do you mean? The Christian Army has claimed responsibility for the attacks!
Siyâvash	It's not proven yet! They would love to pretend they can do such things!
KayKâvus	What about the sexual assaults in Shiraz? They groped and raped women. And the men who tried to protect them got stabbed. Today in Shiraz no-one goes out alone. We accepted a large number of foreigners with open arms but now have to spend huge amounts of money to beef up our security.
Siyâvash	I'd never support those sex attacks. It was tragic for both Europeans and the country. I agree that some foreigners have made trouble. But I won't punish all of them for what a small group does.
KayKâvus	That 'small group' is going to dominate the whole world.
Siyâvash	To be honest, it wasn't only Europeans who made trouble. There were Indians and Persians as well.
KayKâvus	We have, but not as much as this year. The number of crimes has increased. Foreigners come from cultures that are in conflict with ours. They bring that conflict here.
Siyâvash	It looks worse to us when foreigners make mistakes.
KayKâvus	You speak as though you don't mind them making mistakes.
Siyâvash	Of course not. A big part of this chaos is made by the Europeans. But we can't accuse them of everything.

KayKâvus	The Christian Army has revealed that they're sending soldiers into Persia disguised as displaced foreigners. We can't open our arms to that threat.
Siyâvash	In the very beginning, we started the war and displaced them. Now we have to find a place for them.
KayKâvus	We didn't start the war; it was already happening.
Siyâvash	Why are we now going to attack them?
KayKâvus	So what should we do? If we don't fight the Christian Army, who will?
Siyâvash	A new war will make the situation worse.
KayKâvus	So we should sit around waiting to be attacked in our country? Or watch them behead our ambassadors?
Siyâvash	I doubt that.
KayKâvus	I'm lying you mean?
Siyâvash	We first need to educate our people about the Christian Army. Many Persian Christians and Persians with European backgrounds are fighting for the Christian Army. What makes one turn against one's own people, their own ancestry?
KayKâvus	There are lots of problems here. But now these people are fighting for the Christian Army. We need to find a solution.
Siyâvash	War is not the solution. We need to be kind first.
KayKâvus	If we let all Europeans in, Persia will turn into another Europe; perhaps a worse one.

The maid enters, this time desperately.

KayKâvus	[*To the maid.*] Speak up!
Maid	God bless the King. It seems the Queen's highness is in a critical condition. Your physician is seeking audience with you.
KayKâvus	Ask him in.

The maid bows and then leaves.

KayKâvus	We had better leave this to another time.

3

Phaedra's Room in the Palace

Phaedra is lying on the bed, so frail.

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Phaedra Who knows why the sun burns? Why winter sulks away from the sun and summer sneaks out from the corner of its eye? The sun is gazing at me; burning me... Of all of the world's atrocities, its death that adopts thousands of faces, yet remains in self-willed exile. It never calls on you except when uncalled for. It draws you into eternal silence before you utter your last words. It takes away the radiance of your eyes. It leaves you incapable of penitence and forces others to cry at the extent of your sins. Did you know that following my death, people's tears will shape a sea with the breadth of the Caspian and the depth of the Alps? I now know very well that the dominance of the world's waters on its dry lands is a sign of the extent of human sins. You shall never find a human alive without water or drink. We sin till we are satiated with life, till the day we all perish of tears, in tears.

Maid What's this pain that speaks in metaphor? The whole world looks up to your kind, my lady. You're honored in this land.

Phaedra Huh! 'Honored in this land'! So rootless in this alien soil! I'm the daughter of Europe, exiled from my motherland, cast off to you. Not even my corpse would be welcome in either soil. I shall die standing in the sky. I've seen it many times in my dreams.

Maid My lady, what does your young soul have to do with death? The Queen of Persia dwells in the heart of this land and in the hearts of its people.

Phaedra [*In Persian*: I don't even fear death anymore.] [*In* دیگه حتّی از مرگ هم نمی‌ترسم...] *English*.] I only fear disgrace; words that stain my tongue with shame.

Maid Do you have a secret in your heart?

Phaedra Be quiet! [*In Persian*: Secrets will be disclosed.] [*In* رازها برملا می‌شن.] *English*.] But I shall not speak. I shall not have any secrets. I'm in love, but not insane. In my youth, I was saved by Kâvus from barbaric people; this time I shall not betray him. I was the captive of the cruelest murderers. He helped me to escape Europe. Yet I became exiled from my motherland, the curse of Europe haunted me. Now Persia doesn't consent to be my step-motherland. But I won't allow anyone to pay except me.

Maid My lady, forgive me, but I don't understand a word you say.

Phaedra　It wouldn't be right if you did. I wouldn't forgive you even then.

Maid　All your life I've been your confidante, and now I'm a stranger to you; stranger even than a stranger.

Phaedra　It's for the good of you and this land. Leave me alone.

Maid　My lady…

Phaedra　Leave me alone.

The maid bows and leaves. Silence.

Phaedra　To me who has nightmares time and again

I wish sleep

were an eternal death

not death

an eternal sleep.

I wish time stopped breathing

and there was no choice,

no remorse,

no meaning

no judgment

and no deceit

in love.

This path

has no length or width

so I wish I

were not a measure of time

and that the shine of the moon

would not recall thee

or that sunrise

would not burn;

and trees, wind and bed

would not be reminiscent of thy smell

so I

at least

in this last moment

would have another reason than thou

to die

in the mortuary of your eyes ...

Phaedra rises from bed.

Phaedra No! There should still be a way. I can't let love send me into disgrace. Before being a lover, I'm a mother. And before a mother, I'm a Queen, the Queen of this court. I shall bring disgrace to its knees.

The maid enters.

Maid I know you wish to be alone, my lady, but the Prince is looking forward to meeting you. No doubt, three weeks of your absence have made him desperate to see you. Unfortunately, there's this untimely illness.

Phaedra 'Untimely'… This is a sad and pretty word.

Maid Would you give permission?

Phaedra Bring me rouge. And a perfume that would remove the odor of doubt and hatred.

Maid A perfume that…?

Phaedra Bring me rouge and perfume!

The maid bows and goes out. She returns with rouge and perfume. Phaedra makes herself up.

Phaedra Call him in.

The maid bows and leaves. Phaedra is standing in the middle of the scene with her back facing the doorway.

Siyâvash Hello!

Phaedra Great to see the sun shining upon us!

Siyâvash [*Silence.*] It seems frailty has made you a poet.

Phaedra [*Turns away. Silence.*] You believe I talk improperly?

Siyâvash No! I must have provoked it. Apparently, we get what we deserve.

Phaedra Have I offended you?

Siyâvash Forgive me, my Queen. I need a little of your time. I've been waiting for three weeks and now I must mention a problem and be gone.

Phaedra After such a long separation and those long days of my illness, you come to me only with formal talk of problems?

Siyâvash Wasn't this separation what you and the King wanted?

Phaedra Only to let you flourish.

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Siyâvash	But not to drink even a drop of my mother's milk?
Phaedra	And for me, to not have a single chance of embracing you … it's not proper to disrespect me.
Siyâvash	Whatever happens to us is what we deserve. Perhaps, life in exile and the nanny were what I deserved.
Phaedra	Siyâvash that was your father's decision.
Siyâvash	But you said nothing.
Phaedra	How could I say anything to Persian traditions? [*Silence.*] Why is fate so cruel? I've been so far from you that now I find you a stranger; a stranger I wish wasn't of my blood. The pain I suffer now is the love inescapably denied to us – you and I. KayKâvus sent you away with Rostam before I woke up. For years, I felt upset, though I didn't tell anyone. You were far away and I found only remoteness in the embrace of my young husband. A white blue-eyed woman rejected there, dejected here. How can she say anything? [*Silence.*] There may be a reason for all this.
Siyâvash	[*Indifferent.*] But that's over now.
Phaedra	Siyâvash!
Siyâvash	I have to go.
Phaedra	I need to speak to you.
Siyâvash	Leave it for later. Now listen. The King wants to call on me to be his successor.
Phaedra	Yes, I know.
Siyâvash	He's ill and dying. He has chosen me as his successor…
Phaedra	Dying?
Siyâvash	Listen… I won't accept the title. I want to propose you instead. You're the intimate companion of the King. And apart from me, there's no other child of his. For this palace to remain and the dynasty to last, this is the only solution.
Phaedra	Kâvus was here yesterday and he mentioned nothing.
Siyâvash	I suppose you both called me to the palace for this purpose. Separation and longing are empty words. You ruined my childhood and are aiming to ruin my youth… This aside. I'll return for your reply tomorrow.
Phaedra	Siyâvash…

Siyâvash steps out in total indifference. Silence. Now we see a spotlight on Phaedra's bed. Phaedra and Siyâvash are sleeping on the bed next to each other. Phaedra's tummy shows a bump. Twisting her body in pain, she wakes up. Siyâvash turns over. Caressing her stomach, Phaedra starts talking to her unborn child.

Phaedra   Sleep in peace, my pretty love. One day, I shall raise you the way I should have.

Siyâvash   [*Asleep, to himself.*] There'll be no dawn. I wish I had never come into this world.

Phaedra   [*To her unborn child.*] So sweet it feels when my man has been born from me. I will live this dream.

Siyâvash   [*Asleep, to himself.*] The world gives life to us, and in this way spreads evil.

Phaedra   [*To her unborn child.*] A lover feeding on my breasts will never part from me.

Siyâvash   [*Asleep, to himself.*] How bitter is this destiny that never matched my nature.

Phaedra   [*To her unborn child.*] You will be the happiest man in the world.

Siyâvash   [*Asleep, to himself.*] This world is an abyss. Leave me alone. Take my life before I am born…

Phaedra   [*To her unborn child.*] I count every second until I see you.

Siyâvash turns around.

4

The King's Hall and Phaedra's Chamber

This scene is a combination of two scenes that run parallel. At one end of the corridor, there is the King's hall in which the King and his Vizier are conferring, and at the other end, Siyâvash and Phaedra are speaking to each other again.

KayKâvus is furious.

KayKâvus But, how could this be?

Vizier I'm ashamed of what happened, but I assure Your Majesty the danger is gone.

KayKâvus Vizier, what are we doing on the borders? How can the Europeans approach us so easily? We spent a lot of money to build the dams. How can so many foreigners enter the country?

Vizier My lord, they pay shipmasters to show them secret ways into the country.

KayKâvus But the dams are at least fifty metres higher than the seas. And there are many soldiers on the dams. There must be someone helping them from within the country.

> *Light dims and the talk between the King and Vizier stops.*
> *Phaedra is standing in her room, more agitated than before.*
> *She is no longer pregnant.*

Phaedra Your bitter look has left me astounded and in suspense

wondering if I would have suffered

if I did not love you

as I do now?

> *Pause.*

How pitiable our soul is, for silence is always met with silence.

> *Silence.*

For something to end

a soul to be redeemed

for pain to break out

a human to be tortured

hearing one sentence would suffice;

tasting one kiss would suffice.

I wonder, as of now,

who would write

from which love

from which anxiety

from which land?

Farewell to you

makes life hell.

Being with you

makes love limbo.

She cries.

Why

does heaven sneer at me in this mayhem?

She wipes away her tears.

I must reject disgrace. Truth is the only salvation.

Siyâvash enters. Phaedra hugs him closely.

Phaedra	Welcome, my sun.
Siyâvash	Time is short and the King is waiting. I want to propose your succession. What's your reply?

Light dims and the talk between Siyâvash and Phaedra stops. The talk between the King and his Vizier resumes. Phaedra embraces Siyâvash in the dimmed light, in silence. Siyâvash buries his head in her shoulder. They stay this way, though this is separate from the mood dominating their talk.

Vizier	Since the war has become bloodier in Europe, more foreigners have reached our borders. In some cases, we don't have enough soldiers to protect the dams.
KayKâvus	This puts our security at risk. Also, Persians hate European people. I'm scared of a civil war.
Vizier	We've made foreigners' situation tougher, my lord. They cannot work or buy their own houses in Persia. They're not permitted to go to city centres. But none of this has made a difference.
KayKâvus	Find the masterships. Pay them three times more than the foreigners pay. If they still kept smuggling, we'll jail them. Or perhaps exile them to Europe.
Vizier	Yes, my lord.
KayKâvus	Any other news?
Vizier	It's about the palace. [*Pause.*] People have heard of the Queen's illness. There are also rumours about the Prince. And you as well…

KayKâvus [*Outraged.*] What nonsense do they say?

> *Light dims and their talk stops. The Queen and the Prince are no longer hugging.*

Phaedra Don't speak to me of the throne. Today, we must seek assistance from all that is good.

Siyâvash I understand no metaphors…

Phaedra I understand nothing…

every second passes in longing for you

and your name

that I dare not mention,

I know not

which lips

kiss

your name…

> *Light dims and the talk between Phaedra and Siyâvash stops. The talk between the King and his Vizier resumes. Phaedra embraces Siyâvash in the dimmed light, in silence. Siyâvash places his head on her shoulder.*

Vizier It's been said that you've called back the prince to nominate him as your successor.

KayKâvus What do they say about the Queen and Siyâvash?

Vizier They talk more about the child than the mother. They tell stories of the Prince's depression.

> *Light dims and the talk between the King and Vizier stops. The Queen and the prince resume conversation.*

Phaedra I'm in love with you.

Siyâvash [*Shocked.*] I was born out of your womb!

Phaedra I found life in your arms.

Siyâvash How can I believe the stories of my childhood then? Are you the lover who my father saved from death? How can one be so lost in lust?

Phaedra   [*She cries calmly.*] This is not lust…

Siyâvash   What is it then? Now that the King is dying and you have the power…

Phaedra   [*She interrupts him.*] Quietly! Please speak quietly. In this palace, the walls are thinner than a strand of hair.

Siyâvash   What do you want from me? I can't tolerate so much ridicule.

Phaedra   I want 'you' from you, Siyâvash. I want your arms.

Light dims and the talk between Phaedra and Siyâvash stops. The King and his Vizier resume talking. Phaedra embraces Siyâvash in the dimmed light, in silence. Siyâvash places his head on her shoulder.

KayKâvus   I'm concerned that if we don't attack Europe, they'll attack us.

Vizier   That's why you'd like to meet with the Prince?

KayKâvus   It is also a reason. He's now a superior commander who can save the country.

Light dims and the talk between the King and Vizier stops. The Queen and the Prince are no longer hugging.

Siyâvash   [*Calm.*] What havoc would King Kâvus create if he learned about all this…

Phaedra   [*More frustrated than before.*] Are you intent on telling him? How can one understand the heart of a lover?

Light dims and the talk between Phaedra and Siyâvash stops. The King and his Vizier resume talking. Phaedra embraces Siyâvash in the dimmed light, in silence. Siyâvash places his head on her shoulder.

Vizier   What has caused the Queen to grow ill?

KayKâvus   It's probably due to longing to see her child. It started when Siyâvash arrived and will improve if he stays.

Vizier   We must immediately inform the Prince of the state of the army. Time's flying.

KayKâvus [*He nods as a sign of agreement*.] Go and fetch the Prince. I think he's with his mother now.

> *The Vizier bows and steps out. Phaedra and Siyâvash are seen upstage. Siyâvash looks indifferent. Phaedra is wailing. All of a sudden, she runs towards the other side of the stage yelling and seeking help. Before exiting, the doorway frame catches fire but Phaedra leaves unharmed. Witnessing the scene in calm and peace, Siyâvash does not move.*

5

The King's Hall.

Phaedra is by herself. She rips her shirt from the front. She is half naked.

Phaedra I was in love while he was lost in lust. He was about to rape me. Or maybe he raped me? [*Thinking*.] He…? [*She touches her body. Then hides her breasts with her hands. She bursts into tears*.] How bitter is this destiny that never matched my nature. [*She touches her body and looks at it carefully*.] I feel his hands on my soul! I feel him stealing my heart!

> *Phaedra runs towards the other side of the stage while yelling and seeking help. The King steps in.*

KayKâvus Forty nights ago, my only child and my lover decided to shake the pillars of this palace. Since then, every time I lay my head on my pillow, I see my mother making love to me and giving birth to a child similar to my father. Every time, as soon as I draw my dagger to butcher myself, I'm dragged out of sleep into waking. Every night, I have this nightmare.

> *Long silence. He faces the audience.*

KayKâvus I've always done things based on the law to bring peace to this country. You don't know me well and future generations will inherit this not knowing. I won't have a good end. Recently, I've been thinking of having a direct conversation with you. There are things you should know. It's

actually every Persian's right to know about what the situation was and is. Otherwise, they'll lose the future to the past… There were forty nights when I could barely talk. I was shocked and speechless. Perhaps now it's time to converse with you… around fifty years ago, many of you were not born, it was after the death of the former King. The country was in great chaos. There were riots and violence everywhere. People were afraid. With God's and Zoroaster's help I created an army to eradicate brutality from this land. I killed many demons and exiled the rest of the sinners to Europe. We lost many great soldiers, but finally saved Persia. Under Zoroaster's wings, we were united again. It was Zoroastrianism that preserved the Persian Empire. And now, vindictive Christian Europeans aim to invade our country… we must be united. We should not let them use our problems against us. The Christian Army militants are crossing the borders disguised as displaced foreigners. They get help and get to know shortcuts and hideaways. Then they kill the defenceless… I'm not saying every foreigner is a threat, but the threat has come. Some say 'Jesus was a refugee'. I'm asking you, are there any similarities between these demons and Jesus? How can we compare such murderers with Jesus? Of course, I respect Jesus, Christianity and true Christians; but, there's also a huge threat in welcoming foreigners. We don't want to gamble with our security. On the other hand, we need to help the needy. Needless to say, we can't help everyone and then live with a threat; a threat that can change its face from time-to-time and kill us one-by-one. So regardless of who they are, everyone should be obeying the law. We're the first nation to have law. I've always shown that all are equal before the law, even if they're my son or my wife…

       Silence.

KayKâvus Yes; even if they're my son or my wife… I want to reveal the greatest secret of my life to you now. Forty nights have now passed since that affair. I cannot sleep any longer as I cannot bear to see this nightmare again. That night my wife ran out of her chambers shouting and accusing my son of raping her. My son refuses to talk about it. He repeats that not him nor his mother are sinners. I know nothing of the matter and believe

that knowing it would only add to the darkness of my life. However, the gossips are at work. And most degrading of all is that they're insisting on the enforcement of the law, on the 'adultery test'. By this law, if someone is suspected of having perpetrated adultery, they have to pass through a blaze to prove their guilt or innocence. Burning in fire is the punishment for the wrongdoer and coming through it safely is the gift for the innocent. Ironically, the entire city will witness this spectacle as though they've never sinned themselves.

Silence.

KayKâvus No one is ever beyond the law. My son and my wife should cross through the blaze and at least one of them will be punished. But, either way, the outcome will lead to my disgrace. I wish fire was hell itself and nothing more. I wish I took the dream of reaching the light to the grave. My destiny, however, is to pay for the wrongdoings of others.

Silence.

KayKâvus Tomorrow – when the sun is high at noon – they'll make a fire at the City Square and I shall burn while watching…

6

The Great City Square

The guards escort the Queen and the Prince. As they reach the King, they free both of them.

Phaedra [*To KayKâvus.*] Have you looked upon me as a whore who beds with others all these years? Or have you been seeking a pretext to take my young life before your time is over? How can a womanizer like you smear me with the trial by fire? [*She turns away from him.*] Sin is in your spirit. No wonder such a child was born from you. [*To Siyâvash.*] Why are you quiet? Today, you planned to sleep with your mother? Perhaps, tomorrow you would ask me for a child as your brother. Why did you return? You have fouled the city with your return. I shall not be punished for your desires. [*To all.*] Know you all, I'll not pass through the fire nor ignore

	numerous slanders. Siyâvash will burn in the fire so people will know this betrayer better.
Siyâvash	We both know the truth even if others don't.
Phaedra	Hold your tongue, you cheat!
Siyâvash	[*To KayKâvus.*] You still say nothing? I fear neither death nor sin. I shall pass through the blaze first. [*To soldiers.*] Set the fire alight!
	Soldiers prepare the fire.
Phaedra	I'm utterly amazed that you possess both dishonesty and shamelessness!
	Fire burns. Siyâvash passes through the fire. He is standing on the other side smiling.
Phaedra	My God!
Siyâvash	Your turn, Queen!
Phaedra	Never! It's all lies!
KayKâvus	If you refuse, you'll be hanged by law.
	Soldiers take her to the fire.
Phaedra	[*Yelling.*] Let go of me! I'm not yet so contemptuous as to seek to escape death.
	Soldiers leave her. Phaedra passes through the fire. She is standing unscathed on the other side as well. She stares at her arms, and then at Siyâvash. Siyâvash gazes at the King.
Phaedra	To me who has nightmares time and time again I wish this was all nothing but a dream I wish sleep were an eternal death not death an eternal sleep.
	Phaedra walks out of the scene stumbling. KayKâvus turns to the crowd.
KayKâvus	Show's over!
	He leaves the scene.

ACT II

1

The King's Hall

Vizier   What's your command?

KayKâvus   No discrimination; criminals have to be punished.

Vizier   Many of them are the breadwinners for their families.

KayKâvus   It is a crime to help foreigners in.

Vizier   Yes, my lord.

KayKâvus   Didn't we pay them triple?

Vizier   We did.

KayKâvus   So why should we free them? They help murderers to enter the country. They must be sentenced to the severest punishment.

Vizier   The law requires punishment, but even if we arrest all the shipmasters and helpers, it might still happen. Sea borders are impossible to protect.

KayKâvus   [*Outraged*.] Not acceptable! There must be a strong group helping them from within our borders. [*Silence*.] Why are you staring at me? Find a solution!

Vizier   My lord, our research shows that about ten per cent of the population of Persia are from a European background. The number increases in areas like the borders of the Caspian Sea or Mediterranean Sea. With such a big community, stopping other Europeans would be difficult. We should let them in. It would be beneficial as well. It would also have a positive impact on Europe and decreases hatred. The threat of war would be less. Our security needs won't be met by building dams and sending the army to the borders. Murderers have many ways to reach us.

KayKâvus   [*Thinking*.] Borders are important. Two of the recent attacks were done by boat people. If we had stopped them, we would have less victims. Once they enter the country, it's very difficult to find them.

Vizier   The truth is that they are displaced and have nothing to lose. If our perspective on them remains the same, the country will experience a great horror soon.

KayKâvus   Greater than this?!

Vizier   Yes, my lord. Nothing has happened yet.

KayKâvus	I can't let them in to 'help' our country. Although Persians hate Europeans and I don't appreciate this, they are with us yet; especially after my speech before the fire test. I don't want to lose their support.
Vizier	That's true. But we've heard bad things as well.
KayKâvus	What's happened?
Vizier	My apologies, but they seem to be doubtful about the Queen's stability; especially after the test.
KayKâvus	What do they say?
Vizier	My apologies, I'm just quoting reports for my lord. They say the Queen has gone mad.
KayKâvus	Nonsense!
Vizier	The Queen hasn't been seen in public for long. But, I'm more concerned about the Prince. He is your only child and should be taking an important role. By not doing so they assume the Prince is suffering from depression.
KayKâvus	I don't know which one is better: a sinful Prince or a depressed Prince.
Vizier	There's no doubt, sin is not worthy.
KayKâvus	Yes, your counsel is true.
Vizier	But we might be able to solve this problem.
KayKâvus	How?
Vizier	There might be a way to stop foreigners and also help the Prince to become popular again. Some of the Greek Islands are safe as they're far from the war. We could send foreigners to one of them and ask the Prince to manage the process.
KayKâvus	What is going to happen on the island?
Vizier	We use Greek labourers to build a small town.
KayKâvus	Why Greeks?
Vizier	Because then locals will be involved in the project and there'll be less tension about it.
KayKâvus	What's the capacity of the island?
Vizier	It's big enough.
KayKâvus	How would that be, if we're hosting them?
Vizier	When the quality of life on offer is no good, it would make ending up there unacceptable for the ones who have come to be in Persia.

KayKâvus	Not a bad idea, but it may increase hatred. I don't want our relationship with Europe to get worse. And I'm not sure if Siyâvash will agree to take part.
Vizier	My lord, we don't need to explain everything to the Prince. He doesn't even need to actually take a role in it; just having his name next to this project would be enough to make the Prince popular.
KayKâvus	I must talk to him.
Vizier	[*He bows*.] Yes, my lord.
KayKâvus	Time's short. Call Siyâvash in.

2

Next to the Dam

Foreigners, with their old dresses. A hairdresser colours their hair.

Hairdresser	So you colour your hair; but what will you do about your eye colour?
Foreigner 1	There are some blue and green-eyed Persians as well.
Hairdresser	That's true. Many green-eyed ones. Our neighbour's daughter was blue-eyed. I loved her very much, but my father didn't let me marry her. 'They must be from a European background', he said.
Foreigner 1	You didn't love her very much then…
Hairdresser	I did, but when everyone is against you, you can't live peacefully. She wasn't pale though; she was olive-skinned.
Foreigner 3	Why do Persians hate Europeans?
Hairdresser	No idea. They say Europeans are mostly thieves or criminals.
Foreigner 2	Have you ever seen such a thing?
Hairdresser	I heard about the rapes in Shiraz.
Foreigner 3	We're so sorry about that.
Foreigner 2	We gathered in the City Square for a week afterwards to condemn that.
Hairdresser	Did that work?
Foreigner 3	People were so upset and angry. No-one listened.
Foreigner 1	We always mess it up.

Hairdresser	Did you go to the City Square with them?
Foreigner 1	I didn't rape anyone. I don't need to apologise.
Foreigner 2	We didn't rape either, but whatever a migrant does affects all of us. We went to say it was wrong and we don't want people to be scared of us.
Hairdresser	I've heard there were some Persians among the attackers as well, but no-one talks about that. Even the Queen is affected by this misconception. As long as I can remember, people have accused her of all sorts of bad things. If she wasn't European, there'd be no such criticism. I remember once a young girl was burnt in the fire test, but everyone said 'she was innocent'. Now the Queen has passed through the fire, but they still say she betrayed the King! She wanted to leave Persia several times, but the King wouldn't let her. [*To Foreigner 1*.] Want your hair to be dark black or dark brown?
Foreigner 1	Dark black.
Foreigner 3	I used to work in a café. For half the minimum wage. I used to do anything and everything. One day I realised there's no shifts for me on the roster. Asked the head chief about it. 'No shifts means you're fired', he said. 'So why didn't they tell me', I asked. He didn't know. They don't even tell you that you're fired. Your name's there, the boss has just paid and thanked you for what you've done 'brilliantly this week', but the day after someone else has taken your role. They don't even tell you you're fired. It's like limbo. You're devastated.
Hairdresser	If you worked well for half the minimum wage, why did they fire you?
Foreigner 3	Someone else had asked for half of what I was paid.
Hairdresser	What the hell! You can't even buy food with that!
Foreigner 3	Doesn't matter. He had kids. I'm young and single. Under the wings of Christ, I'll find a good job soon.
Hairdresser	I advise you not to reveal your faith as Christians. Change your names as well.
Foreigner 3	What for?
Hairdresser	People don't like European names. You'd barely find a job. And it's… it's a bit dangerous anyway.
Foreigner 1	Why dangerous?
Foreigner 2	It's dangerous, he's right. They'll attack you if they find you by yourself.

Foreigner 1   Tell me a Persian name.

Hairdresser   Want to change your name? [*Thinking*.] Houman; it's one of the most significant names in Zoroastrianism.

Foreigner 3   What does it mean?

Hairdresser   'Thinker of good'. Here 'good' is the opposite of evil. I also heard that Houman means 'immortal'.

Foreigner 1   Marry a Persian and then, people will be having less problems with you.

Foreigner 2   I was about to.

Foreigner 1   You know the ways man!

Foreigner 2   I loved her.

Hairdresser   What happened then?

Foreigner 2   Once we were drunk. 'I don't wanna have white, blue-eyed kids', she said.

                                Silence.

Foreigner 3   So why did she want to marry you?

Foreigner 2   No idea.

                                Silence.

Foreigner 3   [*Talks to himself out loud*.] Who marries a white, blue-eyed person if they don't want to have white, blue-eyed kids? Why so much contradiction?

Hairdresser   Oh, well…

Foreigner 3   [*To Hairdresser*.] Would you like to be treated the same way if the situation was reversed?

Hairdresser   People are so scared of attacks. The threat is everywhere. We can't celebrate anymore. Festivals are all suspended. Some people report their family members if they help foreigners. Sorry that I can't be more helpful.

Foreigner 3   People like you are so valuable.

Foreigner 1   Colouring our hair is a huge favour man. We should get tanned and then life would be much easier.

                                Silence.

Foreigner 2   Why do we need to change ourselves?

Foreigner 3   Exactly! What's wrong with us? A few mad guys who are less than two per cent of our population have fucked up the whole of Europe. Why should others pay for that? We only want a bit of security. No great income,

no great facilities; just to be able to sleep peacefully with no deaths close by.

Foreigner 1 Don't you think some of us deserve such chaos?

Foreigner 2 What do you mean?

Foreigner 1 We are barbaric people. Look how brutal our tortures are; guillotine beheading is so normal back there. We ask Christians to confess in the church and then arrest them for what they admitted. We can't even trust each other. To be honest, I'm more scared of our own culture than the war. That's why I'm not gonna go back. And I don't want the Persian Empire to let more Europeans in.

Foreigner 3 There was no problems to migration until you arrived, but now everyone should be stopped?

Foreigner 2 You're worse than Kâvus.

Foreigner 1 Be honest man. You talked about these things last night. We all had bad days back in Europe. Why should those people bring their culture here?

Hairdresser Do they really behead people and make them confess in church?

Foreigner 2 [*To Foreigner 1*.] You see?

Foreigner 3 [*To the Hairdresser*.] Not always; only in rural areas. But it still exists.

Foreigner 1 It exists and that's the point. Have you ever asked why so many people go to see executions? Because they're brutal and full of hatred.

Foreigner 3 No way! Many go to beg for forgiveness!

Foreigner 2 Once I was there and they convinced them not to execute the convict.

Foreigner 1 Whatever. I don't want to see them here. Life is short and I don't want to lose my security. Here is secure. The city is clean and they don't hang people every single day.

Hairdresser I'm not a fan of execution, but I'd rather die than spend my entire life in prison. Why should we be tortured forever? They execute you and the torture is over.

Foreigner 3 I don't prefer either.

Hairdresser We can't find a utopia.

Foreigner 1 For me Persia is a utopia. Whoever is not happy here should go back home. No-one sent you an invitation.

Foreigner 3 [*Tries to attack Foreigner 1*.] Fuck off asshole…

Foreigner 2 stops him.

Foreigner 2 They'll arrest us all.

Foreigner 1 [*To the Hairdresser*.] Didn't I tell you? They're barbaric people!

Foreigner 3 Persia has committed to help displaced people, but assholes don't know about these laws.

Hairdresser laws?

Foreigner 3 Yes, Persia's laws. That's why we're here.

Foreigner 2 Especially for the ones who had to escape the wars.

Foreigner 3 Assholes should read more.

Foreigner 1 You're an asshole! Barbaric!

Foreigner 2 [*To Foreigner 3*.] Please stop it. Please.

Hairdresser If you'd like to fight each other, you should get out of here. [*To Foreigner 1*.] Done. [*To others*.] Who would like to be next?

Foreigner 2 sits on the chair.

3
The King's Hall

KayKâvus You should answer me; don't you care about foreigners' lives? Don't you see them dying in the seas every day?

Siyâvash If that's the problem, we can bring them by ships. I hate the death boats.

KayKâvus Imagine there are no attackers disguised as foreigners; if we bring them here, there will still be deep cultural conflicts. Persians hate them.

Siyâvash It's because of your policies.

KayKâvus Which policies?

Siyâvash There is so much discrimination against Europeans in rural areas. Foreigners don't stay in those parts of the country. Mostly they are the ones who don't like foreigners. You know why? Because by doing that, they raise their voice against city people.

KayKâvus They can be against city people and still accept foreigners. But the real problem is that they think foreigners steal their jobs!

Siyâvash	Which jobs? Foreigners do what Persians don't. Also, a bigger population will bring more job vacancies. The real problem is that rural people feel excluded and discriminated in their motherland. They don't know what the reason is. They feel marginalised by the city people and now are trying to marginalise the ones city people support.

Silence.

KayKâvus	What if you're wrong?
Siyâvash	Look, Father, today we have the opportunity to make a better life by welcoming them. We have the opportunity of building a country that benefits from the talents of many people and the different cultures they share with us. If we hate, we will always be living in suspicion, and they'll always be concerned about unfair laws. Have you ever noticed how much our people distrust each other? Depression and anxiety have increased dramatically.

Silence.

KayKâvus	If we send foreigners to Greece, there'd be no conflict or threat anymore.
Siyâvash	Greece?!
Vizier	My apologies, but I agree with the Prince that Europeans can enrich our society. I admit it won't happen overnight. A huge change in population will definitely cause problems. That's why I support the Greece Solution. We can send foreigners to Greece and then accept the best ones into the country.
Siyâvash	What?! So we'd categorise them as 'good' and 'bad' people?! And the most obedient ones get rewarded with living and working in a country with so much discrimination?
KayKâvus	[*Outraged.*] Why don't you understand? We're not talking about a couple of people. If we keep welcoming them, we'll end up exiled from Persia! I can see the day the Christian Army will have invaded the whole country.
Vizier	My lord, surely the Prince is not in support of chaos.
Siyâvash	It's hatred that makes chaos. I wish a flood would wash away all borders.

Silence.

KayKâvus	Well, after I die, you'll be the next King. You'll see that no matter what you do, the issues remain with you. It's not so easy to take responsibility for a country.
Siyâvash	I prefer not to play this fake role.
KayKâvus	You should beware that I agree that what we're doing at the moment is not probably the best we can. 'Time will reveal everything, leave it to posterity; it's a babbler and speaks even when no question is put', as a Greek playwright said. You have the opportunity to theorise your thoughts, but I have to make decisions to protect Persians. Not because they're better or worse people; but because I belong to them. Just as I like you more than the Vizier's children, I feel more responsible for Persians than Europeans. Things are getting worse very quickly…
Siyâvash	[*Interrupts*.] It will get worse in the future if we keep it this way.
KayKâvus	I can't let my people be murdered now in favour of a better future. Every attack has been done by Europeans, or Persians with a European background. It's risky to have more foreigners here. We're concerned about every festival or celebration. Our policies decrease the number of attackers. I would love to live in your utopia, but as a King, I have to be realistic.
Siyâvash	You're supporting horror. It's not realistic, it's short-sighted.
KayKâvus	I don't like your language.
Vizier	My lord, may I…
	Vizier exits. KayKâvus loses his control and falls on the floor. Siyâvash helps him to sit on the chair.
Siyâvash	Are you alright?
KayKâvus	My illness is getting worse.
Siyâvash	Do you want me to call the physician?
KayKâvus	I'm ok. Sit down. Sit.
	Silence.
KayKâvus	What do you want? You'd like to change the world? Perfect! Be my successor and start the project. You can't sit around and blame others. If you accept to manage the Greece Solution, you'd not only be helping me, but also the foreigners.

Siyâvash	You don't want this game to be finished. You want this to continue endlessly after your death.
KayKâvus	You have two options: first, take responsibility for the foreigners; or, just watch and see how I do that.
Siyâvash	You love to question people's dignity.
KayKâvus	I'm scared of the Christian Army. Not only me, but everyone else here. Isn't that obvious? Our laws don't let foreigners enter our country with no permission.
Siyâvash	Laws, laws, laws… they always support the stronger because they are the law makers. You'd like to put the whole of Europe through the fire as you put Phaedra and me. These are those laws.
KayKâvus	I hate the fire test, but it showed everyone that there's no discrimination in this country.
Siyâvash	There is! You judge everyone.
KayKâvus	[*Pause.*] You don't? Interesting to see you accused your mother of betraying me, and now you accuse me of judging!
Siyâvash	[*Pause.*] I didn't judge her!
KayKâvus	You did. You said she was 'lost in lust'. That was why I had to set the fire test.
Siyâvash	But I didn't ask you for the test.
KayKâvus	Since you accused her, I had to.
Siyâvash	You didn't trust us. That's all.
KayKâvus	I trust no-one, but I don't pretend that I do.
	Silence.
Siyâvash	You've left me alone with many questions.
KayKâvus	Ask.
	Silence.
Siyâvash	Why did you marry Phaedra if you have so many problems with Europeans? Because she was a Princess, not an ordinary person? Or because she was gorgeous?
KayKâvus	[*Looks down at the ground.*] She's still the most beautiful.
Siyâvash	Is beauty enough to live with someone to death?
KayKâvus	No; but it's enough to love them forever.

Siyâvash	She has gone mad.
KayKâvus	I'm going mad as well. I can't see her like this.
Siyâvash	Do you know people think you wanted to scare Europeans by putting Phaedra through the fire?

Silence.

Siyâvash	Many unanswered questions. [*Pause.*] What did you want to prove with the test?
KayKâvus	*You* accused her of betrayal! I had no other ways! [*To himself.*] When does this nightmare end?

Silence.

Siyâvash	I shouldn't have done that.

Siyâvash is about to exit.

KayKâvus	Where are you going?
Siyâvash	I don't know. I don't want to stay in Persia anymore.

On the other side of the stage Foreigner 3 hangs himself in silence.

4

Phaedra's Room

She is dancing gently and singing.

Phaedra	تو ایستاده بودی
	بی‌آنکه نامِ مرا نجوا کنی
	بی‌آنکه یادِ مرا رسوا کنی
	یا که بر اسبی سیاه
	بگذری
	از ماتم و از عشق و خیال.
	من
	نامِ تو را فریاد می‌کردم
	لباثم آتش می‌گرفت.
	تو

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از آتش می‌گذشتی

و نامِ خود را مُثله می‌کردی.

[*In Persian*.] You were standing

without murmuring my name

without disgracing your memory of me

or atop a black horse

ride away

from grief, love and fantasy.

I

shouted your name

my lips caught fire.

You

were passing through fire

and slaughtering your name.

　　　　　Silence. Siyâvash enters.

Siyâvash　Hi.

　　　　　Phaedra continues to dance and sing.

Phaedra　تو را ورای خون می‌بینم.

عشق تصویرِ تو بود.

تو بر من الهام شدی،

و من بر عشق.

آنگاه تصویرِ تو

نقشِ رازی عیان یافت.

وای بر دودمانی

که عشق آن را براندازد...

[*In Persian*.] I see you beyond bloodline

you are the image of love

you were an inspiration to me

and freed me to love.

Then your true image

emerged as a secret is disclosed.

God help a dynasty that is overthrown by love…

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Siyâvash	God help a dynasty that is overthrown by love…
Phaedra	[*To Siyâvash.*] You are from me and belong to me.
Siyâvash	I've come to say goodbye.

Phaedra continues to dance and sing.

Phaedra	این در و پنجره‌ها

این دیوار

قلبِ مرا عریان خواهند کرد...

[*In Persian*.] These doors and windows

this wall

will see my heart.

She stands face to face with Siyâvash.

Phaedra	[*In English*.] Love is no secret.
	It should not remain between us.
Siyâvash	Mum, I may not see you again. I'm leaving Persia…

Phaedra stops dancing and laughs. Silence.

Phaedra	بوسه

سکوتِ عشق است

و تو عصیان کردی

بر آنچه نشنیدی

بر آنچه نمی‌شنیدی.

من تو را می‌ستودم

که چه زیبا فریاد می‌کنی...

[*In Persian*.] A kiss

is the silence of love

and you raged

at what you did not hear

at what you could not hear.

And I praised thee

for how beautifully you screamed…

Siyâvash	I wish I had fallen in love as well… can't see you like this. Forgive me for what went on.
Phaedra	Forgive you?

She laughs. Silence.

Phaedra با خود گفتم

های قلبِ دیوانه!

نیرنگی دگر در کار است.

مَباد پا پس کشی،

به اسارت دَرتَیفتی،

یا حیله با حیله پاسخ دهی.

مرا ببین...

در من هزار عشق لانه کرده؛

هزار سهمِ ادا ـ ناشده.

[رو بهاو.] باشد که تو هم لانهای بسازی

در قلبی

در تنی

در زنی.

[*In Persian*.] I told myself,

'you crazy heart'!

There is another deceit.

Beware, not to step forward,

beware to avoid bondage,

don't answer deceit with deceit.

Look at me…

a thousand loves have nested in me;

a thousand unpaid shares.

[*To him.*] May you too nest

in a heart

in a body

in a woman.

Siyâvash I have to go somewhere I can find a woman like you. This land doesn't accept me.

Phaedra sobs quietly.

Siyâvash Will you forgive me?

Phaedra   With no forgiveness, we have war.

Siyâvash   Listen Phaedra… if we don't meet again, know that I'm so ashamed. Ashamed of your lips that didn't hide love. Ashamed of seeing you accused while I was judging your love. Ashamed of that ridiculous test.

He kisses her hand and exits.

Phaedra   [*In English.*] Love is no secret.

It should not remain between us.

5

The Great City Square

Trumpets ring victoriously.

Vizier   Today marks two-hundred days without a boat arrival. Two-hundred days with no deaths of innocent children in the seas or on the shores, and no arrival of attackers. Great Persia is more secure than ever. Our policies and efforts have paid off. Foreigners are sent to Greece and people who helped them in are sentenced to death. Great Persia was on the cusp of numerous conflicts and wars, but we're blessed to have a wise King who has protected us all. Today is the fiftieth anniversary of the coronation of King KayKâvus and we've gathered here to greet his majesty. I bid you all to rise to honour this man and all he's done for us.

KayKâvus, in pain, sits on the chair. He crowd quietens.

KayKâvus   My apologies that pain doesn't let me stand. I didn't expect you to celebrate the coronation anniversary. It is you that should be celebrated for all the years passed. Being the King is just a profession with no more benefit than what a merchant or a farmer offers. Together, we have made Persia great. We're blessed that no vindictive Christians are taking roles in our country. Christianity needed a rebirth which Persia, the land of Zoroaster, gave them. Now Persian Christians understand we are not against Christianity, but hatred. In favour of security, we stopped boats and foreigners. There were many kind and talented people among them; many beautiful children with bright futures. But we had to stop them, as the

Christian Army was using them to invade our peaceful land. Now we have made it clear that no-one can cross our borders without permission. We've sent them to Greece, which is a peaceful land. But, certainly, there are more opportunities here. So we'll accept the ones who meet our criteria and norms; the ones who have proven they will practice our laws. Today, symbolically, we welcome three foreigners who were born to European parents from a Christian background.

Soldiers bring the foreigners.

KayKâvus They unconditionally helped our guards and staff in Greece. They're highly educated people with great skills to contribute to Great Persia. I'd like you to treat them the way you treat your family members. And I hope they are good role models to motivate other foreigners who would rather live here.

A Messenger enters and talks to Vizier. They exit together.

KayKâvus Moreover, I'd like to emphasise that anyone, Persian or European, who helps foreigners in without permission, will be sentenced to death. Your money is spent on building dams and bringing you security. Our strong army is supported by you to protect our borders. We don't accept any excuses from criminals. And we don't negotiate with attackers.

Soldiers prepare to hang.

KayKâvus Today we will hang three men who put our national security at risk.

Soldiers bring three European prisoners. Vizier returns.
People talk to each other. Vizier talks to KayKâvus.

KayKâvus Who said that? [*Vizier points at the messenger. To the messenger.*] Where's Siyâvash? When did it happen?

Messenger My lord, the Prince was at the Aegean Sea when a flood broke the dam and…

KayKâvus Where is he now? Is he alright? [*Silence.*] Talk!

Messenger Unfortunately the Prince… the Prince was seriously hurt.

KayKâvus [*Shouting.*] Dead or alive?

The Messenger goes silent.

KayKâvus God, what's happening to me?

Vizier [*To people.*] Please leave the square. Soldiers are bringing the Prince.

The crowd leaves. Soldiers take back the three masterships.
Others bring Siyâvash and lay him down on the ground.

6

Phaedra's Room

Phaedra is singing a lullaby, and setting up the gallows in
the middle of the scene. Siyâvash is sitting in sorrow talking
to himself. It is as if they are simultaneously in two different
places.

Siyâvash زمان امان نمی‌دهد

تا تو را باز بینم

یا که از نهانِ خود

با تو من بازگویم.

مرگ

موهبتی‌ست

کز من دریغ می‌شود...

[*In Persian.*] Time does not let me

see you again

or talk to you

of my heart.

Death

is a bliss

denied to me…

Phaedra prepares the noose. She is holding a piece of
paper. She stands under the noose without looking at the
paper.

Phaedra دیدارِ تو

آرزویِ پیش از اعدام است

مرگِ دوبارهٔ من بر زمین.

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شهزادهٔ قلبِم

در دیدارِ تو

دار به‌بار نمی‌نشست

و عشقِ من

ـ خودکشیِ تدریجی‌ام ـ

مرا

مرگ را

ننگ را

می‌فرسود.

اینک من تمام می‌شوم

تا جهان با تمامِ عظمتش

از کینه تهی شود

در سکوتِ زبانِ سرخِ من

از تکرارِ نامِ عریانِ تو

سیاوش...

[*In Persian*.] Seeing you

is my dying wish

my second death on earth.

Oh you,

the Prince of my heart

the noose wouldn't take me

to meet you

and my love

my gradual suicide -

would wear me

down

death

and disgrace.

Now I will end

to let the world

become void of revenge

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and stop my sharp tongue

repeating your naked name

Siyâvash…

Siyâvash عشق و آبرو

با هم در ستیزند

و این پَلَشتِ جهان است...

[*In Persian.*] Love and reputation

are at war

and this is the vileness of the world…

> *Phaedra ties the paper around her wrist by a piece of thread. She sings as she goes up the stool and puts the noose around her neck.*

Phaedra به امیدِ دیدارِ تو

که تنها دلیلِ من

برایِ زیستن بود.

به امیدِ دیدارِ تو

که تنها دلیلِ من

برایِ مردن بود.

[*In Persian.*] Goodbye till we meet again

for meeting you was my only reason

to live.

Goodbye till we meet again

for meeting you was my only reason

to die.

> *She hangs herself. Screams and cries are heard from all over the place. Siyâvash goes to her and brings down the body.*

Siyâvash With no forgiveness, we have war.

> *He takes the letter off Phaedra's hand. He reads it. KayKâvus enters.*

KayKâvus You tell me; when does this nightmare end?

Siyâvash You started it and now you have to finish it.

KayKâvus	Are you dead or alive? You didn't drown in the Aegean Sea?
Siyâvash	I die every day and come back to your dreams every night.
KayKâvus	How does this nightmare end?
Siyâvash	Break the dams.
KayKâvus	Then the whole country will be flooded.

> *Siyâvash brings the chair Phaedra used to hang herself. He opens the letter from Phaedra's hand. Then puts it in his pocket and stands on the chair. While he's fixing the rope, he starts reading a poem. KayKâvus is watching him silently.*

Siyâvash Everywhere

there are signs of an inglorious murder

whereby

a man departs

from death

a woman from life

and a King from a city.

Everywhere

there are signs of greed

whereby

secret separates

from revenge

future from past

mind from memory.

In this fury

I am in love

and my fate is to be a man.

My mother is in love

and her fate is to be a woman.

Now time has come to a halt

and my words

open to this world.

I speak my fate:

I passed the fiery path of the world safe.

I am not scared of death.

He puts the rope around his neck.

Siyâvash   Father, don't you feel water under your feet?

KayKâvus looks at his feet.

Siyâvash   The dams are broken. Come here. Join me and Phaedra. If you hang yourself, you'll never get wet.

Siyâvash hangs himself. Water is coming higher and higher.

Afterword: Notes for Directors and Actors

Phaedra in Persia was initially written as the creative component of this PhD, but it is intended for production in the theatre. I had the opportunity to hear a reading of the play at the 2016 International Australian Studies Association (InASA) Conference in Fremantle, Western Australia. It was organised by the scholar and theatre practitioner Gabrielle Metcalf, with the assistance of her students. This event helped me clarify how the play might be staged. In this Afterword, I share my thoughts, as the playwright, on how *Phaedra in Persia* should be produced in both Australian and Iranian contexts.

As theatre practitioner John Collins once said, it is always more fascinating 'to get something on stage that didn't present an easy solution for being staged' (Collins 2014: 202). It is hard to find a staging format for adapting a canonical Iranian work for the Australian theatre. But harder than that is to find the right performance approach for Australian audiences.

In *Phaedra in Persia* the ethnic backgrounds of the actors must play a significant role. The play, and consequently its performance, aim to fight racism, as a mindset and as a political force. In this fight, the live stage has an important role to play:

> To conceptualize race in terms of embodiment is arguably the most useful way of attending to the various manners in which it performs. […] To embody race, to act it out, involves three interrelated activities: racial interpellation, the hailing or public identification of the body as raced; racial socialization, the acquisition of racial thinking as a result of environmental pressure; and racial habitus, the development of a set of behaviors inspired by the experience of having been interpellated and socialized (Young 2013: 9-10).

In casting *Phaedra in Persia* I strongly recommend choosing Middle Eastern actors, or actors descended from a Middle Eastern background, for the Persian characters, and white Australian actors, preferably from an Anglo-Saxon background, for Phaedra and the other European characters. This will assist the play's presentation of a reverse racism, and help put the Australian audience, who unlike refugees, are not (hopefully) oppressed or discriminated against, in a situation in which they can imagine the experience of both oppression and discrimination.

The love relationship between mother and son complicates and probably vitiates the idea of cross-gender casting. It is better if male actors play the role of male characters and female actors play the role of female ones. As the play already reverses the assumption of 'how a refugee looks', reversing the characters' genders could result in a distraction from the play's core message (fighting racism).

In Australia, the status of marine-arriving refugees, especially those detained in Nauru and Manus, is as inhabitants of a no exit zone. Refugees are not able to return to their homelands, nor are they allowed to enter Australia. Phaedra describes it as a 'rejected there, dejected here' situation (Act I, Scene 3) in which a person has no control over her/his life. The purpose of my play is to create that sense of limbo in performance. This helps an audience understand internally (i.e. emotionally) what is happening externally (i.e. politically). A smaller venue is preferred for this reason. I see the ideal one as a thrust stage 10-12 meters in length and 3-4 meters in width, used in the traverse. The audience would sit on both sides, close to the actors. The stage would remain fixed as scenes change – which would turn the venue into a claustrophobic corridor-like space.

In essence, the entire play is the King's nightmare. This makes *Phaedra in Persia* a subjective performance piece more focussed on the characters' behaviours than on their actions. Theatre director Katie Mitchell describes such difference as

> […] the difference between being a documentary film-maker where you're an external eye putting together objective information about what human beings do and a film-maker who tries to get inside the head of the subject and show the person's uniquely subjective viewpoint (Mitchell 2014: 216).

My play aims to push the audience into becoming part of the experience they are watching. The closer to the actors and the stage they are, the easier it is to be involved. In Act 1, Scene 5 the King speaks directly to the audience, turning them into actors rather than passive viewers.

When approaching this and similar scenes, it is worth considering Mitchell's experience of recreating the technique of stream of consciousness in her stage adaptation of the novel *The Waves*:

> […] the only way to do this was to get close inside each character's head. This is where the video came in as it allowed us to get very close to each character's face, so close that the audience could see a thought flicker behind an eye or tiny movement of one of

the 200 muscles on the face. We used the cameras to get close to these tiny details and then we added a text as whispered quicksilver into the microphones to simulate thoughts. (Mitchell 2014: 219)

A note on the possibility of performing *Phaedra in Persia* in Iran. I was recently asked. 'Do you think you can stage it in Iran given the relationship between mother and son?' Having worked for a decade as a theatre practitioner, critic and festival organiser there, I still cannot answer this question confidently. Censorship is a complicated and ambiguous process, as individuals and authorities interpret current laws and prohibitions differently.

To give an example from my own experience. Before publishing my book *Step-Motherland*, I decided to publish some short articles drawn from it. I wanted to familiarise Iranian readers with my research and prepare them for the forthcoming book. I contacted a best-selling newspaper and they carried two articles. Some readers complained my tone was unduly negative: 'you've made it to Australia and now you're portraying this journey as a tough one to stop others'. It was surprising as I mentioned only obstacles every migrant encounters in her/his journey overseas. The newspaper requested a third article. I sent them one but they did not publish it. I heard later that, according to Iran's Supreme Leader, the government was concerned that too many people were leaving Iran ('Khamenei az "Nokhbegan-e Javan" Khast Keshvar ra Tark Nakonand' 2015). I was told my articles *supported* the idea of migration. It was the opposite of what my readers had claimed. At the same time, the government had to decide whether to allow the publication of my book, with or without changes. They permitted its publication in full, with the third newspaper piece they had originally banned.

The same government made two contradictory decisions. Censorship works this way. I cannot be confident that the Iranian government will permit a company to stage my play, but as the mother and son relationship occurs within a mythic context, there is no obvious reason to ban it. The only scene which will definitely cause problems is Act I, Scene 5 in which the Queen rips her shirt from the front. At the right time, the director must think of an alternative.

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APPENDIX:

THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE PLAY IN PERSIAN

کا[بـ]ـوس

بر اساسِ داستانِ سیاوشِ فردوسی

هومنِ زندی‌زاده

شخصیت‌ها

سیاوش، شاهزادهٔ ایران

سودابه، مادرِ او و ملکهٔ ایران

کیکاوس، پادشاهِ ایران، همسرِ سودابه و پدرِ سیاوش

وزیر

ندیمه

سربازان

شخصیت‌ها

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ساختارِ کلّیِ صحنۀ نمایش

صحنه یک دالان است به‌طول ده تا دوازده متر و عرض سه تا چهار متر.

تماشاگران در دو سویِ این راهرو و در امتدادِ طولِ آن

بسیار نزدیک با بازیگران نشسته‌اند. در فاصله‌ای

این راهرو با تغییرِ مکان‌های مختلف همچنان ثابت خواهد ماند

و تغییری در ماهیتِ کلّیِ آن ایجاد نخواهد شد.

صحنۀ نخست: اتاقِ سودابه در کاخ.

سیاوش و سودابه در انتهایِ صحنه دیده می‌شوند. نورِ موضعی بر آن‌ها می‌تابد. سیاوش بی‌اعتنا ایستاده است. سودابه سخت می‌گرید. مضطرب است. ناگهان برخاسته و فریادزنان در حالی که طلبِ کمک می‌کند، به‌طرفِ سمتِ دیگرِ صحنه می‌دود. هنگامِ خروجِ وی، قابِ درگاه آتش می‌گیرد، ولی سودابه به‌سلامت خارج می‌شود؛ گویا آتش را ندیده باشد. سیاوش که در سکوت و آرامش شاهد این لحظات بوده، پشت به‌تماشاگران می‌کند. خنجری در آورده و یقۀ پیراهنِ خویش را از پشت می‌درد. نور می‌رود.

صحنۀ دوّم: بارگاهِ کاخ.

کیکاوس بر اریکه نشسته. سیاوش وارد می‌شود.

سیاوش	درود بر کاوس‌شاه.
کیکاوس	درود بر تو سیاوشم. دلتنگِت بودم. خوش اومدی که این روزها نقلِ تو آذینِ ایرانشهرئه.

کیکاوس فرزندش را در آغوش می‌کشد.

سیاوش	سپاس. شادم از با شما بودن.
کیکاوس	تو آرزویِ منی؛ ای بازگشته به‌من. خوشا بودنِت. خوشا پایانِ غربت.
سیاوش	غربتِ من پایانی نداره. دیدارِ شما خودش روایتِ غربتئه؛ سرگذشتِ سال‌هایِ دوری. چشم‌هایِ شما راویِ فاصله‌ای‌ئه که مرزی قطور بینِ ما کشید. باری؛ خشنودم که شاد گشتین.
کیکاوس	حق با توست. ندیدارِ[15] تو سختئه. هَماره سخت بوده. لیک، اینک که تو رو چنین زیبا و برازنده می‌یابم، خودم رو تسلّی می‌دم که سال‌هایِ نبودنِت از تو مردی ساخته که میراثِ من رو صیانت خواهد کرد.
سیاوش	امیدم اینئه که کلماتِ شما از وجودِ من شرم نکنن. میراثِ شما، چون شما‌یی می‌طلبه که آگاهین و فاتح.
کیکاوس	فروتنی تاجی ست نابرازنده بر سَرت. گریزی نخواهی داشت، چونان که من هم نداشتم. این همه سال رنجِ دوریت رو پذیرفتم تا امروز تو رو چون کوه، تکیه‌گاهِ خویش بکنم. برای من هرگز آسون نبود که تو رو نزدِ رستم ـ پهلوانِ جهان ـ به‌یادگیریِ رزم و بزم بسپرم. آری، فرزند زاده می‌شه تا زندگی رو مفهومی پیوسته ببخشه. ما ـ من و ملکه ـ امّا، پس از

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[15] این کلمه را در میانِ اشعارِ گروسِ عبدالملکیان دیدم. از ابداعاتِ من نیست.

آغازین شیون‌هاي نوزادمون در انتظارِ او سال‌هاي رفته رو شمردیم. اینک که در قامتِ مردي بالغ بازگشته‌ی، جوانی و شادابیت کاخ رو سرشار کرده.

سیاوش عمرتون دراز باد. اون روزها تَوانم رو افزود و نهانم رو آفسُرد. امیدِ من به‌روزهاي نرفته ست. لیک گمون نمی‌کنم براي اونچه در سر داشتین، لایق باشم.

یکی از ندیمه‌هاي کاخ وارد می‌شود.

ندیمه پادشاه به‌سلامت باد. ملکه عذرِ حضور خواستن. گویا همچنان ناخوشن.

با اشارۀ پادشاه تعظیم کرده و خارج می‌شود.

سیاوش براي مادر اتّفاقی افتاده؟

کیکاوس [نفس عمیقی می‌کشد.] عجیبئه. ناخوشی هرگز به‌ش راهی نداشت، ولی درست از زمانی که بازگشتی، در بستر افتاده. شادانه محیاي دیدارت بود. نمی‌دونم چه شده.

سیاوش عجیبئه. وقتی به‌دیدارش رسیدم، چنان در آغوشم کشید که گویی در دَستهاش توانِ زنی جوان جاری‌ئه. باورِش سختئه که چنین مسخِ بستر بشه.

کیکاوس بگذریم. می‌خواستم در حضورِ او بگم، ولی در غیابش باید ناچار باید سخن آغاز کرد.

سیاوش اگه حضورِ مادر لازمئه، شتاب نکنین.

کیکاوس بهتر این بود که او هم باشه. هماره ترجیح دادم در بزنگاه‌هاي زندگیم او رو شریکِ لحظه‌ها کنم. باري، وقتی براي اتلاف نیست.

سیاوش یکسر به‌گوشم.

کیکاوس پسرم، من دیگه توانِ پادشاهی ندارم. طبیبان می‌گن به‌زودی خواهم رفت.

سیاوش شما رو چه شده؟ چرا همه بیمارین؟

کیکاوس بیمار و بی‌تیمار. امّا اونچه بر من رفت، از اونچه بر مادرِت می‌گذره سَواست. دردِ لاعلاجِ من ریشه در سال‌ها دَوونده، حال آنکه مادرِت به‌زودی توانِش رو باز خواهد یافت.

سیاوش دردِ لاعلاجِ شما چیئه؟

کیکاوس کسی نمی‌دونه.

سیاوش کاش از من کاری ساخته بود...

کیکاوس از قضا تنها تو توانِ یاریم رو داری.

سیاوش چگونه؟ با من بگین.

کیکاوس می‌باید کَم‌کَم زمامِ امور رو به‌دست بگیری.

سیاوش ولی...

کیکاوس	در این ایّام که دردم فزونی گرفته، بازگشتِ تو خوش‌ترین خبرئه. هراسِ من، مرگِ پیش از موعد بود. اینک با خاطری آسوده تاج از سر برمی‌گیرم و سرِت رو به‌شوکت مزیّن می‌کنم. [سکوت.] چرا سخن نمی‌گی؟
سیاوش	جسارتِ من رو بپذیرین، ولی گمون نمی‌کنم شایستهٔ جانشینِی شما باشم.
کیکاوس	هیچ مگو. تو پس از من رسالتی داری.
سیاوش	رسالت از آنِ شما ست که خداوندگارِ جهانین. من خودم رو کمتر از اون می‌بینم.
کیکاوس	می‌خوای تاج و تخت رو به‌غیر واگذار کنم؟
سیاوش	می‌خوام من رو به‌حالِ خویش واگذار کنین.
کیکاوس	سخن کوتاه کن سیاوش. خوش ندارم روزم رو اینگونه آغاز کنم.
سیاوش	شهریارا، من تا به‌امروز خودم رو وقفِ جانشینِی شما کردم، ولی دیگه کافئه. نمی‌تونم بیش از این از خویش بگذرم.
کیکاوس	چه شده؟ چرا چنین سخن می‌گی؟
سیاوش	راه و رسمی که زندگی بر من تحمیل می‌کنه، چیزی نیست که بخوامِش. چیزی نیست که بتونمِش. نیک‌تر اونئه که از میونِ شایستگان و وابستگانِ قدرت یکی رو برگزینین.
کیکاوس	چه می‌گی؟ اینک افراسیاب و تورانیان تدارکِ حمله می‌بینن. در گذشته رستم رو به‌نبرد می‌فرستادم، ولی اکنون کهولتِش اجازه نمی‌ده. اگه سر باز بزنی، کی رو به‌جنگِ افراسیاب بفرستم؟
سیاوش	جنگ خوش‌ئه. جنگ جانِ جهان‌ئه.
کیکاوس	سر از کارِ تو در نمی‌آرم...
سیاوش	من از زندگانی سیرم. جنگ، نبردِ با زندگی‌ئه. این بزم رو با کمالِ میل می‌پذیرم.
کیکاوس	سیاوش!
سیاوش	مگه خودتون من رو به‌رزم نمی‌خونین؟
کیکاوس	آری رزم، نه بزم! با سری چنین پُرباد، نه تنها خودِت، که ایران رو هم فدا خواهی کرد.
سیاوش	پادشاه من رو قضاوت می‌کنن...
	ندیمه دوباره و این بار سراسیمه وارد می‌شود.
کیکاوس	[به ندیمه.] لب بگشا.
ندیمه	حالِ ملکه رو به‌وخامت‌ئه. طبیبِ دربار تمتای دیدارِ شما رو دارن.
کیکاوس	بگو وارد شَن.
	ندیمه تعظیم کرده و خارج می‌شود.
کیکاوس	بهترئه این گفتگو رو به‌بعد واگذاریم.

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صحنهٔ سوّم: اتاقِ سودابه در کاخ.

سودابه ناتوان بر تخت افتاده.

سودابه   کسی چه می‌دونه که چرا آفتاب سوزانئه؟ که چرا زمستان، از قهرِ خورشید و تابستان از گوشه‌چشمِ اوست؟ کسی چه می‌دونه که این بار آفتاب بر من خیره گشته... از قساوت‌هايِ جهان، مرگ‌ئه که به‌هزار چهره در آمدن‌ئه، ولی هَماره در تبعیدی خودخواسته ست. جز سرزده سر نمی‌زنه. تو رو پیش از اونکه واپسین کلام رو فاش بگی، به‌سکوتِ ابدی می‌کشه. فروغ رو از چشم‌هات ستانده، و توانِ توبه رو می‌گیره. و دیگران رو وامی‌داره تا به‌قدرِ گناهانِ تو، بگیرند. هیچ می‌دونستی پس از مرگِ من، اشکِ آدمیان دریایی به‌پهنايِ خزر با عمقی به‌بلندايِ دماوند خواهد داشت؟ امروز نیک می‌دونم که غلبهٔ آب‌هايِ جهان بر خشکی‌هايِ او، نشان از وسعتِ گناهانِ آدمی ست. آدمی رو بی‌آب و بی‌نوش زنده نخواهی یافت. ما چندان گناه می‌کنیم تا سیراب بشیم از زیستن. تا روزی که همه در اشک و از اشک جان بدیم.

ندیمه   این چه دردی‌ئه که به‌زبانِ استعاره سخن می‌گه؟ دنیا دل به‌چون شمایانی گرم داره بانو. شما شوربخت نخواهید بود. شما افتخارِ این سرزمینین.

سودابه   آه! «افتخارِ این سرزمین»! چگونه منِ بی‌ریشه رو با خاکِ غریب پیوند می‌زنی؟ من دختِ هاماورانم؛ رانده از پدر، مانده از شما. حتّی جنازه‌ام رو هیچ خاکی به‌خودش نمی‌گیره. من ایستاده در آسمان جان می‌دم. این لحظه رو بارها به‌خواب دیدم.

ندیمه   بانويِ من! ملکهٔ ایران در دلِ این بوم و مردمانِش جای داره. جان جوانِ شما رو چه به‌مرگ؟

سودابه   دیگه از مرگ هم نمی‌هراسم. هراسِ من از رسوايی‌ئه؛ از کلماتی که زبانم رو به‌شرم آغشته می‌سازن.

ندیمه   آیا رازی در سینه دارین؟

سودابه   زبان در کِش، رازها همه برملا می‌شن. من امّا سخنی نخواهم گفت. رازی نخواهم داشت. مجنونم و دیوانه نَه. اگر در جوانی با عشقم به‌کاوس سرزمینِ پدریم رو ویران کردم، این بار با ایران چنین نخواهم کرد. کاوس در اسارتِ پدرم بود. بیگناه بود. ولی چون نجاتش دادم، از پدر رانده شدم و نفرین خاکِ هاماوران من رو در بر گرفت. این بار هم نمی‌گذارم کسی جز من تاوان بده.

ندیمه   بانويِ من، من رو ببخشین که هیچ از کلامِ شما درنیافتم...

سودابه   جز این هم روا نباشه. تو رو نمی‌بخشیدم اگر درمی‌یافتی.

ندیمه   عمری همرازِ شما بودم و اینک از هر غریبه غریب‌ترم.

سودابه   صلاحِ تو و صلاحِ این مُلک در این‌ئه. من رو به‌حال خود بگذار.

ندیمه   بانو...

سودابه   من رو به‌حالِ خود بگذار.

ندیمه تعظیم کرده و خارج می‌شود. سکوت حاکم است.

سودابه

برای منی که کابوس می‌بینم مدام

کاش خواب

مرگی ابدی بود

نه مرگ

خوابی ابدی.

کاش زمان از نفس می‌افتاد

انتخابی نبود

پشیمانی سودی که هیچ

معنا هم نمی‌داشت

و در یک کلام

قضاوتی در کار، نه

و عشق را

حیلتی دیگر، نه.

این راه

طول و عرضی ندارد

پس کاش من

حجمی از زمانه نمی‌بودم

و با درخشش ماه

یادت نمی‌کردم

یا با طلوع خورشید

نمی‌سوختم

و درخت و باد و بستر

سفیر بوی تو نمی‌بودند

تا من

لااقل

این دم واپسین

دلیلی جز تو می‌داشتم

برای مردن

در غسّالخانهٔ چشمانت...

سودابه از بستر برمی‌خیزد.

سودابه نه. همچنان باید راهی باشه. نباید عشق رو مجالِ رسوایی بدم. من پیش از اونکه عاشق باشم، یه مادرم. پیش از اونکه مادر باشم، ملکهٔ این دربارم. باید ننگ رو بهتنگ بیارم.

ندیمه وارد می‌شود.

ندیمه بانو، می‌دونم که خواستِ شما بر عزلتئه، ولی شاهزاده در انتظارتون هستن. سالیانِ دوری بی‌شک ایشون رو مشتاق دیدارِ هرروزه‌تون ساخته. افسوس از این بهارِي نابهنگامِ.

سودابه نابهنگام... این تلخ‌ترین و زیباترین تعبیرئه...

ندیمه آیا رخصت می‌دین؟

سودابه [لحنش بهحالتِ پیشین بازمی‌گردد.] برای من سرخاب بیار. و عطری که بوي شکّ و نفرت از میون ببره.

ندیمه عطری که...؟

سودابه عطر و سرخاب بیار.

ندیمه تعظیم کرده و خارج می‌شود. بهسرعت با عطر و سرخاب بازمی‌گردد. سودابه خود را می‌آراید.

سودابه بگو وارد شه.

ندیمه تعظیم کرده و خارج می‌شود. سودابه در میانهٔ صحنه و پشت بهدرگاه ایستاده است. با ورودِ سیاوش، رو بهاو می‌کند. لحنش دوباره تغییر می‌کند.

سیاوش درود.

سودابه چه سعادتی که آفتاب بهما رخ نمود.

سیاوش آفتاب نزدِ ماهروِي شما هیچئه.

سودابه لیک ماه درخشش از خورشید داره!

سیاوش [سکوت.] گویا ضعف و ناخوشی شما رو شاعر کرده.

سودابه [رو می‌گرداند. سکوت.] بهگمونِت سخنی ناسزا گفتم؟

سیاوش ناسزا وجود نداره. هرچه بر آدمی بره، سزای اوست.

سودابه تو رو رنجوندهم؟

سیاوش ملکه من رو ببخشن. کوتاه وقتِ شما رو خواهم گرفت. باید دردسر رو بازگفته و برم.

سودابه بعد از عمری، سهمِ من گفتگویی رسمی در بابِ دردسرها ست؟

سیاوش	مگه عزمِ شما و پادشاه بر این دوری نبود؟
سودابه	تا تو بار بگیری سیاوش.
سیاوش	و حتّی قطره‌ای از شیرِ مادر نصیب نبرم.
سودابه	و من هم لحظه‌ای مجالِ در آغوش کشیدنت رو نداشته باشم... سزا نیست با من درشتی بکنی.
سیاوش	هرچه بر ما بره، سزایِ ماست. لابد غربت و دایه هم سزایِ من بوده.
سودابه	سیاوش، اون تصمیمِ پدرت بود.
سیاوش	و شما دم نزدین.
سودابه	چگونه دم می‌زدم؟ [سکوت.] چرا زمانه چنین بی‌رحمئه؟ چندان از تو دور بودم که حال، تو رو چون غریبه‌ای می‌یابم؛ غریبه‌ای که کاش از خونِ من نبود. دردی که می‌کشم، مِهری‌ئه که لاجرم از ما ـ من و تو ـ دریغ شد. کاوس‌شاه تو رو پیش از اینکه به‌هوش بیام، با رستم روانه کرده بود. سال‌ها دلمرده بودم و اینها رو با کسی باز نگفتم. تو در غربت بودی و من در آغوش عشقِ جوانی‌ام غریبی می‌دیدم. زنی زینجا مانده و زانجا رانده، چگونه دم بزنه؟ [سکوت.] شاید در اینها حکمتی‌ئه.
سیاوش	[بی‌تفاوت.] امیدوارم زین پس خوش باشین.
سودابه	سیاوش!
سیاوش	بنایِ موندن ندارم.
سودابه	با تو سخن دارم.
سیاوش	باشه برایِ بعد. اینک تنها گوش فرا بدین. کاوس‌شاه می‌خواد من رو جانشینِ خودش کنه.
سودابه	چه کنه؟
سیاوش	بیارئه و رو به‌موت. می‌خواد من رو جانشینِ خودش کنه. من عهده‌دارِ چنین لقبی نخواهم شد. می‌خوام ملکه رو به‌جای خودم پیشنهاد بدم. شما تنها امین و مونسِ شاهین. جز من هم که فرزندی نیست. پس آگه قرارئه کاخی برقرار باشه و سلسله‌ای برجا، این تنها راهِ چاره ست. در خبر باشین که نه مرگ خبر می‌کنه، نه شما راهِ دیگه‌ای دارین.
سودابه	کاوس دیروز اینجا بود. چرا با من چیزی نگفت؟
سیاوش	خواهد گفت. گمونم برای همین من رو به‌کاخ خوندن. دلتنگی و غربت همه حرف‌ئه. دیروز کودکیم را تباه کردن، امروز جوونیم را نشونه رفتن. بگذریم. فردا برای شنیدنِ پاسخ بازمی‌گردم. روز خوش.
سودابه	سیاوش...

سیاوش بی‌آنکه اعتنا کند، خارج می‌شود. نور می‌رود. سکوت.

حال نور موضعی بر تختِ سودابه می‌تابد. سودابه و سیاوش

کنار یکدیگر خفته‌اند. شکمِ سودابه برآمده است. کمی از درد

بهخود پیچیده و بیدار میشود. سیاوش پهلو بهپهلو میشود. سودابه دستی بر شکمِ خویش کشیده و با کودکِ نازاده سخن میگوید. لحنِ هر دو تغییر کرده است.

سودابه	آرام بخواب معشوقِ زیبایِ من. روزی تو را آن سان که میباید، بار میآورم.
سیاوش	[در خواب با خود.] بامداد سر نمیرسد. کاش پا در این جهان نگذارم.
سودابه	[با کودک نازاده.] چه رؤیای شیرینی ست وقتی که مردِ من از من زاده شود. من این رؤیا را زندگی خواهم کرد.
سیاوش	[در خواب با خود.] جهان با همدستی ما جان میدهد، و شرّ میفروشد.
سودابه	[با کودک نازاده.] معشوق که از پستان من بار گیرد، هرگز از من جدا نخواهد شد.
سیاوش	[در خواب با خود.] چه تلخ است سرنوشتی که با سرشتم نمیخواند.
سودابه	[با کودک نازاده.] تو خوشبختترین مردِ زمین خواهی بود.
سیاوش	[در خواب با خود.] دنیا برزخ است. مرا بهخود واگذارید. پیش از آنکه زاده شوم، جان از من بگیرید...
سودابه	[با کودک نازاده.] برای دیدارِ تو لحظهها را میشمارم.

سیاوش پهلو بهپهلو میشود. نور کمکم میرود.

صحنۀ چهارم: بارگاهِ کاخ و اتاقِ سودابه.

این صحنه در واقع تلفیقی از دو صحنه است که بهطور همزمان و موازی با یکدیگر پیش میروند. در یک سویِ راهروِ بارگاهِ کاخ است که در آن پادشاه و وزیر مشغولِ رایزنی هستند، و در سویِ دیگر سیاوش و سودابه بارِ دیگر بهگفتگو هستند. شخصیتهای هیچیک از دو گروه قادر بهشنیدنِ سخنانِ طرفِ مقابل نیست. همچنین جهتِ ایجادِ تمرکزِ بیشتر بر هر یک از دو سویِ صحنه، نورِ قسمتی که در آن گفتگو برقرار است، بیشتر بوده و نورِ سمتی که در آن سکوت در آن جاریست، تا حدِّ ممکن کم میشود. جهتِ سهولتِ در خواندنِ این صحنه، دیالوگها با ایجادِ فاصله بینِ خطوط از یکدیگر جدا شدهاند. این فاصلهها تا زمانی که دو طرفِ گفتگو با یکدیگر تلاقی کنند، ادامه خواهد داشت.

کیکاوس خشمگین است و بر اریکه بند نمی‌شود. او در خلوت
با وزیر در گفتگوست.

کیکاوس   آخه چگونه ممکن‌ئه؟

وزیر   این حقیر از اونچه رفت شرماگین‌ئه، امّا خاطرتون جمع باشه که خطر دفع شد.

کیکاوس   وزیر، شما در مرزها چه می‌کنین؟ چگونه تورانیان چنین ساده به‌ما نزدیک می‌شن؟

نور کم شده و گفتگوی پادشاه و وزیر موقّتاً متوقّف می‌شود.
همزمان در سوی دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش می‌یابد. سودابه در
اتاقِ خویش ایستاده و پریشان‌تر از قبل است. او دیگر باردار
نیست.

سودابه   مانده‌ام حیران و آویزان از تلخِ نگاهت
که مگر اگر دیگر دوستت نمی‌داشتم
چگونه عذاب می‌کشیدم
اکنون؟
[مکث.]
فغان از نهانِ آدمی که سکوت هماره مسکوت می‌ماند...
[سکوت.]
برای آنکه چیزی تمام شود
روحی رها شود
برای اینکه دردی آغاز شود
آدمی وادار شود
شنیدنِ همان یک جمله کفایت می‌کند؛
چشیدنِ همان یک بوسه کفایت می‌کند.
من مانده‌ام زین پس
کدامین کس
از کدام عشق
از کدامین دلهره

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از کدامِ شهرِ زمین

خواهد نوشت؟

وداعِ با تو

زیستن را بهدوزخ میماند.

بودنت

عشق را چو برزخ میسازد.

[میگرید.]

آخرِ بهشت

کجای این مملکه ریشخندم میکند؟

[اشکهایش را پاک میکند.]

باید ننگ را بهتنگ آورم. راستی، یگانه راهِ نجات است.

سیاوش وارد میشود. سودابه بهپیشوازش رفته و او را سخت

در آغوش میکشد.

سودابه	خوش اومدی آفتابِ من.
سیاوش	وقت تنگئه و کاوسشاه منتظر. باید از جانشینیِ شما بگم. پاسختون چیئه؟

نور کم شده و گفتگویِ سیاوش و سودابه موقّتاً متوقّف میشود.

همزمان در سویِ دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش مییابد. گفتگویِ

پادشاه و وزیر آغاز میشود. با آغازِ این گفتگو، سودابه دوباره

سیاوش را در همان نورِ اندک و این بار در سکوت در آغوش

میکشد. سیاوش سر بر شانۀ وی گذاشته و او را تنگ

میفشارد. در این حین اثری از بیتفاوتی و خشونتی که در کلامِ

شاهزاده بود، دیده نمیشود. آنها در این حال میمانند و این جدا

از حال و هوایِ حاکم بر گفتگوی ایشان است. اینک پادشاه

بهوزیر گوش فراداده و تمرکز بر گفتگویِ ایشان است.

وزیر	خداوندگارا، از روزی که رستم سلاحش رو بهسیاوش داد و شما شاهزاده رو فرا خوندین، افراسیاب احساسِ خطر
	میکنه. بنایِ حمله دارن تا مگه اینکه بتونن پیش از ثباتِ سپاهِ ماکاری از پیش ببرن. وَر نه، بر اونها مسلّمئه که شاهزاده
	جنگاوری یگّه و کارآزموده هستن.

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کیکاوس	رای باید زد.
وزیر	اکنون دربار کمی آشفته ست. ملکه در بسترِ بیماری‌ان. اخباری هم از پریشانیِ شاهزاده به‌گوش می‌رسه. شایعاتی هم دربارهٔ شما...
کیکاوس	[برافروخته.] چه یاوه می‌گن؟

نور کم شده و گفتگویِ پادشاه و وزیر موقّتاً متوقّف می‌شود. همزمان در سویِ دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش می‌یابد. ملکه و شاهزاده دیگر در آغوشِ یکدیگر نیستند. با بازگشت به‌گفتگو، حال و هوا دوباره به‌شکلِ قبل بازگشته و بی‌اعتنایی‌هایِ سیاوش ادامه خواهد داشت.

سودابه	با من از تاج و تخت سخن مگو. امروز باید از تمامِ سپیدی‌ها مدد جست.
سیاوش	زبانِ استعاره نمی‌فهمم...
سودابه	من هیچ نمی‌فهمم...

هر لحظه به‌انتظارِ تو می‌گذرد

و نامت

که بر لبم نمی‌آید

نمی‌دانم

بر کدامین لب

بوسه می‌زند

نامت...

نور کم شده و گفتگویِ سیاوش و سودابه موقّتاً متوقّف می‌شود. همزمان در سویِ دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش می‌یابد. گفتگویِ پادشاه و وزیر آغاز می‌شود. با آغاز این گفتگو، سودابه دوباره سیاوش را در همان نورِ اندک و این بار در سکوت در آغوش می‌کشد. سیاوش سر بر شانهٔ وی گذاشته و او را تنگ می‌فشارد.

وزیر	گفته می‌شه که شما شاهزاده رو برایِ جانشینیِ خود فرا خوندهین.

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کیکاوس	اینها یاوه ست، یاوه.
وزیر	من رو ببخشین. قصدم جسارت نبود.
کیکاوس	دربارهٔ ملکه و سیاوش چه می‌گن؟
وزیر	بیش از مادر، صحبت از فرزندئه. از افسرده‌دلیِ شاهزاده داستان می‌سازن.

نور کم شده و گفتگویِ پادشاه و وزیر موقّتاً متوقّف می‌شود. همزمان در سویِ دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش می‌یابد. ملکه و شاهزاده دیگر در آغوشِ یکدیگر نیستند. با بازگشت به‌گفتگو، حال و هوا دوباره به‌شکلِ قبل بازگشته و بی‌اعتنایی‌هایِ سیاوش ادامه خواهد داشت.

سودابه	من مجنونِ توأم.
سیاوش	[برافروخته.] اینها یاوه ست، یاوه. من از زهدانِ تو زاده شدم.
سودابه	و من در آغوشِ تو زنده شدم.
سیاوش	دیگه چگونه قصّه‌هایِ کودکیم رو باور کنم؟ تو همون پاکباخته‌ای هستی که پدرم رو از مرگ نجات داد؟ چگونه آدمی تا کمر در شهوت فرو می‌ره؟
سودابه	[آرام می‌گرید.] این شهوت نیست...
سیاوش	پس چی‌ئه؟ حال که دیدی پادشاه بیمارئه و قدرت رو به‌دست داری...
سودابه	[حرفش را قطع می‌کند.] آرام. تو را قسم می‌دهم که آرام سخن بگو. در این کاخ دیوارها از مو باریک‌ترند.
سیاوش	از من چی می‌خوای؟ تابِ این همه مسخرگی رو ندارم.
سودابه	سیاوش، من از تو تو را می‌خواهم. آغوش تو را می‌خواهم.

نور کم شده و گفتگویِ سیاوش و سودابه موقّتاً متوقّف می‌شود. همزمان در سویِ دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش می‌یابد. گفتگویِ پادشاه و وزیر آغاز می‌شود. با آغازِ این گفتگو، سودابه دوباره سیاوش را در همان نورِ اندک و این بار در سکوت در آغوش می‌کشد. سیاوش سر بر شانهٔ وی گذاشته و او را تنگ می‌فشارد.

کیکاوس	دیگه چه می‌گن؟

وزیر	سایهٔ شومِ جنگ‌ئه که به‌گمونِ مردم از آشفتگیِ دربار ناشی می‌شه. سپاهیانِ ایران مرزها رو به‌خوبی در اختیار دارن، لیک به‌ترئه سازمانِ سپاه سامانی دوباره بگیره. نیاز به‌فرمانده‌ای مقتدر هست.
کیکاوس	سیاوش رو فرمانده خواهم کرد.
وزیر	جسارتم رو ببخشین، ولی آیا می‌پذیرن؟
کیکاوس	گمونم مشتاق باشه. نمی‌دونم چرا هنوز نیومده. شاید به‌عیادتِ مادرش رفته.

نور کم شده و گفتگویِ پادشاه و وزیر موقتاً متوقّف می‌شود.
همزمان در سویِ دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش می‌یابد. ملکه و
شاهزاده دیگر در آغوش یکدیگر نیستند. با بازگشت به‌گفتگو،
حال و هوا دوباره به‌شکلِ قبل بازمی‌گردد.

سیاوش	[خونسرد.] چه محشری می‌شه اگه کاوس‌شاه اینها رو بدونه...
سودابه	[پریشان‌تر از قبل.] می‌خوای با او سخن بگی؟ ولی قلبِ عاشق را چگونه باز می‌شود شناخت؟

نور کم شده و گفتگویِ سیاوش و سودابه موقتاً متوقّف می‌شود.
همزمان در سویِ دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش می‌یابد. گفتگویِ
پادشاه و وزیر آغاز می‌شود. با آغازِ این گفتگو، سودابه دوباره
سیاوش را در همان نورِ اندک و این بار در سکوت در آغوش
می‌کشد. سیاوش سر بر شانهٔ وی گذاشته و او را تنگ
می‌فشارد.

وزیر	ناخوش‌مزاجیِ ملکه از چی‌ئه؟
کیکاوس	لابد از دوریِ فرزند. با اومدنِ سیاوش چنین شد و با موندنش بهتر از این خواهد بود.
وزیر	باید شاهزاده رو بی‌درنگ در جریانِ امورِ سپاه گذاشت. زمان گریزپا ست.
کیکاوس	[سری به‌تأئید تکان می‌دهد.] پس برو و شاهزاده رو با خودِت بیار. گمونم در کنارِ مادرش باشه.

وزیر تعظیم کرده و خارج می‌شود. در همین حین سودابه و
سیاوش در انتهای صحنه دیده می‌شوند. نورِ موضعی بر آنها
می‌تابد. سیاوش بی‌اعتنا ایستاده است. سودابه سخت می‌گرید.
مضطرب است. ناگهان برخاسته و فریادزنان در حالی که طلبِ
کمک می‌کند، به‌طرفِ سمتِ دیگرِ صحنه می‌دود. سیاوش که

در سکوت شاهد این لحظات بوده، پشت بهتماشاگران میکند.

خنجری در آورده و یقۀ پیراهنِ خویش را از پشت میدرد. نور
میرود.

صحنۀ پنجم: بارگاهِ کاخ.

کیکاوس تنهاست.

کیکاوس چهل شبِ پیش یگانه فرزندم با یگانه معشوقهام عزم کردن تا ستونهایِ این کاخ رو بلرزونن. زان پس هر بار سر بر بالین گذاشتم، مادرم رو بهخواب دیدم که با من در میآمیزه و فرزندی بهسانِ پدرم از ما زاده میشه. سپس، مادرم با پسرمون درآمیخته و فرزندی بهسانِ من زاده میشه. هر بار پیش از اینکه خنجر برکشم و خودم رو سلّاخی کنم، از خواب بهبیداری رونده میشم. این کابوس هر شبِ منئه؛ «کابوس کاوس».

سکوتِ طولانی. از جا برخاسته و رو بهتماشاگران میکند.

شما من رو بهدرستی نمیشناسین و این ناآشنایی میراثِ آیندگان نیز خواهد بود. سرانجام خوشی نخواهم داشت و در شاهنامهها از من بهتلخی یاد خواهد شد. لیک، اینک تنها فرصتیئه که میتونم با شما سخن بگم... من نامیرا بودم. یکصدوشصت سال بر زمین حکومت کردم و جز تاریکی هیچ ندیدم. همهجا رو دروغ گرفته بود. نیکسیرتان بدانچه لایقش بودن، نمیرسیدن و بدطینتان حاصلِ رنجِ ایشان رو درو میکردن. ظلماتِ مطلق بود و عدالتی ناموجود وردِ زبانِ زمین. در این هیاهویِ بیم و نومیدی، برایِ ایجادِ عدالت، چاره رو در تقسیمِ روشنی با مردمان یافتم. اگر نور و ظلمت بهتناسب وجود میداشت، شاید زمین رو عدالتی راستین در میگرفت. امّا نور از آنِ آسمان بود. پس بهآسمان رفتم و با دیو و دَد جنگیدم. خورشید رو بر فرازِ زمین قرار دادم و در ازاش نامیراییم از دست رفت. در این سفر هفت خوان رو پشتِ سر گذاشتم. چشمهام تیره شد، جانم ناتوان، و بختم شور. تا اینکه رستم سررسید. دیوِ سپید روکه از نبرد با من ناتوان گشته بود، کشت و شهرتی عالمگیر یافت. آری، اون پهلوانِ بزرگیئه، لیک راهی که رفت رو من هموار کرده بودم. نیک بدونین، همیشه منزلت زانِ کسیئه که کار رو بهانجام میرسونه... دیگربار رستم با فرزندش سهراب بهنبرد برخاست. جان از او ستاند و نام از من. افسانه ساختن که کاوس نوشداروئی داره که مرهمِ هر دردئه. حال آنکه اینها توطئه بود. اصلاً نوشداروئی بهکار نیست. که اگه بود، من اکنون از وعدۀ مرگ رها میشدم. تاوانِ فرزندکشیِ رستم زانِ من شد، زیرا کسی حرفِ حاکمان رو باور نمیکنه. حاکم، نخستین محکومِ قدرتئه. یاوهگویان حتّی من رو بهزنبارگی هم متّهم کردن. بهراستی چرا مردمان از دروغ باکی ندارن؟ باری، سخن زین دست بسیارئه و عمر کوتاه. ولی شمایان بدونین که چرا از من بهنیکی یاد نخواهد شد.

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سکوت.

می‌خوام بزرگ‌ترین رازِ جهان رو بر شما عریان کنم. چهل شب از اون ماجرای گَذا می‌گذره. من دیگه به‌خواب نمی‌رم، چرا که تابِ کابوسِ کاوس رو ندارم. اون شب همسرم نعره‌زنان از اتاقش خارج شد و پسرم رو به‌دست‌اندازی متّهم کرد. از دیگرسو، پسرم می‌گه که مادرش در پیِ کامجویی بوده و پیراهنِ از ـ پشت ـ دریده‌ش رو شاهد می‌گیره. من هیچ نمی‌دونم و گمونم دونستنِ اینها تنها بر تاریکیِ دنیا اضافه می‌کنه. لیک یاوه‌گویان بیکار ننشسته‌ن. از همه سخیف‌تر، بر اجرایِ قانونِ «ظنّ زنا» اِبرام می‌ورزن. بر طبقِ این قانون، هر گاه ظنّ زنایِ کس یا کسانی در میون باشه، باید از آتش بگذرن تا گناه و بیگناهی‌شون ثابت بشه. سوختن در آتش، سزایِ مجرمانه و نجات از اون، سهمِ راست‌کرداران. مضحکه اینجاس که در این معرکه تمامِ شهر به‌تماشا می‌ره. گویی تا کنون گناهی نکرده باشن.

سکوت.

هرگز کسی ورایِ قانون نیست. همسر و فرزندِ من باید از این مضحکهٔ آتش بگذرن و لااقل یکی از ایشان مجازات خواهد شد. امّا چه سیاوش گناهکار باشه، چه سودابه، حاصلش بدنامیِ منئه. کاش آتش همون دوزخ بود و بس. کاش آتش چنین تاریک نبود، یا که رسیدن به‌نور رو به‌گور می‌بردم. تقدیرِ من امّا اینئه که تاوانِ زندگیِ دیگران رو بدم.

سکوت.

فردا ـ وقتی که خورشیدِ ظهر بر ما بتابه ـ در میدانِ شهر آتشی به‌پا می‌شه که من در نظاره‌ش خواهم سوخت...

صحنهٔ ششم: میدانِ بزرگِ شهر.

پادشاه، مغموم در یک سویِ راهرو ایستاده است. سربازان، ملکه و شاهزاده را از سویِ دیگر می‌آورند. وقتی به‌کاوس‌شاه می‌رسند، آنها را رها می‌کنند. ملکه آرام و قرار ندارد و مدام فریاد می‌کشد.

سودابه   [به کیکاوس.] این همه سال در نظرت هرزه‌ای بودم که تن به‌همخوابگی با دیگری می‌ده؟ یا تمام این سال‌ها پی بهونه‌ای بودی تا جانِ جوانِ من رو پیش از مرگِ خویش تباه کنی؟ چگونه زنباره‌ای چون تو رو به‌آزمونِ آتش آلوده می‌کنه؟ [از او رو برمی‌گرداند.] گناه در نهادِ توست. عجیب نیست که تو چنین فرزندی زاده بشه. [به سیاوش.] چرا خاموشی؟ پیرهنِ خویش پاره کردی تا محبّتِ من رو رشته کنی؟ امروز قصدِ همبستری با مادرت رو داشتی. لابد فردا هم از من فرزندی به‌برادری طلب می‌کردی. چرا اومدی؟ تو با اومدنت تمامِ شهر رو بیمار کردی. من تاوانِ امیالِ تو رو نخواهم داد. [رو به‌همه.]

جملگی بدونین؛ من نه از آتش می‌گذرم، نه از تهمت‌های پرشمار. سیاوش در آتش خواهد سوخت تا مردم این دروغگوی جامه‌پاره رو بهتر بشناسن.

سیاوش	هر که ندونه، من و شما قصّه رو نیک می‌دونیم.
سودابه	زبان در کِش دروغگو!
سیاوش	[به کیکاوس.] من نه از مرگ هراسی دارم، نه از گناه. ولی تهمت رو برنمی‌تابم. نخست من از آتش می‌گذرم. [به سربازان.] آتش رو به‌پا کنین.

سربازان مشغولِ مهیّا کردنِ آتش می‌شوند.

سودابه	شگفتا که دروغ و وقاحت رو یکجا داری.

آتش روشن شده و نورِ صحنه خاموش می‌شود. سیاوش از آتش عبور می‌کند. نور می‌آید. سیاوش در آن سویِ صحنه لبخندزنان ایستاده است.

سودابه	خدایِ من...
سیاوش	نوبتِ بانو ست!
سودابه	هرگز! اینها دروغئه!
کیکاوس	[بی‌آنکه سر بلند کند.] اگه خودداری کنین، بر طبقِ قانون به‌دار آویخته خواهید شد.

سربازان، سودابه را به‌سویِ آتش مشایعت می‌کنند.

سودابه	[فریاد می‌کشد.] دست از من کوتاه کنین! هنوز اونقدر حقیر نیستم که از مرگ روی بتابم.

با اشارهٔ شاه، سربازان رهایش می‌کنند. نورِ صحنه خاموش می‌شود. سودابه از آتش عبور می‌کند. نور می‌آید. او نیز سالم در آن سو می‌ایستد. حیران به‌دست‌هایش خیره می‌شود، به‌سیاوش، و به‌آتش. بهت و حیرت همه را در بر گرفته. تنها کسی که در او نشانی از شگفت‌زدگی نیست، سیاوش است. او به‌پادشاه خیره شده.

سودابه	برای منی که کابوس می‌بینم مدام
	کاش اینها همه خواب بود
	کاش خواب
	مرگی ابدی بود
	نه مرگ

خوابِ ابدی

سودابه تلوتلوخوران از صحنه بیرون می‌رود. سیاوش رو

به‌جمعیت می‌کند.

سیاوش   معرکه تموم شد.

از صحنه خارج می‌شود. نور می‌رود.

صحنهٔ هفتم: بارگاهِ کاخ.

کیکاوس بر اریکه نشسته و با وزیر سخن می‌گوید.

وزیر   سرورم، دستورِ شما چیست؟

کیکاوس   فقیر و غنی نکنین؛ هر که کوتاهی کرد، مجازاتش کنین.

وزیر   بسیاری از ایشان نان‌آورِ یک خانه‌ن. اگه به‌زندان بیفتن، کسی رو یارای پرداختِ دُیونِشون نخواهد بود.

کیکاوس   می‌خوای تبهکارها رو در دلِ مردم رها کنیم؟ گمونت کسی از این تبعیض، لب به‌شکایت نخواهد گشود؟

وزیر   ما هرچه کنیم، عدّه‌ای رو رضا نخواهد بود.

کیکاوس   قانون چه می‌گه؟

وزیر   قانون بر مجازات تأکید می‌کنه، ولی شرایطِ هر فرد با دیگری متفاوت‌ئه. نمی‌شه از قانونی یگانه برای همگان بهره جست. بسیاری از اینها اگه به‌زراعت ادامه بدن، خراجِ خویش رو خواهند پرداخت.

کیکاوس   وزیر، شما نیک می‌دونین که به‌اینها مهلت بسیار داده شده. همچنین نمی‌تونیم برای هر تن قانونی جدا اقامه کنیم.

وزیر   چاره چیست؟

کیکاوس   شما به‌قانون بازگردین.

وزیر   [تعظیم‌کنان.] فرمانبردارم.

کیکاوس   از احوالِ ایرانشهر بگو. دیدگاهِ مردمان نسبت به‌دربار چیست؟

وزیر   پس از اجرای قانونِ ظنِّ زنا، مردم عدالت و شجاعتِ شما رو ستایش می‌کنن. با این حال رفتارِ عجیبِ ملکه در روزِ آزمون و روزگارِ پس از اون، کمی اونها رو نسبت به‌سلامتِ ایشان مشکوک کرده.

کیکاوس   چه می‌گن؟

وزیر   شهریار جسارتِ من رو ببخشن، ولی گویا معتقدن که ملکه مجنون شده‌ن.

کیکاوس   به دَرَک. دربار رو از شایعات گریزی نیست.

وزیر	گمون نمی‌کنم سخنانی بدین پایه بیهوده، قدری داشته باشن. ملکه کنجِ عزلت گرفته‌ن و این شایعات طبیعی ست. چیزی که من رو نگران می‌کنه، بدبینی به‌شاهزاده ست. ایشان فرزندِ شما هستن و باید نقشی قدرتمند در ادارهٔ امور داشته باشن. حال آنکه با اتفاقاتِ اخیر و بی‌میلیِ ایشان به‌دخالت در امورِ مملکت، ظنِّ غالب بر افسردگیِ شاهزاده ست.
کیکاوس	نمی‌دونم کدوم‌یک بدتر‌ئه؛ شاهزادهٔ گناهکار یا شاهزادهٔ افسرده.
وزیر	بی‌گمان گناه زیبنده نیست.
کیکاوس	آری. حق با توئه.
وزیر	ولی شاید بشه این تصویر رو بهبود بخشید.
کیکاوس	چگونه؟
وزیر	افراسیاب در حالِ تدارکِ حمله‌ای دیگه‌ست. می‌شه شاهزاده رو به‌نبرد با وی فرستاد. اگه پیروز بشن، مردم دیگه گذشته رو از یاد خواهند برد.
کیکاوس	نیکو اندیشه‌ای ست. گمونم سیاوش هم بی‌میل نباشه. سپاهی مهیّا کنین. این دیوانهٔ تورانی رو شکستِ سختی خواهیم داد.
وزیر	[تعظیم‌کنان.] فرمان‌بردارم.
کیکاوس	وقت تنگ‌ئه. سیاوش رو فرا بخونین. با او سخن دارم.

وزیر تعظیم کرده و خارج می‌شود.

صحنهٔ هشتم: اتاقِ سودابه.

به نرمی می‌رقصد و شعر می‌خواند.

سودابه	تو ایستاده بودی
	بی‌آنکه نامِ مرا نجوا کنی
	بی‌آنکه یادِ مرا رسوا کنی
	یا که بر اسبی سیاه
	بگذری
	از ماتم و از عشق و خیال.
	من
	نامِ تو را فریاد می‌کردم
	لبانم آتش می‌گرفت.

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تو

از آتش می‌گذشتی

و نامِ خود را مُثله می‌کردی.

سکوت. سیاوش وارد می‌شود.

سیاوش   سلام.

سودابه بی‌توجّه به‌او، به‌شعر خواندن و رقصیدن ادامه

می‌دهد.

سودابه   تو را ورایِ خون می‌بینم

عشقِ تصویرِ تو بود

تو بر من الهام شدی

و من بر عشق.

آنگاه تصویرِ تو

نقشِ رازی عیان یافت.

وای بر دودمانی

که عشق آن را براندازد...

سیاوش   وای بر دودمانی که عشق آن را براندازد...

سودابه   [رو به‌سیاوش.] هرچه زانی

زانِ من است

آنِ من است.

سیاوش   من رو به‌جنگ خوندن. برایِ وداع اومدم.

سودابه بی‌توجّه به‌او، به‌شعر خواندن و رقصیدن ادامه می‌دهد.

سودابه   این در و پنجره‌ها

این دیوار

قلبِ مرا عریان خواهند کرد

رخ در رخِ سیاوش می‌ایستد.

عشق اگر راز نیست

چگونه میانِ ما خواهد ماند؟

سیاوش   آیا... آیا هنوز دل با من دارین؟

سودابه از رقص بازایستاده و می‌خندد. سکوت.

سودابه	بوسه

سکوتِ عشق است

و تو عصیان کردی

بر آنچه شنیدی

بر آنچه نمی‌شنیدی.

من تو را می‌ستودم

که چه زیبا فریاد می‌کنی...

سیاوش	وقتی به‌استعاره سخن می‌گین، شرم می‌کنم. من رو از اونچه رفت ببخشید.

سودابه	ببخشم؟

می‌خندد. سکوت.

با خود گفتم

های قلبِ دیوانه!

نیرنگی دگر در کار است.

مَباد پا پس کشی،

به اسارت دَرنَیُفتی،

یا حیله با حیله پاسخ دهی.

مرا ببین...

در من هزار عشق لانه کرده؛

هزار سهمِ ادا ـ ناشده.

[رو به‌او.] باشد که تو هم لانه‌ای بسازی

در قلبی

در تنی

در زنی.

سیاوش	کاش آن زن تو باشی...

سودابه آرام می‌گرید.

سیاوش	من رو می‌بخشین؟

سودابه	چاره چیست

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وقتی که آرامشِ جهان

در مرگِ یکدیگر است؟

سیاوش عمرتون دراز باد. من رهسپارِ جنگم. اگه دیگه ندیدم شما رو، بدونین که شرمسارم. شرمسار از سیرت و صورتِ شما که عشق رو نهان نکردین.

دستِ سودابه را بوسیده و خارج می‌شود. سکوت.

سودابه عشق اگر راز نیست

چگونه میانِ ما خواهد ماند؟

صحنۀ نهم: میدانِ شهر.

شیپور پیروزی نواخته می‌شود.

وزیر امروز در این میدان گرد اومدیم تا حضورِ مردی رو پاس بداریم که ایرانشهر سال‌ها به‌انتظارش نشسته بود؛ مردی که رزم و بزم از رستم آموخت و تبار و عیار از کاوس‌شاه به‌ارث برد. امروز دشمنانِ ما در سرتاسرِ جهان می‌دونن که جنگ با ایران، یعنی افتادن به‌زیرِ سمِّ اسبِ شهزاده سیاوش. او در نبرد با افراسیاب چنان رشادتی به‌خرج داد که صفحاتِ تاریخ تا مدّت‌ها به‌وصفِ او خواهد گذشت. به‌مددِ ایشان مرزهایِ ما برای نخستین بار به‌طورِ کامل از وجودِ اشرار پاک شد. دیگه هیچ بیگانه‌ای حتّی یارایِ نزدیک شدن به‌اقلیمِ ما رو نداره. دیگه هیچ مادری دلنگرانِ فرزندانش نخواهد بود. اگه جنگ امروز پایان گرفته، اگه توران با خاک یکسان نشده، به‌خاطرِ غنائم و اسرایی ست که افراسیاب برایِ صلح فرستاد. در مرامِ ما ایرانیان ضعیف‌کشی جایی نداره. از این رو جنگ رو پایان بخشیدیم تا بیش از این زمین با خون آلوده نشه. حال که سیاوش و سربازانِ مرگ‌افکنش بازگشته‌ن، از شما خواستارم تا به‌افتخارِ این اَبَرمرد و اونچه برایِ ما کرده، به‌پا خیزید تا وارد بشه.

اندکی می‌گذرد. خبری از سیاوش نیست. وزیر مستأصل شده
و تشویق حضّار هم خودبه‌خود فروکش می‌کند. در این میان
کاوس وارد می‌شود. از چیزی ناراحت است. جمعیت را
به‌سکوت دعوت می‌کند.

کیکاوس از شما پوزش می‌خوام. قرار بود امروز سیاوش با شما سخن بگه، نه من. ولی او کمی ناخوشئه و یارایِ اومدن نداره. ولی حال که همه در اینجا گرد اومدن، مایلم چند کلامی با شما سخن بگم... تنها فرزندِ من، سیاوش، کاری رو به‌انجام رسوند که هرگز کسی انتظارش رو نداشت. من هم چون شما لرزه بر اندام افتاده بود که اگه افراسیابِ دیوانه ایران رو تصرّف کنه چه؟ اگر زنانِ ما غنائم و مردانمان بردگانِ این هیولا بشن چه؟ [مکث.] ولی سیاوش اومد و شرافتِ ما رو زنده کرد. [سکوت.] حال

که ما نبرد با دشمنِ بیرونی رو به‌انجام رسوندیم، باید به‌جنگ با دشمنِ درون برخیزیم. امّا دشمنِ درون کیست؟ [مکث.] شما نیک می‌دونین که من مردِ قانونم و به‌کاری که خلاف مصالحِ شما باشه، گردن نمی‌نهم. در این سال‌ها تلاش کردم تا میونِ ما راستی حاکم بشه. تلاش کردم تا کسی از کسی نرنجه. تا حقایق رو با تمامِ تلخی‌شون با شما بازگو کنم و ایران از شایعه و ترس از واقعه به‌دور بمونه. ولی چند صباحی ست که بذرِ دروغ در این سرزمین پراکنده گشته. یاوه‌گویان تا می‌تونن به‌خاندانِ من بهتان می‌زنن و اندک ساده‌دلانی نیز اونها رو باور می‌کنن. دشمنِ امروزِ ما اینئه؛ شایعات. شایعاتِ بی‌اساسی که هیچ خردمندی باورشون نداره، ولی ملّتِ ما رو دو-پاره کرده. [مکث.] ما آتشی ترتیب دادیم و عزیزانِ من از اون به‌سلامت گذشتند تا بلکه بدگمانی در میانِ این قوم از میان بره، امّا گویا کفایت نکرده. بددلانِ دیروز، همان‌ها که همسر و فرزندِ من رو به‌زنای با مَحارم متّهم می‌کردن، امروز به‌نحوِ دیگری عقده‌گشایی می‌کنن. بارها از وزیر شنیدم که شاهزاده سیاوش رو افسرده، و ملکه سودابه رو دیوانه خوندن. حال پرسشِ من از اینئه: چگونه یک دیوانه بانوی اوّلِ ایران می‌تونه باشه؟! این توهین به‌ملّتِ بزرگی چون شما نیست؟! چگونه یک افسرده می‌تونه طومارِ افراسیاب و لشکرِ خونخوارش رو در هم بپیچه؟! این مضحک نیست؟ نابخردی تا کجا؟ [سیاوش آهسته وارد شده و همان انتهای صحنه به‌گوش دادن می‌ایستد. کاوس هنوز او را ندیده است.] ایرانِ ما روز-به-روز قدرتمندتر از دیروز شده و این دشمنان رو خوش نمی‌آد. وقتی که در میدانِ نبرد عاجز موندن، میدانِ شهر رو با شایعه در نوردیدن. امروز ما باید متحّد بمونیم تا با شایعات شاهزاده رو تخریب نکنن. می‌خوام به شمایان مژده بدم که سیاوش به‌زودی جانشینِ من خواهد شد.

سیاوش	گویا پادشاه پیش از من، مردم رو از تصمیمِ جانشینیِ خویش باخبر می‌کنن!
کیکاوس	[بهت‌زده.] سیاوش!
سیاوش	ادامه بدین. نطقِ شما تازه داره به‌جاهایِ جالبی می‌رسه!
کیکاوس	باید به‌کاخ باز گردیم.
سیاوش	لابد دیگه چیزی نمی‌گین تا اوضاع بدتر از این نشه.
کیکاوس	من تنها به‌رسمِ گذشته با مردم سخن می‌گفتم... برای حرف‌هایِ خانوادگی بهترئه به‌کاخ باز گردیم.
سیاوش	پس پادشاه مایل به‌گفتگو با مردم نیستن؟ همان گونه که با صدایِ بلند خیالبافی می‌کنین، با صدایِ بلند با فرزندتون نیز سخن بگین.
کیکاوس	اکنون زمانِ مناسبی نیست.
سیاوش	اون‌قدر در این میدان انتظار می‌کشیم تا زمانِ مناسب فرا برسه.

کاوس با عصبانیت راهِ خروج از صحنه را در پیش می‌گیرد و

وزیر نیز به‌دنبالِ او. لحظاتی در سکوت می‌گذرد. نورِ صحنه کم‌تر

و کم‌تر می‌شود. سیاوش مشعلی روشن کرده و رو به‌تماشاگران

می‌کند.

سیاوش شب فرا رسیده و ما هنوز منتظریم تا زمان مناسب فرا برسه! انتظاری همّاره بیهوده. [مکث.] احساس می‌کنم تنها چیزی که اهمیت نداره، آینده و حال‌ئه. من تنها برای گذشته احترام قائلم و بر این باورم که تا گذشته‌ای وجود نداشته باشه، آینده مفهومی نخواهد داشت. من بر این باورم که پیش از زادروزم، گذشته‌ای داشتم که از اون بی‌خبرم. ولی این گذشته وجود داره. اونجا نشسته و با چشمانی یکدست سفید و موهایی یکدست سرخ من رو نگاه می‌کنه. اگه حال به این روز افتادهم و آینده رو محوتر از همیشه می‌بینم، اگه مرگ برای من در موهای سیاهی خلاصه می‌شه که زیر کلاه‌خودم چال می‌شن، اینها همه از گذشتهٔ موهومی ست که با خود به دوش می‌کشم. [سکوت.] فردا من سی ساله می‌شم، حال اونکه کودکی با چشم‌های سفید و موهای سرخ سیصد ساله که بر من خیره مونده. من این کودک رو نمی‌شناسم و چون نمی‌شناسمش، انگار گذشته‌ای ندارم؛ درست مثلِ آدمی که در غربت زندگی می‌کنه. غربت چی‌ئه؟ سرزمینی دور؟ زبانی بیگانه؟ دوستی نداشته؟... غربت جایی میون آرزو و دلتنگی‌ئه. جایی میونِ رفتن و نموندن. جایی میونِ خواستن و نخواستن. جایی میونِ کشتن و نمردن... جنگجو غریب‌ئه، حتّی برای پدرش. من اما جنگجویی غربت‌زده‌م. برای پدرم شاهزاده‌م، ولیعهدم، پادشاهِ آینده‌م، فرماندهٔ سپاهم، و خلاصه هرچه هستم، جز فرزند. او حرفش رو می‌زنه و می‌ره. بی‌اونکه از من پرسشی کرده باشه. بی‌اونکه از من پاسخی شنیده باشه. این عدالتی‌ئه که او می‌خواد. من امّا به عدالتی فراتر و به تاوانی فروتر می‌اندیشم. به راهی برای خاموشیِ ابدیِ مصلحت‌اندیشی. برای این کار باید آدمیان رو با عمق اعمال‌شون مواجه کرد. باید همان تبدیل به جایی بشه که در اون آدمیان تنها یک تن رو قضاوت کنن و اون خویشتن باشه. [سکوت.] امروز رسالت ما این‌ئه که گذشته‌ای بسازیم که آیندگان نسبت به اون احساسِ تعلّق کنن. من شاه نخواهم شد. من شاه نخواهم شد تا جان‌ها به جای قانونِ پادشاهی کنن. آیندگان نباید مثلِ ما در دامِ مطلق‌ها گرفتار نشن.

<div align="center">سیاوش مشعل را خاموش کرده و در ظلمات خارج می‌شود.</div>

<div align="center">

صحنهٔ دوم: بارگاهِ کاخ و میدانِ شهر.

</div>

این صحنه در واقع تلفیقی از دو صحنه است که به‌طور همزمان و موازی با یکدیگر پیش می‌روند. در یک سویِ راهرو بارگاهِ کاخ است که در آن پادشاه و وزیر مشغولِ رایزنی هستند، و در سویِ دیگر سیاوش با اسرائی که از جنگ آورده، مشغولِ برپا کردنِ چوبه‌هایِ دار در میدانِ شهر است. شخصیت‌های هیچ‌یک از دو صحنه قادر به‌شنیدنِ سخنانِ طرفِ مقابل نیستند، مگر زمانی که اعدام به‌انجام می‌رسد. همچنین جهتِ ایجادِ تمرکزِ بیشتر بر هر یک از دو سویِ صحنه، نورِ قسمتی که در آن گفتگو

<div align="center">222</div>

برقرار است، بیشتر بوده و نورِ سمتی که سکوت در آن جاری‌ست، تا حدِّ ممکن کم می‌شود.

کیکاوس	چرا آشفته‌ای؟
وزیر	سرورم، جانِ اسیران در خطرئه.
کیکاوس	کدام اسیر؟
وزیر	افراسیاب برای ختمِ جنگ هدایا و اسیرانی به‌ایران فرستاده. حال قرارئه این اسیران در میدانِ شهر به‌دار آویخته بشن.
کیکاوس	این خلافِ منشِ ماست. سیاوش حرفی از اون نزده بود.
وزیر	سرورم، شاید شما بتونین او رو بازدارین. ور نه همه رو از تیغ می‌گذرونه.

نور کم شده و گفتگویِ پادشاه و وزیر موقتاً متوقّف می‌شود.
همزمان در سویِ دیگرِ صحنه، نور افزایش می‌یابد. سیاوش
دستش را پائین می‌آورد. با این اشاره، چندین اسیر از سقف
آویزان می‌شوند، در میانِ زمین و هوا تقلّا می‌کنند و ذرّه‌ذرّه جان
می‌دهند، تا اینکه می‌میرند. در این حین پادشاه و وزیر سر
می‌رسند.

کیکاوس	آخه چرا؟
سیاوش	چرا چه؟
کیکاوس	اینها اسیرن. نباید با آنها چنین کرد.
سیاوش	اینها متجاوزن، نه اسیر. به‌خاکِ ما تجاوز کرده بودن. اگر قرار بود همان کنم که با ما کردن، روزی صد بار آرزویِ مرگ می‌کردن.
کیکاوس	چه‌ت شده؟ انسانیتت کجاست؟
سیاوش	انسانیت؟ وَه که دل آتش می‌گیره از این همه «انسانیتِ» شما!
کیکاوس	زبانِ سرخِ تو این سرزمین رو به‌خون خواهد کشید.
سیاوش	زبانِ من یا نهانِ شما؟ شماکه دم از انسانیت و قانون می‌زنین، آیا خبر از احوالِ همسرتون دارین؟

وزیر از صحنه خارج می‌شود.

کیکاوس	[مضطرب.] میدانِ شهر جایِ این سخنان نیست.
سیاوش	میدانِ شهر فقط جایِ رسوا کردنِ ماست؟ سودابه در آتشِ بلاهتِ دربار بسوزه، ولی من نتونم از شما پرسشی کنم؟ که مَباد مردمان به‌عزّتِ شاهِ خویش شک کنن؟

کیکاوس	چرا یاوه می‌گی؟ اون قانونِ کشور بود و این زندگانیِ ما. مصلحت نیست از احوالِ خصوصیِ مادِرت در پیشگاهِ مردم سخن ساز کنی.
سیاوش	هَماره چشم به‌دهانِ مردم دوخته‌ین.
کیکاوس	من حاکمِ این سرزمینم. جز این راهی ندارم.
سیاوش	حقیقت رو اگه در میون بگذارین، مردم شما را می‌پذیرن.
کیکاوس	حقیقت چی‌ئه؟
سیاوش	من بر سودابه عاشقم.
کیکاوس	چه می‌گی؟
سیاوش	می‌خواهید دوباره آزمونِ آتش رو به‌پا کنین؟
کیکاوس	اگه لازم بشه، هزارباره چنین می‌کنم.
سیاوش	ما نیز هزارباره به‌سلامت در خواهیم گذشت. لیک شما یک بار هم به‌پوچیِ اون اندیشه نخواهید کرد. نمی‌فهمین که عشق خود آتش است. که در این آتش گناهی نیست.

سیاوش با خشم خارج می‌شود.

کیکاوس	چرا این کابوس رو پایانی نیست؟ [فریادزنان.] به‌چه می‌نگرین؟ زمین گشنه ست. جنازه‌ها رو دفن کنین.

کیکاوس خارج می‌شود. سربازان واردِ صحنه شده و اجساد را پائین می‌کشند.

صحنهٔ یازدهم: اتاقِ سودابه.

سودابه لالائی می‌خواند و همزمان در مرکزِ صحنه بساطِ دار را
مهیّا می‌کند. در یکی از دو سویِ صحنه، سیاوش مغموم نشسته
و با خود سخن می‌گوید. هیچ‌یک از این دو یکدیگر را نمی‌بینند.
گویی همزمان در دو مکانِ مختلف به‌سر می‌برند.

سیاوش	زمان امان نمی‌دهد تا تو را باز بینم یا که از نهانِ خود با تو من بازگویم. مرگ

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موهبتی‌ست

کز من دریغ می‌شود...

سودابه طنابِ دار را آماده کرده. کاغذی به‌دست دارد. بی‌آنکه

نگاهش کند، لحظه‌ای زیرِ طناب می‌ایستد.

سودابه   دیدارِ تو

آرزویِ پیش از اعدام است

مرگِ دوبارهٔ من بر زمین.

شهزادهٔ قلم

در دیدارِ تو

دار به‌بار نمی‌نشست

و عشقِ من

ـ خودکشیِ تدریجی‌ام ـ

مرا

مرگ را

ننگ را

می‌فرسود.

اینک من تمام می‌شوم

تا جهان با تمامِ عظمتش

از کینه تهی شود

در سکوتِ زبانِ سرخِ من

از تکرارِ نامِ عریانِ تو

سیاوش...

سیاوش   عشق و آبرو

با هم در ستیزند

و این پَلَشتِ جهان است...

سودابه کاغذ را با نخ بر مچِ دستش گره می‌زند. همزمان که از

چهارپایه بالا می‌رود تا طناب را بر گردنِ خویش اندازد، شعر

می‌خواند.

سودابه	به امیدِ دیدارِ تو
	که تنها دلیلِ من
	برای زیستن بود.
	به امیدِ دیدارِ تو
	که تنها دلیلِ من
	برای مردن بود.

خودش را دار می‌زند. صدای ناله و فغان از همه‌جا به‌گوش
می‌رسد. سیاوش به‌سمتِ وی رفته و جنازه را پائین می‌کشد.

سیاوش	چاره چیست
	وقتی که آرامش جهان
	در مرگِ یکدیگر است؟

نامه را از دستِ سودابه باز می‌کند. می‌خواندش و رو به‌آسمان
می‌کند. کیکاوس وارد می‌شود.

کیکاوس	مرگ سزای او نبود، ولی تقدیر چنین‌ئه. گاهی در آتش درون می‌سوزیم، گاه در آتش بیرون.

سیاوش	تقدیر شمایید
	و آزمونِ آتش
	شوخیِ کوچکی بود
	با عشق
	که خود، آتش است.

کیکاوس	بهترئه از کاخ بریم. افراسیاب در انتقامِ قتلِ اسیران، شبیخون زده. سپاهیانِ ما هم مقاومتی ندارن. کسی اونقدر بزرگ نیست که سرنوشتِ خویش رو به‌دست بگیره.

سیاوش	کسی هرگز نمی‌خواد اونقدر بزرگ باشه، تا سرنوشتِ خویش رو به‌دست بگیره.

کیکاوس خارج می‌شود.

سیاوش	در هر سو
	نشان از دست‌های قتلی بی‌شکوه است
	که در آن
	مرد از مرگ
	زن از زندگی

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و شاه از شهر

جدا می‌شود.

در هر سو

نشان از چشم‌هایِ حریصی‌ست

که در آن

راز از آز

پس از پیش

و یاد از یادگار

جدا می‌شود.

در این بحبوحه

من عاشقم

و تقدیرِ من مرد است.

مادرم عاشق است

و تقدیرِ او زن است.

حال زمان از حرکت باز ایستاده

و زبانِ من

گشوده بر جهان

با تقدیر سخن می‌گویم:

من از آتش‌راهِ جهان به‌سلامت گذشته‌ام

مرا از مرگ نهراسانید.

صدایِ نبرد از بیرون به‌گوش می‌رسد. سربازانِ افراسیاب در را
شکسته و وارد می‌شوند.

سیاوش   مرا از مرگ نهراسانید.