

## Clash of Civilizations in the Works of Azerbaijani Intellectual Reza Baraheni\*

### Azerbaycanlı Aydın Reza Baraheni'nin Eserlerinde Medeniyetler Çatışması

Elshan Bioukvand Ghojehbiglou<sup>1</sup> 



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**Corresponding author/Sorumlu yazar:**  
Elshan Bioukvand Ghojehbiglou (Master's student),

Yeditepe University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Political Science and International Relations (EN), İstanbul, Türkiye  
E-mail: elshen.boukvand@gmail.com  
ORCID: 0000-0003-1803-4674

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#### ABSTRACT

In this article, we will test whether the basic hypothesis put forward by the Clash of Civilizations theory is related to what is happening in reality. We will look for the words of the thinker who advocates that the future clashes will be between civilizations in the literary and political works of cultures in Iranian geography. The works that we will focus on in this study will be selected from the writings of Reza Baraheni. In addition, this theory, which emerged in global politics, should be transferred to literature studies. Samuel Huntington claimed in his article that future conflicts would not be in the fields of ideology and economy, and we will try to check the hypothesis he put forward, bearing in mind that the great divisions and clashes between humanity will be between cultures. Included in the theoretical framework that supports this thinker's hypothesis and considered basic features: Indigenization of the elite, what are you? Moreover, we will look for traces of the concept of us and them in the works of Reza Baraheni.

**Keywords:** Clash of civilizations, Reza Baraheni, Azerbaijan, Iran, Türk

#### ÖZ

Bu çalışmada "Medeniyetler Çatışması" teorisinin öne sürdüğü temel hipotezin gerçekte olup bitenlerle ilgili olup olmadığı üzerinde durulacaktır. Gelecekteki çatışmaların medeniyetler arasında olacağını savunan düşünürün sözleri İran coğrafyasındaki kültürlerin edebi ve siyasi eserlerde aranacaktır. Bu yazıda üzerinde durulacak eserler Reza Baraheni'nin yazılarından seçilecektir. Ayrıca küresel politikada ortaya çıkan bu teorinin literatür çalışmalarına aktarılması gerekmektedir. Samuel Huntington makalesinde gelecekteki çatışmaların ideoloji ve ekonomi alanında olmayacağını iddia etmiştir. Burada da insanlık arasındaki büyük ayrılıkların ve çatışmaların kültürler arasında olacağını akıldan tutarak ortaya attığı hipotez kontrol edilmeye çalışılacaktır. Bu çalışmada Huntington'un "Medeniyetler Çatışması" makalesinde Seçkinlerin Yerleşmesi, Biz ve Onlar ve Sen Nesin? Başlığı adı altında yer alan bölümlerde ileri sürülen hipotez temel alınacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Medeniyetler çatışması, Reza Baraheni, Azerbaycan, İran, Türk

## Introduction

*“Government orders,” he said. “We’ve been ordered not to use Turkish on the graves.”*<sup>1</sup>

Reza Baraheni was born into a very poor Turkish family living in Tabriz. After finishing high school and entering Tabriz University, he received his bachelor’s degree in English language and literature. His childhood coincided with the entry of the Red Army into Iran and the establishment of the Azerbaijan People’s Government (1945-1946) led by Ja’far Pishevari in Tabriz. Baraheni studied in his mother tongue Turkish during the one-year rule of the Azerbaijan People’s Government. Moreover, he always remembered the sweet memories of that period.

Nevertheless, after the fall of this government and the brutal killing of the people of Azerbaijani Turks and the members of the Democratic Party by the forces of the Pahlavi army, education in the mother tongue of Turkish was banned in the cities and provinces of Azerbaijan. After the establishment of the Pahlavi army in the Turkic cities of Iran the resumption of the dominance of the Persian language, and the banning of the Turkish language, in the following years, Baraheni and other Turk intellectuals started protesting and criticizing this discrimination, oppression, and racist policies of the Pahlavi government in their poems, stories, novels, and articles. As one of the founders of the Writers’ Association of Iran and one of the most prominent literary critics in the history of contemporary Iranian literature, on the other hands, Reza Baraheni is one of the greatest and most influential novelists and poets of Persian literature. Several of his novels and poetry books have been translated and published in different world languages in America, Canada, and Europe. In 1977, he was awarded the best human rights journalist in America. Both during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and during the period of the Islamic Republic of Iran, due to the defense of human rights, freedom, democracy, and the right to education in the Turkish mother tongue in Iran, he was expelled from Tehran University, imprisoned, tortured, and forced to emigrate from Iran. Both during the period of the Pahlavi rule and the period of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and in all of Reza Baraheni’s works, the fight against censorship, discrimination, national oppression, racism, and the defense of the rights of ethnic minorities have been one of his main intellectual, political and literary issues.

As we mentioned above, during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the racist policies of the government and some intellectuals against Turks, Arabs, and foreigners intensified and expanded. In this regard, in addition to the fact that the right to study in Turkish and other languages was not recognized, the Pahlavi ideology and its intellectuals were behind the destruction and eradication of these languages and civilizations. For this reason, Reza Baraheni fought against racism and defended freedom, democracy, and the rights of women and ethnic groups in his published works during the Pahlavi period and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this intellectual and civil struggle, he criticized Iranian racist intellectuals and the Pahlavi and Islamic Republic governments.

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1 Reza, Baraheni, *The Crowned Cannibals*, (New York: Random House, 1977), 88.

## Theoretical Framework

To examine the research topic more precisely, we will first try to explain Samuel Huntington's understanding of civilization in his own words. According to his view, 'civilization is a cultural entity. Villages, regions, nations, ethnic and religious groups are carriers of different cultures at different levels<sup>2</sup>. Regarding this theorist's term culture, there may be a cultural difference between a village in the south of Italy and a village in the north of Italy. Also, the common Italian culture they carry has features that distinguish these villages from the German culture circle. The common culture revealed by European countries is a feature that separates them from Chinese and Arab cultures. Therefore, Europeans, Chinese, and Arabs do not represent any common culture; they are the creators of civilization alone. Therefore, in S. Huntington's view, civilizations are the highest cultural stage of human history and the most prominent stage of cultural identity that separates people from other creatures. The term civilization can describe the subjective perception of people as well as the subjective elements of language, history, traditions, religion, and institutions.

In explaining civilization within the framework of Huntington's theory, the size and smallness of countries, geographies, regions, and the number of people do not matter. From this point of view, when we look through his glasses, this important term is removed from the monopoly of large states and nations with a large population. For this reason, the term widespread and classical civilization can be used broadly, not in the monopoly of nations and states that claim to carry the ancient cultural heritage. He says we can divide Western civilization into European and North American cultures. In addition, we can divide the Islamic civilization into Arab, Turkish, and Malay branches<sup>3</sup>. Based on this conceptual framework given by Huntington, we can use the term "Turkish civilization" in our research.

According to this thinker, the essence of future conflicts is born from civilization's identity and will continue along cultural fault lines. These clashes and conflicts will occur between the nations that place themselves within the framework of another civilizational identity due to their different language, histories, traditions, cultures, and religious identities. The quarrels and conflicts from these differences carried over from the old times as a new turn may not end in bloody wars, but the violence we face has been the bloodiest wars in history between civilizations. According to the thinker, the clash and conflict of political regimes and ideologies is the story of the younger ages of human history. In addition, the ties and mutual interaction of the nations living in the ever-shrinking world geography will help strengthen and form the consciousness of identity and civilization<sup>4</sup>.

Several examples of real political and social events in modern Iranian history will support these theoretical views of the author. Several important revolutions and reform movements in the history of modern Iran took place with the growth of political, social, economic, and cultural ties

2 Samuel, P, Huntington, "The clash of civilizations", *Foreign affairs* 72, no. 3, 1993, 22-49.

3 Huntington, "The clash", 22-49.

4 Huntington, "The clash", 22-49.

between the Turks of South Azerbaijan and the Turks of North Azerbaijan. The Constitutional Revolution of Iran that took place between 1906-1909, the Kheyabani Movement (1920), the Azerbaijan National Government (1945-1946), and the wave of Turkish identity that swept the Islamic Republic of Iran after the collapse of the Soviet Union, along with other factors, can also be explained as revolutions, reforms, and movements brought about by the direct interaction of Northern and Southern compatriots and intellectuals in modern Iranian history.

According to the theorist's statement, before the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eastern nations and intellectuals mostly imitated Western values and ideologies and returned to their homeland after studying in the universities of those countries. However, non-Western nations were tied to their local and national cultures in those same years. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the number of nations imitating Western civilization will increase, as well as the indigenization of elites. In this research, we will write, will we be able to find clues in the author's published works on the theme of indigenization of the elite in the work of Reza Baraheni.<sup>5</sup>

Also, the cultural heritage experienced and carried over the centuries changes less than the political and economic peculiarities. According to the thinker, in the old Soviet times, Communists could become democrats, the rich could become poor, and the poor could become rich, but Turks could not become Armenians. While explaining these, the basic thought advanced by the author is the first question directed at people and social groups in the era of clash of ideologies and strata: on which side are you? Also, those who answered the question could completely separate from the stratum and ideological values they were connected to in a different period and change their place. However, in the era of the clash of civilizations, the right question for people and groups is, what are you? Also, because people and groups will not be able to change and let go of the culture they are attached to, the differences between civilizations will become more prominent. Meanwhile, it should not be overlooked that Huntington emphasizes religious identity as well as ethnic affiliation. According to his thinking, people can carry a double ethnic identity, but it seems impossible to carry a dual religious identity, being both a Muslim and a Christian. In our opinion, the later change of the civilization identity on which the author stands are a correct statement, but we should also test it on the understanding of the civilization of intellectuals in Iran. From this point of view, when we analyze the works of Reza Baraheni, in his works, "What are you?" we need to find the answer to the question. In addition, we will try to reconcile the answer given by several Iranian intellectuals and writers to this question with the answer from Baraheni's work.

To support the arguments of the thinker who said that with the rise of civilizational consciousness, local cultures will return to their roots and protect their identity more and more, we should take Reza Baraheni's works. If we keep in mind the absence of Turkish sentences, Turkish poetry and Turkish language in contemporary Persian novels and poems

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5 Huntington, "The clash", 22-49.

before Baraheni's works, can we show that the importance given to Turkish identity and the consciousness of Turkishness are carried in his works?

Huntington, while explaining the return of non-Western cultures to their roots, the introversion or Asianization of the Japanese, the Hinduization of Nehru's legacy in India, the death and re-Islamization of nationalism and leftism announced by Western theorists in the Middle East, taking into account the birth of Russian nationalism against Westernization during the Boris Yeltsin period, the elements of the Turkish language in the works of Reza Baraheni, Turkish poems, Turkish identity, can we see federalism, the right of nations to choose their destiny, education in the Mother Tongue, and cultural resistance against widespread racism in Iran as a return to the roots of local Turkish civilization?<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the research, we will compare how some Turkish writers, poets, and intellectuals who wrote in Persian express their identity in their works with the concept of identity in the works of Reza Baraheni. According to Huntington, when people consciously explain their national and religious identity, they use "us and them" to reveal their identity. In this regard, we will examine the meaning and purpose of "we and them" reflected in Baraheni's works.

### **Clash of civilizations in Iranian history**

In the article written by Samuel Huntington, ideas about how the future years will take shape after the collapse of the Soviet Union as a fundamental historical period were presented. According to the author, after the defeat and disintegration of the Soviet ideology camp, the war period of ideologies and strata in world politics will end and give way to the "Clash of Civilizations" period. According to us, it may not be correct to see this new theory, which was brought up in time, only within the limits of the historical period the author intended and determined. Does this theory have as much to do with political and social events in ancient and medieval times as it does with modern world history? Can we show the historical roots of the "Clash of Civilizations" theory in Iran?

According to the well-known orientalist Ann Lambton, one of the characteristics of the life of Iranians, as a contemporary turn, has been the conflict and clash of religious and ethnic groups with each other. In the eyes of the European travelers who came to Iran in the 19th century, it was noted that there were very serious problems between Muslims and non-Muslims, Shiites and Sunnis, tribes and peasants, and members of different languages. Arthur de Gobineau, who was the ambassador of the French state in Iran for nearly three years, divided the nations living in Iran into six national groups such as Iranians, Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Jews and Zoroastrians. Edward Browne, who has valuable works on the history of Iranian literature, evaluated the entire history of Iran as a story of continuous wars between the Northern Turks and the Southern Persians. According to him, we can see this mutual ethnic bitterness and anger carried and experienced as a contemporary turning point between Turks and Persians. In

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6 Huntington, "The clash", 22-49.

addition, Vladimir Minorsky, considered one of the famous Orientalists, goes one step further and sees the fundamental feature of Iranian history in the eternal wars between the nomadic Turks and settled Persians, who do not mix like oil and water<sup>7</sup>.

However, in the eyes of another researcher, the absence of racist views was emphasized in the Persian poetry and prose works written in the era of the Turks, who dominated all areas of Iran from the establishment of the Ghaznavid dynasty to the fall of the Qajar state<sup>8</sup>.

There are very serious differences of opinion among those who write about ties, clashes, and conflicts between the Turkic and Persian nations. Contrary to the famous researcher H. Katouzian, Seyyed Javad Tabatabayi of Tabriz, who wrote books on modern and ancient Iranian history and was known for his extreme Iranianism and Persianism, explained the reasons why no important prose work was created in Persia during the Safavid era in that era, Shah Ismail wrote Turkish poetry, Turkish supremacy in the Safavid court, and the loss of Persian, for the first time in the thousand-year history of Persian literature, the emergence of emigration literature. Many poets and writers who wrote in Persia were forced to go to India and create a new literary flow in the history of Persian literature called the Indian School<sup>9</sup>.

Also, as Tabatabayi said, we can see traces of the conflicts and conflicts between the Turkish-Persian civilizations in the Safavid period in Shah Ismail Khatayi's poetry divan. At least nine times, the words Turk and Turkman and four times, the word Tatar has been used in a very positive sense in his poetry Divan. Even in one of his poems, when Shirvan and Tabriz Turks gather and unite, "Mulki Ajam" (Iranians-Persians) will ask when doomsday will happen, he says. Also, when this Turkish union conquers the city of Baghdad, it clearly says that the geographical and human borders of the Arabs will narrow and end day by day. This poem, which we will give from Shah Ismail Khatayi's sofa, can be an example showing the existence of Turkish civilization and the historical roots of conflicts and clashes between civilizations in the Middle East from the past to the present day.

if my lover sits down, he will moan,  
and if he stands up, there will be a doomsday.  
If all the people of Shirvan are moved to Tabriz,  
Mulki-Ajam asks when doomsday will break.  
Arriving there, the Arab's path and abode are exhausted,  
When Turkmen enter Baghdad.  
If he leaves the palace, he will invade this world.  
And a sect leader will make all the people, old and young, rebel.  
Because Khatayi had probably seen this from time immemorial

7 Ervand, Abrahamian. *Iran between two revolutions*. Princeton University Press. 1982: 27.

8 Homa, Katouzian. *Iranian history and politics: The dialectic of state and society*. Routledge. 2003: 128.

9 Seyyed Cavad, Tabaabai. *Ta'amoli Darbare-ye Iran*. Bakhsh-eh Nakhost: Maktabe Tabriz va Mabani-ye Tajaddodkhah, (Tehran: Entesharat-e Minu-ye Kherad. 2013), 339.

The sign of Noah is coming, from which the storm will break<sup>10</sup>.

Many ancient and modern Iranian historians agree that this division, confrontation, and conflict was between the people of the sword (Turks) and the people of the pen (Iranian Persians). Also, by advertising the “pen” as a distinctive feature of the Persian-speaking culture, it can be interpreted as if they wanted to exclude the Turks from the geography of thought, culture, and literature.

The conflicts between the Turko-Persian nations did not end only with the Safavid era. These conflicts continued even after the establishment of the state of Qajar. This separation manifested itself when the foundations of the legitimacy of the newly established Qajar state were laid. Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar connected his state to the source of legitimacy of Genghis Khan and Amir Teymur and showed that he completely connected his statehood to the Turkish statehood tradition. During his period, state affairs were carried out within the framework of the laws of Genghis Khan and the constitution of Amir Teymur. In addition, Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar carried these two Khagans’ statues, pictures, and icons in the palace, rooms, and sheds where he stayed<sup>11</sup>.

The psychology of self-confidence and superiority born from this source of legitimacy saw the dominance of the state established by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar over other ethnic groups as a Kut (political power, power) given by God to the Turkish Qajar tribe. In this regard, in a letter written to the governor of Bukhara at that time, he emphasized that the kut (political power) over Turan, Iran, Rum, Rus, China, East Turkestan, Khotan, and India was given to the Turks (Atrak) by God, so that other ethnic groups should know this and ordered him to stretch his legs according to his blankets<sup>12</sup>.

Also, many contemporary intellectuals writing in Persian, like Mirza Fatali Akhundzadeh and Mirza Agha Khan Kermani, when they reconcile Iran with the new Western culture, attribute the backwardness of their civilization to the influx of Arabs, Turks, and Greeks and to the fact that it is wild and primitive in terms of culture. According to them, the root cause of

10 Şah İsmayıl, Xətayi Əsərləri. tərtib edənlər: Əliyar Səfərli, Xəlil Yusifli. (Bakı: Şərq-Qərb.2005), 90.

The original text of the poem in Azerbaijani Turkish:

Bağdaş qurub otursa niğarım, fəğan qopar,  
Dursa-otursa, fitneyi-axırzaman qopar.  
Şirvan xələyiği qamu Təbrizə daşına,  
Mülki-Əcəm sorar ki, qiyamət xaçan qopar?  
Yetdükcə tükənir Ərəbün kuyi, məskəni,  
Bağdad içində hər necə kim, Türkman qopar.  
Çıxsə saraydən bu cahan vadisin dutar,  
Bir mürşidi-təriqət, piri cəvan qopar.  
Görmüşdü ta Xətayi əzəldən yəqin muni,  
Nuhun əlaməti gəlür, andan tufan qopar

11 Mohammad Hashem, Asaf, Rostam-ol Tavarikh. Be kushesh-eh Aziz Allah Alizad-eh, (Tehran: Ferdosi, 2001), 411.

12 Reza Qoli Khan, Hedayat. Tarikh-e Rozat-ol Safay-e Naseri. Be kushesh-e Jamshid-e Kiyānfar , 9 cild, (Tehran: Asatir, 2001: 7397-7398.



all social problems is the invasion of the local and glorious old Iranian culture by the nations we mentioned<sup>13</sup>.

### **Indigenization of the elite**

In Baraheni's work, the indigenization of the elite is one of the issues he focuses on. The alienation of the elite from their local, national, and historical identities, roots, and cultures is sharply condemned and criticized. When viewed through his glasses, the Orientals were caught in extreme alienation. However, Westerners are simply alienated. The author says that because Eastern people are behind in science, knowledge, technology, and industrialization, they are constantly under the heavy, deep, and serious influence of Western science, knowledge, technology, and industry. According to his point of view, Easterners stay away from the real nature and environment and remain under the influence of reality and truth created by the West. As a reason for this, he says that the American-centered world mentality has changed the thought, knowledge, values, and culture of the Eastern people. This leads to extreme alienation of Eastern nations and elites. According to his thinking, the technology created by the Eastern culture will not be considered a product of the East's mind and its objectivity because it imitates Western creativity, objectivity, and dimensions. On the contrary, the East says that the alienation of the Westerners will mean being changed and alienated under the heavy influence of the new technology, science, and industry they directly created. The main issue that the thinker emphasizes is that Westerners will not become Easterners when they become "alienated"<sup>14</sup>.

His thoughts on the necessity of the indigenization of the elites do not only elaborate on the mutual bonds and interactions between the intellectuals and nations of the West and the East. Baraheni can be seen as one of those who seriously criticize the elite in the geography of Iran who is alienated from their national, local, and historical language and identity in front of the official language, ideology, and identity of the Pahlavi state. Among the Turkish elite who wrote in Persian in Iran, neither in classical literature nor in the field of modern literature, before and after Baraheni, we have not encountered a second famous writer who wrote with so much emphasis on Mother Tongue, identity, and local culture. The following papers show that he addressed this issue broadly, theoretically, and continuously before and after the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

The author, who published the first edition of his book in 1975, mentions that he is Azerbaijani Turk as one of his most important concerns while explaining the main themes of his thoughts. He says that after the Azerbaijan People's Government's overthrow by the Pahlavi regime's military intervention in 1946, Turks had no choice but to learn and write Persian under compulsion. He also mentions the mass burning of Turkish books in Tabriz's Clock Square by order of the

13 Homa, Katouzian, Iranian history and politics: The dialectic of state and society. Routledge. 2003: 91.

14 Reza, Baraheni, Tarikh-e Mozakkar. Fahang-e Hakem vā Farhang-e Mahkoom, (Tehran: Nashr-e Avval, 1984), 151-153.



Pahlavi state. However, even though they learned Persian under state pressure and are loved by Persian-speaking readers, they constantly miss Turkish literature and Azerbaijan and underline that they have not forgotten their intellectual and cultural attachment to that hometown<sup>15</sup>.

The writer's first protest against the suppression of the Turkish language due to the oppression and systematic assimilation of the Pahlavi state against Turkish is manifested in the poem book "Forest and City", published in 1964 with the help of the famous writer Jalal Al Ahmed. He likens the plight of Azerbaijani Turks (carriers of local culture) in the streets and alleys of Tehran to the singing of blind singers. In that poetry book:

My father was one of Shah's old clown  
My mother is a Gypsy Turk  
After my father got old  
Because he could not make Shah laugh anymore  
Mother Tongue was torn from her throat and thrown to the crows<sup>16</sup>.

In Baraheni's political thoughts, "indigenization of the elite" was evident at the beginning of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. In his book "What Happened and what will happen in the Iranian Revolution," published in 1979, he tried to explain why the political-social movement during the Azerbaijan People's Government was defeated. He puts forward the Stalinist ideology and Moscow-centered thinking of the Tudeh Party as the main reason, ignoring the struggles in the local Azerbaijan, Mahabad, and Khuzistan regions. In addition, he criticizes the Tudeh Party, which agrees with Ahmad Qavam. Moreover, indirectly defending the autonomous state created by local elites, he valued that movement as the Azerbaijan Revolution and the Revolution of Iranian Nationalities. By using this word many times, Baraheni differs from other Turkish writers who wrote in Persian and can also be seen as one of the founders of theory in the Turkish issue in South Azerbaijan<sup>17</sup>.

Among the famous Turkish writers who wrote novels, poetry, and literary criticism in Persia, he stands at the head of those who criticize the well-known personalities involved in political and social movements in the geography of Iran from the point of view of Indigenization of the elite, the right of nations to autonomy and independence, national issues and the right to education in the mother tongue. By writing these issues and turning them into political discourse, Reza Baraheni was ahead of many Azerbaijani Turks who wrote in Turkish and put forward this national issue before and after the Iranian Islamic Revolution. "What happened and will happen in the Iranian Revolution", which he published at the beginning of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, to explain the issue raised by Baraheni more broadly. We will take another example from his book:

15 Reza, Baraheni, Zellollah. *Sheerhay-e Zendan*, (Tehran: Entesharate Amir Kabir, 1979), 34.

16 Baraheni, Zellollah, 35.

17 Reza, Baraheni, *Dar Enghelabe Iran Cheh Shodeh Asat va Cheh Khahad Shod?*, (Tehran: Ketab-e Zaman, 1979), 14-26

According to Baraheni, well-known leftists such as Taqi Arani and Tudeh Party are not at all sincere in postponing national autonomy, mother tongue education, and independence, especially resolving existing identity and ethnic conflicts in Iran until after the Revolution. According to him, intellectuals who work on the need for freedom, such as Taqi Arani, do not use this concept of freedom to solve and eliminate the problems of non-Persian-speaking nations. That is why Taqi Arani, who is a Turk, betrayed his local and national identity and says that if local languages and identities in Iran gain an official position and the problem of education in the Mother Tongue is solved, the sovereignty of the Persian language will fall, and it will create a threat to the integrity of the Iranian land. To protect the territorial integrity of Iran and maintain the official status of Persian, Arani deems it necessary to dominate the Turks, Kurds, and Baluchis by force and is blocking the way for the rise of local and national cultures. Also, according to Baraheni, these thoughts of Arani contradict Lenin's thoughts on language, culture, and education rights of nations, autonomy, and the right of nations to choose their destiny and to secede. In Baraheni's opinion, it is meaningless to talk about democracy and the socialist Revolution by forgetting the right of nations to be independent<sup>18</sup>.

Also, the well-known socialist and Azerbaijani Turks Khalil Maleki, who belongs to the leftist camp of Iran, was sent by the Tudeh Party to speak in Tabriz in 1945. In Baraheni's view, Khalil Maleki's speech in Persia to the Turkish nation in Tabriz is the result of the Anti-Turkish policy of the central Pahlavi state, and he emphasizes that Maleki carried out the anger against the Turks because of his own identity and hatred and prejudice towards his mother tongue. Based on this explanation, the author writes that Ja'far Pishevari's way of cultural struggle is right, and Khalil Maleki's hostility to his national identity is wrong. Besides criticizing the left-wing intellectuals, he also severely criticizes Ahmed Kasravi, one of the most well-known intellectuals of the Liberal camp. Baraheni Ahmed Kasravi's extreme admiration for the pure Persian language, in his opinion, that all nations living in Iran are Persian-speaking and have Persian roots; before the arrival of Islam to the geography of Iran, he criticizes the statement that the Turkish nation in South Azerbaijan has Persian roots. In addition, he says that these racist thoughts are unsuitable for a historian who wrote in the books "History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution" and "The 18-Year History of Azerbaijan" how Turkish poetry was effective in the revolutionary movement. He finds it difficult to explain this conflicting worldview of Ahmed Kasravi and says, "We must re-examine the roots and causes of Ahmad Kasravi's creativity and Turkish enmity in it."<sup>19</sup>

Baraheni tried to show it while classifying Turkish writers who wrote in Persia within the framework of the theory of the Indigenization of the elite. By drawing a special framework for Azerbaijani Turks who wrote in Persian, he thought that Turker, who wrote in Persian, had different literary, intellectual, and thought characteristics. He thinks we can divide the Turkish

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18 Baraheni, *Dar Enghelabe*, 43-44

19 Baraheni, *Dar Enghelabe*, 44-46.

writers who wrote in Persian into three groups. As the first characteristic of these important Azerbaijani Turk writers, many of whose thoughts he did not share: A) It emphasizes that they prefer not to give up finding the truth at any cost. Taqi Rafat and Samad Behrangi are mentioned as examples. B) Their second feature is that even if they are poets, they have the imagination and mentality of a storyteller. According to him, Nizami, Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi, and Shahriyar can be placed in this group. C) It tries to avoid lies, fabrications, and superstitions by relying on reason, analytical thinking, and logic in literary, political, historical, and social conflicts. Despite their differences of opinion, Taqi Arani, Khalil Maleki, and Ahmed Kasravi are placed in this framework<sup>20</sup>.

Intellectually and politically, the racist policies of the Pahlavi regime, the banning of the Turkish language in Iran, and the Azerbaijan issue were so deeply embedded in Reza Baraheni's thinking that when Jalal Al Ahmed, one of contemporary Iran's important writers and intellectuals, wanted to publish the first part of his famous book *On the Services and Treacheries of Intellectuals in the New World Journal*, published under the editor-in-chief of Reza Baraheni have: Baraheni said him "You touched on the issue of Azerbaijan in this book?" When faced with the question, he takes the small notebook and notes that he will write this important issue in other chapters. Jalal Al Ahmad's views on the "Azerbaijan Question" in the book mentioned above have been met with anger and bitterness by the racist intellectuals of Iran over the years. This can be seen as one of the clear proofs that Reza Baraheni, before the Iranian Islamic Revolution while giving importance to their own local, national, and historical identity, dealt with the "Azerbaijan Question" in a very serious way from an intellectual and political point of view<sup>21</sup>.

### **The question of "What are you?"**

If we divide Reza Baraheni's work into two historical periods, such as before and after the Iranian Islamic Revolution, we can more clearly reveal how he answered this question. However, before doing this, we will compare the answer given by a famous Türk named Ahmad Shamlou, who wrote in Persian, with the answer given by Reza Baraheni. In a poem written by Ahmad Shamlou, who is considered one of the most important signatures of contemporary Persian poetry, "What are you?" answers the question with an overtly racist look and language:

My name is Arabic

The name of my tribe is Turkish

My nickname is Persian

The name of my tribe, which is Turkish, is the shame of history

Moreover, I do not like my Arabic name at all<sup>22</sup>.

In these verses and other parts of the poem, Ahmad Shamlu shows that he does not love

20 Reza, Baraheni, *Safare Mesr*, Jalaleh Aleh Ahmad va Masaleyeh Falastin, (Tehran: Nashreh Avval, 1984), 117.

21 Baraheni, *Safare Mesr*, 194.

22 Ahmad, Shamlou, *Madayehe Bi Sele*, (Tehran: Entesharate Zamaneh 1999), 46.

Arabic without saying anything, while he has no hatred, prejudice, or anger toward the Persian language and pretends to be an extreme racist without explaining why the Turkic tribe is a disgrace and a point of shame in history, What are you? He answered the question with contempt for his Turkish identity. However, Reza Baraheni was someone who supported the socialist revolution in the Pahlavi period, but also at a time when Iran was slowly taking part in the postmodern trend during the Islamic period, he expressed his Turkishness and Iranianness not with prejudice and hatred, but with a sense of love. In many novels and poetry books, he wrote before, and after the Iranian Islamic Revolution, examples of Turkish poetry and prose appear in a very meaningful way, along with the Persian language. It is as if Baraheni is deliberately trying to show most barely and simply the miserable and shackled condition of Turkish, a prisoner in the prison of the dominant Persian language. He tries to breathe life into Turkish, which is suffocating in many of his published books. Baraheni tried to show the collision between Turkish and Persian in his work as follows:

My tongue! My tongue! (Say) O pity, O pity!  
 My beautiful tongue, how it burned in my bosom, turned to ashes, like me!  
 We all said Dede Korkut Dede Korkut Dede Korkut  
 And we held hands  
 And we closed all the roads for a thousand years  
 We have all cried blood for a thousand years  
 Still  
 Still  
 Yeah<sup>23</sup>.

Baraheni tries to answer what he is by ridiculing the racist identity ideology of the Pahlavi regime that dominates the entire country. He makes fun of M. Reza Shah Pahlavi's Iranian and Persian-centered "The Great Civilization" project by turning it into a mockery in his works. Baraheni notes that M. R. Shah Pahlavi could not find any logical way to open the doors and ways of the Great Civilization to his people. However, strangely, instead of this important issue, he showed how incompetent, racist, and delusional leader he was by changing the country's history from Hijra year to Cyrus Calendar. In addition, he considers the country's roads built for mules, horses, and carts to cause thousands of deaths throughout the year as a clear indication of how frivolous the Shah of Iran's Great Civilization project is<sup>24</sup>.

Also, Brenda Shaffer notes that between 1960 and 1970, several South Azerbaijani Turk writers and intellectuals working in Tabriz began to work in the Turkish lexicon, Azerbaijani music, and poetry for their Turkish identity and culture. In the meantime, he also writes that Reza Baraheni, who identifies himself as an Azerbaijani Turk, criticizes the resistance to Persianization and the political and cultural oppression of his identity, his mother tongue,

23 Reza, Baraheni, *Khetab be Parvaneha vā Chera Man Digar Shaere Nimaei Nistam*, (Tehran: Nashreh Markaz 1995), 67-69.

24 Reza, Baraheni, *The Crowned Cannibals*, (New York: Random House, 1977), 3-4-5.

and other ethnic minorities in Persia by the racist Pahlavi regime. In his book “The Crowned Cannibals”, published in America in the late 1960s and 1970s, Baraheni exposed that Turks had no right to write Turkish even on their tombstones and that Turkish was declared a forbidden language by the Pahlavi regime<sup>25</sup>.

Fred Halliday, a well-known political scientist who compares the Pahlavi era’s extreme and strict nationalism based on chauvinism, archaism, and leader worship to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, draws attention to the fact that Mohammad Reza Pahlavi also accepted this many times and called himself the Aryan dynasty and the Shah of the Aryans. In addition, the Pahlavi regime, which established state policy based on extreme racism, did not grant any cultural rights to non-Persian-speaking nations and prevented Turks, Arabs, and Kurds from studying in their mother tongues and developing their own culture. According to a study conducted in 1960, during the second Pahlavi regime, only and only 17 percent of non-Persian ethnic elites managed to gain a place in the ruling class. The education textbooks of the Persians, who labeled the Turks as “Donkey Türk” and the Arabs as “mouse eaters”, were prepared for children to read in such a way as to contain this racist ideology<sup>26</sup>.

Reza Baraheni, a socialist revolutionary and later a postmodernist writer and clear in the periods of the rise of racist policies before and after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, wrote, “What are you?” He tried to answer the question. He wrote, “I was imprisoned and severely tortured because I constantly emphasized and showed that I was aware of my Turkish roots and identity in my works.”<sup>27</sup>

Reza Baraheni points out that the Pahlavi state opened English-language schools for 3,000 thousand American workers who came to Iran to explain the systematic racism of the Pahlavi state. However, he says that millions of Turkish, Arab, Kurdish, and Baloch children do not have the right to study in their mother tongue due to Shah’s racism. In this regard, the famous writer explains the two basic features of his literary creativity: “Especially after 1946, my inner feelings related to my repressed nationality as an Azerbaijani Turk, whose mother tongue was taken away by the Pahlavi regime and never returned to it, is the second fundamental feature of my literary creativity,” he says<sup>28</sup>.

## Us and them

In contemporary Persian literature, the racism of Pahlavi and the Islamic State of Iran, the right to education in the mother tongue, and the issue of South Azerbaijan have started to show themselves and become a serious discourse directly through the work of Reza Baraheni. The most interesting part of his work is that when he wants the cultural, political, social, and

25 Brenda, Shaffer, *Borders and brethren: Iran and the challenge of Azerbaijani identity*. MIT Press. 2002: 60.

26 Fred, Halliday, *Diktatori va Tooseai-e Sarmayehdari Dar Iran (Iran: Dictatorship and Development)*. Tarjoom-e-yeh Fazlollah Nikaein, (Tehran: Entesharate Amir Kabir, 1979), 60, 61, 225, 226.

27 Baraheni, *The Crowned*, 114.

28 Baraheni, *The Crowned*, 11, 12, 110, 111.

economic rights of Turks and other nations living in Iran's geography, he never has racist views, thoughts, or discourse. In his works, Baraheni tried to defend the Turks not from a racist point of view but within the framework of the concept of justice. In this way, in the novels, poems, and articles written by him, we do not encounter racist discourse and thinking, as seen in the works of Ahmad Shamlou. The "us and them" concept manifested in his work has no racist or ideological basis; there is only a critical view based on justice.

For example: on the night of Black January 1990, when the Soviet army committed a mass massacre against civilian Azerbaijani Turks in Baku, Reza Baraheni, in the foreword he wrote in the Persian translation of the famous poet Osip Mandelstam's poems, criticized the last Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev. According to Reza Baraheni, benefiting from the process of de-Stalinization of the Soviet Union fell only to Eastern Europe. Gorbachev sent himself to Eastern Europe and the tanks he brought from Afghanistan to Baku. Reza Baraheni notes that he saw this as the greatest test of democracy of the twentieth century for Gorbachev. He also severely criticized the massacres committed in Baku and wrote that he was upset that the Armenian and Turkish nations could not find ways of peace after 70 years of Soviet captivity:

*"Although all freedom lovers worldwide, especially in the third world, are expected to support the Anti-Stalinist movement in the Soviet Union, this support should not be seen as supporting mass slaughter in Soviet Azerbaijan. Tanks from Kabul were sent to crush and suppress the people of Baku. As long as this imbalance is not eliminated, Baku will be a point of shame for everyone and the process of de-Stalinization. It is one thing to determine the objective needs of these nations and give them a humane response; it is another thing to attack these nations tooth and nail. If Afghanistan was Vietnam for the Soviets, Azerbaijan, and Armenia should not be Soviet Panama.<sup>29</sup>"*

As you can see, Reza Baraheni did not just see the Turks living in Iran's territory as "us"; he also carefully followed the political and social process in the Republic of Azerbaijan. During the first Karabakh war (1988-1994), the Armenian Writers' Union officially invited the Iranian Writers Association as a guest to Yerevan. Among the contemporary Persian writers who gathered to say yes or no to this call, only Reza Baraheni, pointing out the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh, emphasized that going to the city of Yerevan meant supporting the invading Armenia in this war and said very clearly that he would not go on that travel<sup>30</sup>.

The concept of "us" formed against social, economic, cultural, and political injustices in Reza Baraheni's thinking and creativity does not manifest with racism, hatred, and prejudice. However, to put it bluntly, the great writer James Joyce could not refrain from using such racist thoughts and expressions. It is very important that intellectuals can solve problems through peace, rational solution, and negotiation in countries and regions with racial, ethnic, national, and sectarian conflicts. However, a very famous writer like James Joyce has not been able

29 Reza, Baraheni, Tala Dar Mes. Jelde 3, (Tehran: Entesharate Zaryab, 2001), 1637-1658.

30 Fraj, Sarkohi, Yas va Das, (Sweden: Nashr-eh Baran, 2002), 147.

to hide his racist thoughts against the Saxons and Britons. James Joyce shows that he cannot eliminate existing problems through rational solutions and dialogue because he directly condemns the Saxons and the British nation with sentences containing racist prejudice and hatred. However, despite all this, Joyce nicknamed them the “Great Turks” because of the monetary aid sent by the Ottoman Empire when there was a famine in Ireland<sup>31</sup>.

However, when Baraheni was criticized by contemporary Persian poets, writers, and intellectuals for a racist view and language, he responded with a more humane view and thought rather than with the language and thought they used. When he was subjected to derogatory and racist thoughts by well-known Persian intellectuals such as Nader Naderpour, Mehdi Akhavan-Sales, Houshang Golshiri, and Karim Emami, he stood up to protest not as an individual but as someone representing “us”:

*“I think the “Arash the Archer” poem by Siavash Kasrai is extremely bad. It is a product of Pan-Persianism. Imagine that an arrow from an archer’s bow crosses all the rivers and mountains and enters the eye of a Turk. However, one-third of our society is made up of Turks<sup>32</sup>”.*

When the racist Pahlavi state suppressed the author’s national identity, “us,” and existence and went towards extinction, the Turkish language began to be born from his subconscious. Turkish prose written by himself emerges from Persian prose. Azerbaijan folklore, Fuzuli ghazals, Ali Mojuz poems, and examples of Turkish prose he wrote in the Tabriz dialect take care to prove that our Turkish identity has not disappeared. Here, he tries to attack the racist Pahlavi state in front of him, not with polite language but with a rude, belligerent, and angry expression:

*“I will take revenge on those robbers; I will take revenge by removing Mahmoud’s nails! Open your ears and listen, Samad! There is a place in Mahmoud’s heart that was created for the tip of my knife. I will not hit this knife with one hand, but with two hands, firmly, I will hit his heart so that his heart will split into forty pieces in his chest, Samad. I have been sharpening this knife for thirty years. I will avenge my grandfather, grandfather’s grandfather, and brothers from Mahmut. A thousand years, no! Samad! Two thousand years, maybe three thousand years, these assholes, this mother and sisters I fucked, they rode on our necks, they say, Hey Donkey this way, Hey Donkey that way. Mouths were closed, and dungeons were full. A bandit and a lecherous soldier guard every man’s mouth. I wish you had not died, Samad; you would have seen why I sharpened this knife. I was scared when I looked at this knife; Samad!<sup>33</sup>”.*

## Conclusion

Before Baraheni’s work, many poems, novels, and articles written in contemporary Persian literature ignored the Turks’ identity, mother tongue, and problems. The Turkish language was

31 James, Joyce, *Ulysses*. Çeviren: Nevzat Erkmen, (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık Ticaret ve Sanayi A.Ş., 1997), 859-860.

32 Reza, Baraheni, *Mosahebe-ye Reza Baraheni. Mahname-ye Andishe-ye Pooya*, pp 143. Tehran: 2012:

33 Reza, Baraheni, *Rouzghar-eh Doozaki-eh Aghay-eh Ayaz*, (Tehran: Enteshatrat-e Amir Kabir, 1970), 308-309.



hidden and buried by writers and poets. Through Baraheni's novels, poems, and articles, a new path and a new level of writing emerged in the Persian language. Thanks to his creativity, the Turkish discourse broke the hegemony of the Persian language. Many well-known Turkish writers who wrote in Persian tried to describe their homeland, people, and identity in Persian. Those writers defended the Persianization of the Turks and denied the ethnic existence of the Turks.

However, after the arrival of Baraheni, a new era began in the thousand-year-old Persian literature. The article, poetry, and novel language he used and created revealed the stolen, erased, and melted Turkish identity, language, and existence. As he said, he tried to take revenge on Turkish, which he could not write perfectly, from Persian, which he could write perfectly, by creating a new discourse based on the concept of justice. We tried to show that he launched an intellectual and critical war against racism as the basic feature of the new discourse he opened in contemporary Persian literature. We also drew attention to the fact that Baraheni, in his works during the Second Pahlavi and Iranian Islamic Revolution, turned the Turkish problem into a political, social, and literary discourse and saw it as the mother issue of the entire revolutionary and reformist movement.

We tried to find evidence of Samuel Huntington's concept of the clash of civilizations, indigenization of the elite, what are you, the question, us and them, in the works of Reza Baraheni. We have explained these elements in his works within the framework of research limitations. Reza Baraheni, who thinks about the need to give the rights of Turks in political, literary, and social fields, has put forward very serious thoughts on education in Mother Tongue, the right to autonomy and independence, and sharp criticism of racist policies. We also tried to prove that it opened a serious and new discourse that did not exist before in contemporary Persian literature.

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