

A COMPARATIVE CRITIQUE OF CONFLICT STRATEGIES IN HOMER'S ODYSSEY AND BHRĀM E GUR STORY IN FERDOWSI'S SHAHNAMEH

Yossofali Beiranvand^{*}, Ghasem Sahraei^{**}, Ali Heidari^{***} and
Mohammad Reza Hassani Jalilian^{****}

Abstract: Homer's Odyssey and Ferdowsi's Shahnameh are among the greatest epics in the world. Conflict is one of the most important elements that shape events in this works. Conflict is duality or multiplicity of individuals and groups targets. People had different ways of coping when faced with conflict called conflict strategy. Strategies are created by tactics. Ulysses in the Odyssey and Bahrām e Gur in Shahnameh have faced with conflicts and utilized strategies to resolve them due to the conflict conditions. In this study, we aim to probe these questions: (1) which are similar strategies of Ulysses and Bahrām e Gur when faced with enemies? (2) What is the enemies' operation against their strategy? The results are as follows: the two heroes have benefited from the strategy of pretending, salami, surrendering and competitiveness. Their enemies' operation led sometimes to peace and time to plunge.

Keywords: Conflict, strategy, Shahnameh, Odyssey, Bahrām e Gur.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is one of the most important elements of the world's epic stories including Homer's Odyssey and Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. It is the multiplicity result of individuals' and groups' goals. Conflict arises when the "expectations or the actual goal oriented behavior of a person, group, or organization is blocked by individual, group or other organization." (Thomas, 1976: 7, Baguley, 2006: 16, Robbins, 2004: 267, Rezaeian, 2003: 6 and Ghasemi, 2003: 379) Ways of dealing with this psycho-social phenomenon are different. Sometimes, person applies a variety of strategies in dealing with the conflict and to solve it. "Strategy is a plan, namely a conscious path, or series of guidelines that specifies the ultimate goal. Then, tactic tells us how to get to it." (Quinn, 1994: 34 and Baguley, 2006: 66) Also strategies are called the negotiations of a long-term plan. (Mokshantev, 2002: 25) Strategy

* Phd Student of Persian Language and Literature. Department of Persian Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, Lorestan University, P.O. Box 465, Khorramabad, Iran. Email: Yossofali.biranvand@gmail.com

** Corresponding author, Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature. Department of Persian Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, Lorestan University, P.O. Box 465, Khorramabad, Iran. Email: ghasem.sahrai@yahoo.com

*** Professor of Persian Language and Literature. Department of Persian Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, Lorestan University, P.O. Box 465, Khorramabad, Iran. Email: aheidary1348@yahoo.com

**** Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature. Department of Persian Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, Lorestan University, P.O. Box 465, Khorramabad, Iran. Email: hassani2j@gmail.com

does through tactics. "Tactics are methods and processes that strategy is reach the goal by them." (Marias, 2012: 315 and Bagley, 2006: 65) In the stories of Homer's *Odyssey* and Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, the heroes are faced with conflicts which like chains are interconnected and cause story continuance. In this article, we've selected the story of Bahrām e Gur from *Shahnameh* and biography of Ulysses in *Odyssey* story. Both have used similar strategies when dealing with enemies and with appropriate tactics have succeeded to win over enemies. In this article we seek to answer questions such as these: (1) What are similar strategies of Ulysses and Bahrām e Gur and are the similarities in using them? (2) What reactions have enemies of Ulysses and Bahrām used against their strategies? Next, while giving a summary of both narratives, we will analyze similar strategies of Ulysses and Bahrām e Gur and sides reactions of their opposite.

DISCUSSION

Summary Story of *Odyssey*

Ten years have passed since the fall of Troy (See Homer, 2015), and the Greek hero, Ulysses, still has not returned to his kingdom in Ithaca. A large and rowdy mob of suitors who have overrun Ulysses' palace and pillaged his land continue to court his wife, Penelope. She has remained faithful to Ulysses. The beautiful nymph, Calypso, possessed by love for Ulysses, has imprisoned in her island, Ogygia. Ulysses long to return to his wife and son, but he has no ship or crew to escape. While the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus debate Ulysses' future, on Mount Olympus, Zeus sent Hermes to rescue Ulysses from Calypso. But when Poseidon, god of the sea, found Ulysses sailing home, sent a storm to wreck Ulysses' ship. Poseidon has harbored a bitter grudge against Ulysses since the hero blinded his son, the Cyclops Polyphemus, earlier in his travels. Ulysses and Telemachus have devised a plan to massacre the suitors and regain control of Ithaca.

When Ulysses anonymously arrived at the palace the next day, he endured abuses and insults from the suitors. Quite crafty herself, Penelope following day promised to marry any man who can string Ulysses' great bow and fire an arrow through a row of twelve axes a feat that only Ulysses has ever been able to accomplish. At the contest, each suitor tries to string the bow but fails. Ulysses steps up to the bow and, with little effort, fires an arrow through all twelve axes. He then turns the bow on the suitors. He and Telemachus, assisted by a few faithful servants, kill every last suitor. (Homer, 2002)

Summary Story of *Bahrām e Gur*

Bahrām e Gur is one of well-known kings of *Shahnameh*. He was very concerned of fun. The Khaghan of China and the Kaiser of Rome put upon this property of Bahrām and attacked the borders of Iran. Bahrām pretended to be afraid of war

with Khaghan, so titled the kingdom to his brother, Nursi, and himself with an army moved to Azarbaijan. When Nursy could reach an agreement with the Khaghan for taxes and Khaghan mind was comfortable from Bahrām, Bahrām suddenly attacked his forces and defeated them and they were required to pay the ransom. Then, Bahrām could convince the messenger of Kaisar through negotiation, so Kaiser paid ransom to Iran. Then Bahrām found that Shangol, the king of India, is intending to blackmail from China and Send, so he wrote a threat letter and himself took it to Shangol in peon clothes. Bahrām showed himself a lot of courage in India, so Shangol gave his daughter, Sepinood, to marry him. Sepinood, in the absence of her father in the palace, helped Bahrām and came with him to Iran. After Shangol knew his groom is same Bahrām, their hostility led to peace. (Ferdowsi, 2008: Volume 7)

General Similarities of Odyssey and Bahrām e Gur Story

Before the discussion, it is necessary that we mention a number of similarities between the two stories that have caused Ulysses and Bahrām act the same way in dealing with conflicts. Structural similarities of the two stories Odyssey and Bahrām e Gur have caused similarities in applying the same strategies. The most important similarities are: (1) Both Ulysses and Bahrām have common personality traits; they have been strong heroes and when their physical force was not enough to cope with conflict, have applied to deceit and lies. (2) Both champions have traveled in distant lands and faced preternatural creatures like Cyclopes, dragons... and have defeated them. Of course this shows their great force. (3) Their enemies have been similar to each other. As we will discuss below, Shangol is similar to Circe, witch, from behavioral point of view, also Khaghan has similar to suitors. (4) Both champions were trying to maintain their honor and reputation; for this reason, they have had their own best endeavor to maintain them. Later, we will discuss similarities of the two heroes in the implementation of strategies.

Strategies for Solving Conflict

Pretending Strategy

This strategy is actually a kind of deception of enemy. “Pretending creates the illusion that one thing is desired, while the main aim is really else something.” (Maddux, 1995: 90) This strategy has somewhat adaptation with hidden name in the epic genre. This case is powerfully in the story of Odyssey and Bahrām e Gur; so that this is one of conscious deception tactics of the heroes. “Among conscious tricks are incorrect and fake information.” (Fisher and Uri, 2014: 196, 199 and Rezaeian, 2003: 141) That is referred to as pretending. Both the heroes have successfully implemented this strategy by negotiating tactics and pretending. In what follows we will review the strategy in the two stories.

Pretending of Ulysses

Ulysses has several times rescued his own life and that of others. His tactic has been lying for pretending. "Ulysses has rarely spoken without a lie, or done a work without cheat." (Durant, 2006: 58) On his journey, Ulysses encountered a Cyclope called Polypheme and two of Ulysses friends were eaten by Polypheme. Then he at the same time asked the name of Ulysses and he introduced himself "No-Man". (Homer, 2002: 180) Whereas if he had told his real name, Cyclope would have eaten him because a predictor had previously told Cyclope that his death would be at the hands of Ulysses. Moreover, when other Cyclopes were informed by shouts of Polipheme, they told him who has offended you, he said "No-Man". So they suspected that no one was. (Ibid: 181) With the deceitful tactics, Ulysses gave Polipheme false information about himself. Also when Ulysses was returning to Ithaca, Athene transformed him into a beggar, and provided conditions for him to return to his own house with help his son, Telemachus, and informed situation of suitors, then provided arrangements for their failure. He was repeatedly questioned about his identity by the suitors and the household at his home, but he was every time pretending to a resident of Aqryts and has come to Ithaca for beggary.

Pretending Strategy of Bahrām e Gur

Also Bahrām e Gur benefited from pretending strategy in coping with his enemies. Also, he like Ulysses has used tactics such as lying and cheating to implement this strategy. When Shangol, king of India, blackmailed from China and Send, Bahrām wrote a threatening letter for him and took it toward Shangol, so he introduced himself as the courier of Bahrām. (Ferdowsi, 2008: 7/413 Shangol kept Bahrām on himself because "those times it was a custom to hold ambassador and occasionally not to allow him to return to home" (Mahjoob, 1999: 323) Then Shangol asked his minister about Bahrām's identity. But Bahrām introduced himself as Barzoo. Bahrām like Ulysses was using deceptive negotiating tactics and pretending who is someone else so that the enemy doesn't realize his real identity. He could attract regard of Shangol and marry his daughter, then returned to Iran with the assistance of his wife. When Shangol realized, that courier has been the same Bahrām e Gur, came to Iran for peace.

Salami Strategy

This strategy, which also is referred to as "the policy of step by step" is that "to achieve the goal instead of taking one step, we dribble forward any time and a time reach that we generally possess the goal" (Maddox 1995: 82). This is while "if we promulgate our unchangeable position, won't reach the agreement." (Fisher and Uri, 2014: 25) In the rest of the paper, we'll survey this strategy in two mentioned stories.

Salami Strategy in the Odyssey

This strategy can be seen in the *Odyssey*, in this manner that, home of Ulysses was seized by the suitors. In the absence of Ulysses, Telemachus and Penelope applied many ways for their expulsion, but did not succeed. When Ulysses returned to his house in a beggar formation, suitors of Penelope did not want to even give way to his own house. But he could trap suitors by proper tactics in the hall that was organized by Penelope for competition of shooting so that they beseeched Ulysses to get rid of death. Among the tactics that were used in this strategy by Ulysses was that he appealed to test arc from the suitors for himself, because he maybe to put bowstring. He succeeded to put bowstring on the archer and hit the goal by bow, then his lance gave way Antinous shoulder and killed him, therefore revealed his actual identity for them. (Homer, 2002: 424) If Ulysses was fighting the number of wooers at the beginning of competition, perhaps achieved no success. So he approached them and endured their ridicules, in exchange for he could participate in the competition and reach his goal. Also, Ulysses perched in his rightful place among the wooers by using of this strategy.

Salami Strategy in Bahrām e Gur

Shangol, king of India, wanted to blackmail ransom from Send and China and likely his future option was Iran. But Bahrām, applied his subtle tactics very well so that not only Shangol didn't receive ransom from Iran, but also gradually readied to give all India to Sepinood, the wife of Bahrām, as inheritance. Bahrām introduced himself as ambassador of Bahrām in India. Shangol sent him to fight the dragons, wolves..., but succeeded in all of them. Shangol was afraid of Bahrām, espouse his daughter to him because he thought if such a Powerful person went Iran and joined Bahrām e Gur, he will turn against him. Finally, when Shangol went out of the palace, Bahrām fled from India to Iran with the complicity of Sepinood. Also, Bahrām first pretended who would not be able to fight such an enemy in coping with the Khaghan of China, but with the proper tactics among surprised Khaghan's army, he could finally take the king's ransom.

Surrender Strategy

This strategy is a way which "one side of conflict seeks to relieve the other party and prefer his interests to own interests to maintain their relationship" (Robbins, 1998: 797, Rezaeian, 2003: 72 and Martochio & Judge, 1995: 252). This style is effective in cases when "you trust that conflict creates major and unsolvable problems." (Baguley, 2006: 21) This style is seen in both stories, which we will study below.

Surrender Strategy in the Odyssey

When Ulysses returned to his home, was dishonored by his servants. For example, Melantho, one of Ulysses' house servants, was occasionally rebuking him. He has said:

“... Thus she held out her spleen: Still, stranger, here?
Thus late in night? To see what ladies do?
Avaunt you, wretch; hence, go without doors go.” (Homer, 2002: 369)

Ulysses was completely surrendered and gently spoke to him:

“... Minion! What makes your angry blood thus chide
My presence still? Is it because you see
I shine not in your wanton bravery,
But wear these rags? It fits the needy fate
That makes me beg thus of the common state” (Ibid)

And of course this canniness was so that they didn't know him. Also, among his servants was goatherd Melanthius that said to Ulysses:

*“And what sent, said he, this suffering bane
To vex our banquet? Stand off, nor profane ...”* (Ibid: 395)

But time was not yet that Ulysses use violent tactics, so was tolerating. Other case of Ulysses' surrender was in front of the wooers including Antinoos. While Ulysses as a beggar, was anonymously observing the suitors and the household at his home, conflicting Antinous. Antinous told the audience:

“And what sent, said he, this suffering bane
To vex our banquet? Stand off, nor profane
My board so boldly, lest I show thee here
Cyprus and Egypt made more sour than there ...” (Ibid: 341)

Then he up a stool and beat the right shoulder of Ulysses, but Ulysses was fully surrendered and “Not stirr'd” (Ibid). He only intended to make Antinous anxious with his remarks, so he told him:

“And if the poor have gods, and furies too,
Before Antinous wear his nuptial wreath,
He shall be worn upon the dart of death.” (Ibid)

In all these cases Ulysses had apparently surrendered, while he has been secretly drawing plans for destruction of the offensives.

Surrender Strategy in the Story of Bahrām e Gur

In time of the reign of Bahrām e Gur on one hand the Khaghan of China and on the other the Kaiser of Rome invaded Iran. Bahrām summoned leaders of army

and put Nursi, his brother, on his place and apparently surrendered. Nursi while was unaware of the strategy of Bahrām, sent an ambassador to the Khaghan of China to convince him by negotiation so that Iran is willing to pay ransom to his government without war, so Nursi reality submitted to khan. Khaghan who was seeing conditions in his favor, accepted and told subordinates:

«به ترکان چنین گفت خاقان چین
که ما بر نهادیم بر چرخ زین.
مگر ما به رای و به هوش و درنگ.»
(Ferdowsi, 2008:7/ 389)

Means of (The Khaghan of china told Turks that we saddle sky now. Who has conquered Iran without war? We only did this work by thinking, intelligence and hesitation.)

Bahrām that had gone to Azarbaijan with an army, pretended that has escaped, then attacked the armies of Khaghan with his forces and defeated them. The forces associated with Khaghan wanted Bahrām not to spill their blood so that in exchange they pay tribute to him. (Ibid: 7/ 393) Thus Bahrām accepted that didn't kill for ransom them.

Competition Strategy (Win-lose)

This strategy had been the ultimate goal of Ulysses and Bahrām e Gur. It can be said that three strategies have been already said by us, apiece have been any tactics that these two heroes use as their competitive strategy. In the Odyssey, Ulysses goal was to arrive in Itac and after arriving there, he wanted that beat and killed suitors. Also aim of Bahrām e Gur was to defeat enemies like the Khaghan of China, Kaiser of Rome and Shangol, the king of India. He was not agreeable who surrender to these kings by paying ransom. In fact, both heroes have periodically pretended to surrender.

Role of Inductors in Conflict Resolution

In both stories, intermediaries have had an important role in conflict resolution. In the Odyssey, Athene and Hermes were Ulysses' assistants. Hermes was the ambassador of Zeus and his messages brought to Calypso that needs to extricate Ulysses. Also, in the Circe episode, if Hermes did not make Ulysses aware of the deception of Circe, inevitably Ulysses had become as well as pig. Athene has played more highlight role in the story. Ulysses has been interceded to Zeus and other gods by Athene, finally she could satisfy them that Ulysses return to his home after years. (Homer, 2002: 13-15) Also he transitioned Ulysses to the form of a beggar in Ithaca and could thereby provide the suitors grounds of failure. Also Nausicaa, the daughter of the king of city Phaeacian helped Ulysses very much (Ibid: Book six). She covered Ulysses with his clothes and took him to palace of

her father while he fallen on the beach of Phaeacian, also her father provided a group of sailors for Ulysses and he could reach to Ithaca by them after years, also Bahrām e Gur has had assistants like Nursi, Mubad, his minister, and Sepinood in resolving conflicts with others. He substituted Nursi on his place in conflict with the Khaghan and in this way, was an obstacle for internal rebellion and external enemies. Nursi negotiated with the Khaghan's representative and satisfied him not to attack Iran in exchange for the payment of tax. Mubad, minister of Bahrām, debated with Minister of Kaiser of Rome and could win in debate, so Kaiser agreed to give tax to Iran. Also, Sepinood played an important role in the story." Bahrām had thought return to Iran and whereas he didn't want to reveal his social status so that he wasn't hostage to the India king, wanted Sepinood to secretly go together to Iran. Also, Sepinood guessed who her husband is a warlord that intends to return to his home." (Mohazzab, 1995: 180) Therefore, she helped him in the absence of Shangol in palace and they came to Iran together. She has been a decisive role in the reconciliation between Shangol and Bahrām; so Bahrām could come to Iran by her help and Shangol settled with Bahrām for interest in his daughter.

REACTION OF THE ENEMIES AGAINST THE SAME STRATEGIES OF ULYSSES AND Bahrām e Gur

Ulysses and Bahrām e Gur's enemies have had almost the same reactions against the strategies of the two heroes. One of the causes of these same reactions had been using similar tactics and skills of these two heroes in the implementation of their strategies. Below, we'll analyze the reactions of their enemies.

Conflict Transformation to Friendship

In the *Odyssey*, when Ulysses realized that Circe had transformed his friends in the form of pigs, with help of Hermes "the god of travelers and their guide in dangerous directions" (Guirand, 2002: 124) made ineffective her magic, also Circe swore that would abandon her hostility with Ulysses. Afterwards, their friendship was so strong that Ulysses and his companions were staying in the island of Aea, the residence of Circe, for one year. Of course, it is interpreted that Circe as an evil witch changed a gentle character after negotiating with Ulysses. (Whitman, 1958: 300 and McMlymont, 2008: 21) Because companions of Ulysses were changed form of their human by Circe, also Ulysses was guided the dead world and to Tiresias by her.

Also, Bahrām e Gur showed himself qualified to Shangol by applying appropriate strategies and tactics such as removing rhino, dragon, ... so that Shangol frightened of such a champion that would return to Iran; So he wanted his daughter, Sepinood, to marry him up to would inhabit in India. But Bahrām could return to Iran with the help of Sepinood and Shangol who was an incubus character

thereafter understood his groom is Bahrām, the king of Iran, came toward him for peace. Finally, a permanent peace was established between them. Thus in both stories, conflicting personalities have taken peace approach in front of the heroes and their evil has become good.

Curb of Evil Enemies

Ulysses has surprised and surrendered the suitors in the hall of shooting by applying appropriate strategies and tactics. But since that they had performed many evil acts before Ulysses returned to Ithaca, were killed one after the other by Ulysses. Also he curbed suitors' families with the trick of the gods. Also Bahrām e Gurin coping with the Khaghan of China initially agreed to surrender to Khaghan who wanted to get ransom from Iran before the attack of Bahrām's forces. Therefore, in both stories, although enemies have surrendered their evil has been still potentially felt; as a result, in the *Odyssey*, Ulysses has ended the evil of the suitors by competition and killing them. And in the story of Bahrām e Gur, Bahrām has prevented the evil of the Khaghan by competition strategy and tactics and received ransom from the Khaghan.

CONCLUSION

Both the stories have been formed based on conflict. Both Ulysses and Bahrām e Gur have implemented similar strategies, of course in the implementation of strategies and tactics have considered conditions. Two heroes have benefited from four strategies of pretending, salami, surrender and competition. In both stories, because of the improper time to reveal of the true identity of two heroes, they have tried to hide themselves under a false identity by pretending. Also, because they have pretended to be other persons and used tricky negotiation tactics, they have forced to adopt surrender strategy in coping with enemies. However, they were thinking of competition strategy in their minds and finally could win. Enemies of Ulysses and Bahrām e Gur have adopted peaceful ways in front of their strategy and their evil have changed to goodness and or has been submitted by two heroes.

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