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# ARMAN ARIAN

# Biography



All the books that I am publishing in a year are just one-third of the books I write. Perhaps the oldest book I have written is a two-volume book that I have started writing at the age 16; books about myself, my past, memories and everything that I read it heard every day. The first volume, *Arman Arian in his Words* is about the books I have read and movies I have seen. This is a book that will be published after my death and if anyone reads and becomes interested in my books, could better understand my works. The second book, *Old Man with Socks*, is finished, it is a collection of my memories that am going to recount parts of it for you.

My family has an old interest in history, my grandfather's grandfather, "Mir Mohammad Sadegh Marvazi, was a historian of the Qajar court (one of the kingdoms of Iran over a hundred years ago), he was exiled to Tbilisi at the end of his life and is buried there. He wrote two histories, a formal court history, and another more real and but informal history, which later is published by his grandson, my uncle.

My father had a hand in writing, which after his death in 2010, I organized and edited part of his manuscripts and published it as *Pure Seeds*. All these made books very important in our home and everyone had a library shelf for herself or himself. My childhood quarrels with

my siblings were always for the book. I used to take their books and because our names had similar spellings, I usually changed a few characters, registering my name on the book. Both my mother and father had large libraries. Their field of interest was different. My mother was interested in language, literature, and art and father was interested in technical, mystical and historical subjects. In addition, there was my elder sister's library, to whom I have dedicated *Sepitmaan*, the library was a great point of reference for me. He had exciting books that I loved so much. The most important reward in our home was with books. Every week I had a quota for cinema tickets and books.

It sometimes happened that I did not like a book and immediately exchanged it with my friends. Especially with *The Adventures of Tintin* books that were forbidden at that time. Those exchanges lead to a great collection of books I have today of *The Adventures of Tintin* books that are the result of face-to-face searches to find and select the best versions. This collection is everywhere with me. I was born on November 1, 1981, and grew up with three sisters and a brother in Shahrud, a middle-sized city between Tehran and Mashhad. From early childhood, I was a dreaming and imaginative child and my imaginative life was alive parallel to my real life. Together with my friends, we practiced the strange plans of Tom Sawyer as far as we could but wherever it was impossible, we took refuge to our fantasies and used available toys that we had received from the previous generation. Toys as a cowboy man and the Indian man that was the subject of stories I made in my dreams, and the rich *Keyhan for Kids* magazine that was available in my sister's magazine. The reality of those days was not pleasant at all. The far



and close currents and the dark atmosphere of the 1980s together with nightmares of war between Iran and Iraq, overwhelming censorship and lack of music. In such a dark atmosphere, to be happy was not easy, but emancipation was possible through imagination.

The limitations were even tougher and rougher in our small town. My parents were transferred to Shahrud for their job, and we had no family there. My father, who had his own mystical character, did not go into official and state games at all, he had his own unique

world and singularly accepted all pressure. My mother, who once was a teacher, voluntarily retired herself after the 1979 revolution and stayed at home.

Among my favorite days, was the holiday when we could travel or I could accompany my father in his missions. Most of my travels during the early 15 years of my life, were to Mazandaran (the northern province of Iran) or to Tehran. My mother's family were from Shiraz and Tehran; therefore, I am Shirazi, Mazandarani, and Tehrani.

I had moderate grades in the first years of the school, and with upper classes, I found more interesting points in my discipline and better grades. I was accepted in a top high school because of my good grades. It was a high school where my classmates laughed at my storytelling mind but had a great influence on my literary and cultural development. This was possible with my composition teacher. Mr. Masoumi, who was my teacher for just three months, but had a lifetime and lasting impact. I clearly remember his face, a white man with a long forehead and backward hairs that had a small mustache, and used to carry a black umbrella like a walking stick that was set

with his raincoat. I never saw him again. My other teacher, Mr. Ali Beigi, was our educational advisor. At the same year, I started writing short stories with the encouragement of these two, and for six years, I had the first position in story writing among boys. The first person in the storytelling of girls in our city was Elnaz Nasehi, and at that time it never occurred to me that she is the lost half of my soul! We married 9 years ago.

Besides writing, the theater also made an important part of my life during school years. In those years, we performed strange scenes; for example, we performed Star Wars. Some of them were so funny that made our cheerless Arabic teacher laugh out loud so as we could even see all his teeth! Our school library was full of old books. But I found my beloved library at the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults of our city, with brilliant books that I borrowed and complemented my own personal library.

I always repeat that I am indebted to three cultural pillars: Mehdi Azari Yazdi, Ehsan Yarshater and Mohammad Ali Eslami Nodoshan. *Good Tales for Good Kids* and *New Stories from Old Books* (two re-creations of the ancient Persian literary works) by the great Mehdi Azari Yazdi and two collections of stories from Shahnameh and Ancient Iran by Ehsan Yarshater, made a huge impact on my intellectual development as a child. Also, there was Divan of Hafiz, the classic Iranian Iran, with a beautiful cover design by Sadegh Sandoghi that impressed me so much that I loved to read more Hafiz. I read books by Eslami Nadoshan at a late stage in life, but as a child, beside *Adventures of Tintin*, I clearly remember Astrid Lindgren's *The Brothers Lionheart* that I read many times. Also, the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults had translated and published great books by Maria Gripe, Erich Kästner, and Mark Twain, and a series of Golden Books, Comic Strips, and the *Kayhan for Kids* magazine from the pre-revolutionary era as well as early volumes of *Soroush for Kids*

were available that were very dear to me.

I had a regular reading habit and from my sister, I learned some tips for fast reading. At the same time, I was a quality reader. Later, I found Professor Jalil Doostkhah's edition of *Avesta* (the sacred book of Zoroastrians). My late brother had letter exchanges with him, and the professor patiently and carefully answered the letters of a teenager. My brother died one year ago, at a young age.

I was 15 when I met in my sister's library with the books of Professor Eslami Nadoushan. Until then, the pre-Islamic Iran was important for me, but by reading his works, I realized that in certain post-Islamic periods, Iran's art, literature, painting, and architecture, is even more significant than pre-Islamic periods. I bought all his books and read them and at the age of 20. I felt very fortunate to talk to him. He was one of the early readers of my novel, *Persians and I* and recommended it to a publisher. At the age of 22, I made a documentary about Professor Eslami Nadoushan as my BA dissertation. The most important lesson I learned from his was cultural balance and the necessity of surpassing racism and getting away from extremes.

From the early teen years, cinema was very important to me. Finding films was very hard, and I insisted on seeing the movie according to a list. Since the age of 15, I have been subscribing to the *Cinema Weekly* and *The World of Image* magazines, and on the wall of my room, I had a list of best-selling and artistic movies from Iran and the world. Every movie I saw, I ticked the list until the entire margin of the list was full of my ticks!

From the same age, I started reading the Holy Quran (sacred book of Muslims). I read all the major and important translations by Elahi Qomshei, Atari, Saffarzadeh, and Khoramshahi. Reading the Quran was the gateway to reading other sacred books of the world, such as the Torah, the Gospels, and Avesta, which were important to my work. Avesta later became the subject of my dissertation, imagery in Avesta, that later I published *Ahuraean Imageries*.

The effects of Avesta are clear in all my books, especially *Patash Khoragar*.

At the age of 16, I wrote the first novel that I will never publish. It was a practice to cross the short stories to the world of long stories. I wrote some of the stories of the *Bitter Earrings* collection at the same age. It was also at the same time when I wrote a book called *God of the World and Thought*, which was my philosophical manuscript in adolescence. When *Ashuzdangehe* appeared, those manuscripts found their place between the texts of the trilogy. Also, I wrote the fourth volume to the collection, *Manuscripts of a Six Thousand Years Old Man*, which was an edited version of my writings at the age of 16. I have dedicated it to the immortal character of Ashuzdangehe.

When I was about 6 6, I had three favorite jobs. First, I wanted to be a king but found that this seems impossible! So, I decided to become an astronaut and after a while, I saw that this is just a dream! Therefore, I decided to become an actor. Since then, the interest in cinema grew in me. For ten years this dream was with me until I was 15 when I attended young cinema courses. There was a great library there and it was a rich course in cinema studies and experiences.

When I was a senior high school student, I have already started making films at the Young Cinema Society, and I was in touch with some movie directors. My dream was to make films and to study cinema at a university. But at that time, I could not find courses for cinema in high school and was not prepared to follow another discipline. One day on a math class I found my final decision. So, I closed my book and told the teacher I stop



this now and am going to be a filmmaker or nothing. My classmates laughed and the teacher took it as a joke. But I left the classroom and called my father to inform him!

I was resolute to leave the formal school. I keep a copy of the letters I wrote to the Bureau of Education to add art majors at high school. I told my father I am going to be an assistant director. My father who has seen the experiences of his other sons did not object and said, "Go and start". I started filmmaking and as for the advice of my father, I started reading humanities at another night school. So, I closed all the books for the exam night. Iran has a central entrance exam for the university and we should announce our interests in one table. Although there was a large sheet with rooms to declare 100 items as a list of priorities, I stubbornly filled just one row for the cinema. On the interview day I was the first person with a luggage box full of movies I have made and the recommendation from the Young Cinema Association and the scripts I have already written. Despite my low grade in writing, my work, and especially the sheet, had its impact on the professors, and I became a theater student of the University of Art in Tehran, the last one in the list.

At the university, there was the opportunity to connect with the main protagonists of Iranian cinema and to be their direct student; to learn a lot and to hate even more! Why? Because what I had in my dreams was generally not found in Iranian cinema, my problems were more technical and economic. The last two years of bachelor's degree, I chose directing as my major. In those two years, I contacted many of great Iranian directors and learned a lot. Masters such as Bahram Beyzaie, Bahman Farmanara, Alireza Re'isian, Homayoun Asadiyan, Mohammad Ali Sajjadi, Mehdi Hashemi and Roya Teymourian.

At the end of the graduate course, I decided to move toward literature. As for the master's thesis, I turned to scriptwriting and that great event happened to me. The presence of Mohammad Reza Aslani, an



important documentarist who has produced such great works *Hasanlu Cup*, *Wind Chess*, and *The Green Fire*, in advanced filmmaking courses made a huge impact on me. I tried not to blink in his classes to absorb everything!

I have always dreamed to make three great and historic films for three legendary Persian figures: Zoroaster, Cyrus, and Ferdowsi. When I realized that I could not bring these subjects into a movie, I decided to use them in a novel, and this is how *Persians and I* was formed.

*Persians and I* was written in a time when a young student of cinema and theater was full of concerns and ideas but could not do anything and was drowning in his own dreams and aspirations. Every morning, on the way from home to the university, there were several newspaper stalls in front of me and I reviewed the main titers. The incidents of those hot period, and the high polemics in the politics, had its impact on *Persians and I*. A lot of things accumulated and finally exploded in *Persians and I*, political and social concerns, passions and desires, love for the homeland, love for children, literature, history, myth, previous knowledge and future-oriented dreams, and many, many more.

In that trilogy, the enlightened and enriched me talks. Many people tried to encourage me to continue the novel, but I hated repetition and wanted to enter a new domain. The first prize that *Persians and I* received was Mehregan Literary Prize in 2005 and it recognized me as a teenage novelist.

In *Writing about writing: the image of a soul*,” I have to explain how I write. My writing style is based on spontaneous overflows. My dreams have a lot of impact on my writing. *Dark Garden Nightmare* was the result of a real nightmare and the whole story of *The Dream of the White Garden* came from a dream. Such an approach makes me live in the very space of my stories and with my characters, and really, I cannot distinguish them from each other.



Once I concluded that in addition to our heroes and our superheroes, we need more living and up-to-date characters so as the people and especially the children could feel them more immediately by their side, in their very city and country. Less like a person who has lived three thousand years ago and more like a contemporary person who is living now. This was the basic idea of *Ashvazdangheh*. The word “Ashvazdangheh” means a just person who is seeking the truth. The ancient pronunciation of the word in the old *Avesta* was ‘vaz dan gaheh’ which was transformed into ‘ashvazd’ in Sassanid Pahlavi. When I was studying

*Avesta*, I found the name interesting and kept it. In *Avesta*, just a name is mentioned and the name of his father, as a just person and in *Bundahishn*, he is introduced as one of the immortals. (*Bundahishn* itself means primal creation and is the name traditionally given to an encyclopedic collection of Zoroastrian cosmogony and cosmology.) This is all the information we have received on the character. While writing, on the one hand, I had Batman in mind and on the other, Khidr the prophet. Khidr is present in the story as the master. All these ideas emerged in one night and I wrote the first two chapters of the volume on the same night. The work was intensely spontaneous. I did not reorder the chapters to make the reader more perplexed, they are written in the order as they are printed.

There is a moment in writing that I know it very well. It is like the moment when you want to join two pieces of wood in carpentry; the moment when you feel everything is in the right place and you push the screw and connect the pieces. Finding this moment and the starting point is sometimes easy and sometimes

difficult. Hard like *Patesh Khoargar* that, among all my work, it had a lot of fluctuations. It took months to find the starting point and join the different elements. Most of the book was produced spontaneously and I suffered a lot during its birth. This character appeared to me on several different occasions until I could see him better. At times, I even felt there is a problem with my visual capacity!

When I saw an image, I found the right path. A photo of the kingly castle of Cherat, published in a book about Savadkuh showed the image. The book was a gift from my father and the book was written and illustrated by Mr. Bavand. The exact sense you feel in the book was there. I used that photo and developed it, and the rest of the land, the characters, and the story flourished. In the early contract with the publisher, the collection was to be presented in three volumes, but in the middle of writing the second volume, I saw a deer. The next morning I told my wife this is five volumes now! A new key character and some sub-characters were added to the story, and the story became more voluminous and stranger. I have written all the dates and moments in a book I am keeping since I was 16. This set of quintets is the first novel written based on Avesta and Bundahishn.

In the last ten years, on average, I received an offer in a month by a variety of small and large groups to produce cinematic films, plays or animations based on my books. I like my books to be adapted for movies and there were many proposals for it, but as I know cinema and animation to some extent, am extremely sensitive about it. However, I am sure someday this will surely happen that I hope it to be the best!

I consider cinema as very serious, therefore I try not to approach it. Also, my favorite genre is too costly. When at the university, I made *Ancient Snow*, a short movie about a wanderer

old man. Bahram Beyzai read and confirmed the script.

Now, I think there was a kind of romanticism, rawness, and lack of experience around it. However, it turned out to be a nice movie. I tried very hard to make the historical scenes not to grow expensive. In *Ario at the City of Goheran*, produced by Parsima Company, I was a member of the screenwriting theme and collaborated with such progressive computer games as Garshasp, Siavash, etc. In *the Old Man and the World* movie, I was an advisor and connected the production team to Master Azari Yazdi. He agreed to talk with me for two or three hours, and there were good cameras to hunt the scenes. These scenes, moments, and words should be recorded, although in the final edition, some of the discussions could not be presented.

If one day my books are adapted for movies, I like to monitor the quality of the works. I will do this without very much interference. There is a series of films I like to be produced, and I often see myself as a member of the screenwriting team. Why? Because as a director, I have never felt happy since I have started working and studies cinema. But in the field of literature, I love the moment when I finish a book and deliver it to the publisher. In fact, without this consent, it is impossible to deliver a book to the publisher. I am a simple drop in this galaxy and for these few days God has given me a chance, I need to keep myself alive with my work. History will prove if I have contributed or not!

Writing for teenagers is different. Their existence inspires me. The presence of teenagers inspires me for the future of the world, Iran, and humanity. I am worried as much as I am happy because bad times and bad external conditions cause moral problems, shallow knowledge, and hastiness. I feel and try to learn a lot and teach

narrations. The feedbacks are vital streams that have always given me fresh energy and motivation, and at times, I find new ideas among them.

During these years, I have always attended the Tehran International Book Fair, as a guest in my publisher's stands, presenting my book to the people. However, I get my motivation from somewhere else. First of all, the very work is important for me. It may or may not be seen; it may or may not win an award. We are happy when I hear my works are welcomed to many, but if not seen, it never discourages me. I write because of my love for my singular God, for history, and for the figures who have made and moved history; I write for the love of humanity and those loved ones who understand and follow. Sometimes I find teenagers' ideas and opinions very shocking. One time a girl asked me why in my books all the girls die and boys become heroes? This made me think and so as *Ashvazdangheh* was created with stronger female characters. Of course, my wife also emphasizes these points. She is my first reader and often edits my works. She is so patient, educated, dear and humble and her love is very precious to me.

In these years, my contacts with adolescents have sometimes been very high and sometimes routine; I meet them at schools, universities, and at the Center for Intellectual Development of





Children and Young Adults. I have not lived in Iran for the last seven years and I do not see my teenage audience closely, but the flow of emails and messages continues, and I receive many positive and negative feedbacks. Here and far from Iran, I live just as I have always lived. Technology helps me continue my communications and to send my work to Iran. I feel more mentally relaxed here. Of course, all the bad news, when your away, fall more heavily. Perhaps the most important thing about being away is not to feel the marginal effects of incidents. Possibly I have lost social opportunities, for example, I cannot take part in workshops, seminar, and other social events, or cannot personally attend face-to-face meetings and appointments, but this has nothing to do with my books and I am not too sad. I want to write and to document, and staying away from contemporary Iran has not created a negative effect on my stories. Maybe this is because of the genre of my works. When it comes to library research on such subjects as myth, history, religion, fantasy, and imagination, physical proximity with the society may not be a serious issue. The reservoir of my brain and heart is full of raw materials. I have traveled so much all through Iran to find new spaces and ideas for

this genre that I have absorbed the spaces and images like a sponge. If I find two hundred years of time, I think in my backpack in my backpack I still have many ideas and images to draw on for writing. It is true that today I am away from Iran, but I have had a very good time there, north and south, and east and west, and everywhere my current and future figures have been with me.

I have not had any fixed work anywhere, and I have always been writing, reading, and crying. In these few years, I have published three volumes of *Patesh Khoargar* and have recently finished writing the fourth volume. Also, I have written and published three books from *The Old Future* collection, and have completed four volumes of *The Seven Kingdoms*, a work that is going to be in seven volumes. I have other books at hand, there are plenty of single books, articles, and works that I have not published. Often, I read 100 pages a day, and I move according to a schedule. I will read the course of works and do not start incidentally. I read with better decisions than before, and I keep a certain intellectual trajectory, hoping he will help me keep moving. So, I prefer the humanities, travelogues, history, mythology and the sacred books and the analysis of religions, mythology, and Iranian studies.

These days, I have a 20-month-old baby called Yasna who has brought us more responsibilities and works, together with a wonderful and matchless amount of joy! We fully share the responsibilities of the child at home because I really and truly believe in equality in marital life. I have a romantic passion for home affairs. My cooking is also very good; possibly this is evident in my stories, where I offer cheerful presentations of food scenes. However, at those times, I could be a bit hungry! Our daughter, Yasna, forms a big part of my thoughts, and it's important for us to learn how to make her fortune and build the foundation of her brain and life. For example, she is often not allowed to watch TV, and she is not allowed to touch cell phones and tablets. In twenty months, she handles the book in such a way as if she had already received two PhDs! Apart from spending time with my family, my days pass with work,



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life, prayer and thinking, and also with sports, reading, studying and traveling. I am curious about the events and I continually write and write without losing a moment for thinking and writing. I think about joy, entertainment and pleasure, I think about our real or virtual games with friends or the family, I think about my land the world we are destroying and the history we do not learn from, and the future that, despite all contemporary bitterness, still is the source of hope for many of us. I am in love with Iranian culture and Iran is my land any mother. But this does not mean that I feel any problem with other races, languages , and tribes; by no means, at all! Things that are the significant include freedom, solidarity, and liberation from the false bonds and borders that mad people have created for mankind. But I love all human beings, cultures, nations, and their eternal heavenly lessons. Flowers are beautiful and I love all the flowers in all parts of the earth.



# Resume

## Activities

Teaching Art History and Visual and Performing Arts at Ghalamchi Institute from 2002 to 2006.

Teaching Screenwriting and Writing at Ghalamchi Institute from 2006 to 2008.

## Awards

Winner of the Twenty-Third National Book of the Year Prize for *Persians and I*, 2005.

Winner of the Ceremony of the Mehregan Literary Festival (PAKA) for *Persians and I*, 2005.

Award Winner of Fifth Martyr Ghanipour Festival for *Persians and I*, 2005.

Awarded by Council for Children's Book, *Persians and I*, 2006.

Award of Mehregan Literary Festival for *Persians and I*, 2006.

Winner of the honorary diploma in the 31st IBBY World Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark by the International Board on Books for Young people 2008, for the book the *Persian and I*.

Awarded as the Excellent research on Shahnameh by a young researcher, Ferdowsi Foundation, 2009.

Nominated for Ghanipour Book Award, *Sepitmaan*, 2010.

Winner of the Diploma of Honor for the Best Epic Computer Game for *Game of Gorgin*, National Computer Games Foundation, 2012.

First prize winner of the best film from E.M.U Cyprus Film Festival for the production of Citizen Worm, a short film, 2013.

Special award winner from the Green

Peace Festival of Cyprus for Citizen Worm, 2013.  
Award winner and honorary diploma for *Ashvazdangheh Trilogy*, First Mehdi Azari Yazd Festival, 2015.  
The final winner of Paivar Literary Award for *Ashvazdangheh Trilogy*, 2015.  
Receiving Five Turtles from Flying Turtle List, 17<sup>th</sup> List, for *Ashvazdangheh* trilogy and *Patesh Khoargar 1: Beginning Epic*, Summer 2016.  
*Patesh Khoargar* nominated for the best book of 2017 and winner of the award from 9th Premier Book Festival for Children and Adolescents, 2017.  
*Patesh Khoargar* nominated for the golden and silver medal of Flying Turtle List, 2017.  
*Patesh Khoargar 3: On the Foundations of Being*, Selected Book of Iran for the Reproduction of Ancient Works in the White Crow List, Munich Library, 2017.

## Articles and Notes

Avesta and the Cinema [Master's Dissertation] Screenplay "Ten Criminal Goat Kids, Research and Compilation by Arman Arian, supervised by Professor Mohammad Shahba; Consultant Professor Jaleh Amouzgar, Azad Research University, and Art University, School of Cinema and Theater, 2005.

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## Bibliography

*Persians and I - Vol. 1: Azh dahak Fortress*, Mowj Publications, 2003.  
*Persians and I - Vol. 2: Mystery of the Bird Mountain*, Mowj Publications, 2005.  
*Persians and I - Vol. 3: Here comes the Resurrection Day*, Mowj Publications, 2006.



*Persians and I Collection: the trilogy in one volume, Mowj Publications, 2007.*

*Bitterearrings (Short story collection), Mowj Publications, 2007.*

*Ashvazdangheh 1: Myth Now, Mowj Publication, 2008.*

*Sepitmaan (The Story of Zarathustra's Life), Iran Baan Publications, 2008.*

*Ashvazdangheh 4 : God, World, Idea (6000 Years Old Manuscripts of Ashvazdangheh), Mowj Publications,*

*2008. (The Appendix to Ashvazdangheh trilogy)*

*Dream of the White Garden, Iran Baan Publications, 2009.*

*Computer Game Writing Guide, National Computer Games Foundation, 2010.*

*The Book of Spells, Iran Baan Publications, 2011*

*Dark Garden Nightmare, Iran Baan Publications, 2011*

*The Encyclopedia of the Avesta's Dramatic Elements, Mowj Publications, 2011.*

*Silent Uproar (collection of texts, travel writings, dreams, articles, and prayers), Mowj Publications, 2011.*

*A Hundred Advices, told Thousand times (A Small Book on Wisdom), Iran Baan Publications, 2012.*

*Ancient Future 1: The First Night Story, Saffron Publications, 2013.*

*Ancient Future 2: The Second Night Story, Saffron Publications, 2013.*

*Ancient Future 3: The Last Night's Story, Saffron Publications, 2013.*

*Ashvazdangheh 3: Rescuing Epic, Mowj Publications, 2013.*

*Dark Light, Ghatreh Publications, 2014*

*Ashvazdangheh 2 : Invincible Demons, Mowj Publications, 2014.*

*Patesh Khoargar 1: The Epic of Beginning, Ofogh Publications, 2017.*

*Shahnamg: Myths (six volumes), Chekkeh Publications, 2015.*

*The Image of a Soul (Writing about Writing), Mowj Publications, 2016.*

*Patesh Khoargar 2: A Man from the Dragon's Descent*, Ofogh Publications, 2016.

*White Wings - A Illustrated Short Story*, Mowj Publications, 2017.

*Patesh Khoargar 3: On the Foundations of Existence*, Ofogh Publications, 2017.

*The Deaf Owl*, A collection of seven short stories, Tehran: Mowj Publications, 2018.

*Pure Seeds* (excerpts of mystical texts and moral narratives), Collected by Mahboob Arian, edited by Arman Arian, Tehran: Mowj Publications, 2018.

## Translated Works

*Dark Garden Nightmare*, translated by Caroline Croskery, Published by CreateSpace, USA, 2017.

Bitter Earring is published in Turkish (Turkish: Acı Küpe) Translated by Esra Cakar and published by Demavand Publication House, 2015.

*Koszmar czarnego ogrodu [Dark Garden Nightmare]*, translated by Radslav Strona.

## Conferences and Lectures

Lecture on Applications of Iranian Myths and Symbols in Fiction, Permanent Translation Conference, September 2016.

## Workshops

Organizing the first educational workshop for scenario writing, National Iranian Computer Games Foundation, 2010.

Organizing "Myth and Legend" Workshop, at the House of the Children and Adolescent Librarian, 2009.



Organizing Creative Writing Workshop at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus, 2014.

## Judgments

Member of the jury of the Third Afsaneha Fiction Contest, 2012.

Member of the Jury of the Third Digital Arts Festival, 2009.

Member of the jury of the First Iranian Computer Games Festival, 2011.

## Articles, Dissertations, Reviews and Notes about the Works

Reviewing Journey in *Persians and I Trilogy*: A Jungian Approach, Master's Dissertation by Sara Hosseinpour, Supervised by Professor Farideh Pourgiv, Faculty of Persian Language and Literature, University of Shiraz, February 2012.

Mythological Criticism of *Persians and I*, Master's Dissertation by Marzieh Poudineh, supervised by Professor Mahin Panahi, Literature Research Center, Alzahra University, 2015.

Review and Analysis of *Persians and I Trilogy*, Master's Dissertation

by Mahshid Mansourizadeh, supervised by Bijan Zahiri Nav, Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, 2016. Where do the new ideas come from? Samira Aslanpour, *Shargh Daily*, February 28, 2005, p. 17. A Comparative Study of Contemporary Fantasy Literature in Germany and Iran based on the works of the German Markus Heitz and the Iranian Arman Arian [Master's Disstertation], by Mohammad Sadegh Karimi, Supervised by Professor Phazel Rad, 2012. Master's Degree in German Language Learning, Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Foreign Languages Department.

Renewed Life of Myth and History, Hassan Parsaee, *Monthly Review of Children and Adolescents' Book*, no. 101 to 103, March to May 2006, pp. 70 – 78.

The Rare Wisdom and the Rogue Sentiment, Shohreh Kaedi, *Monthly Review of Children and Adolescents' Book*, August 3, 2005, p. 66.

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## Overview of Work

Arian is a writer who writes to rebel against “old order.” His works are the rebellion of novel against “myths” and “epic”, and the deconstruction and reconstruction of sacred texts and history and reinterpretation of these text for more modern times. While the historical analysis and propositions of the text are explicit enough, the focus of attention of both the historian and the storyteller is to draw attention to the past times of humanity and human societies.

Since the 2000s, when the first work of Arman Arian was published, he is recognized as a different writer who has been able to link the literature and myths of the past with contemporary lives of teenagers. His first book collection both shook the market of children’s literature, but also made a generation of critics of writers of children and teenagers’ literature to consider the first work of a young writer as serious. In his novels, he both recreated some of the traditional and historical Persian literary works and created entirely new works based on myths.

In his interviews, he has repeatedly referred to his studies of literature and history of Iran. Most of the critics remind us that “In fact, with a convenient knowledge about the gaps in the Iranian teenage novel, Arian has consistently tried to address history and Iran’s myths and help his audience for a better understanding of their past and their national identity. With his successful and artistic treatment of these issues, Aryan gives teenagers the opportunity to explore the depth of history and mythology, and presents them an innovative approach of combining individual and collective identities.”

One meaning of the overwhelming consensus of various institutions to award his first novel could be that we are talking about a genuine writer. He has started with historical and ancient literary and mythological tales and goes far beyond rewriting and rewriting and creates great adaptations. By revising and combining various texts such as myths, sacred texts (Avesta and Quran), and history, Arman Arian has created new texts and

has narrated his perception of Iranian history. A narrative that aspires to achieve individual, social and cultural identities; a movement that at the age of globalization, finds angry and dissenting characteristics.

Arian's works is an example of how a new literary work can both preserve some features from tradition and history but also appropriate the past in an entirely new creation. This is not a simple merging and is the creation of an integrated new work that has absorbed and digested all former texts to create an entirely new one.

Arian's works mark a new starting point for the formation of Iranian novel for children and adolescents and in a comparative analysis can be compared with any modern novel of the contemporary world.

Arian continues his journey in writing historical, mythological, and action novels, discussing human values, peace, and the victory of the good and often surprising the readers and critics with new work. Arian's novels are a return to history, but he never stops in the past. Instead, he knows how to use the past in his movement toward the future. This is how he both preserves the narrative aspect of past events and creates a modern novel to communicate with the contemporary world.

He revives and presents Iranian myths in *Ashvazdangheh*. While writing novels are both artistic and literary, there is a deep search in his works that attempts to directly and without reference to the vision of the orientalists, revive the lived Iranian history.

For example, *Ashvazdangheh* is a creative innovation based on myth and history, which has added a new myth to Iranian mythology. Arian has opened a window to the Iranian mythical world. This novel cannot be categorized as historical, war, mythical, surreal, real, or any other category. In this work, all these categories and issues are closely intertwined. Arian in this novel has proved that beyond the experiences that he had with *Persians and I*, there are other things in his mind which are manifested in his creativity in the narrative. This fictional work has no linear and straightforward storyline and structurally is designed more like a puzzle. The novel starts in the present and the next chapter presents the events of about 6,000 years ago.

*"Ashvazdangheh* is the structural continuation of *Persians and I*" Arian says, "in a similar mythical, epic, and historical setting and atmosphere, and I tried to present this novel as a puzzle by focusing in character of *Ashvazdangheh*. It is the symbolic history of Iran. Unfortunately, Iranian history is not well-documented and the early four hundred years of this history is lost in oblivion. However, I managed to write this novel with the available information about the later 2500 years."

In his works, Arian is encouraging the reader to refer to the forgotten treasures of mythology and ancient literature. By narrating every story, he revives thousands of stories from the depth of history and creates a new world based on narration and storytelling. Every reference to symbolic works leads to discovering a new aspect or meaning of his works.

Arian's has deeply read and internalized the ancient myths so that he can recreate them in any genre. In *Dark Garden Nightmare*, using the element of the demon, which is very known in Iranian culture, he has created an apocalyptic setting with standard characteristics of both horror stories and an entirely Iranian setting. This is unique among Iranian writers.

Some form of mysticism is also evident in Arian's works. Although this is evident in such works as *Patesh Khoargar*, *Sepitmaan*, and some earlier works, better manifestations are to be found in such works as *White Wings*. It is the story of an eagle in the mountains of Alborz that is different from the rest of the eagles and wants to pass the



seven stages of love (the same as the seven stages in the path of mysticism).

Comparing the three important and popular works of Arian (*Persians and I*, *Ashvazdangheh*, and *Patesh Khoargar*) shows that the author has used imagery and fantasy symbols to design and develop his stories. These symbols are used for characterization and creation of settings and reinforce

the theme and plot of the story. In *Ashvazdangheh* and *Persians and I*, the objective setting makes the dramatic dimensions stronger than imaginary dimensions, but in *Patesh Khoargar*, the imaginary symbols find more intensity and are developing toward more imaginary illustrations.

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Arian's works could inspire a new wave of creativity in Iran. After his start, a new approach to Iran's ancient myths was introduced and many works were written on mythology and adaptation of them. Still, his works are characteristically far advanced than those of his followers. This is partly because he has a new outlook toward the teenagers and narration for the teenagers and creatively applies the contemporary storytelling techniques of the world to his works. He can create beating settings and imaginative and innovative settings and is also able to dramatically integrate epic, mythical, and historical literary genres in new fantasy work. While most of the adaptations or rewritings of ancient texts in Iran are limited to Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* or a few other works, Arian has opened the old religious texts, such as the Avesta, and the even the lesser known texts into the teenage novel, keeping the thematic framework of these stories and converting them into imaginative novels, he has created important literary works.

His works are both historical-mythological and at the same time retain important characteristics of "new" and "modern" literary works.

## Review of Important Works

### Persians and I: Mystery of the Bird Mountain

Roghaieh Hemmati and Abdollah Valipour

*Journal Child and Adolescent Literature Research*



Siavash, a 13-year-old boy who is orphaned and displaced, works as pager in a desert repair shop for a family who is holding him. One day, an old blind man purchases him with some money from his step-father. Siavash, along with the old man who seems to be a magician called Magu, starts traveling in a dry desert. After a lot of adventures and extreme hardships, the two reach a mountain with a cave that, according to the magician, its gate opens once every twenty years. According to Magu, inside a cave hall, there is a book that is a book of life and the person who could access it, becomes fortunate. Magi

the magician has entered the cave twenty years ago and returned blind. Now, forced laboring Siavash, he is seeking to reach the book. Siavash enters the cave, and when he wants to take the book for the magician, he hears a soft voice from inside the book, telling him: “If you take me to the magician, he will throw you down the rocks.” Siavash closes his eyes with his hand on the book and begins his time and place journey the land of myths. When he opens his eyes, he sees himself at Kay Kāvus throne (a mythological shah of Iran), with everybody waiting for him to arrive. In the land of myths, after the advice of Zal, the father of Rostam, he accompanies Rostam during his entire life, even during his seven tasks.

Throughout the story, we hear all the adventures through his point of view. The flight of Kay Kāvus (according to the myth, he made a vehicle to fly to China) and his captivation by White Daemon of Damavand together with Iranian heroes, and the seven tasks of Rostam that

resulted in their freedom, the conflict with Sohrab and Esfandiar, and even the death of Rustam by Shagad (Rustam's own step-brother), are among the adventures where Siavash is present and witness to all the adventures. At the end of the story, when he opens his eyes, his hand is still on the book and the cry of a magician is heard from a distant. On the other hand, a subtle voice is heard from the book of life, which is from Simorgh and guides him in many stages of the story, telling him: "We have passed a long way and have a long way to go." Siavash closes his eyes again and leaves the cave and the book and the magician and, along with Simorgh, departs for another resurrection.

The story is a fantasy journey in time and place, and its plot is based on the epic adventures of *Shahnameh*. The story has very strong internal and external polemics and conflicts; internal conflicts of the main character and external conflicts of such characters as those of Rustam with his enemies and the land of Iran. The mythological elements and characters are present in the entire story. It has very strong images that illustrate the setting. The language of the story is entirely modern, even the mythical characters use contemporary slang to express their intentions. Contemporary proverbs and commonly used phrases are heard from mythological characters, which makes the reader to engage with them and continue reading.

Arian, taking advantage of man *Shahnameh* themes, is developing a new story that reflects the original events and recounts the events from another perspective. In today's young point of view, who during a series of events returns to thousands of years ago, one of the most interesting things is the novelty and unexpectedness of events, so that the reader at any given moment is expecting something new and unexpected. Another point is the relation between truth and imagination that is featured in this story; producing events like confrontation of Rustam with Zarathustra, the presence of the Phoenix and the invulnerability of Esfandiar (like Achilles he was invulnerable in all his body except for his 'eyes'), which is caused Zarathustra, etc. In fact, the writer has passed the boundary between truth and myth and intertwined them so that we may ask ourselves if these events

really happened? This collection, there is extensive and considerable praise for chivalry, the fight against oppression and tyranny, and the permanent victory of truth.

## Ashvazdangheh Trilogy

Farnaz Maleki Sarvestani

Excerpts from Reviewing the journey of the hero in the *Ashvazdangheh Trilogy*

International Conference on Literary Investigations, Language and Cultural Relations

*Ashvazdangheh Trilogy* is a fictional story with a nonlinear narration of the six-thousand-years-old Magi of the same name who tells the story of Iran from the beginning to the present. Ashvazdangheh along with two of his master's rivals, achieve immortality through eating what his master has provided. Later, the other two people become a strong adversary. When he was eating elixir of eternity, by a conspiracy, he is convicted of murdering his master to death. He survives due to his immortality and leaves Sialk valley, reaching the plain land, where he met Parvaneh, a girl he marries and they live together for years. But after the death of Parvaneh, he is exhausted from his immortality and is looking for a way to remove the spell. After researches, he realizes that the key to his emancipation from immortality is to enter a mysterious fortress. He works for centuries to find the



underground fortress. On this route, Ashvazdangheh passes through the history of Iran, and each time is stronger than before and armed with esoteric sciences and ancient wisdom, so as he can help his people and community. After reaching the fortress, Ashvazdangheh becomes in charge of protecting Israfil's horn. Meanwhile, the enemies are not idle and seek a way to increase their power and reach eternal immortality. They seek help from the devil, Ahriman who in turn, demands them to abduct Israfil's horn. The story continues by descriptions of the battles between Ashvazdangheh and his evil enemies.

Arman Arian in this trilogy masterfully portrays the fluctuations of the hero's journey. Using the literary and fantasy elements, he has created a work that attracts the adolescent reader and makes him think about the ancient culture and history. The trilogy uses fantasy and magic elements of portraying a modern mythical hero.

The distinction between Arian's hero with other heroes of the mystical fantasy novels is that while other heroes start a journey to achieve immortality, Ashvazdangheh begins the journey to end his immortality. Arian's artistic creativity is in that he sets his hero to a double journey. While the hero is on the journey, Arian sends him to a second journey to make his hero a savior. The first journey is to end immortality and the second journey is to accept responsibility and to guard Israfil's horn.

Arian empowers his hero with extraterrestrial power so as to make room for the hero to use his mental capacities, enabling him to capture the attention of the others and advance the events as he needs. Arian sets the setting of the narrative and the characteristics of the hero in such a way as to illustrate the different aspects of a hero. Ashvazdangheh has certain abilities and during the journey, he has gained experiences, making him a superhero,



which at the same time covers three archetypes of hero, savior and wise old man. However, Ashvazdangheh the hero is the strongest aspect of this character overshadows the other two dimensions.

## Patesh Khoargar Trilogy

Zahra Pirsofi

*Patesh Khoargar* is the first Iranian mythical fantasy novel that has recreated the setting and stories of Avesta and Bundahishn. In the first volume of this collection, the evil forces that have been captivated for many years, through thousands of magic and trickery, return to the surface of the earth and with the spread of blackness, destroy people and villages. Therefore, Farah (the special forces of Ahoura and the messenger of the one divinity) ask Arasti, a teenager, to become a messenger and find a person called “Patesh Khoargar”, telling him that Ahuramazda has forgiven him and that he should to reciprocate the Ahoura forces and destroy the evil forces. After traveling through difficult and hard ways, Arasti finds Patesh Khoargar, giving him the message and ultimately Patesh Khoargar prepares himself for a difficult battle with the evil forces.

This story, like most of Arian’s other works, seeks to demonstrate good and bad confrontations and the constant battle between good and evil. Engere Minoos (Monster of Monsters) is the powerful representative of the Black Forces; six demons are his main fellows and companions. They do a lot of mischiefs to carry out their evil intentions.

Patesh Khoargar, the main character of the novel, confronts the devilish forces and using the power





and force of the black magic, he helps to promote goodness and brings victory to good over the evil. Of course, since part of his force comes from devilish magical powers, his magic cannot be considered as pure white. He also has fellows and companions.

An interesting point about most of the characters of this story is their being relative and dynamic in their personality. It seems that Arian has tried to avoid the absolute characters of mythological or fantasy stories and to create some characters who, despite the enjoying of wisdom and perfection, suffer from ordinary human weaknesses. This innovation in the characterization of mythological hero and personalities makes the reader see more real and credible characters and settings.

The Ahouraian and Devilish settings in the novel is very influential. For example, the tower of Farah is described

as a sacred and praiseworthy place: a tall tower with neither a window nor any light from outside, however all through its round and upright staircase, it is immersed in light and in the fresh odor of spring flowers. The detailed and fascinating descriptions of the natural places of the Persian territory also reveal the tranquil atmosphere of this land as well as the good nature of its inhabitants.

In general, the work has a fluent and clear language, inviting the reader to continue following. Matching the size of the sentences with the narrative frequency and the proper use of original vocabulary are the other prominent features of language in the novel.

The application of proper and appropriate techniques in characterization, setting, and narrative has made *Patesh Khoargar* an interesting and entertaining novel. Therefore, it easily invites the audience to get acquainted with the history of ancient Iran as well as to enter the exciting world of fantasy and myth.

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