

## Genetic structuralism in Klidar Novel

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**Abstract:** Genetic structuralism is a theory highlighted by Lucien Goldman in his critique of sociology of literature. In this theory, social classes are known to be the real creators of a work of literature. This study is an attempt to analyze Klidar, a novel by Mahmood Dolat Abadi, from the genetic structuralism point of view, highlighting the role of social classes in the genius of the author in depicting social thoughts and eternalizing them.

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### Introduction

Born in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, sociology of literature is an interdisciplinary body of knowledge describing the link between the society and literature. Lucatch and Goldman are two prominent figures in sociology of literature, especially sociology of novel. Goldman believes that although most people are concerned with sociology of novel, little has been achieved in this regard, and lack of scientific methods has always led researchers to pointing out that literature is a reflection of the society in an artistic-literary context (Askari, 2007: 54-55). Goldman puts forth a number of new concepts typically taken from the ideas proposed by Marx and Lucatch. Using these ideas, he tries to find a positive method to investigate philosophical and literary works. He calls this method genetic structuralism (MEsbahi Pour, 1979: 21).

This study tries to present a genetic structuralism critique of Klidar, a masterpiece by Mahmood Dolat Abadi, the prominent modern author.

### Genetic structuralism

Genetic structuralism is the title Lucien Goldman gave to the method of criticism and tried to explain the structure between the literary work and the worldview resulting from the social-economic structure (Eshaghian, 2007: 111). According to Goldman, the main discoveries of genetic structuralism are the collective agent of literary creation and the structuralist nature of the behavior of the collective agent (Goldman, 2003, 81).

Genetic structuralism considers literary works not as the language but as speech phenomena and emphasizes that unlike linguistic structures, speech structures are meaningful (Goldman, a, 2001: 80). In other words, any human behavior is an attempt to give a meaningful response to a specific situation in order to create a balance between the doer of the action and

the receiver of the action (Pascadi, 2002: 56). This implies that whenever human does an action, he actually wants to solve a problem or change the world in such a way that he finds a meaningful answer to the problem (Goldman, b, 2002: 230). « In this regard, cultural creations (religious, philosophical, artistic, and literary) are remarkable behaviors since they create a relatively meaningful and coherent structure in a specific context, i.e. it approaches a goal all members of a given social group are inclined to» (Goldman, a, 2002: 79).

Now the question which arises is who is the actual creator of the cultural creations, specifically, literary creations. Goldman emphasizes that the creator of artistic creation is the collective whole not individuals (Pooyandeh, 2000: 102). For instance, when John and Jack lift a heavy object, there are not two autonomous pieces of knowledge or actions. In fact, there is an action the doer of which is a two-member group, John and Jack. From this example, Goldman concludes that any human behavior is directly or indirectly social and historical, such a revolutions, wars, the cultural life, and even literary creation which possess the collective agent. He thinks that this collective agent ranges from two to millions of people, as in the previous example or the collective agent in the war against Germany. Any literary work is reliant on a group; therefore any magnificent work of literature includes the worldview of the group since worldview is a group entity (Goldman, 2003: 82-92). Therefore, worldviews and social groups according to which worldviews are formed are factors that determine artistic creations (Goldman, b, 2002: 231). Goldman does not consider the concept of worldview as a traditional one. By this concept he means methods by which a fact is seen or felt, a system of thoughts guiding the creation of the work (pascadi, 2002: 61).

So, generally speaking, the Goldman method is to detect the latent worldview of the work and linking it to a social group. For instance, the latent worldview of *Shahnameh* is xenophobia (hatred of foreigners including the Turks and Arabs) portrayed in the exaggeration of the Iranian heroes and the Persian civilization and is the worldview of the peasants (Shamisa, 2007: 293).

Although Goldman considers social classes as the creators of literary works, he does not reject the role of the author as the mediator. To him, the great artist is an extraordinary individual who creates a coherent imaginary world in the context of literary works with a structure conforming to the structure (worldview) the group is inclined to (Goldman, 1992: 321) and the artist's merit is giving cohesion; in a sense, it is the writer who takes concepts from the society and gives them a structured and imaginary form.

### The genetic structure of Klidar

As it was mentioned, the main discoveries of genetic structuralism are the collective agent of artistic creation and the structured nature of this agent. On this basis, in the genetic structure of Klidar, the social structures are first analyzed and each group's thoughts are discussed, which result in detecting the worldview governing the work and then it is linked to a social class which, according to Goldman, is the actual creator of the literary work.

### Social structure

Marx believes that the history of the past societies is that of the fights of social classes like the fights between the free man and the slave, the conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed. This class difference is more obvious in our age and the society is increasingly splitting into two classes confronting each other, namely the bourgeois and the proletariat (Pietr, 1979: 246).

Bourgeois denotes the rich and wealthy urban citizen and master (Moein, 1981: 601). In fact it includes the upper middle class including bankers, investors, industrialists, and merchants (Tipton and Aldrich, 1996: 99) and Marx considers it as opposed to Proletariat and as the capitalist exploiter (Coser, 2008: 81). In the contemporary world, bourgeois includes the capitalist middle class which is between big capitalists and the lower class (Mehrddad, 1984:27).

Proletariat denotes the worker class which determines the life of capitalist productions (Moein, 1981: 766). The word has a Latin origin which was used by ancient Romans to refer to the lowest social classes with no possessions (Mehrddad, 1984: 32). However, according to Marx, proletariat includes the industrial worker being paid by the capitalist society (AghaBakhshi and Afshari Rad, 2007: 584). Marx gave new credits to the word by using it in his books.

He called it the largest revolutionary force and the constructors of tomorrow's world (Mehrddad, 1984: 32). In his opinion, in the war with the capitalists, the proletariat loses no more than their chains, but they get hold of a world (Marx and Engels, 2001: 317). In Iran, the bourgeois and proletariat classes, in the Marxian sense, have not been manifested. The story of Klidar takes place in an age which is the transition from the Feudal-tribal life to a pseudo-capitalist one; therefore, to refer to two prevailing social structure in the 20<sup>th</sup> - century Iran, we use the master and peasant classes.

### 1) The master class

The master class includes yeomen, merchants and bureaucrats. These classes cooperate and confront with the peasants. The writer frequently portrays the exploitation of the workers by the masters.

#### 1-1 owners

The novel introduces Alajaghi as an exploiting feudal-landowner. "Alajaghi is one of those great landowners who are deeply rooted in rural ownership and urban bureaucracy. One of his secret but well-paying activities is his involvement in smuggling" (Eshaghian, 2004: 240).

*Alajaghi is a foxy man. He runs with the hare and hunts with the hound. On the one hand, he gets loads of opium from the Afghans and distributes them in all villages; on the other hand, he sells out those poor addicts who have failed to pay their debts to the police. He provides all most addicts in the city with opium (689).*

Alajaghi is so wicked that he does everything to get his hands on the properties of Nad Ali.

*I don't know what drink they gave me in the home of Chief Hassan. How much was it, what was it? I really didn't know what document I was signing. Somebody was holding my hand, putting here and there on the paper and presses my finger onto the paper (1161-1162)*

Marx puts bourgeois in the opposing front of proletariat. This class (thought) conflict which he is always emphasizing (Coser, 2008: 81) is seriously portrayed in Klidar. "Not only does Alajaghi try to deviate Gol Mohammad's public movement to an astray riot, but he also tries to suppress the peasant movement both in the village and the city. His main suppressing action to keep his social class is to mobilize the mobsters in the city and the village" (Eshaghian, 2004: 181)

*Ghadir explained the dependence of the mobsters on Alajaghi for Nad Ali. He said casino owners, idle harlots and hooligans have businesses with Alajaghi (688).*

Marx calls the mobsters *the* most dangerous social class. In his opinion, although this group might occasionally take part in proletariat movements, they are often manipulated by the bourgeoisie conspiracies

(Marx and Engels, 2001: 289). The same concept can be seen in Klidar when they are widely engaged in cooperation with great owners like Alajaghi, yeomen, merchants and bureaucrats.

*These types of men are the hands of Alajaghi. They set tables for him. They serve as an army, however without guns and weapons, but each with a knife in their sleeves. They are the wheels of Agha Bozorg's coach (688-689).*

#### 1-2 merchants

Another member of the masters' class is the merchants and urban traders. Those who accumulate large amounts of money by hoarding, making black markets, swallowing smaller properties, leasing, and trading farms and houses. Two prominent members of this group are Haj Malek Ghoozechi and Taj Sultan Juveini, who try to stabilize the system by leading the mobsters (Eshaghian, 2004: 247).

Haj Malek Ghoozechi was sitting opposite Farbakhsh. Haj Malek was introduced to him as the merchants' representative. The governor said: we were going to celebrate to thank for *illuminate the streets and hold a prayer's ceremony for his Majesty (2353-2354).*

The author describes attacks to the printeries and party offices under the leadership of Taj Sultan (248).

*Taj Sultan's band, which had started the invasion from the northern part of the city, was now near Agha Afshar's printery, breaking the doors. Sheets of paper, parts of the printing machine, debris, and other things were being thrown out into the street by the mobsters...(2363).*

Dolatabadi also speaks of the union between these groups and other members of the masters' class for suppressing the lower classes.

*The governor said: Mr. Taj Sultan and Mr. Alajaghi commented that we could stop the disrupters using the very power of the people...I personally agree with this idea...I suppose the mayor and the police chief also agree with me. (2354)*

#### 1-3) yeomen

Lower in rank than merchants and great landlords, who are in the upper middle class, there are yeomen, who are members of the middle class; and as Marx puts it, they are constantly wavering between the proletariat and the bourgeois and at the same time they complement the bourgeois (Marx and Engels, 2001: 305). Most of them live in cities, but a large number of them also live in villages and have a higher position among the peasants. They are often in positions such as teaching and chief of the village (Tipton and Aldrich, 1996: 101).

A prominent representative of the wealthy yeoman is Bab Gholi Bandar, who is appointed chief of Ghal'e Chaman by Alajaghi. The author portrays an interesting view of the 1960's villages by describing

Bab Gholi's lifestyle and residence, his relationships with the servants, commoners, and workers (Shahperad, 2003: 259-260).

He started off with shop keeping. The dependence of the desperate commoners on the shopkeeper causes the accumulation of capital in his hand and an increased debt of the villagers to him. The author describes the behaviors of these people with the commoners this way:

*He feeds people and puts them in as many debts as possible... he agrees to sell wheat but at huge prices. He raises the costs as much as he wants... I struggle to get 120 Tomans<sup>1</sup> so that he gets back 120 Tomans in the spring (70-71)*

What Aslan (Bandar's son) tells about him indicates that the materialistic attitudes of this class overshadows all family relations.

*My father is like a monster, do you see what he has made out of this woman? Her eyesight is weak. He always made my mother work, as long as I can remember...my father had accepted to bake the Alajaghies' bread here... I was always looking for logs and my mother was baking...until my mother died, we continued like this. My mother had gone blind before she died. The fire of the furnace made her blind (476).*

As a middle-classer who "is the medium between the urban and rural worlds, and at the same time, the representative of the federal government in the villages" (Tipton and Aldrich, 1996: 101), Bandar supervises the distribution and sales of opium by acting as a mediator between Alajaghi and the Afghans. Thus, he manages to control all places where they smoke opium, and were considered as important economic institutions (Shahpar Rad, 2003: 259).

We get the Afghans' opium...Alajaghi has made an agreement with the Baluches on the border, and they take the Afghans' things and gives them to us to sell (780).

Apart from Bandar, Klidar talks of other yeomen such as Ali Akbar Haj Pasand, Najaf Arbab, Haj Sultan Kherad Kherad KHarsafi, and Arbab Talkh Abadi, and portrays their exploiting nature in all aspects, especially in their treatments of the commoners.

#### 1-4) bureaucrats

Another group constituting the middle class is the bureaucrats with Major Farbakhsh, Captain Ghazneh, and colonel Baktash as their major representatives. The middle-classers occasionally unite with the workers or support a displeased politician; however, typically, they unite with social classes above them (bourgeois) (Tipton and Aldrich, 1976: 102).

<sup>1</sup> Iranian currency

An example of this group is Farbaksh, the chief police commander in Sabzevar, who shares a friendly relationship with Gol Mohammad. He was an active officer during the Second World War; however, since he was manipulated several times in his youth, he secretly helps Gol Mohammad (Shahpar Rad, 2003: 260).

*Honestly, let me tell you that they are sending me away from here... moving... I am here to tell you that I have always support you; I did not want to hurt you... I have been informed that they want to hang Gol Mohammad; it has long been given to me... I came here to see you and tell it to you...(2332-2331).*

Otherwise, in other situations, the extensive collaboration between bureaucrats and Alajaghi shows this union. "Bureaucracy ignores whatever he does of murder, exploiting the farmers, illegally taking possession of lands, and distributing opium in the city and country; he, in turn, tries to win the favor of authorities by mobilizing mobsters in the city and country and setting up street shows and demonstrations"(Eshaghian, 2004: 248-249).

Other members of this class try to stabilize their positions. Colonel Baktash, who does not possess much military experience, tries to prove competent to the police chief of the region by destroying a number of Gol Mohammad's forces. Captain Ghazneh, the police chief of Sabzevar, by helping to mobilize mobsters and supporting the imprisoned criminals and getting them involved in anti-commoners demonstrations tries to win the leadership of the mobsters by weakening them (ibid: 244-246).

Finally, in the author's view, bourgeois is nothing more than power and exploitation. It is a class that has humiliated the author several times.

## 2) The peasantry

The peasantry includes the lower class society exploited by the upper-class. In this sense, urban and rural workers, tribesmen, and peasants are in this category.

### 2-1 workers

The author's positive attitude towards work and workforce is reflected in his delicate descriptions.

*The furnace was still burning. Akbar... was holding a glazing piece of iron in the pincer and striking it with sledgehammer. Under the strikes of the hammer, the glazing iron was shaping in its soft twirling body.... (1107).*

And where the writer speaks of the struggle between fingertips and the fibers and threads of the rug, it seems like the author takes plenty of pleasure in this description.

*Mousa remembered his own work... when his fingers wove the rug, as though he did not feel the presence of others and even himself. He was so drown in work that it seemed as if he was making love with*

*his work, without me or you, knots, the uniting place of lovers (1107).*

In the author's view, work is credited as much as idleness is discredited and resented.

*They are raised idle and jobless; Frivolous wavering wanderers who live a futile life with nothing and nowhere (2656).*

Although, unlike Marx, he does not have an exaggerated attitude towards proletariat, Dolatabadi displays a supporting view of this class all through the novel; a class including tribesmen, a number of urban and rural workers and a large number of commoners.

Akbar the blacksmith and Mehdi the bicycle-maker are two members of urban workers, whose lives are not clearly portrayed. These workers, who are smart revolutionary forces, are finally killed in a semi-coup de' tat after the king is shot.

Rural workers, some like the rug-weaving workers, are full-time, and some like commoners are seasonal workers. The presence of Goodarz Balkhi's daughters in the novel as the rug-weaving workers of Bandar is portrayed ambiguously. Mousa is the supervisor at this workshop. Despite having political vies and a conservative personality, he is at Bandar's service. The conversation between Mousa and his father approves Marx's quotation that sufferers (workers) are always exploited by the capitalists (Floza, 1991: 529).

- **How does this Bab Gholi Bandar treat you?**

- **...like all those who treat their subordinates...**

- **Does he pay you enough?**

- **No. the total wage we agreed upon is low. What's more, he keep half of that wage to himself... as a surety, to make sure that I will continue working for him (526-525).**

Not only the workers but also other commoners are exploited. The author, through Mousa's speech, reveals the severity of their poverty and reliance on their masters. He shows his sadness about this in the following sentences, especially the final ones.

*...Do you see these workers?...they run out of money right in the middle of winter... you cannot find even a grain of wheat so that a mouse can chew, they take empty bags and head for Bandar's. They beg like beggars. Bab Gholi fills their bags with wheat and barley, which cost them an arm and a leg... they feed their children for two or three months... again, in the middle of winter, they go to Bandar's home to beg Bandar the wheat they themselves planted, watered, harvested, and stacked, at a price 1.5 as much. (527-528)*

Klidar both portrays how the villagers give in to all these humiliations and how they show their anger and wrath. Sometimes, they cannot believe this

gradual death and show the anger with, for instance, putting the stack on fire. Sometimes they consciously fight like Goodarz Balkhi, Ali Khaki, Ghorban Balooch, and Mousa (Khaksar, 2001: 60).

Goodarz Balkhi is the author's portrait of rural-worker attitude. He is the beat harvester of Ghal'e Chaman. However, his need to harvest does not keep him from opposing to the master. He strongly believes in class conflicts, which is the same idea as other conscious characters such as Ali Khaki (Eshaghian, 2004: 278). Therefore, he and others who have the same ideas oppose bourgeois. This is good reason for being tortured by the master when the stack burns. What Ali Khaki says in defense shows his class wisdom of this group of peasantry.

*Let them kill me if they intend to. But be aware, I love each cluster of wheat as much as my children. I could not set my dear one, a field of wheat, on fire. I could not even think of it. No. I'd burn my heart, but not wheat (1595-1596)*

*Apparently, the struggle for food and shelter, which was the primary goal of the primitive man and continues to be the main focus of the human being (Coser, 2008: 75-76) is remarkably portrayed in the society of Klidar.*

#### 2-2 tribes

Tribesmen are other members of this class whose exploitation by the capitalists is finely portrayed by the author. The geographical setting of the novel includes the city, the country, and the tribe. A considerable part of the story is dedicated to depicting life in tribes. A large part of the tribal stories and movements happen in Klidar.

Klidar is a mountainous area where migrating tribesmen camp in the summer. They earn their living by raising cattle; and the power of every family depends on the number of cattle they have (Shahpar Rad, 2003: 277). Agriculture is another means of earning a living for the tribesmen. However, as the hero of the novel states, the untamable nature has killed this hope in them.

*We have put some clods over each other and have called it home!... we have sown some seeds onto the sterile and salty land and have called it rain farming... we buy seeds twice as much... then gaze into the sky and wait for meager drops of rain... and the wheat looks like goat beard...! (192).*

“Disappointed with the sterile land, the Kalmishi's men struggle with famine and poverty. Their cattle, their life veins, are plagued with diseases and death” (Noori Ala, 2001: 34). Dolatabadi, who is originally from the desert, has been effectively able to convey the depth of their sorrow and sufferings to the reader.

*Put on black clothes Belgheis! The cattle is plagued with worms... (227)*

Truly, they have to dress in black when a disaster devastates the tribesmen's lives. Thus, the women have also been vexed by this disaster.

*For the tribeswoman, it is not different that she is plagued or the cattle. So watching the death of the cattle is no different than her death (233)*

Obviously, the tribeswoman is fully aware of the economic impact of the cattle on their lives, to the extent that their attitudes toward the attractions of the nature are influenced by this awareness.

*In Belgheis's view, the sky was pleasant when it rained. The stars were beautiful after a plentiful rain. The dawn was agreeable when one opens their eyes to green grass... the hope of feeding the cattle (73).*

Those who come from the desert know that the desert sufferings are as severe as the burning sun. Truly, who cannot feel the depth of the pain the writer depicts in these images?

*Belgheis threw the worm-eaten liver in front of the dog. The dog... took it... uncle, who saw the liver in its teeth, leaped and took some of the liver out of its teeth (229).*

They are those tribesmen who suffered after the settlement policy enforced by Reza Shah and who resumed their political and economic activities in 1941, leading to a new wave of dependence-seeking among them (Foran, 1998: 402) until the hero of the novel, Gol Mohammad, one of the activists in this movement, was killed.

## Conclusion

According to Goldman, the novel is not only a reflection of the social realities, but also an expression of group attitudes (Goldman, 2003: 92). The structure of Klidar is, to a large extent, a reflection of the social structure. The write's childhood this is during the First World War, poverty, difficulties and humiliations in earning a living, and, in short, the ups and downs of the author's life are present in all parts of the novel, and his experiences of poverty, exploitation, and prison, are explicitly or implicitly depicted in the story. This shows how social realities are reflected in the novel.

In addition, according to Goldman, like revolutions, cultures, and religions, literary creations are all built by a collective factor. In his view, the real creator of a literary work is the group whose worldview is expressed by the author in the work. Social analysis of the novel shows that the worldview of the novel is that of the peasantry. Fighting with oppression, fulfilling the rights of the oppressed, and fighting with the rulers is the worldview of this class.

Klidar is the expression of the sufferings of the lower class and the possessions of the upper class. These sufferings are latent in the callus in the hands of

the workers and the deep lines on the foreheads of migrants.

Moreover, all through the novel, we can fill the total support of the writer of this social class. As the omniscient, the author supports the peasants and shows his hatred of the rulers explicitly. Therefore, from a sociological point of view, the real creator of the novel is the peasantry whose attitudes and opinions are coherently and imaginatively depicted by the author.

According to Goldman, great works of literature are the products of the authors' genius. So is the masterpiece of Dolatabadi, *Klidar*, in which he most effectively portrays the opinions and attitudes of the class he belongs to. Dolatabadi's genius in depicting these attitudes has made this novel eternal.

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