

Intellectual as the Saviour: The Social Role of the Intellectual Saviour in Akbar Radi's *The Saviour in the Damp Morning* based on Gilbert Durand's Theories

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Abstract

This article aims at finding the relation between the intellectual and saviour in play *The Saviour in the Damp Morning* written by Akbar Radi. The main question of this article is who is the saviour in this play and what is their connection to the intellectual and the social order of the time. The proper theory for this analysis is Gilbert Durand's myth-analysis in which the researcher has followed three steps: close-reading of the play, finding intertextual elements and the myth in the play, and figuring out the relation of the myth to the society in which it was written. The findings show that the saviour in this play is an intellectual who considers himself a Christ-like figure that should save the humanity. This person, however, is passive and in facing problems, he finds the solution in committing suicide. Studying the social situation in the time of the play shows that society needed intellectuals to take action and take a step to save their society. The findings showed that the failure in intellectualism was rooted in the lack of connection between the intellectual and his society, which was echoed in the play.

Keywords: Akbar Radi play, The role of the intellectual savior, Literary Analysis from the Perspective of Gilbert Durand, *The Saviour in the Damp Morning*.

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Akbar Radi is one of Iran's great playwrights who has attracted the attention of researchers with his unique prose and critical mind. When we study Radi's collection of plays, we face a similar theme, which is enlightenment and the role of intellectuals. It is clear that Radi has his own world view and his works are passed through this filter. The presence of lasting symbols that appear in Radi's plays strengthens the possibility that Radi was inspired by a myth in writing his plays, which is the myth of the saviour. In Radi's works, the intellectual assumes a saviour status. In the period of oppression, there should be someone who does not succumb to oppression and does not introduce himself to the power system. This symbol is closely related to the myth of the saviour, and *The Saviour in a Damp Morning* is one of Radi's plays in which the concept of the saviour is more clear. To pay attention to the relation between the saviour and the intellectual, and their society, Gilbert Durand's method is used through which we can get closer to the author's mind and understand the social situation of his days better. .

Research Question(s)

The main questions to be answered in this article are as follows:

- Who is the saviour in *Saviour in a Damp Morning*?
- What is the connection between this saviour and Radi's society and what is the reason for his failure?

2. Literature Review

There has been a lot of research on Radi's works. Therefore, in this background, the focus is on the play *The Saviour in the Damp Morning* and the concept of the intellectual, so that a better and more coherent understanding can be obtained. In general, some of the characteristics of Radi's works are as follows:

Dealing with all classes and guilds of society, especially the middle class of society with all their good and bad characteristics, creating a disillusioned, despairing and isolated intellectual character, making a dual atmosphere for the ending of the plays that are filled with hope and despair simultaneously, dealing with all the generations of the society and raising the undeniable issue of conflict and confrontation between generations and... (Yahyapour and Sadeghi, 2011: 166)

The Saviour in the Damp Morning is no exception to this rule. "This is Radi's most personal play. [...] the story of the rise and fall of our famous writer, with all its twists and turns, is a kind of moral show. Radi's idealistic moralism is at its peak here." (Rohanian, 1999: 168) *Shaygan*, the main character of the play, is a writer who has used powerful people to continue his professional life, but in the end, he has to change his position for the benefit of the powerful. In an article that deals with the analysis of power relations in the play, it is stated as follows:

In *The Saviour in the Damp Morning* by Akbar Radi, literature finds its meaning and mission in its dependence on social organizations, manners and behaviour, and the author is expected to act according to the demands of social powers. *Shaygan* is one of those people who [...] tries not to be a "silent witness of his time". (Gholami and Asadi Amjad, 2013: 319)

However, this silence ends in suicide so that maybe someone else can continue the way. This enlightened writer, who repeatedly compares himself to a kind of saviour, but he does not act so. This liberating intellectual evokes the concept of "extra person" in literature. By studying Radi's plays, Yahyapour and Sadeghi have also found "extra person" in this play. "Extra person" is an enlightened personality who is pushed away from the crowd. "In fact, Radi's heroes have suffered from this alienation and separation from society. They have created a condition for themselves because of which they commit suicide, or travel and emigrate, or bring misery and death to others." (Yahipour and Sadeghi, 2012: 295)

In *The Saviour in the Damp Morning*, the complex mentality of the hero, his loneliness and isolation in the company of friends, his heterogeneous relationship with the surrounding environment, his separation from the prosperous social class in which he lived, and the weakening of the hero's personal and social status are depicted. He is wandering between good and bad, virtue and evil, like "extra people". (Yahipour and Sadeghi, 2012: 294)

3. Methodology

The methodology is Gilbert Durand's way of analysing myth for which, the central myth in the play is studied and its social connections are analysed.

4. Results

In this research, by discovering the symbol in the work, we reached from the author's personal myth to the collective myth. The bold symbol that stood out in the work was the intellectual who was introduced as a saviour in the form of the main character, *Shaygan*. According to Radi's other plays and by analyzing the play *The Saviour in the Damp Morning*, it was clear that intellectual is a very important part of Radi's works. And if such an image appears in the works of an author repeatedly, it is rooted in a deeper concept. The intellectual in Radi's works has a great desire for change and wants to take a step for the good of their society. This feature is the manifestation of the saviour myth. Paying attention to the period of time in which the play was written, it becomes clear that during the period of revolution and transition from one policy to another, some people played the role of a saviour in the formation of the movement, but intellectuals, due to their isolation, did not have a powerful presence as much as they should have. At that time, the whole society was changing. The policies of Pahlavi regime, lack of freedom of speech, alienation and dissatisfaction were the highlights of that time. The society needed intellectual saviours to influence the transition process, but the saviours themselves were isolated and did not have a deep connection with the world around them. It is quite compatible with *Shaygan*'s era. In fact, one of the reasons for the consistency and stability of this play is that because it originates from a myth, it is involved with the deepest human needs. Radi, who has always been associated with this image of a saviour, has shown it in most of his works, and in the play *The Saviour in the Damp Morning*, he has discussed the salvation of mankind more openly than before. In this work, saviour appears in the role of a writer who considers himself responsible for his society and wants to use his pen to fight. However, because he always needed other saviours for his growth, now that those supporters do not support him because of their interests, he can no longer continue his life and commits suicide. Intellectuals like *Shaygan* are either only immersed in their own thoughts, or they start working without considering all aspects. Intellectuals can only help their society and be its "saviour" when they use thought and action together. Using Gilbert Durand's myth-analysis, it was determined that the concept of the intellectual was highlighted in the form of the myth of the saviour, and more precisely, with clear references to Christ. Christ dies for the sins of others, but *Shaygan* prefers nothingness to existence because he cannot define himself in that society. Of course, by placing a young and motivated character in the scene of *Shaygan*'s death, Radi emphasizes

the hope of salvation. From the sociological point of view, this issue is in line with the plot of the play, and theorists agree with Radi about intellectualism, and they think the enlightenment of intellectuals is effective when they are actively a part of the society and saviours should actually do something for their people.

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