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Foucauldian Reading of Gholam Hossein Sa'edi's *An Eye for an Eye*

Saman Zoleikhaei
MA Candidate in English Literature
Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran
Email: zoleikhaeisaman@gmail.com

Abstract

The present paper seeks to investigate how power relations work in Sa'edi's *An Eye for an Eye* and how discursive formation of justice brings the conflicts of the play to resolution. Foucault believes that power and knowledge create each other reciprocally, the end result of which is discourse. People live in discourse unconsciously. In Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi's play, all that happens revolves around discursive justice. The discourse of justice sets the engine of the play into motion and brings about conflict among the characters. Knowledge, created in strategic ways, is circulated in the hands of different characters in the play. What is used and misused by the characters is knowledge. Ruler and Executioner not only fuel marginalization but also argue in favor of the discursive formation of justice. Those who are supposed to be accused of the crime, namely Old Woman, Vendor, Blacksmith, Hunter Man, and Flute Player fell to the trap of domination. Except for Hunter Man, the other named characters are marginalized minorities. A close reading of *An Eye for an Eye* (*Chashm Dar Barabare Chashm*) and the explication of the mechanics and politics of power in the play in light of Michel Foucault's theory of power/knowledge form the core of the present research.

Keywords: power, knowledge, domination, discourse, majority/minority, marginalization

Sa'edi and His Discourse

Gholam Hossein Sa'edi (1935-1985) was a physician who with the pen name of Goharmorad had more than thirty published works. He authored some singular short stories like "Geda" and "*Aramesh Dar Hozoor Digaran*". The mentioned short stories focus on marginalized minorities. What is significant in his works is the dominance of pathological and psychoanalytic aspects. Abdol-Ali Dastghaib states "Sa'edi gets closer to the events and represents them in a halo of psychological disorders. Although internal turbulence is at the heart of his works, describing this turbulence does not end in distortion of reality..." (33). Sa'edi has the social life in mind when focusing on the psyche of characters. This focus on the psychic characters is not irrelevant to his career as a physician. Furthermore, traces of anthropological and sociological analyses could be observed in his works since he was concerned with such matters for a period of time. *Mourners of Bayal* is an eight-piece collection of short stories. The setting of this narrative is a poverty-stricken village, the dwellers of which are in the trap of superstition. Many writers and critics consider Sa'edi's screenplay titled *Cow (Gav)* to be his masterpiece. The transformation of Mashadi Hasan has been compared to that of Samsa in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. *Choob Be Dasthaye Varazil* and *Dikte va Zaviye* include the same thematic significance as *Chashm Dar Barabare Chashm*. They dramatize a situation for the audience in which to grasp the root causes of evil and turpitude in society.

Foucault's Theoretical Framework

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a French philosopher, cultural critic, and historian who attempted to show how the basic ideas and assumptions which people normally take to be permanent and ahistorical truths change in the course of history. Each era has got its own particular set of truths and values which restrict the agency of the individuals within the society. His extensive and comprehensive studies have been divided into three phases. The phases are archeological, genealogical, and ethical. Foucault was one of those influential theorists who not only shed light on the past but also opened up the way for further and future researches by providing key critical terms and a specific methodology. He explored episteme, discourse, power, knowledge, marginality and otherness, to name a few.

Episteme was used for the first time in *The Order of Things* to mean the grounds and conditions which bring about the possibility for the creation of knowledge and particular discourses in an era. In other words, it is the philosophical and conceptual framework which encircles the discursive practices and discursive formations of power and knowledge. Being an 'ensemble of practices', episteme is not the sum of the knowledge of a period, but relations of different discourses. Sara Mills states "it is the complex set of relationships between the knowledges which are produced within a particular period and the rules by which new knowledge is generated" (62). Therefore episteme is a set of procedures which produce knowledge and keep that knowledge in circulation within the social life.

Discourse is one of the most popular Foucauldian terms. In its post-structuralist sense, it refers to a coherent linguistic power system which is used by other systems and authorities. In Foucault's belief, it is through discourse that human beings are created. He believed that there is a close relationship between discourse and power. Mills argued that "discourse can be used to refer to all utterances and statements which have been made which have meaning and which have some effect" (53). Discourse is created and manipulated by those who have power and are in control of the means of production. There are dominant discursive elements in each society and era, and the individuals are required to hold such elements since they are considered as normal. In case of deviation from those norms and discourses, marginalization and state of otherness would be the consequence. Mills adds "discourse should therefore be seen as both an overall term to refer to all statements, the rules whereby those statements are formed and the processes whereby those statements are circulated and other statements are excluded" (62). The word 'exclusion' sheds light upon the power as a means for marginalization. The discourse is not to receive all possible statements; but, it is receptive to those which are in line with the dominant ideology. Discourse is not only the creator of the world but also the generator of knowledge. Very importantly, no discourse is absolute and there is almost always trace of counter-discourse within each discourse. Apart from creating the world we live in, discourse constitutes various forms of power relations and knowledge. Discourse has the power to convince subjects to believe and accept what they see and hear as true. Foucault contended in *Power/Knowledge*:

Truth isn't outside power... Truth is a thing of the world; it is produced only by the virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements... (131)

Foucault defined knowledge as a link between power relations and a searching for information which he names as 'power/knowledge'. He stated that "it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power" (*Power/Knowledge* 52). Power and knowledge create each other mutually. There will be a production of knowledge as a result of an imbalance of power between subjects and discourses. Gutting says: "power transforms the fundamental archeological frameworks (epistemes or discursive formations) that underlie our knowledge" (50). A piece of knowledge has to be approved by those in positions of power in order to be considered as fact. Knowledge is not merely the production of scholarly study. Gutting adds "knowledge can have a transforming effect on the power structures that give rise to it" (51). Therefore, knowledge in Foucault's view is considered as a mechanism of domination through which power is exercised over the subjects.

Power is dispersed and it can be found everywhere. Each society has its own particular mechanism and mechanics of truth. Such truths firstly are extracted from diverse discourses and institutions; secondly they are reinforced by distinct systems and media; and finally they will be reincarnated in acts and practices. Power for Foucault is not an authoritative and monopolizing force. It can be used and misused by all those living in a society. Power can be a shaping and regulative force, the manipulation of which makes subjects get along and lead their life. Power moves beyond boundaries and hierarchies and materializes itself as a socialized phenomenon. Foucault did his best to explore the relationship between power and knowledge in *Discipline and Punish*. He dealt with the configuration of power to punish on one hand and generation of knowledge to affirm and reaffirm that power. Power and its manipulation is

wholly contingent upon the knowledge which must be there to order and categorize. Foucault's theory of power and discourse and also his conceptualizing of the worldly nature of knowledge help the readers to understand Sa'edi's choice of subject matter which is the criticism of courts of law in Iran during the anti-democratic decades of 1960s and 1970s. Sa'edi discloses a society in which justice is parodied in systematized and institutionalized courts of law. Far from being a universal concept, "justice" is revealed to be a discursive practice circulating through the workings of power.

An Eye for an Eye: A Further Investigation into the Play and Its Context

Being written in 1350, *An Eye for an Eye* is composed of six acts. The play is the dramatization of how a ruler and his helper are trying to trample justice only for answering their superstitious ideas about sleep. Ruler wakes up in the evening and cannot sleep. Executioner believes that it is related to the guilt of conscience since no justice has been administered in the past few days. Taking out the eye is the procedure through which they administer justice. They scheme to find a guilty person for administering the discursive justice.

Getting out of the palace, Executioner encounters Young Man who is complaining and seeking retribution. He has gone to the house of Old Woman for stealing, and upon mischance and misfortune the rod of a spindle blinds him. Executioner considers him as a good victim for the administration of justice and takes him to the court of Ruler. Firstly, the rod and secondly its owner, Old Woman, are accused. She is summoned and on the verge of punishment turns away. She gets out of the dilemma by mentioning the name of Vendor. She has bought the spindle from him; therefore, Vendor is summoned. After investigation, he too transfers the load to another character named Blacksmith who is taken to be the creator of the spindle. He exempts himself by rationalizing that there would be no one to make tools and chains for Ruler and suggests Hunter Man. This choice shows the sheer baselessness of the justice which is nothing but a discursive formation. The rationale is that the eye of Hunter Man is useless since it is closed at the time of hunting. He takes recourse to the eyes of Flute Player. He believes that her eyes are useless for at the time of playing they are closed. Flute Player is not given the chance to transfer the burden and the conflict is resolved by taking out her eyes on the spot. Sa'edi could end the play at the other choices. He chooses Flute Player as

the victim for showing the marginalization and suppression of women in the society. A woman sets the engine of the play in motion and finally a woman is to bring the play to an end. Domination of woman on the part of those in positions of power is remarkable.

Being in a parallel and one-to-one relationship with the social and historical context, Sa'edi's *An Eye for an Eye* points to the tumultuous and anti-democratic decades of 1970s and 1980s in the history of Iran. Sepanlu contended that several hallmarks of Iranian theater came into being in this period. Apart from literary significance and note, such masterpieces did their social and ideological duty. He pointed to the plays of Bahram Beizai, Akbar Radi, Ali Nassirian, Mohsen Yalfani, and Gholam-Hosseini Sa'edi among others. Sa'edi did his best to promote democratic ideals, the best manifestation of which can be traced in his literary corpus. *An Eye for an Eye* is an ironical and satirical portrayal of reversal of such ideals in society. In his *A History of Modern Iran*, Ervand Abrahamian argues "By the mid-1970s, tension between state and society had reached breaking point" (148). Sa'edi artistically portrays this tension *via* the relationship between Ruler and those around him in *An Eye for an Eye*. It shows the breakup which was widening little by little at the time. Writers and poets of this era voiced their commitment to a literature which was representative of the minority and marginalized groups in society. Sa'edi and other literary figures wrote in order to challenge the regime of the time and raise consciousness. Mehrzad Boroujerdi devoted a chapter of his groundbreaking work to the ideology of this group of writers. Following them, he argues that they could not write about love and lyricism as in classical literature. They have to cope with the struggles and tensions between people and state; they have to shed more and more light on the chaotic rupture in the society; hence, the appearance of themes and symbols related to turpitude, bleakness, duplicity, fear and authority.

Power/Knowledge Relation: Reciprocal Production in *An Eye for an Eye*

The description of the setting – which is directed at the grand bench, magnificent backcloth, choppy and round body of Ruler, and ostentatious outfit – tells the audience about the dominant discourse. Discursive practices are not restricted to the verbal realm. Mills mentions that the "statement is not simply a

sentence because, for example, a map or image could be taken as a statement” (65). Therefore the outward features tell us about the singularity of Ruler and his particular discourse. He is in the position of authority and consequently his attitude and language are different from and toward others. From the very first pages, Ruler addresses the other characters by interjections like ‘hey’¹. Moreover, he speaks loudly which is indicative of his authoritative attitude. He utilizes phrases like ‘donkey and cow’², ‘foul-smelling shit’³ and ‘garbage’⁴ for addressing. Such a usage of sardonic words happens frequently up to the end of the play. Foucault believes that some procedures contribute to the production of discourse and some constrain it. Rarefaction is one of those procedures which limit the discourse. It determines who can speak authoritatively; in other words, some discourses are open to all and some have very limited access. Only Ruler can make use of such sardonic words. The effect of rarefaction makes Executioner take back his words:

RULER. Hey cow, I am gluttonous or you?

EXECUTIONER. Well, it is clear Your Highness. Of course it's me!⁵ (1. 11)

Executioner relates the lack of sleep to the concept of justice. He believes that if one eye is taken out, the eye of Ruler rests. This is baseless and to some extent superstitious; but since it is mentioned on the part of Executioner, one whom Ruler confides in, it is accepted and taken-for-granted. Knowledge is created discursively and it lets them take measure. Executioner, appealingly, comments on the Ruler's guilt of conscience:

EXECUTIONER. Your Majesty, it's related to that definitely. And the guilt of conscience! Sometimes it starts in the morning, but most of the time in the evening; sometimes with headache, some other with loud and protracted belching; sometimes with waking up suddenly, and some other with jumping into water; sometimes with sneezing, some other with hiccup...and the cure for all these is taking out an eye, ONE eye!⁶ (1. 12-15)

This rambling and baseless wording is the knowledge which is shared with Ruler. Power relations are established within the boundaries of this episteme. They have knowledge of the reason for lack of sleep. Adding power to the

knowledge, they embark on their project of domination and marginalization. Young Man has some sort of knowledge and appears at the door of palace. Although he himself is guilty and must be punished, he makes use of the urgency of the situation and persuades Ruler and Executioner to listen to the story of his blindness. What happens is the clash of discourses and dramatization of power relations. Power relations are ubiquitous and co-existent with the social body. Moreover, human relationships are taken to be power relations. Instead of punishing him for committing the crime of steal, Ruler follows his words in summoning Old Woman. The incompetency and insufficiency of Ruler is not irrelevant with social issues at the time. After all Sa'edi had in mind a critique of the context within which the play was written. Dastghaib adds "nobody like him [Sa'edi] has ever dealt with the social life of new urbanity in such a great depth...new urban issues and alteration of the lives of middle and lower classes of society have been the main themes of his stories and plays" (67).

The lack of insight and practicality on the part of Ruler leads to the continuation of the play. The rest of the play shows the give and take of power and knowledge. Young Man audaciously talks about his attempt to steal in the presence of Ruler and is impolite toward Old Woman and calls her "A devilish hag"⁷ (1.22). The Young Man relates what happened to him and how his eye has been taken out,

YOUNG MAN. It occurred to me at midnight to visit the shack of this hag once and for all perchance I find something. Although I am not awkward, I botched up. I was fishing around and groping the walls, not only I found nothing, but also lost an eye.⁸ (1. 22)

The administration of justice fails and they begin moving toward the formation of discursive justice. He is not punished since he provides them with another choice for punishment, the 'devilish hag'. The head of the state must examine and investigate. The following lines show his tactlessness which ends in change of his decision:

RULER. Shame and curse on you! This lumpish physique of yours is good for nothing. How come that you could not overcome an old woman with such brawny muscles?⁹ (1. 22)

The thief tells the audience indirectly that there is no authentic and true knowledge; such a knowledge is not objective and dispassionate any longer, but works in the interests of a particular group as it is clarified in the young man's plea:

YOUNG Man. ...your Highness must punish and take reprisals.
You must make up for the eye that I was supposed to sacrifice for
Your Honor. Administer justice. Justice! Justice! Justice!¹⁰ (1. 23)

These lines show that the justice and government are but the resultants of the dominant discourse. The discursive formation is composed of statements--statements that change everything. He only flatters. After all it is Ruler who defines what is true and what is false. The groundless knowledge makes Old Woman guilty for having a spindle in her own home. She is summoned to the court of Ruler.

In the second act, the words uttered to Old Woman show the dominance of Ruler's discourse. The authoritative command from the head of the state is mingled with a belittling language which is directed at the woman:

EXECUTIONER. Hey hag! His Highness has summoned you.¹¹ (2. 24)

Entering the court of Ruler, she finds herself shocked by the decree, and the ignorance and lack of knowledge make her act submissively. Ruler orders to take out her eye, and she has to make her way out of the dilemma. Ruler asks questions since he is in a privileged status and more importantly he has the knowledge, though baseless. Old Woman recognizes the rod which has been the cause of the blindness. The verbal exchange between Ruler and her is of dramatic quality:

OLD WOMAN. Yes, indeed, yes. This is the rod of my spindle. I have been searching for it hours fruitlessly.

RULER. Eye, take out her eye. Hurry up!

OLD WOMAN. Your Highness, Your Highness, what is the relation between these two...? For what my eyes must be taken out?

RULER. Since if you had not planted such a thing in your damned wall, this Young Man might not have lost his eye at the time of being in your home in the middle of the night,

OLD WOMAN. What was this man doing at my home at that time?

RULER. Don't get off the subject dotard. You are the owner of this damned and eye-taker rod and your eye must be taken out.¹² (2. 29)

Ruler has stated the order and it must be obeyed. Foucault believes that there are traces of counter-discourse in each dominant discourse. It opens the way for protest and disagreement. The marginalized group seeks shelter in the counter-discourse. Old Woman mentions another person and challenges Ruler. This leads to changing stance and deciding in new ways. She reverses the power relations at the moment of punishment by naming another person for being punished. Vendor must be punished since he sells such stuff in great abundance. The validity of the statements is disregarded and they are taken for granted due to the lack of insight. There is not firmness in Ruler's decisions; he accepts her declarations without any protest and orders Vendor to be present. Mill states "Discourse is regulated by a set of rules which lead to the distribution and circulation of certain utterances and statements. Some statements are circulated widely and others have restricted circulation" (54). Vendor is from the working class echelon of the society and his appearance and trial reveals the marginalization of another group. Sa'edi critiques the government of the time by selecting these summoned persons. When the characters are summoned to the court, they are given the tidings of happiness and welfare. The description of the reaction of Vendor at the time of being summoned is illustrative:

Vendor, throwing away the hose, gets out, faltering, enters the spicery and buys some great gifts for His Highness.¹³ (3. 35)

Vendor has brought some presents for Ruler. Firstly, Ruler pays no attention to the trial and gives priority to the gifts which shows the materialism and tactlessness. Such an act illustrates his misuse of power and power relations. After naming the presents, Vendor offers his soul for sacrifice. Ruler mentions that your whole being is not needed except for an eye. The statements turn toward selling rod and taking out the eye. Power tends the subject to produce knowledge for altering the power relations. Sa'edi manipulates the plot

and continues transferring the guilt. He does this only to dramatize of the process of marginalization on one hand and that of domination on the other. Vendor supplies people with the useful and practical materials that they need; but, he is accused of an uncommitted crime the committer of which is crystal clear. What stands out in the confrontation between Vendor and Ruler is fear--fear of authorities. Power works its way to some extent through fea. It is fear that makes the subjects act submissively. Vendor voices his fear in the play:

VENDOR. Your Majesty, Your Majesty, I am yours. Do not let him take me. Have mercy on me. Do not let him take me, Do not let him take me. I am afraid of him. I am afraid of him.¹⁴ (3. 39)

Another turn happens in the plot and Vendor takes control of the power temporarily. Being in the position of power, he produces his own piece of knowledge as the other accused characters did. The power relations are disturbed again and Ruler must listen to him for resolving the knot. Firstly, Vendor speaks about his goodness to people for curing their eyes, and secondly he mentions Blacksmith as the creator of the spindle. He exempts himself from punishment since something new is added to the baseless accumulated knowledge. Authority and the dominant discourse do not acknowledge any borders between those marginalized minorities. They are considered as a whole all together. One can infer such a view from the following dialogues:

RULER. Well, well. It makes no difference to us. Whether Vendor, whether Blacksmith. Hmm.

EXECUTIONER. It makes no difference at all, Your Majesty.¹⁵ (3. 40-1)

Totalitarian society moves ahead by the act of clustering and grouping that eases the process of controlling. *De facto*, each individual is seen similar to others in terms of receptivity and productivity. Ruler and Executioner consider the same and inferior all the individuals on whom they are extremely dependant. It is they(the subjects) who help the affairs of their state. Old Woman provides thread for them. Vendor supplies useful materials. Blacksmith, whose name resonates with the mythical figure of Kaveh in Ferdousi's *Shahnameh*, makes metal things. Later on in the play, Hunter Man feeds them materially and Flute Player soothes their internal world. Put

otherwise, the axis of the state revolves on the marginalized group; but, since they have no power, they are not acknowledged and authorized to exert their influence. Only a ray of power/knowledge reverses the relations and makes the play go on.

Although the discourse of Executioner is harsh toward Blacksmith, he shows leniency and ingratiates himself. He makes use of language skillfully throughout his presence in the play. As a blacksmith is capable of making, Blacksmith in the play is the one who has the power and potentiality to bring about change in the dominant discourse. He manipulates language and, by extension, knowledge in society. This flair in language is the secret of his survival. Blacksmith is the one who uses power, power of language, and makes a fool of Ruler and his Executioner. He talks as if he is the real guilty man:

BLACKSMITH. Guilty man is ready for punishment, Your Majesty. Take out! Take out! Take out!

EXECUTIONER. Take out? Take out what?

BLACKSMITH. Both of them, both of my eyes!

RULER. Who is this madman?

BLACKSMITH. Guilty Blacksmith who must pay for his crime for administration of real justice.¹⁶ (4. 45)

Blacksmith is aware of what he is doing and saying. Ruler and Executioner expect a guilty person to seek pardon and to defend him/herself. The case is different with Blacksmith and he shows the distinct side of the coin. He is not in line with the discourse and his actions are not similar to those of previous characters. He has an in-depth knowledge of the credulity and gullibility of the authority. In Foucault's view whatever outside the boundary of the discourse is labeled perversion; in this case Blacksmith is named 'madman'. Blacksmith challenges them to take out his eye and sophisticatedly fools around by mentioning his regret for not being able to make 'fetter'¹⁷ and 'varnish'¹⁸ them. Being in control of power at the time, he makes Ruler wonder. Having no choice and idea, he asks Blacksmith himself for help:

RULER. If I don't take out your eye, what would be the end of the retribution?

BLACKSMITH. Your Highness, how abundant are useless eyes; take out one of them and everything will be OK.¹⁹ (4. 49)

Sa'edi chose 'blacksmith' to strike similarities with Kaveh Ahangar, the mythical figure who did his best to overturn the kingdom of depravity and cruelty. He was to lead an uprising against a domineering ruler. Kaveh is the epitome of resistance against despotism. Sa'edi's ironical contrast of Blacksmith with Kaveh Ahangar adds to the poignancy of the status quo and fuels the anti-heroical features of the time. Blacksmith could resolve the dilemma easily; but, Sa'edi wants to bring representatives from diverse marginalized groups on stage. The more the oppressed people are brought on stage, the more the anti-democratic atmosphere of the 1950s would be revealed and dramatized through the play. Such a metonymical deferral highlights the unbridgeable gap between Ruler and the subjects. Therefore, Blacksmith intentionally and metonymically defers Ruler to another would-be guilty person in order to expose more and more the folly and turpitude in society. By giving Blacksmith the chance to move on, Sa'edi sheds more light on the lawlessness and viscosuness of the ruling ideology. Blacksmith suggests them to take out the right eye of Hunter Man. He deems his eye useless since it is closed at hunting. Hunter Man is summoned and thinks that Ruler is going to give him another medal. Getting ready quickly, he appears in the court. After introductory greetings and formalities, they inform him of taking out the eye. Hunter Man debates discursively by making knowledge about his supposedly useless eye. After exchanging dialogues, Hunter Man rationalizes the issue and names Flute Player. Hunter Man is a man who is closer to Ruler in comparison with the other marginalized characters and his offer brings the conflict of the play to the resolution for reaffirming the notion that those in position of power make the final decision. The last target is the old lady who plays flute. Hunter Man and Ruler speak:

HUNTER MAN. For example the woman Flute Player at the court of His Majesty.

RULER. For what reason the eye of that woman at the court is useless? Why are they of no use for her work?

HUNTER MAN. 'Cause this woman closes both of her eyes at the time of playing.

RULER. Why does she do that?

HUNTER MAN. Because flute will be played better with closed eyes.²⁰ (5. 58)

Taking out the eye of the old lady is considered not only as administering of justice but also of doing a favor to her since they presume that great players have been blind. Flute Player is the symbol and representative voice of art in the play. Sa'edi chooses a woman intentionally for this final role. The symbolic overtones of Flute Player are: justice is disregarded; the role of art is denied and silenced in the play; more significantly, women are oppressed in society. Ruler schemes not to let Flute Player speak. This plan refers to Foucault's notion about strategy and strategic use of power. Regarding the designation of power, Deacon believes: "power is not a site, a fortress or a rogue to be uncloaked in his lair; it is a relation, a current, a resource, a strategy, an experience, an ordeal" (168). The interconnection of power and knowledge is dependent on skillful use of strategy:

RULER. Listen carefully! When the player appears at the court, we will not have any debate and discussion; we will not accept any proof or reasoning...²¹ (5. 59)

Executioner talks persuasively to her, and she plays flute with closed eyes at the court. She falls to the trap of the dominant discourse and physically tumbles under the power of Ruler. The eyes of the woman are taken out on the spot. Drastically irrelevant to the administration of justice, a discursive justice is formed out of the power relations in the play. This discursive justice needs affirmation and authority; that is why at the end of the play people are dubious:

ALL. Live long the just Ruler!²² (6. 64)

ALL. The justice was administered. The justice was administered. The justice of just Ruler was administered!

By the way, was justice administered? Hmm? Justice was administered! Which justice was administered? What justice was administered?²³ (6. 65-66)

The uncertainty refers to the discursive formation of the justice which is not authentic enough to be accredited by the people. The discourse is the means

through which the society is formed and controlled. Within the boundaries of discourse, power relations engender conflict which is intertwined with making knowledge and exerting power. Ruler uses and misuses his power for administering a forced justice that ends in domination. Domination of the productive group of the society leads to marginalization. This marginalized state is reflected in the verbal language and physical acts of the dominated characters. Even tactlessness and impracticality work their way only if they are bolstered by power.

The tension between the marginalized characters and Ruler points to a conflictual relationship between the ideals and values which are slighted by a protagonist who is in the position of power and authority. All these characters are set against a despot whose power and knowledge wholly depends on these marginalized characters. Woloch contends "Secondary characters – representing delimited extremes – become *allegorical*, and this allegory is directed toward a singular being, the protagonist, who stands at the center of the text's symbolic structure" (*The One vs. the Many* 18). Secondary characters consist of Old Woman, Vendor, Blacksmith, Hunter Man, and Flute Player and they stand for one end of the extreme. In a one-to-one and allegorical relationship, they stand for specific marginalized discourses in the society. Moreover, the mechanics of the state are contingent on the art and work of these minorities. On the other end of the extreme stands Ruler who, by himself, is powerless and tactless. He signifies cruelty, duplicity and despotism, among others. Suffering from lack of knowledge and power to govern, he surrenders to the guidance and remarks of the marginalized subordinated characters, hence subverting his own power and kingdom. Despite the fact that he is in the position of power and authority, he is in urgent need of secondary characters to establish his status as a protagonist; in Woloch's words, he needs contrast to "be fully individualized" (47). *Via* such contrast, Sa'edi not only vividly drew the portrait of a despot but also gave full vent to the voice of the oppressed in society. It is the minority that paves the ground for the emergence and presence of Ruler in the play, not the other way around. By extension, it is the minority that subverts the ruling ideology.

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Notes

Since the play has not been translated into English language so far, the translation of the extracts brought throughout the article are mine.

^۱ هی

^۲ گاو و الاغ

^۳ کثافت بو گندو

^۴ آشغال

^۵ **حاکم:** من پو می خورم مرتیکه گاب یا تو؟ **جلاد:** خب معلومه قربان، البته که بنده.

^۶ **جلاد:** صدرد به همین علت قربان. و اما ناراحتی وجدان، گاه صبحها شروع میشه، ولی اکثر اوقات بعد از ظهرها، گاه با یه سردرد، گاه با چند آروغ بلند و ممتد. گاه با پریدن از خواب و گاه با پریدن توی آب. گاه با عطسه، گاه با سکسکه... و اما علاج همه اینها، در آوردن یه چشمه قربان. یه دونه چشم!

^۷ یه عفریته عجوزه

^۸ **مرد جوان:** نصفه‌های دیشب به سرم زد که یه ارم سری به کلبه این پیرزن هف هفو بزنم شاید چیزی گیرمون اومد. با این که ناشی نیستم قربان، ولی به کاهدان زده بودم. همین جووری تو تاریکی می گشتم و در و دیوار و دست می مالیدم که نه تنها چیزی گیرم نیومد یه چشمم از دست دادم.

^۹ **حاکم:** خاک بر اون سرت کنن. پس این هیکل گنده و بی خاصیت فقط برای لای جرز خوبه. چطور نتونستی با این گردن کلف از پس یه پیرزن بریای؟

^{۱۰} **مرد جوان:** حضرت حاکم باید قصاص منو بگیرن. حق منو بگیرن. تلافی چشمی رو که قرار بود در قدوم مبارکش فدا بشه در بیارن. عدالتو اجرا کنن. عدالت! عدالت! عدالت!

^{۱۱} **جلاد:** هی عجوزه! حضرت حاکم احضارت فرمودن.

^{۱۲} **پیرزن:** بله قربان، بله. این میله دوک نخ ریسی منه. از اول صبح دنبالش می گشتم و پیداش نکردم.

حاکم: چشم، چشمشو در بیار، معطل نشو.

پیرزن: حضرت حاکم، حضرت حاکم، آخه این دو تا..چه ربطی بهم دارن؟ آخه واسه چی چشم من باید در بیاد؟

حاکم: واسه این که اگه تو همچو چیز خطرناکی رو به دیوار خراب شده‌ات زده بودی، وقتی این جوون نصفه شبه اومده خونه تو، چشمشو از دست نمی‌داد؟

پیرزن: آخه این جوون نصف شبی تو خونه من چه کار می کرد؟

حاکم: از این شاخ به اون شاخ نپر پیرزن خرفت! مالک این میله لعنتی و چشم در ار تویی و باید چشمت در بیاد.

^{۱۳} سقط فروش شلنگ اندازان بیرون می‌پرد؛ دست و پای گرم کرده، وارد دکه عطاری می شود و هدایای چشم گیری برای حضرت حاکم تهیه می‌کند.

- ^{۱۴} **سقط فروش:** قربان، قربان، فدایت کردم. فدایت کردم. نذار منو بگیره، به من رحم کن، نذار منو بگیره، نذار منو بگیره. من ازش می‌ترسم. من ازش می‌ترسم.
- ^{۱۵} **حاکم:** بسیار خب، بسیار خب. به حال ما چه فرق می‌کنه که سقط فروش باشه یا آهنگر. بله؟
جلاد: اصلا فرق نمی‌کنه قربان.
- ^{۱۶} **آهنگر:** گناهکار آماده مجازات است، حضرت حاکم! در آرا! در آرا! در آرا!
جلاد: در آرم؟ چی چی رو در آرم؟
آهنگر: هر دو تا رو، هر دو چشممو!
حاکم: این دیوونه کیه؟
آهنگر: اهنگر جنایتکاری که باید به جزای گناهانش برسه تا عدالت واقعی اجرا بشه.
- ^{۱۷} غل و زنجیر
- ^{۱۸} صیقل
- ^{۱۹} **حاکم:** و اگه چشم تو رو در نیارم قضیه قصاص چطور میشه؟
آهنگر: قربان، چقد فراوونه چشم بی مصرف، یکیشو در آرین، همه چی درست بشه.
- ^{۲۰} **میرشکار:** مثلاً نی زن بارگاه حضرت حاکم!
حاکم: به چه دلیل چشم نی‌زن بارگاه ما بی مصرفه و به درد کارش نمی‌خورد؟
میرشکار: به این دلیل که ایشان موقع نوازندگی و هنر نمایی هر دو چشم را می‌بندند.
حاکم: برای چی چشم‌ها را می‌بندد؟
میرشکار: برای این که با چشم بسته بهتر می‌شود نی نواخت.
- ^{۲۱} **حاکم:** پس گوشاتو وا کن و خوب بشنو! وقتی نوازنده به حضور ما رسید، هیچ نوع بگو مگو و بحث و جدلی با او نخواهیم داشت، هیچ نوع استدلال و برهانی را نخواهیم پذیرفت.
- ^{۲۲} **همه:** حکومت حاکم عادل پاینده باد!
- ^{۲۳} **همه:** عدالت اجرا شد! عدالت اجرا شد! عدالت حاکم عادل اجرا شد.
راست راستی عدالت اجرا شد؟ بله؟ عدالت اجرا شد! کدوم عدالت اجرا شد؟ عدالت چی اجرا شد؟