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Asgari Hasankloo, Asgar. *Time and Its Men: A Critique of Ebrahim Golestan's Stories.*

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Time and Its Men is a monograph about the short stories and novels of Ebrahim Golestan, one of the most celebrated figures of modern Persian Literature. Golestan (b. 1922), a modernist writer, has employed various means of expression, including journalism, story-writing, film-making, photography, and translation to articulate his thoughts. He is mostly distinguished in his successful career as a filmmaker and fiction-writer. He made his literary debut with his short stories. However, not even a single book is written on his literary legacy. According to the author “in the recent half century, a lot is written on Golestan’s films, both narrative and documentary, but about Golestan as a short-story writer or novelist, who is a brilliant writer, not a separable book is written. The purpose of the present book is to fill this gap (p. 9)”.

The book, as the subtitle indicates, is a critical analysis of Golestan's short stories and novels. This well-organized book is divided into two sections. The first section, “Ebrahim Golestan's Life, Works, and his Style of Writing”, in

its turn, is subdivided into four short sections: From Shiraz to Sussex, Translations, Films, and the Language and Form of Golestan's Stories. The second section, "A Critique of his Stories," provides critical readings of his stories *Azar*, *the Last Month of Autumn* (1948), *Shadow-hunting* (1955), *The Stream*, *the Wall and the Thirsty One* (1967), *Tide and Mist* (1969), *The Ghost Valley's Treasure Mysteries or The Secrets of the Treasure of the Jinn Valley* (1974), *Rooster* (1995). The book closes with a bibliography.

In "From Shiraz to Sussex," Asgari touches upon Golestan's literary career. He attempts to provide both the chronological order and socio-historical background of Golestan's literary career based on biographical sources including Parviz Jahed's *Writing with Camera*. This short section, which is highly interspersed with Golestan's ideas, is authoritative and informative.

The next part, "Translations," discusses Golestan's translations from French (*From Flaubert's Letters*) and English (including Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*) into Persian. As far as I know this is the only piece written on Golestan's translations. It is noteworthy that Golestan was the first Iranian translator who introduced some great American novelists, like Hemingway, Faulkner, and Twain, to Persian readers.

Together with Ghafari and Mehrjui, Golestan is a founding member of the New Wave of Iranian cinema. Golestan has directed two long narrative and more than sixteen documentary films. Asgari comments on Golestan's famous narrative and documentary films as tersely as possible.

The literary works of Golestan are interesting for "their experiments in narrative techniques, sentence patterns, abandonment of linear plots, and cinematic delineation of scenes and episodes." The last section—"The

Language and Form of Golestan's Stories"— is about the above-mentioned features of Golestan's works. Also, it refers to the influence of Sa'di's *Bustan* on Golestan's minimalism. As Asghari's critical voice is rarely heard in these short parts, they can be regarded as an introduction to the second part of the book.

The second part examines Golestan's four short story collections and his novels. They all feature a dense employment of literary language especially symbols, allegories and codes. Asghari tries to decode their furtive levels. To do so, he puts them in their historical contexts, decodes, deciphers, and analyzes them in detail. This chapter, especially the concluding section on *The Ghost Valley's Treasure Mysteries* and *Rooster*, is the most informative part of *the book*. The former novel is a satirical allegory and an adaptation from a scenario and the latter novella is its companion. They are both allegorical and symbolic. In addition, the *Ghost's* narrative is replete with imaginative uses of cinematic techniques. This section consists of Asghari's main contribution in his book.

The book is a very neatly-organized and well-documented research on Golestan's short stories and novels. The main argument of the book is to decipher the hidden levels of Golestan's stories and novels. To do so, Asghari has searched a large number of sources. Also, the critical voice of the author is echoed in different parts of the book. Therefore, the book is not only a comprehensive research on Golestan's literary works, but also a very informative one about the political atmosphere of the time.

I have, however, three concerns about the book. Firstly, it ignores the influence of the American writers, including Hemingway, Faulkner, and

Twain, on Golestan's style of writing. My next concern is that it is not informed by recent scholarship about Golestan's stories that includes Abbas Milani's "The Hunter of Shadows: Golestan and Modernity", P. Sprachman's "Ebrahim Golestan's The Treasure: A Parable of Cliché and Consumption", and Amirali Nojomian's "Semiotics and the Criticism of Contemporary Fiction". Last, the book also lacks an index.

Despite these shortcomings, *Time and Its Men* is an instructive book and its author has succeeded in providing a new reading/understanding of Golestan's short stories and novels. This volume is useful for students and teachers alike.