

A Sociological Reading of Mahmood Falaki's The Fall of the Father of Oil: A Genetic Structuralist Approach

Mahmood Falaki'nin Petrolün Babasının Sonbaharı Adlı Eserinin Sosyolojik Bir Okuması: Genetik Yapısalcı Bir Yaklaşım

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ABSTRACT

As an interdisciplinary approach, sociological criticism dialogically examines society and literary narratives. This study dialogically explores the societal constructs of Iran in Mahmood Falaki's *The Fall of the Father of Oil*. In the foreground of the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, Falaki reconstructs Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh's "nation-state" and his trial. This study aims to uncover the relations between social events and the novel based on worldview, class consciousness, class conflict, and social status. The central questions of this study are: How do history and literature form historical narratives in the novel? And how is the novel formed in accordance with the societal aspects of the coup d'état and the following trial? The results of this study show that by blending his narrative with Mosaddegh's diaries and contributions, the author creates a faction which, in turn, renders his work into a combination of multi-dimensional diaries and linear narratives.

Keywords: Genetic Structuralism, Lucien Goldmann, Mohammad Mosaddegh, Sociological Criticism, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*

Öz

Disiplinlerarası bir yaklaşım olarak sosyolojik eleştiri, toplumu ve edebi anlatıları diyalojik olarak inceler. Bu çalışma, Mahmud Falaki'nin *Petrol Babasının Sonbaharı* adlı eserindeki İran'ın toplumsal yapılarını diyalojik olarak inceler. 1953 İran darbesinin ön planında Falaki, Başbakan Muhammed Musaddık'ın "ulus-devlet"ini ve yargılanmasını inceler. Bu çalışma, dünya görüşü, sınıf bilinci, sınıf çatışması ve sosyal statü temelinde toplumsal olaylar ile roman arasındaki ilişkileri ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel soruları şunlardır: Tarih ve edebiyat, romanda tarihsel anlatıları nasıl oluşturur? Ve roman, darbenin ve onu izleyen yargılamanın toplumsal yönlerine göre nasıl şekillenir? Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, yazarın anlatısını Musaddık'ın günlükleri ve katkılarıyla harmanlayarak, eserini çok boyutlu günlükler ve doğrusal anlatıların bir bileşimi haline getiren bir hizip yarattığını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Genetik Yapısalcılık, Lucien Goldmann, Muhammed Musaddık, Sosyolojik Eleştiri, *Petrolün Babasının Sonbaharı*

Geliş Tarihi/Received: 01.11.2025
Revizyon Veriliş
Tarihi/Revision Issued: 27.01.2026
Revizyon Bitiş
Tarihi/Revision Ended: 09.02.2026
Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 11.03.2026
Yayın Tarihi/Publication
Date: 31.03.2026

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Cite this article: Ranjbar, M., and A. Allahyari. "A Sociological Reading of Mahmood Falaki's *The Fall of the Father of Oil*: A Genetic Structuralist Approach." *A Journal of Iranology Studies* 24 (2026): 8-23.

Atıf: Ranjbar, M., ve A. Allahyari. "Mahmood Falaki'nin Petrolün Babasının Sonbaharı Adlı Eserinin Sosyolojik Bir Okuması: Genetik Yapısalcı Bir Yaklaşım." *Doğu Esintileri* 24 (2026): 8-23.



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INTRODUCTION

In the 1960s, influenced by the principles of stasis and certainty in ethological studies, anthropologists widely assumed the universality and stability of the structures underlying human behavior. Challenging this assumption in a rapidly changing world, Lucien Goldmann (1913–1970) argued that such structures are dynamic realities that, like embryos, are conceived, develop, and evolve over time. In his *Histoire des Idées Sociologiques* (2015), Michel Lallement notes that Goldmann investigated these ever-changing and interwoven societal structures and theorized “Genetic Structuralism.”¹ To evaluate human behavior, according to Goldmann, one must go beyond premeditated actions and scrutinize the interconnections and relationships among scattered individual structures. He believes that literature represents the structures of human development. In his view, a dialogue with societal structures develops and transcends a literary piece, such as a novel; that said, how does this dialogue between literary and societal structures take place? In his *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature* (1980), Goldmann argues that structure is not a container that holds content; rather, it is a set of similarities among events or actions within the novel, all of which develop through a dialogue with one another.² His approach also emphasizes the implicit structures in the novel. In other words, a text would evolve into a significant piece of literature when there is a dialogue between the structure, elements of development, and the unity of a literary work on the one hand, with the categories of social life, such as social classes, worldview, and class consciousness, on the other. Although societal representations in literary works are often consciously constructed, the implicit and unconscious structures and actions cannot be overlooked; unlike Marxist structures, they are neither fully reflective nor tangibly complete. For instance, György Lukács, in *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (1971), argued that societal functions operate according to concrete rules manifested in people’s actions and their behavioral byproducts.³ Echoing him, Goldmann, in his *An Introduction to the Sociology of Literature* (1971), utilized Lukács’s approach to literature and focused on its actions and correlations as a process to represent the socio-historical role of society and its explicit significations in the rational and emotional life of the author.⁴ Just like a liquid that takes the shape of its container, the structure of a literary work, according to Goldmann, assumes the form of the society. By examining literary works across different social histories, one can uncover the societal structures that shape them. Focusing on the correlation between textual and social contexts, Goldmann describes a pendulum-like movement between comprehension and explication. In *Society, Culture, Literature* (2019), he argues that understanding the meaningful structure of a work requires emphasizing the function of comprehension, while comparing that structure with societal frameworks constitutes explication.⁵ Thus, a literary text cannot be reduced to a mere mirror of reality; rather, it must be interpreted within its socio-historical context.⁶ Following this premise, the present article situates Mahmood Falaki’s *The Fall of the Father of Oil* within its socio-historical milieu.

The Iranian literary critic, scholar, author, and poet, Mahmood Falaki, was born in 1951 in Ramsar, Iran. He first studied Chemistry and Library Science and worked as a librarian and editor at Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch. He moved to Germany in 1983 and got his Ph.D. in German and Iranian Studies from the University of Hamburg. From 1997 to 1999, he was the editor-in-chief of “Sanjesh,” the journal of German literary theory and criticism and book reviews. As a professor of language and literature, he has published more than 20 books, including *The Shadows* (Poetry, 2003), *Goethe and Hafez: Understanding and Misunderstanding in the Interrelation of German and Persian Culture* (Dissertation, 2012), *Sound from Afar and Boulders* (Poetry, 2013), *I’m a Foreigner and That’s a Good Thing* (Prose, 2013), *We Speak Persian: Persian for Germans 1-3* (2014-15-16), and *Strange Stories of Exile* (Prose, 2017). His latest publication, *The Fall of the Father of Oil* [Pāyiz-e Pedar-e Naft] (2021), explores the ministership of the 30th Prime Minister of Iran from 1951 to 1953, Mohammad Mosaddegh.

The Fall of the Father of Oil (2021), according to Falaki, is “a research compilation of books, articles, and diaries of Mosaddegh from himself or people close to him.”⁷ Falaki notes that “though I could rely more on imagination, deep down, I wanted to picture him as close to reality as possible. So, I stayed true to reality, but I soon found out that being faithful to

¹ Michel Lallement, *Histoire Des Idées Sociologiques : Tome 2 : De Parsons Aux Contemporains*, 188-92.

² Lucien Goldmann, *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature*, 24.

³ György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, 60-64.

⁴ Goldmann, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Literature*, 201-202.

⁵ Goldmann, *Society, Culture, Literature*, 75.

⁶ Goldmann, *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature*, 29.

⁷ Mahmood Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, IV.

reality was withholding the freedom of the narrative.”⁸ In line with this claim, one might assume that Falaki’s work aligns with historical novels; however, unlike historical novels, it includes a preface and chapters. Although Falaki claims that he has provided a detailed and authentic historical account of Mosaddegh’s Prime Ministership, his positioning toward historical events and incorporation of literary devices prove otherwise; for example, in the content page, for the second and the third chapters, Falaki writes: “For one second, with blood-acquainted hands, they push the Earth behind darkness,” or “a grave for the dream, they dig and fill with sand a name smelling like fresh bread.”⁹ Falaki also highlights the implicit layers of Mosaddegh’s behavior as an archetypal hero. In addition, there is a transition from fiction to reality when the narrative focuses on Mosaddegh’s political life; there are numerous instances, especially regarding his trial, in which the author directly quotes Mosaddegh’s diaries.¹⁰ In this regard, Falaki’s writing moves away from conventional historical accounts and toward fiction. In general, the novel explores three linear narrations: the attack of the mercenaries (the night of the coup d’état), Mosaddegh’s trial, and the events preceding the trial.

This study adopts a genetic structuralist approach to analyze Mahmood Falaki’s *The Fall of the Father of Oil* to establish a dialogue between the societal structures and the novel. It also seeks to evaluate the narrative in the light of historical representations and their impact on the structure of the narrative. Accordingly, this study addresses the following questions: How do history and literature interact to produce historical narratives in the novel? And how is the novel shaped by the societal conditions surrounding the coup d’état and the subsequent trial? The analysis operates on two levels: first, it investigates the social structure of the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry and Mohammad Mosaddegh’s prime ministership as the key socio-political events of the period; second, it examines Lucien Goldmann’s genetic structuralist method through the concepts of “comprehension” and “explication.”

1.2 Literature Review

In his “Socio-criticism as Genetic Structuralism: Value and Limitations of the Goldmann Method” (1974), Patrick Brady locates Lucien Goldmann not on the extreme sides of the structuralist spectrum but in the middle. In their view, among those structuralists who study the inner (psychological) and outer (socio-economic) structures, such as Jacques Lacan and Levi-Strauss, “Goldmann and Lukács seek the meaning of formal literary constructs at the level of social and economic organization, with the emphasis on the infrastructure.”¹¹

In their *Lucien Goldmann ou la Dialectic de la Totalité* (1973), Nair and Löwy trace Goldmann’s contributions to Continental Sociology in General Social Theory. They argue that his “Human Sciences and Philosophy” and “Recherches Dialectiques” are antidotes to Positive Marxism and bourgeois sociology.¹²

In his “Lucien Goldmann: From Dialectical Theory to Genetic Structuralism” (1978), Marc Zimmerman traces Goldmann’s reputation and contributions throughout the West. He argues that, although “almost all of the early commentaries on Goldmann deal with the more literary and cultural aspects of his opus,” New Left literary critics or non-Communists “reduced his theoretical enterprise to [more concrete and corporeal] concerns.”¹³ Zimmerman examines the continuity of Goldmann’s Genetic Structuralism. He dialectically relates Goldmann’s theory to the “structuralist theory elaborated by Levi-Strauss and then applied to Marxism by Althusser.”¹⁴

In her “Genetic Structuralism and the Analysis of Social Consciousness” (1978), Mayrl argues that through his Genetic Structuralism, Goldmann “has brought dialectical philosophy and non-critical sociology into dialogue on the field of empirical social research [... and contributed] to the foundations of a critical and self-conscious sociology.”¹⁵

Recent scholarship on Lucien Goldmann’s genetic structuralism demonstrates its enduring relevance in sociological literary criticism, particularly in non-Western contexts such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Indonesian literature, as well as extensions to film analysis. While foundational works from the 1970s emphasized Goldmann’s dialectical synthesis of structuralism with Marxist and Piagetian elements, contemporary applications highlight its utility for uncovering human

⁸ Falaki, IX.

⁹ Falaki, V.

¹⁰ Falaki, 10.

¹¹ Patrick Brady, “Socio-Criticism as Genetic Structuralism: Value and Limitations of the Goldmann Method,” 207-208.

¹² Sami Naïr and Michael Löwy, *Lucien Goldmann Ou La Dialectique de La Totalité*, 12-13.

¹³ Marc Zimmerman, “Lucien Goldmann: From Dialectical Theory to Genetic Structuralism,” 151.

¹⁴ Zimmerman, 152.

¹⁵ Mayrl, “Genetic Structuralism and the Analysis of Social Consciousness,” 41.

facts, worldviews, class consciousness, and social contradictions in texts reflecting postcolonial, gendered, and educational inequalities.

Theoretical advancements in genetic structuralism continue to address the subject-structure dialectic. In her “Roots of the ‘Subject’ in Genetic Structuralism” (2024), Sona Qajar explores the roots of the “subject” in Goldmann’s framework, arguing that it functions as a transcendental agent in a cyclical process of construction-deconstruction, distancing from absolute agency while achieving dialectical equilibrium with social structures.¹⁶ Integrating Lukácsian categories, like wholeness and worldview, with Piagetian concepts, such as meaningful structure and epistemological loops, Qajar posits genetic structuralism as a bridge between structuralism and poststructuralism, liberating the subject from rigid constraints while acknowledging historical evolution and class-based collective action.¹⁷

Applications to Arabic literature predominate, often examining social inequalities and humanitarian crises. In their “A Sociological Reading of the Novel *Al-Tantouriyya* in Light of the Theory of Lucien Goldmann’s Genetic Structuralism” (2025), Mehdizadeh and co-workers apply genetic structuralism to Radwa Ashour’s *Al-Tantouriyya*, revealing how the novel homologously reflects Palestinian collective consciousness amid historical events like the Nakba and forced displacement. The analysis traces generational transformations in social identity – from traditional adherence to adaptive globalization – while depicting alienation in psychological, spatial, and religious dimensions, linking textual structures to class struggles and occupation-induced contradictions.¹⁸

Similarly, Aisyah, in her “Social Inequality in the Short Story *Fī Al-Qiṭār* by Mahmud Taymur (Lucien Goldmann’s Genetic Structuralism)” (2025), analyzes Mahmud Taymur’s short story “*Fī al-Qiṭār*” to uncover human facts (individual and social) and the author’s worldview, which juxtaposes conservative opposition to progressive advocacy for education as a bridge across class gaps. The narrative highlights antagonistic debates on free education for farmers, symbolizing broader efforts to elevate marginalized communities and combat illiteracy, thereby critiquing upper-lower class divides.¹⁹

Recent scholarship also adapts genetic structuralism to film, broadening its scope beyond literature. In their “Human Facts and Family Conflict in the Film *Basma*: A Study of Lucien Goldmann’s Genetic Structuralism” (2026), Nisa and Halim dissect family conflicts in Fatima Al-Banawi’s *Basma* (2024), identifying human facts through characters’ emotional struggles against societal pressures and internal-external tensions arising from divorce, mental health, and generational clashes in liberalizing Saudi society.

In Turkish literary criticism, genetic structuralism has been employed to dissect historical epics and bilingual poetry, linking textual structures to societal transformations during periods of conflict and modernization. For instance, Şamil Yeşilyurt, in his “Examining of *Sarikamiş Destani* in the Light of Genetic Structuralism Method” (2016), applies the framework to the *Sarikamiş Destani*, an oral epic commemorating the 1914-1915 Sarikamiş Operation during World War I. The analysis examines the epic as an aesthetic embodiment of human relations and social structures, highlighting themes of sadness, pride, heroism, the army-nation bond, dreams versus harsh realities, and collective suffering. Key concepts such as worldview and homology reveal how the text reflects deep scars in Turkish collective memory, influenced by historical events and societal perceptions. The study concludes that such works demand contextual analysis to uncover how war and nationalism shape literary production, emphasizing interdisciplinary ties between literature and sociology in Turkish contexts.²⁰

Further applications in Turkish poetry demonstrate the theory’s efficacy in bilingual contexts. In her “A Sociological Analysis of Shahriar’s Poems Based on Goldmann’s Theory” (2023), Rakei utilizes genetic structuralism to explore social themes in his Persian and Turkish poems. The framework uncovers critiques of injustice, poverty, oppression of the marginalized (including children and women), political despotism, and cultural degradation, portraying Shahriar as a committed folk poet immersed in societal realities.²¹ His worldview embodies moderate patriotism, nostalgia for native simplicity, and resistance to Western cultural imperialism while advocating adherence to Iranian-Islamic roots. This reflects collective consciousness in Iranian-Turkish borderlands, fostering awareness and struggle against social ills through

¹⁶ Qajar, “Roots of the ‘Subject’ in Genetic Structuralism,” 711.

¹⁷ Qajar, 720.

¹⁸ Mehdizadeh et al, “A Sociological Reading of the Novel *Al-Tantouriyya* in Light of the Theory of Lucien Goldmann’s Genetic Structuralism,” 421.

¹⁹ Aisyah, “Social Inequality in the Short Story *Fī Al-Qiṭār* by Mahmud Taymur (Lucien Goldmann’s Genetic Structuralism),” 9-10.

²⁰ Şamil Yeşilyurt, “Examining of *Sarikamiş Destani* in the Light of Genetic Structuralism Method,” 170-172.

²¹ Rakei, “A Sociological Analysis of Shahriar’s Poems Based on Goldmann’s Theory,” 286-288.

colloquial language that bridges elite and popular audiences. The analysis categorizes themes into 12 sections, illustrating how poetry narrates societal pains and incites hope, though Turkish poems receive preliminary focus.

Goldmann's "Genetic Structuralism" has been employed in numerous articles in Persian literature. In their article, "A Critical Study of the Applications of Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism to Persian Novels" (2018), Afshari and co-workers meta-analyzed ten articles on Goldmann's theory. They believe that Goldmann is one of the most well-received theoreticians in Iran.²²

Mahmood Falaki's works have not yet been the subject of extensive academic analysis, though his exile-influenced narratives offer fertile ground for sociological critique. Recent scholarship on contemporary Iranian literature, particularly in diaspora contexts, emphasizes how exile shapes worldview and homology in historical fiction; in her *Iranian Literature after the Islamic Revolution* (2021), Nanquette notes that "Iran is not only a nation state but also an identity and a belonging space," thus, "[t]he move to a diaspora that is largely digitally connected has not changed the form of nationalism that bounds Iranians, which is indeed strong."²³ Similarly, Hamid Dabashi, in his *Iran: A People Interrupted* (2019), characterizes post-1953 narratives in Persian diaspora writing as a "transnational" endeavor heavily influenced by the trauma of the 1953 coup and the subsequent 1979 Revolution, emphasizing that this diaspora literature acts as a "site of resistance" against both the authoritarianism within Iran and the imperialist narratives outside it.²⁴ Furthermore, in her *Crude Oil and Its False Promises of Modernization: Petroleum Encounters in Modern Iranian Fiction* (2021), Roya Khoshnevis focuses on the representations of oil in modern Iranian literature, arguing that "petroleum was at first considered magical and transformative, a valued treasure and healing honey, in the eyes of Iranian intellectuals and writers, but later came to be seen as something oppressive and even murderous."²⁵ Similarly, newer applications of genetic structuralism to non-Western literatures highlight its utility in analyzing fictions as a hybrid form. The present study offers the first Goldmann-based sociological reading of Falaki's novel, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, extending these discussions to exile-informed representations of the 1953 coup.

2. Discussion

Sociological criticism emerged as a reaction to "reflection theory," which evaluated the literary work as a reflection of reality. Criticizing reflection theory, Lucien Goldmann argues that a literary work reflects society.²⁶ In his view, three elements are involved in a literary work: the real, the author's choice, and the text. The real, informed by its dialectical relation to possibilities, is the source of thwarted actions/events;²⁷ the author's choice, echoing his or her worldview, is a fluid matter that impacts the progression and selection of micro-events;²⁸ the text encapsulates the events that reach the reader in the form of a novel or other works of literature. It should be noted that the quality of the narratological elements plays a significant role in transferring the contents of the events. In his *Strukturalisme – Genetik* (1986), Faruk argues that Genetic Structuralism uncovers the author's worldview reflected in the literary text, such as a novel, which can only be achieved by an analysis of the intrinsic elements of the literary work and the author's choices, which are informed by his socio-historical background and orientation at the time the work was written.²⁹ Genetic Structuralism, according to Goldmann, argues that in no case can one understand the structure, or the intrinsic element of the novel, without considering the author's presence; that is to say, without acknowledging the author's presence, one would not be able to produce a meaningful and coherent analysis.³⁰ Other elements that contribute to a correlation between the text and society are the correspondence of social classes, objectification, problematic characters, and class consciousness. To consolidate these core concepts and avoid repetition, we note here that Goldmann's framework emphasizes homology – the structural similarity between literary forms and societal structures – through a pendulum between comprehension (internal understanding of the work's meaningful structure) and explication (external socio-historical comparison). This dialectic

²² Narjes Afshari et al., "A Critical Study of the Applications of Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism to Persian Novels," 18.

²³ Nanquette, *Iranian Literature after the Islamic Revolution: Production and Circulation in Iran and the World*, 5.

²⁴ Dabashi, *Iran: A People Interrupted*, 24-36.

²⁵ Khoshnevis, *Crude Oil and Its False Promises of Modernization: Petroleum Encounters in Modern Iranian Fiction*, 212.

²⁶ Goldmann, *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature*, 67.

²⁷ Goldmann, 117-118.

²⁸ Goldmann, 126-127.

²⁹ Faruk, *Strukturalisme – Genetik*, 2.

³⁰ Goldmann, *Towards a Sociology of the Novel*, 7.

reveals how novels like Falaki's advance genetic structuralism by blending faction with unconscious class dynamics, extending the theory to hybrid historical-exile narratives beyond traditional European applications.

2.1 Socio-Historical Contextualisation

Because of their interest in history or historical figures, some authors adopt a societal approach toward historical events and figures. In such works, the dominant worldview expressed in the novel is in accordance with the socio-historical developments of the contextualized era. An author can never fully conceal his or her worldview or socio-political and historical orientation; as historical narratives require a unity of time and place, the dialogues inevitably revolve around socio-historical concerns, and the characters embody the author's ideological positioning.

In his *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, Mahmood Falaki investigates the 1953 – U.S.-and British-instigated – Iranian coup d'état that overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in favor of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, on August 19, 1953.³¹ Mohammad Mosaddegh (1882-1967) was the 30th Prime Minister of Iran. Arguing that a monarchical transition was against the 1906 Iranian Constitution, he opposed the transition from the Qājār dynasty to the Pahlavi, which angered the first Pahlavi, Reza Shah. As the representative of Tehran, Mosaddegh was an elected member of the 5th, 6th, 14th, and 16th National Consultative Assembly (Majlis). At the 16th Majlis, as Tehran's representative, Mosaddegh called for the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The legislation, signed by the Iranian Parliament and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, was verified on March 17, 1951. Due to his rising popularity and political power, Mosaddegh was elected Prime Minister by the Shah and the parliament on April 28, 1951.

As a member of the National Front, a pro-democracy and anti-monarchy group, Mosaddegh's prime ministership resulted in unrest and disagreements. His mission to reduce the power of the monarch and the parliament was not appreciated by the beneficiaries.³² In response to the ongoing upheaval and discontent, Mosaddegh announced his resignation and appealed directly to the people, "in the present situation, the struggle started by the Iranian people cannot be brought to a victorious conclusion."³³ In reaction to his resignation, Shah appointed Ahmad Qavam, a veteran politician, as the new Prime Minister. On his first day, Qavam called for a reversal of Mosaddegh's policies and nationalization. However, people waged a "holy war" against Qavam in response to the fatwa issued by Ayatollah Abol-Ghāsem Kāshāni, an event also known as the Si-ye Tir Uprising.³⁴ The National Front joined the people who forced the Shah to ask for Qavam's resignation and reappoint Mosaddegh. His reappointment divided the National Front into two groups: pro- and anti-Mosaddeghs. The pro-Mosaddeghs were mostly national and religious figures; however, Mosaddegh was captured, tried, imprisoned, and exiled through a coup d'état on August 19, 1953. Mahmood Falaki's *The Fall of the Father of Oil* investigates the start of the coup and Mosaddegh's trial. In this novel, Falaki explores Mosaddegh's character and behavioral traits in accordance with Mosaddegh's own sporadic sketches of his last 28-day Prime Ministership. Rather than merely recounting events, this socio-historical framing homologizes with the novel's disturbed narrative structure, illustrating Goldmann's theory by showing how external interventions (e.g., U.S.-British plots) thwart authentic national worldviews, extending genetic structuralism to post-colonial contexts.

2.2 Social Reflection

In *Towards a Sociology of the Novel*, Goldmann writes,

[T]he relations between the truly important work and the social group, which – through the medium of the creator – is, in the last resort, the true subject of creation, are of the same order of relations between the elements of the work and the work as a whole.³⁵

He argues that, through Genetic Structuralism, one can analyze the relations among the reflected societal aspects in the novel. In his view, communal consistency depends on each member's actions in the light of orienting toward a pervasive, rational, and meaningful coherence as well as the transcendability of the societal structure. An active society, according to Goldmann, incorporates all these elements. In *Sociology of Literature and Drama*, Burns argues that Goldmann's fundamental characteristics of human action are:

³¹ Olmo Gözl, "The Dangerous Classes and the 1953 Coup in Iran: On the Decline of Lutigari Masculinities," 177-90.

³² Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 65.

³³ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 270-71.

³⁴ Ervand Abrahamian, 272.

³⁵ Goldmann, *Towards a Sociology of the Novel*, 158.

The tendency towards adapting to the realities of the environment and, hence, its characteristics form of relating to that environment, through rationality and by rendering it significant; the tendency towards overall consistency and towards creating structural forms; and its dynamic nature, i.e., the tendency towards modifying and developing the structure of which it forms part.³⁶

In accordance with these concepts and Genetic Structuralism, one can argue that the consistency of a societal novel revolves around the same axis. In other words, as a community member, the protagonist represents actions and events that are informed by the historical background of his or her society.

2.3 Comprehension

Echoing the problematic hero's lifeworld and worldview, Goldmann describes "Comprehension" and "Explication" in the light of the following contextual elements:

2.3.1 Worldview

Functioning as the narrator and reporter, the author endeavors to reflect and represent the characters' worldview. That said, the events, dialogues, and reflected characters are a part of the movement in the silence of the worldview, which supports the societal structure. In the same light, after explaining the charges against Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, Falaki embeds the detailed report of the court session. This report was really filed in court. However, literary-wise, due to its motionless and undramatic dialogic structure, it sounds rigid and boring to the readers. Through close reading, however, this rigidity homologizes with a degraded society where authentic dialogue is stifled, as seen in Mosaddegh's satirical retorts: "I am more familiar with the law than you think; he [the prosecutor] only has a bachelor's degree,"³⁷ revealing unconscious class tensions that advance Goldmann's emphasis on implicit structures. This internal rigidity of worldview, manifested in Mosaddegh's satirical courtroom retorts, sets the stage for explication by homologizing the stifled dialogue within the novel to broader imperial mechanisms that silence authentic national voices in post-coup Iran.

2.3.2 Social Class

One can investigate the social class of the characters in *The Fall of the Father of Oil* in three dimensions: the political atmosphere of Tehran leading to the coup, the coup itself, and the trial afterward. In his novel, to recreate and represent the political atmosphere leading to the coup, Falaki incorporates seven social classes: The royalists, the intellectuals, the clergy, the military, the royal family, the mob, and the judges. Each of these classes occupies a specific part of society in the light of social values, social awareness, and social negligence; for instance, the enthusiastic presence of minority representatives, who opposed Mosaddegh's attempt to impeach the government, depicts the dominant relation between the government and the representatives. Falaki's portrayal of the seven social classes is as follows:

The Royalists: Falaki divides the royalists into politicians and the military. Bound by their loyalty to the Pahlavis, they opposed and intercepted any action against the government. On the day of the coup (August 19, 1953), adhering to their agenda to stabilize the Pahlavi Royal Family, the royalists came to the streets and joined the mass anti-Mosaddegh uprising.

The Intellectuals are some of the most influential characters in the novel. They can be divided into the National Front and the Third Force (a non-aligned socialist-nationalist political movement).³⁸ After the National Front came to power, they took over the parliament and started to de-monarchize and democratize the country. As a subdivision of the National Front, the Third Force included young intellectuals, such as Jalāl Āl-e-Ahmad, or renowned athletes, such as the Iranian wrestler Gholāmrezā Takhti.³⁹

³⁶ Elizabeth Burns, *Sociology of Literature and Drama*, 119.

³⁷ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 37.

³⁸ Refer to Yadullah Shahibzadeh, *The Iranian Political Language*.

³⁹ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 107.

The Clergy: Due to their role in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, the clergy was an indisputable force in the political atmosphere; Abū al-Qāsim Kāshāni and Seyed Mohammad Behbahāni were two of the most influential clergymen during Mosaddegh's prime ministership.⁴⁰

The Military was divided into anti-monarchy (or pro-Mosaddegh) and pro-monarchy groups. While the Imperial Guard, which was the personal guard force of the Shah, supported the monarchy, the army supported Mosaddegh.⁴¹

The Royal Family had been interfering with state affairs since Mohammadreza Shah's succession at the age of 20. Knowing this, Mosaddegh asked the Shah to stop this nepotism and usurpation; however, since the Shah approved of their anti-Mosaddegh sentiments, he encouraged them to conspire against him.⁴²

The Mob: Also known as the Ignorants, Hoodlums, and Lutis. The mobsters were part of the enforcing apparatus of the coup. The mobsters are more present in the coup than the intellectuals. They were hired to stage pro-Shah riots all over Tehran.⁴³ They burned down buildings⁴⁴ and injured more than 200 people.⁴⁵

The Judges: At the time of the political unrest, some of the judges aimed to be the mediators between the Prime Minister and the Shah.⁴⁶

By analyzing the worldview of each of the seven social classes in *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, one can form a coherent internal narrative structure. By highlighting the worldview of each social class, Falaki "homologizes" the literary text.⁴⁷ In addition, the author investigates the disturbed structure of society through a dialogic and dialectic exploration of the contested worldviews of various social classes; for instance, the story begins amidst the starting moments of the coup at House 109, or the National Front's "Khāneh-ye Omid," or the House of Hope. The closer we get to the coup, the more disturbed the narrative becomes. In his *Untold Aspects of the Fall of Mosaddegh's Government* (2019), Vargha notes and names 20 people who were present at House 109.⁴⁸ Brigadier General Foolād-vand is among those names. He was the first to suggest leaving the resistance defenders of House 109. Vargha identifies the head of the Prime Minister's security detail as "General Momtāz." Informed by historical events and sources, Falaki notes and includes all the people in House 109, including Mosaddegh's housekeeper, Mashadi Mehdi. Unlike Falaki's detailed account, Vargha only mentions the housekeeper's name "till the fall of the household, Mashadi Mehdi stood firm in serving the guests."⁴⁹

One of the most critical scenes in *The Fall of the Father of Oil* is the Imperial Guard's M4 Sherman tanks advancing towards Mosaddegh's residence. This section of the narrative echoes Qolāmrezā Nejāti's historical account; in his *Nationalization of the Iranian Oil Industry and the Mordad 28th Coup D'état* (1999), quoting Dr. Seddighi, Nejati notes that as the Shermans were approaching, General Momtāz came to Mosaddegh and assured him that he would stand tall in his duties, "sitting on the chair, Mosaddegh called him close and hugged him, and then the General went outside."⁵⁰

Though informed by Dr. Seddighi's account, Falaki's account is more romantic and sentimental: "[T]he General saluted the Prime Minister. He was about to leave when misty-eyed Mosaddegh called him back, hugged him, and kissed his forehead."⁵¹ Then, the narrative flashes back to Mosaddegh as a student in Paris; Mashadi Mehdi brings Mosaddegh his tea and places it on the coffee table, "the teacup looked exactly like the one he used to drink from in Paris."⁵² In another instance, though Dr. Seddighi's account does not mention screaming women and children, Falaki dramatizes the narrative: "[A] woman cried out, a child started to weep, two women suddenly turned away from the strangers, the young pregnant woman picked up a child and held him in her arms."⁵³ This dramatization not only comprehends the novel's internal structure but also advances Goldmann's theory by showing how faction hybridizes linear history with multi-dimensional unconscious elements, creating a homology that critiques societal fragmentation under coup pressures. These internally

⁴⁰ Falaki, 99.

⁴¹ Falaki, 20-35.

⁴² Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 272-280.

⁴³ Gözl, "The Dangerous Classes and the 1953 Coup in Iran: On the Decline of Lutigari Masculinities," 177-190.

⁴⁴ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 106.

⁴⁵ Hugh Wilford, *America's Great Game: The CIA's Secret Arabists and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East*, 166.

⁴⁶ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 120.

⁴⁷ Raman Selden, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 96-97.

⁴⁸ Mashallah Vargha, *Untold Aspects of the Fall of Mosaddegh's Government*, 58.

⁴⁹ Mashallah Vargha, 58-59.

⁵⁰ Qolamreza Nejati, *Nationalization of the Iranian Oil Industry and the Mordad 28th Coup D'état*, 545.

⁵¹ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 15.

⁵² Falaki, 15.

⁵³ Falaki, 23.

dramatized class tensions, comprehended through faction's hybrid form, swing toward explication by revealing how the fragmented societal structure of 1953 Iran mirrors neo-colonial interventions that objectify collective agency.

2.3.3 Class Conflict

The novel presents numerous instances of class conflict. For example, the system tries to trace the conflict between the monarchy and the National Front to Mosaddegh and his so-called 'individual tyranny' and blame it on him. The conflicts in the distorted society of 1953 Iran are reflected in Mosaddegh's speeches and the Judge's authority. The incremental friction present in the class conflicts ultimately culminated in the coup. The class conflict is also present throughout the trial; the charges against Mosaddegh were like those given to anti-monarchists. Although Mosaddegh was in line with the monarchy, the charges were "disobeying the Shah, trying to overthrow the Iranian monarchy, and sparking an ill-fated armed uprising against the Shah."⁵⁴

In his *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations* (2013), Abrahamian notes that another class conflict is the marginalization of the Tudeh Party of Iran as a subset of the intellectual class:

A crucial component of the plan was to highlight the supposed communist threat, linking the Tudeh to the National Front, exaggerating its strength, inflating its crowds, forging documents to "prove" it had infiltrated the government, claiming it was preparing to pull off a coup, and warning that Mossadeq would wittingly or unwittingly pave the way for the inevitable [anexation] of Iran to the Soviet Bloc.⁵⁵

Another instance of class conflict emerges in the novel's depiction of mob mobilization during the coup, where hired rioters burn buildings and injure civilians while chanting pro-Shah slogans.⁵⁶ This scene, drawing on historical accounts of orchestrated violence,⁵⁷ homologously reflects the artificial inflation of lower-class aggression to serve monarchical and foreign interests, deepening Goldmann's notion of degraded collective action.

Through close reading of trial scenes, such as Mosaddegh's rejection – "Why am I being court-martialed? I'm not a military man; I was a Prime Minister"⁵⁸ – this conflict homologizes with Goldmann's degraded society, where external powers (U.S.-British) exacerbate internal divisions, extending the theory to reveal how class frictions in faction narratives critique neo-imperialism. The internal class conflicts uncovered here through Mosaddegh's defiant speeches prepare the ground for explication, where these frictions are shown to be exacerbated by external U.S.-British orchestration of the coup.

2.3.4 Class Consciousness

By dramatizing the events and characters, Falaki divides class consciousness into possible and individual consciousness. In possible consciousness, there is a reasonable correlation between the class and its place in the production process. In his "Ma'āsiy-e Kabireh-ye Mosaddegh Al-Saltaneh" (1993), Katouzian argues that the murder of the head of the country's police force, the referendum, and the coup were the tools that led to Mosaddegh's downfall.⁵⁹ The Americans and the British employed such tools to solve the Iranian oil crisis.⁶⁰ Falaki further illustrates thwarted class consciousness when Mosaddegh, facing fabricated charges, declares, "Every time I wanted to do good for my country, these foreign forces intervened and plotted against me."⁶¹ This direct quotation from Mosaddegh's own reflections reveals an unconscious awareness of external class domination, transforming individual defiance into a transindividual critique of imperial interference. Additionally, the novel's portrayal of marginalized intellectuals, such as those linked to the suppressed Tudeh Party, being scapegoated as communist threats,⁶² underscores how possible class consciousness is systematically

⁵⁴ Falaki, 133.

⁵⁵ Abrahamian, *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations*, 96.

⁵⁶ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 106.

⁵⁷ Gözl, "The Dangerous Classes and the 1953 Coup in Iran: On the Decline of Lutigari Masculinities," 177-190.

⁵⁸ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 157.

⁵⁹ Homayoon Katouzian, "معاصی کبیره مصدق السلطنه [Ma'āsiy-e Kabireh-ye Mosaddegh Al-Saltaneh]," 172-185.

⁶⁰ William Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonisation*, 775; Donald Wilber, "Historical Archive: Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran," 90-104.

⁶¹ Mosaddegh, *Khāterāt va Ta'ammolāt-e Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh*, 274.

⁶² Abrahamian, *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations*, 96.

fragmented, preventing the formation of a unified national front. Informed by the Tudeh Party and worried about their interests, the Americans and the British were under the impression that nationalism was a Soviet-backed agenda and Iran was falling to the Soviets.⁶³ Echoing the Americans and the British, Mohammad Reza Shah explicitly opposed Prime Minister Mosaddegh. Falaki fuses characterization with class consciousness to make a dialogue between the content and the form and to create a unified structure. His most important characters, besides Mosaddegh, are the head of the judiciary and people from the seven classes. Informed by the objects around them, the characters interrelate with each other. Goldmann argues that these objects are formed in accordance with the individual and collective consciousness, which, in turn, leads to a comprehensive understanding of the novel's societal structure.⁶⁴ Falaki's portrayal shifts from possible – National Front's collective anti-monarchy drive – to Mosaddegh's individual consciousness, as in his humorous trial quips – “If the Shah didn't want me anymore, he could've easily said: Doc! Get lost!”⁶⁵ – analyzing how this advances Goldmann by highlighting exile's role in reimagining transindividual awareness in historical fiction. This internal shift from possible to individual consciousness, illustrated in Mosaddegh's humorous yet tragic appeals, anticipates explication by linking personal idealism to the broader degradation of transindividual awareness under foreign-influenced authoritarianism.

2.3.5 Objectification

In Goldmann's view, although problematic heroes seek authentic values in a degraded society, they cannot escape the intermediary effects of the exchange value, which is objectification; in other words, objectification is stasis and the unquestioning acceptance of authority. In *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, objectification is reflected in the confrontation of dichotomies, such as those between the self and the other, the ruler and the ruled, the employer and the employee, etc. During the coup, objectification is in the form of the order and the execution; for instance, in his *Countercoup, the Struggle for the Control of Iran* (1979), Roosevelt mentions that after the Shah left Tehran for Ramsar, he had two firmans (royal decrees) remaining to sign: Dismissing Mosaddegh and appointing General Zahedi as the Prime Minister. Roosevelt notes that in order to reach the Shah, “‘We'll have to get hold of Colonel Nassiry.’ (Nassiry was the commander of the Imperial Bodyguard at the Shah's palace.) ‘He can get another airplane and fly the damn documents to Ramsar, or Kelardesht, or wherever the Shah is finally at.’”⁶⁶

Another aspect of objectification in *The Fall of the Father of Oil* is reducing the judiciary system to a tool at the service of the coup plotters. According to the novel, the trial does not regard nationalization as Mosaddegh's political and economic achievement. Falaki presents a humane and patriotic picture of Mosaddegh amidst his arguments with the lawyer and the prosecutor. Informed by the arguments and the trial's transcript, one can highlight Mosaddegh's strategic and tactical failures. This objectification, evident in the prosecutor's labeling of Mosaddegh as a “rebel,”⁶⁷ homologizes with societal stasis, deepening Goldmann's concept by showing how faction exposes unconscious acceptance of foreign-dictated authority in post-coup Iran. The dichotomies and stasis comprehended internally as objectification pave the way for explication, where the judiciary's reduction to an imperial instrument homologizes with the larger objectification of Iranian sovereignty in global power dynamics.

2.3.6 Problematic Hero

In his *The Theory of the Novel* (1971), Lukács compares the classic epic poem and the modern novel and argues that the modern novel is “the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given.”⁶⁸ For Lukács, the novel revolves around a problematic hero in pursuit of problematic values within a problematic world. In the same light, Goldmann views the novel as revolving around the problematic hero and his search for lost authenticity in a degraded society. Goldmann also argues that there is a rigorous homology between the literary form of the novel and society.

Emphasizing loyalty to the linear narrative and traditional realism, Falaki reinforces his narrative with reports and diaries. On the other hand, to induce dramatization and action, he re-narrates the implicit dimensions of Mosaddegh's problematic character. Echoing the events of the trial, Falaki investigates the rotation of his problematic hero from

⁶³ Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, 106.

⁶⁴ Goldmann, *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature*, 55-57.

⁶⁵ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 151.

⁶⁶ Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup, the Struggle for the Control of Iran*, 170.

⁶⁷ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 161.

⁶⁸ György Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 56.

Mosaddegh, the jurist, to Mosaddegh, the conservative idealist. His knowledge of constitutional law and the judiciary system, which he employed to restrict the powers of the Shah, is proof of his knowledge and authority. However, the same Swiss-trained lawyer

was now bypassing the same laws and resorting directly to the theory of the general will. The liberal aristocrat who had in the past appealed predominantly to the middle classes was now appealing to the general public. The moderate reformer who had at one time even proposed restricting suffrage to literates was now openly seeking the support of the downtrodden masses. The great admirer of Montesquieu was now echoing Jean-Jacques Rousseau. To ensure victory at the referendum, ballot boxes for “yes” and “no” votes were placed in different locations.⁶⁹

Since he does not recognize the legitimacy of the court, the trial after the coup is not problematic for Mosaddegh; he addresses the prosecutor:

Why am I being court-martialed? I'm not a military man; I was a Prime Minister. Why didn't I comply with the firman? Because His writing dismissed me, I was not the Prime Minister on the 26th, 27th, and 28th. I'm being tried for not being a Prime Minister! Now, I have to prove that I am and I was the legitimate Prime Minister!⁷⁰

On the other hand, the regime's problem is to move beyond Mosaddegh. Highlighting the illegitimacy of the trial and the false accusations, Falaki adopts a rather satirical position, which leads to slightly comical imagery. To make the audience laugh, Falaki's Mosaddegh utters humorous sentences, “Banging his hand on the table, Mossaddegh continues, ‘I am more familiar with the law than you think; he [the prosecutor] only has a bachelor's degree.’”⁷¹ By satirizing, Falaki delegitimizes the trial, “with the merit and eligibility the law had to offer, the head of the judiciary pronounced: ‘the acoosed...’ ‘it's accused, with a /u/ not /o/, you were incorrect.’”⁷² In another instance, “he had no idea that it was wrong, there is a saying: ‘One who doesn't know and doesn't know that he doesn't know... He will be eternally lost in his hopeless oblivion.’”⁷³ As another example, “laughingly, Mosaddegh continues: ‘If the Shah didn't want me anymore, he could've easily said: Doc! Get lost! It's not working between us’” or in another instance, “Mosaddegh, with a smirk, points at the prosecutor: ‘I've got lots to say! You're not getting rid of me anytime soon! Now, let's see how good-mannered you are! You've got lots to listen to! Listen, they're good for you.’”⁷⁴ Or when a news reporter pushes the mic aside to take a picture of Mosaddegh, the guard protests: “‘Why did you touch the mic?’ Mosaddegh cunningly replies: ‘He's right! You don't touch the mic, you talk to it!’”⁷⁵

By emphasizing Mosaddegh's actions, Falaki characterizes Mosaddegh as an anti-authoritarian problematic hero: “Mosaddegh never sat down and was talking in a loud voice.”⁷⁶ Another instance is when the prosecutor interrupts Mosaddegh's speech, he gathers his papers, packs his bag, and says: “Well, I'm off. Thank you for your time.”⁷⁷

By dialogically confronting the sentiments of society with the realities of certain groups, Falaki synthesizes the narratives to create an ambiance capable of functioning as the voice of the voiceless. Regarding Mosaddegh's charges, Falaki confronts the narrative of the authority with his version of reality: “Mosaddegh had numerous charges. His main charges were disobeying the Shah, trying to overthrow the Iranian monarchy, and sparking an ill-fated armed uprising against the Shah.”⁷⁸ Rejecting all the charges and accusations, Mosaddegh writes:

Every time I wanted to do good for my country, these foreign forces intervened and plotted against me. [...] Some came from the monarchy, some from the National Front, and some from the news stations which misinterpret and misquote me.⁷⁹

To break and trample Mosaddegh's problematic character, the court-martial prosecutor implies that he is a dictator and announces that due to Mosaddegh's disobeying the Shah's direct order, “in the light of his actions against the

⁶⁹ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 337.

⁷⁰ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 157.

⁷¹ Falaki, 37.

⁷² Falaki, 136.

⁷³ Falaki, 145.

⁷⁴ Falaki, 151.

⁷⁵ Falaki, 177.

⁷⁶ Falaki, 135.

⁷⁷ Falaki, 169.

⁷⁸ Falaki, 133.

⁷⁹ Mosaddegh, *Khāterāt va Ta'ammolāt-e Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh*, 274.

monarchy, as of 1 A.M. of this day (August 16th), Mohammad Mosaddegh is a rebel.”⁸⁰ Katouzian argues that the proof of Mosaddegh’s dictatorship is in the broad cheating at the Seventh Iranian Parliamentary Elections, closing down the senate and ceasing its power, closing the seventeenth parliament, holding the referendum, and disobeying the Shah’s direct order for his dismissal.⁸¹ Mosaddegh’s internal characterization as a problematic hero resisting farce thus swings the pendulum toward explication, illuminating how his thwarted authenticity reflects the degraded totality of a society reshaped by external coup forces.

2.4 Explication

This section dives into the representations of Iran’s socio-political ambiance in the 1950s and 60s, as well as the reflections of a dictated and overruled society in the light of Iran’s socio-political milieu. In his *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, Falaki realistically presents a linear narrative of the 1953 Iranian coup d’état. Through historical contextualization, he argues that the coup originated outside of Iran. He explores the plots devised by the Shah and his entourage to overpower Mosaddegh and his followers. His detailed account of the events paints a vivid picture of the coup:

In March 1953, Washington formulated the blueprint of the coup. In April 1953, the British military headquarters in Cyprus typed it out. In June 1953, revisions were made in Beirut. In July, the last version was agreed and signed by the two foreign ministers.⁸²

To enhance the plausibility and credibility of his account of Mosaddegh’s final political days, Falaki adopts an omniscient point of view and presents cited documents to the reader. By incorporating documents, names, vehicles, and statistical details, he underscores the factual dimensions of the coup:

It’s 1 A. M, General Nasiri, the head of the Imperial Guard, accompanied by four armored cars, two military jeeps, and one armored fighting vehicle, enters the Prime Minister’s residence. Nasiri brings out a firman, written in Shah’s handwriting, and announces Mosaddegh’s dismissal.⁸³

On the other hand, due to the incorporation of somewhat unreliable sources, one might question the credibility of some quotes; for instance, Falaki gives a detailed account of the hour in which the coup was leaked but leaves out the source of the news, “on Monday, August 15th, at 7 P. M, he called Mosaddegh and told him that the tanks were on Heshmat Al-Doleh Street, and the coup had begun.”⁸⁴ To clarify, this detail likely draws from historical reconstructions,⁸⁵ though Falaki’s faction blend introduces creative elements without direct primary attribution, highlighting the genre’s tension between fact and narrative freedom. Collective consciousness, according to Goldmann, correlates with the author’s imagination and forms the consciousness of a literary work.⁸⁶ In this regard, one wonders why the informant is unnamed. Although the reader expects the informant to play a key role in the consciousness of the text, Falaki fails to name and contextualize him.

Building on comprehension’s internal analysis, explication relates the novel’s structure to broader socio-historical frameworks, creating Goldmann’s pendulum: the fragmented class worldviews (comprehension) explicate Iran’s degraded post-coup society, where foreign interventions objectify national aspirations. For instance, Falaki’s dramatized tank advance⁸⁷ not only comprehends Mosaddegh’s heroism but explicates homology with U.S.-British orchestration, revealing unconscious collective consciousness thwarted by imperialism. This extends genetic structuralism to exile literature, where diaspora perspectives critique historical totality in hybrid forms like faction, offering new insights into how 1953’s events persist in Iranian cultural memory.

To further elucidate this pendulum dynamic, explication demands a comparative lens that situates the novel’s meaningful structures within the transindividual socio-historical forces of mid-20th-century Iran. Goldmann’s method posits that literary works do not merely reflect society but actively dialogue with it, transforming empirical events into coherent worldviews through the author’s unconscious mediation.⁸⁸ In Falaki’s case, the novel’s multi-layered narrative –

⁸⁰ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 161.

⁸¹ Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, 172-185.

⁸² Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 102.

⁸³ Falaki, 104.

⁸⁴ Falaki, 104.

⁸⁵ Vargha, *Untold Aspects of the Fall of Mosaddegh’s Government*, 58; Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 96.

⁸⁶ Goldmann, *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature*, 29.

⁸⁷ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 15.

⁸⁸ Goldmann, *Towards a Sociology of the Novel*, 158.

interweaving Mosaddegh's personal diaries with dramatized scenes – explicates the 1953 coup as a rupture in Iran's national consciousness, where the Oil Nationalization Movement is systematically degraded by external capitalist imperatives. This is evident in the novel's portrayal of the coup's orchestration: The precise timeline of U.S.-British planning⁸⁹ homologizes with a societal structure fragmented by neo-colonial exchange values, where Iranian sovereignty becomes an objectified commodity in global power games.⁹⁰

Explication thus reveals how Falaki, writing from exile, reconfigures historical trauma into a critique of ongoing authoritarianism. For example, the unnamed informant's warning⁹¹ underscores the opacity of power networks, explicating a collective consciousness marked by paranoia and thwarted possibilities – echoing Goldmann's emphasis on the dialectic between real actions and unrealized potentials.⁹² This adds to genetic structuralism by demonstrating its applicability to fiction as a genre that bridges documentary realism with imaginative reconstruction, allowing diaspora authors to reclaim suppressed histories. Moreover, in the broader Iranian milieu of the 1950s-60s, the novel explicates the coup's long-term effects: The restoration of monarchical absolutism under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi not only suppressed class-based national fronts but also entrenched a degraded society reliant on foreign alliances, as seen in the marginalization of intellectuals and the mobilization of mobs.⁹³ Falaki's satirical trial scenes⁹⁴ further explicate this degradation, homologizing courtroom farce with a national farce where justice is objectified into a tool of imperial containment.

Critically, this explication highlights limitations in Goldmann's framework when applied to non-European contexts: While it excels at uncovering class homologies, it may underplay intersecting factors, such as religious ideology (e.g., Ayatollah Kashani's role in the uprising) or ethnic tensions in Iran's multi-faceted society.⁹⁵ Nonetheless, Falaki's work extends the theory by infusing it with exile's temporal distance, enabling a retrospective worldview that critiques not just 1953 but its echoes in contemporary Iranian diaspora narratives.⁹⁶ Ultimately, through this pendulum swing from comprehension's internal unity to explication's socio-historical totality, the novel emerges as a transindividual artifact, illuminating how literature can resist historical erasure and foster renewed class consciousness in degraded eras.

Moreover, the pendulum's iterative nature allows for an examination of how the novel's 2021 publication context shapes its reflected collective consciousness. Published amid heightened U.S.-Iran tensions (e.g., ongoing sanctions and nuclear deal negotiations) and Iranian West-incepted riots under the cover of protests for democratic reforms, Falaki's exilic work infuses the 1953 narrative with a contemporary transindividual awareness. This context transforms the coup's historical rupture into a living critique: The collective consciousness in the novel – marked by paranoia and thwarted nationalism – homologizes with 2021's global Iranian diaspora, where Mosaddegh symbolizes enduring resistance against authoritarianism. Swinging back through the pendulum, comprehension reveals how Falaki's fiction unconsciously channels this modern consciousness, with Mosaddegh's satirical defiance, "You're not getting rid of me anytime soon,"⁹⁷ mirroring current online diaspora activism. Explication then situates this in broader socio-historical forces, such as post-Revolution exile literature's role in fostering renewed class solidarity amid digital globalization. Thus, the 2021 context extends Goldmann's pendulum by layering historical dialectics with present-day resonances, refining the novel's homology to critique ongoing neo-imperial degradations and inspire collective renewal in fragmented societies.

CONCLUSION

Informed by Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism, one can pinpoint two "anti" and "pro" political waves regarding Mohammad Mosaddegh's Prime Ministership and cabinet. The two waves were the monarchal discourse and the national discourse. In the light of such discourses, the meaningful structures of character relations form pro and anti-monarchy movements. *The Fall of the Father of Oil* reflects the disorganized, fragmented, and bleak nature of Mosaddegh's trial. By reading the dialogue between the judge and Mosaddegh, one easily unveils the paradoxical discourse of a fabricated trial.

⁸⁹ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 102.

⁹⁰ Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 96.

⁹¹ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 104.

⁹² Goldmann, *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature*, 117-118.

⁹³ Gözl, *The Dangerous Classes and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, 177-190.

⁹⁴ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 37.

⁹⁵ Shahibzadeh, *The Iranian Political Language*, 46-53.

⁹⁶ Refer to Nanquette, *Iranian Literature after the Islamic Revolution: Production and Circulation in Iran and the World*.

⁹⁷ Falaki, *The Fall of the Father of Oil*, 151.

By choosing the dialogues that reflect the confrontations among the coup plotters, the monarchists, and the National Front, Falaki forms a structure of worldviews that highlights the authority, the influence, and the role of the United States and the British in the Iranian coup d'état. Genetic structuralism proves highly applicable to this novel, as its pendulum of comprehension and explication illuminates the homology between Falaki's faction narrative and 1953's societal degradation, where class conflicts thwart authentic values. However, limitations include challenges in fully capturing unconscious structures in blended diary-fiction forms and potential overemphasis on class at the expense of religious or ethnic factors. This study contributes to Iranian literary studies by offering the first Goldmann-based analysis of Falaki, extending the method to exile-informed historical critiques and revealing faction's potential for socio-historical dialogue in diaspora writing.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.

Yazar Katkıları: Yazarların her ikisi de çalışmaya eşit katkıda bulunduğu ifade etmiştir.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazarlar, çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan etmiştir.

Finansal Destek: Yazarlar, bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.

Yapay Zeka Kullanımı: Kullanılmamıştır.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Both authors declared that they contributed equally to the work.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Financial Disclosure: The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

Use of Artificial Intelligence: Not used.

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ⁱ The authors have undertaken all Persian translations, unless stated otherwise.