

Women Retelling the Iranian Revolution: A Comparative Study of Novelists Maryam Madjidi and Negar Djavadi

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Abstract : The Iranian Revolution has been the object of numberless historical and semi-fictional accounts, often providing a monolithic perspective on the events, due to the westerner positioning of those recounting them. Against this tradition, two contemporary French-Iranian novels "Disoriental" (2016) by Negar Djavadi and "Marx and The Doll" (2017) by Maryam Madjidi have offered readers a female-oriented and interestingly layered representation of the Iranian Revolution, hence addressing the responsibilities and misconceptions of Western countries. Furthermore, these two women writers have shed light on the disenchantment of the Iranian intellectual class vis-à-vis the foundation of the Islamic Republic, by particularly focusing on the deterioration of women's rights, as well as the repression of political, ethnical, religious and sexual minorities. By a psycholinguistic and semasiological analysis of the two novels by Djavadi and Madjidi, this essay will focus on alternative accounts of the revolution in order to reflect upon the role of intersectional literature to the understanding of history. More specifically, as both women, refugees, and bi-cultural writers, Djavadi and Madjidi unearthed moments and figures of the revolution which had disappeared from the prevalent narrative. In doing so, however, these two writers resorted to entirely opposite styles of writing that, it will be argued, stem from different types of female resistance. In defining these two approaches as a "narrative resistance" and a "photographic resistance," the essay will elucidate the dependence of these writers' language on generational and psychological factors, but it will also stir a reflection on their different communicative strategies.

Keywords : Iranian revolution, French-Iranian, intersectionality, literature, women writers

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