



PUYANDA, MOḤAMMAD-JA'FAR

PUYANDA, Moḥammad-Ja'far (b. Yazd, 17 Kordād 1333/7 June 1954; d. Tehran, 18 Āḍar 1377/9 December 1998, [FIGURE 1](#)), scholar and translator of literary texts and sociological studies. Puyanda finished his primary and secondary education in Yazd before going to Tehran, where he received his MA degree in Law from the University of Tehran. In 1974, he went to France to study the sociology of literature, returning to Iran shortly before the Revolution of 1979.

Puyanda entertained strong sympathies for the leftist movement of Iran, but he did not believe in the traditional ideas of Marxism and never joined any political organization or party, although he was a diligent defender of democracy and unlimited freedom of speech and belief. He was, however an active member of the Writers Association of Iran (Kānun-e nevisandagān-e Irān).

He learned French in his early twenties and began to translate its literary texts. Despite the trouble of poor health and poverty, he devoted most of his time and energy to his works, producing more than twenty books in a few years.

One month before his unexpected death, the ceiling of his rental room collapsed and his desk and books were buried under debris. He referred to the



pressure and distressful financial condition that he was experiencing in a note at the introduction of his translation of *History and Class Information*: “I continued the translation during my worst financial and psychological situation. Perhaps it was the combined force of these pressure that stimulated me to do this work. In fact what kind of consolation could be better to me than the translation of one of the most important books of the world in recognition of the contemporary world and its class oppression and injustice?”

His choice of texts for translations clearly reflect his belief in human rights and freedom. He also participated in a round-table panel organized by the weekly *Ādina* (now banned), and discussed the issue of human rights in Iran. He had a key role in reorganizing the Writers Association in August 1998, and a few months later, on 8 December 1998, he was kidnapped on Iranšahr Avenue in Tehran and later his suffocated body was found in the area of Bādāmak village, Šahriār district, a suburb of Tehran (Bidār, 1999). He was another victim of the serial murders, most probably political, that occurred in the 1990s.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Selected Translations.

M. Bakhtin, *Du dialogue, de desire, du la liberté*, as *Sowdā-ye mokālama, kanda va āzādi*, Tehran, n.d.

H. de Balzac, *La vieille fille*, ed. and annot. Robert Kopp, Paris, 1978, as *Pir doktar*, Tehran, 1988; 2nd ed., 1990; 3rd. ed., 1991.

Idem, *Gobseck*, ed. and annot. Robert Kopp, Paris, 1978, as *Gobesk-e rebāk'vār*, Tehran, 1989.

Idem, *Illusions perdues*, with introduction and notes by A. Antoine, Paris, 1956, as *Ārezuhā-ye bar bād rafta*, Tehran, 2004.

Dj. Behnam, *Le devenir de la famille: Dynamique familiale dans les différentes*



aires culturelles, Paris, 1992, as *Tahavvolāt-e kānevāda dar farhangha-ye moḵtalef*, Tehran, 2004.

L.-J. Calvet, *Les Politiques linguistique*, Paris, 1996, as *Zabān-šenāsi-e ejtemā'i*, Tehran, 2000.

A. Garzón, *La politique nationale du livre*, Paris, 1997, as *Siāsat-e melli-e ketāb*, Tehran, n.d.

L. Goldmann, *Pour une sociologie du roman*, Paris, 1964, as *Jāme'a-šenāsi-e adabiyāt*, *Defā'i az jāme'a-šenāsi-e romān*, Tehran, 1992; 2nd ed., 2002.

G. Lukács, *Histoire et conscience de classe; essais de dialectique marxiste*, Paris, 1976, as *Tārīḵ va āgāhi-ye ṭabaqāti*, Tehran, 1998.

Idem, *La théorie du Roman*, Paris, 1968, as *Jāme'a-šensī-e romān*, Tehran, 1995; 2nd ed., 1996; 3rd ed., 2002.

References.

Bidār, Hanover, December 1999 (special issue for the first anniversary of Puyanda's death).

J. Doostkhah, Personal memories of Moḥammad-Ja'far Puyanda.

M.-J. Puyanda, *Tā dām-e āḡer*, *Gozida-ye goftoguhā va maqālahā*, ed. S. Šāḡebi (Puyanda), Tehran, 1999.

Idem, personal website, formerly available at www.pouyandeh.net.

S. Šāḡebi (Puyanda), "You Will Answer, One Day," *The Iranian*, 12 December 2002, available [here](#) (accessed December 15, 2008).

Writers Association of Iran, Discourses and manifests.

(Jalil Doostkhah)

December 15, 2008