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### The challenges of transcribing historical experience: a comparative study of the novels *The Paper Tiger* by Olivier Rolin and *Alley of Lost Clouds* by Kourosh Asâdi

Abbas Farhadnejad <sup>1</sup> 0000-0003-0280-6342 Anis Baghi<sup>2</sup> 0009-0004-8085-4088

1. Department of French Language and Literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.  
E-mail: [farhadnejad@ut.ac.ir](mailto:farhadnejad@ut.ac.ir)

2. Department of French Language and Literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.  
E-mail: [anisbaghi@yahoo.com](mailto:anisbaghi@yahoo.com)

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#### ABSTRACT

The May 68 movement in France and the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 were both shaped in various ways by the global revolutionary, liberatory, and anti-imperialist ideals of the latter half of the 20th century. While Michel Foucault and Reza Baraheni have briefly explored the similarities and differences between these two significant political and social events, a literary comparison of the novels written about them has yet to be undertaken. This research investigates how the history of these two revolutionary movements is rewritten in *\*The Paper Tiger\** by Olivier Rolin, a former left-wing proletarian activist, and *The Alley of Lost Clouds\** by Kourosh Asadi, an Iranian writer who experienced the revolution firsthand. French scholar and comparatist Emmanuel Bouju examines the relationship between history and literary narrative to shed light on the issue of historical rewriting. According to Bouju's theories, the archaeological exploration of memory and the reproduction of witnesses' voices are two models of historical rewriting in literature. Although the narrative strategies employed by the two authors differ, the resulting texts are both ambiguous, complex, and heterogeneous, diverging from linearity and conformity with official historical discourse. This complexity mirrors the intricate relationship between historical experience and literary narration. Furthermore, it necessitates a more active engagement from the reader, who must derive meaning from the work based on their own historical knowledge and the interpretive keys provided by the author. The reader's role and responsibility in decoding and understanding the text represent the final stage of the rewriting process, which will be explored in this study.

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