The application of the theory of Cultural Hegemony In The novel of Tarighe Besmelshodan

Mahbobeh Mobasheri *[1], Elnaz Khojaste Zonoozi[2]

Abstract

Tarighe Besmelshodan, one of the Mahmood Dowlatabadi's modern novels, which was published in the 90s and became a bestseller, is the story of conflict between Iranian and Iraqi forces in the war at a place called Zero Mount, and deals with the ethnic conflict between Persians and Arabs. The author creates a hegemonic narrative by relating a historical figure to each other relates human values to nationalist concepts. It reviews the history of Iran from the time of the rise of Islam to the middle of the third century. Using the analytical-descriptive method, this research concludes that the use of nationalism discourse, referring to an important moment in political history, distorting history with the aim of stimulating the nationalist spirit, using the symbol of the pen, the sword, the lion and dove to create a myth of nationalist figures has become a hegemonic tool and the audience has attracted. The hegemonic analysis of novel, according to the theories of Stuart Hall, reveals the metaphorical codes of the text.

[1] Corresponding author, Associate professor, department of Persian language and literature, Faculty of Literature, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran. mobasheri@alzahra.ac.ir   ORCID: 0000-0002-7071-037X

2. *Postdoctoral researcher*, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature*, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.* e.khojaste@alzahra.ac.ir   ORCID: 0000-0002-8914-729X

1. **Introduction**

The theory of "Cultural Studies" believes that culture is a set of meanings that people produce through discursive behaviors. According to this theory, the rulers in all societies try to dominate by producing cultural products, which ideologically increases their power. In order to make these concepts completely clear, cultural studies thinkers use the term "Hegemony", which was first used by Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci. The meaning of the term hegemony is that one class dominates the other classes of society economically, socially, politically and ideologically. "This term is used to describe the relations of domination that do not appear as relations of domination, do not guarantee coercion, and are accompanied by the consent of the groups under domination." (Abercrogi, 1988:167) The Cultural hegemony is used to describe the cultural dominance of one social group over another, so that the dominant group obtains a degree of satisfaction from the subordinate group. The powerful class tries to dominate all its ideas in the society and destroy the intellectual independence and identity of the minorities with their own consent. "In Cultural Hegemony, the modern culture that has been produced is a combination of imposed, spontaneous and dominant of this culture," (Spector, 2003:176) criticism of this ideology in the text clarifies its concepts.

One of the prominent characters of this theory is Stuart Hall, whose most important expertise is in the field of ideological and hegemonic studies of literature, and he is one of the most important exponents of the Reception theory. He believes that readers of a text do not read it passively, but read it with active components. Thus, it is the audience that "decodes" the meaning of literary texts, especially hegemonic texts. The novel *the way of becoming a martyr* was published for the first time in 2019 and became one of the best-selling fiction works of that decade. This modern novel has a non-linear structure and narrates the story of a day of conflict between the Iranian and Iraqi armies over the possession of a water tanker. The Iraqi commander kills the Iranian prisoner, but the Iranian commander treat the Iraqi prisoner with justice. This conflict gradually reminiscent of the historical conflict between Iranian and Arabs. In addition, this novel creates deep hegemonic meanings.

2. **Literature Review**

"Encoding" and "Decoding" are two interrelated concepts that were proposed by Stuart Hall and especially show the expansion of the concept of hegemony in the Cultural Studies. Encoding means using symbols that contain the meaning intended by the producer. Hall

believes that there is no guarantee that the text's audience will receive the same hegemonic meanings or message that the producers intended. He considers three hypothetical positions for decoding the text and calls the first position the domination hegemonic position, the second position the modified position, and the third position the oppositeness coders. (Storey, 2009:35) So, the codes of this novel can be classified in following way:

Based on the first position, the narration of the novel is based on the modern method, the characterization and plot of the novel is based on the Nouveau Roman principles and "violates the common methods of storytelling such as plot, narrative and tension." (Robbe-Grillet, 2013:59) The plot of this novel has no denouement and complication. In addition, the point of view changes and the narration structure is messed up. It is very difficult to understand the content of this novel and based on the first position, it is felt that it has no story interest.

The second level of text analysis, based on Hall's theories, is called modified position, which is the majority approach in reading the text, "it is a mixture of opposing and coordinated elements in the text, which always confirms and legitimates the dominant hegemony in the text." (Storey, 2009:37) In this novel, the Iraqi commander tries to prepare a false report about the takeover of the water tanker and send it to his superiors. He incites the national feelings of his secretary "Abol'Ala" and the sense of long-standing Iranian-Arab enmity in him and orders him to distort all the events and even the history of Iranian-Arab conflicts in his report so that the Arabs appear superior. According to the second position of the text analysis, the author creates a hegemonic atmosphere in the story to show the enmity between these two peoples deeper and more extreme and to stimulate the anti-Arab in the audience. In this position, the selfish attitude of the author is revealed and the audience understands that he deliberately ignores other hegemonic discourses of Iran's political history in his work and does not mention the importance of Islamic discourse in the history of the Iran-Iraq war, but only bolds the discourse of nationalism.

In the third position of reading the text, the critic can discover all the hidden codes of the text and "realizes what meaning the author (text producer) wanted to convey to his audience, but deliberately does not accept the meaning intended by the author and presents a different meaning from the text. He shows that had a different inference from text." (Payande, 2017:298) At this stage, should carefully pay attention to the codes that the author has given in the text. In this novel, by analyzing symbols such as water, dove, lioness, sword, and pen, which

have been repeated many times and turned into an "Image" due to this repetition, we can have a metaphorical analysis of the text.

3. Methodology
This research wants to say how cultural hegemony subtly normalizes the dominant values and discourses in the society. Then, using library sources and descriptive-analytical method, answers these questions: How the concept of hegemony is explained in this novel? How the political and social history of Iran after Islam until the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.H is presented as hegemony in this novel? Why it is one of the best-selling novels?

4. Results
The way of becoming a martyr, in the Iranian audience, creates a sense of militancy with the Arabs. The author has used codes such as water, dove, lioness, sword and pen and created a metaphorical plot in his novel. By decoding these images, it can be understood that the pen and the sword are the codes of the military power of the Arabs so that they can dominate the Iranians. The dove is the codes of national heroes of Iranian history and hegemonic encrypted in Iranian nationalist ideas. Lioness is the symbol of Iran. In a metaphorical state, these heroes guard against foreigner with their peace and self-sacrifice. Therefore, a set of such codes has made this novel a metaphorical work. In this situation, the audience concludes that this work is a continuation of the historical struggle of Iranians and Arabs. The historical personages of the 2nd and 3nd century AH are the most popular Anti-Arab personages in the political history of Iran. Due to the hegemonic power of nationalism, paying attention to these historical personages and reproducing novels with this content attracts the audience and increases the sales of these novels.

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