

Mechanisms of Legitimation to the Gendered Discourses in Mahmoud Dolatabadi's "Solok" Novel

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Abstract

In order to fix their articulations, the gendered discourses always try to legitimize their own self dimensions and delegitimize the others' elements; legitimation, from the semiotic-discursive point of view, is a process that hegemonizes power through discourse articulation. The authors' aim in this paper is to investigate and identify the way in which the legitimating mechanisms of gendered discourses function in contemporary Persian story literature. Hence, they provide a deconstructive reading of the methodology of Van Leeuwen (2007) based on Laclau and Mouffe (2001) and Derrida (1983) and take advantage of a variety of linguistic tools. Then, in order to analyze the functions of these mechanisms, they go through the "Solok" and purposefully examine some of its parts. Finally, they respond to the research question about how the legitimizing mechanisms of gendered discourses operate and introduce four structures, i.e. simple, compound, complex, and chain, in those mechanisms. Moreover, they show that after gaining and achieving the legitimacy, the gendered discourses step forward to maintain and fix the legitimacy and delegitimize the other explicitly and implicitly- by the way of recontextualization.

Keywords: de/ legitimation, deconstruction, articulation, story literature, "Solok" by Mahmoud Dolatabadi

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1. Introduction

Legitimation is a discursive mechanism that seeks to hegemonize the operation of any discourse. The purpose of this study is to investigate the function of de / legitimation mechanisms of gendered discourses in the contemporary story literature.

The importance of this research can be discussed in three dimensions. First, the researched body is story literature which benefits from the tools that make it more hegemonic than other written texts such as political ones. The second is its methodology which provides a deconstructive reading of Van Leeuwen (2007) theory of legitimation. Finally, it goes beyond the description and tries to explain how discursive legitimation works in the story under study.

The main question is how gendered discourses in the Dolatabadi's *Solok* try to legitimize own self dimensions and delegitimize the others' elements. And finally, the hypothesis is that the gendered discourses in *Solok* try to legitimize their dimensions by changing their articulations, creating discursive nodes, and crystallizing around those nodes, and try to delegitimize the other by rejecting the signs' concepts.

2. Methodology

The methodology of this study benefits from the deconstructive reading of the methodology of Van Leeuwen (2007) based on Laclau & Mouffe (2001) and Derrida (1983) and it takes advantage of a variety of linguistic tools.

Van Leeuwen (2007) identified four legitimation mechanisms - each consists of some subcategories - that operates separately or jointly to de / legitimize discourses:

1. Authorization: Legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law, and/or persons in whom institutional authority of some kind is vested. It has six types: personal authority, expert authority, role model authority, impersonal authority, the authority of tradition, and the authority of conformity.

2. Moral evaluation: Legitimation by reference to value systems. It is

consisted of evaluation, abstraction, and analogies.

3. Rationalization: Legitimation by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action and to the knowledges that society has constructed to endow them with cognitive validity. It could be instrumental or theoretical rationalization, which the former is consisted of goal, means, and effect orientation and the latter of experiential, scientific, definition, explanation, and prediction.

4. Mythopoeisis: Legitimation conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish nonlegitimate actions. By definition, this category is consisted of moral tales, cautionary tales, single determination, and overdetermination which in its turn it is of two types: inversion and symbolization.

The above is the start point of our methodology in this study. While using it as the core of the methodology, we tried to deconstruct its categorizations by the use of Derrida's approach on deconstruction and threshold as well as Laclau & Mouffe's explanation on the concept of discourse.

Derrida (1983) discusses about "deconstruction" in "Letter to a Japanese Friend". He believes "Deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness, or organisation of a subject, or even of modernity. It deconstructs it-self. It can be deconstructed." Then, he emphasizes on the importance of "context". While describing Derrida in detail, Nojournian writes: "Derrida believes that the boundaries between discourses are invalid and says that discourses leak into each other" (2016: 56). Thus, the legitimation cannot remain tough and untouchable, because the discourse fixation is limited and temporary, and it collapses at the discourse boundaries - the threshold - and is placed in a paradoxical status.

Moreover, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) define the discourse as to the following:

we will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will

call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments. By contrast, we will call element any difference that is not discursively articulated.

Following Van Leeuwen (2007) we asked the narrator “Why should I accept your narration?” and / or “Why should I accept the gendered discourses as you represented them?”. And finally, having new tools of analysis with regard to the concept of discourse, its articulation, and its unstable boundaries, i.e. the threshold, as well as the deconstructive reading of Van Leeuwen (2007), we analyzed of Dolatabadi’s “Solok”.

3. Conclusion

The innovation of this research has two prominent aspects. First, the authors dealt with the story literature which uses a high degree of hegemony and the narrator benefits from a variety of linguistically narrative and aesthetic mechanisms to legitimize his omniscience and narration. Second, the authors methodologically adopted a deconstructive reading of Van Leeuwen (2007) by use of Laclau & Mouffe (2001) and Derrida (1983).

In the analysis, it has been noticed that despite the narrator’s efforts to gain, maintain, and fix the legitimacy for the intended discourses in the story, he had no way but to be caught in paradox. Hence, the research hypothesis of changing the articulation of gendered discourse in *SOLOK* in order to legitimize their own nodes and simultaneously de-legitimize the other’s dimension is confirmed.

Also, the linguistic structure of de/legitimation mechanisms can be generally presented in four categories: 1) simple: a proposition de/legitimize another proposition, 2) compound: at least two propositions de/legitimize the other proposition, 3) complex (nested): a proposition that is de/legitimizing the other proposition, has a de/legitimation structure in itself. 4) chainlike: sequences of propositions that move one after the other in the direction of legitimizing, maintaining and fixing it.