

Representation of Hegemonic Masculinity in Lillias Hamilton's *A Vizier's Daughter; A Tale of the Hazara War*



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Abstract: *This paper aims hegemonic masculinity in novel written by Lillias Hamilton, "A Vizier's Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara War," conventional in the male-dominant Pashtun state of Afghanistan during the 1890s. The study utilizes R.W. Connell's collaborative critiques and applies hegemonic masculinity in the specific context of Afghanistan. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research employs close reading to analyze the portrayal of Pashtun hegemony in the novel. The Pashtuns in the narrative depict the Hazara as inferior, oppressed, and migrant, contrasting with the Hazara's self-perception of freedom. The character of Gul Begum exemplifies the consequences of Pashtun hegemony, suffering from oppression by characters like Ferad Shah. The findings highlight the Pashtuns' view of Hazara as sub-citizens, considering them inferior, enslaved, migrant, and laborers. The research underscores the evident hegemonic approach of the Pashtuns towards the Hazara, portraying them as outsiders and subordinates, oppressed and suppressed within the Afghan societal framework.*

Keywords: Hegemonic, Masculinity, Afghanistan, Pashtun, femininity

Introduction

Hegemonic masculinity employs several stereotypes of femininity to perceive women as less capable, and the notion that women are innately weak and require security along with establishing expectations for males based on hyper-military ideas of masculinity. Given that the gender social order is based on antagonistic relations, if male dominance participates in wars, femininity will be perceived as weak, passive and calm. The idea that femininity is essentially calm and peaceful is based on the concept that cornerstone of femininity is motherhood, life givers and antithesis of violence and destruction. (Skjelsbæk, 2001).

Gender binaries created by society, such as masculinizing militancy and feminizing peace, successfully disparage femininity and otherize women and girls as less important; less respected who always requires protection. (Romaniuk and Wasylciw 2010).

The idea that women depend on men for social security and protection promotes hegemonic maleness's claim to "safety and control" by solidifying the link between feminineness and "vulnerability and dependency." (Åse, 2018).

Bannister, quoting Tickner (1992), explained that mannish and womanly "fixed binary oppositions" go yonder particular personality features to additional basic principles., as like

“private versus public,” “autonomy versus relatedness,” “objective versus subjective,” and so forth. Furthermore, Tickner (1992) claims that “fixed” besides “permanent” natures exist (Bannister 2023). Many beliefs about masculinity and femininity exist in all countries, and they are damaging to both womanhood and manhood. According to research, many civilizations interpret masculinity in terms of antagonism and femininity. The duties, attitudes, and characteristics that are deemed proper for males are sometimes characterized as the opposite of those linked with femininity and considered appropriate for women. Furthermore, the duties and actions associated with masculinity are usually regarded as superior to those associated with femininity; along with the distinction among masculinity and femininity there is also a hierarchal ranking in many social sectors. The notion of hegemonic masculinity was initially developed by R.W. Connell. “to divert attention to the overt practices that had promoted favourable conditions for men over women and the emergence of a dominant kind of social masculinity” (Connell and Messerschmitt, 2005). Connell had commented that the project presented evidence pertaining to Multiple hierarchies—in terms of gender and class., gender construction, too masculinities (Connell et al., 1982).

Hegemonic masculinity is described as “a set of values established by men in power that performs to include and exclude and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over women and other men), and the interplay between men’s identity, men’s ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy” (Jewkes and Morrell 20212).

The connection between gender norms, social collectivities, and individuals is complicated, with one exerting distinct forces and consequences on the other at various periods. Hegemonic masculinity mostly has been used as a social structural paradigm to describe the validation of masculinities through social sectors and organizations (Morrell, Jewkes, &

Lindegger 2012).

The notion of hegemonic masculinity is occasionally used as section of a theory of change, but it is commonly utilized to define a major aspect of the gender ranking that contributes to the presence and durability of gender inequality. While it is never set, expressly accepts change over time, and in essence it proclaim that masculinities are inherently fluid and vigorous, it is not conceptualize to permit for the identification of major periods when hegemonic masculinity is more gender equitable than not.

The Novel: A Vizier’s Daughter, A Tale of the Hazara War

A British medical practitioner, Lillias Hamilton wrote this novel in English and published it in 1900 during the Victorian era (1837–1901). The story takes place in Afghanistan and focuses on the people of Hazara and their struggle. It paints a gloomy picture of Hazaras through Gul Begum. The author portrays Sultan Muhammad Khan (the father of renowned poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz) as a self-satisfied royal favorite who later in the novel becomes an overburdened official in Amir Abdur Rehman's palace. The novel depicts many of the theoretical assumptions and characteristics of late Victorian writing. During the earlier phase of Victorian period, the "novel" became the most prominent genre of English literature, with central themes of virtue and immorality. Fatalism is a pessimistic perspective on humanity's incapacity to adapt to changing societal situations, as shown by Lillias Hamilton in *A Vizier's Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara War*. The protagonist of the novel, Gul Begum, has a bit influence over the awful fate that makes her from being a noble daughter of a vizier to a girl enslaved in Kabul. It also has a genuine quality in that it illustrates humanity's incapacity to overcome enormous obstacles. Another characteristic of the book is Afghanistan’s orientalist portrayal, which is commonly found in Western literature on the Orient. The novel's central theme is the obstacles and difficulties faced by people in Afghanistan via Abdur Rahman, the "Iron Ameer."

Literature Review

Sultan Muhammad Khan is presented as a self-satisfied court favorite in "A Vizier's Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara War." He finally becomes an overloaded bureaucrat. At the time, Sultan Muhammad Khan served as Afghanistan's envoy in England. Lillias has created characters from actual life. She brilliantly presented the Chief Secretary, Sultan Muhammad Khan, as a supporter of Afghanistan. He is shown as a devoted servant to Amir. The tale vividly depicts Sultan Muhammad Khan's sacrifices for Afghanistan's growth. His contributions to keeping the country safe from breaking and being attacked are also acknowledged. As a person, Sultan Muhammad Khan emerges as a gifted and diligent personality who is passionate about his profession and deeply committed to the welfare of Afghanistan. He is a committed Muslim, with his own quirks and superstitions. (Amin and Khan 2017).

Complicity to Hegemonic Masculinity, which worked on D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, explains that men from the beginning have been associated with dominance, power, and confidence, and that meeting with the ideally accepted masculine traits has always been a part of a culture's social identity. The research focuses on a critical discussion of masculinity studies in D.H. Lawrence's classic novels. Drawing on narrative data from his work *Sons and Lovers* (1913), the research investigates how the male protagonist, Walter Morel, reinforces hegemonic masculinity in his gendered relationship. In particular, the research focuses on how the masculine character conforms to the hegemonic authoritarian idea of 'tough' masculinity. The impact of social practices and the sociohistorical setting in which Lawrence composed these novels are also investigated. The research used Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to explain Lawrence's portrayal of dominating masculinity through his character. The findings show that Lawrence connects Walter Morel (protagonist) with the dominance by condoning aggression and violence. (Subrayan and Yahya 2016).

The study *Hegemonic Masculinity* in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* seeks to investigate the

hegemonic masculinity represented by Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) in *The Waves* (1931). To have a better understanding of the subject, it is necessary to define hegemonic masculinity using Raewyn Connell's perspective. Hegemonic masculinity is a subject that cannot be described independently of the idea of masculinity because the two are inextricably linked and cannot be explored separately. On the other side, the concept of masculine supremacy is directly linked to the subjection of femininity and the enslavement of other men.

Hegemonic masculinity as a gendered activity has become an accepted recognition problem for the practice's legitimacy, resulting from male dominance and female subordination. Mukhtar Mai's work "In the Name of Honour" depicts several types of hegemonic masculinity. The research study examined how the novel portrays hegemonic masculinity. The novel was studied using the hegemonic masculinity theory, and the study report found men's actions as dominant against the suppressed character (female), demonstrating hegemonic masculinity. The novel's five male protagonists illustrate hegemonic masculinity. The five characters include Abdul Khaliq, Faiz Muhammad, Ghulam Farid, and Allah Dita, these individuals conducted acts of terrorization, rape, and violence against marginalized women and men, while the police urged Mukhtar that the case against Mastoi as a suspect should be abandoned. The positivist viewpoint and the normative approach are the variables that drive hegemonic masculinity. Rezaian and Altaf (2022).

Theoretical Framework

Raewyn Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) serves as an analytical tool for recognizing attitudes and identifying actions among men that preserve gender inequality, which includes both men's dominance over women and certain men, usually less masculine and minority groups of men. The concept has been vastly used, contested and modified over the years. (Connell and Messerschmitt 2005), with the central assertion that hegemonic masculinity is 'a culturally and socially idealized epitome' and 'is

both a personal and a social goal'. (Donaldson 1993).

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), expressed their notion started in Australia and evolved mad about a complicated conversation concerning men's roles. Furthermore, hegemonic implies that there is a cultural impact that causes males to seek leadership positions in society. Furthermore, as Connell (2005) stated, hegemonic masculinity stems from a male-controlled traditional framework that views inter-gender dominance of the feminine side as subjugation. As a result, Connell (2005) backs up his point of view with masculinity-related words, such as power interactions between genders. Moreover, Connell argues in his book *Gender and Power* that hegemonic masculinity is built on encounters with female subordinates. As a result, men other than women can influence hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, the difference between these men is their power, since hegemonic masculinity governs men with less power than themselves. According to Connell (2005), a genuine example of this dominance is the presence of homosexuals who are governed over by heterosexuals, exhibiting hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, marriage exemplifies hegemonic masculinity since it exhibits dominance by choosing the life partner one wishes.

According to Connell (2000), hegemonic masculinity makes the best use of men's roles while adhering to the hegemonic traditional expert witness pattern. Masculinity is dominant, demands corroboration in the form of subjugation to a lesser ally in order to demonstrate its dominance through cultural means. Moreover, Connell (2005) asserts that masculinity occurs in the interplay of genders, which intersect in life's realities such as experience and socio-culture. Even Connell's research reveals that hegemonic masculinity has characteristics with group power and cultural values, whether individual or communal. Not only that, but the masculine character has been present since birth. Then it appeared spontaneously.

Discussion and analysis

Masculinities mostly adhere to the conceptual framework of gender and power. It presumably has a greater historical character, is less concerned with categorizing, and is more concerned with demonstrating how gender relations pattern's function and evolve in practice. The notion of masculinity is established by society and is influenced by historical context and culture. In 2000, he characterized it as a culturally elevated kind of masculinity that reinforces men's dominant status. According to him, the construction of masculinity is frequently established for men based on their nature of work and organizational rules. (Connell 1987).

A Vizier's Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara War explores the hegemonic masculinity and coercion/violence by the hegemonic Pashtuns over the less powerful Hazaras, like Gul Begum is a girl from Hazara ethnicity, who suffered much in Kabul. She is a pretty, tall, and bright girl who works as a woman slave in Kabul despite being the daughter of a vizier (chief) of Hazarajat and the niece of Hazara's leader. She was sold to Pashtuns one by one, and they all treated her cruelly, with the exception of Sultan Muhammad Khan (Ameer Abdul Rehman's chief secretary), who was a kind gentleman. Moghadam (1997) correctly observes that the problem of females' human rights in Afghanistan has in history been hampered The patriarchal nature of gender and social relations that are muscularly established in old-fashioned societies.

The situation of women in Afghanistan was not less than that of animals. They were considered to be more animals than humans. Their existence was merely to serve and obey men in their lives. Gul Begum, talking about the Kafirs, expresses something that portrays the true image of women in Afghanistan.

"Women are born to be in subjugation to men, to wait upon them and serve them. Must they forever be in subjugation? Why? Because it was God's law, and there was no disputing that." (p.13)

Gul Begum was living in a patriarchal society

where there were hegemonic men representing toxic patriarchy. Not only the Afghans were treating women as minors, but even Gul Begum faced the same in her own society. Women were considered lifeless things; their only duties were to cook, clean, and serve their men. Women had to look after the children as if they were only their own. Gul Begum's mother also had to see the chunks of hegemonic masculinity in her life. Through the hands of her husband, Ghulam Hussain, his wife had to face the dominance of men. She had no voice. As a mother, she was really concerned for her daughter, Gul Begum, when she was leaving for a fake marriage. She wanted to make sure Gul Begum had everything she would need. Deep inside, this mother's heart was in pieces, but due to her husband's response, she had to stay quiet. On asking Gul Begum whether she would take all the clothes, his wife was shut down by Ghulam Hussain, reminding her of her duties.

Mir ridiculed and verbally abused Gul Begum after she refused to get married him. You are not protected by the law; therefore we can treat you as we see appropriate. Following that, Gul Begum became agitated and semi-mad as a result of the Afghans' terrible behavior and attitude. She suffered mental agony. You are not protected by the law; therefore we can treat you as we see appropriate. Your lord snatched you as the rebellious subject's daughter (p. 141). Gul Begum had suffered a lot through hegemonic masculinity in Afghanistan. Mohamed Jan was one of the hegemonic men who made Gul Begum's life miserable. He made her life real hell on earth. She was not given even the basic needs of survival. She was abandoned for food, water, care, etc. Mohamed Jan's treatment of Gul made her half mad, and she was not in her full senses at times. Gul Begum was a brave girl, but she had seen the dark, toxic face of Mohammad Jan. Therefore, the dread in her eyes was clear when she heard his name. She made it clear to her Agha that she only fears Mohamed Jan, and his name still haunts her.

"Go to your bed, wife, and don't you worry about clothes and stores. I will see that they are provided; you look after your cooking and your children. That's your department; never mind

about the rest. Leave that to me." (p.53)

Women were marginalized by the people of Afghanistan. To have a stable life, women were supposed to get married and remain limited only to the private sphere. Women were not allowed in the public sphere, and they had no freedom of speech or life. For Hazara women to be safe from the brutality of the hegemonic men, it was necessary to get married. It was the only way to be safe from the brutality of the Afghan men. Gul Begum had faced the same offer from Afghans. Therefore, she had to fake her marriage at the insistence of her father. So that she will not have to face the outrageous Afghans.

"It is only as a married woman that you will be safe from outrage." (p.51)

Hence, the Afghans believed in group segregation based on superiors and inferiors. The assertiveness of the loftier was hegemonic and coercive alongside the additional inferior groups. The Afghans not only considered other groups inferior, but they also practiced their true hegemonic behavior. Women suffered a lot at the hands of hegemonic Afghans. Before Afghan men, women were voiceless, having no social status; they were enslaved, only limited to house chores and looking after their children. Women were suppressed and murdered brutally. They were helpless because no woman had the right to speak against men. Afghans said that Afghanistan belonged only to Afghans (Pashtuns), who were the legal inhabitants of the country. The remainder of the population, particularly women, is inferior and subservient to the Afghans. All other lower-ranking communities in Afghanistan, particularly the Hazaras, suffered due to their poor status. The Afghans (Pashtuns) mostly targeted the Hazara. Minor offences resulted in torture, kicks, and beatings; serious transgressions resulted in death, slaughter, burning alive, and disability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, "A Vizier's Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara War" vividly depicts the hegemonic masculinity prevailing within the Pashtun community in Afghanistan during the 1890s. The narrative unfolds a tale of systemic

oppression and power dynamics, where Pashtuns, driven by a sense of superiority, subjugate the Hazara population. The ethnic hegemonic masculinity of Pashtuns manifests through the brutal imposition of war, the destruction of livelihoods, and the enslavement of Hazara men, women, and children.

Gul Begum's character becomes a poignant symbol of the suffering endured by Hazara women as she navigates through forced marriages, denial of basic rights, and the harsh reality of being a slave. The Pashtun-Hazara power imbalance is further underscored by the imposition of taxes and the relegation of Hazaras to sub-citizenship within their own homeland.

The author, Lillias Hamilton, intricately weaves a narrative that highlights the consequences of hegemonic masculinity, illustrating how the Pashtun instinct to oppress has far-reaching implications for the Hazara community. The physical, social, and economic subjugation of Hazaras reflects a broader societal paradigm where power dynamics perpetuate inequality and injustice.

In essence, "A Vizier's Daughter" serves as a compelling exploration of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, providing insights into how biological factors intertwine with sociocultural constructs to perpetuate a system of dominance and subordination. The narrative calls for a critical examination of power relations, social stigmas, and the lasting impact of hegemonic masculinity on marginalized communities.

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