

Analysis of Theme of “Tehran -e- Makhof” (Dreadful Tehran) as a Pioneer of Social Novels in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Because of changes in social relations and exaltation of civil insight due to relationship with western countries and promotion of the middle urban class in Iran in Reza Shah period, historical novel was inclined and social novel was manifested. “Tehran –e- Makhof” book is the first Persian social novel published in 1924 by emphasize on women problems and their rights. This novel is important from different aspects of novel writing in Iran. The content of this novel led to writing of social novels about the mentioned problems and it provided context for development and promotion of Persian novel from structural viewpoint by accounting women misery and innocence. In spite of structural incompatibility, “Tehran –e- Makhof” caused to progression of social novel towards description of reality. In this novel Kazemi criticizes different classes of the society.

KEYWORDS: social novel, critique, pioneer, theme, context.

INTRODUCTION

Novel in Farsi is a new phenomenon gained attention of Iranian by shaping constitutional movement. Factors like modernization of Iranian society, expansion of individuality idea, entrance of some European civilization aspects and its circumstances like printing, modern educational discipline, translation, press and expansion of literacy and nationalism discourse provided context for expansion of novel. Modernization of Iranian society was result of structural revolutions and interference of foreign agents. Modern and western powerful countries needed to new customers and markets for their industrial productions, so they helped to establishment of consuming foundations in countries like Iran. Gajarid government could gradually centralize power after failure of Afshari and Zandi governments in establishment of their political power. In this period scholars from all over of Iran were founded the core of Iran scholarship in Tehran as the political and powerful center of Gajarid dynasty; individuals who could interact with foreigners and travel to European countries. Send of students to Europe provided context for acquaintance to west and modernity was accelerated by fundamental and structural revolutions in educational discipline and establishment of “Darolfonon”. The first students were wealthy and they were from governmental class. Most of the translators and scholars were from this class and they brought revolution. By completion of Iran-India and Europe telegraph line the information exchange was accelerated so fast and expanded communication was shaped (Khojasteh, 2009:66-82).

At the late of ninth century scholars like Akhond Zadeh, Agakhan Kermani, Talbof and Melkom Khan identified relation with west civilization as the only solution of the Iran problems that in their opinions was originated from preventive old traditions (Ahmadi, 1994:2). Modernity challenged the society norms and led to abandonment of literature aristocrat façade in its thought aspect and expansion of printing in commercial scale and increase of literate individuals in instrumental aspect that arranged background for expansion of literary genre of novel proportionate to new life style.

In early constitutional movement Mirza Fathali Akhondzadeh, Zynoaabedin Maraghei and Talb of Tabrizi wrote important novels and provided western novel way. According to story writing styles they considered social criticism instead of literary work. In any case these works can be considered as the introduction of Persian novel. Farsi novel was established based on social foundation and critical perspective (ebadiyan, 1992:21).

As a result of social and political revolution and enhance of people knowledge a group was dominated in Iran constitutional era that they wanted liberty, equity, centralization and nationalization (Behnam, 1996:400). So they could comprehend their past and capabilities in order to form unified nation against foreign counties and also seek “historical similarities” to progress and superiority and announce reasons for their previous magnificence. Being affected by national movement constitutional literature sought to react to these affairs and respond to national need. Thus new style called “historical novel” was progressed that it was representative of after revolution literature and literary motivator of national unity and patriotism (Golam, 2000, 126). Historical novel revitalizes story narratives in imaginative style. In this story genre historical personages and story personage are attended (Cudden, 1978:411).

Mohammad Bager Khosravi wrote the first historical novel in 1909. Historical novel writers intended to announce Iran splendid culture and civilization against to current inclined situations. In this historical regression, Iran honorable past was shown magnificent and its security, wealth and affluence were exaggerated. Historical novel idealist writer sought unavailable himself and his country needs in the past (Asgari, 2008:41). Undoubtedly the aim of these writers was to find a solution for reduction of feeling inferior and alienation of the readers so seeking savior in different forms is seen in all historical novels (Mir Abedini, 1998, v.1.48).

Historical novels were completely social and they effects on revolution of novel writing movement and shaping story literature from literary view point. Gradually novel tactical aspects were observed in historical novels and reached its culmination in social novel. The main disadvantage of the historical novel was that the writer accounted the past and ignored contemporary problems and issues. In such conditions because of change in life style and governmental reformation most of the writers wrote social novels (Rahimiyan, 2001:95). In contrary to historical novel the writer of the social novel considered his contemporary period and did not seek great personages for his novel. Thus it was superior than historical novel (Asgari, 2008:44-45). By end of RezaKhan period and abolishment of dictatorship and weakness of governmental encouraging element the historical novel lost its statue among readers and social novel and criticism of critical and dispersed situations were common (Sepanlo, 1995:134).

Social novel

Social novel depicts images of life with its advantages and disadvantages and the writer tries to transfer his message to the reader by explanation of events. In Social novels, the writer tries to offer solutions for society problems. He uses novel as a context for addressing political, social and philosophical points and writes novel not only for its aesthetic and artistic but also for its social aspect. In social novel the writer pays attention to society nature, performance and its effect on his novel personages. This novel emphasizes on domination of society and effect of economic conditions on personality and events and often tends to justify and guide individuals probably in order to conduct fundamental revolutions in the society (Shokri, 2007:120-121). The writer of social novel writes about his period and the talks about the old wounds and never seeks historical abstract personages as the savoir in his novel. Attraction of the reader in novel is considered as mean for achieve special goals. The writer narrates his ideology and his account of world affairs in a story. He writes as a person by political, social and cultural attitudes and writes based on his obligation and ideology. In these novels most of the words and concepts are political and social and reflect the writer critical account. But created excitement and tension are function of the message hidden in the story that expressed as directly, indirectly and explicitly according to the contemporary social and political contents, if the censorship and dictatorship is dominated on the society, art and literature the message is applied as implicitness and if the political atmosphere is calm the message is expressed directly and explicitly. The writer of the social novel does not try to attract the reader in the first place; the identity of the work is important and valuable for him. In these novels the messages are usually serial and the story element is in the margin. The reader does not pay attention only to story attractive element but the message narrated by signs is important.

“Tehran -e- Makhof” as a pioneer of social novels

“Tehran -e- Makhof” is the first novel that Moshfeg Kazemi published it as footnote in newspaper of “Iran star” in 1922 and as a book in 1925. Publication of this work in this magazine was gained attention of the readers as the first Iranian novel by western style. Compared to native stories and historical novels “Tehran -e- Makhof” approaches to western style significantly and it is far from weak plot, fatalism old prose aristocrat and literarily words. “Tehran -e- Makhof” is important from different aspects of novel writing and by accounting women miseries and innocence, political oppressions and prejudice and ignorance caused to writing significant amount of social novels about the mentioned issues and provided context and background for development of Persian novel. In spite of its structural incompatibility led to progression of the social novel toward reality and description of real events. Kazemi describes central quarters, south part cafeterias, illegal centers, Ovin village, urban life style, hotels and etc. (Christophe Balaei, 1998:395). This novel was so important that it was translated to Russian in 1943 and Azari. “Tehran -e- Makhof” was motivator of the novels in this period. After Moshfeg Kazemi some writers and the journalists wrote in this genre; so nobody could not achieve any privilege and even Moshfeg Kazemi selected the subject matter” (Rahimiyan, 2001:97).

In coherence and insufficient resources of this novel in literary research scope necessities analysis of “Tehran -e- Makhof”, there are dispersed subjects among books, magazines and newspapers that analyzed the novel temporary and they ignored its concepts.

Summary of “Tehran -e- Makhof”

Farokh is the main personage of the story if from poor family that fell in love with her cousin Mahin from aristocrat family. The parents of Mahin, F. Saltaneh and Malek Taj Khanom become wealthy because of illegal affairs and never allow to marriage of Farokh and Mahin. In this relations, princess K demands Mahin for his sensual son Syavoush Mirza and F Saltaneh agrees with this marriages since his position has jeopardized in the ministry and tries to become lawyer.

Syavoush Mirza sometimes attends in prostitute house by help of his servant and in this period he injured by Gazag officer and he is rescued by Farokh. Effat the miserable and educated woman as the other personage of the story that his husband had given her to the officers demand Farrojh to releases her and Farrokh rescues her. Syavoush Mirza sees him by chance and emphasizes on his promise related to his rescue and as a result Farrojh in a letter demands him to ignore marriage with Mahin but Syavoush rejects this demand and Mahin's parents struggle to get ride of Farrokh and they go on pilgrimage to Gombut. Farrokh snatches her returns her to Tehran and spend night with her. The opponents of Farrokh arrest exile him and Mahin and Syavoush do not marry because of pregnancy of Mahin and she bears a son and dies. In the second volume Farrojh escapes by help of the villagers and goes to Baku. At this time Russian great revolution begins. Farrokh enters Iran by revolutionists and joins to Gazaga in Rasht after failure of the and enters to Capital in 1299 by coup d etat group. After coup d etat some traitors of the government are arrested. At first Farrokh arrests father of Mahin and then husband of Effat, but one hundred days later the cabinet of Seyed Ziya is lost and the prisoners are released by command of the king. Farrokh is confined and decides to marry with Effat and raise his son.

Theme of Tehran -e- Mkhof

“Theme is the main and dominated thought in every work and it is line drawn during story and binds story situation to each other. In other words, theme is defined as dominated thought that the writer imposes it in the story for this reason it is said that the theme of every work is the writer thought and comprehension direction” (Mir Sadegi, 2001:74 and Perrine, 2002,69). “Tehran -e- Makhof” is social novel and emphasizes on a central thought as social and political corruption. This work can be considered as social romanticism novel by measuring with world literary and artistic schools principles that provided the background for realistic novels in next decades. “Tehran-E-Mkhof” apparently is story of falling love of Farrokh with Mahin, but it addresses to reasons for violation of constitution revolution and its failure and prostitute of the women, corruption of the offices and etc (Bigani, 2007). Also other social corruptions like actors, selfishness of the militaries, poverty and deprivation can be addressed (Dastgeyb, 2008;49). In this period theme of the most social novels is issues like corruption, unrestraint of women and men in different classes and sometimes poverty, oppression to inferior classes. Basically the writer explains his society current conditions. Thus critical content that reflected in the new papers now explains in the social novels because of closeness of independent newspapers; but it is not deeply critic (Rahimyan, 2001:59).

In Tehran-e-Makhof Kazemi criticizes different classes and social abnormalities rooted in society disorder. It can be referred to following groups:

Politicians: this group involves political officers, princesses, market politicians, journalists and ignorant people by illegal activities, receiving and giving bribe, attitude toward wealth, debauchery, following resiliency, opposition to knowledge, hypocrisy, ambitious, unaware of politics and management, treachery, intelligence and flattery. F saltaneh, Ali Ashraf Khan, Princess K and Syavoush Mirza are in this group (Razag Pour, 2007:42-43).

Women: change in social and political foundations as a result of constitutional revolution due to relationship with developed countries caused to change in attitude toward some issues. Women liberty and their right in the male dominated society was one of these issues. In this society (reza shah period) women were considered as second class and the men were superior but acknowledging women positions and familiarity with their freedom caused to oppressions. One of the reasons for domination of the social novels should be considered being effectiveness of French romantic writers. These reformist writers affected by works of Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and other romantic novelists tried to return prostitute women human value in aristocrat frame. In a society that love is taboo the love stories are manifested as relationship between men and prostitutes; the relationship that ended to pleasing moral result (Mir abedidni, 1998.v.1:55).

It should be pointed that the first Persian novels were written affected by romanticism school and the first translations of European novels were result of romanticism movement, that this trend led to facilitation of attendance of women in the social novel and expression of their problems (Asgari, 2008;39).

Woman attends in art and literature as social phenomenon current to constitutional revolution and forms the main personality of the social novel. In classic and traditional society women were powerless creatures and they did not attend in social life. The characteristics of such a woman is beauty, loyalty, obedience and shame that traits that

Frangis and Manigeh possess them. In sonnets woman is manifestation of love and beauty and she is called friend, cupbearer and etc. But she is unkind, unfaithful and corruptor of the religion and world. These women are holistic sample that do not have special traits but each of them is the same manifestation that like other beloveds are subject of the love. Concurrent to constitutional revolutions and especially after the First World War, advocates of renovation and scholars talk about misery and lack of liberty, right and family and social deprivation of women (Maskub, 1994:122).

The subject matter of this period novels is a woman or a girl that she is deceived as a result of incorrect raising or ignorance and innocence and trust to devil nature individuals or poverty and wealth and enters to illegal associations and while narration of life of this woman other individuals traits and pleasure places are explained (Rahimyan:2002:96). Being affected of advocates of renovation and reformists writers by romantic writers like Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas and other writers caused to attendance of women in the novel (Mir Abedini, 1998.v.1 & 2:55).

In social novel the reader encounters to women that are outside of the home and participate in social affairs. In constitutional period novels woman is not ideal that that attracts poet and she is not an imaginary creature that her attendance in poetry and literature is not real connection with society but she attends in social affairs besides men and relatives. By creativity of Moshfegh Kazemi social novel changes to mirror reflecting women realities. In contrary to story, narrative and myth supernatural attitude changes to social knowledge and the fate changes to incidents in new literary genre that human being leaves the secret to God and seeks living pain remedy in the earth and community. Since then the reality is seen from different angles; the life of individual is shaped by combination to social affairs and as result the novel shows person fate. (Maskub, 1993:127).

The writer of Tehran-e-Makhof describes honored young women and girls that trapped in corruption because of different social reasons and he shows considerable skills in this case but his analyses are descriptive and superficial than inferential (R.K Asgari, 2008:46). Most of the primary Iranian novels have surface approach toward social issue. In this novel Kazemi describes social damages like poverty, corruption and political corruptions and considers the cause and does not seek the roots of the damages (Bighani, 2007:115). In social novels the woman is shown as victim of superstitions and backward society that have to marry unwontedly and accept assaults of multipouses traditions and one way divorce (Mir Abedini, 1997.v.1 and 2 :55). Mahin as the main personage have to marry with Syavoush Mirza, Effat does his husband wanting and Agdas marries unwontedly with one old apparently religious marketer that has many wives and loses her innocence. Tehran-e- Makhof is about pain of Iranian women trapped in ignorance, illiteracy, corruption, superstitions and poverty .All women personages of this novel are dominated by social statues and they do not have any will to change their directions. They are victim of lust and passion of men and women like Nahid, Baji Khanom (boss of house of prostitute) and Mohammad Tagi. While these women do not familiar with their rights and do not react because of fear, except Mahin that she is educated and fights with unpleasant traditions: "she was miserable because she was educated than her friends and she was familiar with life secrets so she could not accept her fate and incidents like other sisters" (Kazemi ,1968:14).

Kazemi allocates some chapters of her novel to description of the prostitute house under title of "ill quarter that four prostitutes are in this house. The events are described like a short dramatic scene. The privilege of these chapters is explicit description of threatened scenes that they were rare in literature. The appearance of these houses and their residents are described so that the reader feels them as reality (Baharlu, 1997:64-65).

Pretenders of religiosity: "images offered for religious men is full of corruption, attitude to world, deceive ,instrumental usage of religion, money, rebel and insecurity, illegal affairs and support of dictatorship and fighting with knowledge" (RazagPour, 2007:44). When Agdas expresses her fame to the women points to her husband that marries with her with fraud :he was religious and said prayers all day and night and consult for trade and then used beads and referred to Hafez..

After a few months her husband did not come home for three days I was anxious and I said that he is a religious man and he is not like other men and when one of the neighbors came I told her and she said certainly he is in house of other wives do not worry" (kazemi ,1968:70).

The employers and governmental institutes: following constitutional revolution the social and cultural structure was changed and new classes entered in community .At the beginning governmental offices were place for whom that avoided their social classes for reasons. Bankrupted autocrats and landless and poor feudal entered to offices; they wanted to justify their conducts by specified salary (Modarresi, 1998:28). "Employers entered to Iran contemporary literature by criticizing constitutional system by social novel and by centralization of administrative development in Reza shah period are the main personages of Farsi novel; especially most of the writers were from these employers. In these years the employers were not belonged to defined social class and they were not conservative, impatient and uninterested since they were some urban educators and had free time and published new

paper and formed party and generally they were active from cultural and social aspects (Mir Abedini, 1997v.1 and 2 :53-54).

Kazemi addresses to abnormalities of this new founded class. Farrokh as main personage does not work in the offices. He knows offices as place for some corruptible and tyrant individuals (Kazemi, 1968:313). Prostitute is other characteristics of these officers the writer enters them to story when he describes prostitutes houses that they are in pleasure (ibid:73). Infringe (ibid:89-90) torture and violence (ibid:206) fraud, cruelty (ibid:321) illegal relationship and frightening are characteristics of these individuals that play an important role in expansion of corruption (RazagPour, 2008:45).

In general Kazemi in "Tehran-e- Makhof" does not show positive portrait of governmental stuff and institutions in his opinion these institutes are place of some incompetent individuals that they are in hands of aristocrats and riches and supporter class. Most of the officers offer their wives to bosses for promotions. This phenomenon is repeated in the novel and the writer accuses all the employers. Probably this affair is sign of hate of the writer and it is result of his exaggeration in flattery and inferiority of this class.

In general "Tehran –e- Makhof" is totality of Iran society after constitution until Reza Shah Period that has offered in personalities of the story personages. These novel personages reflect historical and social truth of special time and place. The story and its sequences refer to inclination of Gajar and codetta of 1920.

Conclusion

"Tehran –e-Makhof" is a social novel and emphasizes on central thought means political and social corruption. If this work is compared with world artistic and literary measures, it can be considered as a social novel that provided the context for realistic novels in other decades. This novel apparently narrates the story of falling love of Farrokh with Mahin but the writer points to reasons for violation of constitutional revolution and its failure and constitute of women, corruption in organizations and also the other social damages like corruption of the actors selfishness of commanders, poverty and deprivation are manifested in this novel.

In spite of structural and content incompetency this novel moved Iranian novel toward reality. Some descriptions of Tehran in reza shah period, houses of drug productions, illegal centers, urban life style, transportation and associations are described naturally and really.

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The writer of "Tehran-e-Makhof" reflects social insecurity and general despair after constitutions by description of political, social and organizational corruption. This novel indicates the painful consequences of violated revolution, so at the end of the story the main personage confined at home and seeks future.

If this work as a social document compared with social novels after Islamic revolution, it can show different situation of women. After Islamic revolution women participate in social affairs.

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