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Homes That Teach Silence: Domestic Space as a Site of Female Moral Formation in Lion Women of Tehran

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Abstract: Space is increasingly recognized in contemporary feminist literary criticism as an active agency in constructing subjectivity, rather than a passive backdrop. This article looks at the Lion Women of Tehran and argues that household space serves as an educational location for the formation of female moral identity through silence, endurance, and emotional regulation. Drawing on feminist spatial theory, the study investigates how homes function as moral training contexts rather than just places of confinement. The story focuses on subtle processes of ethical training that often precede and replace overt resistance. This study contributes to feminist and postcolonial literary studies by shifting the focus away from conspicuous political resistance and toward quiet moral training within private places.

Introduction

The domestic realm has long been regarded as a critical site for the development of moral, ethical, and social ideals, particularly in relation to female experiences. In literary studies, the house is more than just a setting for narrative action; it is also a complex site of cultural and ideological production, reflecting broader society norms and individual subjectivities (Ahmad, 2015; Mernissi, 1991). Contemporary Iranian literature, particularly fiction about women's life, emphasizes the complex intersections of private domesticity and public morality, providing subtle insights into how domestic settings create female identity, agency, and moral development.

The home becomes a crucial setting where female characters in Lion Women of Tehran negotiate the conflict between their own wishes and social expectations. The novel emphasizes how stillness, discipline, and ritual within the house contribute to women's moral and psychological development, portraying domestic environments as both constrictive and educational. These depictions are consistent with more general theoretical debates on gender and spatiality, where the house is viewed as a socially constructed location that both permits subtle resistance and imposes acceptable behavior (Bachelard, 1994; Lefebvre, 1991).

The function of household spaces in the moral development of female characters in Lion Women of

Tehran is examined in this study, which looks at how internalized socialization and ethical instruction are facilitated by quiet, spatial layout, and domestic behaviors. This study aims to shed light on the complex ways that domestic environments shape female subjectivity by placing the novel within the frameworks of feminist spatial theory and ethics of care. This provides a literary lens through which the moral and cultural expectations placed on women in Iranian society can be critically analyzed.

This study intends to add to the expanding body of knowledge on Iranian women's literature and the spatial dynamics of gendered moral formation by closely examining the text and emphasizing the house as a location where cultural, ethical, and emotional aspects combine. The research highlights the interconnectedness of space, silence, and moral education in modern Iranian narratives by emphasizing domestic space as an active participant in character development.

Statement of the problem

In *Lion Women of Tehran*, the home serves not only as a private space, but also as a location for women's moral and ethical formation. Domestic environments teach and enforce gendered norms through silence, obedience, domestic labor, and spatial organization, having a significant impact on women's identities and ethical awareness. Despite the importance of these dynamics, little research has been conducted on how domestic spaces function as instruments of moral and psychological formation. This study investigates how the spatial and relational structures of the home shape women's ethical sensibilities, using feminist spatial theory and care ethics to better understand the intersection of space, morality, and gender.

Research Questions

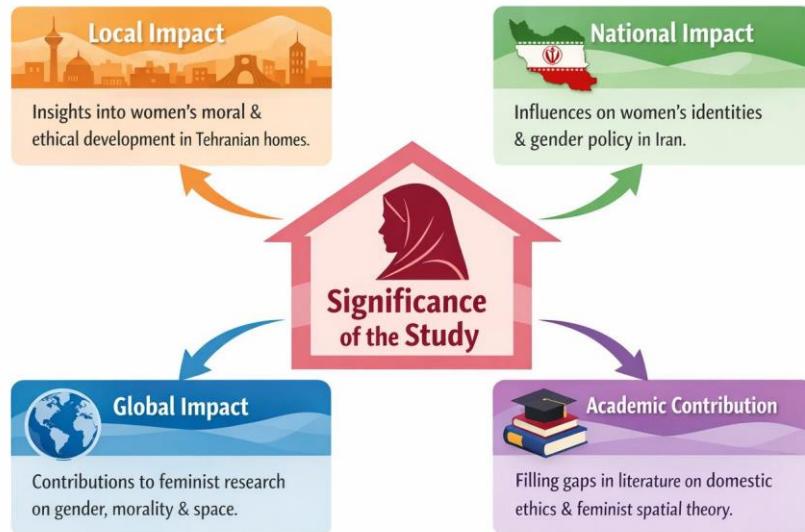
1. How do the spatial and relational structures of the home influence women's moral and ethical development in *Lion Women of Tehran*?
2. How do domestic practices like silence, obedience, and labor reinforce gendered norms and shape women's ethical consciousness?

Research Objectives

1. Examine the spatial and relational structures of the home influence women's moral and ethical development in *Lion Women of Tehran*.
2. Analyze the domestic practices like silence, obedience, and labor reinforce gendered norms and shape women's ethical consciousness.

Significance of the research

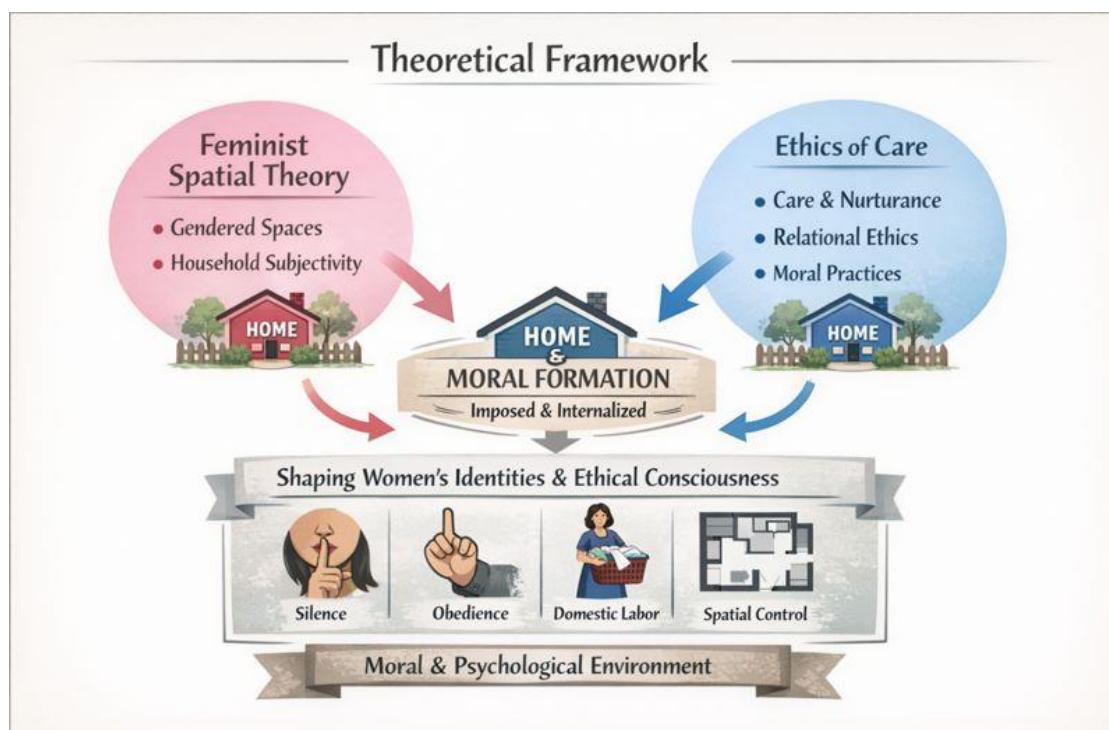
This study is significant in a variety of ways. Locally, it sheds light on the gendered moral and ethical development of women in Iranian homes, providing insights into Iranian women's everyday experiences. At the national level, it advances understanding of how cultural and spatial practices shape women's identities and social roles, with implications for women's empowerment and gender policy. Globally, the study adds to feminist research on the relationship of gender, morality, and space, allowing for cross-cultural comparisons. It fills a gap in the academic literature by analyzing domestic settings as sites of ethical and psychological formation, as well as incorporating feminist spatial theory and care ethics to advance theoretical and empirical understanding of women's moral development.



Theoretical Framework

Theoretical lenses for this work include feminist spatial theory and care ethics. Feminist spatial theory investigates how physical and symbolic spaces maintain gender inequality, exposing how household surroundings influence subjectivity (hooks, 1990; Massey, 2005). The ethics of care framework stresses relational moral obligations, emphasizing how ethical formation occurs in intimate settings through attention, nurture, and reflection (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1993).

The research emphasizes the home as a location where moral formation is both imposed and internalized by merging different theories. Women's identities and ethical consciousness are shaped by the moral and psychological environment that is created through the use of silence, obedience, domestic work, and spatial structuring as teaching techniques.



Literature Review

In literary and cultural studies, the relationship between gender, morality, and space has been extensively studied. While Lefebvre (1991) highlights the social construction of space as a vehicle for the enactment of power and ideology, Bachelard (1994) views household spaces as places of memory, imagination, and ethical formation. According to feminist academics, women internalize social norms and develop moral sensitivities in the home, which is a crucial setting for gendered socialization (McDowell, 1999; Massey, 2005).

Similar explorations of domesticity as a site of education and restraint have been found in Iranian women's literature. Mernissi (1991) and Paidar (1995) emphasize how women negotiate social norms in private places, especially those pertaining to moral behavior, obedience, and silence. The relationship between household space and ethical formation is highlighted by recent research on modern Iranian fiction, which shows that houses serve as settings for both subtle resistance and social control in such stories (Milani, 2011; Najmabadi, 2013).

There is still a dearth of concentrated research on the processes of moral formation in Iranian household settings as they are portrayed in modern novels, despite this expanding corpus of literature. In order to close that gap, this study examines how the ethical development of female characters in Lion Women of Tehran is influenced by silence, ritualized labor, and spatial structure.

Methodology

This study looks at how domestic environments are portrayed in Lion Women of Tehran using qualitative textual analysis. Key passages that describe family settings, rituals, and patterns of quiet were subjected to close reading approaches. The following dimensions are the focus of the analysis:

Spatial arrangement: How physical and symbolic structures of the home enforce or facilitate moral formation.

Silence and discipline: The role of enforced quiet and behavioral norms in shaping ethical sensibilities.

Domestic practices: How labor, routines, and relational care contribute to the moral development of female characters.

Analysis and Discussion

Domestic areas function as meticulously planned venues for moral education in Lion Women of Tehran. A recurrent theme, silence serves as a conduit for characters to absorb social conventions and develop self-control, patience, and moral introspection. For example, the story portrays time spent alone at home as a chance to reflect and strengthen moral awareness.

The spatial arrangement of the home including bedrooms, kitchens, and courtyards structures behavior and emotional regulation, aligning with feminist spatial theory, which views space as socially produced and relational. Household routines, domestic labor, and participation in family rituals further reinforce moral values, fostering responsibility, empathy, and internalized discipline. Drawing on the ethics of care, these practices highlight that moral formation is relational and embodied, occurring through attentive, everyday actions.

The study's conclusions support feminist spatial theory by showing that household settings actively influence identity, behavior, and thought. Concurrently, the ethics of care viewpoint highlights how moral development is fostered by relational and attentive behaviors in the home, implying that ethical formation is a socially mediated, lived process rather than an abstract ideal.

Silence as Instruction in Morality and Ethics

A major theme in the book is silence, which serves as a tool for developing moral principles. Female characters live in environments that limit vocal expression, promoting self-reflection and emotional

control. Women face their obligations, worries, and wants during these peaceful times, which reflect Iranian society's expectation of moral refinement in private.

Scholars of feminist spatial theory suggest that silent spaces foster self-discipline and internalized norms (Massey, 1994; Bachelard, 1994). Silence is not merely enforced but is closely associated with moral education, according to Lion Women of Tehran. Characters have the ability to predict social standards and adjust their behavior to avoid being judged by their families and society. In this sense, the home serves as a training ground for moral behavior, as cultural expectations balance individual impulses.

Spatial Arrangement and the Ethics of Care

The narrative also emphasizes how moral teaching is structured by physical geography. To compel regularity, order, and relational attention, rooms, courtyards, and domestic quarters are meticulously marked off. For example, areas used for household tasks like cooking, cleaning, and providing care are designed to foster perseverance, hard work, and interpersonal awareness.

According to the ethics of care theory (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1993), these household tasks are moral exercises in accountability, empathy, and attentiveness rather than just chores. Through embodied practice, women learn to balance their own demands with those of family members, internalizing societal and ethical norms. These teachings are reinforced by the layout of the home, which makes it an active learning environment.

Domestic Routines as Subtle Resistance

It's interesting to note the novel's contradictory tension: whereas the home upholds social rules, it also offers a place for moral self-assertion and subtle opposition. Characters exercise agency in limited spaces through close encounters, introspection, and quiet rituals. For instance, characters can critically assess social expectations during times of introspection in quiet rooms, developing a moral interiority that is both socially conscious and self-directed.

This is consistent with feminist criticisms of domesticity, which contend that the home is not only a site of oppression, but also of negotiation, resilience, and ethical formation (Milani, 1992; McDowell, 2000). Women learn to manage patriarchal constraints without outright revolt, proving that moral maturation can occur through subtle, everyday spatial activities.

This is consistent with studies on Iranian women's literature, which implies that home spaces are venues of ethical apprenticeship, instilling cultural norms, emotional intelligence, and moral ideals through lived experience (Talatof, 1997; Rahimieh, 2010)

Domesticity and Intergenerational Moral Transmission

The book also shows how moral principles are passed down through household customs from one generation to the next. Younger women are guided by older female role models who display patience, self-control, and relationship care in the silent standards of domestic behavior. These teachings emphasize that moral formation is a socially mediated, spatially located process and are ingrained in ritualized tasks, interactions, and even implicit expectations.

Conclusion

In conclusion According to Lion Women of Tehran, the home is a place where women develop their moral character. Silence, spatial arrangement, and household customs serve as tools for teaching morality. The book emphasizes how home may be both a place of moral development and a place of constraint, reflecting larger social standards while allowing for complex ethical growth. This study highlights the relationship between space, gender, and morality and adds to the body of knowledge on Iranian women's literature. It also highlights the need for more research on domesticity as a formative setting in modern fiction.

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