A Study of the Representation of the City in Ali Hatami's Hezardastan: The Tension between Tradition and Modernity

Sara Lashkari[1] Seyed Mohammad Rashtian[2] Faeze Taghipour[3]

1- PhD student of urban planning, Department of Urban Planning, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran
Tourism, Architecture and Urban Research Center, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran (Corresponding author).
2- Assistant Professor, Department of Urban Planning, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.
Tourism, Architecture and Urban Research Center, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.
3- Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Sciences, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.
Tourism, Architecture and Urban Research Center, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.

Abstract

Introduction: Many of the challenges of contemporary life stem from the tensions between tradition and modernity. In his works, particularly Hezar Dastan, Hatami provides a nuanced analysis of the social, historical, political, and cultural dynamics of Iranian society. Through his insightful exploration of Iran's transition to the modern era, he highlights the inherent flaws in this process. This research focuses on Hatami's examination of the modern city and how modernity integrates into Iranian society, as well as the broader implications of modernization within urban contexts. What does modernization mean in Iran, and how has modernity impacted our lives? Hatami's narrative in Hezar Dastan is more than just a recounting of Iranian tradition and culture. His analysis of the city is both spatial and temporal, addressing concepts that span across both space and time. This article investigates the complex relationship between urban environments, urban society, urban culture, and the traditionalist framework in Hezar Dastan. Hatami's narrative goes beyond a mere account of Iran's historical traditions and cultural heritage. The goal of this research is to elucidate how Hatami's portrayal of urban environments reflects deeper dimensions and confrontations, especially by examining the historical traditions embedded in Iranian culture. It also looks at the philosophical foundations of Islamic thought regarding the city, as well as Hatami's distinctive cinematic techniques, which contribute to his unique representation of urban spaces.

Methodology: This article adopts a semiotic approach to explore the traditional and modern concepts of urban planning and the cultural impact of Hatami's films in their representation of the city, society, and urban identity. The research also examines the urban crises that arise at the intersection of traditionalism and modernity, taking into account the historical, social, and cultural context in Iran. Through semiotic analysis, the study decodes Hatami's narratives in Hezar Dastan, aiming to provide new interpretations of Iran's transitional period and the associated changes in urban environments

Results: The study presents an in-depth case analysis of key locations, visual concepts, cinematic techniques, and symbolic representations within Hezar Dastan. The goal is to foster a comprehensive understanding of the significance of urban space representation in Iranian cinema. This analysis provides a detailed reading of how urban environments are depicted, shedding light on their broader cultural implications and their role in reflecting the tensions between tradition and modernity.

Conclusion: The final outcome of this research is the identification of twenty dominant visual concepts in Hezar Dastan, which illustrate the transition from tradition to modernity in the Iranian city as represented in the series. These concepts help to showcase how the series captures the evolving landscape of Iranian urban identity in the face of modernization, offering valuable insights into the cultural and social transformations taking place in Iranian society.

Keywords: Cinema, Modernity, Representation, Traditionalism, Urban spaces.