

**A Look at the Concept of Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity in
Jamshid Khanian's *Edson Arantes do Nascimento and His
Himalayan Rabbit***

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Introduction

In the course of thinking about subjectivity and its meaning, it is very important to make connections between concepts related to it such as agency and consciousness. Also, it is important to consider the fact that subjectivity is related, on the one hand, to the concept of individuality and identity, and on the other hand, to the social and ideological discourses.

Conscious thinking and dialogue with the other necessitates the existence of two sides in the relationship, I and thou. Following this duality, one may imagine many other dualities such as subject/object, self/other, human/god, agency/social process, east/west, adult/child, writer/reader, writer/hero. The interaction of these dualities is inevitable. In this interaction, usually one side of the duality dominates over the other side. Therefore, although the consciousness of both sides is enhanced in this interaction, they acquire a kind of constructed identity and the weaker side is dominated by the hegemony of the dominant ideology. As a result, the dominated side does not think but is thought, though it has the illusion of subjectivity. The dominated side

thinks it is free to choose, though it has to choose from among the existing possibilities. A key concept which helps us to better understand this relationship is the Bakhtinian concept of intersubjectivity which emphasizes that these changes occur in a process and suggests that moving from being to becoming occurs in a constructive negotiation.

For Bakhtin, every event necessitates a conflict between humans in a kind of co-being situation which is related to the common experience of some subjects. Therefore, no event can be thought of as the source of conflict between a subject and an object only; actually, it is the site of conflict with another subject or another person (thou). Accordingly, being is inherently intersubjective. Bakhtin emphasizes that intersubjectivity is indeterminate and transitory: the subject is never stable but is constantly in the process of becoming in interaction with other subjects.

Methodology, Review of Literature and Purpose

The main purpose of this research is to analyze the concept of subjectivity with a problematic approach and to examine its relationship with the theory and criticism of children's and adolescents' literature. Accordingly, the researcher tries to answer these questions: What approaches to the two concepts of subjectivity and intersubjectivity exist in the theory and criticism of children's and adolescents' literature? And how can one make use of these approaches?

The concept of subjectivity is a rather new, though challenging, concept in the theory and criticism of children's and adolescents' literature, especially in the works of John Stevens, Robin

McCollum and Maria Nicholajeva. Stevens believes that assumptions about the uniqueness of the individual and selfhood should be discarded and replaced with a dialectical relationship between subjectivity and sociability, and between representations of self and social structures about self. Accordingly, the subject is nothing but a structure that registers the conscious or unconscious natural and cultural processes.

That the researcher did not find any related study in Iran during the course of research emphasizes the necessity of conducting such a research in this country. The main question in this study is how we can improve the relationship between these dualities and then substitute the intersubjective relationship for the duality of the subjects.

Conclusion

At the end of the study, the researcher tries to focus on Jamshid Khanian's *Edson Arantes do Nascimento and His Himalayan Rabbit* in order to show the writer's attempts in writing about the subject, which is the duality between the writer and the hero of the story and the intersubjective relationship between these two. The aim is to show the applicability of these discussions and their challenges in the field of children's literature.

In this novel, Khanian creates two characters, the writer and the hero, and shows their constant struggles about the essence of reality. In this relationship, the hero does not become totally dominated, although the writer has a powerful effect on him and his life. The hero occupies the mind of the writer powerfully and surprises the writer constantly. The main subject of the novel is the fire incident in Cinema Rex in Abadan, Iran (in which people were locked in and burnt alive)

which is still a historical puzzle. This incident causes tension between fictional subjects and their struggle over the end of the story leads them toward an investigation of reality. Therefore, in an intersubjective relationship, the writer tries to lead the story toward a historical fact while the hero tries to substitute another possibility for it in the story: that the cinema does not catch fire and hundreds of people do not die, which is only possible in the world of the story. The open ending of the story which gives weight to both possibilities (the historical reality as well as the fictional reality) negates every certainty and conclusion and lets the subjects have their own narrative of reality based on their own knowledge. Reality in the course of the story is not objective and predetermined, but negotiable and changeable in an intersubjective relationship.

Keywords: consciousness, *Edson Arantes do Nascimento and His Himalayan Rabbit*, intersubjectivity, subjectivity, Jamshid Khanian, action

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