

**A Comparison of the Functions of the Elements of Crossover  
Literature in *Call Me Ziba* and *Danny, the Champion of the World***

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**Introduction**

In the beginning of the flourishing of children's literature in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were authors who wrote for both children and adults. These authors are known today as crossover authors, crosswriting authors or dual-readership writers (see Debrauwer, 2002: 118). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the expansion of children's literature, the boundaries between writing for children and adults started to diminish and more emphasis was laid on the literary form of crosswriting (ibid).

Children's literature shares many elements with adult literature; however, the fact that its audience are children gives it specific characteristics and turns it into an effective and dynamic trend. Since a number of writers of adult literature were interested in this trend, they found it eligible to extend the readership of their works to

include both children and adults. They insisted on eliminating the boundaries between two types of children and adult literature and crossing the borders of dual readership.

### **Methodology, Literature Review and Purpose**

Using the method of qualitative content analysis, the researchers aim at identifying and introducing Iranian works of fiction which are, from the perspective of crosswriting, comparable to successful western works. The researchers believe that such studies will not only help Iranian writers by providing critical readings of their works, but also help the expansion of this type of literature in Iran.

The theories about crossover literature became widespread with such studies as *The case of Peter Pan, or, The impossibility of children's fiction* by Jacqueline Rose, *Children's Literature: Criticism and the Fictional Child* by Karín Lesnik-Oberstein, and the theories outlined by Aidan Chambers in his essay "Implied reader" which were later on modified by Barbara Wall in *The narrator's voice*.

Eqbalzadeh claims that he has used the term "literature for all ages" for the first time in Iran. SeyedAbadi has also focused on the concept of children and adolescent literature in his essays "Medium-age children literature" (2001) and "Prior understanding of children and adolescent audience" (2002). Dalili Shojaei (2020) has studied the dual audience literature in her M.A. thesis, "The introduction and analysis of the genre of books with no specific age-group".

### Discussion

In Hassanzadeh's *Call Me Ziba*, Ziba is a girl living in a poorhouse run by Behzisti (the governmental Welfare Organization of Iran). Her father has mental issues and is kept in an institution. Ziba helps her father escape from the mental institution and celebrate her birthday in the course of one day's journey.

The novel is a realistic novel with the theme of a girl's need for her father's love. The writer delves deep into the heart of the city and shows his critique of poverty, violence, addiction and corruption. He constantly shows the contrast between the real world and the imagined world. This combination of reality and imagination results in a juxtaposition of comedy and tragedy which leads to the creation of grotesque in the story. By focusing on gaps between the text's and the narrator's representations of reality, Hassanzadeh lets the audience decide for themselves. This may lead to the widening of the readership of the work.

The selves that are created in the story accompany each other in different layers of the text. The novel uses the motif of "home, away from home, home" but unfortunately, the writer breaks down this model and substitutes it with "home, away from home, poorhouse" to give a more imaginative and idealist answer to this issue.

In Roald Dahl's *Danny, the Champion of the World*, a father bestows all his love to his only 4-month-old child. William tells his son about the trafficking of pheasants by the local people and also wonderful secrets about illegal hunting tricks. The theme of the story is criticizing social injustices and the emphasis on the role of the father in the education of the children.

This novel can be regarded as an example of crossover literature, since it can have readership among both children and adults. The society which is symbolized in the story by the school has taken away all the chances for enjoying childhood from Danny and has given him bewilderment and confusion instead. The first person point of view of the novel makes the reader aware of the flow of thought and motivations of the hero. The combination of conflicts and paradoxes in the story result in a kind of grotesque. Sometimes, putting emphasis on this combination has led to small problems in the narrative structure of the novel.

### **Conclusion**

The two stories are similar in these aspects: unpredictability of the characters, the use of exaggerations, the theme of paternal love, the existence of conflict and repetition, a critical and realist outlook, the use of humor in a tragic atmosphere, the display of grotesque, and the combination of reality and imagination. In both novels, the transition from childhood to adulthood happens very quickly. Both child-heroes of the two novels function as controllers of the adult characters and help improve the situation of their fathers.

Nevertheless, there are some differences in the use of other elements of crossover literature in the two novels: there is a two-way relationship between Danny and his father; however, the relationship between Ziba and Khosro is transitory and to some extent, one-way. Roald Dahl is more successful than Hasanzadeh in directing his critique toward the defective social structure. Also, Hassanzadeh has created a

new model instead of the theme of home, away from home, home, which can be destructive.

On the whole, given the fact that the purpose of all these ups and downs is the transition from innocence to experience, and crossover literature is part of the audience's social experience, Roald Dahl can be considered as more successful in using the elements of crosswriting.

**Keywords:** crossover literature, Dany, the Champion of the world, Roald Dahl, Call Me Ziba, Farhad Hassanzadeh

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