

**Challenge of Genotext and Phenotext in *Call me Ziba*  
According to Kristeva's Theory**

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**Introduction**

The poststructuralist theorist Julia Kristeva proposes two functions or two signifying aspects of semantic and symbolic to analyze complex and abstract experiences in literary language. The dialectic between the two causes the formation of a process of signification. The semiotic aspect is associated with a space that Kristeva calls "chora" and is connected to the mother's body; a space that is comprised of identity and language before the formation of the other. The semiotic is associated with unconsciousness, nature and deviation from the rules of grammar (the nature of poetic language), in opposition with the symbolic which is systematic, coherent, logical, and connected with the mind and the self-consciousness.

For the analysis of literary texts, in connection with the semiotic and the symbolic, Kristeva distinguishes between generative text (genotext) as the subtext and surface text (phenotext), as the apparent text, between which there is an intertextual relationship. A revolt, or a return to the semiotic, takes place between the two texts in such a way that the semiotic becomes dominant and the symbolic is violated and disrupted. Kristeva also introduces a society in which commodity and

consumption is dominant as an entertainment society, in which the commodity manipulates human identity. The entertainment society is the realm of the symbolic. In the entertainment society, contemporary subjects have forgotten the semiotic, and the culture of disobedience is necessary for the entertainment society to return to the chora of the semiotic. In this research, Farhad Hassanzadeh's *Call Me Ziba* is analyzed with a descriptive and analytical approach based on Kristeva's theory of defiance and other views on this subject.

*Call Me Ziba* is the story of a day in the life of a Ziba, a teenage girl who lives in an orphanage and her father is kept in a mental hospital. The father calls her for a birthday party and asks her for help to escape. The story is intertwined with the news pages of a newspaper and a novel that the teenage girl is reading.

Newspapers are the realm of the standard, formal language, the tools of the entertainment society for commodification and authority, and spaces for the promotion of goods, entertainment, and event reporting. The novel is also narrated in a linear time (as a daily report) and masculine, which can be considered as being the realm of the phenotext and symbolic from this perspective. The girl's orphanages, the father's mental institution, caretakers of these two places, shopping malls, restaurants and vendors are in connection with this realm. That is to say, all these places and persons form the symbolic field in Kristeva's formulation because the newspaper is the central nucleus of all the events of the story, as well as the entertainment society. There is an intertextual link between the newspaper (phenotext) and the story (genotext) and the revolt occurs between these two texts and brings

about the dominance of the genotext (the story) over the phenotext (the newspaper).

In this novel, home and the feminine space are rejected and eliminated. The mother is addicted, has caused the father's illness and as a result has destroyed the house (identity) and displaced the daughter. She has remarried to an addicted man who abuses the daughter. The other woman is the head of the father's institution, whose behavior is violent. The head of the girl's orphanage can also be considered another face of her.

The father and daughter wander between two places: the orphanage and the mental institution (the realm of the symbolic / masculine) from which they have escaped, and home (the realm of the semiotic / feminine) that has been rejected. The space between these two is the street. The street is the middle and a no-place; therefore, the two characters are suspended, confused and deprived of identity. The street is the realm of the entertainment society, a very masculine space. The father and the daughter are constantly confronted with the salesmen who behave coldly and violently. Meanwhile, the author enters the story himself and tries to accompany them in this return (revolt), because in the real world, it is not possible. This return takes shape at another level, that is, in the confrontation between the newspaper (the symbolic) and the story (the semiotic).

The entertainment society divides all areas in the novel and forms the basis of the confrontation: the girl's orphanage, the father's institution and its guardian, shopping malls, restaurants and the salespeople, all create a phenotext and the realm of the symbolic. In contrast, the genotext and the realm of the semiotic means home: a) home (mother-

identity) that she has lost and wishes to return to but is impossible; b) the house of the author who replaces that house and is, in a sense, the chora of the semiotic, the secret garden or the immortality of literature.

In order to return to the chora of the semiotic, timelessness and identity, the symbolic must be broken and disrupted (and turn into narrative).

The two signifying aspects in the form of newspaper (surface text / the symbolic) and the story (genotext / the semiotic) have an intertextual relationship with each other and the revolt takes place between these two levels. The newspaper is scattered in the text of the story in the form of news stories of the incidents, while in the introduction of the novel, these news stories are refuted in order to prepare the ground for the story (genotext) to prevail over the newspaper (phenotext). This disruption of the symbolic is shown with the image of the newspaper torn into pieces and blown into the air.

In this novel, of course, with the death of a girl, there is a return or defiance on another level and form: the story (the symbolic / rotational time / feminine) with the rupture of the symbolic (the newspaper / linear time / masculine), saves Ziba and other girls and takes them to the timeless world of the text (they become narratives). This rupture occurs when the author enters the story himself and takes Ziba to his home. This is a return to the semiotic that appears in the form (or metaphor) of the author's house which is formed in words, narrative and literature, or the return to the semiotic that has been obtained by revolt, which is, according to Kristeva, the secret garden or the rescuing power of literature.

Keywords: *Call Me Ziba*, young adult novels, Kristeva, revolt, entertainment society, Farhad Hassanzadeh

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