

**Representing the Perspective of the Narrator and the
Implied Reader Based on Aiden Chambers' Idea of Clear
Cut Gaps in the Novel *Light a Candle for Me***

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Introduction

Aiden Chambers introduced reader-response criticism to children's and adolescents' literature. By advocating Iser's idea of the implied reader, he discussed the importance and position of this audience in the criticism of literary works. From the angle that Chambers deals with the relationship between the reader and the narrator, one can find many empty spaces that pave the way for the reader to enter the text and fill in the empty spaces of the text with structural elements and self-made meanings. In this regard, the text limits the questions because they must be related to the text. In the end, however, it is up to the reader to choose the type of question since it is the reader who decides which aspects of the story to focus on and ask questions about.

To analyze the embedded reader, the literary critic searches for answers to the following questions based on the clear cut gaps: does the

story begin without an introduction and with ambiguity or is it clear enough? Does the author allow the reader to participate in the receiving of the meaning in the text? Does the author present an expressive text or is the text ambiguous? Are the author's judgments and descriptions direct and partial, or has he allowed the reader some freedom in making meaning by generalizations and ambiguity? Does the author state the conclusion directly and in detail, or does he allow the reader to freely draw conclusions? (Hessampour, 2011: 120)

Review of Literature and Purpose

The present study analyzes the participation of the adolescent reader in the novel *Light a Candle for Me* by Maryam Mohammadkhani (2018) according to the four components proposed in Chambers' approach. As such, the novel is analyzed in a descriptive-analytical method.

The objectives of this research are 1) the analysis of textual gaps in formal and superficial, semantic, stylistic, descriptive, characterization, communicative and ideological axes; 2) analyzing the emotional and the value world of the teenage character in the story by describing text gaps; 3) analyzing the participation or passivity of the embedded reader in the process of searching and creating meaning.

In order to reach the stated objectives, this research investigates the following questions: 1) in which of the story elements are the text gaps manifested? 2) how does the writer use the gaps in the text to insert her emotional and ideological values into the text? 3) how do the gaps in the text provide a platform for the participation of the adolescent reader in the text?

Several researches have been conducted by Iranian and non-Iranian researchers focusing on the criticism of Aiden Chambers'

hidden reader in the field of children's and adolescents' literature; however, no research has been done so far on the novel *Light a Candle for Me* by Maryam Mohammadkhani, focusing on how the reader participates in the text gaps.

Discussion

One of the functions of reader-response criticism is to provide a suitable platform for the reader's participation in creating meaning in the text. The gaps in the text are among the components that determine the reader's participation in expanding or limiting meaning in the reading process. The subject of this research is the novel *Light a Candle for Me* from the list of The Flying Turtle which has received five Flying Turtle awards in *The Research Quarterly for Children and Adolescents*, with the approach of Chambers.

The author has given parts of the narrative to the narrator to develop in the text and to introduce the emotional and value world of the characters, especially the protagonist who is a teenage girl, in the form of direct and indirect description. The adolescent character in the story knows his inner doubts and contradictions and in the process of events, he experiences to reach a point in his personal and social life that brings him an inner satisfaction. He is a narrator who tries to talk about everything, but does not say anything about the main issue. Therefore, sometimes he takes over the empty spaces of the text to have his own narrative. The textual cracks draw the implied reader into the text, which describes and splits the hidden layers of meaning and interprets them at various formal, semantic, stylistic, descriptive, characterization, communication, and ideological levels. It deals with

the emotional and ideological concerns of the main character of the story.

The analysis of the novel shows the textual gaps are centered on cognitive power, intellectual credibility, the spirit of criticism and questioning, the active scope of the teenage character and the participation of teenage implied reader in the process of unraveling the knots. The teenage reader is present in the text in line with his/her lived experiences, concerns and needs and identifies with the teenage character. The text nurtures the unsaid and the unknown, which encourages the teenager to discover them and solve the riddle and restore the lost balance by removing the existing gap in the text.

Conclusion

In the novel *Light a Candle for Me*, "formal and superficial gaps" have a literary, musical and media scope and are to be filled by a young reader who is intelligent. "Gaps of style and meaning" create suspense in the plot and bring the implied reader into the text with the help of adverbs of doubt, mental verbs, doubt and interrogative aspect in verbal action. As for "personality gaps", to describe the characters beyond their actions, speeches and appearances, concepts from the field of art and literature are proposed so that the reader can discover or create their hidden semantic connections. The element of color has an active function in creating gaps in characterization and description. "Communication gaps" are formed in the form of verbal and non-verbal actions and the satisfaction or fragility of character interactions are not judged. "Ideological gaps" include the scope of individual and family, cultural and religious beliefs, which extend to the context of the national and global society. The author takes advantage of the ideological gap

to express ethnic and linguistic issues, class differences, and poverty and gender injuries and makes it believable for the implied reader by the help of the teenager's narration. The teenager overcomes his fears and conflicts with the ethnic and social norms derived from the values of his adults and builds his own belief. He has wider and more flexible ideological boundaries that demand a satisfactory and friendly interaction.

Keywords: Aiden Chambers, *Light a Candle for Me*, reader, narrator, clear cut gaps, hidden layers, reader-response criticism

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