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Extended Abstract

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The Role of Humor in the Success and Longevity of Manouchehr Ehterami's Children's Poetry Based on *Hasani* Poetry Collection

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Introduction

Manouchehr Ehterami is one of the most enduring and successful children's poets of the 1980s. His works, according to official statistics, are among the best-selling and highest circulating works in the field of children's literature, playing a significant role in enriching and elevating children's and young adults' literature after the Islamic Revolution. "The publication of *Hasani Nago Ye Daste Gol*, as Ehterami states in his interview, is received so warmly that after its publication, 400 types of *Hasani* hit the market, and the circulation of *Hasani Nago Ye Daste Gol* reached five to six million copies" (Hajvani, 1394: 89, quoted from Ehterami, n.d.). This 21-volume series, presented in a simple and eloquent language with a special charm and impact, has maintained its credibility and appeal to this day. Humor, which plays a significant role in this longevity, in its highest function, is a form of artistic expression. It is essentially this artistic expression that leads to the poetic quality and immortality of the works. The present article, which is an effort to examine the role of humor in the success and longevity of children's poetry, specifically focusing

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on his *Hasani* collection, seeks to answer the question: what connection exists between humor and the level of appeal, success, and longevity of Ehterami's children's poetry? And why do his poems, especially the *Hasani* collection, still hold significance and appeal for today's young audience?

Research Methodology, Background, and Objective

This study examines the impact of the techniques of humor on the success and longevity of Manouchehr Ehterami's *Hasani* collection using a descriptive-analytical approach. The statistical population consists of the 21-volume children's poetry collection published by Gozaresh Publications in 1402, excluding the works *Mouse and Cat*, *Charming Sparrow*, *Selimon and Baba Selimon*, and *The Rude and Untalented Boy*. Since this collection, which is the latest edition, lacks page numbering, the references only include the year of publication and the title of each poetry volume.

In regard to humor in children's poetry and the reasons for the success and longevity of children's poetry in general, a limited number of studies have been conducted. Farshadmehr (1389) in *Humorists of Contemporary Iran* analyzes humor in Ehterami's works and clarifies how his works differ from others. Taayi-Semiri (1398) in "Elements of Humor in the Adult Works of Manouchehr Ehterami" investigates the language and rhetorical elements in Ehtesami's adult works in connection with humor, identifying irony and metaphor as influential techniques in creating his humor. Taheri and Durri (1395) in "A Study of the Structure of Manouchehr Ehterami's Children's Works" examine the storytelling elements in Ehterami's children's stories. The similarity between this research and the present study is that a brief section of the article focuses on humor, providing examples of three humorous techniques used by Ehterami. However, to date, no research has explored the relationship between the longevity of Ehterami's children's poetry and humor.

Discussion

The use of humor in children's literature has a significant impact on its retention in the minds and language of children. Laughter and joy serve various purposes and functions, such as "creating joyful moments for children, addressing an inherent need, serving as an educational tool, reducing anxiety and violence, fostering social relationships, boosting self-confidence, and providing comfort and relaxation to children in the face of worries."

Ehterami employs different techniques, even ones that are unique to his style, such as humorous twist, compound humor, humorous perspectives, and humorous names, among others. Each of these elements has contributed to the success, popularity, and lasting impact of his poetry. The secret to the enduring appeal of Ehterami's poetry lies in its humorous nature, joyfulness, and ability to make children laugh, as the need for laughter has always existed among all human beings and continues to be essential.

Ehterami, relying on popular literature, has made his words and thoughts flow and become immortal in the minds and language of children. His humor, through the technique of situational comedy, has endured because he was able to present the situation effectively.

The technique of repetition, one of the strongest factors in influencing, as well as humorous allusions that immerse children in joy and surprise, have also contributed to the effectiveness of his poetry. Humorous characters and comedic settings, all of which are unique to him, even using places like "Shalmarud," which do not exist in reality, have made his poems believable to children, significantly contributing to the immortality of his humorous works. His poems, following a humorous idea, convey different understandings to children after reading, so that discovering these interpretations is pleasing to the children, and this pleasure is one of the factors contributing to the enduring nature of his poetry.

Surprise, one of the techniques of norm-breaking, is another factor in the enduring appeal of Ehterami's poetry, as the flow of his words is such that when the sentence ends, the child is suddenly astonished, surprised, and filled with delight and laughter.

Additionally, techniques such as defamiliarization, metaphors, exaggeration, rhythmic and melodic music, and the use of non-standard language in constructing humor, along with the induction of a sense of friendship and empathy for the child, have all played a significant role in the lasting impact of Ehterami's poetry.

Conclusion

Ehterami, relying on his humorous mindset and a comprehensive understanding of his child audience, has blended his poems with humor and his unique techniques in such a way that the boundaries of time, place, race, and lineage are shattered, making his works memorable for children of all generations, eras, and backgrounds, thus becoming ingrained in the collective memory of all. One of the main reasons for the enduring nature of Ehterami's poems is the combination of humor, critical approach, and entertainment-educational perspective centered around the social realities.

Although, in children's humor, there is no need to seek criticism, as the simple action, phrases, and sentences that bring a smile to the face are sufficient, Ehterami's works revolve around social realities. His children's works have both a surface layer, which is appealing to children, and an underlying layer, which offers a critical perspective that adults also benefit from. Ehterami's study of popular literature and his sharp intellect have led to the prominence and distinction of techniques based on popular culture, making them much more significant than other methods. This technique has been employed across all seventeen collections mentioned above.

Keywords: children's poetry, humor, endurance, Hasani Collection, Manouchehr Ehterami

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