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Extended Abstract

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The Naturalization of Violence in the Works of Houshang Moradi Kermani: A case Study of *Sweet Jam*, *You're No stranger*, and *Majid's Tales*

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Introduction

In Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, naturalization refers to the process through which ideologies and power relations in discourse are presented as "natural," "self-evident," or "normal." This concept demonstrates how language and discourse can unconsciously instill certain beliefs and values in individuals so that they accept them as "common sense" without questioning them. Violence—understood as deviant behavior involving coercion and harm—may manifest physically or more subtly through speech, gaze, or specific gestures.

Houshang Moradi Kermani is one of the most prominent contemporary Iranian authors of young adult novels, widely admired for his fluid and appealing narrative style. According to the authors of this article, one of the notable features in most of his works is the naturalization of anger and violence. The point of concern is that when an author repeatedly represents anger and violence as everyday and inevitable, the audience may perceive them as ordinary rather than subject to critique.

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Method, Review of Literature, and Purpose

Adopting a descriptive-analytical approach, this article examines the naturalization of violence in the works of Houshang Moradi Kermani, based on Fairclough's notion of naturalization. The body of literature on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is extensive and diverse, with numerous studies analyzing texts through this lens. The present study addresses the theme of violence in children's and young adult literature, with a case study of Moradi Kermani's stories, focusing on instances of violence that do not initially appear as such. At first glance, children or adolescents may even be encouraged to engage in such acts; however, a critical reading reveals them as examples of naturalized violence. Such representations may influence the socio-cultural behavioral models of young readers. The study seeks to answer the following questions: 1. What types of violence are naturalized in Moradi Kermani's works, and which are most prominent? 2. How, and under what mechanisms and conditions, are these forms of violence naturalized?

Discussion

The naturalization of anger in Moradi Kermani's works is analyzed in two dimensions: (a) through the use of narrative elements, and (b) through non-narrative features. In the selected novels, the author depicts settings in which the adolescent protagonist neither protests against nor resists violence. Social hierarchies between characters are strongly emphasized: adults commonly treat children harshly and aggressively, while the subordinate child or adolescent is expected to remain silent, exercise restraint, or respond passively, humorously, or by evading the situation. Moreover, when Moradi Kermani portrays instances of aggression, he provides no narrative space for critique or resistance on the part of young characters. In discourse analysis, naturalizing violence does not merely mean concealing it; rather, it involves representing violence in a way that strips it of critical, emotional, or moral dimensions, rendering it ordinary, inevitable, or even legitimate. Therefore, although violence is overtly depicted in the analyzed works, this alone does not preclude its naturalization.

From a tonal perspective, the "implied author" appears to deliberately avoid expressing emotions arising from such mistreatment. Another notable aspect is the manner in which adults address children: in the studied works, mothers, grandmothers, and other elder figures often resemble each other, frequently employing verbal expressions infused with normalized verbal violence, which the implied author presents as acts of care. This tendency is especially frequent in *Majid's Tales*. Additionally, many phrases and idioms indirectly reference violence. Numerous story situations are accompanied by humor, and the exaggerated portrayal of violent actions and speech within comedic contexts reduces the audience's sensitivity toward violence.

Conclusion

1. The analysis of Moradi Kermani's works shows that violence is often depicted as an everyday reaction. In the studied stories, most characters respond to situations with shouting or threats, yet such behavior is never challenged.

2. Characters tend to accept anger, react passively, and show no intention of changing it.

3. No clear message is conveyed about the consequences of anger and violence. While some moments of suffering caused by violence are present (e.g., in *You're No Stranger*), overall the stories offer no explicit message about the harms of either direct or indirect violence.

4. The repeated use of expressions and idioms normalized around anger further reinforces the naturalization of violence.

5. The naturalization of violence in these works is not limited to verbal forms; physical violence is also present, including imprisonment, beating with a stick, and corporal punishment.

6. The use of humor in contexts depicting violence contributes to the naturalization of such behaviors, as aggression and humiliation, when framed as jokes, appear harmless and diminish the perceived severity of anger.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Violence, Young Adult Novel, Naturalization, Houshang Moradi Kermani

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