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**AHMAD
AKBARPOUR**

Biography



Several unreliable reasons to write

Until the age of nineteen, that is when I was a junior university student, I was not interested in literature at all. I preferred to be somebody in the world of politics and if becoming a president or minister is too for me, becoming a member of parliament was more feasible.

During the dormitory life at Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran, thanks to a few roommates who were interested in literature, I became a reader and gradually started writing. As I think, just an accidental encounter with several roommates, cannot cause such a massive and essential change in my mind. Especially given the fact that I was a student of psychology and such concepts as unconsciousness and collective experiences were active in my mind. Possibly, several childhood events that may have had a profound effect on me, are the deeper causes of this change.

Pinocchio

I was born in August of 1970. I spent my childhood and adolescence in a village called Chahvarz in Fars province, in a very sultry environment near the sea where there was no book around and even there was no electricity for us to sit by the TV and become mesmerized with radiating lights.

A year or two has passed the 1979 revolution and at that time of crisis, nobody cared about books and magazines

for children. I was in the fourth grade of primary school. We had a teacher, Mohammad Reza Izadi, who came to us from the city of Lar. He asked if anybody wants to buy *Keyhan for Kids* (the most famous magazine for kids at that time). We thought together and collected our monies to buy a magazine for about 7 or 8 persons. Those days Pinocchio's story was published as a comic strip. Even now, when I read a good story, I remember the old good days when we received a new magazine and sat down to read it together and were wondering what would happen to Pinocchio.

So far, the situation was normal, but the story became more dramatic when, because of a natural or political reason that was so prevalent those years, for two or three weeks the schools were closed and we the children did not receive the magazine.

It was the time we sat together to guess the possible fate of Pinocchio in dealing with the fox and the cat and other unexpected incidents. Later on, when I finished reading the book, I realized that some of our predictions of the story were more attractive and sometimes even more terrifying. Some children guessed about the possible death or the burning of the wooden body of Pinocchio and his companions. My heart beat fast and I tried to convince myself and my friends that "remember, the Fairy is always by Pinocchio and will save him from any danger."

One Thousand and One Nights

My brother, Javad, who was five years old than me went to Shiraz (center of Fars province) to continue his high school studies. He usually returned to the village once every four or five months. In one of his visits, he brought me a small book that was a selection of stories from *One*



Thousand and One Night.

Whenever I am invited for a talk about the importance of literature and imagination for children, more than academic and theoretical issues and ideas, I try to use the memory of those nights when in the dim light of a simple candle I was invited to the complicated and wonderful world of *One Thousand*

and One Night. I had to wait for my brothers and sisters, who were about a dozen, to sleep, to start my magical journey on the endless roads of words.

It's been thirty-seven years since that date, but I can still travel to the extraordinary town that was the product of Scheherazade's imagination, to make the story longer and survive one other night from that ruler. In that selection of stories, I recall the city where the hero of the story arrives early in the morning after a difficult journey, he was extremely tired and hungry. The city is very clean and it is very clear from the fresh drops of water that somebody has cleaned it a few moments ago but nobody is seen around. However, as he walks by the open doors and in a loud voice calls if anybody is there but hears nobody. His hunger and tiredness convince him to enter a house. The yard is clean and the flowers are fresh and shining. He ascends the spiral stairs and reaches the balcony. He calls the landlord several times again and hears no response, at the same time he sees a breakfast table full of different types of cheese, butter, cream, walnuts, and jams and most important of all, a glass of hot tea with rising vapor. It is clear that somebody has prepared the tea a few minutes ago. A feast with the size of a city with nobody to see.

Nowruz Courier

I really do not remember the exact title, but in the school, they brought a single magazine from the b of the bureau of education and announced they are will give it to anybody who will answer a few questions and make the students laugh. It was a performance as an imitation of animal sounds or doing a local dance, etc. This is about the pre-revolution era when Shah was still in reign. The magazine was full of colors and everybody in the school, that is, nearly 130 students wanted it. I felt that I had to show myself. Like Arash the Archer (Arash Kaman-gir, an Iranian mythical figure who shoot an arrow with his life energy to define the northern borders of Iran), I had to concentrate all my power to own the magazine. It's important to note that I was the tiniest student of the second grade and the senior students never took me seriously. Later, when I saw the "Winnie Poe" animation, I realized that I had done something like him to reach for the honey. In short, I danced, laughed, cried, and made the sound of all animals better than themselves, until I received that single magazine. It was something like an anthology. Full of every kind of written stuff including stories, poetries, scientific materials, riddles, etc. When I see similar collections even today, I remember the theory in modern physics that matter never expires but changes its form.

My Mother

Sometimes someone asked me who are the most influential women in my life? I immediately replied Marguerite Duras, Simon de Beauvoir, and my mother. Now I have the same idea with a change in priority: my mother, Marguerite Duras, and Simon de Beauvoir.

In the violent and patriarchal environment of the village that children were never considered as real persons, it was my mother who emotionally protected us. Despite the many children she had the difficult tasks of housekeeping, it was impossible for her to forget telling a sto-

ry every night. “Yellow Cow,” “The Pea”, “Shangul and Mangul” (Iranian folk tales), and some stories that she probably created, which indirectly asked us to take care of our dresses and challenged our behavior. Every summer night, as we seven brothers and sisters lied on our bed in the yard, we were restless to hear the stories. Later I realized that each of us thought that Mom loved him or her more than the others. Still, I think that I am the favorite one. Most possibly *Magic Grandmother* has its early formation in these nights.

Now that she’s still living in the village and I live a city, whenever I publish a book I have to send her a copy. Despite the fact that she does not have reading and writing skills, I know she is very much fascinated and keeps the books among in a safe.

I said that I had a love of politics. I was born in a crowded family, and it was natural that children were not seen. I wanted to be a parliamentary representative, for example, as it was an opportunity for my image on the walls of the city to be seen during election campaigns. I was graduated from high school with the same mentality, but I could not get the required grade for political science, therefore, I had to study in the psychology department of Shahid Beheshti University. All my roommates were interested in reading novels and poetry, and I did not show any interest until the founder of the Revolution, Imam Khomeini, passed away and they closed the university classes for one week. Everyone left to their towns and I stayed with a pile of novels and poetry books.

I opened a book aimlessly, it was *Twenty-Twentieth Hour* by Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu. The more I read, the more I became absorbed. It’s been around for thirty years, but I still can see the prisoners of the World War that in spite of the bad situations they had, when they were in front of the cameras of international organizations such as Red Crescent, they had to obey the orders of the guards: “Just smile.”

The next book was *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway that absolutely captured me.

I went to the writing classes and found two great chances of my literary

life: “Houshang Golshiri” (contemporary Iranian novelist) and Dr. Reza Barahani (contemporary Iranian novelist, literary theorist and political activist) and started writing for the adults. Dr. Barahani is the first scholar who seriously introduced modern and postmodern literary theories into Persian literature.

Writing for children was quite a coincidence. For an academic research, I went to the Children’s Book Council. I have already piled a great number of academic papers and reference books on my desk. It was late at night and they were obliged to close the doors but I have not finished reading. The late Mrs. Mansoureh Raei, who did not know me and later became a close friend, told me that despite the laws, I can take everything with myself. She was an active and influential member of the Children’s Book Council. What happened to Jean Valjean after stealing silver candlesticks, happened to me without stealing the books so as a few months after I wrote a piece of poetry and sent to members of the council as a form of gratitude and appreciation:

It is too early for our children
To spit on the ground
The sky
When brushed away it’s pebbles,
I will start my travel.
In a passage from Neishabur
I will lift the spear
From the eyes of children





And for the buried Arab girls
I will take toys.
It is too early...

However, I sent the letter through a friend to the council and heard from them that Dr. Noushin Ansari, the head of the council, who had said if I could read it for them in a meeting.

I forget to talk about the fact that earlier, I was more fascinated with poetry. I was attending the creative poetry classes of such great poetic figures as Gheisar Aminpour, Hassan Hosseini and Sa'ed Bagheri. The result was *Peoples of the Thursday Evening* a collection of poetry published by the Roshangaran publications. Very soon I realized that this is my job. It has long been said that failed poets turn to write fiction.

I published my first book, *The World in the Margin of my Notebook* and through a series of loans, I managed to publish it at my own personal expense. From the 2000 printed copies, I distributed about 50 copies among friends and am keeping the rest.

I published *That Night's Train* in 1999 by Cheshmeh publications, and it was a great pleasure to hear the book was awarded in Book of

Year Festival. It was after this that I rewrote the two stories in my first book and published two separate books *Emperor of Words* and *Southern Dreams*, both of them selected by the Council of Children's Book and nominated for Book of Year Festival. *Emperor of Words* was also chosen by IBBY, and after that, some of my books including *Good Night Commander* and *That Night's Train* were translated into a variety of languages like English, Chinese, Korean, Turkish, and German.

I am not Your Daddy's Servant, which is my first work for Ofogh publication (a leading publisher of children's books), was one of the three candidates for the National Book of the Year, and a final candidate for the Biennial Festival of Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. You see how active my works are for nomination everywhere and even Munich International Library listed them on White Raven. This book has been published eleven times and during hard financial times has helped me.

Good Night Commander despite its tiny volume is a blessing book. At the same year, the Children's Book Council organized a competition which was attended by UNICEF. The book was nominated by the Council and at the Festival for 25 Years of Defense, it was awarded and brought me both financial and spiritual capital. The book is also printed in Canada by Ground Wood Books. The bigger reason I love this book is that it is related to my academic studies, recognition, and diagnosis of exceptional children. The story of a child who loses his mother and a leg and is thinking of revenge in a fantasy war.

I started reading with such adult writers as, Virgil Georgiou, Hemingway, Dostoevsky, Marquez, Borges, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Salinger, Marguerite Duras, Gogol, Sadegh Hedayat, Mahmoud Dolatabadi, Sadegh Chubak, Hooshang Golshiri, and more recently, Shahryar Mandanipour, and Abutorab Khosravi.

Franz Kafka was the most influential writer on my soul. No fantasy could have happened except in his metamorphosing pen in the very first sentence of the novel: “When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin.”

The first serious impact through children and adolescents literature was by Michael Ende and his epic fantasy *The Neverending Story* which is a combination of imagination and reality and has affected my writing. Later, I read *Momo* and *Jim Button*, and am still surprised by his pen.

My acquaintance with has a special adventure. A few weeks after I published *Emperor of Words*, they gave me a note that they appreciate the story but it is under the heavy influence of *The Neverending Story* by Ende. As a matter of fact, I had not even heard this name before. Because it was out of print, I searched a lot to find it.

Houshang Moradi Kermani the contemporary writer of children is also among those who taught me that the rural atmosphere is not necessarily associated with boredom and sorrow. He gave me a witty, curious and active mentality. Astrid Lindgren, with her novel *Pippi Longstocking*, gave me boldness to recreate gender roles at least in the realm of imagination and not just follow the existing situation.

Samad Behrangi the classic figure in Iranian children’s literature, teaches every writer to creatively use the myths; some form of using folklores a tradition and at the same time, using modern devices and techniques.

Shortly afterward, I became acquainted with a writer who took the children most seriously and, like a friend was involved in their joys and fears: Roald Dahl. He gave me humor at the center of fantasy.

I read *Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry both for its unique techniques and also for my own soul when the world of grownups pressures me.

I owe many writers in this field. Selma Lagerlöf, Philip Pullman, J.K. Rowling, Dr. Seuss, and Shel Silverstein, are among the writers who have moved the borders of children’s literature as sharply as it happened to the Berlin Wall.

Now I have discovered the magical power of the myth, and beside extensively



reading Iranian myths, I devour anything I find about the myth of other nations. The magic, mania and the cheerfulness that is streaming in these tales, is compatible with our collective psyche, they are rich with ideas that have passed through centuries and have reached us as an invaluable gift.

After graduation, I have been living in Shiraz, the city of such poetical and philosophic figures as Sa'di, Hafez, and Mulla Sadra. Some of our reading and reviewing poetic and fictional works were organized near the tomb of Hafez.

The Mausoleum of Hafez or Hafezieh with those magical stairs, tall cedars and tomb of Hafez, designed by André Godard invites everybody into the space of literature and poetry.

From the same twenty years ago – around 1999 – for I organized weekly meetings for children and adolescence literature. The companions of those years are competent writers themselves. Shahrbanoo Bahjat, Leila Barzegar, Fatemeh Foroutan, Azam Sobhanian, Leila Honarkar, Marzieh Jokar, Zahra Fardshad, Fereshteh Hekmat, and Mitra Kianbakht are some of the names associated with those meetings.

I have always managed two series of sessions, one series was for talented kids under eighteen, and the other for grownups, to review and criticize the works.

Currently, I teach writing to children in three academic institutions: University of Art, Hafez University, Children's Literature Unit of Applied Academic Center.

My other luck is my contact with the scholars at the prestigious and active Center for Children Literature's Studies, affiliated to Shiraz University. Dr. Khasrownejad, Dr. Hesampour, Dr. Hassanli are among my close friends who usually invite me for doctoral dissertation sessions that are related to children's literature. I am one of the first readers of the Journal of Children Studies. Communication with the academic communities and encountering serious criticism has developed the writing art and skill of the members of our meetings.

Despite all these, I really do not have a solid and reliable reason for my being a writer. Instead, I do not need a reason to continue this as literature is now part and parcel of the labyrinths of my mind and my life. Now, writing comes along with breathing and heartbeats. I write to live and am living to write.

Shiraz – December 2018



Resume

Awards

That Night's Train selected as Book of the Year by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 2000.

Emperor of Words received IBBY Honorary Diploma in Beijing, 2006.

Emperor of Words Nominated by Children's Book Council, 2005.

Emperor of Words awarded by Fars Province Culture Festival, 2005.

Emperor of Words nominated Mehregan Literary Festival, 2005.

I am not Your Daddy's Servant listed by Munich International Library, 2005.

Good Night Commander nominated by UNICEF, 2002.

Emperor of Words listed as the Children's Council on Books, 2003.

Emperor of Words, The first rank, Fars culture festival, 2003.

I am not Your Daddy's Servant nominated for National Book of the Year, 2004.

I am not Your Daddy's Servant nominated for Mehregan Award, 2004.

I am not Your Daddy's Servant nominated for Book Festival of Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, 2004.

Good Night Commander Selected by Children's Book Council, 2004.

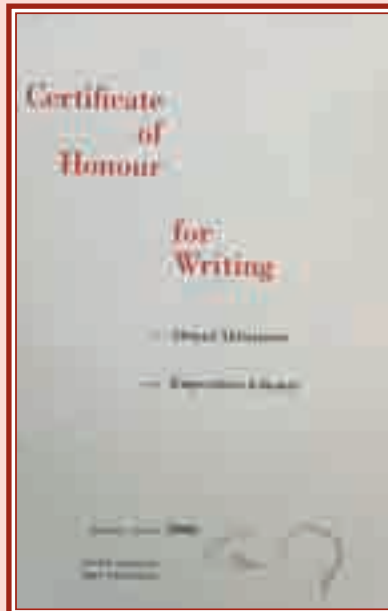
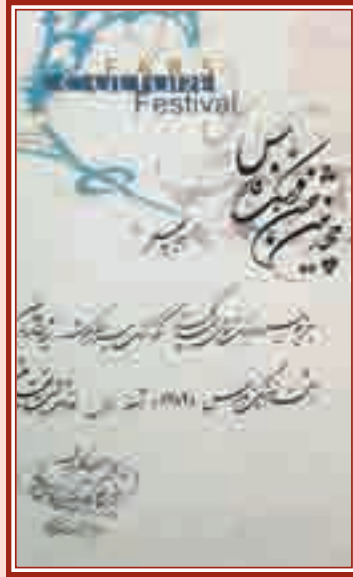
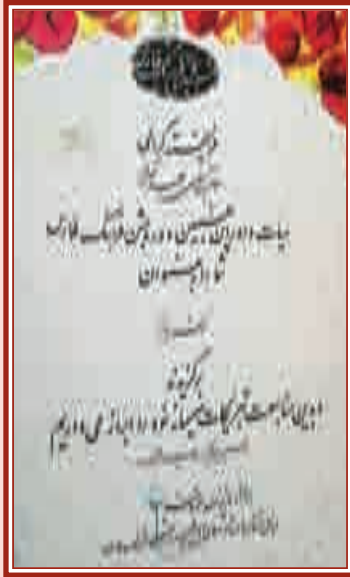
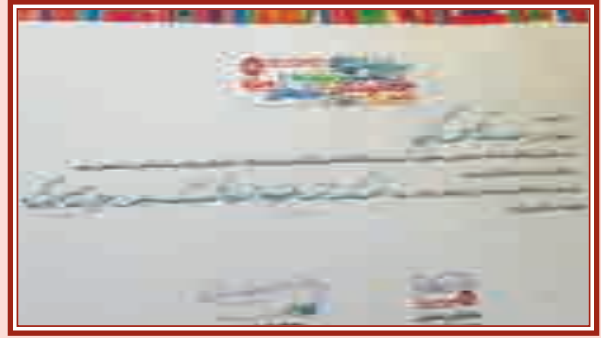
Southern Dreams Selected by Children's Book Council, 2006. 2006

Ghoul and Bicycle Selected by Children's Book Council, 2006.

Three Magical Whistles Second Prize of the Isfahan Festival, 2009.

Three Magical Whistles Festival on Best Book, 2009.

Southern Dreams Yearbook candidate for National Book



of the Year, 2009.

If I were a Pilot, Awarded in Festival for 25 Years of Defense, 2009.

Ghoul and Bicycle Listed in Munich Library Selected Books, 2009.

Good Night Commander, Awarded by Festival of Resistance Literature.

Psychopath Writer's Trail – Nominated for Biennial Festival of The Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents, 2012.

Seven Labors and More Nominated for Book of the Year, 2013.

Magical Grandmother, Nominated for Golden Pen Festival, 2015.

Good Night Commander received five Flying Turtles, Flying Turtle List, 2016.

Goulmaz received four Flying Turtles, Flying Turtle List, 2018.

I am Scarecrow but am Scared received four Flying Turtles, Flying Turtle List, 2018.

I am Scarecrow but am Scared, candidate for the Martyr Ghanipour Festival, 2018.

I am Scarecrow but am Scared, revived Golden Statue of Growth Educational Books Festival, 2018.

Judgments

Festival of the Mehr and Moon Festival, Shiraz, 1999.

Festival of the Mehr and Moon Festival, Shiraz, 2000.

Narenj Festival, Jahrom, 2001.

Isfahan Children Festival, 2003.

Narenj Festival, Jahrom, 2005.

Children and Youth Festival, Shiraz, 2016.

Behaghi Festival, Tehran, 2013.

Bayhaghi Festival, Tehran, 2014.

Comedy Festival, Bandar Abbas, 2016.

Comedy Festival, Bandar Abbas, 2017.

Jalal Al Ahmad Festival, Tehran, 2018.

Workshops

Comedy, an anti-dictatorship genre, Darab, 2015; Shiraz, 2016; Shiraz, 2017; Bushehr, 2017; Shiraz, 2018; Sirjan, 2018; Khormoj, 2018.

Postmodern Techniques in Myths, Shiraz, 2015; Bushehr, 2016; Shiraz, 2017; Shiraz, 2018; Fasa, 2016; Tehran, 2018.

Recognition of Modern Children's Literature, Esfahan, 2014; Bushehr, 2014; Abadeh, 2015; Saadat Shahr, 2016; Shiraz, 2012; Shiraz, 2013; Shiraz 2015; Shiraz 2016; Shiraz, 2017; Shiraz 2018.

Longer courses

Children's literature, Shiraz, 180 sessions.

Children's literature, Isfahan 75 sessions.

Published Articles and notes

Poor Children's Literature; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*, June 23, 2006, p. 85.

The wise man, the fallen human beings: a mythological reading of *Fall to Chalchalak*; Ahmad Akbarpour and Mahdieh Seyyednourani; *The Children's and Adolescent Book Review*, no. 16, Winter 2017, p. 55.

Great Lady of Iranian Children's Literature; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Shargh Daily*, August 2, 2005; p. 24. (About Turan Mirhadi, Children's Book Council)

Imagination is the writer's reality - dialogue with Hussein Kampeparvar / Surgery of Words – dialogue with Abutorab Khosravi, Hossein Fazeli and Reza Ameri and Ahmad Akbarpour; *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*, no. 5, Spring 2007, p. 36.

Memories of the other pair; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*,

no. 10, Winter 2009, p. 120.

Iranian Story / Star; Ahmad Akbarpour; Quarterly Journal of Barg e Farhang, no. 11, Winter 2001, p. 86.

Animal Talks; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*, no. 12, Spring, and Summer and Autumn 2011, p. 55.

Honest Friend; Ahmad Akbarpour; Hengam Monthly, no. 5, July and August 2014, p. 22.

A container full and ripe and raw fruits / Silly words; Ahmad Akbarpour and Hasan Parsaee; review of children and adolescents' books, no. 13, Spring 2017, p. 91.

Abbas Yamini-Sharif; teacher or artist / Speaking Doll; Zari Naeemi and Ahmad Akbarpour; *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*, no. 5, Spring 2007, p. 116.

Ghoul and Bicycle / Mediating Literature / Some experiences / the reader within the text; Ahmad Akbarpour, Ali Asghar Seidabadi, Mohammad Reza Yousefi, Aydan Chambers; Translator: Tahereh Adinepour; *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*, no. 4, Autumn and Winter 2006, p. 127.

Rules of the Game: Reviewing *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*; Ahmad Akbarpur; *Shargh Library*, August 27, 2006: p. 12.

A Book Beyond the Good; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*, no.





11, Autumn 2010, p. 88.

A Book Beyond Good; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*, no. 10, Winter 2009, p. 124.

Writing Children: Ahmad Akbarpour / Alireza Abdolmaleki / Shaghayegh Moazzenzadeh / Termeh Elhami / Amir Ali Zia Ebrahimi / Maral Abasi-nik / Fereshteh Hasan, *Khanesh (Reading) Magazine*, no. 6, summer 2007, p. 100.

Reviewing the causes and reasons for oral humor; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Hengam Monthly*, no. 3, June and July 2014, p. 108.

The audience, Yes and No / I Was a Deer; Ahmad Akbarpour and Farkhondeh Haghsheno; *Review of Children and Adolescents' Books*, no. 13, Spring 2017, p. 27.

Reviewing *Advertisement of Alef Publications*; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Barg-e-Farhang Quarterly Journal*, no. 10, Autumn 2001, p. 74.

A Simple Date; Ahmad Akbarpour; *Thursday Afternoon Monthly*, no. 84, April and May 2005, p. 11.

Reviews and notes by others

Friendship Station (Reading *That Night's Train* by Ah-

mad Akbarpour); Majid Koohkan; *Children and Adolescent Literature Research*, Spring 2006, no. 44, pp. 131-136.

Exploring Symbolic Violence in *I am not Your Daddy's Servant* By Ahmad Akbarpour; Hossein Ghorbani and Mohammad Hossein Dallal Rahmani; *The Journal of Children's Literature Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, spring and summer 2016, pp. 49-64.

Reviewing Some Democratic Characteristics of Ahmad Akbarpour's Fictional Works (Master's Thesis); Hossein Ghorbani; Supervised by Atefeh Jamali; Persian language and literature; Major in Children and adolescent literature; Hormozgan; Hormozgan University; Faculty of Humanities, 2014.

Examining the Implied Reader in Ahmad Akbarpour's Stories (based on Aidan Chambers' theory); Saeed Hesampour; *Children's Literature Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, Spring and Summer 2010, pp. 101-128.

Reviewing implied reader in three stories by Ahmad Akbarpour; Dr. Saeed Hesampour and Seyed Farshid Sadat Sharifi; *Journal of Paidari Literature*, vol. 4, Autumn 2010, Spring 2011, pp. 113-146.

Reviewing the concept of empowerment in the fictional works of Ahmad Akbarpour; Fatemeh Farnia and Farideh Pourgivi; *Journal of Children's Literature Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, Spring and Summer 2013, pp. 113-136.

Comparative study of the cognitive semantics of metaphor of time in adolescent novels by Ahmad Akbarpour and Farhad Hassanzadeh (Master's Thesis); Masoumeh Jafari; Supervised by Maryam Iraj; Tehran: Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Department of General Linguistics; 2015.

The study and analysis of story elements in the works of Ahmad Akbarpour (Master's Thesis); Roen Moafpourian; Supervised by Fatemeh Sadeghi Naghd-Olyha, Shiraz: Payame Noor University, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Persian Language and Literature Department, 2015.

Language Dynamics and Its Effect on the Reading of Audience; A Review of the Ahmad Akbarpour's Novels; Mahnaz Jowkari; *The Review Children and Adolescents' Book*, no. 9, Spring, 2016, pp. 23-33.

The analysis of the *Emperor of Words* according to Karl Mannheim's surpassing differences theory; Atefeh Jamali and Hossein Ghorbani; *New Literary Essays Quarterly*, no. 195, Winter, 2016, pp. 93-110.

Double-faced ontological narration (critique of *That Night's Train* by Ahmad Akbarpour); Ali Rabiee Vaziri; *Journal of Child and Adolescent Literature Research*, Spring 2006, no. 44, pp. 137-139.

The image of society in children and adolescents' fiction (based on selected works of Houshang Moradi Kermani, Jafar Ebrahimi, Mohammad Reza Sarshar, and Ahmad Akbarpour) (Master's Thesis); Zahra Kichi; Supervised by Alireza Mahmoodi; Zabul: Zabol University, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Persian Language and Literature Department, 2013.

The critic inside the text: A reading of two relatively different stories: *Ghoul and Bicycle* (Ahmad Akbarpour) and *The Throneless Prince of the Underground* (Aliasghar Seidabadi); Leyla (Roya) Maktifird; *Children and Adolescents Monthly*, October 2010, no. 156, pp. 22- 26.

Reviewing *Three Magical Whistles* by Ahmad Akbarpour, *Three Extra Whistles*; Hasan Parsaee; *Children and Adolescents Monthly*, May 2010, no. 151, pp. 13-18.

Reviewing A close look (the writings of Ahmad Akbarpour); *Children and Adolescents Research*, Spring 2006, no. 44, pp. 92 - 93.

Reviewing the narrative dimensions of *Three Magical Whistles*: Based on the theory of Maria Nikolayeva; Dr. Saeed Hasampour, and Shadi Aramsh-fard; *Journal of Children's Literature Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, Spring and Summer 2012, p. 19.

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The World in the Margin of my Notebook; Tehran: Khayyam, 1997.
That Night's Train; Illustrated by Nazanin Aigani; Tehran: Cheshmeh Publications, Venoushe Books, 1999; Second reprint, 2007.
That Night's Train (Audio Book); Speaker: Roya Maktabifard; Music: From Cristofori's Dream by David Lanz; Tehran: Council on Children's Book, Audio Book Group, 2000.
The Roads Will Not End When We are Sad (Long story); Tehran: Nimnegah Publications, 2001.
Advertisement of Alef Publications (Short stories collection); Tehran: Nimnegah Publications, 2001.
I am not Your Daddy's Servant; Illustrated by Hamid Bahrami; Tehran: Ofogh Publications, 2003; 2014; eighth reprint, 2014.
Good Night Commander; Illustrated by Morteza Zahedi; Tehran: UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), Publications Unit, 2004.
Southern Dreams; Illustrated by Parviz Heidarzadeh; under the supervision of Mohammad Reza Bayrami; Tehran: Ministry of Education, Deputy of Education, Cultural Foundation of Education, 2005.
Heavenly Frame; Illustrated by Hoda Haddadi; Office of Publications and Informatics, Department of Research and Cultural Relations, Foundation for Martyrs of the Fars Province; Tehran: Nimnegah pub-



lications, 2005.

Silent Girl with Busy Birds; Illustrated by Manely Manouchehri; Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publication, 2006.

An Ant Step (Iranian children's games); Illustrators: Ali Ataei, Amir Shabaniopour, Negin Ehtesabian, Azadeh Madani, Mahnaz Saboor, Sahar Bar-dayee, Sharareh Khosravani, Saeed Ensafi; Tehran: Gaj International Publications, 2007.

Ghoul and Bicycle; Illustrated by Rashin Kheirieh; Tehran: Ofogh Publications, Hazel Book, 2016 and 2008; b.

The Fox and the Crow; Illustrated by Setareh Motazed; Tehran: Shabaviz, 2008.

Three Magical Whistles; Tehran: Ofogh Publications, 2008. The third quarter of 2013.

If I were A Pilot; Illustrated by Hoda Haddadi; Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publications; 2009.

Psychopath Writer's Trail; Tehran: Qatreh Publications, 2011.

The Strongest Being in the World; Illustrated by Amir Shabanipour; Tehran: Shabaviz Publications, 2011.

Windows-based Digest (Comic book); Illustrated by Ardeshir Rostami; Kerman: Noun Publications, 2015.

Seven Labors and More: Interconnected Stories (Teenage novel); Tehran: Ofogh Publications, 2012.

Hot Whey (Collection of Satire); Illustrated by Mohammad Rafie Ziaee; Tehran: Charkh Falak Book, 2012.

Emperor of Words (Teenage Novel); Tehran: Peidayesh Publications, 2013.

Hiccup Moments (Teenage novel); Tehran: Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, 2013.

Magical Grandmother; Illustrated by Sahar Bardari; Tehran: Peidayesh Publications, 2014.

Stop, Pilot with Long Tail; illustrated by Sepehr Hajiabadi; Tehran: Chekkeh Publication, 2014.

The Receiver is an Ass; Illustrated by Sepehr Hajiabadi; Tehran: Chekkeh Publication, 2014.

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Goulmaz; illustrated by Mohammad Babakoochi Ashrafi; Edited by Nasrin Nooshamini; Tehran: Hoopa Publications, 2017.

I am Scarecrow but am Scared; illustrated by Maryam Tahmasebi; Tehran: Fatemi Publications, Parrot's Book, 2017.

Rouby Agency for Honored Chickens; Illustrated by Mahnaz Salmannejad; Graphics Designed by Elahe Javanmard; Tehran: Fatemi Publications, Tooti Book, 2018.

Don't Look at my Tail; illustrated by Mahnaz Soleimannejad; Tehran: Fatemi Publications, Tooti Book, 2018.

Goodbye Moon! (Collection of Stories on Peace and Friendship) Illustrated by Manely Manouchehri; Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publications, Blue Bird Books, 2018.

A Train of Words (Selected Stories); Tehran: Cultural Organization of the City of Adab, 2018.

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Wenn ich pilot ware, dann, Autorin Ahmad Akbarpour, Aus dem Persischen ubersetzt von Saied Firuzabadi, Illustratorin Hoda Haddadi Tehran

Se fossi un pilota, Scritto da Ahmad Akbarpour, Illustrator da Hoda Haddadi, Tradotto da Gholamreza Emami, Tehran

Good Night Commander, Ahmad Akbarpour, illustrated by Morteza Zahedi, Greenwood Books; Toronto; Translation edition (April 27, 2010).

That Night's Train, Ahmad Akbarpour, Greenwood Books; Toronto; Translation edition (October 6, 2012).

I am not Your Daddy's Servant translated to Turkish

Emperor of Words translated to Turkish.

Good Night Commander translated to Chinese.

Good Night Commander translated to Korean.

That Night's Train translated to Korean.

Overview of Work

Fatemeh Ghasemipour, *Sarand Monthly* (excerpts).

Ahmad Akbarpour has started writing when he was 24, and he started with composing poetry for the adults. *People of the Thursday Evening* is his first published collection of poetry. But after a not-so-successful experience in poetry, an academic research sent Akbarpour Children's Book Council. The research was a comparative analysis of poetry for children in Iran and in other countries. At that time, Akbarpour was a student in the recognition and diagnosis of exceptional children psychology. To conduct this research, on the recommendation of a friend, he went to the Children's Book Council. The sincere treatment of some council members, including Mansoureh Raei and Noushafarin Ansari, impressed Ahmad Akbarpour to know more about children's literature. At that time, Akbarpour's main interest was poetry. He composes a few lines about the council and then continues to visit and starts collaborating with the council. He attends a six-month course on understanding children's literature.

Akbarpour is a writer who has started with poetry. The central idea of one of his first books, *Emperor of Words*, is an adaptation of a Korean poem. A book that no publisher initially accepted to publish it. He published a summary of the story of this book, along with another story, in the form of two long stories in *The World in the Margin of my Notebook*. A few years later, he rewrote *Emperor of Words* and published them by personal expense. Although the book does not appeal to the critics, it introduces the special talent of Akbarpour, which paves the way for publishing later books, to the extent that famous publishers become willing to publish his stories. Akbarpour makes bold moves in writing for teens. Initially, his stories do



not look like any other story for children or teenagers' literature. He, who was a student of Reza Barahani and Houshang Golshiri, has specially adapted the postmodern style of writing for modern-day adolescents. Without knowing he has introduced a new style in this field. For this reason, critics of the children's literature initially made harsh criticism of his works. But Dr. Pourgiv, a professor of children's literature at Shiraz University, in a review of his works, calls Akbarpour the founder of postmodern children's literature in Iran and praises his innovations. Despite such criticism of his work at that time, some of his books, like *That Night's Train*, brought him numerous awards from domestic and foreign festivals. *That Night's Train* is published in 1999 by Cheshmeh Publications. This book is one of the celebrated books of the year by the Ministry of Culture. Two adaptations of the story led to a television film directed by Hamid Reza Hafezi and a movie directed by Hamid Reza Ghotbi. In addition to an English translation, some books have also been translated into Korean.

However, in the early 2000s, Akbarpour still does not know how the audience is dealing with his stories. He is disappointed with criticism of his work and thinks his stories are good for festivals only.

At that time, *Book of the Month* magazine published critiques by the audiences. It was a space for the young readers to express their ideas about the stories they are reading and their views were published without any editing. After reading these ideas and criticisms by the teenage audiences for *Emperor of Words*, Akbarpour found how the readers have found the story interesting. It was here that teenagers directly encouraged Akbarpour for writing.

Undoubtedly, Ahmad Akbarpour's success in children and adolescent literature the result of his appeal to his audiences. Perhaps one of the main reasons for this success is the proximity of his fiction to the world of children and adolescents, also his humorous style is also another important factor.

Akbarpour is a satirist with courageous intentions. His works are not offensive. But there is a boldness in his works that sometimes makes the



older ones to show their frown.

Children and more especially teenagers are very interested in reading humorous works, and whenever they get acquainted with a writer of such works, they will follow the other works of the author.

The main theme of Akbarpour's main works circles around such topics as fear, loneliness, and peace. He has always shown his disdain for war in such works as *If I were a pilot*, *Good Night Commander*, and *Emperor of Words*. These stories deal with the destructive effects of war on the personal and social life of children and adolescents. Certainly, the academic background of Mr. Akbarpour, recognition and diagnosis of exceptional children psychology, has led him to become acquainted with the emotional crises of children and adolescents. This is to the extent that the emotional logic of his stories along with his liter-



ary competency has contributed to thriving works.

If I were a pilot, is a narrative of a few rural boys whose village is bombarded by four Iraqi fighters, injuring their teacher. The author has masterfully expressed the students' rage and grief over the incident. Also, the narrative line is surprising for the audience, a surprise that makes the story more appealing.

Good Night Commander is the story of a child who lost her mother and one of her legs up to the knees. In his imaginary games,

he is seeking revenge against the enemies that caused his mother to die and faces a fictitious soldier very like himself and ultimately concludes to order his troops to a cease-fire.

Emperor of Words aspires for peace through another form of narrative; peace for all the world with the disappearance of the borders between countries and continents. This could be considered the best work by Akbarpour, written for teenagers. By borrowing from a poem by a Korean poet, the author has created a narrative that makes the audience deeply reflect on war and the concept of peace. He posed the question of what would happen if the borderlines between countries were cleared and no war would have happened because of passing through the borders?

Another dominant theme in Akbarpour's works is loneliness. This theme is very well evident in the case of *I am not Your Daddy's Servant*. In this work, there is a teenager boy named David, whose voice as an independent and distinct teenager is not heard by anybody, even by his own parents.

All through the narrative, David seeks to prove himself, but he is surrounded by others in the rural setting where clichéd ideas dominate and there is no room

for his to express and show himself. David is lonely among the others, and his voice is not heard at all.

In this book, Akbarpour has portrayed a convincing image of the rural atmosphere. He has grown up himself in a village setting in the southern parts of Fars province and is very well acquainted with costumes and culture of such environments, therefore creates the sense that the writer is the same David of the story. The adolescent boy who resolutely stands against violence in an adult and closed atmosphere.

Another important point is that in *Seven Labors and More*, which is published a few years after *I am not Your Daddy's Servant*, the main character is a writer named David, who is naturally associated with David in *I am not Your Daddy's Servant*, and therefore with Akbarpour the writer.

Three Magical Whistles is the other work that deals with the problems associated with the separation of parents and their new marriages. Although the author's tone in many of these works is humorous, he has expressed perfectly well the problems of these children and adolescents. In fact, Akbarpour has been able both to attract children and adolescent audiences through a humorous language and address their special problems and issues.

Attention to children with defective organs such as blind children, and children of war in rural settings, is another cause for Akbarpour's success. Proximity to the life-world of these children and adolescents, and addressing their major issues and involvements, makes the audience to follow him closely. It could be said that Akbarpour is one of the major writers with practical knowledge of the cares and concerns of children and he dedicates his time and creativity to write about these issues.

Overview of Work

I am not Your Daddy's Servant

David is a boy who constantly strives to attract his father's attention. He does most of his father's affairs at home. This provokes the anger of his brothers and they start calling him "Daddy's servant". One day a bunch of father's banknotes falls in the toilet well, and the greedy father wants to send one of his children in the well. David, who is more frustrated with his brother's jokes about him, resists the demands and threats of his father, and eventually, another family member pulls the money from the well.

The story has a simple and straightforward plot and language but what makes the book interesting is the use of comic and dynamic setting: the book has all the features of a comic book! A comedy with roots on a protest to reform, with an artistic language and style of expression, interesting use of prototypes, all of which make the younger reader to identify with the main characters and events of the story and to continue reading.

The point of view of the story is first person or I-narrator, and since the narrator is one of the main characters of the sort, it is called the first person narrator. Actually, the writer has used multiple I-narrators and three characters of the story narrate it respectively. Despite the multiplicity of narrators, the main narrator is a boy with about ten years, and events around him are the main incidents of the story. The use of this method makes the relationship between the narrator and the audience more intimate, and the narrator can convey his feelings, emotions, and sentiments more easily, making the overall chain of events more coherent and lucid.

The point of view in this story is different with the other two in that in this type of view, the reader's presence is not direct and visible and the reader cannot fully identify or associate with the events and characters and or at least has

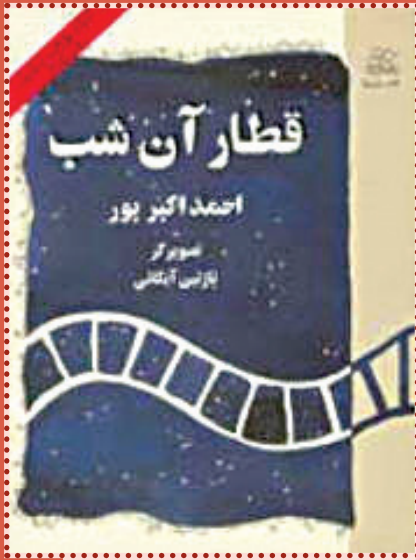


such a feeling. But the writer applies a few other techniques and devices to invite the audience to closer participation. Selection of the first-person point of view and narration of the major events of the story through the point of view of a child (Sarah, a dumb child who starts talking) and two adolescents, provides creates a situation for the write to accompany the characters and instead of reproaching them for their actions, to sympathize with them, recognize their behavior as characteristically childish not evil.

Advocacy of the children's social rights starts from the very title of the story: *I am not Your Daddy's Servant*. This protesting and revolutionary title is a rebellion by all the children who have never been seen or heard and are ever seen and defined just as incomplete adults who, because they have a different outlook and understanding, have to surrender and obey the rules of the elders.

This concept finds more significance with childish and joyful behavior of the brothers of the main narrator, David. At the beginning they call David just "Daddy's servant" but with dropping off his father's money into the well of the toilet, they call him "Daddy's Servant in the toilet". David, who was already annoyed by his brothers' behavior, by this incident and the demand to descent the dirty well, becomes rebellious against the will of his father, and here the narrator together with the reader start sympathizing and confirming this rebellion.

I am not Your Daddy's Servant can be considered a prominent contemporary literary work for children and adolescents. In this story, the writer, both maintains the simple and singular setting of childhood and its characteristic behaviors and defensibly gives his little heroes the right to such a rebellion.



That Night's Train

Banafshe, a five-year-old girl, becomes acquainted in a train with a young teacher who is a writer for children. They become friends and decide to meet on a Friday when the teacher will call Banafshe and their friendship to be continued. The teacher, who was going to a village to teach, takes off the train at the next station and departs

from Banafshe and her grandmother. The second and fourth chapter of the book is another narration by the young teacher who reads her story (the story of Banafshe and the teacher) for her classroom. The kids' responses make the teacher ponder on how to end her story. But instead of the subjective ending of the story, she actually enters the story and finishes it.

The presence of elements such as trains and telephones, a five-year-old child, school-children, a kind and accompanying teacher, together with a sympathetic mother-in-law has contributed to creating a coherent, natural and simple setting for the children to comprehend. For example, the personification of the train and the consequent images makes the text compatible with children's dreams and imaginations. The simple language of the story and its short sentences, the portrayal of beautiful images, the sound of the train and its horn, as well as the phone ring (an important and influential element to the end of the story) and then inviting the audience to participate in the story, are among the most effective elements that makes a pleasant style and attracts the audience.

The point of view of the story shifts and Banafshe is the focal point of view. However, in certain chapters (second and fourth), the writing teacher is the focal point, which is related to the

narration of Banafshe. What distinguishes this story from many other stories is the method of its narrative point of view, using multiple narratives at the heart of the main narrative and provision of meaningful signs and setting to show the open spaces in the narrative for the participation and involvement of the reader. For example, the following devices are used:

When the audience waits to hear about the meeting of the girl with the teacher, the narrator suddenly shifts from the girl to the teacher who reads the story of the girl to her students and asks them to finish the story. The narrator never directly mentions the relations between Banafshe and the teacher, and it is the audience who should discover this relation.

Also, in the story of the friendship between the old man and the little girl – that is read by Banafshe’s father to her – Banafshe finds that despite her promise, after immigration, the little girl has never written to the old man, and never responded to him until the old man died in a hospital. Here, the audience, very like Banafshe, thinks that this all the truth, but in the next few pages, in the story of the writer who is communicating with her audiences, she receives a letter from one of her readers. The writer of the letter is the very little girl in the story who is complaining, “don’t scold me because I have answered the letters of the old man and I have been in the hospital until his last moments.” This contradiction reminds the reader that the writer’s view is just a limited point of view and she may also make a mistake. This perception of a writer with limited knowledge and vision, allows the audience to feel the writer very close to herself and creates spaces of intimacy and sympathy between the reader and the writer.

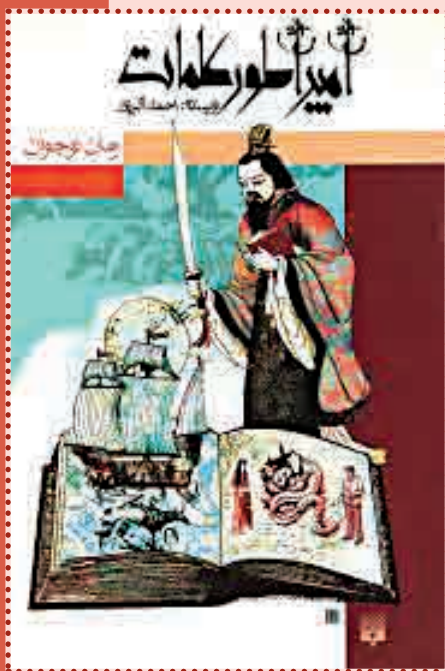
In general, the special use of such a point of view in this

narrative makes room for active participation of the reader in the creation of the story and its events.

Therefore, the writer's support of the implied reader is more in line with this device; the writer believes in the ability of the reader to participate in the advancement of the story, and has tried to provide the reader with the necessary backgrounds to fully involve in the work; even there are indirect guides for the reader's participation in the story writing process. In other words, in this work, the author contributes to the mental development of the reader and encourages her to read more actively.

The other characters of the story such as the grandmother and Banafshe's fathers also have a sympathetic relationship with Banafshe. The teacher also invites the children to participate in her writing process and respects their views about the end of the story. Such features indicate a sympathetic and supportive understanding of the reader by the writer.

Emperor of Words



A boy wants to read a story; at the beginning of the story, he read a poem by a Korean teenager about the unification of the world and the friendship of all nations. The boy becomes interested to find out more about the poet and his country. The story continues with a Chinese girl named Sunny, who because of erasing the borders of China in geography class, is imprisoned by the Emperor of China in the book (the same story as read by the boy). The boy becomes friend with Sunny. The writer asks the son and Sunny to travel to Korea to

find the Korean teenage poet. So the boy, like Sunny, enters the book and the story continues, but the writer has to leave the story and the heroes to themselves.

The Style of *Emperor of Words* is more complicated than the previous works of Akbarpour; it has a more complicated plot and its understanding requires hesitation and contemplation. Some of the sentences are longer than times the sentences are a bit longer than *That Night's Train*, and the presence of fantasy images in *Emperor of Words* demands a more active imagination. These contemplative images are compatible with a theme that emphasizes empathy, friendship, and peace among nations, and it provides a setting for active participation of the reader, and in spite of some complexities, allows the reader to involve with the story and to contemplate and discover more.

The story uses multiple points of view, and is narrated at three levels:

A. The Story of a boy who is reading a story and while reading he becomes friend with a fictional character within the story and enters the story. This narrative is presented through a third person point of view.

B. The story of a Chinese girl, who is imprisoned by the emperor's command because of erasing the border of China; she becomes friend with the boy in the previous story. , loves to be a boy of the previous narrative. This narrative is also presented through a third person point of view.

C. The narration of the writer – or the main narrator – who enters the story at the beginning in a very limited way and with some minor comments, but by the middle of the story enters the narration just like a character and plays a role. These sections are narrated with a first-person point of view. Such a narrator is often called the interfering narrator; that is, the narrator in-

tervenes in the story whenever he or she likes, and directly addresses the reader about the characters or events.

In fact, the writer, in two parts of the story, enters the story just like other characters and makes room for the reader to participate and enjoy the tale. Such examples, as well as the ending which is left to the reader, creates new spaces for the reader to contribute to the overall process of the story.

Erasure of the borders of a great country that according to the girl, was just done for entertainment, besides the young Korean poem, create a deeply human and symbolic concept that is connected with the images and events of the story and interconnects all the characters and events of the story. The relation between the notion of friendship and solidarity, instead of hostility, and bloodshed, creates an even deeper concept through a variety of elements such as the very title of the book (*Emperor of Words*), the reading boy, and the excessive interest of the Chinese emperor to books

(in such a way as to accompany to feelings of the people, imprisons the little girl inside a book). Thus, it could be said that there are deep links and interconnections between culture (symbolized by books and reading), ethics, and human values. Also, the ambiguity in the title of the book and its multiple links with the contents of the book requires more considerations. Who is the real emperor of words? Does it refer to the reader of the book who enters the book? Or to the Chinese girl who is imprisoned within a book? Or does it refer to the main emperor of China who is in frenzy love with books; or even all the young

people who through activating their imagination enter the work and experience a new imaginative world? These concepts and the network of relations between them activates and moves the imagination of the reader, creating new spaces and demanding for new innovations.

In general, these concepts and devices together with their widespread use in the story, lead the reader to think more differently, to find new ways of seeing and thinking and to explore for new meanings and concepts. These concepts and meaning are far beyond the implications of such simple concepts as a country, childhood, or adolescence.

Good Night Commander

Saeed Hesampour and Seyyed Farshid Sadat Sharifi

The story is a slice of the world of a disabled boy who has lost his leg in the war. In the world of fantasy and in childish play, he continues his war with the enemy to take his mother's revenge (we gradually realize she is killed by the same enemy).

Beside the solitude of the room and lonely playing child, there is something else outside (in the grown-up world): the father's relatives want to find him a new companion, an idea that encounters with the child's displeasure. Eventually, at the end of the story, when a child encounters the imaginary commander of the enemy's army, he finds him exactly like himself, a child, with one leg lost in the same war. The boy ends up the war, and even lends his artificial foot to his enemy.

The most striking quality that attracts the attention of the reader of *Good Night Commander* is its overwhelming sim-



plicity. This simplicity, which is clearly observed at all linguistic levels (lexical, structural, syntactic, etc.), leads to a special intimacy between the reader and the narrator. Moreover, since the main narrator of the story is a child who reads the text, a more intensive and deeper sympathy is created toward him. On the other hand, the dialogues and the text that is syntactically closer to everyday language makes the text even more intimate and simple. In fact, the formal codes of speech are observers so as to keep the narrative aspect of the text.

In this story, both the narrator and the focal point are the same: a traumatic and disabled child, considering the purpose of creating such a work (addressing children with special needs or with disabilities), this choice is the best one. The child in this story has his own uniquely childish outlook toward his world. In addition, and above all, the method of provision of information to the reader deserves attention as it is a prominent element of the work. The reasons for this can include:

- Until the middle of the story, the reader does not understand why this difficult situation (the two misfortunes of disability and losing the mother) has happened for the narrating child. On the fifth page of the story and through a soliloquy of the narrator (his imaginary talking with his mother), the reader finds answers to these questions, but even after these revelations, the reader is not certain about the final answers.
- The perception of the clever narrator of the work is not directly expressed, and the reader is given the opportunity to find answers.
- In some cases, the writer has tried not to explain and just by showing the readers, gives them the opportunity to see and to participate, thus involving them more deeply with the story.
- On the other hand, the author has used I-narrator (first

person) point of view and soliloquies of the child in order to reveal his subjectivity. In this section, the reflection of the look of his anger and his resentment toward the enemy, with the repeated use of the “coward”, is of particular importance, and the most important and subtle point about this usage is the projection of the fear it has, a fear that exists in the mind of the narrator.

This story can be the story of any child who is the victim of war anywhere in the world. With a few words, the writer creates the most intensive impact on the reader and takes the reader to the world of a traumatic boy who is searching for peace.

If I were a Pilot

Saeed Hesampour and Seyyed Farshid Sadat Sharifi

The story is told by an unnamed narrator and his three friends, Emad, Kahzad, and Rashid, who have gone to the hills around their village to find examples of flowers and deliver it their teacher as a homework. While surfing, they encounter four planes flying over the area, a scene strikes all four children with admiration and amazement. This joy does not last and they hurriedly return to the village when they hear a shocking sound, and they find that because of bombardment, the village is in panic and the bus of one of the residents, Eskandar, is burning, and their teacher who was in the bus was also severely injured. Thus, by a story, the violent and ugliness of the war is tangibly and effectively portrayed for the children to imagine.

Choosing my narrative style of the first-person point of view, with a child nar-

rator, made the linguistic aspect of (in terms of vocabulary, composition, and grammatical structure), very simple and free from complexities. Besides, sometimes even the sentences violate the standard language to become childish: “The smokes are growing and growing; as if all the pipes are full of smokes” (p. 18). Also, the writer is very careful in his approach to create and use images. Although



these images are based on the simplest available forms that are very familiar to the rural people, they effectively objectify the subject, thus deeply impressing the reader.

Also, the proper use of birds for making these images is another important choice as on the one hand, it is connected with the rural setting, and on the other, it is connected with the main theme of the story, flight.

Aside from the images, the suspense that is created in the second half of the story (after bombardment) is one of the most important and exciting factors that makes the reader eager and restless to follow the story.

The first-person point of view of the child narrator eliminates the distance between the narrator and the emotions that are conveyed to the reader, making an intimate relation between the narrator and the audience, and increasing the final effects on the reader. The most interesting device here is the subtle and indirect transmission of some information to the reader. These devices can be categorized as follows:

- A. an indirect portrayal of the surprise and admiration of children for the plane, instead of direct explanation;
- B. a depiction of children's individual moods and their differences with each other;
- C. Showing a change of attitude of the narrator and the other children towards the planes.
- D. Objective reference to phenomena, without subjective explanations: without talking about such words and concepts as the enemy, war, bombardment, warplanes, etc., the writer has included them in the story.

All these elements and approaches, require an audience that is more an active participant within the story who is not waiting



to hear the ideas of the writer but is actively extracting meaning from the text. It is true that children have limited knowledge but they are far more imaginative and better creators of meanings and concepts. There is no need to explain everything to them.

Hiccup Moments

Arash Shafaei, published in *The Book of the Month for Children and Adolescents*, No. 2, May 2014.

Hiccup Moments is the narratives of the friendship of two teenagers, whose rivalries and friendships form their relationship: Amin and Behrouz. Amin is the narrator of the story and Behrouz is the second boy who seems to be more successful than Amin in many perspectives. This makes Amin the narrator play some tricks along the way, although later he becomes ashamed of these tricks and harassments that are caused by jealousy.

The storyteller's friendship begins in a classroom in Shiraz, then leads the two classmates to attend a war and captivity in a prisoner of war camp. For the narrator, this friendship has always been associated with contradictory feelings of solidarity, jealousy and endless measurements and comparisons of achievements. This feeling has made the hero of the story to make perfect example of his friend and in every way, he tries to imitate this subjective image. This comparison between the self and what he has made about Behrouz, continues throughout the story, but it is at the end of the story that this logic fails, and

Amin finds that the hero, or in his own words, to be the first person, is not specified to a particular person, and everybody who has a personality can be the hero of a story.

The writer has used “hiccups” to show the fears and anxieties that exist for the main character of the story. This device has enabled the writer to sharply and effectively convey the inner fears of the main character in dangerous and perilous situations, to the reader. The main point here is that in such situations, the hero of the story is actually trapped in a caricature situation. Almost every time he is in danger, it is to show his value and courage and prove his first order personality to others. Whenever he wants to play the role of a hero, he starts hiccupping that almost everyone knows, he is afraid of something.

Hiccups always reveal his intentions to others and just when he is supposed to show his heroic aspects, he needs the help of the others for a shock to stop hiccupping. This ends his heroic actions to end ridiculously. Akbarpour is pointing to an important and tangible concern of the teenagers: the concern for showing oneself. This is the concern that makes Amin visit the heart of the battlefields, imitating heroic actions that sometimes has no good result, such as the captivating the enemy soldiers at the very base of the enemy forces, which result of him and his friend to become captivated.

The writer cutely did not leave everything to the melancholic hero of the story. Despite the fact that always Amin is ready to enter into dangerous and lethal situations in order to prove himself, he can reflect on his actions and when looking from a distance, finds that

he is never independent of help from others and especially his best friend, Behrouz. In one of the flashbacks of the story, we read that these two friends, rivals and classmates change their schools and are placed in two different classrooms. Amin with insistence asks school officials to locate him at the same class as Behrouz. In this chapter of the story, Amin confesses that he has accepted to leave the top student position to unite with Behrouz because he has always needed Behrouz and it was Behrouz who has always helped him in different situations.

The writer has a good understanding of teenagers and their world. He knows what they are thinking about at this age. This knowledge is not limited to the narrator. Behrouz, who is the second person in the story, has a significant and well-defined character.

There is yet another important point about the book, which may make it more attractive for teenagers, and it is the writer's very insistence on word economy. Akbarpour has often tried to narrate his story in the most concise and fastest possible way. Although this makes the story clearer and more straightforward and we never encounter additional scenes and descriptions, it may also be the Achilles' heel of the book. There are a lot of capacities within the story that is available for teenagers who are enjoying the excitement. An important part of the story passes through the wartime, and the teenage intend to heroically move from the enclosed area to the base of their own forces. Under the heavy fire and despite all the dangers, they even succeed in capturing the enemy's soldiers, but are eventually captured themselves and are sent to the camp of war prisoners, and the enemy intends to use

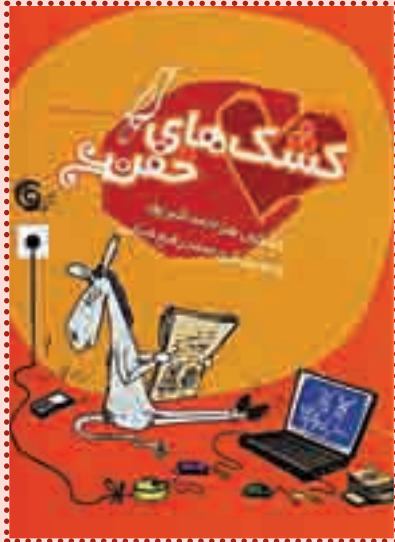
them for propaganda, but they seek to neutralize the enemy's plan. Such a great situation was a potential to make *Hiccup Moments* full of breathtaking moments to engage the teenager reader, but the writer has preferred to engage the reader with the inner struggles of the characters rather than engaging the audience external and physical clashed and conflicts.

Hot Whey

Hot Whey is Ahmad Akbarpour's comic collection of stories, in which thirty-seven works are gathering to discuss how whey is the most delicious food and that humanity is obliged to talk about it continuously.

In the collection of Akbarpour's satire, everything is found: from astronomy and meditations to university entrance exams, psychology of colors and blank verse. In different occasions, the reader is invited to listen to the laments of the foxes, elephants, donkeys, dogs, crows, sparrows and beetles and become acquainted with their special life world! Also, in other sections, the strange fictional land of 'Chachalak' is introduced where the reader is taken to the party of people and animals. The contents of the book in terms of format and language are diverse, sometimes new, sometimes repetitive, sometimes strong, and sometimes ordinary. Nothing is smooth, there are beats and oscillations in terms of subjects, ideas, qualities, and quantities.

Akbarpour is a well-known and creative writer of fiction for children and adolescents. He knows literary techniques and devices of the day very well and has a good profile on the production of humorous literary works. Therefore, when he starts writing narrative prose, he produces strong, readable and sometimes very pictorial stories. In some sections of the



book, he has applied such literary devices as inviting the reader into the story, using multiple points of view, and linguistic shifts, thus giving the satire a special literary quality and creating innovative and distinctive work.

While reading 'Myths of Chachalak Land', the reader suddenly encounters the writer who in the middle of describing the heroes, talks to the reader directly. This spacing is one of Akbarpour's literary techniques.

In different sections of the book, we see how common phrases and different proverbs are played with to create linguistic comics.

In some of the works, a poetic language is overflowing the text, making the satire very close to a poetic or literary narrative.

Akbarpour's innovative and distinctive approach has allowed him to find new points of view for some subject and invite the imagination of the reader to accompany. In 'Childish Collection' he asks what would happen if a beetle wears glasses or if a fox drives a taxi? In spite of all fluctuations, *Hot Whey* perfectly well shows how a new point of view to the subject and different construction, it is possible to present a distinctive literary work.

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