



A Study of Ecofeminism in Reza Amirkhani's *Rahesh* based on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

Environmental problems and the destruction of natural resources have become a significant concern in the modern era. The study of different aspects of these problems and their association with the fields of social sciences and humanities draw our attention to the important role mankind plays in increasing and decreasing the rate of environmental damages. Pierre Schoentjes, an environmental theorist, highlights the pivotal role of language and literature in teaching social responsibility to the next generation so as to achieve sustainable development and enhance environmental protection. Ecofeminism is an intellectual movement that sees a connection between the exploitation, degradation and empowerment of women in society; hence, the elimination of gender discrimination and inequality is directly associated with environmental protection. The present study endeavours to examine how components of ecofeminism are reflected in Reza Amirkhani's novel *Rahesh*. Building on Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis on the three levels of description, interpretation and explanation, we explore the relationship between environmental destruction and a tendency towards the dominance of men over women in a patriarchal system. The findings suggest that that a woman gives her body to the world to express her thought. The interplay between women's body and the fabric of the world and the manifestation of the world in women is a symbolic message which represents how men are unjustifiably at the top of the power hierarchy in a patriarchal society. This, in turn, has led to ruthless exploitation of natural resources.

Keywords: Fairclough, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ecofeminism, Environment, Reza Amirkhani, *Rahesh*

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The growth in urban population and its environmental outcome can be regarded as among the most serious concerns of the present century. Literature, as an

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important factor in transferring human and cultural heritage, tries to alert humans to environmental problems. In *Rahesh*, Amirkhani tries to reflect urban architectural problems and their effects on the environment and highlight the role of women in protecting the environment. In the present article, by drawing upon Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, attempt is made to examine ecofeminism and the reflection of its main components in Amirkhani's novel.

2. Theoretical Framework

According to Fairclough, discourse is the social reproduction of the relationship of hegemony, acting in an organized way in order to naturalize an ideology. Each discourse can be examined at three levels of description, vocabulary, and text. This kind of analysis tries to represent social and cultural changes and reveal the dialectical relations between signs (including language) and other components of social practices.

3. Methodology

In the present study, first, the process of selection of words and different kinds of coherence are examined in order to explain hidden ideologies and sources of power in a literary text. Different types of connection between the environment and women through the selection of words in the novel are then studied, and the formation of the ecofeminist discourse and how it is at work in this novel is examined based on gender discrimination.

4. Discussion and Analysis

The ecofeminist discourse of the text is an attempt to establish environmental justice. The discourse of the text indicates that traces of ideological patriarchal discourse can be found in the unjustifiable supremacy of men over women, animals and nature. The woman in Amirkhani's novel plays the main role in the narration, but is unable to achieve her environmental goals due to the hegemony of men. Other contemporary novelists such as Zoya Pirzad, Raziye Ansari and Sara Salar have depicted the interaction between women and nature and criticized the supremacy of men. *Rahesh* is the story of women's constant struggle to find out the meaning of life and a way to save urban environment. This novel establishes a connection between the status of women, their support for the preservation of the environment and their protest against social inequalities in Iranian society.

5. Conclusion

In the present study, ecofeminism has been examined in Amirkhani's novel *Rahesh* through content analysis based on Fairclough's approach. Through a juxtaposition of words connected, in different ways, with women, the environment, and pollution, the novelist has highlighted the relationship between them. The main

theme of *Rahesh* is the connection between men's supremacy over women and large-scale exploitation of the environment. Ecofeminism in the present novel is a tool to attract attention to the environment and the role women have played in protecting it. The novelist tries to remind us of the rights of women and the environment, and this novel is an attempt to challenge men's authority.

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