

A Butlerian Reading of Gender Narratology and Power Discourse in Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock* and Fariba Vafi's *Razi dar Koucheh-ha*

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Abstract

Inspired by Foucault, Judith Butler suggests that the structure of power is constructed and socially interconnected in a way that women are on its lowest layer. The overt and covert power systems distributed in the society deprive women of their rights. Adopting a descriptive-analytical approach, the present paper studies Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock* and Fariba Vafi's *Razi dar Koucheh-ha (A Secret in the Allies)*. The findings of the article demonstrate that Munro and Vafi expose complicated dynamic networks, revealing how women are driven back through stereotypical women's affairs. In a straightforward narration, Munro provides explanations and signs of power discourse in the lower strata of the society, inspiring women to focus on their rights. Vafi discusses the boundaries of male domination. According to Munro, literature is one of the areas which redefine hidden social and civil conflicts that have political, cultural, and even theological dimensions. In Vafi's work, this is made possible by demonstrating the skills, strengths, and abilities of women, both mentally and socially. The feminist mindset of Munro and Vafi in these collections is compatible with what is known as the three waves of feminism, but owes much to the feminist reflections of the post-structuralist scholar Judith Butler who is associated with the third wave of feminism.

Keywords: *Razi dar Koucheh-ha*, *The View from Castle Rock*, Feminism, Discourse, Patriarchy, Narratology

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Feminist movements and discussions on gender form one of the new critical perspectives in the twentieth century, which have been influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist ideas. From Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath to Rosa Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt, women writers and activists have attempted to connect literature, philosophy, and politics to gender issues as well as to the critique of male-dominated discourses. The present article tries to offer a feminist reading of Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock* and Fariba Vafi's *Razi dar Koucheh-ha (A Secret in the Allies)*. Both Munro and Vafi seem to try to reveal complicated social structures that have marginalized women through stereotypical feminine frameworks.

2. Theoretical Framework

The concept of power plays a significant role in feminist narratology. Foucault, Kristeva, and Butler believed that power is always faced with resistance and, in fact, power needs resistance in order to continue to exist. In the present article, we have adopted Judith Butler's viewpoints on feminist narratology in order to conduct a comparative research on Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock* and Fariba Vafi's *Razi dar Koucheh-ha*.

3. Methodology

In the present article, we have drawn upon a critical-analytical method to study Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock* and Fariba Vafi's *Razi dar Koucheh-ha*. We have collected relevant data on gender narratology and analyzed these two texts comparatively.

4. Findings and Discussion

In the narration of her story, Munro represents a permanent coherence in the development of feminine views, which can be similarly seen in Fariba Vafi's work. Vafi uses an intervening narrator in her *Razi dar Koucheh-ha*. Munro has also opted for the intervening narrator who seems to exhibit more interaction with the reader. Female characters in both stories give detailed accounts of their lives and freely express their emotions, making it possible for the reader to easily relate to the story and even show some kind of sympathy.

5. Conclusion

Through complex networks, Munro and Vafi demonstrate how women are rejected and marginalized in their societies. Munro represents signs and instances of power discourses in the lower classes of the society and, at the

same time, encourages women to resist them. Similarly Vafi exposes the hegemony of masculine power. In Munro's view, hidden social and civil struggles, with their political and cultural agencies, are re-configured in literature. Vafi tries to depict and underscore women's power in undermining male hegemony. Munro and Vafi's feminist mindset relies on the achievements of the three waves of feminism, but it is more indebted to the postulations put forward by the post-structuralist feminist philosopher, Judith Butler, who is associated with the third wave of feminism.

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