Literary Interdisciplinary Research, Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies (IHCS)
Biannual Journal, Vol. 7, Special Issue, 111-127
https://www.doi.org/10.30465/lir.2025.48529.1841

A Revision of War Narratives in Hasanzadeh's *This Weblog will be Transferred*

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Abstract

This article focuses on Iranian war narratives and the technique of 'writing back to history' in Hasanzadeh's *This Weblog will be Transferred* .(2015) Deploying the neo-left technique of revision and Flanagan's notion of 'technorealism ,'the writer has tried to discuss how young adult literature can reevaluate the dominant representation of the recorded history. It is argued that the production of a counter-narrative and the illustration of history from a marginalized silenced perspective of the young adult reader have enabled Hasanzadeh to reveal hidden narratives and to re-assess the dominant discourse. As one of few young adult narratives that address the subject of the Iran-Iraq War and the depth of national agony, Hasanzadeh's work distinguishes itself through its use of cyberspace in the representation of war. His work, by incarnating an online platform such as weblogs, inspires a sense of collectivity that most war narratives strive for. This sense is inspired through many intertexts woven into the fabric of the narrative. Along completing and expanding the scope of the main narrative, these intertexts incorporate an intimate tone and elicit empathy and identification from the young adult reader. Furthermore, they create a kind of multi-perspectivism that not only challenges the monolithic narrative of the war in Iran but also corrects and shapes the public's perception of the impacts of war on a nation. The result is an alternative vision of the past that fights the misuse of national memory and the creation of a better sense of the inherited world for young adult reader.

Keywords: writing back, technorealism, polyphony, sense of collectivity, war narratives, Hasanzadeh.

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Date received: 16/03/2025, Date of acceptance: 13/09/2025

1. Introduction

The inclusion of war as a subject in children's literature has long been a matter of debate. Many critics, such as Ursula K. Le Guin and Eric Kimmel, consider the topic too difficult or view the portrayal of human suffering as ethically problematic. From their perspective, narratives of war cannot effectively promote the classical doctrine of didacticism in children's literature. Furthermore, given the horror and misery intrinsic to such stories, the element of entertainment—often central to children's books—appears incompatible with war literature. In contrast, scholars including Kem Knapp Sawyer, Jennifer Armstrong, Kate Agnew, and Geoff Fox argue that the depiction of war in children's literature can serve a valuable purpose: it provides a safe and mediated way for young readers to confront and understand the realities of evil and violence in the world:

> *Children must be made aware of the evils of the past and the courage with which those evils were often confronted. Moreover, young readers need narratives that explore the nature and experience of war if they are to make sense of the world they have inherited and the future they must face* (2001: 79).

Besides, as American author Jennifer Armstrong notes, this kind of literature encourages children to avoid war in the future:

> *If we don't encounter war in the safe way, by experiencing it through literature and art, how will we be moved to avoid the real thing?* (2002: 2).

In addition to raising awareness, another reason some critics regard war as an appropriate subject for children's literature is the prevalence and inevitability of war, particularly in the twentieth century. For children with traumatic experiences, war narratives can, in Vivian's view, provide an opportunity

> *to articulate their fears and concerns about trauma and to name their pain and aspirations* (2016: 122).

Such opportunities can, in fact, relieve them of the burden of long-suppressed feelings. This therapeutic quality of war literature stems from the connection between trauma and narrative. As Cathy Caruth observes,

> *It is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is otherwise not available* (2016: 4).

Given this feature, the proliferation of children's literature about war is not surprising, considering the number of wars in the twentieth century. However, an increase in the quantity of war stories does not mean that they all approach the subject in the same way. On the contrary, war narratives appear in a wide range of formats, genres, and styles. As Peter Hunt notes, they treat the subject in different ways, offering readers themes such as *"the mythologizing of war," "the stereotyping of national and individual characteristics,"* or the depiction of its horrors (2004: 502–503). In some stories, war serves merely as a backdrop against which writers explore human relationships or socio-political philosophies. In others, the narrative reflects the trauma and pain that children have suffered, or the displacement they have experienced.

In Iran, due to the Eight-Year War between Iran and Iraq, the number of war narratives is considerable. Like their Western counterparts, these narratives present the theme of war in different ways: some address war, heroism, and sacrifice directly, while others place the war in the background and concentrate on its aftermath. Farhad Hasanzadeh's award-winning young adult novel *This Weblog Will Be Transferred* (WWBT) is one of the most recent examples of war literature in Iran. The novel has gained remarkable popularity among the younger generation and has been reprinted seven times. This success has drawn the attention of critics, who have approached Hasanzadeh's work from different perspectives. For instance, Ghiyasi and Kamalabadi (2015) conducted an intertextual analysis, examining the concepts of paratext and intertext in the novel. Moradi (2022) offered a Lacanian reading, discussing the notion of individuality in Hasanzadeh's work. Similarly, Taheri (2022) explored the innovations that cyberspace introduces for young adult readers. However, no study has yet examined the representation of war in Hasanzadeh's novel, nor has any research focused on the role of cyberspace in conveying this theme.

Thus, as a journey into the past, Hasanzadeh's work appears markedly different from classical war narratives, despite sharing thematic elements such as postwar nostalgia for lost loved ones and the premature maturity imposed on young characters. This paper therefore focuses on Hasanzadeh's *This Weblog Will Be Transferred*. Drawing on Flanagan's notion of technorealism and the neo-left strategy of "writing back," it examines the novel's distinctive thematic and textual techniques in representing the concept of war. The study also considers how Hasanzadeh's work—by foregrounding neglected perspectives—constructs an

alternative account of the war and offers a counter-narrative to the narrow, state-centered definition of the Eight-Year War in Iran. Furthermore, it explores how these alternative accounts are mediated through Hasanzadeh's simulation of cyberspace and his fusion of past and present within the narrative structure.

2. Discussion

2.1 This Weblog Will Be Transferred

The opening of *This Weblog Will Be Transferred* establishes the contemporary dimension of Hasanzadeh's narrative. The novel begins with an introductory chapter dated June 27, 2012, which presents sixteen-year-old Dorna, an aspiring writer. Driven by her passion for writing, Dorna starts a blog, where she begins composing a story titled *A Bunch of Keys*. In this introduction, she addresses her weblog readers (and, by extension, the novel's audience), explaining that they will read a romance: "a story of a man's love towards a woman" (Hasanzadeh 8). She further emphasizes that the story is based on real events, recounting the life of a bookstore owner, Zal Zakeri. Dorna chooses to share the narrative online with the aim of helping Zal reconnect with his long-lost love after thirty years.

The concluding section of *This Weblog Will Be Transferred* returns to the present-day setting. Dorna informs her readers of the need to transfer the weblog due to Zal's complaint. Between these framing moments, she recounts Zal's life story. The novel's structure resembles a story-within-a-story, a technique further enhanced by the contributions of the weblog's readers, who share their own narratives. This metafictional approach is also emphasized through the descriptive chapter headings, which interweave multiple texts into the narrative fabric. Such structural strategies lend the novel an episodic rhythm and sustain the reader's engagement throughout the story.

As the narrative unfolds, the reader gains insight into the conditions of the Iran-Iraq War through both the main storyline and the accounts contributed by readers in the commentary section at the end of each chapter. The central narrative follows Zal, a teenage boy from Abadan who comes from a poor family and works as a shop assistant for Ghader the Canary, a local bird dealer. Isolated and friendless, Zal's plight elicits the compassion of Touran, a woman in the neighborhood. Touran, who lives in Abadan with her two daughters, Fariba and Fereshteh, while her husband works in one of the Gulf States, extends to Zal the maternal care he has long been deprived of. Deeply moved by Touran's kindness, Zal feels a strong sense of

obligation and seeks to repay her through small acts, such as running errands or performing odd jobs. Over time, these daily interactions foster a deeper attachment, and Zal gradually falls in love with Fariba, Touran's elder daughter.

Although the young reader may be eager to follow Zal's one-sided love for Fariba, the romance is abruptly interrupted by the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War. With the onset of hostilities, Zal's moments of happiness are shattered. Touran and her daughters decide to leave Abadan and move to Borazjan to live with Touran's sister. Their departure leaves Zal deprived of both emotional support and affection. The only source of hope he clings to is the bunch of house keys Touran entrusted to him on the day she left, asking him to care for her home during her absence. After their departure, only a few residents remain to defend Khorramshahr against the advancing enemy, while others flee the city. Ghader is among those leaving; he and two other men try to convince Zal to accompany them. Zal, however, expresses his desire to join the combatants, but Ghader opposes the idea. Determined to take Zal with them, Ghader ties his hands and drives him away. Along the way, their van comes under fire from Iraqi forces and overturns. While Ghader and the others manage to escape, Zal, who was at the back of the van, is presumed dead and left behind. Covered in blood, Zal survives and struggles to free himself from under the vehicle. As he emerges, he witnesses Iraqi soldiers pursuing Ghader and his companions—and, to his shock, sees an Iraqi soldier approaching him directly:

> I heard a rustling sound and suddenly turned around, even though I shouldn't have. I didn't understand the sound. Through my slightly open eyelids, I saw an Iraqi soldier coming towards me. [. . .] I played possum. [. . .] I wanted to scream and beg him not to kill me. I wasn't even worth being killed. I wasn't worth being captured. [. . .] He drew in a quick breath, took the gun from his shoulder, and pointed it at my face. A smile appeared on his chubby face, as if he was recalling a funny memory. [. . .] I was stunned, and stared into his eyes, frightened. [. . .] He pointed the barrel at my face, and his finger touched the trigger. (Hasanzadeh 2015, 126–127)

The Iraqi soldier terrifies Zal but ultimately does not shoot him, allowing him to survive. This encounter reinforces the complex and ambivalent image of Iraqi soldiers in the narrative. Although the soldier leaves Zal behind, he remains tied up. In a moment of insight, Zal notices Touran's house keys and attempts to use them to free himself, a gesture that deepens the symbolic significance of the keys. Thirty

years later, Zal still cherishes the hope of Touran's return, even if it seems unlikely. Observing Zal's desperation, Dorna decides to recount this event in her weblog to assist him. Her mission is fulfilled when she receives an email from Fariba asking her to inform Zal of her marriage. With this communication, Zal's love story reaches its resolution, and the weblog can finally be transferred.

2.2 Hasanzadeh and Writing Back to History

Although the theme of love—particularly from the perspective of a teenage boy—is engaging enough to attract young readers, it is Hasanzadeh's construction of an alternative war narrative that gives his work broader appeal. While Dorna, despite the warnings of two weblog viewers, employs some familiar tropes of Iranian war narratives—such as stock characters like Seyed Reza and the motif of an improbable love story—her narrative, as other viewers including Uncle Mehran observe, is "unlike anything we've seen or heard before" (Hasanzadeh 2015, 29). This distinction arises from Hasanzadeh's narrative strategy: writing back to history. By framing a public event—the Iran-Iraq War—through the lens of private consciousness, Hasanzadeh offers a counter-narrative that challenges conventional historiography. As Charlotte Beyer notes, "writing back refers to the process through which literary texts challenge and reassess dominant representations of history, by addressing the perspectives of those who have been marginalized" (2021, 5).

As a historical narrative, Hasanzadeh's work preserves the lived experience of an adolescent boy; it represents the experience of war and paves the way for a new version of collective memory, which "provides the basis for imagining a different kind of historical memory" (Crane, 1376). Peter Widdowson (2006), in his discussion of historical narratives, focuses on the root of the word *history* and notes that in the past it referred both to a narrative of past events and to any narrative or tale. It was only around the fifteenth century that "'history' comes to mean 'an account of past real events,' but 'story' includes 'less formal accounts of past events and accounts of imagined events'" (Widdowson, 2006: 493). However, this history, to use Raymond Williams's term, is the "selective tradition" (1982: 325); that is, it is constructed by the dominant group, which writes history while excluding or silencing the experiences of ordinary people. To give voice to such experiences, writers produce historical novels that "offer an account of the past which purports to be true – often, indeed, one which claims to correct, amplify or substitute for authorized History, but which is simultaneously sharply self-conscious about its own

representation of that 'truth'" (Widdowson, 2006: 495). Using fiction as a vehicle for history, novelists "explore how the scars of the past persist into the present, [and] how the past's presence in the present determines the nature of that present" (Widdowson, 2006: 492). Through the act of writing back, this presence of the past—as constructed in the consciousness of individuals—is questioned. Writing back thus draws attention to the history represented in the literary text and "invites the reader to experience the past through the eyes of a character or characters. It [also] provides an imitation of memory, rather than displaying actual memories as a diary or documentary would" (Gamble, 2013: 154–55). Such imitation, in Anastasia Ulanowicz's terms, is "second-generation memory," by which she means,

This type of memory, according to Ulanowicz, can

> not only refer to the vicarious memories of the children of Holocaust survivors—Jewish and non-Jewish—but also serve as a form of collective memory that involves an individual's conscious incorporation of her elders' memories of a traumatic past within her own mnemonic repertoire.

alike—but also to those formulated by children of other historical traumas" (Ulanowicz, 2013: 10). These memories are generally transmitted "as a hidden narrative physically needing to be uncovered, only to be read after," a process often represented through "the motif of unwrapping a parcel" (Beyer, 2021: 131). This hidden knowledge is then reassessed from a fresh perspective, prompting both the character and the reader to embark on a quest to uncover the past. Alongside this search for historical understanding, other marginalized narratives emerge. As these mysteries are revealed, the perceptual frameworks of both character and reader are profoundly transformed. By revisiting a previous historical era in post-Revolution Iran, Hasanzadeh paves the way for the emergence of "alternative histories," to use Gamble's term, while simultaneously advancing the didactic objectives he may have embraced as a writer. As Lucas (2003) notes: "children's writers, in presenting the past, often communicate opinions. These opinions tend to be relevant to their own era rather than the one described; such narrators are indeed didactic for they aim to teach a better future" (xvii). Indeed, Hasanzadeh's effort reflects the reality for many, including the new generation:

> [T]he world and society had to be rebuilt; much of the past was gone—its material evidence obliterated—except in memory, and memory as a device in literature increased in significance as the twentieth century progressed.

> Alongside the postwar atmosphere of joyous relief and optimistic innovation, there was a sadder, more doubting, more nostalgic culture which was sensitive and speculative. Nowhere is this culture expressed more pervasively and persuasively than in narratives for children written in the aftermath of the war (Thaler, 2003: 3–4).

In Hasanzadeh's narrative, the reader encounters a similar situation. In addition to the mainframe story of Dorna, an adolescent girl aspiring to practice storytelling, the reader is introduced to Zal's story as well as to numerous other narratives that have never before had the opportunity to be told or shared. All of these hidden narratives are

[U]ncovered, only to be read after their death. As the novel enacts its own textual strategy through the motif of unwrapping a parcel, the reader comes to appreciate both the significance of this act and the effort required to reveal hidden narratives—and the cost at which they are unveiled (Beyer, 2021: 131).

Some of these stories even disclose new information that alters one's perception of past lives, as in the case of Latifeh's admitted secret love for Zal—a fact of which he had been completely unaware.

"Unwrapping a parcel" is the narrative technique Hasanzadeh employs in his novel. As Dorna recounts, she stumbles upon the life story of Zal, the bookstore owner, while searching for a magazine to see whether her story has been published. When she finds her name mentioned only in the "Received Stories" section, Dorna feels unappreciated and decides to distract herself by examining the old books piled at the back of the store. There, she discovers an old cage containing a notebook instead of a bird. The brownish pages and worn leather cover pique her curiosity. Despite Zal's initial reluctance, Dorna's determination prevails, and she takes the notebook home. At home, Dorna learns that the notebook is a memoir, recounting events from roughly thirty years earlier when Zal was a young adult. The story moves her deeply, prompting her to help Zal reunite with his long-lost love, Fariba, by sharing the narrative online: "I wondered if I could kill two birds with one stone; I could write an awesome story in an awesome weblog and let a thirty-and-odd-year-old secret slip. Who knows? Fariba might show up after all" (Hasanzadeh, 2015: 17). Motivated by this quest to reconnect Zal with his beloved, Dorna's narrative transports the reader back thirty years, to the time when Iraq attacked southwestern Iran.

This mystery gradually unravels through the various narratives contributed by weblog viewers. Dorna structures her storytelling so that the slow revelation of Zal's

difficult life remains central to the plot. At the same time, her engagement with the past brings to light numerous previously untold stories. In doing so, her narrative highlights issues of national scope by portraying the havoc the war wreaked and the wounds it inflicted, particularly on women and young adults. Rather than mythologizing the war, the narrative exposes its grim realities—separation, death, dislocation, migration, captivity, homelessness, and trauma—from an adolescent's perspective. It further provides space for silenced voices, repressed desires, fractured families, and lived pain. One weblog viewer recalls a harrowing episode:

One of the memories I remember is about a minibus full of hospital staff that were captured by Iraqi soldiers on their way to work. One of our relatives was also in that minibus (Hasanzadeh, 2015: 114).

Another viewer, Arash, responds to Zal's story of lost love by sharing the moving account of a woman in Khorramshahr whose fiancé was killed in the war, yet who continues to wait at the train station every morning for his return. Similarly, Qasimzadeh recounts the desperate conditions of displacement:

One of our relatives couldn't even take a suitcase with him. He left the city empty-handed. He was from Khorramshahr (Hasanzadeh, 2015: 37).

These embedded recollections of horror, loss, and dispossession enable Hasanzadeh to represent only a few of the countless wounds inflicted on Iranians during the eight-year war, while simultaneously situating Zal's personal story within a broader collective memory of trauma.

An important feature of these narratives is their ability to provide readers with graphic accounts of war. The detailed descriptions of scenes in which Zal is directly involved are rendered so vividly that weblog viewers report being profoundly moved: *"I can put myself in Zal's shoes and identify with him"* or *"When I read this, I felt so sad and wept afterwards"* (Hasanzadeh, 2015: 139). This vividness is further enhanced by the intimate tone of a young adult narrator, through which all these events are conveyed. Such intimacy proves indispensable to an authentic rendering of history, as it elicits empathy from the reader (Beyer, 2021: 5). It is precisely this sense of empathy that Hasanzadeh seeks to cultivate in his young adult audience, thereby fostering a renewed sense of nationalism in a generation otherwise far removed from the lived realities of war.

The outcome of this quest, both for Dorna and for the readers, is the realization that war is not a mono-dimensional concept. Beyond the nationalism embodied by

figures such as Seyed Reza, Parviz the barber, and even Zal, war encompasses a spectrum of devastating experiences: the loss of loved ones, imprisonment, mutilation, espionage, forced migration, environmental destruction, and psychological trauma. Hasanzadeh employs this recognition to place a form of subjective responsibility on the young adult reader. At the same time, he underscores the democratization of social memory by providing an outlet for diverse war narratives through Dorna's weblog:

As Yerushalmi warns,

For the world in which we live, there is no longer merely a question of the decay of collective memory and the declining consciousness of the past, but of the aggressive rape of whatever memories remain, the deliberate distortion of the historical record, the invention of mythological past (2011: 197).

In this way, Hasanzadeh transfers the collective memory that "maintains the lived experience of individuals within groups" into the broader historical memory of a nation (Crane, 1997: 1391). At the same time, by narrating Zal's story alongside the memories contributed by the weblog viewers, he constructs multiple pasts that both complicate and enrich Iran's historical memory of the war.

Consequently, Hasanzadeh's rereading of a historical event such as war not only preserves collective memory but also transmits it to a younger generation living at a temporal and experiential distance from the conflict. At the same time, he resists the misuse of national memory by offering readers a holistic picture of war that is not confined to idealized scenes of heroic men and women. Instead, he depicts how the war shattered countless dreams, inflicted deep psychological trauma, and forced millions into exile. Moreover, Hasanzadeh challenges the monophonic narratives of war that have traditionally framed national defense as exclusively an adult concern. By giving voice to adolescents, he highlights the significant roles they can play in grappling with social and national issues.

2.3 Technorealism in Hasanzadeh's War Literature

In addition to evoking broader themes such as collectivity, Hasanzadeh's narrative distinguishes itself from other war accounts through its technorealist form. His use of cyberspace creates, in Flanagan's words,

a new system of social institutions and discourses within which to explore the development of subjectivity and the conditions for achieving subjective agency (2014: 107).

In this space, young adults are able to become socially and politically active, participate in reshaping their world, and contribute to the promotion of gender equality. By presenting subjectivity as both networked and collective, Hasanzadeh's narrative underscores the empowering potential of digital platforms to encourage community building and collaborative agency.

These acts of collaboration and networking are precisely what the reader encounters in Hasanzadeh's novel. Dorna, as a blogger, uses this virtual arena to address social issues and become actively engaged in public life—an opportunity that would be less accessible to her in the real world. In pursuing these objectives, she embarks on a quest not only to discover the owner of the keys that have remained with Zal for more than thirty years but also to heal the enduring psychological and emotional wounds the war has inflicted upon people. Moreover, without the existence of cyberspace, Dorna—as a teenage girl—would have had little chance to become the heroine of a war narrative, given the conventional assumptions surrounding war stories. Indeed, Hasanzadeh's choice of a female narrator aligns the novel with the new opportunities that digital spaces provide for female creativity, for the triumph of feminine resilience over masculine endurance, and for the inversion of traditional conceptions of heroism. As Johnson et al. observe,

Novels and picture books that portray children taking action for social change in local and global settings are a source of demonstrations of authentic social action and children's rights and responsibilities. [These] books . . . focus on children who live in situations where they fear for their safety or are concerned for the well-being of others. They are willing to engage in the "risky business" of activism with others in order to transform their lives or the world in some way, rather than wait for adults. These books provide demonstrations that children, not just adults, are responsible for and capable of social action. (2017: 154)

In Hasanzadeh's narrative, a girl takes the leading role—rescuing rather than being rescued. This narrative pattern, therefore, functions as a call to challenge the predetermined social hierarchies that have traditionally portrayed young adults—especially females—as a vulnerable and socially passive generation in constant need of parental and societal protection.

At the same time, the choice of cyberspace redefines the classic genre of romance—as a narrative of a teenage boy's adventure and puppy love—and brings to the fore more serious issues of national significance through the various narratives provided by weblog viewers. In other words, by mimicking the structure of online

weblogs, Hasanzadeh's narrative synthesizes elements of romance and war literature through a technorealist structure and thus attempts to "recreate a digital environment within the traditional format of the printed book" (Flanagan, 2014: 164). It does so by "mimic[ing] the structural conventions of chat rooms and message boards, where multiple individuals post synchronous messages and interact with each other in a collective space" (Flanagan, 2014: 163). Such imitations are evident in Hasanzadeh's work in the color of the printed pages (light gray), in the language, in the page layout, and in the electronic signs (#, @, ♫) and emoticons (☺) used throughout the text. However, these imitations are not limited to the formal features of the narrative. Along with this "range of linguistic and graphic techniques that mimic the use of online social media such as blogs, instant messages, chat rooms, and message boards," many remarkable textual innovations are introduced, such as "fragmented narratives, polyfocalised narration, genre mixing, and linguistic and typographic experimentation" (Flanagan, 2014: 9). This feature leads to the destabilization of the dichotomy between virtual and material reality. Once this dichotomy is disrupted, virtual space is recognized as a real domain that fosters the creation of social bonds and identity development.

Through his adoption of a technorealistic style, Hasanzadeh's narrative also provides a "primary site of communication and peer interaction for adolescent subjects" (Flanagan, 2014: 163). By indirectly introducing the topic of the Eight-Year War on this platform, he creates a space for identity formation, national collectivity, and belonging—cultivated through a sense of nostalgia and collective memory. These sentiments are further reinforced through the mobilization of collective voices and the incorporation of diverse discourses, both made possible by the technorealist style.

In general, it can be concluded that the digital sphere, owing to its interactive nature, allows multiple voices to be heard and multiple perspectives to be shared. Thus, a technorealist war narrative not only conveys the themes typical of conventional war narratives in a more innovative and affective manner but also creates a dialogic, heteroglossic atmosphere of diverse discourses that distinguishes it from the male-dominated war narratives of the past.

2.4 Narrative: Voice, Characterization, and Perspective

In his discussion on the construction of the novel, Bakhtin describes the effect of heteroglossia as the product of "using different repertoires of stylistic features,

correlating with different situations or uses of language" (in McHale, 2004: 166). When this "interweaving of different registers in the text of the novel . . . serves as the vehicle for the confrontation and dialogue among worldviews and ideologies in the novel," it orchestrates a "polyphony of voices" (McHale, 2004: 166). 'Polyphony' is one of the most remarkable features of a technorealist work; in Victoria Flanagan's view, narratives that "seek to adopt online modes of expression and communication . . . are 'polyphonic,' offering readers multiple character perspectives" (2014: 164). In contrast to conventional polyfocalized novels, in which an event is narrated alternately by different characters, in a technorealist narrative multiple voices are heard simultaneously regarding a single event. This feature creates a dialogic atmosphere, which can be reinforced through the use of distinct typographical fonts for different characters; for instance, to convey Zal's strong negative reaction to Dorna's request, Hasanzadeh uses a different font size: "No" (Hasanzadeh, 2015: 12). This variation in typographical font allows the reader to distinguish between characters and their emotions, embodying the polyphonic and participatory nature of online social media.

The use of different languages, such as Persian, Arabic, and English, also signals polyphony in Hasanzadeh's narrative and broadens its potential readership. The same applies to the incorporation of other genres of discourse, including poetry, pop songs, tales, and historical texts. The introduction of these diverse discourses not only challenges the homogeneity typically expected from a war narrative but also constructs an incongruous, decentered world. Such incongruity is further reinforced by Hasanzadeh's use of 'anti-language,' or a particular language employed by a specific social group. The term anti-language is used because this form of speech usually deviates from the standard language of contemporary society. In Hasanzadeh's narrative, the strategy of anti-language is developed through the voices of Ghader and Dorna. Ghader introduces a Southwestern accent filled with the jargon of bird dealers, while Dorna employs the language of Iranian youth subculture, which incorporates foreign (English) words, newly coined Persian terms, and Latinized Persian words created by adding Farsi suffixes and prefixes to English nouns, verbs, or adjectives—for instance, "typication" (تایپیدن) and "publicationing" (بچاپونه).

This technique produces a multilingual text that represents different social classes, groups, and geographic regions. The text challenges standard language and literary genres by promoting heterogeneity and multiplicity. It also questions the established boundaries and the monologic atmosphere of official war narratives by

disrupting them. Another feature that contributes to the dialogic nature of Hasanzadeh's work is the juxtaposition of the female voice and creativity with the traditionally masculine narrative of war and heroism. Dorna emerges as a female hero who rescues Zal from a prolonged sense of grief, rather than conforming to the stereotypical female role of waiting to be rescued.

The resulting polyphony challenges the all-knowing, god-like narrator typical of official war narratives by rendering the war narrative more lifelike, believable, affective, and impactful. It also contests the linear style of realist war narratives, presenting a non-linear pattern that makes reading a challenging yet engaging task—a form of discovery—and transforms the pursuit of the plot into an appealing adventure for young readers. This complexity is generated through viewers' comments in the chat box and results in the "heterogeneity of authorship," which removes the notion of centeredness from Hasanzadeh's writing and emphasizes reality as a multifaceted concept that cannot be reduced to a single perspective.

> Every language in the novel is a point of view, a socio-ideological conceptual system of real social groups and their embodied representatives. […] Any point of view on the world that is fundamental to the novel must be a concrete, socially embodied perspective, not an abstract, purely semantic position; it must, consequently, have its own language with which it is organically united. A novel is constructed not on abstract differences in meaning nor merely on narrative collisions, but on concrete social speech diversity (Bakhtin, 1982: 411–12).

Such concreteness is later described by Bakhtin as 'heteroglossia.' By heteroglossia, he refers to the use of different stylistic features as well as variations in language usage (i.e., "registers," from Halliday's perspective). In Hasanzadeh's work, this heteroglossia is established through the presence of approximately thirty-five characters in the role of weblog viewers—most of whom are unknown to Dorna. Of course, the individual identities of these characters seem largely irrelevant, since most are identified not by name but by a number or an attribute (such as the Faithful, the Big Footed, the Born in October, and so on). This variety of naming procedures underscores that the characters' identities are not central to the progression of the narrative; they appear in the story to make their points and then disappear. Thus, in addition to the main narrators—Dorna and Zal—each chapter contains several other minor narrators who exist solely to tell their own stories. The

anonymity afforded by the digital sphere allows these characters to express their long-suppressed pain, trauma, or private feelings. These public confessions, particularly those of female characters, represent one of the most significant innovations in young adult technorealist novels. In Iranian literature, direct access to the unconscious of characters—especially female characters—has traditionally been rare due to the cultural and social stereotypes embedded in classical narratives. In contrast, Hasanzadeh's narrative contains numerous short tales that respond sincerely to what Dorna has just written, such as unrequited love or the calamities of war. Among these tales, the most poignant belongs to Latifeh, the sister of Zal's friend. Latifeh is active in cyberspace under a gender-neutral e-identity, The Familiar Stranger. This e-identity enables her not only to publicly acknowledge her long-suppressed passion for Zal after thirty years but also to request that Dorna deliver her message of love to him.

> A person without an anchor belongs nowhere. I want to get rid of this condition. I'd like to take Latifeh with me one day, get in a car, and drive from Isfahan back to Abadan… Maybe these things don't make sense to your generation; I don't care. I want golden bangles, the kind that jingle. Tell her… dear Dorna. If you see him [Zal] again, tell him this… (Hasanzadeh, 2015: 143)

In addition to enriching the main plot and enhancing the polyphonic nature of the work, these tales impart an aesthetic quality described as rhizomatic:

> This rhizomorphic domain of self-expression gives rise to multilogues, which in turn helps children and young adults to find communities of common interest and concern across geographic boundaries. The multi-logical, communitarian, interactive assertion of the reader-as-author and reader-as-participant is a key component in the new aesthetic in children's literature (Burnett and Dresang, 429).

This rhizomatic quality, then, challenges "the simplifications of war in mass media, where it is often a recurring theme in popular, violent movies and computer games that focus on entertainment rather than representing the pointlessness of war" (Świetlicki, 2018: 126). Moreover, it broadens the young reader's understanding of war, portraying it as a more complex issue than a mere act of attack, self-defense, or martyrdom.

3. Conclusion

Hasanzadeh's work is a multi-layered narrative that writes back to history to challenge the one-dimensional representation of war. His is a counter-narrative that employs a story-within-a-story technique to construct a more sophisticated image of war and to rescue it from the monological reading that dominates classical war narratives. Thus, Hasanzadeh's main contribution to young adult war literature, in addition to providing a holistic image of war, is his emphasis on the notions of collectivity, "difference," and dialogism.

As a space where different characters are heard, various opinions are shared, multiple languages are practiced, and diverse people are brought into contact, Hasanzadeh's novel creates a heteroglossic platform where everyone is free to speak for themselves. It is precisely because of this dialogical ambience—reinforced by a technorealist structure—that Hasanzadeh's work appeals to young adult readers and helps them trace the roots of war and violence to rigid binaries and the inflexible demarcation of people. In reality, the boundaries between friend and enemy, male and female, adult and child are blurred.

Ultimately, Hasanzadeh's work seeks to convey that love, peace, and tranquility emerge from the collapse of binaries and the acceptance of heterogeneity and difference. If people are given the right to be different and the opportunity to be heard, wars can be avoided altogether.

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