



Semiotic Analysis of the Title of “Al-Qatil Al-Ashqar” by Tariq Bekari

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Objectives

The title is one of the most important signs in a literary work. The “title” of a literary work constitutes its identity. Every smart author strives to choose a beautiful, purposeful, attractive, and symbolic “title” to convey a major part of concepts, intentions, and general domains, as well as the main message of the work on the cover design; i.e., authors aim to express a world of words and messages in the form of a short title or a graphic/symbolic and mysterious design. The title of the novel “Al-Ghatil Al-Ashghar” is rich in signs intelligently included in the work. The title in this novel is investigated to answer the questions on codes in the title, express the link between the title and the main and final message of the author, and the reasons why the author has selected these two words.

Materials and Procedure

This paper used a semiotic approach and the content analysis method, and aimed to analyze the title of the “Al-Ghatil Al-Ashghar” novel to deal with the literary nuances of this work and the concept latent in it. This study fell under documentary and library research.

Findings

Besides its apparent meaning, the word “Al-Ghatil” refers to deadly incidents such as childhood rapes, emotional harms, the loss of honor concerning the veil, identity crisis, etc., and also to incidents that have destroyed a part of Ashghar’s character. As well, the word “Ashghar” may symbolically imply the stigma caused by illegitimacy, specificity, and concepts whose relationship and association with “Al-Ghatil” justify this. In this work, Tariq artistically depicts Ashghar’s transforming character into a cold-blooded killer and his joining the ISIL. The author includes various linguistic signs to unveil the identity crisis and moral corruption of ISIL’s commanders.

Conclusion

The title is an inseparable part of a literary work that involves a world of signs and meanings. Each part of the title of the work is stated by an author which conveys a specific meaning.

In the end, using semiology in analyses and reading the title “Al-Ghatil Al-Ashghar”, the following results were noted.

The words in the title are selected by the author based on a specific goal, with each involving both apparent and allegorical, and symbolic meanings, used in a framework of signs. Besides its apparent meaning, the word “Al-Ghatil” refers to incidents that have destroyed a part of Ashghar’s character; for instance, childhood rapes, emotional harms, the loss of honor concerning veils, identity crisis, etc., which have severely affected Ashghar’s identity. This is what the author Bekari interpreted as killing. The word “Ashghar” has positive and negative semantic aspects. Symbolically, it may also imply the stigma from illegitimacy, specificity, and concepts of this kind.

This word also has a symbolic meaning that justifies its association with “Al-Ghatil”. On the other hand, his red hair refers to the severity of a bloodthirsty character that has engulfed all of his body. This word also refers to being different and distinguished from others, who have joined ISIL out of ignorance. In general, all codes and symbols in the title and the association of these two words with each other have served the main intention of the author and revealed the brutality and savagery of ISIL’s leaders.

Keywords: *semiotics, illustrative signs, title, Tariq Bekri, Al-Ghatil Al-Ashghar.*



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Moroccan author, Tariq Bekari (1988), is a talented writer who scrutinizes a significant part of the problems affecting the Moroccan and Arab-Islamic societies with his eloquent writing style. The novel “Al-Qatil Al-Ashqar” is one of his prominent works, which depicts anomalies including the prevalence of prostitution, identity crisis, and murder. The title of this work is full of cleverly-chosen signs. In this article, the authors try to analyze the signs in the title of the novel “Al-Qatil Al-Ashqar” with the semiotic method. The results show that the word “Al-Qatil” in addition to its apparent meaning refers to fatal incidents including childhood rapes, emotional damage, loss of dignity concerning shama, identity crisis, and other painful incidents that destroyed a part of Ashqar's personality. In addition, the word Al-Ashqar can symbolically refer to the stigma caused by illegitimacy, specialness, and similar concepts, which is justified by companionship with “Al-Qatil”. In this work, Bekari artistically depicts the transformation of Ashqar's character into a vampire killer and his joining ISIS. In fact, by including various linguistic signs, the author tries to reveal the identity crisis and moral corruption of ISIS leaders.

Keywords: semiotics, visual signs, title, Tariq Bekari, Al-Qatal Al-Ashqar



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