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Osmaniye Korkut Ata University

Department of English Language and Literature
&
Modernism and Postmodernism Studies Network

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Bariş Ağır

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Introduction

International Modernism and Postmodernism Studies 2022 was held online by Osmaniye Korkut Ata University and Modernism and Postmodernism Studies Network, Türkiye on 18-19 October 2022. Conference 2022 brought together numerous scholars from Türkiye and abroad.

Modernism, postmodernism and the related processes, which have had pivotal role in the fields of fine arts, literature, sociology, geography, philosophy and politics, still continue to fuel discussions among the scholars from these fields today. The fields of study highly influenced by these concepts have not only been in a continual dialogue with each other but also have deeply shaped the orientations of each other. Accordingly, the papers presented in the conference did not only address to the audience from their fields only; they broadened the horizons of the scholars from the other fields, as well.

In the conference, 57 papers, in English and Turkish languages, were presented. In addition to these presentations, two distinguished scholars delivered keynote speeches in the conference. Sid Dobrin from University of Florida and Ahmet Dağ from Uludağ University contributed to the conference with their keynote speeches entitled “Environmental Humanities in the Metaverse: Considerations of Crash” and “Four Centuries of Thought of Humanity (1620-2022): Modernism-Postmodernism-Trans-Posthumanism”, respectively. In addition to keynote addresses, a special session on ecopoetry was held.

The Book of Proceedings consists of only some of the papers presented in the conference.

We are deeply indebted to the academic staff of the department of English Language and Literature at Osmaniye Korkut Ata University and to the members of Modernism and Postmodernism Studies Network in Türkiye.

İsmail Serdar ALTAÇ
Head of Organizing Committee

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	V
Chapter 1	
The Reflection of Art in <i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> : Healing and Transformative Power of Art on Stephen Dedalus <i>Ayşegül Yenice Ay</i>	1
Chapter 2	
<i>The Good Soldier</i> : An Ambiguous Tale <i>Ceren Turan Yalçın</i>	11
Chapter 3	
Towards a New Understanding of Consciousness: Don DeLillo's <i>Zero K</i> and Jeanette Winterson's <i>12 Bytes</i> <i>Cristina Arbués Caballé</i>	19
Chapter 4	
The Modes of Female Power and Urban Space in Amy Levy's Poetry <i>Emre Çakar</i>	29
Chapter 5	
The Metamorphoses of Non-human Entities from Disposable Bodies in <i>Never Let Me Go</i> towards Agentic Counterparts in <i>Klara and the Sun</i> <i>Mahinur Gözde Kasurka</i>	39
Chapter 6	
The Unknown within the Evident: The Red Wheelbarrow <i>Mehmet Burak Ev</i>	50

Chapter 7

From Romanticism to Modernism in English Poetry: Tennyson, Browning, and Hopkins as Figures of Transition

Mustafa Canlı 56

Chapter 8

Distancing and Alienation as Interpretative Paradigms Contemporaneity

Orazio Marie Gnerre 64

Chapter 9

Postmodern Character along the Möbius Strip: Ed Thomas's Stone City Blue

Rıza Çimen..... 77

Chapter10

A Magical Historicity of the Marginal: The Postmodern Concern of Magical Realism in Sema Kaygusuz's Trauma Narrative *Yüzünde Bir Yer*

Selis Yıldız Şen..... 89

Chapter 1

The Reflection of Art in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: Healing and Transformative Power of Art on Stephen Dedalus

Ayşegül Yenice Ay

James Joyce's perfect ability in using language especially in a poetic way is obvious in his works. It is clear from his ideas in *Critical Writings* that he is highly influenced by Wagner, Ibsen, Shakespeare; in many aspects of art from music to drama. Influenced deeply by philology, Joyce has special interest in words. "Although Joyce's lack of interest in painting is well known, his use of imagery is very much like such painters as Cezanne and Diebenkorn (Levit 300). Indeed, his artistic inclination cannot be ignored in his modernist literary work *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Along with the allusion to Shelly and Byron, scattered pieces of poems and songs enrich and maintain the narration. The reflection of art is felt every parts of this work. This study; in fact, is work of art within art. Aforementioned novel portrays the function of art through the character Stephen Dedalus. This paper aims to discuss the significance of healing and transformative effect of the art in the light of experience of the protagonist. In order to achieve this, Stephen's talent of artistic thinking and his utilizing the process of active imagination are depicted.

Joyce presents a character that often lives in his own mind in isolation, and evaluates his previous living. At the beginning of the work our protagonist Stephen is presented as a weak, fragile and dependent child. Although his artistic manner cannot be displayed considerably in his early years, we still have many implications that he will be a man of art in the future. While he is in Clongowes Wood College, it is a boarding school, his vulnerability, sensitive nature, melancholic mood are observed in many cases. "He felt his body small and weak and his eyes were weak and watery" (Joyce 9). He misses his home there, has troubles with the boys who make fun of him, but he prefers not reacting. His forming relation between colours of the object and senses makes him feel his emotions more deeply. While in the refectory, realising his butter and the tablecloth are damp, he thinks whether all white objects are damp and cold. He finds corridor and stairs cold, too. Sheets of his bed are not warm; therefore, he has difficulty to sleep. It cannot be wrong to conclude that sensing the coldness estranges him in dormitory in Clongowes. Beside shivering and thus depressing effect of the atmosphere, darkness also accompanies his troubles. The chapel and corridor of the dorm at college are all dark at night. All the darkness and

coldness disturbs him. Unavoidably, as a result of not being able to adapt his new life in boarding school, he becomes sick. However, his interpretation is worth to mention in the sense of struggling to create consciousness of him: “he was sick in his heart if you could be sick in that place” (Joyce 14).

His tenderness with colour is presented in the scene of the numeric competition in his course at school, this time in a positive way. There are two teams whose members have badges with white and red roses. While it is an activity to solve maths problem, for Stephen the focus is the colours of the roses which are white and red. Afterwards, he remembers a song while thinking other colours. Triggered by the song, he imagines a green rose; he thinks he could get one. While he is about to give up the idea of having green rose in the frame of rational thought, his imagination whispers “but perhaps somewhere in the world you could” (Joyce 13). His thinking is not only a manifestation of his unique way of perception, but also artistic soul of him.

Stephen’s strong imagination is observed in many cases. In the dormitory of his first school, growing with darkness his imagination creates fictional scenes; at night he sees strange faces whose eyes he likens to carriage lamps. He describes the figures as ghosts of murderers. In the same school, in infirmary, being wearied by his sickness again, he renders on his own death and imagines the funeral; moreover, he considers the candles in the chapel along with his coffin carried by the people to the graveyard. From that scene, his strong imagination can be observed.

In relation to this, Jung’s ideas are regarded significant. For Jung, creating fantasy is crucial in that “Every good idea and all creative work are the offspring of the imagination and have their source in what one is pleased infantile fantasy” (Jung 5). One sample of Stephen’s fantasy creating ability is seen while he is looking at a book in the library. Realising the movement of the fire there, he assumes them in the form of waves and hears their talking. Afterwards, with the effect of the book, he picturizes people, waves of sea, ships and harbours in his mind. He describes the images as an artist forms his art. Stephen’s fictional side appears important in the light of Jung’s emphasis of fantasy: “Not the artist alone but every creative individual whatsoever owes all that is greatest in his life to fantasy (Jung 5).

In association with his imagination, manifestation of the inner world in Stephen’s psyche is significant to discuss. It is more prevalent when he grows up corresponding to following chapters in the novel. In chapter two, at night he

dreams of an island considering himself as the Count of Monte Cristo who is a leading figure in his childhood. He also imagines Mercedes who is Count's lover as his own beloved. In another scene, while he is with milk man, he dreams of living in a calm countryside. While the people are taking their milk, he watches inside of the houses to catch "a glimpse of a well scrubbed kitchen" (Joyce 73). Stephen's ability in visualising images is considerably powerful in his inner world.

Another example of the power of his fantasy creating ability is dominant in the scene in which he tries to get into his room in the dorm. He sees murmuring faces and hears the voices of them in the dark. It takes him time to get rid of its effect in the doorway. He says himself it is "simply his room with the door open" (Joyce 156).

When his agnostic, emotional humour merges with his wish of isolation he is drawn more into his own world. His isolation is excessively felt in chapter two at times when he is in Belvedere College. During the years in Clongowes he does not want to play with other boys; however, in Belvedere he loathes of the noise children cause. He does not consider himself having the same blood with his family members. Instead, he feels "mystical kinship of fosterage" (Joyce 113). When he becomes a teenager, he begins being fed up with his father's telling and his drinking habits in the bar. At those moments, he has a dense sense of alienation. Regarding to the experience of protagonist, it is not difficult to feel the effect of a sense of fragmentation and alienation.

When we look at the features of the protagonist, it is concluded that he carries some artistic characters and it is appropriate to claim that his sensitiveness, imagination and introversion help him to turn his face to art. Beside his features mentioned, the interaction with his unconscious is noteworthy to discuss.

The unconscious is relevant to art as it harbours the root of artistic contemplation and creativity. Stephen meets and confronts with his unconscious in chapter two where he realises his restless motion in his psyche. When he is at Belvedere College, he performs in a play. The role he acts has deeply affects him and arouses new emotions at him. He feels the play more real than the life itself, and becomes more curious about art. Moreover, he begins considering life and art intertwined and himself as an artist, a player who acts in a scene. After the play, without even seeing his family, he leaves. "Now that the play was over his nerves cried for some further adventure" (Joyce 98). He cannot surpass the sound of his restless heart; he goes out and wanders among the streets. In that

moment, he is under the effect of his unconscious. Realizing the futility of life he is leading under the effect of his unconscious, he feels that something new he needs. He becomes aware that he has to create his own reality. Therefore, an indispensable need blossoms in his heart. On his meeting with his unconscious, his duty has changed from making sense of outside to following the daylight of his inner world. In order to discover what is there, he is aware of the necessity of hearing its voices. On his travelling to Cork with his father, Stephen hears one of those voices. His father talks about his memories there; however, Stephen does not listen to him carefully. He is busy with his inner feelings and thoughts. “Nothing moved him or spoke to him from the real world unless he heard in it an echo of the infuriated cries within him” (Joyce 106). Another case in which he feels the cries within him happens after he spends all his money he gets for his essay prize. At that section, he evaluates his struggles to find meaning of his life. His heart longs for something authentic but “he had not gone one step nearer the lives he had sought” (Joyce 112). Feeling hopeless, desperate, he finds himself caring nothing. Additionally, he cannot interpret the things in outer world properly, and he wanders around those “distorted images”(Joyce 113). In his unexplainable mood, he feels that he is getting rid of his timidity and weakness. With this courage “the wasting fires of lust sprang up” and “inarticulate cries and the unspoken brutal words rushed forth from his brain”. (Joyce 114). On going through that moment he never has, he seems to have lost himself. Thus, he takes the roads hastily as if he is looking for something, a sound, an image or an action. While “his blood was in revolt”, “he moaned to himself like some baffled prowling beast” and desires for sin (Joyce 114). In his wandering from street to street his unconscious rises its peak: he realizes a “dark presence moving irresistibly upon him”. With that state of mind he goes into a narrow and dirty street where perfumed women and girls are waiting. Eventually, he comes by another realm, “he had awakened from a slumber of centuries (Joyce 115). This tremendous change happens due to the power of his unconscious. In this scene, Stephen encounters another part of his being, a dark side of his personality, which helps him later to pursue his artistic life. While the streets, pictured in that chapter, is the reflection of Stephen’s hidden part of his psyche, murmuring alive dark presence is the projection of his shadow. All in all, interacting with unconscious is crucial as it enables a person to create a deep inner world and initiates to produce art.

Art is a way to escape from weary and dead end cases. It heals people from their suffering. In her book of “*Inward Journey*”, Keye discusses art therapy: she believes that art presents a process in which the individual

differentiates his way from others and deepens the questions related to himself. In the light of this finding, This study takes Stephen's habit of image production as an art therapy. As Keye states, art therapy helps the individual to understand the "relationships of the real world" better and encourages "trying new behaviour" (Keye 4). Before explaining how Stephen forms new behaviour and idea, it is noteworthy to put forward Keye's inner dialogue technique he applies in his courses. She draws attention to the importance of inner dialogues in the function of individual's being aware of the knowledge he has already carries with him. He makes use of this technique in psychodrama his patients create. They tell about images, people or scene they remember in their dream; next they ask those some questions; after that, the people try to guess the answers. It is the way of getting in touch with their inner realities. As for Stephen's image production, he mostly reflects on his memories which are often triggered by an outer image, sound, smell or any means. while visualizing and evaluating the events, he renders densely captured in that moment. For instance, in chapter four, while Stephen is a university student he visits his family. Getting bored at home, he goes out. At those moments, he hears a scream of a woman out of a madhouse. It can be thought that he associates his previous being with that helpless woman who has to stay in that closed building. The scream is so painful that it makes him recall his memories. In chapter three, while walking home, he hears laughter of a girl, that sound warming his heart makes him remember Emma. As soon as her image appears, he feels shameful and begins the quest himself. While he is wondering whether it is boyish love, poetry or chivalry (Joyce 132), not only does he remember the pictures he hid in the fireplace but also the hours he sinned in his thoughts. Furthermore, he recalls the letters he wrote and planned to throw a place where a girl might find. He finds those ideas really crazy and hardly believes that he is the one who did all. While these "foul memories condense in his brain" (Joyce 132), he imagines being with Emma and kissing her. Although he doesn't use the exact technique as Keye does, he differentiates himself from his old being with the help of questions he asks himself.

With the help of his daydreams, fantasies, and imagination, Stephen creates a kind of art therapy process. While doing this, he makes use of "active imagination". In the introduction part of *Jung on Active Imagination*, Joan Chodorow clarifies that "active imagination is based on the image producing function of the psyche, that is the imagination (Jung 5). Jung uses many different names such as visioning, active phantasying, picture method and introspection before settling on active imagination. As it is understood from those terms, this

technique requires concentration on inner voices. It helps passing from one attitude to another. While applying this technique people make use of different means allowing them to reach their unconscious. For Jung, starting point of the process might be an image, impulse or emotion. He gives the example of “concentrating on disturbed emotional state” and waiting for appearing a phantasy, a visual image (Jung 5). One of the ways to start the process is choosing a picture, object or listening to an inner voice, after that concentrating on it. Stephen goes through this process very often throughout the novel. When he visits Queen College upon request of his father, he is haunted by absent classmates of his father. In anatomy theatre of the college, while his father is searching for his initials on desks, Stephen sees a word foetus carved on a desk. On his caring closely the object in the darkness and silence of the place, he gets frightened and sees a vision of someone with a big moustache cutting the desk with his knife and other figures of students comes out thereafter. Not until his father calls him, does he get out of that fiction. Another case which is a sign of Stephen’s active imagination is the scene where Stephen takes part in a play. It is one of one the most remarkable parts of the novel since it evokes many incognitum emotions and consciousness. Firstly, the artistic atmosphere impresses him in that noise of audience, light from the glass roof, rhythm of the music are all in a harmony, and that leaves a soft pleasing emotion on him: “the sentiment of the opening bars, their languor and supple movement evoked the incommunicable emotion”; secondly, his acting in a play assist in him discovering his inner reality; at that time “disjointed lifeless” play replaces the real life for him (Joyce 86). Thirdly, a speaking of his friends before the play about honour makes him realize that he is fed up with all issues with honour, and right behaviour; as a result, he visualizes all his troubles hearing the voices of his mother, father and masters always reminding him what to do along with the voices of his friends saying him to defend his country. They all turn to be “hollow sounding in his ears”, and he is disillusioned “it was the din of all these hollow sounding voices that made him halt irresolutely in the pursuit of phantoms” (Joyce 86). This mindfulness is due to his willing concentration on the night and the play. Finally, he gains a new being looking for his real aim being aware of the fact that he will be transfigured in a right supreme moment.

Now that active imagination is clarified and exemplified, it would be appropriate to discuss healing and transformative power of art. In relation to this, first; it would be useful to touch upon the concepts of aesthetic contemplation and creative interpretation. These concepts are also functional for understanding the relationship better between art and active imagination. In *Art Heals* in which

McNiff elaborates how creativity cures the soul, he mentions his experiences with the patients during the process of art therapy in his studio. In the section of *Aesthetic Meditation* in his book, he discusses the efficiency of looking at his paintings in contemplative ways. He claims that concentration on the images or objects motivates and engages individuals in art as well as liberates them. Therefore, he appreciates “silent meditations on images” (McNiff 57). “When looking deeply at thing we get outside ourselves and become immersed in the object of contemplation”, he is of the belief that “this meditation brings new and vital energy into our lives” (McNiff 57). In order to make use of aesthetic contemplation people need to spare time to look carefully with “heightened visual awareness” and this attitude is acquired only if it is practised regularly. From presentation of Stephen’s rendering on images, it is clear that he has heightened visual awareness as a consequence of his constant concentration on the images of his outer and inner world. Owing to his visualization and rendering in detail on the affairs, he regains aesthetic contemplation which is “the basis for all methods of interpreting and engaging artistic images” (McNiff 13). In chapter four, Stephen is pictured as an individualized broad minded university student having passion for pursuing any adventure for the sake of art. While he is walking on a wooden bridge he sees a group of schoolboys running and chatting around. He observes their reflection on water. After he murmurs a phrase “a day of dappled seaborne clouds” he reflects on rhythmic rise and fall of words and their associations as well as their colours. As a result of his concentration, he concludes sensible world is less exciting than “contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored in a prose” (Joyce 191). In the meantime, he watches the clouds. Caused by the images of the boys there, he remembers the voices of his friends, recalls their towels, wet bodies after swimming and making fun of him. His memories disturb him, and he feels a great pain to see them and his adolescence. However, he succeeds in hearing a different call coming from inside of him. He interprets the meaning of that enchanting enlightenment. As a result, he confronts his childhood and gets rid of its agony. The practice Stephen perform can be considered as “creative interpretation”, it offers “new ways of looking at things and provide fresh metaphors or re-visioning old situation”.

Healing and transformative power of art is dominantly observable on the protagonist since he gets rid of all of his suffering and transforms with the help of turning to art. Not only does he shape his life, but also escapes the terrors and lives more fully (Harknes 24). As Harkness states “art provides a way of alleviating his unhappiness” (Harknes 21). In Joyce depiction of Stephen’s mood by the river actualizing his freedom is grasped :“he seemed to hear the noise of

dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air “ (Joyce 193), he reflects on he gets really excited, his heart trembles, even though he waits for his transfiguration, he does not feel so close to it. Being about to cry due to the intense emotion, he feels his soul is purified. Hearing a new life’s singing in his veils, he is already far away the wounds and shames and “his soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood” (Joyce 195). At the same moments, he sees a girl walking alone and looking at sea. Being beautiful and delicate, the girl seemed to a sea bird to him. She is depicted as an extraordinary being with high beauty. Her gentle movement evokes a tremendous sensation, hence he finds himself in a deep joy. Her image is penetrated into his soul; he feels that her eyes seems to call to something holly and spiritual “to recreate life out of life” (Joyce 197). He runs and lays down on the beach, feeling the peace in his blood in the silence of the evening. It is a kind of rebirth with which he is transformed. Then, he is ready “to live, to err, to fall, to triumph” (Joyce 197).

Now that the protagonist obtains free thinking which is a must for an artist, Stephen appears totally a different figure in chapter five in comparison with the former narration. He has discussion about aesthetic issues, ideas of Platon, concepts of apprehension and beauty. In *Aesthetics of Joyce* Aubert states that Joyce’s aesthetic is directed by the problem of the artist’s autonomy, but this matter seems to be done away towards the end of this novel. Depicted as an intellectual having aesthetic manner, he has conversation with the dean of studies of art. This indicates his maturation in terms of being ready to be into art in its fullest sense. He even produces art in a concrete way in the sense of writing poems. Transformed by virtue of art, Stephen brings about aesthetic theory of Aquinas emphasizing aesthetic stasis and he adopts artistic stasis before creating his own theory and ideas. Joyce depicts transformative power of art by adding artistic consciousness on Stephen’s character letting him turn into an artist.

In conclusion, this study manifests reflection of art in the novel through the character of Stephen Dedalus. Along with the processs of active imagination, healing and transformative function of art is particularly dealt with. In the light of these purposes, the ability of the protagonist in recalling memories is analysed. Having a mind visualizing the things easily in an analytic way, Stephen has the talent of artistic thinking His evaluating of the events is not also a preparation for creation of art but also the practise aesthetic contemplation itself. All of Stephen’s characteristic features, suffering, and alienation contribute his artistic inclination. Losing perfect security in family and school,

he understands the futility of outer world. As a result, Stephen leaves all anxieties behind with the help of art. As Harkness quotes Gilbert's saying: "It is through Art, and through Art only, that we can realize our perfection (Harknes 40). Embracing art Joyce's protagonist comprehends and reaches inner self.

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The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion by Ford Madox Ford is considered to be one of the earliest examples of modernist novels in English Literature. The novel revolves around the complicated relationship between two fellow couples, Dowells and Ashburnhams; however, what makes the story intriguing is the way this relationship is narrated – or not narrated. The reality in the novel is shaped by the flow of the first-person narrator John Dowell’s mind who tries to narrate the events in the past fourteen years according to what he remembers. Ford’s involvement in the movement of literary impressionism, which offers an alternative to the conventional narrative, is manifested in his choice of an involved first-person narrator. Contrary to the traditional omniscient narrator, Dowell is an unreliable narrator whose futile attempts to tell a tale results in ambiguities. In between the chapters, he moves back and forth in his narration trying to relate the story as it appears to him: “One goes back, one goes forward, one remembers points that one has forgotten and one explains them all the more minutely since one recognizes that one has forgotten to mention them in their proper places and that one may have given by omitting them, a false impression” (Ford, *The Good Soldier* 155)¹. Concerning itself with the ambiguities in the novel, the present study focuses on some centralizing statements within the narrative to demonstrate how these statements are dismantled by the narrative itself as the text cannot escape the inherent instability of language and memory. Drawing on Jacques Derrida’s reflections on language, text, and memory, this study argues that narrative unreliability functions as a deconstructive strategy within the text, which discloses the fluidity of language and memory.

Ford Madox Ford, the author of nearly eighty books, was a significant figure in early twentieth-century literature. His famous novel, *The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion*, which is considered by many critics to be a modernist masterpiece, was published under the name Ford Madox Hueffer in 1915. His founding of magazines – *The English Review* in London and the *Transatlantic* in

¹ Hereafter the references to Ford Madox Ford’s novel *The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion* will be referred to as *TGS*.

Paris – helped the Modernist writers in those cities to meet and come together. Through his involvement with these artistic networks and movements like Impressionism, Modernism, and Vorticism, he contributed to the major cultural shifts of the early twentieth century. Herein, it might be necessary to mention Ford's own statements about the Impressionist style. In "On Impressionism" (1995) he states: "the Impressionist gives you, as a rule, the fruits of his own observations and the fruits of his own observations alone. He should be in this as severe and as solitary as any monk" (260). These statements elucidate how Ford's style is a challenge to conventional realist fiction of the nineteenth century since his narrative style is based on subjective impressions and recollections instead of the ideal of objectivity in fiction. According to Max Saunders, who wrote the Preface to the book *Ford Madox Ford: Literary Networks and Cultural Transformations* (2008), Ford is also "a significant commentator on cultural transitions" and "a shrewd analyst of aspects of the experience of modernity – of the impact of technological change, urban development, historical change, and changing definitions of Englishness" (152). *The Good Soldier* was completed before the outbreak of the war itself, which renders the title of the novel more ironic. Although Ford's initial choice of a title was "The Saddest Story", it was found inappropriate by the publisher as it coincided with the outbreak of the First World War. Ford's next suggestion "The Good Soldier" was approved by the publisher with the secondary title "A Tale of Passion". However, he does not refrain from using his initial choice in the opening line of his novel: "This is the saddest story I have ever heard" (Ford, *TGS* 5).

From its ironic title to its narrative style, *The Good Soldier* is a "tale" of ambiguities, which makes it one of the best examples of modernist fiction. In *A History of Modernist Literature* (2015), Gasiorek states that "if our goal is to understand Modernism and its relation to modernity, we shall need to consider the shadings and variations within and among the categories – the shifts, ambiguities, the tensions within the work of individual artists and even within the single works of art and literature" (31). There are some critics who argue that *The Good Soldier* can be called a postmodern novel because of its formal and thematic aspects. Some of the formal features of the novel which are commonly associated with postmodernism are digressions and metafiction. Dowell is quite conscious of the challenges of narration and he even comments on the digressions in his narrative: "Is all this digression or isn't it digression? I don't know. You, the listener, sit opposite me. But you are so silent" (Ford, *TGS* 15). Dowell's narrative style is also self-reflexive because he sometimes addresses

the listener-reader directly. This direct addressing draws the reader into the writing process. In her book *Narcissistic Narrative, The Metafictional Paradox* (1980), Linda Hutcheon argues that there are modes of narcissism in a metafiction like self-conscious and self-reflexive modes. According to Hutcheon, in a self-conscious novel, the novelist and the novel itself becomes legitimate subject matter. A self-conscious text is conscious of its own narrative process (Hutcheon 11). Dowell's explicit declaration, "From there, at this moment, I am actually writing" and his comments on the digressions in his narrative reveal self-conscious mode of the text. On the other hand, his direct address to the reader discloses the self-reflexive mode of the narration. Digressions and narrative unreliability in the novel hinder a coherent reading and reaching a meaningful end. As a matter of fact, Dowell calls his narration "maze": "I have, I am aware, told this story in a very rambling way so that it may be difficult for anyone to find their path through what may be a sort of maze" (Ford, *TGS* 155). This paper does not claim that *The Good Soldier* is a postmodern novel because the characteristics – metafiction, parody, irony, and intertextuality – which are mostly associated with literary postmodernism "also exist outside of a postmodern paradigm" (Stephan 35). These aspects, however, constitute a substratum for this study to reconfigure the novel through the deconstructive perspective of Jacques Derrida.

In her article "The Good Soldier: Ford's Postmodern Novel" (2015), Catherine Balsey maintains that *The Good Soldier* "asks its reader to reflect on the wayward behaviour not only of human beings but also of the language that both defines and delimits their opinions" and "[f]ar from reiterating the familiar lament (lament) that language falls short of the whole truth, [it] demonstrates that the signifier can be full of meaning" (31, 44). From the post-structuralist premise that language is inherently unreliable and that a text remains a field of possibilities, it can be argued that Ford's novel never achieves closure because of the ambiguities and tensions within the text. One of the pioneers of post-structuralism, Jacques Derrida, is a highly influential figure in the late twentieth century. Deconstruction or deconstructive perspective, which is known as Derrida's way of reading texts, focuses on language and on its instability and unreliability, as such, reveals the underlying complexities, hidden contradictions, and hierarchical relations within a text. His special term *différance* – a clever pun on the words *different* and *deferral* – plays a significant role in deconstruction. In *Margins of Philosophy* (1982), Derrida emphasizes that *différance* is "neither a word nor a concept", and he points out that the difference "between the two

vowels, is purely graphic: it is read, or it is written, but it cannot be heard. It cannot be apprehended in speech” (3). He, thus, criticizes logocentrism’s privileging of speech over writing. Derrida’s deconstructive approach underlies his reflections on language, text, and also memory. In *Memoirs: for Paul de Man* (1989), Derrida suggests a new perspective on the notion of memory and its relation to writing. He starts the book with a declaration: “I have never known how to tell a story” and asks, “Why am I denied narration?” (Derrida, *Memoirs* 3). Shortly afterward, he concedes that “it is precisely because he keeps the memory that he loses the narrative” (Derrida, *Memoirs* 3). In Derrida’s view, memory always needs signs to recall the non-present and it “stays with traces, in order to ‘preserve’ them, but traces of a past that has never been present, traces which themselves never occupy the form of presence and always remain, as it were, to come – come from the future, from the *to come*” (Derrida, *Memoirs* 58). It can be maintained that Derrida’s approach to the concept of memory is deconstructive too. *Deconstruction does not happen from the outside; it happens within a context, within a text. In this regard, a text cannot be completely coherent and whole in itself; rather, there are places where there is a contradiction, a gap. Memory is constituted with contradictions and gaps just like a text.*

The narrator of *The Good Soldier*, John Dowell, tries to tell the incidents, in which he is involved, retrospectively. He sometimes gives detailed descriptions of the events as if he tries to enforce the impression that his memory is quite reliable. However, he cannot escape the fallibility of memory. Talking about his wife Florence, for instance, he gives a detailed description of her dress as if he remembers everything about it just after he says, “I can’t remember a single one of her dresses. Or I can remember just one” (Ford, *TGS* 22). Hence, the tale he is supposed to tell turns out to be an accumulation of impressions and perceptions that hinder the unity of the text. It forces the reader to speculate whose viewpoint is trustworthy, which turns out to be an unattainable quest. As a narrator who resorts to memory to tell his tale, Dowell is drawn into hesitations. As Richter explains in his essay “Acts of Memory and Mourning: Derrida and the Fictions of Anteriority” (2010), “[t]he figurative and allegorical investments of memory in its various articulations preclude any totalization; memory always will have been that whose pastness, present claims, and future-oriented commitments pull it elsewhere, to a different time and space, ...” (153). Dowell feels lost drifting among these vacillations. His recurrent statements “I don’t know” and “It’s all a darkness” augment the ambiguity of his narration.

To stop the potentially infinite flow of meaning and give itself stability, the text sets up some centres of meaning. One of the key centring operations in the novel is the word “tale”². The word “tale” is inherently dichotomous and ambiguous. In the novel, from the very beginning, the reader is conditioned to read a tale. However, it sometimes gets vague whether Dowell is telling or writing his story. In the early part of the novel, Dowell describes his hesitation about how to tell this tale: “I don’t know how it is best to put this thing down – whether it would be better to try and tell the story from the beginning, as if it were a story; or whether to tell it from this distance of time” (Ford, *TGS* 13). On the one hand, he explicitly addresses the listener: “You, the listener, sit opposite me. But you are so silent. You don’t tell me anything”, but on the other hand he regretfully says, “I wish I could put it down in diary form” and he cannot decide which one is more suitable: “I can’t make out which of them was right” (Ford, *TGS* 185, 205). Thus, the binary opposition between speech and writing is blurred by the use of the word “tale”. The ostensible incompetence of Dowell as a narrator is an implication of the instability of language and memory. Sudden temporal switches in his narration carry important implications about Derrida’s assertion that “[t]he failure or finitude of memory says something about truth, and about truth of memory: its relation to the other, to the instant and to the future” (Derrida, *Memoirs* 57). While Dowell tries to tell his tale, memory constantly pulls him to a different time and place.

A single temporal point, 4 August 1904, is another centring operation in the novel. Although the significance of the novel rests on the incidents that supposedly happened on this specific date, at first glance it is not possible for the reader to notice the contradiction in time schemes. When we look at Dowell’s vague statements about these incidents, it becomes evident that these events are overlapping each other. This specific day is when Dowells and Ashburnhams meet and have dinner, when two couples make their trip to the castle, when Florence sees Maise Maidan’s humiliation by Leonora, and it is also when the death of Maidan occurs. All in all, this ambiguity about different sets of events might imply that Dowell is disjointed from time, which is quite evocative of Derrida’s reflection on Hamlet’s famous sentence, “the time is out of joint”. Derrida argues in his *Specters of Marx* (1994):

² A narrative, written (in prose or verse) or spoken. When in prose, barely distinguishable from a short story (*q.v.*). If there is a difference, then a tale perhaps suggests something written in the tone of voice of someone speaking. (Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary* 899)

To maintain together that which does not hold together, and the disparate itself, the same disparate, all of this can be thought...only in a dis-located time of the present, at the joining of a radically dis-jointed time, without certain conjunction...“The time is out of joint”: time is disarticulated, dislocated, dislodged, time is run down, on the run and run down [traqué et détraqué], deranged, both out of order and mad. (20)

This disjointed state is obviously rooted in the instability of language. Language notwithstanding, he tries to tell his story – although he cannot –, and drifts to a different time and place by memory; Dowell asks, “Permanence? Stability? I can’t believe it’s gone” (Ford, *TGS* 7). His use of the metaphor “minuet”, a dance of perfect synchrony and order, to describe their intimate relationship with Ashburnhams dismantles another centring strategy that implies stability in the novel. Although this friendship of “good” people appears to be like “minuet”, it is not permanent or stable; rather, it is just adultery. “Minuet” is a mask that symbolizes the fraudulent stability of perceived existence. In this perfect order of “good” people, Edward Ashburnham takes the lead in goodness. He is “the fine soldier, the excellent landlord, the extraordinarily kind, careful and industrious magistrate, the upright, honest, fair-dealing, fair-thinking, public character” (Ford, *TGS* 45). He “was the cleanest looking sort of chap”; however, for Dowell, he was also a villain who “[has] been punished by suicide” (Ford, *TGS* 11, 209). As a matter of fact, dismantled by the narrative, the minuet ends in death and madness leaving the reader among infinite possibilities. The metaphor of minuet used for the relationship between two couples encompasses binary oppositions such as order/disorder and good/bad. It alludes to both “the breakdown of internal standards of behavior and the confusion of civilized values” (Goodheart 85). Hence, the metaphor also carries crucial implications about the political and social conditions of the time. Leonora survives through her commitment to convention and tradition while Edward’s tragedy is the “extinction of a splendid personality, like the fall of a great civilization” (Stang 89). Moreover, “Dowell understands his own ignorance as an expression of a universal condition” (Goodheart 84). Dowell does not know anything anymore, and he says: “There is nothing to guide us. And if everything is so nebulous about a matter so elementary as the morals of sex, what is there to guide us in the more subtle morality of all personal contacts, ... It is all a darkness” (Ford, *TGS* 11).

The Good Soldier is supposed to be “A Tale of Passion”. However, there is hate as much as love in it. First and foremost, Dowell hates Florence to such an extent to say: “I hate Florence with such a hatred that I would not spare her an eternity of loneliness” (Ford, *TGS* 51). Edward sometimes hates Leonora:

“[W]hatever she did caused him to hate her ... Hated hung in all the heavy nights and filled the shadowy corners of the room” (Ford, *TGS* 148). However, sometimes, Edward suddenly declares his affection for Leonora: “By Jove, you’re the finest woman in the world. I wish we could be better friends” (Ford, *TGS* 148). Likewise, Leonora sometimes hates Edward: “She pitied Edward frightfully at one time – and then she acted along the lines of pity; she loathed him at another” (Ford, *TGS* 170). Last but not least, although Dowell is fond of Edward Ashburnham and thinks highly of him, he switches to a totally opposite impression of him: “Good God, what did they all see in him? For I swear there was all there was of him, inside and out; though they said he was a good soldier. Yet, Leonora adored him with a passion that was like an agony, and hated him with an agony that was bitter as the sea” (Ford, *TGS* 25). Destabilizing the binary opposites good/bad, love/hate, speech/writing and unsettling the hierarchical relationship between them, Ford unveils the ambiguities within stability.

To conclude, *The Good Soldier* showcases Derrida’s deconstructive notion of language which maintains that what a signifier signifies is another signifier. As a matter of fact, destabilizing the relationship between the signifier and the signified, Derrida’s idea of an infinite number of signifiers result in the free play of meaning. In *The Good Soldier*, the meaning that the reader tries to grasp always differs and defers leading to ambiguities, which renders Dowell’s tale an ambiguous one. The present study argued that Dowell’s impressionistic narration is characterized by an ambiguous language that tries to stabilize itself through some centring operations. This impressionistic style reinforces narrative unreliability in the novel. In this regard, the novel forms the template for exploring how narrative unreliability serves as a deconstructive springboard to discuss the fluidity of language and memory and its impact on writing. As Dowell is conscious of the fallibility and unreliability of his memory in the construction of his narrative, he hesitates about how to put it down appropriately. Analogous to Derrida’s declaration that he is unable to narrate because he keeps the memory, Dowell can never tell his tale as he is constantly drifting between memory and writing. Dowell’s inability to narrate results in a chain of impressions and recollections which carry the reader into a “maze” of Derridean *perhaps*’es.

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Towards a New Understanding of Consciousness: Don DeLillo's *Zero K* and Jeanette Winterson's *12 Bytes*

Cristina Arbués Caballé

Jeanette Winterson has long explored the issue of identity and which of its markers can or cannot help us better understand the human mind and consciousness. From her transgressive and experimental *Written on the Body* (1992), she has continuously shown an interest in questioning how the observance of human kinds' interactions with one another can help in such an endeavour. With time, in works such as *The Stone Gods* (2007), or *Frankissstein* (2019), she begins to incorporate into her corpus a preoccupation with how the interactions with technology can or will redefine our understanding of the human mind. In *12 Bytes* (2021) (a collection of essays possibly put together from her research for *Frankissstein*) Winterson takes a step forward, as the author begins to question the emerging human fascination for artificial intelligence, showing a clear concern for identifying why and how human kind is intent on prolonging life and what that would represent for a reformulation of the understanding we have of human consciousness, as well as morality and identity and all its ramifications.

As she states, “[i]f we extend our lifespan, we will no longer be the carbon based creatures made of meat and filled with blood that we have been thus far in our evolutionary journey. We will be enhanced, biohacked, physically rejuvenated as many times as necessary over a ‘lifetime.’” (Winterson 134) Further, she questions what the consequences of extending life by the use of AI would represent, asking “Do we want to live forever? Would we be human if we did? In the transhuman world to come, we will be hybrids, just as Dracula and Frankenstein’s monster are hybrids.” (Winterson 136)

Similarly, well established author Don DeLillo, with over eighteen novels under his belt, has continuously dealt with understanding human consciousness, focusing on how language and human consciousness interact, on issues of grief, terrorism, as well as art and its interactions with human identity. With time, especially in his latest works, he has developed such preoccupations to include what technology and artificial intelligence can do if intermixed into such an equation. Notwithstanding, what DeLillo and Winterson do is question the society that comes, not necessarily endorse it. As Mads Rosendahl Thomsen argues, “[w]hile DeLillo is obviously fascinated with the idea of a transforma-

tion into a new way of being that could be furthered by technology, he is equally critical of what that world might be like.” (as quoted in Nel 2)

There is an emerging interest in exploring the human being’s obsession with extending life, something particularly striking in the works just mentioned, as well as in DeLillo’s *Zero K* (2016), a novel which as Adèle Nel argues, “...deals with the techno-scientific practice and rationality of cryonics and focuses on the ways in which conceptions of the body, life and death and their relationship are being reconfigured.” (Nel 2) Both authors point out that the preoccupation with extending life now possible due to technological advances emerging in our world, along with the scenarios which would take place by possibly modifying our human bodies (which might go hand in hand with extending human consciousness, consequently creating a reconfiguration of it) would, in turn, alter the ways in which we understand humanity, as well as the ways in which human beings will continue to interact in society.

One of the aims of this paper is to focus on the concepts of death and re-birth as portrayed and explored by Winterson and DeLillo in *12 Bytes* and *Zero K* respectively, to understand how the ever-evolving possibilities afforded by technology might modify our understanding of the basis of what it means to be human.

Artificial Intelligence as a New Religion

Mikael Leidenhag considers transhumanism (which, to put it very briefly, is the wish to extend life by technological means¹) to, “...not merely [give] rise to theological beliefs and ideas, but ... can and should be considered as an emerging secular religion.” (Leidenhag 2) Winterson is very specific in this in *12 Bytes* where she clearly draws the similarities inherent in the cult now surrounding AI to ideologies that have a religious base: “...religious belief shares quite a bit of territory with artificial intelligence. It may be that religious insights can help us humans better manage the coming reshaped world that AI will make possible, or inevitable.” (Winterson 103)

She further specifies how artificial intelligence contains all the structures that religious doctrine does:

¹ As described by Winterson in *Frankissstein*, “...transhuman means different things to different people; smart implants, genetic modification, prosthetic enhancement, even the chance to live forever as a brain emulation.” (Winterson 104)

Our new AI religion has what all religions have. Believers: the Singularity disciples, the Transhuman evangelists (...), the Biohax converts, the life-extension enthusiasts, the start-up brain-uploaders, the science labs printing 3D body parts, the stem-cell researchers who will ‘match’ your perfect body ideal - so many, so different, yet all of these sharing a Gnostic unorthodoxy of loosely overlapping ideas anchored to the central, but updating text of accelerating change, inside and outside the human body. On the other side are the Sceptics, who take up the Orthodox position of believing in the unique specialness of being human. They do not believe that altering the human substrate can happen in the near future. (...) And then there is the priestly cast of tech types. Mostly men, who believe themselves to be chosen/superior/the new directors of humanity’s future. The ones with Special Knowledge; the hard maths mysteries of programming the next world. (Winterson 96)

In *Zero K*, alternatively, DeLillo takes pains to show how a fictional organisation, called “The Convergence”, where people from all areas of life have gathered to create a new future for themselves (based on their wish to extend their life through cryonics), consciously identifies some of its workings and foundations to resemble religious structure and ideology: “...’And the name, which sounds religious.’ ‘Faith-based technology. That’s what it is. Another god. Not so different, it turns out, from some of the earlier ones. Except that it’s real, it’s true, it delivers.’ ‘Life after death.’ ‘Eventually, yes.’” (DeLillo 9) Furthermore, throughout the narrative, Jeffrey Lockhart (the main character of the narrative, and a firm opposer to such facility and organisation), goes as far as to show concern for the utmost faith that his father, Ross, one of the main organisers behind The Convergence, shows for this project, stating at one point “‘I think you’ve been brainwashed. You’re victims of these surroundings. You’re a member of a cult. Don’t you see it? Simple old-fashioned fanaticism. One question. Where is the charismatic leader?’” (DeLillo 113)

However, DeLillo aims to show all sides, precisely because he is speculating with what would take place, and thus shows that the members of The Convergence find in AI and what is taking place in the facility a sense of peacefulness resembling what is often attributed to enlightened spirituality, something Ross describes as “...[a]nticipation and awe intermingled. Far more palpable than apprehension or uncertainty. There’s a reverence, a state of astonishment. They’re together in this. Something far larger than they’d ever imagined. They feel a common mission, a destination” (DeLillo 9)

Consequently, if AI can help human beings extend their lives, death will need to be understood differently, and if the possibility of uploading one’s cons-

sciousness to the cloud or to an unknown suspended state became a reality, issues of birth, rebirth, death and a general new understanding of what constitutes humanity and our society would also need to be reformulated. Most of these have been structured under religion hitherto, hence why AI, which seems to be the future, appears to have been shaping itself the same way.

As Winterson highlights, “[r]eligion has been, and remains, a cultural enforcer of binary roles, and we have yet to see how religion will react when the absolute binary of life/death is breached. This will start to happen as humans live longer - much longer. And when humans are ‘returned’, by upload, to a life not dependent on a material body.” (Winterson 199) In fact, a reformulation of how humankind lives and dies will inevitably have after effects in all ramifications of human existence. Consequently, the modes in which society has operated under (always influenced to lesser or most likely higher degrees by religious belief and doctrine) will find a revaluation that at this point can only be speculated upon. In fact, Ingman Persson and Julian Savulescu argue in “Moral Transhumanism” that this revaluation is necessary as we approach a society significantly altered, identifying that the issue extends itself beyond religion and identity, and should be first and foremost based on an entire moral restructuring:

Even if human beings were psychologically and morally fit for life in those natural conditions in which they have lived during most of the time that the human species has existed, humans have now so radically affected their conditions of living that they might be less psychologically and morally fit for life in these new conditions. These new conditions consist in societies with an enormous population density and an advanced science and technology, which enable their citizens to exercise an influence that extends all over the world and far into the future. If human beings do not better adapt psychologically and morally to these new conditions, human civilization could be threatened. (Persson & Savulescu 660)

Religion has shaped social and behavioural interactions and patterns for centuries, and if artificial intelligence is to be understood as a new religion, it is doubtful it will not have the same effects on the human psyche as well as its interactions with the outside world.

Death and Rebirth under Transhumanist Thought

Both works show that with procedures such as cryonics, death is already being understood as something other than what it is currently understood to be. Winterson describes cryonics by claiming it “...aims to pause death by vitrification. Once a person is pronounced legally dead, there is enough time (...) provi-

ding their team is ready and waiting, to empty your body of fluids, then vitrify it. Or, they can employ this process on the brain only, using your head as the container, and then suspend body, and/or brain, in what looks like a giant thermos flask filled with liquid nitrogen...” (Winterson 120) If, as Nel puts forward, “death is understood by consciousness as a precursor for existence. The actual event of death is just an iteration of the potential that has always already existed. Death is not an indifferent and inanimate state of matter, but rather a position on the spectrum of vitality...” (Nel 5)

Whether death is seen as a precursor to another life (as most religions would hint at), or if death is considered as a stop to all sensory and conscious life, however it may be perceived, with AI all such ideology changes and the focus turns to consciousness. Interestingly, with AI the idea of what happens after death (or around/during the process of dying) will no longer be a preoccupation, the focus will be on separating our conceptions of consciousness from having a human form. A perpetual state of consciousness would reign.

In *Zero K* Jeffrey Lockhart’s stepmother, Artis, as well as his father, being part of *The Convergence*, plan on undergoing this cryonic process. This way, the novel “...redraws the boundaries between life and death – the apparent contradiction between death as a final closure and a new unfolding, and consequently, it is concerned not only with the government of the living but also with control over life and death and the practices of dying.” (Nel 3) Interestingly, after Artis undergoes the cryonic process, DeLillo dedicates an entire chapter to depicting her conscious state. The chapter consists of a long, fragmented stream of consciousness, where Artis seems to be depicted in a perpetual state of being, but one that is confused and unsure of what it is. The certainty displayed by Artis throughout the first half of the novel is here momentarily split when the reader is made privy to her new form of consciousness. Up until that chapter, for Artis (and consequently Ross) death is neither a worry nor a possibility to be contemplated. She envisions herself in a permanent state of ‘forever’, in which she will never cease to exist, she will always be conscious, and at some point, get her body back. As Øyvind Vågnes puts forward,

[t]he reader is first introduced to her voice in the dialogue in the first part of the novel, where Jeff, serving as the first-person narrator of the novel, also makes several comments on the way in which she expresses herself, and how she sounds, as she is about to go into treatment. Then, we are led to believe that the voice of a narrative titled “Artis Martineau,” placed at the novel’s middle, between Jeff’s visits to the compound and a closing return to New York City, in

fact belongs to Artis, or whatever is left of her, as she wakes up after years in frozen Suspension. (Vågnes 39)

Therefore, by dealing with cryonics and by depicting the conscious state of being of a character which has undergone the process, what DeLillo does is to actively question what death should be understood as, and as Nel puts forward, “in a poetic fashion, this short chapter demonstrates that death is not necessarily an absolute end. It also demonstrates Braidotti’s (2013) notion of posthuman death theory as a vital continuum. In this gap between the absence and presence, Artis is in bardo, an intermediate or a transitional or liminal state between death and rebirth.” (Nel 4) Furthermore, as Winterson puts forward,

All our assumptions and plans about life, from a micro to a macro level, are predicated on dying. Individuals accept it and governments and insurance companies plan for it. We have a timeline that maps out childhood, education, working life, a partner, probably children, maybe divorce and another family, something like retirement (...) Then death. What is happening right now, though, is that all those assumptions of how we live are being challenged. (Winterson 134)

With this, both Winterson and DeLillo show that for those devoted to artificial intelligence’s transhuman practices, the sacred acts of birth and death, which have become cemented in society throughout centuries, can no longer help us comprehend what it constitutes to be a human being.

New Forms of Consciousness: Can our understanding of Modernism and Postmodernism help us understand Transhumanism?

There seems to be a clear and sensible progression in the way in which scholars and artists alike have approached the question of consciousness. While modernism was the time for self-exploration, the interest in knowing what the mind was composed of, and there was a consequent need to reevaluate the self, coming hand in hand with a fracture in society; eventually focusing on trying to understand how thought was created and what originated from our thought processes. With postmodernism, society and art take a step further, the knowledge acquired by such modernist exploration results in a state of self-awareness and self-knowledge that almost verges on a repudiation and destruction of everything that has been understood and accepted until the moment. Postmodernism takes special pains to show how aware of itself society and the individual have become, and with that, absolutes are shattered, as well as the individual.

Nowadays, it seems that society is grounded in undergoing an active repudiation and rejection of that which is known. The need for the unknown that modernism attempted to mend now seems preferable. There is a need for that which is as uncertain as what technology can eventually offer. It would seem that that which cannot be fully explored (for instance, the human mind) has remained such a mystery for such a long time, there is nothing left to explore without technology's help.

As Julian Huxley put forward in his very famous essay "Transhumanism", "[a]s a result of a thousand million years of evolution, the universe is becoming conscious of itself, able to understand something of its past history and its possible future. This cosmic self-awareness is being realized in one tiny fragment of the universe—in a few of us human beings. Perhaps it has been realized elsewhere too (...) But on this our planet, it has never happened before." (Huxley 12) Therefore, it could be suggested that the fragmentation of the individual and society that postmodernism put forward is now being embraced, rather than stated. Concurrently, human beings seem to be stirring towards a conscious and deliberate acceptance of their fragmentation, thus human beings are not only aware of such fragmentation, now with this hyper knowledge, they choose to celebrate it by creating selves and plunging willingly into the unknown. It could be stated these cryonic creatures are to be seen as new selves that are being actively created by each individual, as part of their fragmented self. This way, the view of transhumanism and its practices breaks with modernism and postmodernism, but as mentioned earlier, it is a sensible progression that would be impossible without the knowledge obtained from the exploration carried out by the former two movements.

Winterson and DeLillo seem to speculate with the idea that if the human being cannot understand itself fully (as it has tried to for centuries) through the exploration of the mind and the connection with the body, it needs to find new ways of understanding and of exploring, and that can be found within, not only by elongating our life-spans but also by adding new attributes and external nurturing only afforded by technological enhancements. The speculative nature of fictional works that deal with transhumanism is not only a reflection of the fact that this new movement and such social changes are in their early stages, in point of fact, Lovro Furjanić reflects that "[o]n the most basic level, the data available is limited. In this sense, literature can have a profound influence on the discourse about speculative technology as it can show a world where the technology is no longer speculative. To what extent can this knowledge be applied to the empirical world is an open question." (Furjanić 508)

Consequently, humankind should turn to literature to understand what is taking place in transhumanism, given that by looking at these works, the problems that might arise and the issues that need to be looked at, might help in re-considering and questioning what makes us human and conscious, as well as help in the redefinition of our society. Ultimately, we can no longer continue to look backwards; we must look forward.

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The Modes of Female Power and Urban Space in Amy Levy's Poetry

Emre Çakar

Introduction

Amy Levy was born in England into a middle-class family on 10 November 1861. Between 1879 and 1881, she attended Newnham, a women's college at Cambridge University. During her short life, Levy published three poetry books, three novels, and a number of short stories and essays. Although a few of her friends supported the political left, she never embraced socialism in her writings. On the other hand, she did not follow the art for art's sake movement too. She did not stick to any groups or organizations. Even her Jewish identity did not create priority for her career, for example, in her novella, *Reuben Sachs*, she represented Jewish community materialist and some of its characters with "ruthless ambition" and criticised their social world (Beckman, *Amy Levy* 1). Hence, she was an outsider in London's social life, and for some critics, she was a "virtual foreigner" in English society because she was single, unmarried, and lesbian (Nord 740). However, it was obvious that she was depressive, which led to her disastrous end. When twenty-seven, she tragically committed suicide.

In his *Marius the Epicurean*, Walter Pater claims that "[l]ife in modern London even, in the heavy glow of summer, is stuff sufficient for the fresh imagination of a youth to build its 'palace of art' of" (17). Written in 1885, Pater's text signifies the relationship between urban space and art in the eighteen-nineties. It symbolises that London began to be considered the intellectual and artistic fountainhead of the fin de siècle. According to Vadillo, "London was synonymous with modernity" (4). This was also significant for the groundwork of the transition from the Victorian age to modernism, which can be observed in Levy's poems as well. In this sense, Levy's poems paved the way for modernism through her handling of the issues of urban space along with the problems of gender. In this paper, I will explore the relationship between modernism and Levy's poetics from the subjects of female power and urban space.

Female Power

In the 1880s, English cultural life observed the birth of the New Woman who was a group of writers with feminist ideals. Some critics claim that it was the second generation of English feminists that was influenced by the first generation of the 1860s (Jordan 19). What made the New Woman unique was their “hostility to men,” “questioning of marriage” and “determination to escape from the restrictions of home life” (19). The New Woman mainly dealt with the problems of women and defended their rights in various areas ranging from marriage to education. While struggling against the difficulties, some preferred literature, some practised art, and some others were involved in sports. And their mutual attention was on the liberation of women.

Considered to be one of the New Woman group, Levy also fought against the traditional marriage that puts a woman in a restricted position in the house. In her poem, “A Ballad of Religion and Marriage,” she criticised the stark authority of religion over women and the traditional roles that are essentially determined by marriage. “A Ballad” begins with a reference to the holy trinity in Christianity to signify that the religion is dead. The speaker says, “The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, / Pale and defeated” and then goes on, “The great Jehovah is laid low” (Levy, “A Ballad”). Not only the god of Christianity but also that of Judaism are already dead. And the stanza finishes with the question “Shall marriage go the way of God?” (Levy, “A Ballad”). The speaker questions whether marriage will cease one day like religion.

In the second stanza of “A Ballad,” the speaker overtly challenges the state of having a single partner, briefly of monogamy. She states that women are “no more content to plod / Along the beaten paths,” so “Marriage must go the way of God,” in other words, marriage must also diminish like the god. Levy repeats the idea that marriage must transform thoroughly from a traditional structure into a liberated position. In the last stanza, Levy concludes that “Folk shall be neither pairs nor odd” and “Marriage has gone the way of God!” (“A Ballad”). In the final line, she assures the reader that marriage will fade away one day. Levy deliberately uses the word “odd” to refer to homoerotic love between two women and to signify the state of lesbianism. Similarly, in 1893, five years after the publication of Levy’s ballad, George Gissing entitled his novel *The Odd Women* with similar concerns. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the term odd was already in use to designate the love between two women, Castle reports that Anne Lister, an English diarist, wrote about her “oddity” in her diary (10). Later, she was christened as the first modern lesbian.

Therefore, Levy intentionally uses “odd” to refer to the end of traditional marriage, according to her, one day women will not be confined because of their marital status.

In 1889, after the first staging of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* in London, women audiences like Olive Schreiner and Eleanor Marx were surprised to see such a revolutionary play. The audience said, “This was either the end of the world or the beginning of a new world for women” (qtd. in Showalter vii). It was one year after the publication of Levy’s “A Ballad,” so she could not see the play, however, it proves the accuracy of her ideas about the confinement of women. She continues to depict the restraint she faced in her everyday life, which can be followed in her poem, “Philosophy” which was originally published in *A London Plane-Tree*. Levy writes the poem in the first-person speaker who addresses the nameless beloved. The poem begins with a precise depiction of the world, according to the speaker the world is “drear,” and she talks about her youth in the summer when she had “pleasant times” the two lovers had together (*A London* 88). She remembers the days when they were not like Phyllis but Corydon. Phyllis is a mythological character who symbolizes the impossibility of getting together. Corydon is a different figure that takes place in Virgil’s *The Eclogues*. The beginning of the second book of *The Eclogues* reads, “Corydon fell in love with a beautiful boy / Whose name was Alexis, the darling of his master” (11). Thus, the theme of homoerotic love is underlined through the imagery of Corydon.

The place in “Philosophy” is revealed in the second stanza. The speaker manifests that the two lovers gather not in the countryside but in the city. Therefore, the romantic landscape of the lovers turns out to be the city where they encounter “A Philistine and flippant throng” (*A London* 88). At this point, Levy designates the people on the streets as uncultured, rude and frivolous who cannot empathise with those “odd” women, thus, the lovers despise them. In the fourth stanza, the speaker states that they climbed up “the stairway’s topmost height / And sat there talking half the night / And gazing on the crowd below” (88). And they “Thanked Fate and Heaven that made [them] so” (88). While looking at the crowd from the top of a building, two lovers are depicted in a cityscape.

Towards the end of “Philosophy,” the speaker declares that they avoid using the “egoistic” pronouns “I” and “you” to diminish selfishness. Moreover, they talk about various subjects ranging from literature and art to life and humanity. In the last stanza, the speaker shows that they were “Scarce friends,

not lovers (each avers) / But sexless, safe Philosophers” (Levy, *A London* 88). In “Philosophy,” Levy highlights two different kinds of exclusion of the lovers, one is on the philosophical level, and the other is on the sexual level. On the philosophical level, Levy dreams of a utopic world in which people develop into sophisticated and polite people. They situate their love not only above the philistines but also above the prejudices of homophobic people. Therefore, Levy also imagines a sexless society free from biases. It is also possible to talk about the third level, which is latently about politics. From a political point of view, being a lesbian is frequently considered a “nonperson” (Castle 5). On every level, Levy represents how a lesbian turns out to be a nonperson in the eightennineties.

The theme of “persona non grata” is implicitly repeated in her poem, “At a Dinner Party” in which she mentions the inadmissible homoerotic desire. In this rather short, eight-line poem, Levy recounts a scene between two people at a dinner party, however, she neither reveals their gender, nor their love. In the first stanza, the speaker depicts the atmosphere of the party in which fruits and flowers are decorated and “The wine and laughter flow” (*A London* 87). The image of fruits and flowers, as well as that of wine and laughter, can be considered a reference to human desires, especially to sexuality. In the next line, stating that the world is a dull place the speaker contradicts the vivid picture of the dinner party with the lifelessness of the world (87). In the second stanza, the speaker describes the lively scene in which the beloved or her friend “look[s] across the fruit and flowers” (87). Thus, the image of fruits and flowers is enriched with the eyes of the beloved. And their glances come across at the party, however, the speaker whispers that the encounter of their eyes is a secret between the two, “It is [their] secret, only [their],” because all the world is blind” (87). Once again, Levy refers to the unaccepted situation of the lover as a nonperson employing the imagery of the encounter of the eyes, which is very simple and very clear. The representation of the lovers’ glances is juxtaposed with the blindness of the world, in other words, common people are unaware of their love and of the reality of same-sex desire. And if the poem is analysed from the perspective of “the failure of society to recognise female same-sex desire,” Levy’s attempt to display “erotic politics” will be visible (Lake 256).

In *The Woman’s World*, a periodical edited by Oscar Wilde, Levy writes an essay entitled “Women and Club Life,” in which she mentions the female clubs in London in detail. In the essay, she states, “while the old state of affairs was in many respects beautiful and satisfactory, it was the source of much and of increasing evil; adapted rather for the happiness of the chosen few than of the

unchosen many. To its upholders in these days can only be attributed an unphilosophic disregard of the greatest happiness of the greatest number” (“Women” 367). Levy observes the transformation of women in English social life, the old traditional system, regarded as the source of evil, was once good for a minority however there had to be a certain change for the good of the general. And the change can also be followed in Levy’s poems on the cityscape.

Urban Space

Although new poetic styles and forms were developing through the end of the nineteenth century, first with the death of Robert Browning in 1889, and then the death of Alfred Tennyson in 1892, the end of Victorian poetry was officially announced. At this crucial moment, Levy published her *A London Plane-Tree and Other Verse* in 1889 which was regarded as her “recognition of the poetics of London and her innovative articulation of women’s experiences of urban life” (Vadillo 1). Therefore, Levy’s poetic novelty is significant both for the issues of New Woman and for the concerns of urban space in the fin de siècle period.

Levy turns out to be one of the pioneers of modernism by means of the different representations of urban space. Vadillo claims that “Levy’s most important and radical act of imaginative exploration of urban aestheticism” is “her formulation of the female passenger both as a modern urban type and as the poet of modernity” (40). In other words, Levy is considered a passenger in the city as an urban poet like a flaneur who narrates various scenes from the city. In this sense, Levy also unites the transformation of women with the transformation of city life. For example, in her “Between the Showers” Levy illustrates the transitional nature of the city along with the image of the transgressive character of the speaker. The poem begins with the latent influence of the climate over people, “Between the showers,” the speaker says, “I went my way” (*A London* 26). The phrase “my way” symbolises her control over her own life, she is the true master of her life. Despite the weather conditions, Levy’s persona leads her own way, and her assurance is accompanied by the image of bright streets and flowers. In this urban picture, even the roofs and towers shine in their own ways, which is observed by Levy’s persona, thus, she examines the bright side of urban space. In the last stanza, the speaker states,

Hither and thither, swift and gay,
The people chased the changeful hours;
And you, you passed and smiled that day,
Between the showers. (*A London* 26)

Levy refers to the genderless beloved as she has done in “At a Dinner Party,” the speaker says that their glances encounter between showers, and nobody is aware of this coincidental meeting. On the other hand, the encounter of the so-called lovers signifies the presence of the women in public space and “the breaking down of boundaries and certainties” as well (Goody 166). Especially the phrases “Hither and thither” and “swift and gay” represent the “state ‘between’ points of fixity” (166). Therefore, Levy not only represents certain movements from city life but also the image of transgressing women who are beholders of modern life. Wandering on the streets of the city like a flaneur Levy forms her poetic voice in accordance with the poetics of the urban space.

In “Women and Club Life,” while referring to Baudelaire’s term, flaneur, Levy writes that “The female club-lounger, the *flaneuse* of St. James’s Street, latch-key in pocket and eye-glasses on nose, remains a creature of the imagination” (366). Levy’s statement indicates that the public space is occupied by men and women equally. What is more important is that Levy is concerned with the possibilities of public space in which women live as freely as men. She also depicts public vehicles of her time, for example, the omnibus is one of the public transportation she employs in her poems. Interestingly, the omnibus was very popular before the underground, and with the increasing popularity of the underground in London, the omnibus lost its reputation. In order to compete with the prices of the underground, the price of the omnibus became much cheaper. However, this changed the profile of the passengers, according to Vadillo, “[t]he middle-class character of the omnibus disappeared as the working classes started to use the omnibus” (21). It was a radical change in the use of the public transport system. So, the popular use of the omnibus and later tramway allowed women to transport themselves easily all over the city.

Levy’s “Ballade of an Omnibus” which is published in *A London Plane-Tree and Other Verse* directly deals with an urban image to represent civil mobility in the city. Before Levy, Oscar Wilde also used the image of an omnibus in his poem, “Symphony in Yellow,” yet Wilde’s style was, in some sense, more impressionistic. He says, “An omnibus across the bridge / Crawls like a yellow butterfly” (235). What makes Levy different from Wilde is that Levy’s speaker is an actual citizen walking on the street from the lower classes like an ordinary passenger. Vadillo claims that “[t]he passenger is a nomad in the modern metropolis, and in her journeys she records life as it passes by” (73). From Vadillo’s perspective, Levy’s persona can be regarded as a nomad living in the city. The poem begins with an epigraph from Andrew Lang’s poem stating that “To see my love suffices me” (*A London* 21). Through the epigraph, Levy

thematically connects the “Omnibus” poem with “At a Dinner Party” and “Between the Showers.” In the first stanza, the speaker says, “Some men to carriages aspire; ... Some seek a fly, on job or hire” and then the speaker states, “I envy not the rich and great / A wandering minstrel, poor and free” (21). Levy’s persona compares her situation with some other men to display her freedom. Feeling herself free, the persona calls herself a wandering minstrel, so she turns into a medieval performer who sings poetry. Therefore, considering herself a poet, a minstrel, the speaker differs from the public in general because she is a poet.

Furthermore, Levy makes a reference to the class distinction in the omnibus by calling herself “poor” (*A London* 21). Rappaport quotes some critics that the omnibus can be designated as a “democratic vehicle” through presenting human diversity (125). Levy represents the omnibus as a democratic vehicle that carries various people from different classes. She does not care about being rich or great, she is contented with her fate; an omnibus is enough for her. Through the omnibus, she can wander as a minstrel in London freely, at this point, the omnibus turns out to be a vehicle for her to “access to her love, London” (Rappaport 126). Although it is not indicated in the poem, the omnibus might enable her to see her love, which is loosely indicated in the epigraph. Hence, the omnibus becomes a love vehicle for her as well. Levy’s concern with urban space is crystallised in her love of London. In her “The Village Garden,” the speaker says that “The city calls me with her old persistence, / The city calls me—I arise and go” (*A London* 31). She displays that she cannot decline the call of the city and she goes because, for Beckman, “the city became central to her poetic development” (“Amy Levy” 208).

Conclusion

To sum up, through the evaluation of the poems, it is possible to conclude that Levy mainly concentrates on two different points; on the one hand, she, as a New Woman, deals with the issues of gender, for example, in her “A Ballad of Religion and Marriage,” she mainly copes with the religion and marriage, both of which had strong pressure on women. In the poem, by asking at the end of each stanza whether the marriage will follow the path of religion, she underlines that the trust in religion will be wiped out one day like the belief in god has already been demolished. At the same time, Levy latently refers to the homoerotic love between two women to assert that traditional marriage will end one day in the future, thus women will not be kept within any bounds. In “Philosophy,” Levy criticizes society employing the philistines who are rude and

prejudiced and presents a utopic society which is sexless and free from any biases. The speaker and her friend are depicted as not lovers but sexless philosophers and they look at the philistines from the top of a building. While revolving around the problems of womanhood and homoerotic love, Levy also employs urban space as the backdrop to her poem. The homoerotic desire between two lovers is repeated in "At a Dinner Party" in which Levy represents the world as blind on one side. And she portrays two lovers at a dinner party on the other side. In "At a Dinner Party," Levy does not reveal any details about the place of the poem, but she once again represents a vivid image of two lovers, most probably two women in an ignorant society.

On the other hand, she is concerned with the urban space which can be regarded as one of the fundamentals of her poetics. "Between the Showers" exemplifies Levy's concerns about the cityscape, for example, the speaker and her lover encounter between the showers while wandering on the streets. Acting like a flaneur, Levy wanders around London and employs some images of public transportation, for instance, she writes a ballad for an omnibus. In "Ballade of an Omnibus," Levy draws the omnibus as a vehicle which allows various people from different classes to travel throughout the city. Thus, Levy can be considered an urban poet, even if she stays in the countryside, she cannot turn down the call of the city as reflected in "The Village Garden."

This paper has shown the relationship between the power of the New Woman and their significant representation in the urban space by analysing Amy Levy's poems. Particularly, Levy's use of urban images and as well as the representations of female figures in the fin de siècle society makes her a distinguished poet among her contemporaries. Furthermore, Levy can be regarded as one of those who opened the way for modernism through her use of urban images and representations of the New Woman. While creating a sense of awareness of gender issues, Levy draws attention to being a citizen of London. Therefore, Levy's poems enable the reader to make a visit with an omnibus and see the disguised lovers at a dinner party between the showers in London streets, but above all, to read the poetry of the so-called "minor" poet of the New Woman of the fin de siècle.

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The Metamorphoses of Non-human Entities from Disposable Bodies in *Never Let me Go* and towards Agentic Counterparts in *Klara and the Sun*

Mahinur Gözde Kasurka

Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro is a renowned author who utilizes non-human characters as narrators in both *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and *Klara and the Sun* (2021). The first of these novels presents a transhumanist dystopian vision in which the clones are stripped of their right to live to provide organs for humanity. The novel reveals a dialectical ontological relationality between the human and the clone. Yet, this hierarchical relationality based on the politics of life is blurred due to organ transplantation leading to the hybrid human body. Thus, it will be suitable to claim that the human and the non-human form a kind of kinship in Donna Haraway's sense of the term. Yet, this kinship cannot erase the hierarchical ontological relationality between the clones and the normals in novel's own terminology. As a result, the clones have to provide spare body parts to prolong the lives of humans, which reflects a deeply human-centred perspective.

Klara and the Sun also exemplifies a similar story from a different perspective. The non-human narrator Klara is an artificial friend who is created to befriend the lifted children. The narrative world is made more specific than the previous novel as the implied reader can understand that the narrative world is depicted as a highly technologized world having some ecological problems due to pollution. In a similar manner with *Never Let Me Go*, the narrator is a non-human character, Klara who narrates her life by making it explicit how digital capitalist practices establish a hierarchy between the human and the non-human. The narrative world highlights the fact that is a harshly hierarchical one not only working against the non-human, but also working against the children who are not lifted by making us ask the question that lies at the very centre of posthumanist discussions which is what it means to be human and non-human in this century.

Non-human characters of Ishiguro showcase a significant transformation in time in terms of displaying their agentic capacities. The clone characters in *Never Let Me Go* do not question their sacrificial status and passively go towards

their death all throughout the novel. However, in *Klara and the Sun* the artificial friend Klara acts in such a manner that it becomes obvious her agency is well-established in comparison to Kathy of the previous novel. Klara poses a challenge to the digital capitalist narrative world by presenting a cure for her human counterpart Josie's illness by going beyond the boundaries set for her. Josie's intra-active relationality with Klara transgresses the ontological boundaries of the human and the non-human in Karen Barad's sense of the term. This study argues that there occurs a remarkable transformation in Ishiguro's attitude of his human and non-human portrayal of entanglement from *Never Let Me Go* towards *Klara and the Sun* in relation to relational ontology. This paper suggests that the implied author attempts to de-link from the old habits of anthropocentric practices in his very recent novel by showcasing non-human agency on the same grounds with human agency. In this respect, his latest novel negates the human-centred acknowledgement of agency as a prerogative of the human which excludes the non-human dimension. On the contrary, human, and non-human entanglement appearing in Klara and Josie's relationship promises hopeful horizons of multiplicity working as a cure for human-centred hubris in comparison to Kathy's dark visions of commodified clones in *Never Let Me Go*.

The Non-Human on the Forefront: *Never Let Me Go*

Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* recounts the story of three clone friends who have to donate their organs on behalf of saving humanity. In this respect, the novel exemplifies clone bodies that stand for spare body parts grown with the aim of prolonging humans' lives. Thus, the novel presents a quite pessimistic dystopian air even though the oppressive regimes of twentieth century dystopias are now obsolete in the narrative world. In the canonical examples of twentieth century the narrative does not enable the reader to hear the voices of the non-human other, but in the contemporary dystopia, it is possible for the reader to witness the stories of excluded non-human. Yet, the tendency to voice non-human counterparts can be within the borders of transhumanist horizons that aim to focus "specifically on human enhancement" to cite Francesca Ferrando (*Posthuman Glossary* 439). In line with this, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* depicts a transhumanist guiding force behind the narrative, as the whole motivation behind the creation of clones is to enable humanity a life away from all sorts of illnesses. In view of this, the narrative employs its dystopian pattern on the inevitability of supplying spare organs for humans. While doing this, the novel does not portray a far-away future that would fit for the existence of clones. Instead, it creates a twentieth century England setting by highlighting the fact that the text itself is beyond the borders of genres. Since it resists science fiction

novel with the exclusion of science visible all through the narrative. This attitude of creating a genre transgressing border boundaries by blending a science fictional motif with the 1990s Britain, Ishiguro creates a form of hybridity visible in the novel as is visible in the hybrid characters of the novel. Thus, he manifests an example of hybridity that he acts out both in the form and content. This struggle to go beyond borders within genre level is telling in deconstructing the novel's hybridity in character level.

The hybridity that appears as the strong theme residing in the novel brings forth a hierarchical form of life that is based on the dialectical ontological relationality between human and clone. Clones as exemplified by Kathy, Ruth and Tommy are raised as the ones who will complete their missions when they grow old enough by having operations in which they will supply organs for "normals" namely humans. This hierarchical relationality based on politics of life is what divides clones from normals in a dialectical manner. Clones are raised at Hailsham boarding school in a rural area that is away from the eyes of normals. When they get younger, they are sent to live in the Cottages before they start their mission as carers at first and then donators. In this respect, placing these clones away from humans' eyes portrays the grim reality of narrative world that is based on an Anthropocentric perspective. Humans living in the city and having spare body parts for themselves have the residues of human-centred discourse by placing the human at the centre of everything. Hierarchically lower status of the clones is manifest in varied points in the novel such as Miss Lucy's explaining the reason why they should not smoke as follows:

It's not good that I smoked. It wasn't good for me, so I stopped it. But what you must understand is that for you, all of you, it's much, much worse to smoke than it ever was for me. You've been told about it. You're students. You're... special. (NLMG 32)

Miss Lucy repeatedly warns these children about their health as they are in a way special by hosting the suitable organs for normals. In this respect, the text does not problematize the non-human exploitation by injecting normals a kind of view that clones can be exploited on behalf of human betterment. With the aim of warning the children what awaits them in the future, Miss Lucy states as follows:

The problem, as I see it, is that you've been told and not told. You've been told, but none of you really understand, and I dare say, some people are quite happy to leave it that way. But I'm not. If you're going to have decent lives, then you've got to know and know properly... Your lives are set out for you. You'll become

adults . . . and before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do. (NLMG 37-8)

By making the reason of their creation explicit, Miss Lucy uncovers the truth for the clones whereas that does not stir any kind of opposition on their side. Ishiguro's fabrication of silent clones attracts much attention by questioning why these young people go to sacrifice their lives on behalf of normals that they have never seen. In line with this, in the book entitled *Nonhuman Agencies in the Twenty-First Century Anglophone Novel*, Maria Ostrovskaya directs our attention to the passive agency of non-human entities as they do not revolt against the system they are in by stating:

The reader gradually gets to know that the fate of the characters is predetermined. In their early twenties, they start to donate their vital organs, until after 'the fourth donation' at the latest, they die... Although she is due to become a donor herself, Kathy seems curiously undisturbed by this prospect and takes for granted the validity of the donation programme. (130)

Yet, by acknowledging the lack of resistance from clones are reduced into tradable, disposable bodies that are stripped of their agentic powers. Yet, one should also consider the fact that by marking human-non-human entanglement visible in the novel, the text also lays bare the fragility of the so-called boundaries between human and non-human.

Humans' pursuing their lives with the organs transplanted from clones' bodies also undermines the acknowledgement of human as an enclosed system by making it explicit that their bodies are entangled networks of agents. In this line of thinking, normals need clones to continue their lives and to have the chance of eradicating markers of illnesses from their bodies. They also embody human-clone hybridity by erasing the ontological superiority. Thus, the novel showcases the erasure of human's ontological superiority since there is no longer an enclosed form of body that is not amalgamated with clone body. In this respect, the non-human agency makes itself visible even under the forced labour of clones.

Ishiguro's depiction of non-human agency together with the epistemic and material violence exerted upon clones is significant in laying bare the late capitalist system that commodifies anything even life itself. In this way, the text foregrounds a form of natural-cultural entity that transgresses the previously set boundaries by forming intra-active relationality. Karen Barad's term intra-action which underlines the mutual constitution of entangled agencies becomes the embodiment of human and non-human encounter in the text. Even though clone

bodies are taken as disposable and exploitative bodies, their seemingly lower status also contaminates the superior position of normals. In this vein, critical posthumanist stance differentiates itself from Giorgio Agamben's pessimist acknowledgement of *zoe* as *bare life* which he explains as "the simple fact of living common to all living beings" (*Homo Sacer* 1). Yet, from a critical posthumanist angle it is not possible to talk about a stabilization of ontological categories in the narrative world. In contrast, it undermines inherited dualisms of Humanist ideology from a posthumanist framework by de-linking the new human from their assumed position.

Ishiguro's fabrication of the novel from Kathy's perspective also signifies a way of voicing the other side of the story. In this respect, Ishiguro's position as a dystopian author can be taken as an ambiguous one that can be clarified as in the following: Firstly, depicting the non-human others as Kathy, Ruth and Tommy who accept the fate of completion namely death after three or four organ donations bears transhumanist overtones. Secondly, narrating the story from Kathy's perspective enables the implied reader a possibility of learning about the stories of the non-human other. This attempt of voicing the stories of non-human others echoes Serpil Oppermann and Serenella Iovino's category of storied matter that can be explicated as follows: "matter's stories emerge through humans, but at the same time humans themselves emerge through 'material agencies' that leave their traces in lives as well as stories" (*Posthuman Glossary* 411). In this respect, normals' stories are actualized thanks to their non-human counterparts. In this way their stories emerge within each other by presenting hybridity as standing against the categories of human and non-human. Even though it is not possible to acknowledge that the text injects a flat ontology based on a non-hierarchical thinking, the implied reader has the chance to witness the enmeshment of human and non-human that underlines "bodies are reconfigured as permeable and porous sites in a state of constant relation" (*Posthuman Glossary* Marchand, 293). The porousness of human and clone bodies forms a kinship beyond reproduction between them.

All through the narrative, the donors do not learn for whom they sacrifice their lives, yet there appears to be a bonding between them which gives way to hybridity. In this line of thinking, the novel makes it explicit that this negative bonding between normals and clones evolve into a kinship relation from Donna Haraway's perspective. Haraway is aware of the turbulent times that all the entities are going through these days, yet she does not lament over the loss by focusing on what cannot be retrieved back. Instead of this, she proposes another perspective that enables to find a way "to stay with the trouble" in her

own words (*Staying with the Trouble* 4). While finding a way to focus on the regenerative forces of human and non-human entanglement, Haraway suggests forming kinship relations with earthly others instead of having babies due to limited sources of the earth. Within the narrative world, Ishiguro does not touch upon the lives of normals by silencing them, yet the narrative still offers possible sites of kinship beyond reproduction, as the clones who donate their lives for the sake of humanity continue to exist in enmeshment with normals. In this line of thinking, their bonding brings forward an intertwined and blended ontological relationality.

By making the reader question what it means to be non-human, the novel also problematizes if there is any essence of being human. In this respect, the clone children's dealing with varied forms of art at Hailsham is telling in undermining a kind of essence that is unique to humanity. In this respect, the non-human is voiced in relation to the human, but the novel also sketches non-human agency in a different manner by placing emphasis on their ability in art. When they grow up, Kathy and Tommy question if they have a chance to prolong their lifetime on the condition of proving their art matches with each other. Upon this, they hear the bitter truth behind the school's emphasis on art as they state: "We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to prove you had souls at all" (*NLMG* 238). Seen in this light, normals equal art with the essence of humanity and upon seeing their art works, they are not persuaded with the possibility of clones' being horizontally aligned with humans. Thus, creative artwork in the text is not enough to erase the markers of identity. Moreover, by emphasizing the core of humanity as the ability of having soul unveils the dichotomous logic apparent in humans' engagement with clones. Placing soul on the upper leg of binary logic compared to body signifies an unsuccessful attempt of consolidation of the ontological stability of ontological boundaries.

The Portrayal of Agentic Capabilities in *Klara and the Sun*

The text demonstrates a narrative world in which parents buy some artificial friends for their children and modify their children's mental capacities to provide them better lives for their future. Klara is the non-human narrator as an artificial friend of Josie who remembers her days with her human companion. The reader encounters her days at the AF store and her waiting for a child to start a brand-new life. The text establishes several hierarchies by establishing binary logic based on the superiority of human over non-human. Yet, it also makes us question which human occupies the central position in the text, as it also

demonstrates Rick, as a child who is not lifted, is discriminated against the others. That is to say, the hierarchies work in different layers in the text from a posthumanist standpoint. The text's critical engagement with the life practices of digital capitalist society is a significant point in underlining its paving the way for a reading that will bring to the fore the agentic potentialities of the non-human counterparts in comparison to *Never Let Me Go*.

As there are multiple layers reflecting the hierarchies in the text, it would be appropriate to demonstrate how the consolidation of human as a category is established in the text and how it enables to pave the way for a more agentic depiction of the non-human. *Klara and the Sun* reveals a lifting process to enhance better mental qualities for the children. Yet, this process also bears some significant risks as exemplified by Sal, Josie's elder sister who has died due to her illness after the lifting process. The text also stresses Josie's illness due to the same procedure. The division between the lifted ones and the others comes to the fore with Rick, Josie's friend who is not lifted. Even though Josie claims to "spend their lives together" in the future, their friendship does not continue in this manner due to the differences between them (KS 53). By pointing out the relationship between Rick and Josie, the text makes it clear that the biotechnological advancements create hierarchies working for the betterment of a closed group by excluding the others who cannot afford it. The novel's critical engagement with neoliberal practices can be seen in a more visible manner than the previous novel as Ishiguro does not make normals visible in his *Never Let Me Go*. Clones do not have any contact with their human counterparts for whom they sacrifice their lives. Also, the implied reader is not given any traces of how this system works in the lives of normals. Namely, it is not apparent in the text which humans have access to organ transplantation to prolong their life spans. Thus, Ishiguro's portrayal of his criticism of biotechnological advancements working for a small, privileged group of people shows a transformation from *Never Let Me Go* towards *Klara and the Sun*.

The non-human entity of the narrative is Klara who meets the reader while she is waiting for a human counterpart in a store, displayed by the shop window. She is a solar-powered artificial friend created with a purpose to befriend children. While waiting for her human companion, she makes great observation and tries to understand the human world outside. Even starting from the beginning part of the novel, Ishiguro makes it explicit that Klara is not intended to demonstrate a passive non-human entity as she learns quickly from what she sees through the shop window and also makes projections about her future in relation to what she sees. An example of this can be given when she

sees two people whom she names “The Coffee Cup Lady and her Raincoat Man” after bumping into each other hug each other so sincerely. She tries to understand why and how they can feel sad and happy at the same time as she draws the conclusion from their facial expressions. She dreams about a possible meeting of her and Rosa, another AF waiting to be sold at the shop, years later. Klara questions: “And I tried to imagine how I would feel if Rosa and I, a long time from now, after we ‘d found each other different homes, saw each other again by chance on a street. Would I then feel, as Manager had put it, pain alongside my happiness?” (KS 25). The implied author’s making it explicit that Klara, as an artificial entity, questions how she would feel when she sees her friend years later undermines the idea of feeling as something solely belonging to the human. In accordance with this, Klara reflects that “the more I observe, the more feelings become available to me” by approving her capacity to learn how to feel in a similar manner with a human child (KS 98).

The non-human entity’s presenting their agentic potentialities also makes itself visible in Klara’s awareness towards ecological degradation together with her acknowledgement of “the Sun” with a capital letter as a deity. As her ecological awareness and constant references to the Sun as a source for life reveals a concern over nature which is something that the human characters lack in the text. Thus, she is more aware of the narrative world than the human characters. An example of this can be taken when she takes the Cootings Machine as a source of pollution that prevents sun lights. Throughout the end of the text, Klara decides that it is due to this machine that there is pollution and intentionally wants to damage it as in her own words “it’s a terrible machine” (KS 196). She also thinks that it is because of this machine that Josie is ill and destroying it would enable her to heal.

Klara’s obsession with the Sun does not solely result from her solar-powered nature. She attaches the Sun a greater power that is able to heal them. Thus, she prays to the Sun for Josie by believing that it has the capacity to do so. It is narrated as in the following:

So I gathered my thoughts and began to speak. I didn’t actually say the words out loud, for I knew the Sun had no need of words as such. But I wished to be as clear as possible, so I formed the words, or something close to them, quickly and quietly in my mind. “Please make Josie better” (KS 165).

Klara’s intentionally praying for Josie’s illness and her struggle to do something that will better her is also another point laying bare her agentic potentialities. It might even be strange to see that Josie’s human counterparts

give up their hopes on her even including her father who does not approve what Mr Capaldi as a scientist does to replace Josie with Klara in the incident of a possible death. The father's statement makes it explicit:

I think I hate Capaldi because deep down I suspect he may be right. That what he claims is true. That science has now proved beyond doubt there's nothing so unique about my daughter, nothing there our modern tools can't excavate, copy, transfer. That people have been living with one another all this time, centuries, loving and hating each other, and all on a mistaken premise. A kind of superstition we kept going while we didn't know better. That's how Capaldi sees it, and there's a part of me that fears he's right. (KS 200)

As is clear, the text depicts humans' questioning what it means to be human and if we can differentiate the human from the non-human. In contrast to this pessimistic vision of the father, the non-human is not depicted as a kind of possible threat for the humanity. Unlike the dystopian visions in which the non-human is reflected as a significant danger for the survival of humanity, Klara signposts a possible entity together with whom Josie may continue her survival even after her death. This possible union of Josie and Klara paves the way for Katherine's Hayles's reference to posthumanism by declaring "although the posthuman has been variously defined, most versions include as a prominent feature the joining of humans with intelligent machines" ("Refiguring the Posthuman" 312). In this vein, the text's inherent reference to utilizing Klara's body in the aftermath of Josie's death exhibits the way the text debunks hierarchies and instead offers "a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" in Hayles's own words (*How We Became Posthuman* 3). It is through this point that the text goes beyond "either...or..." viewpoint by suggesting an amalgamation of various components.

Far from consolidating a dichotomous logic of either a threat to humanity or a slave for them, Klara occupies a natural-cultural position by linking culture and nature, human and non-human, organic and inorganic, naturally conceived and culturally produced. In this respect, the title of the novel is quite telling since it combines Klara, an Artificial Friend, with Sun, a natural entity. Ishiguro's combining what we call artificial with a natural phenomenon can be taken as an intentional attempt in emphasizing a posthumanist dictum in Andrew Pickering's words: "human and non-human agents are associated in networks and evolve together in those networks" (*The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, and Science* 11).

To conclude Ishiguro's journey from *Never Let Me Go* towards *Klara and the Sun* makes a constant move from visualizing clones leading to their completion in the novel's terminology towards the status of a friend who makes constant choices in her life. Thus, the latest novel, despite its dystopian overtone, enables having glimpses of hopeful horizons by presenting how the non-human can go beyond their duties determined by humans on behalf of them by reflecting enmeshment of the human and the non-human and stressing ontological relationality on a non-hierarchical plane. Ishiguro's depiction of Klara and the Sun's relationality underscores strong symbiosis between organic and inorganic by offering affirmative posthumanism away from exclusionary practices of human-centred view.

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Introduction

Modernism still carries within itself the hope of creating a better world by using different artistic styles and experimenting with the objects, ideas, and what was once thought to be less worthy of pondering about. There was this belief in the possibility of living in a better world until the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which gave way to post-modernism and changed the expectations from literary works. Early twentieth century was a turning point for the world history and both scientists and artists looked for ways to understand the reason why so many drastic changes started to occur, while at the same time working on novelties to set the rules for the new game in several branches of art such as architecture, music, and literature. Although poetry has the innate power of involving so many meanings within lines, modernist poets brought a new perspective to the language and themes used within their poems. Before the emergence of modernism, elevated style and language with all the figurative speech elements were common among the world of poets. It was as if the quality of a poem depended largely on the use of symbols, metaphors, unknown or sophisticated adjectives, and great ideas. What was more evident than that was the lofty themes that were discussed within the poems. Modernism, however, demonstrated the possibility of writing poetry that was to a great extent in contrast with the traditional perception and appreciation of literature. In addition to that, as emphasized by Berry, Williams was well aware of the fact that the vernacular language had the power to express “certain local things” better than the “standard” speech (41). What William Carlos Williams, a prominent figure of imagism, had in mind and aimed at achieving can best be understood through a semantic scrutiny into his poem *The Red Wheelbarrow*. Thus, next section will attempt to find out the hidden or the unknown within the evident by looking at how language was used by the poet in a way that invites readers to come up with new ideas every time they read it.

Delving into the poem

If ignoring the standard writing rules is one of the tenets of modernism, then William Carlos Williams definitely achieved to surprise the reader with his

novel way of approaching the idea of “what a poem is” in *The Red Wheelbarrow*. The poem dazzles the reader both through its appearance, and the simple language used within. All the letters in the poem are in lower case, which may signify that everything in the poem is of equal importance. Proper nouns, first words, country names and such other words are usually capitalized in formal writing. Although poetry as a literary form can be written by allowing some room to use non-standard modes of writing, it was not until the emergence of Modernism that poets had such limitless authority to experiment with the language and structure of the poems. Another reason why capitalization rules were neglected in the poem is that Williams might have wanted to express his enthusiasm for modernism by diverging from the general rules of writing. This was his poetic license, all in all, which enabled him to show that a new American society was emerging and so was a new form of poetry. Whatever reason he had in his mind, the words all in lower case had a profound and yet paradoxical contribution to the overall meaning of the poem. To put it briefly, what is the use of not capitalizing the words now that so much depends on so many things? If they are really vital, they would be better capitalized. If they are not, how can they still have an influence on several other things? As the title of the paper suggests, even these simple lines with a simple English can arouse a philosophical question within the minds of the readers, leading them to question what is important and what is not.

The usage of the article “the” in the title of the poem is another aspect that requires attention. As a definite article, “the” is used to mention things that are known by those being talked to. As a result of this, the reader is assumed to know which wheelbarrow the poet is writing about. However, things get upside down when Williams says, “so much depends upon / a red wheel barrow” (lines 1-2). Now, “the” red wheelbarrow becomes “a” red wheelbarrow, leaving the reader in total amazement. The shift in the usage of article does none but cause things to get much more complicated. Now that the statement “so much” is a strong expression, how can the reader be expected to decipher the significance of the red wheelbarrow in the existence of an ambiguity between a familiar and unfamiliar wheelbarrow? From another perspective, if we take the wheelbarrow in the title as the main argument, we can say that the person depends on wheelbarrows in general, however, the wheelbarrow in the poem is an exception in the sense that the same person depends on any red wheelbarrow or a wheelbarrow that others are not familiar with, implying that it is impossible for the reader to appreciate how important the wheelbarrow is for the person who sees it in the poem. However, if that is the case, then why does the poet strongly

emphasize the dependence level of the person on the wheelbarrow? The dilemma here is sometimes what is very much important for us does not mean anything at all to others. On the other hand, maybe it is people themselves who cannot realize that they depend on the same things. It can be deduced that even a slight linguistic change has the power to create an urge for the readers to come up with as many ideas as possible, a thing that was achieved by Williams no matter how simple language he used in his famous poem.

How imagery was used in the poem is another striking point that comes as a modernist manifesto. As can be noted from Guimand's words, Williams wanted to draw a very precise portrait of life (43). The reader is presented with a rural scene where there are "white chickens", "a red wheelbarrow", and of course "the rainwater". From a very basic perspective, these images do not sound like perfect lofty images that can be used in traditional poetry. However, from a modernist point of view, they have the strength to reflect their significance owing to the fact that each and every one of them is interconnected with each other. That is to say, it is not a red wheelbarrow upon which the unknown person depends so much, but "a red wheelbarrow glazed with rainwater beside the white chickens". By so doing, Williams enables the reader to appreciate and have a grasp of the setting and the scenery in the poem. It was highly emphasized by Pound that the rhythm in imagist poems had to be "composed of in the sequence of the musical phrase" (Pound). Such a musical rhythm much different from daily speech is witnessed within the poem. The reader is provided with the opportunity to discover each element thanks to the perfect visual contribution made by the poet. Moreover, it is not only the visual elements that make the scenery as lively as possible but also the music that is produced as a natural result of the rain and the chickens. Thus, a combination of audio and visual elements creates the perfect atmosphere for the readers to visualise the very scenery in their minds. It is thanks to these sounds and images that enable the readers to really feel the rural setting which was then about to transform into a realm where people's understanding of economic relations was doomed to change owing to the need for mass production in factories, which was a result of population growth in a vast country.

In modern times, people almost transformed into machines due to the developments in industrialization and growing number of factories opening everywhere. People living in both urban and rural areas inevitably became a part of this system where their existence as human beings were considered to be less important than the tragic fact that they were mostly "another brick in the wall" (Floyd 1979). This being the case, feelings related to being a human were

neglected and many sufferings, hopes, and expectations were left unheard. In the poem, the existence of that person or thing who or which so much depends upon a red wheelbarrow is so real. However, we are given no clue as to who or what that person or thing may be. This may well show that instead of finding out who that person or thing is, it is evident that millions with the same dependency exist, with the saddening fact that their existence do not really make a difference. In parallel with the title of that paper, the unknown millions are evident, which sounds paradoxical, yet this is an inescapable outcome of modernism. All the disappointments, mournings, and ambiguities gradually created a gloomy atmosphere that was not endurable without the existence of the works written by modernist writers. They-if not completely-contributed to the healing of the people as they felt their voices were to be echoed in the novels and poems. Some did it explicitly, some implicitly. *The Red Wheelbarrow* was one of them that evidently drew a portrait of rural area by hinting at the same time that it was about to shift sooner.

Conclusion

Tragedies that came as a result of World War I and rapid changes in the society negatively modified the way politics shaped and governed the public. Taking what the French symbolist Gustave Khan argued into consideration, T. E .Hulme states that from a modernist perspective, modifications in the form of poetry can best represent a poet's ideas rather than the social changes (52). Taking this for granted, it would not be unjust to claim that Williams drew the general portrait of the complex society thorough the use of simple language which is foreign to genteel poetry. The wheelbarrow is glazed with the rainwater. The shiny feeling rainwater could add to the wheelbarrow may be resembled to the promises politicians made to public. Although rain is traditionally thought to carry romantic elements within itself, here this notion changes as the reader is not provided with any room to dive into an emotional phase. However, it is also crucial to use rain in order to signify that nature is an indispensable part of a natural scenery. To put it more briefly, the wheelbarrow actually would not have looked that attractive if it had not rained. Most of the politicians' words are actually none but popular sayings that can only be used to cheat the society just like the rainwater which manipulates the real appearance of the red wheelbarrow. It is again evident that people will continue to be manipulated by those who are craving for endless rights to rule over a country or society, while the reasons behind these tricky and inhumane actions will never be discovered by those working on their farms, sharing their food, and showing

the world that being a human in the middle of nature does not need to be that difficult.

It comes as a striking point to see such a short poem has the strength to express, embrace, and cover several ideas which are closely related to how to position ourselves in the modern world. As has been rumoured, this poem is a representation of how one is stuck between life and death. One may agree with that understanding of the poem as in time of death either everything is really important, or nothing matters at all. Everything is important because there is maybe a chance to survive, just like the modernists who tried to get rid of the old forms of poetry to “make it new” as made famous by Pound (265) and resurrect as a form very much different from the traditional one. However, nothing is important as humanity seems to get worse regardless of the corrective efforts made by the artists. Moreover, as once suggested by A. Walton Litz, it is not an easy task to relate one’s feelings no matter how beautifully they are comprehended when it comes to the psychology behind poetry (963). From what Walton said, we can deduce that it is already not an easy attempt to decipher the meaning in the poem; however, when it comes to understanding a poem like *The Red Wheelbarrow* this turns out to be even harder-or maybe simpler- as people are generally inclined to look for deeper meanings in what they read, hear or see. Thus, they might be tempted to investigate if there is a hidden message in the poem. Reaching a total consensus on why Williams wrote this poem with all the word choice, structure, and rhythm might be a challenging dream; yet, considering the enthusiasm that circulated around the poets then, we can say that writing in such a way must have required great courage as it is clear that the readers are still invited to see and appreciate the unknown within the evident.

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From Romanticism to Modernism in English Poetry: Tennyson, Browning, and Hopkins as Figures of Transition

Mustafa Canlı

Introduction

The Victorian novel was the dominant literary production in the nineteenth century. Poetry was read, but it was not that successful and widespread. However, poets of the Victorian Age were respected and considered to be the true artists at the time (Bristow 5). They were celebrated much by their contemporaries and audience. In this study, three voices from the period representing the time and its conventions are analyzed in terms of their general characteristics and contribution to the nineteenth-century English literature: Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Tennyson represents a transition from Romanticism to the nineteenth-century poetry. Tennyson was interested in the rhythmical features of the English language and was a maestro of this tool. Reading Browning, on the other hand, is more demanding than Lord Tennyson. He gave importance to experimentation in both style and content. His monologues and the excellence of his knowledge and mastery in his lines make him a proto-Modernist if the term finds its place. Poetry became thoroughly Modern with Hopkins; he tried to use the tool of stress to create poetry, which he called “sprung rhythm” instead of the usual term meter. He believed that the future of English verse rests in language exploration in the form of small lyric poems. These three writers bridge the gap between great Romanticism and Modernism, preparing the path for future breakthroughs in the twentieth-century poetry. This work analyses a poem from each poet outlining their and the century’s characteristics as a transition from Romanticism to Modernism.

As the novel got popular and widespread, the poets tried to tell their stories at length. They tried to write long narrative poems; however, this was debated among the poets and critics. According to *Norton Anthology* editor Abrams, the debate was also on the subject matter. Matthew Arnold suggested using heroic materials of the past, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning suggested that the poets of the Victorian age should represent their age, not that of Charlemagne (1902). For example, Arthur Hugh Clough’s *Amours de Voyage* is

a long epistolary poem that tells the story of a failed romance with various characters inside.

That Victorian Poetry was a transition between romanticism and modernism, and it was developed under the shadow of romanticism was expressed in such examples by the critics: In his poem “Resignation”, Arnold suggests her sister that she visit a landscape that would give her rejoicing and creative inspirations; Tennyson occasionally presents his muse cut off from the world; Browning’s poems “embrace the visions that darker imaginations present”; Hardy’s “The Darkling Trush” imitates Keat’s “Nightingale” (Abrams 1902). Another critic that analyses the poetry of the age is Randall Jarrell, who wrote *Poetry and the Age* in 1953.

The Transition

The nineteenth-century poetry was not as popular or widely studied as fiction which became the basic entertainment of the middle classes regarding the classics (Bristow 18). So the outstanding success of novels surpassed poetry. As prose writers, Dickens, Ruskin and Carlyle were read and bought by the readers as much as poetry. However, little poetry was celebrated and adored by its admirers as the most prominent genre of the English people. The poet laureate was the most distinguished literary figure, and the public revered poetry and its creators. When Alfred Lord Tennyson died, he was accorded a state funeral, which is a great honour. Tennyson’s poetry, such as “Enoch Arden” and “Idylls of the King”, sold as many as significant novels of the 1840s and 1850s. Some poems were also as lengthy as novels, such as Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*, Browning’s *Aurora Leigh*, and Meredith’s sonnet *Modern Love*, which is a lengthy tale of a marriage breakdown.

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809–1892) was a poet by whom the Romantics were greatly influenced. Keats and Shelley especially inspired him. He had the ideal of the Romantics and tried to achieve this in the poetry of the Victorian Age. This idea was the production and stressing of the musical qualities and dimensions of poetry in general (Armstrong xii). Melody and harmony were his key terms while producing and appreciating a poem. Tennyson was considered the master of this verbal melody which demanded certain skill. From his early life, Tennyson was meant to be a great poet. He reached the peak of his profession when he was chosen poet laureate, after Wordsworth, in the 1850s. Tennyson was announced a baron by Queen Victoria, who loved his poetry, in 1884. Tennyson had a variety of themes in his poems. “In Memoriam”, which is

about the death of his colleague Arthur Hallam, is generally accepted as his masterpiece.

Tennyson had a particular interest in classical poetry. The epic poem *Odyssey* inspired and affected Tennyson to a large extent. He was amazed by the poem and the character Odysseus in terms of their emotional capabilities and variety (Bristow 91). The melancholic journey of Odysseus and his men inspired Tennyson. Just as the Romantics dealt with the weary state of the nation in general, so Tennyson was similarly concerned with the weariness of Odysseus and his companions during their sea journeys. That the men of Odysseus lost their belief in life and success gave melancholic inspiration to Tennyson, which he used in some of his poems. John Sutherland claimed this melancholy was the other side of the Victorians who created a world of wealth and infrastructure in their own nation (65). Although the Victorians were outwardly the pioneers of the Modern era, they felt melancholy, weariness and loneliness inside. The Victorians gave up their spiritual ties due to the dynamic and never-ending production and fast lifestyle. Just as the lotus-eaters captured some of Odysseus's men and cleansed their past and identities (Ricks 70-72), the Victorian men were also cleansed and lost their ties with the roots of the romantic man.

Tennyson also dealt with public issues and contemporary events of the period. Wars, crises, uprisings and other public events were the themes in some of his poems (Armstrong 211). For example, his poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" mentions the Crimean War between Russia and an alliance of the Ottoman Empire, France, and Britain. In his poem, gathering information from some newspapers, photographs, and memoirs of the events (Ricks 509), Tennyson reflected on the crimes, bloodshed and other human encounters during the war and the stories of many soldiers. Especially the losses of the British soldiers became a piece of shocking news for the public. The British Cavalry lost many soldiers in a special attack called the "Charge of the Light Brigade" in 1854, which was considered a suicide mission more than a battlefield tactic. The poem begins with the instruction to the British soldier to die:

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!

Charge for the guns!” he said.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred. (Ricks 508)

During the war, an attack was made on the Russian guns, and lots of men and 400 horses were casualties. This disaster was recorded and commemorated by Tennyson in his epic poem. Tennyson regarded it as a stupid decision and a deliberate slaughter. Moreover, the poem was also published with the photographs taken by the correspondents. So it was a new format for the readers at the time.

Robert Browning (1812-1889) is the other prominent figure of the nineteenth-century English poetry. Browning’s poetry is much more experimental than Tennyson’s (Armstrong 46). His poems are also considered harder to understand. His poem *Sordello* is deemed one of his first poems, which surprised and angered the audiences. The comments and criticisms of the poetry were harsh, and most of the time, the poem’s message and details were considered impossible to understand. The lines were self-referential, and the symbolism made it much harder to apprehend the outline of the story and message of the poem. It was considered the most obscure of all Browning poems:

Lo, the past is hurled

In twain: up-thrust, out-staggering on the world,

Subsiding into shape, a darkness rears

Its outline, kindles at the core, appears

Verona. ‘T is six hundred years and more

Since an event. The Second Friedrich wore

The purple, and the Third Honorius filled

The holy chair. That autumn eve was stilled:

A last remains of sunset dimly burned

O’er the far forests, like a torch-flame turned (85-94)

Occasional full stops, names and reference to events make the lines harder to comprehend and associate with specific imagery or story. Browning’s

poems include many thoughts and opinions of him, most of which are very self-referential and hard to understand (Ryals 85). More than the story or musical quality, the ideas expressed in his poems are important.

Browning's "My Last Duchess" is an excellent example of his contribution to the nineteenth century and early Modernist poetry with his use of dramatic monologue. Dramatic monologue presents an outburst of the inner psychology or shows expressions of someone's unconsciousness. This is the most outstanding achievement of Browning in the art of poetry (Ryals 101). The dramatic monologue in the poem is over the ambiguity of the duchess's real identity in terms of her being the persona's wife or mistress. The poem's persona is the Duke of Ferrara, who loves art, but is also considered a dictator and a patron. It is implied in the poem that he may have killed some wives or mistresses and now talks about this "last" one. When the Duke explains his taste in art and the works of art in his gallery, he stops and explains a portrait which portrays his last wife:

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands. (1-4)

Later in the poem, the persona remarks on his discontent with his lover and possibly murders her. Moreover, it is also conceivable that he drew her portrait, which hangs on the wall. In this way, the reader experiences the taste of his art in his monologue on the interpretation of the painting. Browning influenced W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot in the Modern era with his dramatic monologue.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889) is considered more a Modernist than a Victorian poet in technique and subject matter. Hopkins was a Jesuit priest during his lifetime. His poems were later found and published. He was not known during his lifetime. Hopkin's poems were published by his friend Robert Bridges, the poet laureate from 1913 to 1930, after Hopkin's death. Hopkins was well aware of Tennyson and Browning's success and innovations in poetry. Hopkins owed some of his descriptive skills to Tennyson. His poem titled "That Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire" carries some traces of Tennyson's illustrative style and technique:

CLOUDPUFFBALL, torn tufts, tossed pillows' flaunt forth, then
chevy on an air-

built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs' they throng;
they glitter in marches. (Hopkins 22)

Hopkins used stress as a tool for his poetic art. He called it “sprung rhythm”, pointing out that it is not a meter or any kind but a specific instrument for the musical qualities and comprehension of poetry. His rejection of pentameter was an innovation in a structural dimension. Another of his projection for the future of English poetry was short lyrics which he thought would be a flexible format for the Modernist poets that were to come soon after his death. The language was prolific and flexible in this kind of poetic format. He thought that the poet must experiment with the language in the short lyric format and bring new ideas and forms into English poetry. However, Hopkins was not innovative in the subject matter. He favoured the use of traditional subject matters with few amendments. Nature and the world were Hopkins's usual themes in his poems.

As Hopkins was a priest of Catholic Christianity, his subject matter was rooted in the religious realms of the English culture (Hopkins vii). Catholicism and the love for Lord presided over his themes in poetry. “Terrible Sonnets” is one of his most famous poems, focusing on poetic art's religious side. As a classical and common practice of the Catholics, the inquisition of one's soul and conscience is the main point of these sonnets. The unknown parts of the human soul and religious consciousness are examined and artistically verbalized in these poems:

I WAKE and feel the fell of dark, not day.

What hours, O what black hours we have spent

This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!

And more must, in yet longer light's delay. (1-4)

In these sonnets, Christ is given a particular place, and the crucifixion of Jesus is stressed. The poet tries to feel the pains of Jesus during his lifetime and on the cross though he cannot hold still like Jesus. The pains are too much for him, and he understands what Christ has gone through. Sacrifice is emphasized in these sonnets:

NO worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?
My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief
Woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing—
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked ‘No ling-
ering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief’. (1-8)

This poem includes various moods of emotions and pain. The source of pain is unknown but could be religious thoughtfulness, melancholy or frustration. Finally, we consider an even more crucial element of these poets’ influence: how far can these poets be blamed for the ambiguity of meaning in their poems? Although they have encouraged poets to use the language’s resources more fully, it is wrong to equate their grammatical liberties with the heedless obscurity, the constant and unexplosive vagueness in their poems.

Conclusion

These three poets embody the transition from Romanticism to Modernist poetry with their innovations and unusual stress, rhythm and form techniques. It is fair to say that there is no traditional Victorian poetry as the genre changed shape and focus throughout the century. There were many conflicts in the Victorian, and one of the interrogations was about age and a total breakdown of faith, idealism and conviction. The modern era looks dubious of the ancient certainties and norms that governed Victorian society. The modern era has been dubbed, probably correctly, the “period of questioning”: old preconceptions and moralities are fiercely questioned; there is a strong protest against traditionalism, Victorianism, and against its feeling of stability, struggle for order, and spiritual contentment. The contrasting demands between Victorian and contemporary poetry were clearly and appropriately portrayed by Tennyson’s, Browning’s and Hopkins’ poetry.

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Distancing and Alienation as Interpretative Paradigms of Contemporaneity

Orazio Maria Gnerre

“Modernity” and “postmodernity” are terminologies used very frequently within many disciplines, ranging from historiography to sociology. They have to do with the perception that man has of the present, even more than with the unfolding of history itself. The human being began to define his own "modern" times from very ancient times. This has not started recently. To give an illuminating example, think that the great Italian political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli, one of the most sublime and best-known minds of the Italian Renaissance, defined what he had seen in France and Germany, where he had been ambassador of his own republic, “modern things”. This concept, which Machiavelli expresses in the letter of dedication to Lorenzo de' Medici at the beginning of “The Prince” (Machiavelli, 2006a 3), is thus explained by Francesco Bausi:

Decisive for Machiavelli's political "training" was [...] the "experience of modern things" accumulated during the important diplomatic missions he carried out in Italy and abroad during the years of the chancellery: of particular importance, for their duration, for the depth of the interlocutors and for the importance of the events which the Secretary had the good fortune to witness, were the four legations in France (1500, 1504, 1510 and 1511), the two legations to Cesare Borgia (June 1502 and October 1502-January 1503), the two legations to the papal court (1503 and 1506) and the legation to the imperial court (1507-1508). Traveling and coming into direct contact with some of the protagonists of the national and international political scene allowed the young Secretary to leave the closed and stagnant Florentine public life (paralyzed by long-standing partisan conflicts and by habit, as well as necessity, accustomed to a cautious and wait-and-see until immobility), and at the same time allowed him to meditate on the root causes of the crisis of the Republic, acquiring the analytical and conceptual tools essential to overcome the often short-sighted and narrow-minded view of his fellow citizens in a broader supra-municipal perspective, in which even the ills of Florence could be adequately framed and diagnosed in the light of the more general Italian and European situation, as well as of recent and contemporary history”⁴ (Bausi 104).

⁴Translated from Italian.

These “modern things” that Machiavelli spoke of were clearly the developments in the administrative and political sphere, which saw the formation of new national states, where Italy was still fragmented into many kingdoms and city-states, and the evolution of the art of war, an art of war in which Machiavelli himself was greatly interested (Machiavelli, 2006b). This has meant that often, in the field of historiography, modernity was made to coincide with the birth of the national state, but this is also often associated with Bodin's ideas on state sovereignty (Bodin), which would define the end of ancient statehood and the birth of the modern one (Slongo 149).

But this is not the only relevant break. Someone else argues that modernity was born with the democratic and Enlightenment principles of the French Revolution, still someone else that it corresponds to the developments of the technique that substantiated mass production with the First Industrial Revolution. In the latter case, the matter becomes even more complicated: was the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century really the first one? Or was there not before that of the European Middle Ages with its great technological divergence from the other world civilizations (Lucas)? Was there not even before a substantial modernization in Asia, especially in China?

To this is added the question: what is postmodernity actually? On the one hand, the philosophical answer to the question is that postmodernity is the epoch of the collapse of the great political, metaphysical and destinal narratives (Lyotard), and the inauguration of the epoch of the "collage" (Brockelman), in which the flattening on the present is not capable of producing nothing new but only of bringing together many pre-existing ideas, concepts and images in an always different way. The "collage" in fact would be representative of postmodernity since “collage challenges historicist and avant-gardist assumptions: there is in collage a compelling rethinking of philosophical issues of truth and history” (Brockelman 8).

On the other hand, there is the institutionalist response, according to which postmodernity is nothing other than the period in which the great subjectivities of classical politics, first of all the modern state, disappear. Then there is the explanation that it is the end of the Enlightenment and anthropocentric discourse or the deviation from it, the conclusion of hope in dialectics and reason, the end of trust in humanity, and so on. Another unsolved question, similar to that posed by the debate between the two German philosophers Ernst Junger and Martin Heidegger entitled “Über die Linie” (“Beyond the Line” or “Across the Line”) (Jünger, Heidegger), is whether

postmodernity represents the the end of the modern path now running out, or rather a further and different era compared to modernity.

The truth is that this debate will not have any univocal solution, as it involves too many different disciplines and forms of knowledge, each with its own point of view on the history of the world and of thought. We will then proceed by using the term “contemporaneity” to speak of the present condition of humanity, understood both from a sociological, philosophical and anthropological point of view. One of the characteristics of this contemporaneity is also the globality of its nature. It manifests itself in the totalization process of human experience towards the planet, which is increasingly uniform from the point of view of connections and communication techniques. It is also impossible to speak of a real distinction between modernity and postmodernity, since in our theory and in our discourse contemporaneity manifests itself as the development of some long-term historical processes and paths, which manifest themselves among the various things in the objectivity of domination of technology and domination of the capitalist economy.

In our opinion, these tendencies, which on the one hand produce and on the other hand are produced by an increasingly pervasive form of thought, can be reflected in the phenomenon and perception of alienation. As German idealism explains, often a phenomenon exists only as an ideological germ, before finding the means and possibilities of manifestation even in the material sphere, in history and even in the flesh and in the lives of human beings. In addition, there is a continuous folding of ideology on materiality and on the dimension of life. This continuous folding means that a phenomenon of great importance such as that of alienation is whirlwindly produced on an ideological and then material level (or material and then ideological, we are not given the first step of the process) in continuous cycles that are overcome and complement the previous ones.

This type of clarification on the type of term to use to speak of the temporal situation of the concept of alienation is not specious. We do this for two reasons: first of all because, as we began to explain above, alienation takes place in the contemporary dimension. There are various ways and spaces in which it has begun to manifest itself or it manifests itself with full force, but we want to study it in the contemporary moment to better understand it in the current outcome of its dialectical development. This helps us develop what the German thinker Carl Schmitt called using the “global linear thinking” (Schmitt, 2006 87-88) The second point, however, also of great importance, is that analyzing

alienation in its historical development will help us understand the existence of long-lasting processes that materialize in the present era (the “contemporaneity”) without categorical detachments that make us interpret the history of the world dichotomously. This obviously in no way denies the existence of historical breaking point favored by ideologies, world visions or restructurings of the production system (Marx, 2002), but this often confirms already existing tendencies (or distances history itself from these tendencies). To understand the phenomena of alienation it is more appropriate to interpret history as a continuum.

The concept of alienation also has its genesis within the idealistic theory. It is substantiated in the gesture of the subject who places something outside himself to objectify it. This is done initially to allow an instrumental use of that thing, but the more this is done, the more the field of objectification of the world increases (Bataille, 2009) (which in a pluralistic and non-univocal perspective is produced by various agents, i.e. political and economic actors). Furthermore this process of alienation is fundamental, according to Hegel, for human consciousness, since

it is the experience of being alienated from itself, by failing to understand that it is an organic spiritual unity of subjectivity and objectivity, that drives consciousness to adopt a new shape of itself that it hopes will allow it to fully understand itself. Consciousness’s experience continues to lead it to adopt new shapes of itself until it reaches Absolute Knowing where its experience discloses that it does fully understand its ontological structure (Rae 28).

Marx, deepening the Hegelian discourse (Gouldner 177-198) especially as regards the issue of work (Sayers), comes to the conclusion that the process of alienating objectification has a dark side, a hidden face, which is that of progressively alienating man from what constitutes him.

In this sense, Marx identifies three main types of alienation, which constitute only a general outline for thinking about this phenomenon, but could be extended to many other elements of human life. First of all, in material terms, in the industrial production process the human being is alienated from the product of his labor and from the proceeds of its sale. The factory worker, according to Marx, is notorious for producing a good that will not belong to him once finished (Marx 1990). If the human being has always worked to appropriate the finished work produced by him, possibly alienating it only at the time of sale, the industrial worker produces in order to have the fruit of his work stolen. In addition to this, according to Marx, there is the extraction of the so-called

surplus value (which Marx quantifies, rightly or wrongly, in the real value of human labor) by the boss with respect to the worker. The industrial worker receives only a part of the proceeds from the sale of the good he produces, and what is alienated to him, according to Marx, is precisely the value of the work he does (Marx 1990).

But this is only part of the alienation process. Then there is industrial alienation, which has to do with the psychological dimension. Within the factory production processes, specialization is increasingly manifested. Of course, Marx did not get to know the Fordist assembly line (which indeed will be widely appreciated in its efficiency by Lenin and implemented in the Soviet Union) (Link 77), but it represented the exponential extremization, in the twentieth century, of the processes of specialization and fragmentation of nineteenth-century work. Within these processes, it is difficult for the worker to have a substantial knowledge of the aims of production, and the hermeneutic-existential possibility of giving a different value to that of the mere survival to the work. The work is therefore alienated from the artistic and conceptual element, to become a mere quantitative reproducibility of means of profit, in a perverse mechanism of alienation from meaning.

Finally, the most important element remains that of the alienation of the human being from society. To make a symbolic comparison, it could be represented by that famous character from Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" (Dickens), Mr. Scrooge. Moreover, the intent of Dickens' work in the critique of certain forms of capitalism is clear enough. This character, to satisfy his thirst for gain, completely loses sight of human relationships, charity, piety, religion and shared social values, to the point of becoming the very shadow of a person. It exists only to accumulate, realizing, thanks to the moral of the story, that the meaning of life is acquired only by confronting death and understanding that relationships and symbolic participation in the world are the only things that make life worth living. In Marx's conceptual system this type of alienation affects all the human being, and also the capitalist, the owner of the means of production, albeit in a different way than the worker. In fact, Marx writes:

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-alienation. But the former class finds in this self-alienation its confirmation and its good, *its own power*: it has in it a *semblance* of human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in its self-alienation; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence" (Marx, 1956 51).

He is crushed by a centrifugal mechanism that imposes on him inter-capitalist competition but also the abandonment of contextual or universal morality, which represent mere trappings to the so-called “rational” economic calculation. This type of analysis can also be deepened with the sociological means of Max Weber, who, writing about American civil religion (the country that at the time had the most advanced capitalism) supported precisely this schizophrenic doubling of morals, between the sacred and the economic (Weber), anticipated by Marx himself. In fact, Marx said that the capitalist world, unlike the idyllic scenario of the Greek city-state in antiquity (Katz), does not admit a coincidence between the values one bears and social practice.

All these trends, in our opinion, are still present in contemporary society and in many ways have been deepened. We do not pretend that we should take every element of Marx's analysis as current, they should be clearly adapted in the light of a more precise analysis of the power relations, of the functioning of complex political and social systems, of the historical-social reality that has been produced after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, with the subsequent restructuring of the global mode of production and the emergence of new technologies. In our opinion, however, Marx has well highlighted, overturning or rather completing idealist humanism, the founding element of a conception of the world, the liberal-capitalist one, founded on the principle of alienation.

According to a conservative European school of thought, the so-called school of the "Catholic counter-revolution", the substantial problem of philosophical liberalism was the production of a certain type of anthropology, which was the individualist one.

According to a definition that Chancellor Metternich produced in a letter to the Tsar, liberalism denied any kind of human and civil relationship to the advantage of mere individual interest, on which no established order could be founded (Metternich 64). This recalls in many ways what Marx will write about capitalism: in the *Manifesto* it is in fact asserted that capitalism has done nothing but dissolve the previous social relations present in feudal society and throw personalities into the cauldron of extreme economic competition (Marx, 2002). In fact, the political battle of Marxian communism, as also described in the analysis by Deleuze and Guattari, is none other than that of restructuring the “territorialized” relations between humans and between the human being and territory within a process of reordering of centrifuges forces of the unleashed economy (Deleuze, Guattari; Cancelli 25-26).

The principle of alienation is increasingly present within our societies, due to the cultural vector defined by philosophical and political ground on which we live. We want to analyze it from two other points of view, produced in the first half of the twentieth century and which subsequently influenced the so-called postmodern philosophy.

We recall that, following the paradigm of historical-philosophical criticism according to the category of “contemporaneity”, reading the history of thought as a flow, as a continuum (in which, however, there is obviously an internal dialectic), twentieth-century thought helps us to understand many passages that lead to the present condition. Moreover, due to moments of cultural habituation, at times the thought of the twentieth century can favor – in our opinion – a way to guarantee a positive estrangement, and to be able to reflect, if not from the outside, almost on the conditions in which we are immersed. Estrangement and continuity are therefore the positive fruits of the non-fractured awareness of the history of thought, especially for the categories of great political-social importance such as that of “alienation”.

The first is the case of the analysis of the famous German theorist Carl Schmitt who in his fundamental text “The concept of the political” (Schmitt, 1972) enunciates the war that liberalism has waged against the public sphere.

Liberal thought systematically overlooks or ignores the state and politics and instead moves within a typical and ever-renewing polarity of two heterogeneous spheres, namely those of ethics and economics, spirit and commerce, culture and property⁵ (Schmitt, 1972 157).

This sphere is the one in which people live associated not so much out of necessity of an economic nature or of interest (Schmitt himself dismantles the utilitarian hypothesis of the birth of the modern state with Hobbes in another of his famous books) (Schmitt, 1996), but rather to meet the fundamental nature of human relationships, which is association (according to Schmitt, division is also part of human nature, but this always reproduces as a counterbalance association in the famous dichotomy of *friend and foe*) (Schmitt, 1972).

This, for Schmitt, is radically denied by the liberal categories, which prevent the possibility of conceptualizing war or enmity even only as a possibility underlying reality (Schmitt, 1972). The paradox of liberal pacifism, writes Schmitt, is that through this negation, which in our opinion functions as a

⁸Translated from Italian.

Freudian psychological repression (Freud), what disappears and is removed from social possibilities is the organizational and associative capacity of the human being (Schmitt, 1972).

[Liberalism's] critical distrust of the state and politics is easily explained on the basis of the principles of a system for which the individual must remain *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem*⁶ (Schmitt, 1972 157).

In short, according to Schmitt, liberalism places the individual at the center of the socio-political question (Schmitt, 1972 157). But, again according to Schmitt, there is no possibility of building the principles of statehood on this assumption, nor even a shared vision on which to found society (Schmitt, 1972). The general paradigm, after the establishment of liberal principles, becomes that of cultural and social distancing of people, and the reconversion of any political or state relationship into an economic relationship. Schmitt writes that “what liberalism saves from the state and politics boils down to ensuring the conditions of liberty and eliminating the disturbance to liberty⁷” (Schmitt, 1972 157), where liberty clearly means individual (and predominantly commercial: “private property and [. ..] free competition⁸”) (Schmitt, 1972, 157) liberty.

The dimension of economic exchange as the only acceptable possibility therefore becomes, according to Schmitt, the presupposition of a form of paradoxical aggregation which is based, in reality, on disintegration and the lack of internal cohesion. It is evident how in this context the process of individualization means, in other respects, that of distancing human subjectivities from one another, given that the presuppositions of commonality of any kind are no longer there. This also represents one of the main forms of alienation: that of the human being from other human beings. Process which, as we had highlighted, for Marx affects both the worker and the capitalist at the same time (economically benefiting the latter and disadvantaging the former) (Marx, 1956 51).

Carl Schmitt will also conceptualize the emergence of a new catastrophic-apocalyptic figure on the horizon of history, namely that of the “global civil war”, a war fought not by ordered fronts that distinguish between internal and external, but by all against all (Zolo).

⁶Translated from Italian.

⁷Translated from Italian.

⁸Translated from Italian.

This type of absolute war is certainly allowed by modern technology, but it could also find its foundations in the idea according to which a humanity without aggregation factors, founded only on the principle of individual economic rationalization, does not know any kind of peace, but a constant competition, which can erupt into small-scale or large-scale warfare. Certainly, for Carl Schmitt this type of war is the logical fallout of the principle of international police operation against the “enemies of freedom” (Schmitt, 1972), but it is impossible not to consider the economic factor that underlies the wars that Lenin defined as “imperialist” (Lenin).

The second criticism is that of the famous French philosopher Georges Bataille, who wrote how Western bourgeois society was removing every religious and cultural element that produced, in his practice, an even if symbolic cancellation of the distinction between subjectivity. For example, in his book on the concept of sovereignty, Bataille develops the question of the “miraculous” foundation of sovereign life, substantially distinguishing it from the bourgeois way of life, based on calculation and rationalization (Bataille, 2009). He also carries out a similar type of criticism in another important work (Bataille, 2000). He introduces the essay on sovereignty with an analysis of the experience of tears and laughter, very strong forms of communication, which brings the reader to the question of the miracle and the impossibility that takes place (Bataille, 2009 20-26). One of the fundamental themes of the text, on the other hand, is that sovereignty, this way of life misunderstood and not fully practiced in the world of the bourgeoisie, is (socially speaking) based on its ability to communicate (for example, from the king to the people) (Bataille, 2009), even if Bataille suggests that the content of this communication is nothing. Bataille therefore prepares us for the question of a world without the “miracle”, set solely on the scheme of economic calculation, expropriated from the possibility of living “sovereign experiences”, and in which the personality of the human beings is radically individualized. This too, according to Bataille, is the perspective of a humanity alienated and, fundamentally, distanced due to individualization.

Beyond the political and ideological stances of the aforementioned authors, or the full correctness of their analyses, they underline a process of emptying social relations interpreted as a form of human alienation. Alienation which, as we have seen, takes various forms in Marxist and Hegelian thought, but which in any case reflects on society. This is because the study of human society (whether in the form of the state and of legal systems in Hegelianism, or of productive relations and the ideologies that justify them in Marxism) is at the

center of German idealism and Marxist thought. In this sense, Schmitt and Bataille do nothing but continue a reflection that was already present, and which had its foundations in other cultural currents. In this sense, obviously, Schmitt and Bataille are not the only authors to refer to for a critique of the process of social distancing as a form of alienation, but they are certainly two subjectivities that we interpret as profoundly significant (Gnerre, 2018). Beyond the examination of what is “modern” they clearly see the processes in progress and the contributing causes that feed them or deviate from the duration of these processes themselves. This problem should also arise with us and the concept of “postmodernity”, and certainly the structure of thought of these authors and their method can be of great use to us in understanding the present, while accepting their teaching with a critical attitude.

Furthermore, we must keep in mind the concepts of alienation and distancing (understood especially in the sense of deconstruction of social ties) as categories for interpreting the contemporary world: we have tried to propose the category of “distancing” in the context of geopolitical studies, considering (in line with the milestones and the founders of classical geopolitical thought) spatiality as a factor that is not only physical but also social (Gnerre, 2022). The fundamental trace of this reasoning is this: the historical development of the process of alienation and distancing between multiple subjectivities or between subjectivity and objectivity (in the terms of Hegelianism and Marxism) is the demonstration of the difficulty, in the history of thought, of using too rigid epochal categories. These tendencies are ancient and do not appear as karst rivers as much as rivers in flood. Recognizing this could be useful, if necessary, to raise the banks or to give directions to the movement of these ideas.

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Postmodern Character along the Möbius Strip: Ed Thomas's
Stone City Blue

Rıza Çimen

Introduction

British theatre at the turn of the century witnessed a surge in the number of theatrical works which later came to be labelled as plays without characters. Martin Crimp's *Attempts on Her Life* (1997) and Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000) were, for example, in common parlance located within a theatrical aesthetics where the character and its conventional humanist make-up no longer find easy expression on stage. According to Christina Delgado-Garcia, (anti-humanist) claims about the disappearance of the character gained momentum and theoretical anchor in a number of significant publications which were being released around the same time when such plays were populating the stage (xi). Elinor Fuchs's *The Death of Character* (1996) specifically chronicles the alleged elimination of character from modernism to postmodern theatre. Similarly, Gerda Poschmann's *Der nicht mehr dramatische Theaterertext [The No Longer Dramatic Theaterertext]* (1997) and Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* ([1999] 2006) shed light on a diverse range of performance composition which defies hackneyed dramatic norms, including the naturalist constitution of the character. All three of these theoretical studies agree on the point that the character can no longer continue to live on stage as an autonomous and rational individual as envisioned by modernity. In view of this, the theoretical framework in which the contemporary formulations of the character are discussed needs a reconsideration of fundamental dramatic concepts on a plural plane of thought, including a non-essentialist exploration of subjectivity spanning across postmodern tropes of identity formation.

Postmodernism, as an epistemological field that keeps a critical distance from modernity's formulations of identity, space, and time, dissociates itself from the assumed rationality, coherence, and primacy of the Cartesian subject by favouring multiple subjectivities over one ideal subjecthood. Modernity's vision of the human as the rational product of a linearly generated system of signification fails to illuminate our sense-making of the human in an era which is marked by a continuous dissolution of stabilities and a disillusionment with assumptions of clarity. The full force of the postmodern culture necessitates a reassessment of taken-for-granted notions of subjectivity and calls for a reconfiguration of estab-

lished procedures of meaning-making, addressing a need to detotalize the essentialist linkages between language, discourse, and subjectivities. Tina Chanter suggests that, offering novel ways in which difference, multiplicity, and fragmentation might be mobilized creatively, postmodern dynamism addresses a new form of expressiveness which moves beyond rational models of “intentionality” and “collective unity” (263). As opposed to the unified subject of modernity, the postmodern subject is not essentially a conscious individual with an innate ability to know the world in its entirety, or an autonomous agent moving towards a *telos* with its capacity to produce rational outcomes in the material world. In the words of Linda Hutcheon, within the contours of postmodernism, “the perceiving subject is no longer assumed to a coherent, meaning-generating entity” (11). Through a constant play of signifiers where language does not point out an origin, subjectivities under the postmodern condition are constituted through complex enmeshments emerging out of the interplay between the self and others, or “between consciousness and unconsciousness” (Chanter 264). In this sense, postmodern selves are, as Julia Kristeva points at, “processes” stimulated along the crossover between identities and social spaces in which actions, reactions, and a variety of subversions find creative expressions.

The ontological framework that such continuities formulate addresses the topology of the Lacanian Möbius strip, a psychoanalytic metaphor for describing subjectivities through which binary oppositions such as inside/outside, the self/the other, and signifier/signified are problematized. A surface with only one side and no boundaries, Möbius strip is rich in figurative implications. It allows room for a rethinking of time and space and the subject’s spatiotemporal relation to the material world and to himself. On it, time is experienced as a non-linear process of continuity and space as an uncontrollable entity in itself. It is emblematic of an ontology which does not rely on distinctions and departures but rather strives towards fusion and movement. Following such plane of thought, Dylan Evans states that the Lacanian Möbius strip marks binary oppositions as not “discrete” entities but as “continuous with each other” (119). With this in mind, the Möbius strip is ontologically “instructive for explaining the internal dialogue of the subject” (Arrigo 159) as well as marks a topological condition where the self is located on a plane of flux rather than a rigid system of dialectical oppositions.

Ed Thomas’s *Stone City Blue* (2004) is set in a heterotopian hotel room where the spatiotemporal dynamics between characters and space outline the ontology of the Möbius strip. While conventional (that is, naturalist) drama stresses the active power of marking distinctions between time, space, and cha-

racters, *Stone City Blue* abound in non-linear procedures of meaning-making that contribute to the emergence of a dynamic networking between various constituents of dramatic experience. The knotted world of the play displays an emergent quality, a web of differences which in a continuum constitutes the play as a rhizomatic assemblage of processes, subject positions, alliances and conflicts. Such a post-organizational perspective clearly marks a shift in understanding the familiar configurations of theatre; the play suggests that, to begin to think about the ways in which postmodern culture may have transformed the stage into a pluralistic modality without a heeding to any kind of representationalism, it is necessary to reach a new awareness of theatre's fundamental elements, like space and character. In this vein, the metaphor of the Möbius strip could be helpful in formulating a new framework for engaging the unhindered openness of meaning deriving from the complex relations among theatre's various components. *Stone City Blue* attests to the extent to which such a possibility can be realized. Arguing that subjectivity is a matter of lasting relations rather than isolated perspectives, the play explores how a postmodern take on the theatrical character can open up a dynamic room for a pluralistic understanding of space, of the self and its psychic make-up.

Partly aligning with Elinor Fuchs's argument for a postmodern, "dispersed idea of the self" (9), the play also makes a point for the sustained existence of character within postmodern culture. Accordingly, while still fragmented and discontinuous with the "grand narratives" of modernity, the character under the postmodern condition exists in unexpected forms and processes beyond habitual constructions of identity. By fragmenting the perceiving subject into multiple voices and perspectives, the play makes a case for the resurfacing of the character as a modality that is dispersed over spaces, bodies, temporalities, and relations, which in turn marks the postmodern subject as a heterotopian possibility rather than a coherent set of conscious experiences. If character is, as Delgado-Garcia argues, "any figuration of subjectivity in theatre texts and performances (46), then the play is overflowing with countless modulations of characters and subjectivities. Given this, *Stone City Blue* affirms Patrice Pavis's contention that "the character is not dead; it has merely become polymorphous and difficult to pin down" (52).

Beyond Mimetic Character

The first pages of the playtext is quite different from what a conventional drama offers. There are no stage directions and no mimetic details regarding the characters. *Dramatis personae* consists only of four R's: R1, R2, R3, and R4,

and in quite a Beckettian style, these four voices articulate a non-linear series of traumatic episodes about family problems, romantic failures, and a problematic father figure who commits suicide in a hotel room. Rather than providing a clear character depiction and pointing at spatial particularities, the first pages evoke a disorienting mood; the audience is invited to navigate what feels like an overwhelming sense of loss and a sheer lack of causal relations. It is implied in the course of the play that these R's are somehow different versions of a person called Ray:

R2: Those who think they know me call me Ray

R3: Crazy Ray.

R4: Where real Ray is only real Ray knows. (Thomas 4)

While the name Ray is articulated many times by different Rs, the reality of this character remains enigmatic. This is perhaps due to the constant implication that Ray is a collective project undertaken by different subject positions and psychic conditions. While each contribution makes up a small portion of Ray, none takes over the whole process. In their attempts to reveal a glimpse into the life of someone whose existence can only be constituted linguistically alongside a fundamental lack of representational means, the swift verbal complements between the four R's mark the field of subjectivity as a relational matter in process. In other words, building the self refers to a process that is mutually constituted rather than *a priori* grounding on a stable plane of existence. This kind of subject formation becomes more concretized in the almost schizophrenic episodes throughout the play:

R4: Who's we?

R1: All of us.

R2: Me.

R1: And me.

R3: And me.

R2: And you.

R4: How come I'm a you not a me?

R2: You are a me.

R4: You just called me a you.

R2: I meant me.

R4: So why say you?

R2: It's just a turn of phrase, if you want to be a me say me.

R4: Me.

R2: Bingo, you're a me.

R1: Just like the rest of us.

R4: The rest of us?

R1: Four me's make an us. (Thomas 5)

Such embedded dialogues hint at the play's commitment to a postmodern sense of self where modernity's structure of identity built on dualistic oppositions is renounced for a pluralistic space of mutuality and continuum. In this regard, both textually and in performative sense, the play locates the self on a Möbius strip on which the subject creates itself not through oppositionary distinctions but via constant interaction with other constitutive elements. "Ray" is ultimately presented as longing for the restoration of the intersubjective laces that define and ground the subject" (Delgado-Garcia 116), and along this presentation, the textual and performative dynamics of the play avoid drawing up a representative strategy to produce a specific grounding for Ray's identity. In doing so, the play works against the grain of representationalist attempts to come up with a recognizable picture of character. The fluid topology of the Möbius strip and the psychic register it represents thus allow the play to come into contact with the postmodern idea of meaning as a play of signifiers which constitutes the multiplicity that postmodernity calls for. "Who I am and where I come from nobody in this city knows" (Thomas 4), says R4, pointing at the impossibility of building a secure bridge between knowledge and identity. What matters in the end is the generative power of language and its playful take on the impossibility of drawing boundaries between dynamic relations and singular identities.

The Self and Postmodern Space

Following a critical path that seeks to integrate the topology of the Möbius strip and postmodern performance of the self points at a need to map out the significance of space to understand how the relations that constitute subjectivities are dispersed. As a vibrant performance piece that gravitates to the fluid junction between theatre and postmodern theories of the self, *Stone City Blue* also makes use of postmodern designations of space to further its experimentative take on the locations of subjective experience. In postmodern thought, space is a dynamic field of production where everyday life is engaged from a wide

variety of directions and networks. It represents a decentered accumulation of memories, values, concepts, discourses and subjects, and in posing so, it accommodates a multitude of flows and contradictions. According to Henri Lefebvre, space is not a given, or a tangible object to be moulded by a fixed logic of representation; rather, “spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to the historical period” (46). The implication that space is an intangible field of constitutive relations addresses spatiality and relations as central forces in building the social meaning and producing the ways by which such meaning is dispersed across territories.

Marc Augé offers another spatially oriented take on postmodern thought through the concept of “non-place” which points at the experiential qualities of postmodern spaces like cities, airports, and hotels. In Marc Augé’s vocabulary, a hotel is a “non-place,” an abstract space of “supermodernity” which accommodates an “excess” of images, relations, and simultaneous becomings (29-30). A non-place, for Augé, “never exists in pure form:”

places reconstitute themselves in it; relations are restored and resumed in it; ... Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten. (78-79)

When taken from a theatrical perspective, both Lefebvre’s “production of space” and Augé’s “ceaseless” rewriting of identity and relations within “non-places” resembles the Beckettian event in which meaning-generating processes take place in constant flux beyond fixed spatiotemporal coordinates. *Stone City Blue* attests to such spatial mobility. Instead of offering fixities that can help to designate a specific place for action, the play avoids organizing a naturalistic theatrical space and instead pulls the audience closer to a sense of placelessness. The action takes place at a hotel, somewhere beyond recognizable traits, evoking “the strange feeling that the room isn’t really here” (Thomas 86). Unable to marshal the spatiotemporal experiences of characters around whom “time freezes” (84), space gets entangled in a process of production, “Just establishing a common ground, a common experience” (10). However, this does not mean that this process will have an end product when performance is concluded; on the contrary, the continuous mutability of space accompanies the flux of identities on stage where no element can function as a stable sign without deferring meaning and relating to other constituents. For instance, the back cover of the play’s

Methuen edition points at the spatiotemporal enigma that accompanies the action:

Winter in a city. Berlin, Paris, Cardiff, Antwerp

It could be anywhere.

A stranger

A Poet

A Drunk

A whore

Four voices

One city

Together till dawn

The end of the story?

Or just the beginning?

The indication that the action could take “anywhere” sums up the thematic and formal universe of the play. It continuously crosses the boundaries between the spatiotemporal habits of the audience and the dreamlike flow of theatrical language where the self can find no stable ground for settlement. Introduced to the reader as a performance piece that builds its fictional landscape through a fundamental lack of definite referents, *Stone City Blue* offers no origin stories and no rational subjects whose actions rotate around a visible *telos* in a locatable territory:

R1: Myself.

R3: I.

R4: In a hotel room.

R2: Alone.

R4: But who am I?

R3: How did I get here?

R2: Am I still the man I used to be? (Thomas 10)

David Ian Rabey draws a connection between Beckett and Thomas in terms of the latter's "preoccupation with the possibility of self-reinvention" (542). Like Beckettian characters who occupy enigmatic spaces, Thomas's characters in *Stone City Blue* explore the possibility of inventing an idea of self which does not rely on spatiotemporal particularities. Against this background, their processes of identity formation are very similar to a postmodern travel on the Möbius strip; both modes of movement exploit the mutual entailment of binary oppositions like inside/outside and the self/the other rather than buttress the entrenched dichotomies in modernity's formulations of subject formation. Rather than establishing a definite spatial relationship between subjects and their actions, the play reconsiders human-space relations in a pluralistic perspective, based on the idea of the non-locality of the subject.

Postmodern thought may seem to have taken over the discursive universe of the play, but it is precisely against this claim of domination that the play also laments the loss of coherence and unity caused by postmodernism. The psychic space of the Möbius strip, which shows the ontological continuity of subjects with each other and with places, also establishes a continuous bridge between the present and the past. Although the spatiotemporal dynamics of the play are ripe with references to the "here and now," positive memories along with traumatic episodes inform the other end of the Möbius strip, that is, the present. Not knowing how they got "here", the characters, like a "lost dog cruising the city," look for "a scent:"

R1: A trail.

R4: A path.

R3: A way.

R2: To be connected again.

R1: To be reborn.

R4: Free.

R2: To belong again. (Thomas 19-20)

Here characters collectively engage in a lamentable mode of remembrance and desire "to be home" (20) which is, for R4, "just a memory / I keep it inside me / Like the corpse of a still-born child / A womb for the dead." (20). Apart from the psychoanalytic innuendos, home for these characters represent a space of signification which sometimes caters to their need of a stable and secure identity. It offers a nostalgic opportunity to be whole again, to "belong" in a

world of shifting meaning. However, home is, like many other narratives under the postmodern condition,

R1: Just a story.

R2: With no one around to listen to.

R3: Fragments.

R2: Bits and pieces.

R1: Words.

R4: Pictures.

R3: Meaning nothing. (100)

The traditional meanings of home are continually erased within the present economy of disintegration. “Incoherent” and “Not even sure of what is made up or memory” (71), characters portray the postmodern predicament of “platiality” (Chaudhuri) by drawing attention to the evacuation of meaning in places. The only choice for them is then that they “wal[k] around [their] life like a stranger:”

R3: Disconnected.

R4: Yes.

R1: A bag of bones with thoughts.

R4: Yes.

R3: Incoherent.

R4: Yes.

R1: Dark.

R4: Yes.

R3: Lost.

R4: Yes.

R1: A bum.

R4: Just a bum at the edge of my own story. (Thomas 22-23)

Facing the end of all “grand narratives” that function like a secure home, subjects can now only claim authenticity “at the edge” of their own stories. Identity, which used to be a secure system under modernity’s promise of completeness, is now more like a collage of inconsistencies. On this basis, lamenting the past and living the present simultaneously, the postmodern character finds itself “cruising” along the psychic economy of the Möbius strip. Conflicting and contradictory affects constitute the present without offering a neat resolution. *Stone City Blue* makes it clear that the postmodern condition, which, for Lyotard, “puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself” (81), skews conventional understanding of character by adding countless twists to modern subjectivity that used to pose as an unshakeable paradigm.

Conclusion

This paper has set out to explore the postmodern implications of undecidable formulations concerning character and space in *Stone City Blue*. Moving away from the solipsism of modernity’s rational subject, postmodern thinking has challenged the idea of a self-identical subject through performative critiques of modern subjectivity. Ed Thomas’s play transliterates such theoretical undertakings into the stage without offering a neat resolution for the tension emerging out of the various conflicts between the self and its others, the present and the past, and the action and the space. In its performative take on meaning, the play espouses the adoption of a fluid identity which, rather than salute the tradition and stability, calls for a dismantling of rigid dualisms operating across the epistemic fields of subjectivation. This post-dualistic undertaking necessitates employing a decentered mode of thinking, and the play does so by also voicing the counter-responses against the primacy of postmodern celebration of instabilities. Within this frame of reference, the loss of inner integrity following the demise of modernist notions of self accompanies the emergence of postmodern idea of relational existence; nostalgic sensations of unity characterize the present celebration of multiplicity. In this manner, *Stone City Blue* employs the very postmodern strategy of detotalization against the grain of postmodernism itself, thus achieving what the prefix post- implies in its various forms.

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A Magical Historicity of the Magical: The Postmodern Concern of Magical Realism in Sema Kaygusuz's Trauma Narrative *Yüzünde Bir Yer*

Selis Yıldız Şen

Introduction

One of the significant works of literature in the postcolonial literary context, Sema Kaygusuz's novel, *Yüzünde Bir Yer* is a novel that is centred on trauma narrative. The novel is constituted by layers of different yet intertwined narratives and interconnected histories, written in a non-linear timeline. The speaker or the narrator of this intricate and unique story, whose name or identity is ambiguous throughout the entirety of the novel, constantly calls out to the main character of the novel; constantly tells stories to this protagonist; the act of storytelling is the core of the narrativity of *Yüzünde Bir Yer*. While calling out to the protagonist, the narrator tells all sorts of stories of magical realist essence, such as the origin of the fig tree or the folk figure Hızır and his ancient friend, Zulkarneyn or Eliha, the woman who charms an entire land or Grandmother Bese, and so on. The narrative revolves around this nameless character -who is referred or addressed as "you." This character's family and family history, especially the character's grandmother Bese and Bese's traumatic history as a young woman who is banished from her homeland, Dersim, upon the unnamed, unspeakable happening that is referred as "Dersim Kıyımı" or "Dersim Slaughter" are also of significant note. Bese's survival upon the Dersim Slaughter, her testimony and also, her special connection to a folk hero called Hızır (who has a special place in Bese and her family, especially her grandchild's semantic world) becomes a legacy that stretches out to her family, to her grandchild, her heir. All the stories that are told by the narrator and especially the magical realist elements in these stories situate the story, identity and familial history of the protagonist on a level beyond the dominant semantic field constituted by the humanist narrative. That is, the magical realist elements and magical realism as an attitude or a form of creating narrative(s) in *Yüzünde Bir Yer* makes it possible for the repressed and shamefully silent voices of those who are traumatized to have a voice, have a story; a medium or space of recognition which is denied to them by the humanist narrative and its semantic field. *Id est*, the magical realist mode of storytelling and meaning making takes on a postmodern role towards

the humanist narrative. In this respect, the aim of this paper is to inspect the magical realist elements in certain magical realist stories, such as the story of the fig tree, the story of Eliha, the story of Hızır and Zulkarneyn, the story of Grandmother Bese, and the story of the protagonist the narrator narrates, and try to find an answer to the question as to whether the magical realist elements in the narrator's stories and the magical realist perspective and attitude of the narrator disrupts or maintains the humanist narrative.

Before going into exploring the magical realist elements in the novel and how they are presented, it is necessary to present a brief explanation of what humanist narrative and post humanist narrative are.

Humanism and Posthumanism as forms of narrative: Humanist Narrative & Post-humanist Narrative

Humanism, or "Humanist narrative" is a system and structure of rational and scientific thought that comes with the Enlightenment Period. The rise of humanism disrupts the rooted corruptness of men of religion and religion as an institution. However, even though ration and reason are the core of its system of thought, humanism, by situating man at the centre of its value system and creating a dichotomic, hierarchical view of all living beings, transforms into a ground of meaning making and space for recognition only for a specific type of living beings, more particularly, a specific group of people. In other words, in the perspective of humanism, ration and reason are only conducted *by* people and they only work *for* people. This unfair perspective is one of the many faulty aspects of the humanist narrative. Another faultiness or problem with humanism, especially in the contemporary critical discourse, is its fixation with a single and universal truth that is supposed to signify a meaning to all living beings and all cultures of humanity. The characteristics of Humanist thought as tendential, solid and fixed, dichotomic and dualistic, offer and promote a single type of narrative and a single type of voice, which ultimately leads to a repression, silencing or loss of diverse and unique stories and voices. Correspondingly, posthumanism's central concern is to criticise, create recognition and consciousness of, and to a certain extent, distort and disrupt the limitations, fixedness and semantic field of dichotomies created by the humanist narrative. Humanism's certainness of a solid, stable, fixed Truth dissolves into thin air in the postmodern age. As Luca Valera, in his paper, "Posthumanism: Beyond Humanism?" suggests, "If in the modern age there was the paradigm of certainty and great metaphysical point of view, in post-modernism we are witnessing the end of the certainties and great stories, a prelude to a more liquid concept of the human

being and society” (Valera 2). Valera’s comparison of the modern age and the postmodern age, the age of humanism and the age of posthumanism, stands in relevance to the claim that considers posthumanism and postmodernism as a reaction to humanism’s action. It is important to remark that posthumanism or postmodernism is not based on a denial of humanism or humanist narrative, but rather, a re-direction or re-formation of humanist narrative. In other words, the rise of humanism and humanist narrative in the historical and philosophical context is not denied with the rise of postmodernist and post-humanist thought (Valera 3).

In that case, what posthumanism makes possible is an alternative way of thinking, an alternative space of meaning making. In the alternative space of speech and meaning-making, alterity and its numberless narratives becomes recognizable, if not entirely decipherable and comprehensible. To put it another way, posthumanism makes it possible for the formation of an alternative space of communication and recognition, and in this space of recognition, all sorts of narratives and voices and beings emerge and exist in a harmony, without the fixed concern of reaching to a formulized, prescribed Truth or paradigm of thought.

Magical realist form of writing and storytelling, then, could easily be considered as one of the most important forms of post-humanist writing and literature. As it will be discussed in detail below, in many ways, and as Wendy B. Faris, in her book, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, suggests, magical realism has a postmodernist concern and attitude, emerging to the field of writing and literature with “a postmodern literary sensibility” (Faris 17). So, the dynamics between the humanist narrative and postmodernist perspective create a grounded bridge to the focus of the paper, which is the inspection of magical realist elements and the way they are presented in the novel. In order to understand them, we must have a knowledge of magical realism.

What is Magical Realism?

Simply put, magical realism is a ground or space of meaning making where the real and the fantastic, the ordinary and the extraordinary comes together and becomes intertwined. As Faris points out, “Magical images or events, glowing alluringly from within the realistic matrix, often highlight central issues in a text” (Faris 22). Following this, Faris explains magical realism as a “mode of expression” (Faris 14). Magical realism’s function as a mode of expression is quite important when one considers its connection to postmodernism, posthu-

manism and postcolonial systems of thought as modes of criticism. In relation to these systems of criticism, magical realism stands as a system or mode of expression on a level and semantic field of its own. Faris says, “Magical realism not only reflects history... it may also seek to change it, by addressing historical issues critically and thereby attempting to heal historical wounds” (151).

On this note, magical realism, just as postmodernism and posthumanism, and indeed, with the very concerns and attitudes of postmodernism and posthumanism, offers a space for alternative modes of meaning making; a space for transformation and change through “magical historicity” (151), which is one of the core aspects of the narrative mode and structure of *Yüzünde Bir Yer*.

The Magical Realist Stories Told by the Narrator

The Story of the Fig Tree:

The first of the stories that are told by the narrator within the context of magical historicity of *Yüzünde Bir Yer* is the story of the fig tree. The narrator draws the attention to the mutual relationship between humanity and the fig tree; on how humanity, with its fixed and self-centred point of view, forms and shapes the meaning of the fig tree within the context of their world of meanings. The narrator says:

As the fruit, in the eyes of the man, becomes more of a something than its tree, as it becomes a mysterious creature who sees, who understands, who even speaks in whispers at night, who is prone to divinity, who has many arms, who is friends with snakes, it is welcomed as a miraculous being from a whole other universe (19).¹

In a sense, the fig tree becomes a whole other being in the eyes of humanity and within the semantic field of the humanist narrative; it becomes a distressing yet sublime figure with its many armed, snake-like, all-seeing and ever-present uncanniness. It is possible to say that the self-centred point of view and attitude of humanity towards nature and in the particular case of the novel, towards the fig tree, leads to the manipulation of fig tree into an uncanny horri-fication and monstrosity, and the magical realist element that surrounds the narrative of the fig tree serves as a way to demonstrate the problem with approaching

¹ “İnsan gözünden bakınca meyve ağacından öte, gören, anlayan, hatta geceleri fışıldayarak konuşan, kutsallığa eğilimli, birçok kollu, yılanlarla ahabap, gizemli bir yaratığa dönüştükçe incir, başka bir alemde çıkagelmiş mucizevi bir varlık olarak karşılanıyor” (*Yüzünde Bir Yer*, sf. 19, Metis Yayınları, 2014).

to nature and to a tree with eyes that see the nature and the trees as more than what they are.

After presenting the magical realist narrative of the fig tree, the narrator moves on to the story of Eliha.

The Story of Eliha:

The figure of Eliha is described by the narrator as a mysterious woman who lives in a house under a fig tree. Eliha is a woman who is free from the moral and societal codes and rules of the modern world. She builds her own house; shapes her surroundings and thus the circumstances into her own favour. She takes many lovers, but she lives alone, without a husband or a man. She is described as not only a giver, but also a taker. Based on this picture, one may easily see the resemblance or commonalities between Eliha and The Fig Tree in terms of being accepted both as a source of anxiety and of extreme idealization. If one is to look at the magical realist element(s) that surround the narrative of Eliha and the parallels between her and the fig tree, one may easily see that these serve almost as a warning against the temptation of categorizing a person to the point of dehumanization and intense idealization. Just as a tree is simply a tree and nothing more than that, a human being is also a human being, capable of taking action in accordance with his or her own truth and capacity, not a determined, fixed, universal paradigm.

To follow the line of the narrative, Eliha's infamous beauty, in time, charm and character attracts Melkisedek, King of Salem. The story of how Melkisedek manages to take Eliha with him to Salem and make her his wife is certainly a subject of a critical gender study on its own, however, the scope of this assessment only necessitates a brief explanation of Melkisedek's place in Eliha's story: He is the father of Eliha's future son, who is one of the most important figures in the novel in terms of its magical realist elements.

Shortly after, the narrator begins telling the story of the figure of Hızır.

The Story of Hızır & The Figure of Zülkarneyn:

In Salem, after a period of alienization, transformation and adaptation to life in Melkisedek's palace, Eliha decides that the "way of diffusing into life" is to become a mother. Eliha starts to dream of a son. In the end, by eavesdropping the conversation between an astronomy scholar and his wife, Eliha finds out that a very special child is to be born if a man and a woman has sexual intercourse at night, during the time when a star shines on the southeast of the north star. With

this knowledge, Eliha practically steals the child who is to be born out of the astronomy scholar and his wife and gives birth to Hızır. On the other hand, the astronomy scholar, though they miss the chance to bring a special son to the world, finds another way, another star under which he and his wife may come together to give birth to another special child. This child is Zülkarneyn. Thus, Hızır and Zülkarneyn, whose birth stars are situated as facing each other, become inseparable friends and figures in the magical historicity of *Yüzünde Bir Yer*.

Zülkarneyn and Hızır are friends, and their destinies are intersecting, and even though they are conceived in the same night, they are quite different from one another. Narrator describes the two of them as follows:

The two of them together are like fraternal twins. One of them is a celestial presence whose mother Eliha captures by throwing a lasso at the fate, the other is a world conqueror whose father will always find faults with. Hızır is the son who is ripped away by his mother, Zülkarneyn is the son who is granted by his father (49).²

As the narrator describes, Zülkarneyn has a loud, proud, strong type of war leader figure that of all the famous and mighty rulers, such as Alexander the Great or Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. Hızır, on the other hand, is more of a silent, melancholic, philosophical, weak type of figure. Zülkarneyn and Hızır are like the two sides of a coin.

Specifically, Hızır's presence in the physical world and reality is on a detached level, a detachment to the point of magicality. Indeed, Hızır is never presented as a figure representing the real or reality. While all the other characters' aspects, magical and/or real, may be related to a certain degree of explanation, Hızır, paradoxically and contrastingly, always remains fluid and inexplicable. His fluidity and ambiguity seem to be the sole stability and determinateness of the narrative. Where Hızır walks, there rises a sense or circumstance of the magical.

At this point, while speaking of Hızır and the circumstances his footsteps cause rise, it would be nothing but relevant to start inspecting one of the most

² "İkisi bir araya gelince çift yumurta ikizlerini andırıyolarlar. Biri, anası Eliha'nın kadere kement atarak ele geçirdiği göksel bir kişilik, öbürü ise babasının daima kusur bulacağı bir dünya fatihi. Hızır anasının sökerek aldığı, Zülkarneyn ise babasının verdiği oğul" (Yüzünde Bir Yer, sf. 49, Metis Yayınları, 2014).

significant magical realist stories the narrator narrates: The story of Grandmother Bese.

The Story of Grandmother Bese:

Years, perhaps in fact, centuries later the vague times when Hızır first comes to being, young woman Bese and Hızır come across. Right after the Dersim Slaughter, when Bese and her people are on the roads, miserable and homeless and banished from their land, Bese hears Hızır's call and disappears from sight for a while. Everybody starts looking for Bese, however, they are unable to find her until she returns on her own, with bruises and a messy look all about her. Soon after, people start to understand that Bese is pregnant, and the father of the child is unknown. With a fig branch used for abortion cases, they come near Bese and try to hold her. Using the fig branch for abortion has a whole other magical realist story to it; if a woman uses a fig branch to get rid of a baby, then, that woman's relationship with the fig tree is corrupted forever. This story may be interpreted as both a way to deal with the trauma of abortion by putting the blame of the corrupt, broken feeling of abortion to the fig tree, also as an indicator of manipulating the image of the fig tree to more than what it is. Knowing the story of the fig tree, Bese refuses the abortion, begging women around her not to make her at odds with the fig tree. They accept her plea and marry Bese off with a man while she is pregnant. Bese gives birth to an eccentric, unusual child called İlyas. The actual father of İlyas is never mentioned in the novel, however, it is quite tempting to interpret Bese's disappearance upon hearing the call of Hızır and consider Hızır as the father of Bese's child; indeed, this interpretation seems to be what Bese herself believes as well. On the other hand, there is also a whole different possibility of interpretation concerning the unbearable realness of Bese's traumatic experience upon the Dersim Slaughter, and how Hızır steps in on the fluid ground where the unnameable, unbearable real(ity) becomes open to mingling with the magical, the fantastic. In many ways, Bese's story is a perfect example to the magical realist mode of expression and storytelling in trauma narrative. The reality of Bese's trauma intermingles with the folk fantasy Hızır's magicity. Hızır and his presence in Bese's trauma is how Bese is able to come to terms with the trauma of slaughter and most likely, rape.

At the age of fifteen, just as eccentric and dissociated as the figure of Hızır in the stories told by the narrator, Bese's son İlyas wears his stepfather's shoes and leaves the house, never to return and to be heard from again. Bese lives with İlyas's mourn all her life. Other than İlyas, it seems as though it is the protagonist of the novel, her grandchild who is closest to Bese's heart.

Both literally and metaphorically, the main character is the true heir of Bese. The unspeakable sadness, trauma, pain and shame Bese carries within her passes on to the main character, becoming even more undecipherable within the main character's psyche.

The Protagonist's Story:

When it comes to the protagonist's story, it is the only time the narrator is incapable of offering a narrative. Rather than a linear plotline, the reader sees certain points of manifestation of the trauma, sadness, unspeakable emptiness the protagonist inherits from her grandmother. Unlike the other characters or figures, the main character's story does not have a beginning or an ending. In many ways, even though it seems as though the main character is the one who exists in the present, in a name-able and decipherable age or time and place, all the figures from the past such as Hızır, Eliha, Melkisedek, Zülkarneyn have more distinct and definite parameters and structures of existence when the way their story is presented considered. Indeed, the main character, without a certain starting point or an ending, without a definite story, has a storyline that is made up of moments of feeling, of numbness. Because the figures from her past exist in such a dominant way and stretch out from history to the present through intense modes of feeling within the psyche of the main character, the semantic world and existence of the main character is depolarized; and because of this depolarization within her psyche, the main character is often deprived of a sense of belonging, a beginning or an ending, and consequently in return, her situation leads to a depolarization of meaning and structure of the whole novel. After all, we know from the narrator that it is the main character's condition of lack of relation or belonging that leaves the narrator in desperation and confusion when it comes to telling any story related to the main character and her history.

In this sense, it may be said that the main character's story and existence in the novel is like that of a tree trunk, assigned and inherited with the terrible burden of carrying all the branches of memories and stories and the collective history of a bloodline, immobile and at times, unable to diffuse into the human life. In all these moments, the protagonist never sees or hears or experiences anything magical; nevertheless, her inability to sense the magical that is interwoven with the real haunts her in the form of a numbness, a whole in her reality, and the possible reason for this is the magical historicity she inherits from her grandmother. She also never hears or recognizes the narrator who constantly speaks to her with the sad reproach of being unheard, so it may be safe to say

that the narrator itself is also a magical element in the novel, though its ambiguity still remains.

The Narrator:

The ambiguity of the narrator's identity may be the most definite matter about the novel. There may be hints as to what or who the narrator might be, however, it is impossible to be precisely sure. The narrator seems to be a part of the main character and it sees Hızır and all that is unfit for or beyond the realities of the humanist and dominant narrative as they simply are. What is also quite interesting about the narrator is that it is not the main character who creates the narrative of the novel but this unnamed, ambiguous, aching and reproachful part of the main character, the narrator of this novel that does it.

The act of writing, then, one of the central motifs or concepts associated with trauma writing, postcolonial and minority literature, stems from not the main character but the narrator which is a part of the main character longing to be able to come together with her. Perhaps the most definite and clear form the narrator takes on while talking about itself comes at the very end. The narrator says, "Let me go back home, where I'll stay in the raw realm of words" (152).³ Based on this claim, it may be said that the narrator itself as yet another form of narrative or a form of statement, or rather, perhaps, a form of testimony that gains a persona and a voice in extreme magicality; the reality or the realness of the testimony of the trauma once again intermingles with the magical, the extraordinary. In this sense, if the narrator by nature is a testimony which originates in the raw realm of words where words that are not uttered or manifested roams, then the novel itself may easily be considered as the narrative of this testimony, and magical realism is the mode of expression which makes such a complex, yet resolute dimension of narration occur. Through the act of writing and through the forming of this novel, the narrator, the testimony of trauma reaches out to the cultivated realm of words and meaning. Again, this interpretation may be considered both from a negative and a positive perspective.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the magical realist elements in Sema Kaygusuz's novel *Yüzünde Bir Yer* all serve as warnings or indicators of certain problematics of the humanist narrative post-humanist thought criticizes

³ "Bırak da yuvama döneyim şimdi, ham aleminde kalayım sözcüklerin" (*Yüzünde Bir Yer*, sf 49, Metis Yayınları, 2014).

on the contemporary level. Magical realism in the novel may be interpreted as a way of disrupting the humanist narrative by giving a space of recognition and a ground of speech to those who are deprived of speech and voice. The whole narrative of *Yüzünde Bir Yer*, including its narrator, may be regarded as victors in terms of achieving a voice, a space for speaking of or telling their own story, their recognition regarding their standpoint against a cultural and historical event happened at Dersim that is deemed as unspeakable and unrecognizable and unacceptable in the dominant Turkish cultural and historical context. Indeed, the magical historicity of *Yüzünde Bir Yer* does manage to offer an alternative history or an alternative story within the context of dominant historical context. On the other hand, magical realism in the novel may also be interpreted as the continuation of the problems the humanist narrative causes, for magical realism, despite its varying motivation and intention, just as the humanist narrative, idealizes or bemonsters or characterizes a being more than what is simply is, as the reader may clearly see in the presentation of the fig tree.

In the end, the evidence in the texts show that the answer to the question as to whether the magical realist perspective in the novel disrupts or maintains the humanist narrative may be answered as both or as neither yes nor no; in the end, as it turns out, what matters is not to find a definite answer as the single Truth, but with a postmodernist literary sensibility, recognize all the truths that magically come together to form a narrative reality, a magical historicity of the silent, of the forgotten, of the marginal.

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