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Tracing Self and Nature in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves:* Nineteenth through Twentieth Century*

Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre*'i ve Virginia Woolf'un *Dalgalar*'ında Benlik ve Doğa'nın Keşfi: 19. Yüzyıldan 20. Yüzyıla

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Öz Benlik kavramının analizi, zamanla birlikte değişmekte ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıldaki stabil benlik algısından yirminci yüzyılla birlikte değişken ve heterojen bir yapıya bürünmektedir. Kavram, her dönemde şekil değiştiren sosyolojik, politik ve ideolojik etkilerden geçerken, öteki ile arasındaki ilişkinin keşfine de yeni pencereler aralamaktadır. Bu makale, benliğin ötekiyle ya da daha spesifik olarak doğa suretine bürünmüş ötekiyle gelişen bağını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Doğaya duyulan bağlılığın ya da karşıtlığın incelenmesi, bireyin öteki ile bütünlük içinde bireyselleşme yolculuğuna dair büyük bir içgörü sunmaktadır. Bu bağın bir uzantısı olarak dış dünya ile bütünleşme modern dönemle birlikte kapsamlı bir şekilde ele alınsa da, bu analizin kökeni on sekizinci yüzyıl Romantik düşüncesine dayanmaktadır. Doğayla kurulan içsel uyumun özünün ortaya koyulduğu Romantik dönemden başlayan makale, kişinin kendini gerçekleştirme ve olgunlaşma yolculuğunun bir yansıması olarak birey ve bireyin doğal çevreyle kurduğu bağa ilişkin dinamikleri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bahsedilen bağlantının kökleri, on dokuzuncu yüzyılda ortaya çıkan Bildungsroman türü aracılığıyla edebi düzlemde izlenmektedir. Bu tür, benliğin ötekini keşfetmesinin karşılıklı etkileşiminin araştırılması için alan sağlamaktadır. Makale daha sonra İngiliz Modernist dönemindeki benlik ve doğa kavramlarının tartışmasını ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Viktorya dönemi, dönemin simgesi olan normların çöküşünü yaşarken, modern bir kültürün oluşumu yeni bir gerçekliğin ve ulusal kimliğin de habercisiydi. Bu bağlamda, ekoeleştiri kuramı, iki yüzyılı kapsayan tarihsel yansımalarının yanı sıra, değişen benlik ve doğa kavramlarında bir çerçeve olarak kullanılacaktır. Daha sonra Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre* (1847) ve Virginia Woolf'un *The Waves* (1931) adlı eserlerinde karakterlerin oluşumu doğrultusunda doğal unsurların izi sürülecektir. Analiz, Viktorya dönemi İngiltere'sinin toplumsal arka planında bireyleşme yolculuğuna çıkan ana karakter, Jane Eyre'i ele almaktadır. Benzer süreçler daha sonra *The Waves*'in altı karakterinde de izlenecek ve sağlam benlik anlayışının sorgulanması yerini dağılmakta olan yeni modern gerçeklikteki parçalanmış benliğe bırakacaktır. Ekoeleştirel teori aracılığıyla, bu karakterlerin doğa bağlamında çevreleriyle kurdukları ilişki analiz edilecek ve karakterlerin kendi bütünleşme ve bireyleşme yolculukları özelinde ben/öteki, insan/insan olmayan kavramları arasındaki bağlantı araştırılacaktır.

Anahtar sözcükler: birey, doğa, Viktorya dönemi, Modern dönem, Charlottë Bronte, Virginia Woolf, İngiliz edebiyatı

Abstract The study of the concept of the self goes through shifts with the times, and ranges from a stable sense of self in the nineteenth century to fluctuating and heterogeneous with the twentieth century. As the concept passes through sociological, political and ideological influences that take shape in every period, it opens new windows into the exploration of its relation with the other. This article aims to study the transforming connection of the self with the other, or more specifically, the other cloaked in the image of nature. The examination of the affinity or hostility born to nature offers great insight into the journey of individuation in unison with the other. Though the integration with the outside world, and the natural environment as an extention of this connection is adressed extensively with the onset of the modern stage, the origin of this analysis is traced in the eighteenth century Romantic thought. Starting with the Romantic era that discloses the spirit of harmony established inherently with nature, the article intends to survey the dynamics regarding the individual and his/ her connection with the natural environment as a reflection of one's journey of self-fulfillment and maturation. The roots of this connection are to be traced in the literary field through the Bildungsroman genre that emerged in the nineteenth century as the genre provides space for the exploration of the interplay of the self's exploration of the other. The article then attempts to cover the discussion of the concepts of self and nature in the English Modernist period. As the Victorian period was experiencing the fall of the norms emblematic of the time, the formation of a modern culture was a harbinger of a new reality and national identity. In this context, the ecocritical theory is to be utilized as a framework in these concepts of self and nature as well as their historical reflections overarching two centuries. The natural elements are then to be traced in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) in line with the formation of the characters. The analysis aims to address the heroine in Jane Eyre, who is on her

journey of individuation against the social background of Victorian Britain. Similar processes are then to be traced in the six protagonists of *The Waves* in which the inquiry of the stable sense of self gives way to the fragmented self in the face of a desolate and modern reality. Through ecocritical theory, the relationship these characters have with their surroundings within the context of nature will be analyzed and the connection between the concepts of the self/ other, human/nonhuman with particular regard to characters' respective journey of integration and individuation will be explored.

Keywords: self, nature, Victorian period, Modernist period, Charlottë Bronte, Virginia Woolf, English literature

Introduction

The nature of the concept of the self has been under immense transformation as the ages continue to progress. What starts with simple inquiries into its essence turns into a wide range of studies regarding identity, selfhood as well as the sense of belonging for the individual. In *Exploring Identity in Literature and Life Stories: Elusive Self*, it is argued that the discourse on identity extends from the classical Bildungsroman, which portrays a protagonist's journey of growth and education, to postmodern studies that emphasize the fragmented self. It is then concluded that the concept of the self is subject to being redefined in the face of novel encounters with the other and that it is not established once and is complete; rather it is continuously revised with the influence of society and culture (Barstad et al. 2019: 3-4). The contemporary studies focus on the ambiguity regarding the roots of the self and point to its elusive, changing, and fluctuating nature. However, this is not always the case, as from the nineteenth century onwards in particular, the focus is placed on the different facets of the self that can be pinned down and concretized. In line with this belief, with the Victorian era there is a rising importance placed on the aspects that are in one's control, contributing to the development of the concepts of self-control and self-composure.

Thus, regulation of the individual's internal environment gained prominence and became a powerful indicator of one's stability of identity. Emotional restraint in the face of desire further brought up the conversation around the duality of reason and passion springing from this period. Another influential element regarding this discourse around the self is individual's external environment, particularly the values, standards of the period in which one lives. In this context, the study of the external world includes the connection of the self with the natural environment, as well. Thus, the sense of self is regarded as an extension of the individual's sense of place. With the arrival of the Modernist period, new understandings and definitions regarding the dynamics of self and nature emerges. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, a revolutionary novel that reflects the reality of the period, is selected to analyze these dynamics in line with the historical background of the nineteenth century. To expand the analysis further, Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* will be examined to trace the fragmented self's relation with the natural world in the Modernist period. The study further aims to explore the place of nature in characters' development, road to individuation and self-realization in an ecocritical framework.

Romantic Repercussions

To trace the origin of the relation of the concepts under study, it is necessary to extend the analysis to the Romantic period as it is highly influential on the formation of the concept of the self in connection with nature. With the Romantic period, the impact of one's surroundings are particularly highlighted in terms of the construction of one's self. The 1760 Industrial Revolution in Britain had both immediate and long-lasting resonances upon the nation. With the delegation of the production power to machines, the outbreak of the

developments was growing large in scale and Britain was nearing the brink of a new history. In response to these advancements in the cities, the Romantic individual was in search of safe spaces which would serve as shelters from the dramatic transformation the nation was undergoing. Thus, the natural environment provided the individuals with the space where they could indulge in further reflection, creativity and inspiration independent of the constraints imposed by the changes of the eighteenth century. Beyond the sense of escapism bred by these great shifts, there is also an inherent social responsibility for the individual to be stimulated by this connection with nature and to partake in the current issues and concerns pertaining to one's culture. The natural environment, then, serves as a place for the re-construction of the existing social system. It is the nurturing element for the individual to explore new outlets for expression and the re-evaluation of the established concepts and notions.

The literary framework reflecting this dynamic explored the inherent connection established (or rather re-established) between the individual and nature. One of the mediums through which this relation can be explored was Romantic literature, which was concerned with the innate and subjective view of reality. In this regard, poetry is considered to be the ideal genre for depicting the contemplations of one's feelings and experiences unique to the individual. William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) became the cornerstone of Romantic poetry as the preface of the collection supported the poet's connection with his inner workings. *In Romantic Naturalists, Early Environmentalists: An Ecocritical Study, 1789-1912*, Dewey W. Hall expands the connection between the birth of environmentalism and Romantic literature, further stating that the element of the movement that centralizes on the environment served as a catalyst for the early environmental studies. Another pillar of this Romantic thought is the American movement called Transcendentalism. As stated by Lawrence Buell, under the influence of key figures such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, "the concept of a higher Reason is the heart of what came to be called Transcendentalism" (1973: 5). Works produced by these great thinkers further highlights the inherent good nature of humans along with the power of intuition over information acquired through senses. Human beings are not exempt from the notion that every living being is one with God but rather, they comprise a single unit. This realization, brought about by the expression of the individual's senses, serves as the moral guide and represents one of the refined examples of a setting designated for the integrity of one's self independent of outside factors. The concept of the self innately connected with the natural environment as woven in this period, and is then carried onto the Victorian era.

The Victorian Outlook

With the settlement of advances and initiatives taken with the revolution in the previous period, there was a communal shift into a new industrial reality. The concept of the self is heavily influenced by the changing social norms and the rapid development of the nation in the nineteenth century. As the new era marks the self as a constituent of a community, the affinity with nature starts to be disparaged. The new period, which starts with Queen Victoria in 1901, initiates urbanization as a result of the outgrowth of the nation and the migration of the villagers to the cities. The prosperity, well-being and security granted by the expansion of the production power in the middle class contrasts with the exploitation of the working class, making the in the early Victorian period a time of transition as well as a "time of troubles" (Greenblatt and Abrams 2006: 985). The late Victorian period, or often referred to as the *fin-de-siecle*[1], marks the transition into a new century with the social repercussions of the previous period such as the women's suffrage and labor movement. The rapid changes and the heralds of the Modernist era, leading to the fall of long-held

[1] The term *fin-de-siecle* refers to the transition period at end of the nineteenth century in Britain.

convictions of Victorian morals and values, and are the causes of communal sense of despair. Greenblatt and Abrams further state that:

> Although many Victorians shared a sense of satisfaction in the industrial and political preeminence of England during the period, they also suffered from an anxious sense of something lost, a sense too of being displaced persons in a world made alien by technological changes that had been exploited too quickly for the adaptive powers of the human psyche. (2006: 980)

This feeling of defamiliarization felt on a communal scale is due to the anxiety experienced in the face of the fast-paced technological advancement and the heralds of the new modern world, turning the period emblematic of concepts such as order, progress, and expansion into a new world view dominated by pessimism and corruption.

As industrialization and the new wave of culture settle in as a consequence of the novel formations and lead to the degradation of the outlook towards nature, the pillars that supported the Romanticism begin to fade away. The new social fabric of the period is concerned with concepts such as intuition, imagination, and insight but within a more scientific and materialistic framework. There is a shift from individual's harmony in nature to the individual's journey of social integration, the dynamics of which is echoed in the nineteenth century novel as well. In response to the demands of the rising working-class and the mirroring reality rooted in the period's environment centralized on the material, authors of the period begin to reflect this shift from individual's inherent affinity with nature to the individual as another unit of the the Victorian period's social structure.

The novel, as a mediator of the Victorian reality, offers spaces for the solidification of values and morals. As Schor explains: "novels, it has variously been argued, are an integral part of a system of individual discipline and social formation that took its current, powerful form in the mid-nineteenth century, and has been shaping (and mis-shaping) individual readers and the culture in which they read ever since" (2014: 349). Victorian novels are based on the individual self and the social environment in which one was established. On the opposite side of this narrative was the dynamic with the 'other' that is covered up with the emerging society of high etiquette, morals, and the consequential censorship. The refusal of confrontation with the other is a medium through which the government can reign without paying heed to that which is on the periphery of the collective identity. Within the context of the conversation around madness, the chaotic parts of the individual's psyche is repressed, regarded as the other and thus was overlooked. With this marginalization on an individual and communal level, the Gothic genre provides the outlet for the exploration of alterity. In *History of the Gothic*, Carol Margaret Davison states that the Gothic "has always traded in cultural contradictions: at the core of a dream, the Gothic discloses a nightmare; at the heart of rational modernity, irrational darkness; at the root of romantic intimacy, terror; at the heart of Enlightened liberty, slavery" (2009: 225). Thus, it is an outlet where the dualistic nature of accounts peripheral and central, reason and passion, human and nonhuman can dwell together. Gothic fiction often draws on nature as a means of representing the other. The element of Gothic opens up portrayals of the natural landscape that reflect the instrinsic and innate connection between human and the nonhuman, enabling for an unrestricted investigation into the self free from social constraints.

The Victorian outlook on the environment is deeply influenced by the developments in technology and science. In the field of biological science, Charles Darwin's contribution with the theory of evolution is a turning point for the belief in the Chain of Being in which all living things were placed in hierarchical order. The belief that the man is superior to animals is disproved:

> This new idea of nature, which broke the Great Chain of Being, derived from Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton by way of Rousseau, Goethe, and Coleridge, among many others.

> Romantic nature replaced separate creation—six days, every species utterly separable and distinct—with a dynamic and organic model, a much less stratified and indivisible version of the order of the nonhuman world. Between 1750 and 1859, a new narrative came to challenge the earlier story of divine order. (Nichols 2011: 15-16)

The repercussions of the degradation of this teleological classification system are a testament to the new world which highlights "not separate but rather connected creation, a unified tree or web of life and living things" (2011: 16). Thus, the break of the Great Chain of Being allows for the unity of all living beings in a circular and cooperative order.

The weather in nineteenth century Britain is another element that influenced people's outlook on the natural environment as the century witnessed the densest smokes and fogs in the history of nation. As one of the effects of rapid and intense industrialization, the 1952 Great Smog of London is one of the weather events that came to be the symbol of pollution that also reflects the social unrest. Peter Thorsheim, in his *Inventing Pollution: Coal, Smoke, and Culture in Britain Since 1800*, places emphasis on the construction of modernity and industrialization in the loss of the intrinsic connection with nature: "In line with modern formations, the connection was abandoned as nature was capitalized and commodified. The representations of it were often reflective of the Victorian period outlook that morphed into one that indicated the nature as filthy and as the cause of the pollution in the cities" (2018: 10). Even in the face of these large-scale influences, most of the people were still of the opinion that the unhealthy atmosphere of the period was caused by the environmental factors. Miasma was considered to be a particularly dangerous contaminant. The 'miasma theory' proposed that an organic material's byproduct, which was thought to contribute to the spread of infectious diseases, was the cause of epidemics (2018: 10). Such understanding of nature as the cause of pollution is gradually replaced by narratives that are inclusive of representations of nature, leading up to Victorian environmentalism.

The portrayals of the environment are reflected in the literary movements such as Naturalism. Naturalism in the Victorian period, depicts the natural world as a wild and relentless force: "for the Victorians, 'Nature' was far stranger and more frightening than self-consciously nostalgic accounts let on, as the period's most famous articulation makes explicit: 'Nature, red in tooth and claw'" (Taylor 2015: 883). It is a cruel representation of the environment reflective of the move away from nature in the industrial reality. Yet, further portrayals of nature are more mitigative as activist and author John Ruskin's arguments expands on the commodification of nature due to capitalistic and modernist pursuits. Ruskin discloses modern advancements such as electrification of houses as the factors that made us stray away from our inherent natural connection. Thus, the origin of environmental politics emerges with the individual self's connectivity with his/ her surroundings along with other living beings. Early Victorian and fin-de-siecle authors such as Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy and many others seek to encapsulate the spirit of the period and the experience of the Victorian/ Modern divide in their works, pointing out the transformation from rural to urban settings and offering insight into the heralds of alienation experienced in the modern age. Victorian literary texts are thereby analysed in a biocentric approach with the rise of ecocriticism. With the redefinition and the reimagination of nature through these accounts mentioned above, Victorian ecocriticism was gradually progressing from an anthropocentric to a biocentric ground with a natural frame of reference, an ecocentric portrayal of the world around us.

The emerging genre of Bildungsroman in the period aims to provide the space for the spiritual development of the individual and makes way for the recognition of the self and the subsequent exploration of nature as an other. The narrative is focused on the journey of the protagonist from childhood to maturity. Through the exploration of the selected novel *Jane Eyre,* building on the analysis of juxtaposition of eras, the journey towards maturity is

traced in connection with nature, as a bildung by nature. As Feder states, "the Bildungsroman is humanism's story of becoming human as becoming part of culture, the humanist origin story of culture itself, of its self-creation out of nature" (2014: 19). Within the literary framework, the presence of the self as a concept can be traced back to works by Goethe, who is a significant pillar of world literature in exploring the conflict between the centre and the margins. His late-eighteenth century masterpiece, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* describes the imaginary travels of the author, leading the protagonist to the path of self-realization. Recognized as one of the earlier examples of the Bildungsroman genre, the novel represents the birth of the concept of the progression and the improvement of the self's faculties. The genre, thus, focused on the wholeness of the self along with its integral nature which is soon to be fragmented and dissolved in the following twentieth century. The individual is portrayed as heavily influenced by the reality of his/ her environment. Such coming-of-age novels deal with the individual's integration into the social environment, where he/she makes a compromise to be accepted into the social structure. The protagonist's' journey towards self-actualization then leads them to the path of integritation, which is made possible by the union of Romantic passion and Victorian reason.

Reading into the Modern Stage

The arrival of the modern formations brought a leap into the new world. The processes of modernization such as manufacturing methods, increasing the usage of and dependence on machinery, further lead to the exploitation of nature. With the marginalization of nature, there is also the new "strong belief of culture's domination over nature & man's domination over woman" (Scott 2012: 14). Fast-paced developments, economic struggles, the outbreak of the First World War and its traumatic effects establishes the period on a radical and new foundation. As supported by Tew and Murray: "modernism is continually attempting to assert its own beginnings, to mark itself as rupture, whether aesthetic, social, political, sexual or cultural" (2009: 2). In the social aspect, the beginning of the twentieth century also marks the emergence of a modern culture. The denial of tradition and the rewriting of fundamental Enlightenment ideals involving reason and self-autonomy guides the exploration of new approaches that come to be characterized by modernism. Even though the works published in this period show clear denial of Victorian traditions, the transition from one era to the other contributes to a larger sense of exchange between the periods. As Mahoney states: "modernism's emphasis on rupture has made it difficult to perceive points of continuity between the Victorian and modernist periods" (2013: 718). Therefore, it can be stated that despite the apparent differences brought about by advancements and improvements, each period continues to sprout from the same origin.

The world recovering from the traumatic shock of the war, the novelty that comes with the move into a modern reality, the immigration from the rural to urban environments are all contributing factors for the transition to a new national identity. The reconstruction of a communal sense of self under the light of these changes gave way to further explorations of selfhoood. As briefly mentioned, there were many formations that altered the familiar view of reality. This is further elaborated by Philip Tew and Alex Murray in their *The Modernism Handbook*

> modernity was represented synecdochically by the train . . . The railway transformed the nation, dramatically reshaping the landscape, blurring the lines between rural and urban, facilitating the growth of the major cities, sweeping away local times, and introducing its own standard time – in effect, "annihilating" an older perception of time and space. (2009: 1-4)

The fundamental advances such as railways, the electrification of the streets in Britain, and the Eiffel tower –the construction of which was only completed through the late century,

give rise to the domination of the natural environment and the subsequent sense of estrangement and disconnection. The electrification of streets and houses has become the symbol of the urban life, the usage of which freed the modern individual from the confines of nature, along with the natural separation of the night and day. With each technological advancement, the gap between the human and the nonhuman is getting broader. This being the case, as Bonnie Kime Scott claims, "nature, as an inescapable aspect of being human, went dangerously unacknowledged in the twentieth century, as predominant cultures delighted and indulged in modernity . . . based on Western values" (2012: 2). The exploitation of nature in this sense is the consequence of a weakening of the human-nonhuman bond, the domination of which strengthened the anthropocentric perspective that controls the natural systems.

The portrayals of nature in the Modernist era are reflective of the loss of connection with representations that exlude the natural setting altogether or approach it as a rather detached and inscrutable element. Thus with the Modernist era, nature is acknowledged as yet another Other. A false sense of separation between the British and the native, the man and the woman, as well as the self and the other rests at the heart of the tumultuous relationship and the dichotomy between the human-nonhuman. As Aylin Atilla states:

> The ontological root of imperialism displays itself in different forms, but the concealed purpose is to find a means of creating a resistance against alterity. Western philosophy has always sought to appropriate the Other to the same. Unfortunately, it is believed that the Other poses threat to the autonomy and the sovereignty of the self. (2017: 81)

Even though the distant portrayal of the nature is mainly due to the degradation of it in the modern world, the authors who are attuned to the winds of change from natural to industrial could imagine a world integrated with culture and nature. Thus, they are able to convey the predicament of the fragmented individual, the modern crisis as well as its association with the natural environment. These depictions of the natural environment, varying from indifferent to responsive, were continually shifting modern constructions of self. As further acknowledged by Scott: "modernists also discovered the impossibility of rejecting the natural world, given powerful early memories of place and sensation, and the experimental satisfaction that comes with imaginative merger of human and nonhuman other" (2012: 14). There was shift that had occurred in response to the diversity of viewpoints regarding nature and within this scope, a wide range of natural accounts were now becoming accessible, offering important leads for the progression of modern studies in ecocriticism.

The legacy of a secure, stable sense of self that is established previously through individual's integration into society was not applicable for the new emerging ideas which were very much based on a shifting view of the world. Having experienced the traumatic events surrounding war, the world saw "terms such as flux, process, absence, and indeterminacy come to replace stability, essence, presence, and the epistemological certainty" (Hovind 2011: 255). Thus, the notion of the multivocal self in flux and new investigations of the other replaces the long-held conviction that the world is made of the material and the physical. Roll states that the "long existent belief in the objective, stable, metaphysically or historically formed subject has been shattered and replaced by the writer's inquiry into the inner experiences of the self" (2012: 226). The individual experience of the self is now the subject of discussion and is just as subjective and abstract as it was before the modern stage marked the new world and the deconstructed the old ways and beliefs.

The psychological repercussions of the horror of the First World War brought about an internal conflict and a loss of sense of identity. There were also challenges regarding belonging and disorientation, as well as a sense of diaspora. Regarding this context, the need for continuity and a pursuit of truth seem to be in opposition with the individual's

sense of identity. The canon of modernist literature draws on modern approaches ranging from alienation, subjectivity and stream of consciousness to fragmentation in order to convey a reality of collectivity. Mirrored in this literary collection is the world on the verge of a crisis: as the "modern characters tend to shift from formulation to formulation, from story to story, from assertion to question to plea . . . they endlessly debate with themselves whether anything they can say or believe about themselves is really true" (Brown 1989: 112). Thus, the consequences of fragmentation present a threat to the concept of the integral, united self. In this regard, the accounts reflecting the modern formation of identity gave place to the examination of the relationship between the self and nature.

Jane Eyre as a Victorian Case Study

The novels of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* are selected to analyze the connection of the primary concept of selfhood and the progress the individual goes through in line with nature. With these novels, the study aims to trace the fictional projections of this connection with special focus on the ecocritical elements. Among the writers of the nineteenth century Victorian setting who produced works with an emphasis on the independence of the heroines as a powerful theme, is Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855). Her novel *Jane Eyre* is a blend of genres from romance, gothic fiction, autobiographical fiction, Bildungsroman and realism. Even though categorizing it would be to disregard its diverse nature, it would be accurate to state that by addressing the divide between romantic and realist aspects, *Jane Eyre* succeeds in portraying the nineteenth century reality. The dominant atmosphere in these consecutive movements is significant as the spirit of the Romantic era provides hints regarding the complex nature of the Victorian period. Its unique and revolutionary perspectives include morality and autonomy themes, heroine undergoing spiritual development in a time when the nineteenth century women were "passive, dependent, and idle creatures of prevailing ideology" (Langland 1992: 291). As stated by Sandra Gilbert in *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, women were often "praised for their emotional sensitivity as well as their purity and passivity" (1944: 73). They are perceived by the patriarchal system under a prejudiced and a demeaning light, which is detrimental to their social standing. They are further expected to perform and hold themselves up to standards that are obsolete, and significantly different than their male peers. Furthermore, women are disrespected in their attempts at independence, which is frequently the case in the self's command over the other as a means of establishing authority.

The rise of self-control regarding the concept of selfhood is particularly relevant in the Victorian era as it is dominated by an exertion of power, censorship, and pressure. Consequently, there is an increase in the discourse around madness springing from this atmosphere. The reflection of madness can be observed in the novel through the primary conflict the protagonist struggles with, which is between reason and passion. In an instance throughout the course of the novel where Jane learns about Rochester's old wife, Bertha's existence, she loses control of her sense of self-restraint and refers to the moment as one that is ruled by insanity, but soon enough she restores her composure and restrains from giving in to her overwhelming emotions: "I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad—as I am now" (Brontë 2008: 317). Regarding this dilemma the protagonist experiences with her opposing urges, Terry Eagleton states that "the Romantic self must be persistently recalled to its deliberately narrowed and withered definition of rationality" (2005: 18). It is the rationality that comes with the immediate need of restraint when one feels a threat to self's sovereignty. Carol-Ann Farkas in '"Beyond What Language Can Express:' Transcending the Limits of the Self in *Jane Eyre*" refers to the balancing of these dualistic aspects, stating:

> the idea of self-completion, or self-fulfilment, could best be compared to the Jungian notion of individuation, where . . . the conflict between external and internal, conscious and unconscious, is brought to an equilibrium. For Jane, this involves a resistance against the social forces that would define her from without— her sense of herself as part of a larger social order is balanced by a growing awareness of her own desires and values, which define her from within. (1994: 68)

The coming together of the internal, external and harmonizing elements characterize her within and 'without', and she is then able to bring herself to a balance regarding her place as a separate and autonomous identity in a community.

The Victorian society serves as a counter-element in the construction of the self. It absorbs the identity of the individual and renders it enmeshed with the restricting standards and values dominant at the time. Another dualistic confrontation Jane goes through on the way to self-actualization is the denial of the Other. As it was touched on briefly, throughout different periods, the representation of the Other takes on many modes and forms, all the while remaining to be separate from the individual self. In the novel, the character Rochester shows up as the other with whom Jane is in dire need of reconciling. Rochester enters Jane's life he introduces a series of obstacles through which Jane moves and integrates aspects of her self diverse in nature. Reconstruction of the self happens through compromising and harmonizing with the outside environment. In this respect, Tony Tanner in "Passion Narrative and Identity in *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*" states that "it is worth noting that one of the first lessons that Jane Eyre masters is 'the first two tenses of the verb Etre' - I am, I will be, or I was. This is indeed exactly what she has to learn to say with full confidence and authority, to know what the self is in time, to stabilise the self in its relation to what is around it" (1984: 23). The voice of the other further provides the space for the heterogeneity of accounts that lurks beneath the surface. These narratives raises further discussions about the self as well as one's attempts to identify the unusual, deprecated and disparaged, offering insight into the discourse around the integrated self.

As briefly mentioned, during the nineteenth century the natural environment was perceived as an outsider to the structure of the newly industrialized nation. However, as employed by the author, there are numerous instances of the novel that depict the interrelation of nature and the protagonist as an affinity. On Jane's journey to her last stop, Ferndean, Tanner states:

> Her journey to Rochester is marked by a symbolic suggestiveness. The way gets darker and more constricted with trees until she feels she has lost her way. There are no longer any roads - indeed there is 'no opening anywhere.' It is as though she is returning to some pre-social space where all the conventional definitions are erased and where she can begin again. In the 'formlessness' of Ferndean she at last can reform relationships and roles on her own terms. (1984: 21)

The exploration of the five distinct locales the heroine traverses and advances offers a progressive reading of Jane's journey for independence and self-realization. Many critics and studies of *Jane Eyre* point to the pattern the distinct locales in the novel partake in. They are frequently used as the focal reference point for the reflection of Jane's experiences and her journey to self-fulfillment. The early stages of the narrative, for instance, is where Jane introduces Gateshead as a place rather emblematic of the class-conscious Victorian society. In this respect, the various forms of tyranny that alternate throughout the book act as counter elements in the formation of the self, demanding obedience. Yet, the mere reunion and reconciliation with the other only does not promise the protagonist ultimate fulfilment as it is also required for characters to be reconciled, and integrated in the nature. Virginia Woolf in *The Common Reader* refers to the interplay between different elements and characters and how they all merge together in the heroine of the novel: "Remarkable

faces, figures of strong outline and gnarled feature have flashed upon us in passing; but it is through her eyes that we have seen them. Once she is gone, we seek for them in vain. Think of Rochester and we have to think of Jane Eyre. Think of the moor, and again, there is Jane Eyre" (1925: 168). As the place she moves on to subsequently, Lowood marks the place of her initiation as Jane notes the "the skirts of Lowood" along with the "the hilly horizon" (Brontë 2008: 85). Throughout the novel, as employed by the author, Jane partakes in this connection resembling a symbiosis.

Following a scene where they confess their love to one another with Rochester, Jane notes that June turns into a December: "A Christmas frost had come at midsummer; a white December storm had whirled over June" (Brontë 2008: 295). The change of scenery acts as a foreshadowing of events when Jane learns about Bertha as Rochester's locked-up old wife. Following this moment of anagnorisis, right after having learned about Bertha, the character that is often explored as Jane's other or double, Jane plans to leave Thornfield and on "drear flight and homeless wandering", turns to nature, remarking: "nature seemed to me benign and good; I thought she loved me, outcast as I was; and I, who from man could anticipate only mistrust, rejection, insult, clung to her with filial fondness" (Brontë 2008: 320-323). This natural space that is free from restrictions and limitations of society provides a space of reflection:

> Jane's focalization in this episode prepares us for Brontë's deus ex machina conclusion to the love story between Jane and Rochester, which can only flourish outside the constraints of a class-regulated society. Just as the master of Thornfield can tame and domesticate the menace of the natural world, so at Ferndean Jane and Rochester can harness the fertility of nature to advance their union. As in the individual story of Jane's evolving selfhood, so also in her romantic liaison with Rochester: nature is the key to the human mastery that both Jane and Rochester desire. (Fincham 18)

The middle ground between the self and the other, culture and nature, and reason with passion is processed through the locale of Ferndean: "nature, under the guise of love and desire, draws the lover to one another whilst the ideals of society hinder their union; the novel tackles this through the depiction of social structures as unnatural settings as well as the depiction of natural settings as permissive of the lovers' release from social constraints (Teuscher 2019: 5). Thus, within the course of the narrative, nature as an element offers the space for the characters' self-reflection, self-actualization as well as integration.

The Waves: A Reflection of the Modern Self

The novel *The Waves* is reflective of the Modernist period's redefinitions around the concepts of the self in connection with nature as an other. Virginia Woolf's analysis of the surrounding reality is a reflection of her skillful experientiality. She utilizes tecniques such as the stream of consciousness, fragmentation and her signature way of writing display the union of the individuals' through their separateness. Woolf further indicates that the relation between these characters is made possible by the splits that come to characterize modern reality. The contact with the natural elements is another significant component of her writing:

> Woolf's writing, both fictional and non-fictional, demonstrates her awareness of the complex changes occurring in the life sciences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She kept pace with the rapid shifts in the field, showing herself to be familiar with many of the key figures and concepts of the emerging disciplines and accurately representing new developments in her writing. In her rejection of the taxonomic outlook, her sense of the revolutionary potential of the new biology, her determination to hold protection to rational standards, her sense of the pleasure to be found in the observation of living creatures, and her awareness of humanity's place in the wider scheme of nature, Woolf encapsulated many of the dominant trends in the modern study of nature. (Alt 2010: 167)

Her experimental and subjective novel *The Waves* explores the modern world's fluctuating characterizations of the self. Woolf weaves the thread of the fragmented self and the collective reality through the protagonists of Bernard, Louis, Neville, Jinny, Susan and Rhoda. Common point in these characters is a lack of unity and a sense of incoherence, the concept of "selfhood as progressive disruption, set against the lost myth of continuity" (Brown 1989: 149). In one of her diary entries Woolf refers to this dissolution, stating: "the six characters were supposed to be one. I'm getting old myself - I shall be fifty next year; and I come to feel more and more how difficult it is to collect oneself into one Virginia . . . Therefore I wanted to give the sense of continuity" (Woolf 1980: 397). Through the characters' portrayal as disconnected from their own nature Woolf points to the combination of their individual accounts, a world where they are all united and one. Brown states that

> *The Waves* constitutes Virginia Woolf's most sustained exploration of the self in time. It provides, in its structure, a broken chronology of life time which takes us from primary childhood awareness to the oncoming of death. At the same time, the mythos of the single day is given in interspersed poetic passages which trace the rising and falling of the sun. Six characters speak their attempts to create and sustain a consistent selfhood in the face of fluxive change and sudden disaster. (1989: 160)

The characters experience great challenges with the external environment, beyond the range of their familiarized childhood perceptions: As Hinnov states: "each character's painful process of individuation—'We suffered terribly as we became separate bodies' (344)—necessitates fragmentation. Yet disunity from the whole is required for eventual reunion as the wavelike movement is both a break and a merge" (2011: 215). As a consequence of the separation from their inherent connection with one another, with the natural environment and their sense of continuity, the characters go through fragmentation in the face of disillusionment with modern reality.

The journey to a collective selfhood emanate from the sense of dissatisfaction and futility the individual experiences as the loss of point of reference that comes with the modern reality. Apter further states: "the moments of communion, as they all feel at Hampton Court, are not in themselves enough to justify the presentation of characters as a body . . . What binds them together is the fact . . . that each discovers his or her self by reference to the others" (1979: 123). The sense of unison inherent in the characters point to a larger recognition of each of their own natures. An integration with the surrounding reality happens through "characters' collective consciousness", as well as with the forming of "communal notion of identity" (Bradshaw 2015: xv). In contrast to the portrayal of the ideal, integrated self through the character of Percival, the mutual friend of the six protagonists, the six characters are set to perpetually be in a state of confusion and alienation with their identity. The character Percival serves as the ideal point of reference through which they are able to aleviate the turmoil of the fragmented self, connect to one another and attain unison in a communal sense of self. He holds the ideal of the lost, unattainable integrity, when the others are scattered in all directions. Louis states: "It is Percival sitting silent as he sat among the tickling grasses when the breeze parted the clouds and they formed again, who makes us aware that these attempts to say, 'I am this, I am that', which we make, coming together, like separated parts of one body and soul, are false'" (Woolf 2015: 80). Neville contemplating on the notion of the multiselves or of the self infused with the essence of the other, inquires and says: "as he [Bernard] approaches I become not myself but Neville mixed with somebody—with whom?—with Bernard? Yes, it is Bernard, and it is to Bernard that I shall put the question, Who am I?" (Woolf 2015: 48). A similar exploration by Bernard about the real nature of his being follows: "What am I? I ask. This? No, I am that", following his observation of the surrounding environment he states: "then it becomes clear that I am not one and simple, but complex and many" (Woolf 2015: 44). For him, the

observation of the environment he is in gives way to the realization of the multifaceted nature of his self, along with the acknowledgment of its impermanence.

Howard states that "central to Woolf's aesthetic is the tension between the individual's public personae and his or her 'private' self" (2007: 44). Although this tension and fragmentation is experienced individually, the examination of the characters of Rhoda and Louis can offer deeper insight into the nature of this sense of communal dissolution. The feeling of displacement experienced by these characters can be observed to date back to their childhood where the remarks of the environment and their immediate sensory perception in the form of stream of consciousness reveal the state of their being and how they relate to the surrounding world. Although both characters display traits of observation, in a state of emulation of others, Rhoda can be said to be the one experiencing a more extreme sense of disintegration. In a manner parallel to Jane in the gloomy atmosphere of the Red Room, Rhoda is in a situation where others present both a threat to her being, and a proof of it, she states: "Alone, I often fall down into nothingness" (Woolf 2015: 25). Stuck in a similar state of disharmony with his surrounding reality, Louis bases these feelings on the discord he feels due to his Australian background: "From discord, from hatred my shattered mind is pieced together by some sudden perception. I take the trees, the clouds, to be witnesses of my complete integration. I, Louis, I, who shall walk the earth these seventy years, am born entire, out of hatred, out of discord" (Woolf 2015: 22). After receiving an unwelcome kiss by Jinny in the form of an intrustion, Louis hides in a bush and recovers the integrity of his sense of self in connecting with the natural environment: "I feel come over me the sense of the earth under me, and my roots going down and down till they wrap themselves round some hardness at the centre. I recover my continuity" (Woolf 2015: 20). As a child he is cognizant of his inconsistency both within himself and in regard to the other five characters and he only finds some solace with the unification of nature, the trees and the clouds. It is to nature Louis intuitively turns to for the confirmation and consolation of his identity.

As the character who frames the novel with the entirety of the final chapter dedicated to his inquiries about the nature of their identity and experience, Bernard is the one that collects stories and words; he seeks to capture and materialize the essence of all their experiences. Yet, at the end of the novel he, too, comes to the grim realization of the futility of these attempts, the inadequacy of language to reflect the modern reality, Bernard states: "I need a little language such as lovers use, words of one syllable such as children speak when they come into the room and find their mother sewing and pick up some scrap of bright wool, a feather, or a shred of chintz. I need a howl; a cry" (Woolf 2015: 176). His conclusion is that their immediate sensory perceptions of a tree or a bird belonging to their childhood surpass the sophisticated and complex formulations in communicating the nature of reality. Leading up to this realization, his experience of the world without a self follows:

> The woods had vanished; the earth was a waste of shadow. No sound broke the silence of the wintry landscape. No cock crowed; no smoke rose; no train moved. A man without a self, I said. A heavy body leaning on a gate. A dead man . . . this way and that, mutable, vain. I, carrying a notebook, making phrases, had recorded mere changes; a shadow, I had been sedulous to take note of shadows. (Woolf 2015: 170-71)

Susan Dick refers to this loss of identity as the dissolving of illusion stating: "one of the terrifying elements in this experience is the loss of language, one vehicle of illusion. There are no words, he will say, to describe the world seen without a self" (1983: 48). This point of anagnorisis for the modern individual on the modern stage possesses another layer of unification with the other.

The self in *The Waves* is not only complete and whole with the other five characters, but also within the natural environment. The natural element in the novels run in and out of the chapters in the form of interludes and characters' sensory perceptions of the environment, providing the catalyst for unison: "it is nature to which Virginia Woolf turns for integration, for fusion, for flow" (Bevis 1956: 18). The motif through which the fusion and integration is weaved is, as evident in the title of the novel, the waves. The waves frame the entirety of the novel, cresting and falling in the background of the characters' journeys; its cyclical flow overarches the reality of the present. Throughout the course of the characters' lives, they perceive and experience the rhythm and the motion of the waves in different ways, yet its essence always stays the same. Building on this motive, each character partakes in the ocean of collectivity in the form of a wave. Flux and change being their inherent nature, together they form a communal identity where each character contributes to the unison with their unique experience and sense of self. This is further stated by Bernard through the metaphor of the seven-sided flower: "A single flower as we sat here waiting, but now a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves—a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution" (Woolf 2015: 74). Regarding these words where the integrity of self through the collective is emphasized Mattison states: "multiplicity is not opposed to unity, that, through intuition, Bernard, Susan, Neville, Jinny, Louis, Rhoda, and Percival have experienced the interconnections of their "selves" and, in so doing, have composed (or, created) "a whole flower" (2011: 5). The complete flower includes the character Percival who possesses the ideal, integrated self each character strives to attain and who is exempt from the protagonists' flow of narration and is instead merely 'perceived' from the outside. Each character is indispensable in the making up of the single flower and thus each is collectively able to experience unison as a point of reference through the character of Percival. Among the motives and metaphors that exist throughout the novel to communicate the dynamics between the environment, the individual and the collective, there are also interludes, placed as accounts that briefly frame the chapters.

The interludes act as the pillars for the integration of the natural world into the modern reality depicted: "'the segmentation of the characters' lives by the phases of the day (and the year) highlights the common nature of animals and humans: both are subject to time and change and undergo the natural process of growth, perfection, decline and death" (Hühn 2001: 346). They follow as a detached narration of dawn into the setting of the sun, in parallel with the linear chapters that follow the childhood of the characters into old age, pivotal in the portrayal of human-nature symbiosis. Hühn further states:

> The perspective established by the scenic descriptions of the interludes differs radically from both the characters' soliloquies and Bernard's retrospection in that they refer to external natural objects and events in the form of first-order observation . . . Such a pervasive ascription of human traits to the natural scenery is apt to foreground its extra-human status and thus, reversing the perspective, establishes the interludes as an observation device for the human world, facilitated by their position as a frame for the soliloquies and by the formal analogy between birds and characters. (2001: 345-346)

The perception of a reality that is inclusive of this depiction of nature emphasizing characters' connection is formed by the accounts of stream of consciousness. As the sun initiates the emergence of light which metaphorically refers to the consciousness of the protagonists, their early clumsy perceptions of the world are revealed. The subsequent chapter depict the mid-day, the brightest phase of the sun which figuratively seeps into the chapters through the illumination and clarity that are provided to the characters, in the afternoon and the peak period of their lives. The light shines on all that exists in the portrayal of the natural scene making up a blindeding and sudden transformation into adulthood. The narrator informs that the sun sees "straight over the waves" (Woolf 2015: 63), signifying a stage of completion their journey of integration. Their respective selfhood maturity with

the exposition of insight through the imagery of the sun is clear as the narration confirms this individuation with the mention of birds singing: "one sang under the bedroom window; another on the topmost twig of the lilac bush; another on the edge of the wall. Each sang stridently, with passion, with vehemence, as if to let the song burst out of it, no matter if it shattered the song of another bird with harsh discord" (Woolf 2015: 63). Birds are the representation of the six distinct personalities and serve as symbols of initiation, of exploring the singularity of their voices. As the sun descends quietly, the death of the ideal, integral self that Percival symbolizes marks the beginning of the second phase of their lives, the end of their childhood with overtones of insight, from innocence to experience. With their childhood in the past, the characters have reached the phase where they are provided with emotional maturity and agency to help with their early perceptions of the surrounding world and their primary contact with it.

The last soliloquy of Bernard takes the nature as the element that acts as a stimulant for integration, and it is significant in that the last words of the novel uttered by the character frames the novel once and for all: "the sky is dark as polished whalebone. But there is a kindling in the sky whether of lamplight or of dawn... Dawn is some sort of whitening of the sky; some sort of renewal. Another day; another Friday; another twentieth of March, January, or September. Another general awakening" (Woolf 2015: 177). The narrative that is initiated with dawn breaking softly over the landscape is present once again; this time it points to a larger cycle, experience in return for flow, the past in return for the present. Bernard's realization of the world without a self leads to this observation of "whitening", "renewal" and "another general awakening". His words of inspection are fixed on nature, more precisely the waves, as he continues: "a bird chirps. Cottagers light their early candles. Yes, this is the eternal renewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again" (Woolf 2015: 177). The recognition of the self's successful integration accompanies a sense of hope, and an expectation of truth. Once more the novel is framed with the cyclical portrayal of continuity of motion. Thus, the self and other, the object and the subject, the form and the context merge into one another. The respective experience of the six personalities are fused together under a collective identity where they become one body. Through the metaphors of the many petaled-flower and the birds each singing with their distinct voices the theme collectivity is woven and they are moved towards a unified reality with the stimulant of the natural environment leading to a sense of communal integration.

Conclusion

Nature that is present throughout the different journeys of the characters in the selected novels depicts a wider image of individuation. The element of nature recurring in these narratives overarches two centuries. With the twentieth century onwards it serves as the space of contemplation, self-discovery within the individual and communal sense. The connection between the eras encompassing roughly the nineteenth to twentieth centuries and the evolution of the definitions of self over time are explored within the context of nature. Through the historical background of nineteenth and twentieth century, as well as the fictional framework, a particular emphasis is placed on the relationships between the protagonists and nature. The inquiry of the self as an instrument in the novels offers insights into the characters' respective journeys of self-discovery. Yet, as it can be observed, the journey of the six characters in *The Waves* is not as consistent and straightforward as Jane Eyre's, and it does not necessarily guarantee self-fulfilment considering the modern environment and the new ideas about the self emerging from this scene. Morris asserts that

> *The Waves* does not fit the traditional definition of a Bildungsroman, and moreover, the novel can be read as an anti-Bildungsroman. It is Woolf's attempt to replace the self-centredness of the traditional realist novel with a worldly realist distribution of the perceptible foregrounding the material common life and culture of shared physical being and intersubjective consciousness. (2019: 119)

Thus, it can be concluded that regardless of whether the characters achieve self-actualization in traditional terms, the acknowledgement of their efforts in the name of exploring their personalities as well as their attempts to establish a sense of balance is an integral component of their process of individuation and integration of the self with the other.

The novels selected for this analysis show similarities that have been clarified in terms of the self encompassing the other, the individual the communal, the human, the nonhuman. It has been pointed out that as a representation of the main concepts of self in relation to nature in the Victorian period, *Jane Eyre* offers a place of the examination of nature as a guide. The author's portrayal of the environment as a means for the heroine to attain unity within herself offers her independence on personal and social level. The revelations granted by this natural environment point to its function as a space of transformation and introspection, the integration of which leads to self-fulfillment. Analyzing the shifting representations of nature in the novels gives insight into how the protagonists in *The Waves* manage the modern, fragmented self. Characters that appear to be quite distinct in terms of their identities share a similar reference point in their interactions with one another. This pivotal point, which results from the protagonists' struggles to deal with the loss of their valued friend serves as a focal point where other connections are explored during the course of the narrative. With this coming together, all their thoughts and identities get intertwined and melt into each other. The blueprint for the characters' individualization journeys is mapped out through the portrayal of the connections they establish with their natural surroundings. In order to examine the human-nonhuman connection and bring particular attention to the points made in the novels, the relationships of these characters with nature, the events that emenate from this connection and their impact on the development of the characters, have been analyzed through ecocritical theory.

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