Çankaya University
Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

15/1

June 2021

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Editor's Preface

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We are honored to present the 15/1 issue of *Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. As in our earlier issues, in this issue of the volume too, we have maintained our efforts in adhering to and reaching the goals of academic discussion. We continue to cover interdisciplinary studies at the intersection of different areas of the human sciences that fall within the scope of the Journal and to share new perspectives in the humanities. This current issue is coming out during the time of a devastating pandemic. It responds to the global loss of many lives caused by Covid-19 by giving place to a discussion of Thanatos, the fear of death and our final surrender to it in dignity. The discussion is pursued in different articles in this volume through a diversity of texts. The issue includes highly stimulating articles also on such hot topics as African Migrant Mothers, trauma narrative, "making America great again," and the concepts of authority and authenticity in creative writing, and a wide variety of literary texts from different periods such as Clarke's *Childhood's End*, Shafak's *Pinhan*, DeLillo's *The Body Artist*, Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*, Rooney's *Normal People*, Barnes's *Nothing to be Frightened Of* and *Flaubert's Parrot*, Thackeray's *The Rose and The Ring*, Sabahattin Ali's "Melancholy," and Poe's "The Imp of the Perverse". These and a myriad of other canonical texts are discussed from inventive angles in the issue articles. We are sure our readers will enjoy observing the many-sided analyses taking place in these articles, and we hope the present volume will be of interest for scholars and stimulate further research.

The editor-in-chief would like to thank all the authors wholeheartedly for their scholarly contributions and for their collaborations throughout. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our referees for their reviews and valuable comments.

We, as the Editorial Board of *Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, would like to thank the Board of Trustees and the Presidency of Çankaya University, and the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for their continuous support.

Acknowledgments

Thanatos in Shakespeare's Hamlet, Homer and Barker's Achilles, Barnes and Saunders: Warding off Death before Release into the Unknown

Shakespeare'in Hamlet, Homer ve Barker'in Achilles'den, Barnes ve Saunders'e: Ölümden Kaçmak, Sonunda Bilinmeyen'e Yenik Düşmek

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Abstract

This paper offers an existential approach to writers' responses to death, evaluating their different views regarding our ultimate destiny, Thanatos. It considers the deliberations of Shakespeare's Hamlet, the archetypal death-ponderer, and Homer's Achilles, approaching our own time through contemporaries like Julian Barnes, George Saunders and Pat Barker. These writings spanning hundreds of years demonstrate our desire to evade or control death, while anticipating ultimate judgment for behaviour in this life, before loosening our attachment to life in accepting our final fate. We watch Hamlet's concern for his father's ghost tortured in purgatory and his wish for revenge, as it became surpassed by Hamlet's interrogations concerning his own mortality, still obsessed by death, to which force he finally surrenders. While Achilles had initially embraced a gloriously heroic, youthful death, Homer subsequently shows him mourning the loss of his life in Hades; Pat Barker shows Achilles as reconciled to death, even while attached to life in considering his child's future. The contemporary George Saunders presents Lincoln's young son caught in a liminal bardo of the dead, who are trapped in attachment to their mortal state, while Willie is enabled to transition to his final state of possible judgment and closure. Julian Barnes' wish-fulfilment dream or desire of heaven offers this ideal as a debased, corporeal paradise, leaving his character longing for meaning, even while trapped in the limitations of his own personality. Visions and dreams from Homer and Shakespeare onwards offer cryptic clues regarding unknown future states. These literary reflections through disparate eras indicate the human aspiration to evade death and whatever lies beyond it, while often positing a final surrender to death, alongside a wish for it to make sense of life through karmic resolution.

Keywords: Death, bardo, purgatory, judgment, resolution, nothing

Öz

Bu makale, Achilles'den Shakespeare'in Hamlet'ine, çağdaş yazarlar Julian Barnes ve George Saunders'e kadar ölüm olgusuna yaklaşımları tartışmayı amaçlar. Araştırmanın konusu olan yazarların eserleri, kader ve bilinmeyene gidişi kabullenmeden önce nihai adaleti beklerken bile ölümden kaçınma veya onu kontrol etme arzusunu ortaya koyar. Hamlet'in babasının araftaki hayaline olan ilgisi, daha sonra kendi sorunları arasında unutulur; Achilles erken ve şaşalı bir ölümü kabul etmişken Hades'deki kaybolan yaşantısının yasını tutar. Barker ise onu, ölümü kabullenmesine karşın oğlunun geleceğini planlarken gösterir. Çağdaş Saunders,

Lincoln'ın genç oğlunun arafın eşiğinde tutulurken sonsuz kaderi, yargılanma ve sona ulaşma için onun cesaretlendirilmesini konu eder. Barnes'ın arzularını tatmin edecek cennet rüyası, aslında böyle bir cennetin bile nihai olarak kötü olduğunu gösterir, yarattığı karakter bir anlam aramakta ve kendi kişiliğinin tuzağına düşmektedir. İncelenen eserler göstermiştir ki, kaleme alındıkları dönemler farklı da olsa ölümden neye mal olursa olsun kaçınmaya çalışır ama sonuçta onu kabullenir ve mümkünse hayata nihai adaleti getirmesini umarlar.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Ölüm, araf, yargılanma, mahşer, çözüm, hiçlik

> One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
> One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
> The Stars are setting and the Caravan
> Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste!
> Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
> Beset the Road I was to wander in,
> Thou wilt not with Predestination round
> Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?
> *The Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, trans. Edward Fitzgerald

> "Death **was** a man—a skeleton—with a scythe and a cloak coming for us, whereas it's written into our DNA. We carry death within us"
> Julian Barnes interview with Kenneth Whyte

What do we know of the relationship between this world and any possible life beyond the grave, effectively the relation between our somatic body and our spirit or soul? Very little, or rather, we know that our body will decay after death, becoming food for worms, its elements dispersing to their organic parts, whatever memorial rites are employed as we surrender to physical corruption, or speedy dispersal through cremation, leaving any spectral survival highly debatable. Such issues remain ever-present in *Hamlet*, which effectively offers an objective correlative of death, ghosts and mourning.[1] The Shakespeare who speaks to us through a thousand personalities wrote this play some years after the sudden death of his young son Hamnet, offering a detached, cerebrally haunting interrogation of the meaning of life in the face of death. It is *King John* from the same years that offers a moving cameo of a mother inconsolably grieving for her son Arthur, refusing accusations of madness in expressing her desperate longing and mourning for him, asserting that her sanity causes her to suffer his loss all the more sharply (*King John* 3.4.44-60). In Albert Camus' *La Peste*, witnessing a child's agonising death from the plague, Rieux contends: "je refuserai jusqu'à la mort d'aimer cette création où des enfants sont torturés" (Camus 174), as he refuses to countenance any order that tolerates the agonising death of children. Surely Shakespeare brought his "negative

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[1] T. S. Eliot found this play lacking any clearly embodied objective correlative (100), while its protagonist eternally springs to our mind with skull in hand, the play's discussion obsessively revolving around ghosts, death, mortality and mourning, amounting to an elusively fascinating objective correlative.

capability"[2] to bear on death in *Hamlet*, even as we cannot specify his location in this play which is replete with his ubiquitous presence. He steps behind the scenes to show us death the last enemy, and our tenacious hold on this life in fear of what may lie beyond it. Present existence is preferable to any dubious perpetuation beyond the grave, whether idyllic, conscious existence, or a painful accounting for our behaviour in this life.

This paper journeys through literary approaches to Thanatos, seen through the eyes of writers and characters who interrogate or narrate death and the grave, from Homer's Achilles, to Shakespeare's Hamlet, to the nineteenth century Lincoln and on into our era. These writers' responses to death illuminate our expectations regarding any future life, and our wish for resolution or judgment as a palliative attempt to make sense of this mortal coil. An existential, ontological approach of Jean-Paul Sartre might indicate that, however little difference it will ultimately make, a life freely and consciously led is preferable to one lived in insincerity and bad faith; integrity and authenticity are essential to free humans as moral agents, who themselves are "the unique source of value and the nothingness by which the world exists" (Sartre 627); there is nothing beyond the free integrity of mortal individuals. A discussion of life approaching death appears particularly apposite now, in the era of our present plague or pandemic, Covid 19, since death, which always accompanies us, now asserts an ever-present threat to us. On this side of the grave we struggle with our problems, while on the other side awaits the great unknown.

Attitudes to Death, from Hamlet back to Achilles

The deliberations of Hamlet have become a universal reference regarding death, its protagonist astutely remarking:

> For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of déspised love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes,…
> But that the dread of something after death—
> The undiscovered country from whose bourn
> No traveller returns—puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of? (*Hamlet* 3.1.70-82)

We cling to our flesh and blood, in ignorance of what horrors may await us beyond death, since no traveller has returned from the grave to inform us about it, declares Hamlet, despite the tenets of the Christian faith nominally espoused by Shakespeare, based on the principle of one who returned from death. The New Testament 'testifies' to Jesus throwing off the grave cerements, as reported by Mary Magdalene, Jesus' disciples, and tens of thousands of

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[2] John Keats describes Shakespeare's "negative capability" in a letter to his brothers in 1817, showing the "uncertainties, mysteries, doubts" of this writer's ubiquitous sympathies (Houghton 62).

subsequent martyrs, who risked death in their certainty of inheriting eternal life, trusting the precedent of Jesus' resurrection. Not all were convinced; doubting Thomas had to place his hands in the wounds of Jesus, and every sceptic since weighs their doubts against the chance of sentient life surviving death. After conversing with his father's ghost, Hamlet is convinced that his father is suffering in purgatory: "confined to fast in fires/Till the foul crimes done in [his] days of nature/Are burnt and purged away" (1.5.11-13), informing Horatio and the watch that "It is an honest ghost" (1.5.138).

In Shakespeare's dramas the dead return as ghosts, often to plague the conscience of the guilty, like Macbeth, Richard III, or Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, or to direct the actions of a grieving son, as Hamlet here, or to bless those fighting wicked tyrants, like Henry Richmond in *Richard III*. Hamlet avers that he will tenaciously follow his father's injunction to remember his father and avenge his wicked murder by "that incestuous, that adulterate beast" (1.5.42) who stole his life, crown and queen in one fell swoop, condemning Hamlet senior precipitately to the purgatorial "sulphurous fires and tormenting flames" (1.5.3), his abrupt death leaving him suffering for his unconfessed sins: "Cut off even in the blossoms of my sins,/Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled" (1.5.76-77), without benefit of the last host or priestly unction, as emphasised in Greenblatt's discussion in *Hamlet in Purgatory*.[3] This play suggests a fascinating transition between father John Shakespeare and the Protestant playwright who "was probably brought up in a Roman Catholic household in a time of official suspicion and persecution of recusancy" (Greenblatt 249), and hence susceptible to being "haunted by the spirit of his father pleading for suffrages to relieve his soul from the pains of purgatory" (249), since his old religionist father was born under the ancient rites and intercessory prayers, before the Protestant prayer book of 1552 made such acts illegal.

Yet Hamlet is almost immediately asserting, against his initial belief in his father's ghost, that it is "the dread of something after death—/The undiscovered country from whose bourn/No traveller returns" (3.1.78-80), which makes humans irresolute, indecisive cowards. This contradicts his previous assertion that his father had returned from death precisely to inform his son of his fate and to ensure remembrance and revenge from him. The mental presence and imagined loss of the father who would die shortly after he completed this play, and who would surely have desired to be prayed for according to the old rites, is suggested in their interaction, yet the son speedily relegates his father's injunctions and memorial requests to neglect. Hamlet's father's murder is immediately followed by his mother's marital "baked meats" (1.2.179), then the "hugger-mugger" interring of Polonius killed behind the arras (4.5.80), and Ophelia's "maimed rites" after her doubtful death (5.1.199),

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[3] Greenblatt suggests that Hamlet senior was a believer in Roman Catholic purgatory, evinced by his words "unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled" (1.5.77), together with his wish for remembrance from his son, also alluded to in Hamlet junior's purgatorial "Saint Patrick" (1.5.136); such beliefs and practices were outlawed as recusant in the reformed Protestant church, which may have been mentally closer to the younger Hamlet, as shown in his writer, William Shakespeare.

all of which to Jacques Lacan indicate the play's inadequate mourning rituals for the departed dead (40-41). The dead remain in the memories of the living as those we love and have lost, which only gradually release their grasp on our mind, through time and the enactment and partial closure of funeral ceremonies.

Cavell asserts that "the work of mourning is the severing of investment, the detaching of one's interests, strand by strand, memory by memory, from their binding with an object that has passed, burying the dead" (Cavell 186). This play shows Hamlet losing his initial determination for revenge, neglecting his promise to his father and severing his connections with the dead as he falls into procrastinating indecisiveness. Hamlet's scepticism makes him insert a speech in *The Mouse trap* play to "catch the conscience of the king" (2.2.580), apparently because the memory of his father's ghost, who had initially convinced him of his own fratricidal murder, has faded into a dubious visitation: "The spirit that I have seen/May be the devil" (2.2.573-74). Then, even as Claudius' disturbed reaction to the play once again revives Hamlet's certainty to "take the ghost's word for a thousand pound" (3.2.270-71), upon passing Claudius in prayer minutes later, he lets slip an opportunity to make summary execution of him, basing this reluctance on belief that any prayer will send "this bloody, bawdy villain!/Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!" (2.2.554-55) straight to heaven, his sins cleansed, simply because he has knelt in prayer for forgiveness. He may well confess his overly cerebral irresolution, proving him incapable of action:

> Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
> And enterprises of great pitch and moment,
> With this regard, their currents turn awry. (*Hamlet* 3.1.83-87)

First persuaded of the honesty of the ghost, and then negligent, Hamlet is again jubilantly convinced by his words, then later hesitant regarding them. However sure he may be of the integrity of his father's ghost after two visitations and Claudius' clearly displayed moral guilt, as demonstrated in the play-within-the-play and vocalised in his subsequent failed efforts to pray, Hamlet never plans any revenge, although each theatre of spectators is freshly convinced of his father's bloody fratricide. Increasingly indifferent to his father's assumed ongoing torture in purgatory, he fails to obey the loving father and husband who appears in his mother's closet to step between him and personal revenge against his wife.

Hamlet's indeterminacy regarding his father's ghost, and the bloody, unholy revenge he urges him towards, results instead in the deaths not only of Polonius and Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, but also culminates in that of Laertes, Gertrude, Claudius and Hamlet himself. We may well wonder about his uncertainty regarding his father's ghost, as we listen to his deliberations that relegate his father to forgetfulness. A graveyard brings Yorick to his mind, with Caesar and Alexander, but not his lost father. By the

time Hamlet faces Laertes in a fencing duel, he has resigned himself to whatever fate may face him: "we defy augury. There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all" (5.2.202-205). Deliberating and finally accepting his own death, he has become oblivious to his father's fate. In his last breath Hamlet urges Horatio to draw his breath in pain in order to "tell [his own] story" rather than that of his father's murder, leaving the court in the final scene entirely unaware of Claudius' several crimes, as Hamlet sends him to follow his mother, ignoring any possible post-mortal confrontation with his murdered brother, as "old Hamlet has in effect been forgotten" (Greenblatt 227).

Bradley declares *Hamlet* to be a play enacted between the intimation of "the religious idea of a soul come from purgatory, at the end, conveyed through the similar idea of a soul carried by angels to its rest" (Bradley 141); a trajectory from a father's death to that of his son's. In her fictional *Hamnet*, Maggie O'Farrell switches the focus of this play to Shakespeare's son, imaginatively recreating an alternative reaction of Shakespeare to death. She reflects the powerful influence on the playwright of the death of his young son Hamnet, causing him to write a play in his name a few years after this loss. She shows *Hamlet* as presenting two people on the stage, the living young man and the ghost of his dead father, the part we know to have been acted by Shakespeare:

> As the ghost talks, she sees that her husband, in writing this, is taking the role of the ghost, has changed places with his son. He has taken his son's death and made it his own: he has put himself in death's clutches, resurrecting the boy in his place. 'O horrible! O horrible! Most horrible!' murmurs her husband's ghoulish voice, recalling the agony of his death. He has … done what any father would wish to do, to exchange his child's suffering for his own, to take his place, to offer himself up in his child's stead so that the boy might live. (O' Farrell 366)

Thus O'Farrell's novel suggests the effect of his son's death on the playwright, driving him to recreate on the stage what he had lost, using the only power he had, that of using charismatic words to bring to life the irrevocably lost child.

In "*Hamlet* before Its Time," Margreta de Grazia synthesises multiple approaches to *Hamlet*, whose protagonist appears in any context with "a young man with skull in hand stand[ing] iconlike for the self-reflexive, freestanding Hamlet" (de Grazia 367), showing this play as an ever-changing mirror of humanity, remaining at the vanguard of contemporary thought for four hundred years, particularly since the Romantic era. She exemplifies Jacques Derrida's use of Hamlet's interaction with his father's ghost, and this ghostly throwing time out of joint, to indicate our relationship with the spectre of Marx. "In avenging his father's murder, Hamlet performs the messianic delay called for now in expectation of a justice barely on the horizon … the incommensurate justice of a future yet to come [which] demands hard calculation" (*Specters of Marx*, qtd. in de Grazia, 373). Derrida demonstrates deconstructionism through *Hamlet*'s ghost, stating that "ghosts confound 'all

the 'two's,' or binaries, on which metaphysics grounds itself. Neither alive nor dead, here nor there, material nor immaterial, they can be said to stand for what metaphysics has left behind, the unassimilable leftovers of an ontological system" (de Grazia 375). Declaring that "everything is in Shakespeare" (Royle 39), Derrida uses Shakespeare's text to illustrate the eternally in-between, neither dead nor alive, knowing nor ignorant, for ever interrogating the presence of death in our lives, as O'Farrell similarly shows Hamlet on the stage as both "the young man, alive, and the father, dead. He is both alive and dead" (de Gazia 366), in what Royle calls an indeterminate, revenant "ghost tense" (39).

What of the Greek warrior Achilles, who after the death of Patroclus, was haunted by his friend's ghost while dragging the dead Hector around Troy? Patroclus returns to reproach his friend and request burial, since without burial, he is unable to cross the river Lethe to Hades. Mourning the loss of their comradeship, he asks Achilles to bury their bones together. As Achilles reaches out his arms to Patroclus in longing for some comfort, the spirit of his friend vanishes underground, gibbering like smoke. In desolation at being unable to embrace his friend, Achilles asserts that: "Something of us does survive in Hades' halls, some spirit and image of a man, but only with a shadowy existence, since all night long the spirit of poor Patroclus has been standing at my side, weeping and wailing. It told me what to do and looked marvellously like him" (Homer, *Iliad* book 23, 398). Guthrie names this lack of substance in the ghost or wraith as *phrenes*, which he translates as heart, or even guts, continuing: "After death the soul drags on indeed a bare existence, but has nothing that could be called immortality, for its separation from the body dooms it to an existence which is the negation of all that, in the opinion of the survivors, makes life worth living" (Guthrie 279). Life after death was assumed by the Greeks to be a shadowy, wraith-like existence.

Achilles had elected a glorious heroic death in preference to survival into an uninspiring old age, sequestered at home. However, when Odysseus encounters him in the underworld, with the dead crowding around the trench, drawn to the smell of the blood of sacrificed sheep, moaning with regret for their truncated lives in shadowy Hades, Achilles declares, counter to his original wish to die young: "My lord Odysseus … spare me your praise of Death. Put me on earth again, and I would rather be a serf in the house of some landless man, with little enough for himself to live on, than king of all these dead men that have done with life" (Homer, *Odysseus* book 11, 184). Odysseus' mother informs her son of how she had died grieving for him: "It was my heartache for you, my glorious Odysseus, and for your wise and gentle ways that brought my life and all its sweetness to an end" (176). Thrice Odysseus attempts to embrace his mother; thrice she slips through his arms as a shadowy ghost, leaving him harrowed with pain, as she explains the plight of the dead: "once the life-force has departed from our white bones, all is consumed by the fierce heat of the blazing fire, and the soul slips away like a dream and flutters on the air" (177). Finally Odysseus, in sheer panic and "sudden fear that dread Persephone might send up from Hades' Halls some

ghastly monster like the Gorgon's head" (188), the terrible Medusa, to irreversibly detain him in Hades, he escapes, leaving the dead to their unearthly, shadowy existence.

The postmodern reading of Pat Barker's *The Silence of the Girls* on the Trojan War reveals Achilles' grieving and longing for his friend Patroclus after his death, while facing his own death unflinchingly: "His death's determined by the gods" (299). In his last days he returns to his beginnings, remembering his mother Thetis' reluctance for the mortal coil of marriage and a son: "the long mistake of mortal life erased at last" (301), while he instead memorialises "the richness of life he's about to lose" (299), cherishing memories of his father Peleus. Even his grief for Patroclus softens into imagining him "gone ahead of him into the next room" (301). Together with Briseis, the captive girl who had caused Achilles' wrath when seized from him by Agamemnon, thus prolonging the war, they both remember their old friend, with any relationship of their own "filtered through their shared love for Patroclus" (302), the Greek who was kind, particularly to the captive girls. For himself, Achilles seems resigned to not having a future, as if he has lived all his life now: "because there is no future ... an old man's acceptance of death" (302). Yet the sudden realisation that Briseis is pregnant confronts him with the fact that "there *is* a future, though not a future he can be part of, but still, one he has to reckon with" (302). This brings a change, causing Achilles to plan for his posthumous heir. He plays his lyre, then informs Alcimus of Briseis' pregnancy, stating that if he, Achilles, dies, an outcome he expects to occur soon: "I want you to take her to my father. I want the child to grow up in my father's house" (304), thus placing his child in the known environment where he had grown up. Having reached this decision regarding the future, he returns to the lyre lament he had so often played near Patroclus, whose ghost finally appears spectrally before him, as Achilles ends in a tangle of indeterminate, unfinished notes, abruptly aware that: "that's it, that's the end—it's been there all along, only he wasn't ready to see it" (306). Looking at Briseis he states: "That's it.... Finished" (306); "suddenly he knows; nothing, nothing comes next, because that's it, that is the end" (305-6). The end for him is nothing, although he must first complete any unfinished business before death overtakes him.

Humans evade death, the last unknown, in our ignorance of what will happen after we cast off mortality. We need to settle our accounts, whether moral, emotional or practical. And we hold on to the evils of this life rather than risking death for whatever dubious alternative may follow, as Hamlet states:

> To be or not to be—that is the question.
> .... To die—to sleep—
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wished. To die—to sleep—
> To sleep! Perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub;
> For in that sleep of death what dreams may come

> When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
> Must give us pause …
> But that the dread of something after death— (*Hamlet* 3.1.56-78)

What may we awaken to while supposedly resting in peace? Or what may visit us in the strange, unearthly slumber of death? That is surely a matter of concern: Julian Barnes calls it "The Dream".

Contemporary Reflections on Life Beyond Death

To the perennial concerns of Shakespeare and Homer, when lives were hardy and tough, frequently cut off early through war or childbirth, disease and poverty, Barnes in the tenth chapter of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* offers a perspective on life beyond the grave through his protagonist's dream of heaven, concluding his panoramic readings of religious and secular history. His narrator enjoys the perfect breakfast, proceeds to go shopping, plays extraordinary golf and other sports, observing that his "game has improved *no end*" (358), enjoys limitless sex, and meets as many celebrities as he can identify. He does whatever he wishes to do, in the most satisfying way, for hundreds of years, without hitches or glitches, and gradually becomes utterly bored and phased by the entire experience. His experience amounts to what Gregory Rubinson calls the truly "corporeal and sybaritic" heaven (Rubinson 176) of a shallow man; physical satisfaction. As this paradisal state persists in uneventful, satisfying monotony for millennia, the narrator's thorough enjoyment of these activities starts to pall, making him feel no less than damned by such tedious perpetuity. While growing up in a Christian community, I had found the words of prayer: "for ever and ever, amen" utterly terrifying as a child; the everlasting persistence of continuing without interruption or relief, extending and stretching over an abyss of nothingness, without ever coming to an end, actually traumatised me for years. Barnes' protagonist finds the constant gratification of his fleshly pleasures pales through interminable repetition. He comes to appreciate that everything is great, but that he is not; there is no escape from one's own personality: "You can't become someone else without stopping being who you are" (Barnes 372). In the end he decides that endless life after death, however enjoyable it may be to indulge all his desires, in its sameness and repetition, leaves him simply gagging with nausea. Somewhat my response to the academic I encountered in Louisville who complained how there were so many scientists working in America, only a small percentage of whom were working on attaining eternal life, evading the clutches of death; I regarded her desire for endless perpetuity as deluded and crazy.

Barnes' fiction frequently engages with death; *The Sense of an Ending* circles the issue of youthful suicide, as the young in crisis or even in deliberation turn their back on life in despair or disgust. Barnes' personal experience of the death of his wife aged sixty-two has no doubt increased his existent fascination with death. Barnes has declared his belief in the unwavering finality of death; he does not believe he will see his wife again. Instead, he conjures his wife's reaction to things, engaging in an entirely self-generated "ventriloquism"

which he feels to be not without meaning, his wife Pat's voice in his head offering a necessary prop to his own identity. He reports that in those first days and weeks, he found himself "missing what it was in her that made me more myself" (Brockes 1). He finds a friend's letter after his wife's death apposite: "The thing is, nature is so exact, it hurts exactly as much as it is worth, so in a way one relishes the pain. If it didn't matter, it wouldn't matter" (1). This is the exactness that his character in *A History of the World* finally seeks; give me an explanation, an evaluation of what I have done, beyond the tangible satisfactions of the body. Let it make some sort of sense. Instead of which he is told, you're OK, leaving him feeling cheated.

George Saunders' view on life after death, in his Booker prize winning novel of 2017, *Lincoln in the Bardo*, imagines an interim, limbo world, while indicating a karmic accounting beyond death. It focuses on Abraham Lincoln's eleven-year-old son Willie, cut off from life when a cold turned to typhoid fever as he persisted in riding a gifted pony in inclement weather. The deceased boy is brought to a borrowed crypt or bardo inhabited by shades, whose conversations shed a macabre perspective on their fortunes in this world and beyond. 'Bardo' is a Tibetan Buddhist liminal state between death and rebirth, a transitional mode where the dead may experience reality if they are spiritually capable, or may undergo terrifying impulses from their previous, earthly state, karmically created, before they enter a less desirous rebirth. This approximates to the Turkish "araf," where the dead await transition to another world and judgment, which appears to share aspects of the Catholic interim state of undergoing burning in purgatory as experienced by Hamlet's father, preceding his judgment; Odysseus' mother also refers to trial by fire, or burning.

The newly dead Willie awaiting his father Lincoln's promised return to the crypt witnesses the dead's strong compulsion back towards the physical world from which they have been cut off, their unfinished business leaving them attached to life. Roger Bevins' emanation as sensory organs indicates his insatiable longing for life: "so many extra eyes and noses and hands that his body all but vanished   Eyes like grapes on a vine Hands feeling the eyes Noses smelling the hands Slashes on every one of the wrists" (Saunders 27). This last shows how his "perverse predilections" towards young men, especially Gilbert, who rejected him, had made him slash his wrists over a bowl, then immediately feeling regret. The deed is done and he is dead, yet he remains under the misconception that he might return to his former life. Willie also sees "The other man (the one hit by a beam) Quite naked Member swollen to the size of   Could not take my eyes off   It bounced as he Body like a dumpling … Quite naked indeed   Awful dent in the head" (28), emanating as grossly phallic. Hans Vollman appears in a state of truncated passion, having married an eighteen-year-old girl at the age of forty-six and allowing her time to respond to him, until, warming to his generosity, she wishes to consummate their marriage. This is precisely the day when he is hit on the head by a ceiling beam, which tears him from life in a state of dreadful frustration: "the full pleasures of the marriage bed; when behold Anna's naked form; when will she

turn to you in that certain state, mouth hungry, cheeks flushed; when will her hair, loosened in a wanton gesture, fall at last around you" (98), leaving his bodily shell frozen in a state of permanent tumescence.

These two ghosts encourage Willie not to wait for his father, but to move on from this transitional state, which can now only offer him depravity, as they show him young Elise Traynor, sexually abused by the ghouls who use her to relieve their own boredom. Initiated from youthful innocence into depravity, she has come: "to know, in my mind, serten untoward kwarters where such things Dim rum swoggling plases off bakalleys Kome to love them- Crave them places. And feel such anger. I did not get any. Thing. Was gone too soon- To get Only forteen. Yrs of aje" (38-39); they inform Willie that his psyche will undergo a similar degeneration in the bardo. Willie's determination to leave is temporarily shattered by his father's return to the crypt, as Willie runs to and straight through him, like ghostly shades in Hades passing through the physical, as Lincoln sobs over his son's shell, oblivious of Willie's present form. When his father picks up the dead "worm," a frantic, sentient Willie darts back and forth in dreadful frustration, until he manages to insert himself into his own dead form, as illustrated in the Patrick Swayze film *Ghosts* (1990). Clasped in his father's embrace, he listens to his loving words reassuring him of what a joy he had been to him and assuring him that he will return, as the boy glimpses some of his father's experiences, like "How it is to have a beard" (61).

A veritable pilgrimage of ghouls gather around the boy to learn what it had felt like to be embraced, while also remaining trapped in their personal obsessions. Each is attacked on their weakest point, after a softening through visions of "the fruited trees, the sweet breeze, the endless food, the magical streams" (90), before their personal susceptibility sweeps this illusory paradise from them, overwhelming them instead with their private obsessions. Bevins' lover Gilbert comes winsomely to inform his friend that everything is alright, only then to disillusion him that he is "a wave that has crashed upon the shore" (93) and hopelessly dead. Vollman's vision of his young wife speedily transforms into his flimsily dressed grandmother, who asserts: "Never. That's finished now. You delude yourself, Kugel" (98). Such tantalising onslaughts determine many wraiths to depart the bardo, electing transition to their ultimate destination under such frustrations. Intent on saving Willie, Bevin and Vollman catch up with Lincoln lingering in the graveyard, imagining his son to be "in some bright place, free of suffering, resplendent in a new mode of being" (161), which they know is false and deluded. Particularly the young and innocent are doomed to become trapped by carapaces or ghostly branches solidifying around them, imprisoning them away from "light" or positive aspirations, and exposing them to the degradations of a "depraved orgiastic cohort" (185), who attack their victim when pinioned into inaction and hence vulnerable to their insatiable lust. They use their utter boredom as an excuse: "We had sat every branch on every tree. Had read and re-read every stone. Had walked down ... every walk, path, and weedy trail, had waded every brook; [...heard each other's stories] many thousands of times" (124). This compares to Barnes'

account of boredom, even in positive activity, as a discouragement of everlasting tedium after death.

As Bevins and Vollman enter Lincoln's body, they share his mourning over the premature extinction of his son's life spark: "*When he is to be left out here? Is a person to nod, dance, reason, walk, discuss? As before?*" (156), imagining his child "*either in joy or nothingness. (So why grieve? The worst of it, for him, is over.)*" (157), then advising himself to: "*Think of him, when [he does] as being in some bright place, free of suffering, resplendent in a new mode of being*" (158), which is unfortunately false. These ghosts try to share the misery of Elise with him, sensing her suffering when "manifesting as an ancient convent, containing fifteen bitter quarrelling nuns, about to burn to the ground.… Suddenly the place (the girl) is ablaze: screams, shrieks, grunts, vows, renounced if only one might be saved. But none are saved, all are lost" (167). Then they focus on the crypt's lock in Lincoln's hand to encourage him to return to his son there, while other ghosts rush into Lincoln to "*harness* that mass power, to serve our purpose" (252), their brief "serendipitous mass co-habitation" with him offering them a regenerative, shared humanity (256). Gaining a sense of responsibility from him, they urge Willie's tormenters to leave him alone, at which these ghouls retort that their particular predilections were not their own fault; as Omar Khayyam states in the above epigraph: "Thou wilt not …/ Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?" continuing: "Shall He that *made* the Vessel in pure love/And Fancy, in an after Rage destroy!" Will we really be brought to account for what we have done through the qualities that we were born with?

The reverend, who had fearfully fled his own after-life judgment, joins them in determining to release the boy, now almost incapacitated under surrounding carapaces, trapped as ghoulish demons slip multiple hands into his pants-pocket, pumping and gasping over him (186). As "the two were bundled tightly together within a rapidly solidifying new carapace" (274) around him, the reverend pinioned with the boy gains a final vision of the "dreadful diamond palace!" (275) which had "crashed shut" (192) on him, when the Christ-emissary became beast, "bloody-handed and long-fanged" (192), convincing him of the "terrible judgment … with whips of fire" (193) still awaiting him. He nevertheless embraces his quietus and moves on to face an Osiris-like judgment which he had fled from, when his weighed heart emerged as disgusting. He knew this fate would catch up with him, even as he had been sworn to silence, like Hamlet senior, sworn to secrecy while trapped by his sins in purgatory: "forbid/To tell the secrets of my prison-house" (1.5.13-14). Not understanding his faults, the reverend declares he "did not kill, steal, abuse, deceive; was not an adulterer, always tried to be charitable and just; believed in God and endeavoured, at all times, to the best of his ability, to live according to His will. And yet was damned" (Saunders 193), he ponders and wonders. While Barnes' narrator in his insipidly splendid heaven aspires judgment, and feels thwarted by the lack of assessment of his life when told: "you're OK" (354).

Enabled by the reverend's explosive departure, Willie breaks free of the carapaces, as the other two dash off to the church with him, where Lincoln is still meditating. Willie sits on his father's knee, in his father's embrace, as Lincoln ponders his son's situation, alongside his other pressing domestic and national duties. But when he utters the words: "Willie is dead" (294), this instigates a liberating certainty in the boy. He finally realizes that the shell in the box no longer has anything to do with him, shouting: "Dead! The lad shouted, almost joyfully… Father said… I am dead" (296-297), as he understands the irreversible nature of his present condition. This liminal bardo merely postpones an unspecified but final, inevitable state, and his father will not return, or even if he did, he would never be allowed back into the old life, so the boy grasps his authenticity in reposting: "Why stay?… We're done. Don't you see?" (298), disillusioning the others about clinging to false hopes of holding onto this liminal state. Many release themselves from the bardo at this point, submitting to their ultimate destiny. Willie briefly passes through future, never-to-be-lived experiences, rapidly being a young man, father and widower, as he leaves in a "matter-lightblooming phenomenon and its familiar, but always bone-chilling, firesound" (300) which each ghost makes in moving on to their final state, relinquishing their precarious grasp on this charnel ground with its tentative proximity to the old life. Saunders remains silent about any such destination, while hinting at judgment; will they face dissolution, nothingness, or rebirth, in a return or dispersal to the elements of the world?

Willie's departure releases Lincoln to his perpetuating sorrows and duties. Facing the suffering of the American Civil War, he deliberates to "lead the rabble in managing" (308) the necessary liberation of the black race, as some black folk immerse themselves in Lincoln, offering both sides a mutually illuminating bond. Bevins and Vollman also determine to move on, releasing themselves from their bondage trapped within this liminal state. They achieve the positive action of releasing Elise from her depravities through their own exit. "Though the things of this world were strong with [them] still" (334), they determine to relinquish them, instigating their explosion next to her, freeing her to move on also. This shadowy graveyard bardo, like Homer's Hades, leaves the dissatisfied dead longing for what they have left behind in their lives, even as Saunders proffers a last-ditch redemption or chance to create karmic meaning. Vollman and Bevins release Elise, while the reverend frees Willie even in facing his own judgment: "going into that unknown place content that he had, at any rate, while in this place, done all that he could" (276). Life without meaning is intolerable; how satisfying to manage a final post-death agency, leaving the world however slightly better. Saunders implies a Buddhist karma in his macabre wish-fulfilment projection of a grim future world. Better any meaning than to aspire the cliché Christian eternity of praising God in the clouds.

Barnes' postmodern perspective on paradise shows his protagonist in idyllic circumstances, while finally utterly bored by its repetition and lack of challenge. After he has enjoyed doing everything he wishes and more, he starts

to question; he worries about his health, his cash, or who is running this place, and what sort of place it could be, where Hitler visibly goes about his business—after all, what happened to hell and punishment? Hell apparently exists as a spooky theme park, a place where it is others who are punished, not oneself, which scarcely fits any concept of a moral universe. "People prefer to get what they want rather than what they deserve" (365) and everything appears too anodyne. He starts to enquire about God, learning that religious people had desired the God experience, although most of them were dying out. This perfect Heaven offers whatever one wants in a benign, wish-fulfilling continuation of life. And in the end, when that becomes meaningless through its tedium, it turns out that one may choose termination the second time round, because, well, there just doesn't seem much point in continuing with a meaningless existence for ever. His mentor informs him: "People who want an eternity of sex, beer, drugs, fast cars—that sort of thing. They can't believe their good luck at first, and then, a few hundred years later, they can't believe their bad luck [because] that's the sort of people they are, they realize. They're stuck with being themselves. Millennia after millennia of being themselves. They tend to die off the soonest" (369), as their chosen world becomes irritatingly too good to be true (Buxton 81).

The ones who buck this trend are either Old Heaveners, who keep worshipping for aeons, or the scholars. It's reassuring to learn that the intellectuals get a kick out of perpetual life: "They like sitting around reading all the books there are. And then they love arguing about them. Some of those arguments … go on for millennium after millennium. It just seems to keep them young, for some reason, arguing about books" (369). But ultimately even this New Jerusalem is too boringly perfect, a "hellish repetition of increasingly tiring perfection" (Buxton 82); in the end any exit may be preferable to a nightmare from which there appears no escape. At this point Buxton returns to Barnes' half chapter on love, suggesting that this offers something in our present life which is not contained in the heavenly hereafter. Buxton implies that this may be Barnes' closest approximation to solving our problems: "Love won't change the history of the world … but it will do something much more important: teach us to stand up to history, to ignore its chin-out strut. I don't accept your terms, love says; sorry, you don't impress, and by the way what a silly uniform you're wearing" (Barnes 289-290).

Barnes reverts to the existential question of identity and personal integrity in evaluating life: "You can't become someone else without stopping being who you are. Nobody can bear that" (372). If one's own existence becomes tedious and without meaning, eventually death may appear preferable. His character determines that "Heaven's a very good idea, it's a perfect idea you could say, but not for us. Not given the way we are" (372) and "getting what you want all the time is very close to not getting what you want all the time" (373). Identity also implies the concept of reaping the consequences of your life, making us accountable. Both Barnes' and Saunders' novels indicate our need for life ultimately to attain some meaning; Barnes' character wishes for judgment and approval of his life, even as he acts as he pleases. In a post-death bardo,

Saunders vindicates a handful of characters who achieve something moral after death, claiming a last-ditch grasp at meaning for their limited lives, before they relinquish their hold on existence, thus asserting their personality in the shadows. As for Barnes, he declares that his "argument [is] against the existence of a man-created God, an approvable God or a just God … There is either a God and a plan and it's all comprehensible, or it's all hazard and chaos, with occasional small pieces of progress. Which is what I think" (Kate Saunders in Rubinson), as he regards dreams of heaven and justice after this life as "ultimately a kind of self-delusive wishful thinking" (Rubinson 177). Barker shows Achilles closer to such a view, in bravely facing death, resigned to accepting whatever may come, after sorting out his life, while Homer actually shows him in a severely diminished underworld. In *Hamlet*, a dead father's ghost shockingly opens the drama, the role associated with Shakespeare the actor, and ends with many deaths, its various discussions of death remaining the play's major legacy to us. The dialogue of Hamlet and the ghost fades, as Hamlet moves beyond his father's injunctions, sufferings and desire for absolution, prayers and revenge, becoming caught up instead in his own endless reflections on life and death, only eventually to relinquish control of his destiny in his own readiness for death.

These reflections on Thanatos, from classical and Elizabethan, to contemporary writers, I offer in the time of Covid 19. Initially clinging to this world and evading death, we remain fixated on our temporal concerns and fearful of death as our last invincible enemy. We aspire authenticity and we hope for significance and closure to life even in death, hoping to escape pain and punishment. We remain bound up with the recollections of our own dead, mourning them for a season, until they loosen their hold on those of us left behind, as we too will gradually finally release our grasp on this mortal world. In our desire for meaning, we aspire to retain our present sentient state, although that is the least likely probability of all these humanly created possibilities. Wishing for some control over our destiny, death will eventually wrench all from our determined grasp, as life fades away, in the words of James Joyce in "The Dead:" "His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling … the descent of this last end, upon all the living and the dead" (Joyce 220).

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"Make America Great Again": From Neoliberalism to Nihilistic Nostalgia in *Superior Donuts* and *Good People*

"Amerika'yı Tekrar Harika Yap": *Superior Donuts* ve *Good People* Oyunlarındaki Neoliberalizmden Nihilistik Nostaljiye

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Abstract
This article analyzes how affective narration and dramatic construction in Superior Donuts (2008) by Tracy Letts and Good People (2011) by David Lindsay Abaire prevent characters' capabilities from understanding or criticizing neoliberal discourse in general. Neoliberalism's presence is difficult to track in many similar daily-life domains, but drama is more advantageous to explore its subversive effects by unfolding it through power relations and personal clashes among characters. Creating an ontological approach, the affective narration in these plays opens the path for an overall nihilist resolution while propagating a character-based understanding in dramatic structures. As a result of the prevalent affective tone, a nostalgic yearning has emerged as a response to the problems experienced. Aiming to forget problems of the present, these characters idealize a mostly fictionalized and distorted past in order to find temporary solace through this wishful habit. The danger of a nostalgic approach is that it prevents characters as well as audiences from generating a critical method to understand the problems of today and tomorrow. Nostalgic vein in Superior Donuts and Good People is a reflection of social and cultural politics within the USA which believes in the project of "Making America Great Again" without a real scrutiny of neoliberal mistakes and their consequences.
Keywords: Neoliberalism, American Drama, Nostalgia, *Superior Donuts*, *Good People*

Öz
Bu makale Tracy Letts'in *Superior Donuts* (2008) ve David Lindsay Abaire'in *Good People* (2011) adlı oyunlarındaki duygusal anlatım ve dramatik yapıların, karakterlerin genel olarak neoliberal söylemi anlama veya eleştirme becerilerini nasıl engellediğini incelemektedir. Neoliberalizmin gündelik yaşam alanlarındaki etkilerini takip etmek zor iken dram sanatı, neoliberalizmin yıkıcı etkilerini, kişiler arasındaki iktidar hırsları ve kişisel çatışmalar üzerinden tespit etmek açısından daha avantajlı bir pozisyondadır. Ontolojik bir yaklaşımı kendisine rehber edinen duygusal anlatım bu oyunlarda nihilist bir çözümlemenin kapısını aralarken dramatik yapılarda da karakter temelli bir anlayışı ön plana almaktadır. Bu duygusal tonun sonucu olarak da oyunlarda tecrübe edilen sorunlara karşılık olarak da geçmişe nostaljik bir özlem duygusunu çözüm olarak sunulmaktadır. Yaşadıkları zamanın sorunlarını unutmayı veya göz ardı etmeyi hedefleyen karakterler de geçici bir sığınak bulmak için daha çok kurgulanmış veya deforme edilmiş bir geçmişi idealize etmektedirler. Nostaljik bir yaklaşımın zararı ise karakterleri ve seyircileri bugünün ve yarının sorunlarını anlamak için eleştirel bir metot yaratmaktan alıkoymasıdır. *Superior Donuts* ve *Good People* oyunlarındaki nostaljik taraf Amerika'daki neoliberalizmin yanlışların ve

doğurduğu sonuçların anlamlı bir analizi olmadan "Amerika'yı tekrar harika yap" projesine inanan sosyal ve kültürel politikaların bir yansımasıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Neoliberalizm, Amerikan tiyatrosu, Nostalji, *Superior Donuts*, *Good People*

Introduction

Neoliberal policies, particularly since the 1970s, have been grounded in the assumption that governments should be restricted while giving an unrelenting freedom to free markets, and privatization as well as corporatization of small businesses. Although it seems like a well-connected world in terms of economic, political, social and cultural domains, the prevalence of neoliberal discourse in each of these components has been criticized by Cal Jillson, David Harvey, Alfredo Saad-Filo, Noam Chomsky, Jean and John Comaroff and by many others for its ineffectiveness, corruption and repression over relationship within the global network. Neoliberal policies are key factors for reducing the future prospects of characters in *Good People* (2011) by David Lindsay Abaire and *Superior Donuts* (2008) by Tracy Letts and as a result, these policies have generated a nihilism which has deprived most characters of their moral and political values as well as their social needs. The characters have been turned into drifters whose nostalgic feelings have disconnected them from reality without a process of critical reassessment. In other words, personal memory functions as a protective shield against the corrosive political and financial climates, but the past embodies and promises a "cul-de-sac" which prevents the characters from understanding the large abstractions of neoliberal discourse.

Playwrights are usually reluctant to depress their audiences with their characters' financial details with good reason, but when plays that primarily engage with neoliberal market dynamics imply a reliance on sheer luck, it is a gross underestimation or a sign of naivety. Accepting that life and professional career are simply a part of a chain of fortunate events, that they cannot be changed or reversed in favor of other things obviously is a symptom of learned helplessness which epitomizes the subject's acceptance of powerlessness over the order of things. This deterministic appraisal often comes as an indirect consequence of drama's engagement with neoliberalism through an ontological approach rather than a critical one despite the ontological renderings' ability to impose "an intervention in ontology's conditions of possibility, its configuration and arrangement, not in its already existing features and characteristics" (Huehls 19). The problem with ontological investigation in a fictional piece is that it generates an attitude towards fixed essences and boundaries which limit the understanding of social concepts such as sexual identity, power relations, and identity issues. Graham Harman summarizes how ontological approaches damage a text's foundational essence:

> The political problem here is that a consistently relational ontology would only lead to a perpetual ratification of the status quo. For if humans are merely the effect of a ceaseless upheaval of discursive

practices, if they are merely holograms, then it is difficult to see why any situation at all should count as oppression: after all, the current residents of a dictatorial state would only count as holograms produced by intersecting institutions and disciplinary practices. (194)

Representational arts create meaning in a conventional method per se, but this approach as Harman mentions, limits the boundaries and strengthens the *status quo* in a text. Object-oriented affirmative synthesis, as a method of ontoloical approach, renders a text a single unit and meaning. Hence, it creates an ontological evaluation which focuses on the sentiment that it creates rather than discerning its secondary and primary layers such as political outcomes. For example, in *Good People*, years later Margaret (Margie) finds her old fling Mike who has become a wealthy doctor. She is in dire straits and needs a job, but their encounter, unlike her expectations, shows not only the impossibility of any kind of professional interaction between them but brings up many questions about the social, political and cultural status of the society. In the scene where Margie meets Mike for the first time after many years, she points out that luck or coincidental order of things has determined the condition of their lives:

MIKE: You make too much out of everything. It never got close to that.

MARGARET: Yes, it did. You know it did. You could be sitting up in Walpole right now, bunkin' with Marty McDermott.

MIKE: That wouldn't have happened.

MARGARET: If your father wasn't watching from the kitchen window it would've.

MIKE: But he was.

MARGARET: Which is lucky, that's all I'm saying. I never had anyone watching from a window for me. You got lucky. One hiccup, and it could've been you looking for work instead of me. Or you dying up on that sidewalk instead of Cookie. That could just as easily have been you, Mikey.

MIKE: I don't think so. (190-191)

Margie's statement about being lucky and the possibility for Mike to share the same fate with other "unlucky" characters from their teenage years undergirds the coincidental element stressed throughout the play. Although "one hiccup" seems to underestimate the solemnity of situation, it shows how social imbalance and influence have been effective forces within their lives albeit Mike's disregard. According to Margaret, her adverse situation is connected to her bad luck because she cannot explain how her life has reached this unwelcomed point and she has failed to climb the sliding ladders of the economic hierarchy just like Mike did. Her belief of the world being led by a financial system based on personal fortune and good people making it more bearable in such a socio-economic world is prevalent in the play. In other words, the real problem behind Margie's poor conditions is not discussed here and elsewhere in detail in this play's context because such a discussion

requires playwrights to step out of the affective zone and evaluate their characters without focusing on their emotional realms. However, Lindsay-Abaire is not solely responsible for this attitude as certain caveats operate in the whole genre of American playwriting. First of all, it is more practical for the purpose of writing a play and creating characters under the guidance of Stanislavski's teachings which equip many artists with a highly influential system of dramatic training appealing to emotions of not only audiences but also actors. Personal flaws also suit the traditional character-based tradition of American playwriting in order better to address the most basic questions of how humans organize and govern rather than track the decline of the financial system and welfare state. Above all, the ontological approach to producing and criticizing literary pieces is a long convention in America since the invention of New Criticism whose concern has been in the structure and the mode of being in a literary piece.

Mitchum Huehls criticizes many contemporary authors for being "curiously reluctant to critique the injustice and inequality that they clearly recognize as endemic to twenty-first-century life" (X) despite their zealous engagement with political issues from a broad range of topics. Huehls's point covers mainly fiction, but same tendencies are at work in dramatic world as well. Most playwrights are also keenly interested in political topics which they reflect in their plays and speeches, but a reluctance to critique the injustice and inequality by highlighting foundational roots for social injustice can also be felt in their plays. As Huehls points out, this type of literature "refuses ideological critique, prefers ontological rather than representational value production and views everything in the cosmos with a measured and neutral eye" (XIV). Oscillating between subject and object status disables the analytical potential in these plays as they are under the guidance of the affective hypothesis which Rachel Greenwald Smith defines as "the belief that literature is at its most meaningful when it represents and transmits the emotional specificity of personal experience" (1).

An ontological approach's capability without using analytical instruments for the problems stated in a text is questionable. It is clear that a nostalgic refuge has been created in return for the culmination of individual empathy and aversion to social critique in literature. This nostalgic resort prevents writers from scrutinizing the socio-economic roots of the problems and ushers them to seek shelter in the fictional realms of the past because nostalgic synthesis of contemporary problems and a fictional past fails to locate the origin of neoliberal problems which will be used as a key term to address the problems faced by many individuals and societies in the twenty-first century. Is neoliberalism the only culprit? There are, of course, other elements such as pollution, global warming and virtual world but its role in all these parts is usually neglected because it is difficult to detect the neoliberal influence that has permeated all culture since neoliberalism is "not merely an ideology, not merely an economic perspective, not merely a rationality, but it is the concatenation of them" (Ventura 2).

Letts' and Lindsay-Abaire's optimism on the roots of self-creation, success, and achievement may seem incompatible with the politics of the contemporary neoliberal world, but it serves as a platform to disseminate their vision. Despite the promising resolution of *Good People*, Lindsay-Abaire's imagined environment of possibilities is restricted to those who have the means to be a part of this world. In other words, people, no matter how *good* or bad they are, must be members of either high middle-class or above to possess this element of luck. Therefore, *good people* are not always winners and this perspective offers a vision reminiscent of twentieth century American drama. This traditionalist position, despite the implied positive results of hard work and education, asserts the persistence of unfair and unequal construction of the American climate for lower classes. This, in turn, is recognition of the plight defined in Thomas Piketty's book *Capital* (2014), in which he argues that the majority of wealth is inherited all over the world from generation to generation or accumulated by those with access to large sums of capital, which blocks the lower classes' chance to move within the social hierarchy (78-80). The characters' stories in *Good People* and *Superior Donuts* testify to Piketty's thesis which points at neoliberalism as the source of most conflicts in a modern society.

Despite the heavy tone of neoliberalism, Margie's feeling of personal guilt is one of the most vibrant emotions in the play which hints that individuals are responsible for their own choices, so other outside forces cannot be attached to the problems that they experience. That can also be seen as a summary of how the neoliberal system treats consumers. If a person is successful, that success is related to her personal perseverance and determination. As Smith points out, "Neoliberalism's emphasis on the necessity of personal initiative, along with its pathologizing of structures of dependence calls upon subjects to see themselves as entrepreneurial actors in a competitive system" (2). Margie believes that she has lost the competition as an entrepreneur because she was not lucky and determined enough. Neoliberalism sees the individual as an entrepreneur who is uniquely responsible for success or defeat as if she were on a roulette table risking everything. Moreover, affective renderings of these characters' stories "imagine the act of reading [staging in this case] as an opportunity for emotional investment and return" (Smith 2). It is not just the playwright but also the audience who expect to have a wave of emotions so that their personal experience transmits emotional elements. *Good People* in general gives an emotional account of Margie's deprivation, but socio-economical roots of her predicament are never put under spotlight and this affective account shows a strong link between *Good People* and many similar texts that advocate a neoliberal mindset in defense of the system over individuals and feelings over the intellect.

The scenes where Margie and her friends as well as almost everyone in the neighborhood play bingo highlight the significance of luck in this plot. The fact that it takes place in the basement of a church signals that the fortune and other social institutions have been historically linked to each other. Considering the fact that Las Vegas is often thought to be the unofficial capital

of entertainment, the neoliberal America has invested heavily to embed this concept of sudden success/wealth into the psyche of the whole nation. It is relevant in this regard that in Tracy Letts' *Superior Donuts* Franco's gambling history has caused problems with a betting gang. The possibility of having enormous success in the form of a jackpot seems to be the only hope most characters have of ever becoming rich, which is not very intriguing for the financial and social conditions that neoliberalism has created.

Superior Donuts depicts the unlikely friendship between an elderly Polish immigrant Arthur Przybyszewski and a young African-American teenager Franco. Arthur has a coffee shop which is about to close because of management problems and Arthur's new employee Franco initiates a positive perspective on several topics. Their encounter, just like Margie and Mike, unfolds different issues around which the American society revolves particularly in the twenty-first century. Arthur has lost his self-confidence and he, in a way, represents the generation of the Americans coming from an age of relative wealth and prosperity. However, his hippy personality prevents him from fitting into the neoliberal system of entrepreneurship and market. As a "child of the 1960s," (37) Arthur has a conception of business fraught with disillusionment and disappointment. Arthur's learned helplessness does not derive from his perception of luck in life like Margie's, but rather his lack of confidence and self-esteem. His conflicts with his father, his reluctance to serve in the army, his subsequent escape to Canada to avoid conscription, his hippy and, to a certain extent, anarchist life-style are all reasons that anticipate his apparent refusal of commercial prerequisites to further his business.

Arthur does not establish his understanding of failures on a narrative of luck, but he romanticizes his relationship with the past. For him, his past failures with his family members become an obstacle for his personal and financial development. Given the strict emotional background portrayed in the play, it comes as no surprise that Arthur's problems function as a focal point for his personal conduct. Affirmative narration over his poor conditions emerges as a pillar of conformity that focuses on his personal inadequacies rather than social dynamics. It eventually renders readers incapable of critical analysis required to decode the intricate network between the financial web and social life. Franco's inclusion into Arthur's life stirs his understanding and summons him back to real life from his stagnation.

Playing with the Feelings

The notion that socio-economic details are inherently inimical to dramatic literature is one of the beliefs of American playwriting which involves a rejection of the realistic conceptualization of social dynamics. This perception, in general, undermines the authority of playwrights to create a realistic reflection of the dialectic network in daily life. Thus, the play as a medium becomes a selective field to express certain emotional oscillations. This affective approach requires a strong impact that a dramatic piece aims to accomplish in such a narrow time limit, but reflections of authentic human experience has limited access to the components of social interaction.

However, the point that humanity has reached now is totally different than what it used to be in the past. The gap between generations has never been so rapid in progression and it necessitates all of us to transform our mindset in order to grasp the delicacy of the new system surrounding us. As Jason Read points out, neoliberalism is not just "a transformation of the mode of production," but "a new organization of the production and distribution of wealth, but by the mode of subjection, a new production of subjectivity" (29). The attempts to understand this new, but completely different, form of capitalist system, thus, requires fresh approaches to the contradictions between social institutions and the individual. Although both Lindsay-Abaire and Letts also relate their protagonists' problems to the escalation of corporate world as the subversive presence of corporations is conspicuously manifest in *Good People*, and *Superior Donuts*, their notability in the background is still far from being scrutinized. For example, in *Superior Donuts*, the lack of control over corporations is an integral frustration emphasized by Max, in his offer to buy Arthur's store, "I give you the same price I offer before Wall Street douchebags fuck everyone in the ass" (38). Through his broken English and politically incorrect Russian spirit for communication, Max, a fiery émigré, contemplates the American identity entirely through business, and presents a character, born outside the US, but still well aware of social dynamics. His frustration with the Wall Street crisis, however, does not harm his enthusiasm for business. An American resilience added to his Russian dynamism becomes the highlight of the scene rather than an investigation of "Wall Street douchebags".

Max and his crew have a minor role in *Superior Donuts*, but at the end, Max becomes the owner of three adjacent stores, so he potentially embodies the future. However, the opening of a Best-Buy store in the neighborhood is very likely to end Max's business dreams, just as Starbucks is about to bring down Arthur's donut store. In general, compared to Arthur's bohemian and disheartened character, Max's entrepreneurial spirit combined with his pragmatist methods seems triumphant. Nevertheless, it is clear that his victory is only acceptable until another corporate store opens somewhere nearby and takes over his business. Max, as a character, however, demonstrates that the contemporary American identity is closely related to business success. His presence and success as an immigrant highlight the multicultural and pluralist fabric of the global business world as well as Tracy Letts' authorial tendency to employ varied characters from different backgrounds.

David Lindsay-Abaire refrains from integrating such details in his characters' background, and does not highlight the dominance of corporations, but Margie's absolute submission to her manager to keep her position hints at her impoverishment and the total subjugation of her psyche to the Dollar Store where she works. She tries to convince her manager to withdraw all the raises and promotions she has received when she says, "I never asked for those raises. I only got them because you were required by law to give them to me. It wasn't much, god knows—a nickel here, fifteen cents one time—but I knew when I went over nine dollars, you were gonna start looking for an excuse to

get rid of me" (15). Margie's lack of appreciation and respect for her own labor stems from her internal psychological issues and pressure to keep her position. In other words, she feels estranged and does not value her contribution to the business. According to her character-based and socially decontextualized perception of her position in this big chain of stores, she feels that she is the main culprit in her situation, and she cannot have those raises.

Despite the historical contribution that corporations have made to the growth of the US, each time a corporation is mentioned in these plays, there is a complaint or cynicism about the way it conducts its business. Whether it is Starbucks in *Superior Donuts* or Dollar Store in *Good People*, characters are negatively affected by these companies' labor practices although the plays do not directly criticize or hold them responsible for the tragic events. On the contrary, they are often mentioned as an inevitable corollary of the melting of the future and a direct accusation, which would be uniquely un-American, is often avoided.

Despite the veiled criticism of corporate culture, realistic drama in its American form does not purport to explore social dynamics like its European counterparts, but rather focuses on personal conflicts through affective rendering. This perception might be one of the major differences with British theatre, whose plays are imported whenever Broadway needs a strong statement about a social conflict.[1] The intention of this article is not to criticize playwrights for their artistic choices, as no writer has any kind of obligation to include any kind of social criticism. What it is difficult to grasp is the lack of a broader social analysis while showing these characters in dire conditions. Although some scholars believe that the age of American exceptionalism is long gone, fascination with the American system can be observed in this situation. David Harvey links this situation to a conceptual apparatus which has become so embedded in common sense as to be taken and not open to be questioned (5). Can it be that overconfidence in the American way of life that establishes an invisible wall for the playwrights to shy away from national politics or is it so embedded within the American psyche that nobody tries to act against it?

Neoliberalism in Drama: Now and Then

Because neoliberalism is not a mode of production, its influence on society can be observed better in literary texts. Thus, dramatic texts play an important role to show how the American neoliberal rationality ramifies from the economic realm to the cultural realm. After all, politicians since the 1980s have not succeeded in restoring confidence and opportunity broadly throughout the society and economy. The emergence of the Bretton Woods Institutions which would later turn into the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO, the melting of Keynesian principles which suggested that the state should get involved in regulating markets and capitalism, the stagflation caused by the high cost of

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[1] It would be clarifying to see that how important problems of the American society have been reflected through the European playwrights. *Enron* (2009) by Lucy Prebble, *Stuff Happens* (2004) and *The Power of Yes* (2009) by David Hare are some major examples of the British plays that have brought direct criticism to American politics and life-style.

the Vietnam War and oil crisis, and the elimination of taxes on the wealthy are considered to be some of the major reasons for the neoliberalism to get more aggressive. (Hickel) This aggravated situation on average citizen constitutes the extra burden on the protagonists in contemporary plays. On the other hand, the loss of promise in the present has compelled the characters to take refuge in the past. This nostalgic desire for a fictional past has resulted in a nihilistic attitude, which in turn has disabled the characters to make decisions for their lives or to take action.

Superior and *Good People* mainly differ from the perception of hope in modern drama and cause characters to seek refuge in their memories. Protagonists in *Superior* and *Good People* are outcomes of several failures, whereas modern drama often portrays characters on their way to destruction and its subsequent results. The criticism of the transition from being a "salesman" in twentieth century plays to a corporate employee working for minimum wage in contemporary drama embodies the very spirit of neoliberal policies. One of the common points of Margie, Franco, and Arthur is that they either work for minimum wage or their income is not sufficient to maintain a decent life. Furthermore, different from twentieth century business plays, the emphasis is on psychological damages rather than the implications of a consumerist culture criticism. Most protagonists in business-related plays, for example, Willy Loman in *Death of A Salesman* and Shelly Levine in *Glengarry Glen Ross,* are victims of their greed and ideals whereas Margie in *Good People* and Arthur and Franco in *Superior* are hard workers who can't make ends meet despite their efforts. What they need to accomplish their goals does not solely depend on their personal merits but involves other elements such as establishing a bond with people, understanding the dynamics of financial and cultural environment or finding ways to cope with alienation. Loman and Levine are honorable characters who don't accept defeat or seek a way out of their miseries without admitting their failure. They are losers because their dreams have perished. Loman's rejection of his brother Charley's job offer or Levine's effort to get good cards for faster sales show these characters' sense of dignity and self-confidence to preserve their dreams. Where both plays show the path to failure, *Good People* and *Superior Donuts* analyze post-failure. Both Levine and Loman are out of their context, and a surreal psychology leads them to their destruction. On the other hand, Margie and Arthur have fallen into reality's trap and do not have the power to get out. However, while accepting the presence of an experienced catastrophe of a financial meltdown, these plays seek for some moments of relief. These contemporary mainstream plays—successful in terms of box-office and being restaged—tend to restore or repair the plight of those characters by offering bits of optimism. For example, at the end of *Good People*, the protagonist, Margie, receives some money from a benefactor to be able to pay her next rent so that she will not be left in the street with her disabled daughter. In *Superior Donuts*, the belief for a better future is revived through the novel draft, *America will be*, that Arthur has sent to an editor to be reviewed and published for his African-American employee, Franco. This situation is reminiscent of Allan Bloom's words on the American

way of transferring European forms: "We have here the peculiarly American way of digesting Continental despair. It is nihilism with a happy ending" (147).

The belief in American way of living has significantly eroded, and compared to contemporary pieces, modern versions contain more promise and integration for protagonists or people around them. It does not mean that contemporary plays do not offer hopeful resolutions at the end, but they rather highlight the pessimistic surroundings in which they take place. Loss of belief and awareness of the plight, which have equipped these plays with a nihilistic message, have caused characters to fail at turning critical light back upon themselves. The main settings described by the playwrights also echo this loss of faith. For example, *Good People* starts behind a Dollar Store, which is known for selling second-rate products for cheap prices, and the presence of a big trash container in the first scene is not coincidental. The stunning house in the second act does not convey a promise, but conversely increases the conflict between these two settings. The last scene, where characters play bingo at a church's basement, does not offer a consolation at all. The symbolic erosion of the American setting is also visible in *Superior Donuts,* which takes place in a vandalized old-fashioned donut shop.

As a comparison point between the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, the shifting optimism in plays should be noted. *Salesman* and *Glengarry* are intrinsically about their protagonists' delusions, and they portray the moment of truth in which the protagonists recognize *hamartia*—their own flaws after a long struggle of survival. They initiate a reaction which shortens the path to their ends. On the other hand, *Good People* and *Superior Donuts* highlight the aftermath of struggle as playwrights show a strong awareness of the deteriorating conditions of lower middle classes. Both plays depict characters that have already lost their dreams while trying to survive. In other words, they have reached the end of their deadlock and have nothing left to find a way out.

Another key aspect of these protagonists linking them with twentieth-century drama is the prevailing concept of illusion. Although characters in *Glengary* and *Salesman* have a self-deception which merges economic success with social and emotional validation, contemporary writers are more cognizant of their characters' plight. Arthur sells his donut store and gets some money, but Letts does not endorse this as a final relief from his problems. For Margie, the future is unpredictable, as the play has an open ending without a final promise. Miller and Mamet point at twilight and a threshold, but Letts and Abaire highlight the wounded state of their characters. The change is designed to reflect the illusory situation as well as the real problems of neoliberalism's impact. Hope constitutes a filter for these protagonists' self-discovery and dignity, which alerts the audience to how these plays situate themselves around the absence of hope.

Are Winners Really Winners?

The key for success is a frequently scrutinized topic in American society. In his best seller books, *Outliers: The Story of Success* and *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell analyzes several success stories from computer programmers to famous hockey players and succinctly concludes that there are several factors governing personal achievement: date of birth, familial support, demands of the market, and timeliness. Playwrights also seek answers from a fictional point of view to the question of what makes a person successful. The concept of financial success in its American context is embodied by way of characters presented as acceptable and admirable in opposition to others presented as unacceptable.[2] Bequeathed by twentieth century dramatists to their contemporary successors, this contrast between winners and losers shifts the focus from social forces to personal attainments and competitive skills. *Good People* and *Superior Donuts* form a trajectory between successful and unsuccessful characters because philosophical contrasts between them highlight the uncompromising dialectic of capital and labor. As a result, financial hardship and other difficulties are often considered as a proof for careless abdication of responsibility for the characters. The emphasis on the survival of the individual creates a strong parallel between the logic of neoliberalism and drama. As Smith warns, "In other words, neoliberalism, with its expansion of market rationality to nonmarket activities, leads to a situation where individuals are encouraged to see themselves as the outcome of a range of investments and returns" (37). Those whose investments are not well-placed are inevitably destined to fail.

Good People and *Superior Donuts* contain winners and losers: losers who are at the bottom of their lives and fully aware of the fact. Their efforts to get out of this vicious cycle seem, if not impossible, mostly futile. The vitriolic tone describing the difficulty of upward mobility in social and financial levels in American drama suggests a cynical and contentious approach to winners and wealth. It would not be correct to think, however, that American drama has a consistent anti-business stance, despite the reformist impulse. If we look back at *Death of a Salesman*, winners, in contrast to Loman, are happy and seem to have a better life. The managers in *Glengarry Glen Ross* are die-hard capitalists, but no critique other than calling them "stupid" is directed toward these characters. At least they are the ones who give orders and have the privilege of looking down on everyone else. On the other hand, there is a clear decrease in the life quality of winners in *Good People* and *Superior Donuts*. Mike in *Good People* and Max in *Superior* are not pleased with what they have. As Wendy Brown points out, "Neoliberalism normatively constructs and interpellates individuals as entrepreneurial actors in every sphere of life. It figures individuals as rational, calculating creatures whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for 'self-care' –the ability to provide for their own

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[2] For example, in *Death of a Salesman* Willy Loman's older and wealthy brother, Ben, is a successful businessman, and in *Glengarry Glen Ross* everybody envies Tony Roma, who has better sales records than everyone else in the office.

needs and service their own ambition" (43). According to this formula, these characters have accomplished their mission in a rational method, but because their financial success is equaled to their capacity and ambition for self-care, there are problems arising. These characters who are successful in their careers have failed to maintain a good relationship with their relatives. There is no family stability, as their lives are prone to frequent crises. Mike in *Good People*, as the wealthiest among these "winners," has family problems; he cheated on his wife, and there have been trust issues within the family as his marriage is also questionable because Mike's father-in-law, who is at the same time his former boss and academic adviser, has facilitated his son-in-law's career goals. Another winner character, Max, owns three stores at the end of *Good People,* but he is not appreciated by the community because of his aggressive character. In addition to local aversion, Max, as a Russian immigrant, is clearly homesick, lonely, and estranged from American daily norms and society despite his success in business life.

The insignificance of these characters' lives suggests that success in the business world neither depends upon personal merits nor guarantees happiness. Playwrights question and, to a certain extent, ridicule wealth as none of these "successful" characters is portrayed as free of major problems. Success in business life might be an important tool for social acceptance and upward mobility, but the way it has been crowned by neoliberalism is clearly undermined on stage. It would, however, be misleading to think that these characters are depicted as malicious or patronizing, but the playwrights' treatment of them is an outgrowth of the view I ascribe to illusion. These characters, maybe more than the protagonists, have reasons to believe that they are the winners of this society albeit the lack of connection with others. Mike's disillusion with his past and Max's disconnection from people around him and probably his motherland point at the conflict caused by the perception of wealth as a sign of better living conditions. This might be a dual characteristic of mainstream American drama, which on one side undermines the aspect of affluence, but on the other sells an average ticket for one hundred dollars.

The life conditions of characters whose financial and social accomplishments are less satisfactory compared to others are justified without an objective reasoning. These characters consider themselves as a detached unit within the society. This should be a significant result of a neoliberal mindset that glorifies individual effort and lack of a social mechanism. This partially functional social mechanism has undermined the protagonists' ability to identify their positions within a historical context. Patricia Ventura points out that the reason for holding individuals accountable for their own actions, but not seeing the responsibility that network of system and structures have is a result of neoliberal rhetoric and policy (4). The vulnerability that Margie, Franco, and, to a certain extent, Arthur experience comes from the neoliberal assumption which regards the poor as lazy, given to criminality, and generally without morals. In a way, "they deserve their misery even though the system is at least partly responsible for creating it" (Ventura 4).

The inability of suggesting an attainable solution to the protagonists' failures has nourished a nihilistic philosophy which has undermined the ability of characters to confront their challenges or question the foundation of unfair treatments. As the prospect of a better life fades, the diminution of these protagonists' personal traits dominates contemporary plays. Allan Bloom relates this situation to nihilism:

> Nihilism as a state of soul is revealed not so much in the lack of firm beliefs but in a chaos of the instincts or passions. People no longer believe in a natural hierarchy of the soul's varied and conflicting inclinations, and the traditions that provided a substitute for nature have crumbled. The soul becomes a stage for a repertory company that changes plays regularly—sometimes a tragedy, sometimes a comedy; one day love, another day politics, and finally religion; now cosmopolitanism, and again rooted loyalty; the city or the country; individualism or community; sentimentality or brutality. And there is neither principle nor will to impose a rank order on all of these. All ages and places, all races and all cultures can play on this stage. (155-156)

Lack of confidence, quiet nature, and passive lifestyles are dominant traits for Margie and Arthur. For example, Arthur is questioned by Franco about his nihilistic character when Arthur advises him not to dream because dreaming is "dangerous," and he is "going to get crushed" (68). Franco opposes Arthur's inactive demeanor: "You don't talk, you don't vote, you don't listen to music. Why do you bother to get outta bed in the morning?" (68). Arthur, the most progressive protagonist, later breaks this cycle by fighting Luther, who cuts Franco's fingers for his unpaid debt. Although Arthur pays Franco's debt later with the money he gets from selling his store, saving Franco's life, the finale does not provide a vision of the future. Despite Arthur's individual advance, the fact is his future, at least the financial one, is as unpredictable as Margie's. Indicative of his determination to change his life, Arthur's transformation is a momentary triumph, but also reflects his impulsive character and chaotic state on stage.

A transformational turn like Arthur's cannot be observed in Margie because she does not have such a climactic reversal in her story. She suffers within a social system, which refuses to help her to take better care of her disabled daughter or give her a chance for an improved life. Even a simple mention of such solutions might increase the utopian character of American drama and enrich the philosophical soil for playwrights. However, it seems that the only remaining option for her survival is working for corporations like Dollar Store or Gillette, which pay minimum wage and provide little or no benefits. Although the act of discharging her from her position is justified because she has been late several times, had she been a member of a union, she could probably receive more assistance to keep her position. Her manager, Stevie, is concerned as his superior pressures him about Margie's tardiness. He seems to be considerate of Margie's situation as he is one of the "good people" who helps

her at the end of the play, but corporate policies require him to fire her due to her inefficiency.

Unlike the situation where Arthur sells his own store to help Franco, along with other reasons, corporations have eliminated personal connection between employees because ultimately corporate profit maximization is more important than anything else. Despite the dominant role of corporations on plot, there are no figures of authority in terms of representation. No characters take the role of bosses or employers. The ultimate decline of such superiors in a workplace is a sign for the meltdown of business under neoliberal policies. Although management is an essential feature of a legally authorized entity owned by shareholders, the lack of a corporate authority on stage has caused an underestimation of their impact. The scene that David Mamet added for the movie version of *Glengarry Glenn Ross* exhibits a ruthless Alec Baldwin whose infamous "Coffee is for closers" statement has had echoed through the business world. However, there is no more die-hard-Rolex-wearing capitalists whom we can detest. Those who represent the corporations are again one of those people. The physical disappearance of corporations on stage, at least at the level of top managers, tones down the criticism of consumerist culture, as there is no actual person or place to be critiqued. Although this seems to be a subtopic of both plays, the demanding nature of corporations has influenced all their characters adversely. They have lost connection with each other and in response, they have created psychological shields to maintain their dignity. There is no evil or malicious face of uncontrolled capitalism as it is represented through every one which makes the situation more tolerable. This is also a consequence of a prevalent affective narration which interferes with dramatic construction with the intent of forging an emotional consciousness. Another reason these playwrights are criticized lies in their failure to comment on the lack of political and social programs despite the presence of an ideally suited situation for constructive criticism. For example, Margie's hard times with her daughter's disability might not be a problem in England and Franco's problem with his college tuition would not be as challenging in Scandinavian countries or in another Western country. The lack of a comparative analysis or a hint of a socially motivated resolution weakens the utopian character of these plays. Patricia Ventura links the denial of a social inquiry into the characters' problems to neoliberal culture:

> That denial enables neoliberal subjects to avoid operating in an antagonistic relation to any other ideologies or to formal structures of power, and allows those individuals and groups who have assumed a friendly relationship with the powers-that-be to blame victims of social, economic, and political ills for their own problems—as when the supposed laziness of the poor is said to be the cause of poverty. As a result, everyday life is depoliticized. (12)

Far from providing a futuristic vision for the problems discussed in the plays, the depoliticized atmosphere playwrights create does not direct audiences' attention into these problems. For example, in *Good People* when Margie visits

Mike's house, she is told that their vase is really expensive and insured. This instance is used to enhance the comic side of the play. The absence of artistic intervention to highlight these moments of inequality and social injustice lessens the impact of theatre on society because it does not challenge idealistic notions of neoliberal culture as the base of many problems.

The forces and relations of production have shaped a competitive and individualistic culture which has nourished a nihilistic attitude that does not strive for a broader understanding of individual problems. It would be illuminating here to mention a minor character in *Superior Donuts* to illustrate the issue of social injustice. Arthur allows a homeless woman, Lady (Boyle), to come inside and have a free donut with coffee any time. A recovering alcoholic, Lady summarizes what it looks like to be unfortunate and how addictions can take a person to the bottom of the social order: "You never see the bad stuff coming. Just always comes up behind you and pow! Socks you behind the ear with a glove fulla marbles. Sets you back a few steps" (85). She takes refuge in several places on a regular day, but her statement at the end summarizes her problem: "I guess I gotta find someplace else to go" (87). This is not her place and she is not wanted anymore. Her situation is unknown as the play ends and nobody questions where she might go instead of Arthur's store. The misery of losers is an accepted concept in neoliberal societies although the need to further investigate it is often ignored. Lady becomes a part of the affective narration which aims to enrich the emotional content of the play.

Here is Your Prescription: Yearn for the Past

Before the term was even coined to describe the situation of Swiss soldiers living abroad in the seventeenth century, nostalgia has always been a central feature since the times of Homer. Often dismissed as a sentimental reaction to modernity, nostalgia refers to a growing fondness for the past, which is becoming a strong trend in America. Some miss the days of FDR, some Reagan, some the days of Woodstock, and some lament incapable politicians for not being able to bring the prosperity of those good old days, which might help explain Donald Trump's presidential campaign slogan "Make America Great Again". Clearly, many people believe that America was a great country in the past and they want it back.

There have been several incidents in the twenty-first century that might have triggered such nostalgias; 9/11, Afghanistan and Iraq wars, Hurricane Katrina, and the financial crisis were some of the most significant. Although these events initiated a difficult term for many people, the strong sense of nostalgia in contemporary American drama has been independent of these crises. The longing for a fictional past has long been a common theme in literature. This tendency can also be read as a trait of postmodern phenomena, which Frederick Jameson defines as picking certain images to create a certain memory instead of reminding of the historical realities of the desired era (*Postmodernism* 281). For example, South Boston (Southie) embodies this kind of a nostalgic appeal for Margie in *Good People*. She recalls Southie as a much better community, where people used to support each other, although her

stories clearly contradict other people's perception. For example, the story Margie tells to prevent her manager, Steve, from firing her illustrates the inaccuracy of her assessment:

> MARGARET: We grew up together, me and your mother. If she knew what you were doing right now …
>
> STEVIE: You know what, Margaret? I *do* actually remember that story about her stealing the turkey. But you know what you forgot? The part where you called the cops. You forgot that she spent Christmas Day down at Station Six. That was always how *I* heard it. You should ask my sisters how funny that story was. (17)

Margie's feeling of guilt and embarrassment filters her memories to suit her illusion which can summarize her and Arthur's condition. The shift from realities of her youth to imagined or inaccurate portrayals of the past is part of the overarching grand illusion of the play. The lost society or the past for which she nostalgically longs, is deeply flawed in ways she omits or never even existed. The loss/absence of a dream(s) in this text is a main reason for an illusion, but the difficulty of accepting current situation, which would make it necessary for Margie to surrender the dream, exacerbates her condition. Although it is misleading, this habit of manipulating personal history helps Margie survive. The problem and danger of nostalgic narratives, as John Su points out, are "that they offer readers the illusion of utopian idealism without providing knowledge of legitimate alternatives to present circumstances" (8).

Margie has distorted her past and started to believe the illusion with which she has replaced her bitter memories. Moreover, this illusory and nihilistic attitude in response to real problems is heavily associated with neoliberalism. Arthur's situation in *Superior Donuts* is more complex than Margie's, as his memories embody a different tone of bitterness, stemming from the Vietnam War draft and his relationship with his father. However, his retrospection clearly portrays a better country:

> The city was true working class, and the bars were clean and well lit, and immigrant factory workers would sit and have a beer after a day's work. And sleeping outside with my family, with all the families, on the lawn at Jefferson Park on sticky summer nights. Every Sunday hanging out in someone else's basement, food all day. Or a trip to a forest preserve, all free back then. Polish the only language I'd hear, twenty pigs spinning in fire, and every friend I made became my parents' friend, just because they were my friend. Coming back from a family trip, driving along the Eisenhower, I'd see the giant neon lips of Magikist and I knew I was home. (28)

This romantic portrayal of old Chicago from his childhood days clearly contrasts with what Arthur experiences at the moment. However, rather than a comprehensive analysis and smooth transition, he prefers to yearn for the things he had lost. Arthur's escape to Canada destroys his relationship with his

father who takes a central role in his monologues. Compared to his father, Arthur, a failure at business and family affairs, has been overwhelmed with the burden of business and family. This pervasive sense of defeatism, which explains the protagonists' insignificance in their work places, has undermined confidence and resilience while establishing a fragmented identity, centered in nostalgic illusions.

Indicating mostly homesickness and pain, Arthur's monologues, in which he recalls his earlier years with his family, construct a nostalgic narrative between now and then. However, his engagement with the past, unlike Margie's, leads to a personal transformation toward self-respect, action, and an approach to overcoming his difficulties. Although his nostalgia has a somewhat transformative impact on his character, Arthur's monologues can easily be considered as instances of his illusory tendencies and his drug addiction. Arthur is unquestionably delusional. His business is about to go bankrupt, his wife and daughter have abandoned him, and he ignores everyone else around him, including the female police officer who has been courting him for months. His newly hired employee, Franco, becomes a catalyst for Arthur to see the outer world again, and help others while restoring himself. Arthur's selling his store and getting out of business is the emancipating solution in the play, though it is also a capitulation to the corporations and neoliberal policies. Encouraged by the emotional tone in the play, nostalgic transitions from the present to the past shape the characters in a particularly incompetent manner.

Margie's affective approach to incidents impairs her abilities to understand how her life has failed and she wants to believe that it still can be saved by taking refuge at her disillusions about people. It is clear that Margie and Arthur made significant mistakes in familial and financial choices, but none of them questions primary sources of their problems. This lack of investigation recurs as a *leitmotiv* in each of these plays. Thus, their misery seems fortuitous as the playwrights omit a general contemplation in favor of personal flaws which weakens the realistic vein in these plays. Cultural critic bell hooks insists on a significant distinction between memory and nostalgia for a "politicization of memory that distinguishes nostalgia, that longing for something to be as it once was, a kind of useless act, from that remembering that serves to illuminate and transform the present" (147). A purely nostalgic dissatisfaction with the present cannot help envision genuine solutions to crises because it assumes solutions are found in past societies. John J. Su states that nostalgia linked with "the economic, social and political forces associated with late modernity" (3) signifies "inauthentic or commodified experiences inculcated by capitalist or nationalist interests" (2). The longing to restore an imagined past inhibits protagonists from gaining greater knowledge and engaging in activist practices about their situations, questioning institutions of authority or status quo, and maintaining a progressive dialogue with the audience.

Svetlana Boym, in her ground-breaking study, *Future of Nostalgia* (2001), defines nostalgia as the "ache of temporal distance and displacement" and divides it into two zones as restorative and reflective (39). While restorative

nostalgia embodies the memory of home, *nostos*, reflective nostalgia aims to embody the processes of longing, *algos*, rather than the memory of home. Thus, evoking "national past and future" becomes a mission of restorative nostalgia whereas "individual and cultural memory" is about reflective nostalgia (49). The problem of nostalgia comes from its reflective nature, which avoids the restorative, nurturing potential of memory for the individual who feels threatened with the hardship of present. It impedes an inclusive perception of social matters rather than provide a fuller understanding on the negotiation between the present and the past and how it has shaped the self and the society. Milan Kundera defines nostalgia as "the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return," (5) but if it is a non-existent paradise only good for remembering, what is the point of returning there?

Conclusion

Despite their reluctance to highlight neoliberalism as the main culprit of the protagonists, contemporary playwrights should be acknowledged for dramatizing current conditions as they are. Documenting the hardship of these characters' experience can be helpful in identifying the problems first and seeking for causes and solutions later. Boym attributes a utopian quality to the nostalgic desire that has been on the rise since the 1960s. "The twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia," she states and adds that "Nostalgia itself has a futuristic utopian dimension, only it is no longer directed toward the future" (74). Susan Stewart, who defines nostalgia as a "social disease," joins Boym to associate nostalgia with an idealized world. Stewart argues that "Nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns toward a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality" (122). Therefore, despite nostalgia's subversive impact on their characters, playwrights express their characters' individual disappointments which, in turn, could initiate a search for articulating an alternative narrative that calls others and audience members to question what they witness. As Su points out, "The alternatives provided by nostalgic narratives are valuable less for their potential to provide a blueprint for a better or more utopian world than for their potential to offer hope that alternatives continue to exist" (176). It is nostalgic longing that enables the characters at least to articulate the frustration that haunts them all the time.

Margie and Arthur have high esteem for their nostalgic stories which they have turned into personal mythologies. The stories they tell on stage sound far from the truth, but they are stuck at the time and the place those stories took place. Margie's recalling of the past in Southie is not accurate. What she believes is a distorted version. Arthur's Chicago does not exist anymore and the place he describes has caused him to run away. These narratives are all products of these characters' ways of coping with the difficulties they have endured. The commitment to these personal stories keeps the characters sane and focused on their missions, just like the American Dream is another socially-constructed narrative that keeps the society on a specific path. While one serves a whole

nation, personal mythologies, as an extension of the concept of the American Dream nourished by nostalgia, engage individuals.

The problem with a nostalgic and illusory aspect of the past is that it makes all these protagonists yearn to relive it through a romantic vision. Nostalgia has turned into an illusory force that playwrights use as a fuel for their protagonists. The affirmative tone in the plays lead the plot into a tearful twist where the audience do not have much other than feeling pity for the characters. This emotional burden on characters lessen the details and significance of an invisible social network that imposes its regulations on everyone. The poverty of the present is so overpowering that their dream is more comforting than anything else. However, the transformation of characters under the influence of their illusion does not promise any hope or conceptual relief for them. Still, none of these protagonists should be understood as suffering from a psychotic disorder. Their stories are not about rags-to-riches, or winner-takes-all-stakes. Their stories are about survival. Illusion is what dragged O'Neill, Miller, Williams' and Mamet's most characters to their end, but in *Good People* and *Superior Donuts* it is the fuel for characters. *They dream, therefore they are.* In a world where they are not financially, psychologically, and socially capable of producing change, they prefer to live in their dreams, which keep them alive but at the same time bring on a slow destruction. The illusions that they have bred to flex their psyches will eventually become their masters. After all, illusions are a combination of consumerist culture, unemployment, lack of social services, and all the other difficulties a neoliberal age has left on our threshold.

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The Perpetual Quest for Author(ity) and Authenticity in *Flaubert's Parrot*

Flaubert'in Papağanı Romanında Yazar, Otorite ve Özgünlük Arayışı

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Abstract

Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) is significant in its employment of metafiction, which is one of the key characteristics of the postmodern novel. *Flaubert's Parrot* can be defined as a self-reflexive text, which is utterly aware that it is fiction. Moreover, it presents an intertextual network, which connects Gustave Flaubert's *Un coeur simple* and *Madame Bovary* with the fictional amateur biographer Geoffrey Braithwaite's narrative. The narrator/protagonist Braithwaite's quest for truth and certainty, ironically, creates a multi-layered narrative involving multiple points of view. The novel's portrayal of (the lack of) truth, knowledge, and certainty becomes more conspicuous with the twenty-first century's emphasis on post-truth. The novel questions the relationship between real life and fiction, and the parrot becomes the embodiment of this mutual relationship. Furthermore, it can be argued that the imitative nature of the parrot emphasizes the relationship between life and art as well. With this semi-biographical novel Barnes not only fictionalizes Flaubert but also poses existential questions to critics and scholars. The speculations concerning an author's life and the creativity of the biographer accentuate the (lack of) boundaries between fact and fiction, life and art, author and critic. That is the reason why the primary aim of this paper is to display this novel's relation to postmodernism as well as the nature of the collaboration and/or the battle between the author and the biographer/critic/academic.

Keywords: Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot*, postmodern novel, metafiction, authenticity

Öz

Julian Barnes'ın *Flaubert'in Papağanı* (1984) romanı postmodern roman türünün temel özelliklerinden biri olan üst kurmacadan yararlanması açısından önemlidir. Bu romanı, kurmaca yapısının bilincinde olan öz-düşünümsel bir metin olarak tanımlamak mümkündür. Ayrıca, Gustave Flaubert'in *Saf Bir Yürek* öyküsü ve *Madam Bovary* romanları ile amatör biyografi yazarı olan Geoffrey Braithwaite karakterinin anlatısını birleştirerek metinlerarası bir ağı da gözler önüne serer. Romanın ana karakteri ve anlatıcısı olan Braithwaite'in doğruluk ve kesinlik arayışı ironik bir biçimde farklı bakış açılarının sunulduğu çok katmanlı bir anlatının ortaya çıkmasına neden olur. Romanın gerçek, bilgi ve kesinlik gibi kavramların varlığını (ya da yokluğunu) yansıtma biçimi yirmibirinci yüzyıl dünyasının hakikat sonrası kavramına yaptığı vurguyla daha da çarpıcı bir hal alır. Roman, gerçek yaşamla kurmaca ilişkisini sorgular; papağan ise bu karşılıklı ilişkinin vücut bulmuş hali olur. Bununla beraber, papağanın taklitçi doğasının sanatla yaşam arasındaki ilişkiyi temsil ettiğini iddia etmek de mümkündür. Bu yarı-biyografik romanında Barnes yalnızca Flaubert'i

kurmaca dünyanın parçası yapmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda eleştirmen ve akademisyenlere de varoluşsal sorular yöneltir. Bir yazarın yaşamına ilişkin tahminler ve biyografi yazarının yaratıcılığı gerçek ile kurmaca, yaşam ile sanat ve yazar ile eleştirmen arasındaki sınır(sızlığ)ı vurgular. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın temel amacı romanın postmodernizmle ilişkisini ve yazar ile biyografi yazarı/eleştirmen/akademisyen arasındaki iş birliğinin ve/veya çatışmanın doğasını gözler önüne sermektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Julian Barnes, *Flaubert'in Papağanı*, postmodern roman, üst kurmaca, gerçeklik

> "What happened to the truth is not recorded"
> *Flaubert's Parrot*

Flaubert's Parrot, which was first published in 1984, challenges concepts such as genre, truth, history, and meaning. In parallel with the fact that many have already found it difficult to categorise the text as a novel, Julian Barnes himself defines *Flaubert's Parrot* as an "upside down, informal piece of novel-biography" (Barnes, "Julian Barnes in Conversation" 259). *Flaubert's Parrot* is one of the most profound examples of the postmodern novel, which deconstructs the genre with its emphasis on intertextuality, fragmentation, and metafiction. The novel predominantly displays an apparent intertextual relationship with *Madame Bovary* and *Un coeur Simple* [A Simple Heart]. It bends the norms and conventions of the novel genre by embracing various forms of writing, including chronology, dictionary, and even examination paper. Being an example of metafiction, *Flaubert's Parrot* consistently emphasises that it is fiction. The novel's narrator/protagonist Geoffrey Braithwaite not only directly addresses the reader but also refers to the previous pages of the novel while communicating with the reader: "Do you know the colour of Flaubert's eyes? No, you don't: for the simple reason that I suppressed it a few pages ago. I didn't want you to be tempted by cheap conclusions" (95). With this approach, the novel takes itself out of the conventions of the genre, questions its own identity, and sets fresh rules to be challenged. Accordingly, this study aims at presenting a discussion on concepts such as author, authority, and authenticity in postmodern literature with a close reading of Barnes's work. The novel employs the conventions of postmodernism in literature such as fragmentation, disorientation, and relativism, which display multiple truths, multiple identities, and multiple views of reality. *Flaubert's Parrot*, which is first published almost four decades ago, becomes even more remarkable in an age that is defined with the term post-truth.[1]

The book is narrated by Geoffrey Braithwaite, who "thought of writing books [him]self once" (13). Defining himself as an amateur Flaubert scholar, Braithwaite takes the reader on a journey, while attempting to determine the

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[1] "Post-truth" is first used in the 1990s, and since the 2010s it functions as a concept defining the current political mood as well as the human condition worldwide. Hence, the contemporary reader's perception of this early example of postmodern literature is in accordance with the lack of truth and certainty that is experienced in the twenty-first century.

whereabouts of the original stuffed parrot which inspired Flaubert's short story *Un coeur simple*. Like almost all journeys, this is essentially a soul journey, in which Braithwaite tries to reconcile with his past. In other words, the search for the stuffed parrot as well as the historical "facts"[2] concerning Flaubert are intermingled with the autobiographical details of the narrator. Hence, Braithwaite's research is utterly engaged with the combination of the so-called facts and fiction by its nature.

The narrator's approach towards his subject matter -both the stuffed parrot and Flaubert- and the contents of the novel look familiar to the literary scholar, in reminding them of the preparation process of an academic work. Taking notes, making lists, writing down chronological details, focusing on certain words and terms, consciously or subconsciously associating the subject matter with personal experiences, and even thinking about potential examination questions while discussing the subject matter are not alien to the academic. Hence, analysing this novel allows the scholars to examine their own academic identities as well as their relation to their studies because by their nature, academic work and "biographies offer models of how others live, face challenges, and cope with change; they are prime sites for studying ourselves" (Benton, "Literary Biography" 44).

Both biography writing and research in literature are "conceived in a process of interpreting the evidence" (Schabert 3). In this argument, the word "interpretation" is substantial because it emphasizes the direct relationship between the subject matter and the biographer/critic/academic. The relationship between the author, the literary text, and the reader becomes even more challenging when the author becomes the subject of a biography. *Flaubert's Parrot*, with its postmodern approach, displays power relation between the three. Once the authority figure as the author of literary works, Gustave Flaubert becomes the subject of another text.

Both the author and the literary scholar, including the amateur ones like Braithwaite, reveal their existence through language and their writings. Pen -or the keyboard in the (post)modern age- and words function as the ultimate tool for communication. The idea of communication through writing is further emphasized in relation to Braithwaite's unsatisfied desire to become an author. He admits that he once thought of writing books himself: "I had the ideas; I even made notes. But I was a doctor, married with children. You can only do one thing well: Flaubert knew that. Being a doctor was what I did well. My wife … died. My children are scattered now; they write whenever guilt impels" (13). This statement is a declaration of Braithwaite's perception of success, failure[3],

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[2] The concept of historical facts is challenged with the presence of three alternating chronologies concerning Flaubert's life. As it is discussed in the following pages of this study, different chronologies create alternating truths and facts, which display relativism and multiple points of view.

[3] It is also worth mentioning that the reader has no proof to believe that this unreliable narrator is a successful doctor. Moreover, his reference to his late wife's death right after declaring that he was a good doctor is ironic in itself.

family, loneliness and authorship. Furthermore, thinking about his failed attempts to write reminds him of his past and family; and most importantly at this point in the novel, Braithwaite is not yet ready to talk about his past – particularly about his relationship with his late wife. Hence, the blank (...) after the reference to his wife is going to be filled towards the end of his narrative, when his search for the original stuffed parrot is over.

Braithwaite's communication with his reader is also indicative of the postmodern attitude Barnes employs in this novel. The narrator/protagonist functions as a bridge between the reader of Barnes's novel and Flaubert (both as a person and an author of literary works). In other words, the fictional narrator becomes a portal between history and fiction. As Daniel Bedggood argues, "the placing of the narrator within the schematic consideration of historical 'proof' also alerts the reader to the postmodern referential presence of metafiction, the self-conscious acknowledgement or emphasis of the text as a literary object" (212). While the novel objectifies its own genre, history and fiction are interconnected as a crucial indicator of metafiction.

In his discussion on how the narrator/protagonist establishes a personal relationship with the reader by directly addressing them in various instances, Péter Tamás argues that Braithwaite "gradually constructs an audience of his own in an effort to establish his writerly authority" (90). Tamás's argument supports the idea that authority and authorial identity are significant themes that are examined throughout the novel. In Braithwaite's comments on Flaubert, the reader is allowed to observe and interpret Braithwaite's so-called authority on his subject matter, language, and life. Certain chapters of the novel, especially the "Examination Paper," which contains exam questions focusing on a wide variety of disciplines, underlines Braithwaite's claim that he is not only "an authority on Flaubert" (94) but he is also an expert in numerous fields such as literary criticism, economics, logic, geography, and history.[4] With Braithwaite's thirst for authority is ironic with respect to postmodern literature's relation to concepts such as authority and mastery. As Linda Hutcheon emphasizes, in postmodernism "we find masterful denials of mastery, totalizing negations of totalization" (Hutcheon, "History and/as Intertext" 169). Despite Braithwaite's attempts to prove the opposite, Barnes's novel distorts all possibility of mastery and totalization in accordance with postmodern theory.

The title of the novel, as well as Braithwaite's "self-appointed quest" (Martin 6), focuses on Flaubert's parrot rather than Flaubert the man or the author. The parrot, which is a reference to Loulou in Flaubert's short story *Un coeur simple*, is symbolic in both texts. In *Un coeur simple* when it is still alive, the parrot functions as the ultimate companion for the main character Félicité. However, when it is dead and stuffed, it is transformed in metaphoric terms as well: As

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[4] Throughout the novel Braithwaite is presented as the narrator and the protagonist, which indicates that he is the one who also prepares the questions in Chapter 14 entitled "Examination Paper". The licence to set an exam focusing on numerous fields is in accordance with his claim of authority.

the story concludes, Félicité associates Loulou with the Holy Spirit. In Barnes's novel-biography, however, the parrot is ironically associated with authenticity, truth and history[5]. Furthermore, according to Braithwaite, the stuffed parrot is "the emblem of the writer's voice" (19). On the one hand, depicting an animal, which is associated with mimicry and repetition, as a symbol of authenticity is puzzling. This association becomes even more problematic in the end of the novel, when it is understood that there are many stuffed parrots that may have been the source of inspiration for Flaubert's Loulou. As Andrzej Gasiorek argues, "there is no single truth anymore than there is a single parrot" (158), which takes us back to the postmodern nature of Barnes's text. While challenging the traditionally accepted form of the genre, this postmodern novel celebrates fragmentation and multiplicity through its "refusal of totalisation" (Guignery 41). On the other hand, the parrot's connection with mimicry and imitation is reminiscent of the continuous debates on the relationship between art and life: Does art imitate life? Or does life imitate art? Regardless of the answer to this question (which is beyond the limits and the focus of this study), the correlation between this particular relationship and the image of the parrot is remarkable with respect to the concept of imitation.

Like many other works of Barnes, this novel is concerned with authenticity, truth, memory, history and reliability. In Barnes's own words,

> it's a book about the shiftingness of the past, and the uncertainty and unverifiability of fact, […] and it's a book, and it's a novel about Flaubert, and so on, and it's a novel about love: how the love of art compares with love of a human being – and I think perhaps beyond all that it's a novel about grief, it's a novel about a man whose inability to express his grief and his love is shifted. ("Julian Barnes in Conversation" 262)

The shiftingness of the past is exquisitely exemplified in Chapter 2, which is entitled "Chronology". In this chapter, the reader is presented three alternating versions of chronology focusing on Flaubert's life. The first chronology starts with Flaubert's birth and mostly focuses on the publication of his important works as well as the dates he meets with the important figures in his life, such as Louise Colet. The second chronology, on the other hand, starts with the deaths of Flaubert's siblings before his birth, suggesting that this chronology does not designate the author's birth as the starting point of his life. This approach argues that an individual's life is also shaped with the events prior to their birth and highlights the continuity of life. Moreover, the second chronology includes more comments, when compared to the first version. Another apparent characteristic of the second chronology is its emphasis on death, pain, decay, and suffering. The third chronology, however, is written in first person, and looks more like a diary. Instead of Flaubert's birth year or the years in which his elder siblings pass away, the third version begins in 1842, when Flaubert is already twenty years old. Due to its structure, which is

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[5] It is of no coincidence that, instead of the full portrayal of a parrot, the covers of various editions of the novel present feathers reminding the reader of quill pens.

reminiscent of a diary, this version focuses on personal thoughts and emotions rather than historical facts. In order to fully display the differences between these three chronologies, analysing the final entries of each would be appropriate:

> I
>
> 1880   Full of honour, widely loved, and still working hard to the end, Gustave Flaubert dies at Croisset (27). [...]
>
> II
>
> 1880   Impoverished, lonely and exhausted, Gustave Flaubert dies. Zola, in his obituary notice, comments that he was unknown to four-fifths of Rouen, and detested by the other fifth. He leaves *Bouvard et Pécuchet* unfinished. Some say the labour of the novel killed him; Turgenev told him before he started that it would be better as a short story. After the funeral a group of mourners, including the poets François Coppée and Théodore de Banville, have dinner in Rouen to honour the departed writer. They discover, on sitting down the table, that they are thirteen. The superstitious Banville insists that another guest be found, and Gautier's son-in-law Emile Bergerat is sent to scour the streets. After several rebuffs he returns with a private on leave. The soldier has never heard of Flaubert, but is longing to meet Coppée (31). [...]
>
> III
>
> 1880   When will the book be finished? That's the question. If it is to appear next winter, I haven't a minute to lose between now and then. But there are moments when I'm so tired that I feel I'm liquefying like an old Camembert. (37)

Accordingly, the fundamental distinction between these three chronologies lies in the approaches they employ towards their subject matter. Although all three chronologies end with Flaubert's death in 1880, the way the last entry focuses on death varies in each version. The third chronology, which is written in first person, and hence fully underlines its subjective approach, correlates weariness with death. It is an autobiographical chronology, written by the fictionalised Gustave Flaubert, who is not aware of the fact that he is going to die soon. Therefore, the reader who knows the fact that the real Flaubert dies in 1880, reads this entry with that pre-knowledge.

However, the first chronology, while focusing more on facts, presents Flaubert as a loved and honourable individual. The second chronology, on the contrary, depicts the author as a detested man. The contradictory portrayal of the same individual is indicative of the subjective nature of biography writing. Like all kinds of writing – including novels, diaries, letters, and autobiographies – biographies too employ a subjective reading of the subject matter. As Philip Holden argues, "What Barnes plays with, then, is both the non-identity of career author and historical figure, and the investment of the biographer as reader writing his own individualized biography" (928). In this way, postmodernism's intricate relationship with biography is also revealed in this

novel. As Katherine Frank suggests, "biographical characters from a postmodernist perspective are linguistic constructs, untethered to the past and what really happened" (9). Hence the acclaimed French author Flaubert is transformed into a linguistic construct in Braithwaite's narrative.

These alternating chronologies – in other words, historicised accounts of Flaubert's life – display the subjective structure of history. Hutcheon, while referring to Frederick Jameson and Hayden White in her analysis of the interaction between history and fiction, argues that "History as narrative account, then, is unavoidably figurative, allegorical, fictive; it is always already textualized, always already interpreted" (Hutcheon, "History and/as Intertext" 170). Barnes, in his postmodern work, evidently proves the textualized and interpreted nature of history. Presenting the life of a real author in three utterly distinct ways is indicative of the role of the historian, who introduces subjectivity into history writing. Although Braithwaite does not define himself as a historian, his narrative and particularly the chapter entitled "Chronology" displays the subjective, and even fictive aspect of history writing. Once again, point of view, which is one of the crucial focal points emphasized by postmodern literature, becomes dominant in Barnes's argument that is displayed in the given chapter.

Scepticism towards the word and language is one of the highlighted postmodern aspects of this novel-biography. The arbitrary nature of language, and the lack of a natural relationship between the word and the referent (or the signifier and the signified in linguistic terms) is displayed through multiple points of view (end even multiple chronologies). Thus, the text questions and challenges the concept of truth. The novel also provokes scepticism towards all individuals within the text, such as the narrator/protagonist, Flaubert, and Dr Enid Starkie. This distrust is further accentuated in Braithwaite's definition of the past as "autobiographical fiction pretending to be a parliamentary report" (90). Braithwaite's perception of the past is later echoed in *The Sense of an Ending* by Adrian: "history is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation" (17).[6] In the second half of *Flaubert's Parrot*, starting with the "Cross Channel" chapter, "Braithwaite is much more interested in the 'unspoken' or 'potential' elements of Flaubert than the known or familiar" (Hateley 180)[7]. Apart from the introduction of fiction into the lives of real people while writing their biographies, biographers, as Richard Holmes suggests,

> base their work on sources which are inherently unreliable. Memory itself is fallible; memories are inevitably biased; letters are always slanted towards their recipients; even private diaries and intimate

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[6] Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* (2011) focuses on past, memory, truth, and subjectivity in a similar way. Both *Flaubert's Parrot* and *The Sense of an Ending* underline the subjective approaches employed in remembering and interpreting past events

[7] One should also note that *Flaubert's Parrot* even has a chapter on Flaubert's unwritten works, entitled "The Flaubert Apocrypha". This chapter presents a fundamental question about unwritten literature: "Do the books that writers don't write matter?" (115).

> journals have to be recognized as literary forms of self-invention rather than an 'ultimate' truth of private fact or feeling. The biographer has always had to construct or orchestrate a factual pattern out of materials that already have a fictional or reinvented element. (17)

Similar to Holmes's definition of biography writing as a pursuit and a haunting, Michael Benton suggests that during this process "the biographer turns from pursuer to pursued" (Benton, "Reading Biography" 77). Therefore, the reader of Barnes's novel learns the life story of Braithwaite rather than that of Flaubert. Hence, Amia Lieblich's argument is exemplified through Braithwaite's portrayal as a biographer in Barnes's text: "biography will always be autobiographical as well. It must be self-reflective, and since it is based on a relationship, the biographer cannot avoid being there with her feelings, her fears, hopes and satisfactions, and her own echoes of the tales of the protagonist's life" (209).

Braithwaite, who is attempting to work on Flaubert's biography, seems to interconnect his work in progress with his own autobiography. Therefore, the main focus of this novel-biography as well as the predominant authority figure is not definite throughout the text. The affinity between the words "author," "authority" and "authenticity" becomes a substantial part of the relationship between Flaubert, Braithwaite, Barnes, and the reader. "Author" and "authority," which are both derived from the Latin "auctor" meaning master and inventor, are utterly interrelated with respect to their meaning: The authors are traditionally claimed to have so-called authority over their texts for creating them. As stated earlier, this attitude towards the concept of authority (which is also reflected in Braithwaite's longing for being regarded as an authority figure) is challenged in postmodern literature.

Although the term authenticity is not derived from the same Latin root, it is significant that there is a correlation between the meanings of these three words, besides the similarity between their pronunciation: The word "authentic" comes from the Greek "authentikos" -which means "principal, genuine" - and "authentes" – which means "lord, master". "The historical genealogy of the term reveals authenticity as a highly volatile and historically contingent concept comprising three frames of utility: classical truth to an ideal, artistic truth to self, and positive definitions of collective identity" (Claviez, et. al. viii). Authenticity in this study is rather related to the concept of genuineness since the question of authenticity is a significant aspect of the novel from the beginning with the first reference to Flaubert's statue in Rouen: "This statue isn't the original one. The Germans took the first Flaubert away in 1941, along with the railings and door-knockers. Perhaps he was processed into cap-badges" (11). The fact that this particular statue is not the original one obviously foreshadows the question of authenticity that is primarily related to the stuffed parrot. What is most conspicuous in this quotation is that Braithwaite talks about the statue as if it is Flaubert himself. He even uses the personal pronoun "he" for the statue, while arguing that it may have been "processed into cap-badges". This personification evidently, and ironically,

turns the real author into an inanimate object and the statue into a human being. The immortality of the public figures, including writers and artists of all kinds, is largely two-sided. Although their works and legacy are immortalised, they can be turned into statues or become a part of the commercial daily life: "Along the avenue Gustave Flaubert, past the Imprimerie Flaubert and a snack-bar called Le Flaubert: you certainly feel you're going in the right direction" (15). These names suggest that naming various symbols of the commercialist system after the nineteenth-century author, inevitably turns him into a commodity. It would not be farfetched to suggest that reconstructing the image of Gustave Flaubert by naming certain places after him is similar to recreating the parrot through taxidermy. On the one hand, in Flaubert's *Un coeur simple* the parrot is immortalised on a physical level, but it is turned into an inanimate object that is designed to be exhibited. Keeping the skin of this parrot in a frozen posture obviously indicates the amount of loneliness Félicité is experiencing. Yet, taxidermy cannot offer an eternal solution to Félicité's loneliness. Towards the end of her life, she not only loses her sight but also has to part with the stuffed parrot since its reconstructed body is falling apart.

As mentioned before, the narrator/protagonist of this novel defines himself as an amateur Flaubert scholar. Through this literary biography, the reader observes how the author(ity) of literary texts becomes the subject matter of another text. As Alison Lee suggests, in this novel "[m]ade-up characters are treated as though they were real, and, conversely, real people are rendered fictional" (46). Apart from the portrayal of Flaubert throughout the novel, Louise Colet's fictional narrative is one of the palpable examples of how real people are fictionalised. This is an indication that the novelist or even the biographer "may invent episodes which elucidate the historical personality as he conceives it" (Schabert 6). Furthermore, Chapter 11, which is entitled "Louise Colet's version," emphasises the multiple points of view presented within this postmodern text. The reader is given the opportunity to read the events related to Flaubert through the perception of a different character. Another real human being who becomes a part of this fictional biography is Enid Starkie (1897-1970), an esteemed Irish literary critic, who particularly specialized on French literature and wrote on Flaubert. While referring to Dr Starkie and her arguments on Flaubert[8], Braithwaite comments on Starkie – as the representative of professional critics and scholars in general – as well: "I can't prove that lay readers enjoy books more than professional critics; but I can tell you one advantage we have over them. We can forget. Dr Starkie and her kind are cursed with memory: the books they teach and write about can never fade from their brains" (75). Once again, the novel focuses on the intricate relationship between reading, past, and memory. Braithwaite, who has the courage to conduct a research on Flaubert, places himself with lay readers opposite to the professional critics and scholars.

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[8] It is also significant to note that "Barnes's quotations from her criticism are accurate" (Holden 929).

Throughout the novel, Braithwaite is associated with two types of quests: "the simple [quest] is the attempt to locate and authenticate a stuffed parrot. The enactment of this quest facilitates the complex quest, one of psychological individuation and acceptance" (Hateley 177). In other words, while searching for Flaubert's literary voice symbolized by the stuffed parrot, what Braithwaite truly aims at achieving is coming to terms with his wife Ellen's infidelity and suicide. Hence, the intertextual bond between *Madame Bovary* and *Flaubert's Parrot* is implicated with Charles Bovary and Braithwaite's occupation, as well as their wives's extramarital affairs. While focusing on Flaubert on the surface, Braithwaite admits his real motivation: "Books are not life, however much we might prefer it if they were. Ellen's is a true story; perhaps it is even the reason why I am telling you Flaubert's story instead" (86). Although Braithwaite argues that there is an evident distinction between life/reality and fiction, the totality of the book claims the opposite.

Chapter 13, which is entitled "Pure Story," primarily focuses on Braithwaite's late wife Ellen. This is the chapter in which the reader learns the details of their relationship, including Ellen's adultery and Braithwaite's reaction to her death. Therefore, the emphasis on the word "pure" is utterly intriguing. According to Vanessa Guignery,

> the ontological status of this fictional but 'pure' story is ambiguous, as underscored by the polysemy of 'pure'. Does 'pure story' mean 'not corrupted', as opposed to Emma Bovary's corrupted one; 'purely imaginary' as opposed to all the chapters relating to real people and places; or 'true story', as understood by French translator Jean Guiloineau, who entitled the chapter 'Une histoire vraie [A true story]'? (42)

In Braithwaite's terms, the "pure story" refers to how he perceives his wife's death. When he talks about how he decides to switch off the machines keeping her alive at the hospital, in other words how he kills her, Braithwaite says that "she wasn't corrupted. Hers is a pure story. I switched her off" (168). Since the reader continuously has to remind themselves not to fully trust narrators, or even their own memories, it can be suggested that the ambiguity concerning the emphasis on the word "pure" prevails even after Braithwaite's statement. Furthermore, this section in his narrative is notable since there is an obvious change in the sentence structure. Braithwaite's sentences are much shorter suggesting anxiety and uneasiness; and this uneasiness threatens his authority over his own narrative.

In "Pure Story," which is placed towards the end of the novel, Braithwaite starts to come to terms with his past. He gradually begins to talk about his past, which is understood to be the reason why he finds himself on this quest:

> Ellen. My wife: someone I feel I understand less well than a foreign writer dead for a hundred years […] Books are where things are explained to you; life is where things aren't […] Books make sense of

life. The only problem is that the lives they make sense of are other people's lives, never your own. (168)

"Pure Story" also functions as a confession, in which Braithwaite frankly admits the real reason behind his quest. Hence, this narrative can be regarded as Braithwaite's attempt to make sense of his own life – as opposed to what he claims in the above stated extract. While discussing the concept of confession in Tolstoy, Rousseau, and Dostoevsky's writings with respect to Augustine's perception of the term, J. M. Coetzee argues that

> confession is one element in a sequence of transgression, confession, penitence and absolution. Absolution means the end of the episode, the closing of the chapter, liberation from the oppression of the memory. Absolution in this sense is therefore the indispensable goal of all confession, sacramental or secular. (194)

When Braithwaite manages to talk about Ellen's infidelity, her suicide, and his role in her death, he is ready for a secular absolution, which prepares the ending of the novel. This confession reveals his character to a great extent; the text displays the personality, the identity of the narrator/protagonist rather than Flaubert's, who is presented as the so-called subject of the narrative.

Flaubert's Parrot is a novel about identity: the identity of the stuffed parrot, the identity of Flaubert, the identity of Braithwaite, the identity of Ellen, and the identity of the reader. When the reader recalls that Julian Barnes, as an author, has repeatedly challenged the idea of a single voice and a sole identity through the various pen names he employs while publishing his works, his stance against the idea of a single truth is appreciated in the broadest sense. The author of *Flaubert's Parrot* is known as Julian Barnes, Dan Kavanagh, Edward Pygge, and others at the same time. Barnes has written crime fiction under the pseudonym Dan Kavanagh – a name which is derived from his late wife Pat Kavanagh. Apart from this pseudonym, Barnes has also employed different pen names, while particularly writing for newspapers and periodicals:

> The Edward Pygge name was a tradition of the *Review* and the *New Review*, so he was actually a pseudonym that I inherited. And it was an honor not granted to many people to be Edward Pygge. And you had to write in a certain style to be Edward Pygge. In this certain acerbic and un-illusioned style about literary matters. Basil Seal I used because I was a restaurant critic and you didn't want them to know who you were. […]
> The other pseudonyms, which are more trivial, or less often used, were simply because of my output at the time. If I was writing the *New Statesman* television column, I couldn't have another piece in the same issue under the same name. So if I was doing fiction roundup or something like that, I simply used a pseudonym. I quite liked using one, there was something liberating about it. (Barnes, *Conversations with Julian Barnes* 175-176)

What Barnes highlights in this comment is the liberating aspect of writing under various pseudonyms. While liberating the author to remain anonymous to a certain extent, the use of pseudonyms provokes a question of identity and authenticity. So, would it be farfetched to suggest that an analysis of the use of pseudonyms, which challenges the relationship between authorial identity and authenticity, is not different from Braithwaite's search for the original stuffed parrot? After all, they are all related to a sense of truth about identity.

Ironically, the quest for the stuffed parrot, which provides the novel with its name, is fully discussed in the final chapter "And the Parrot…" Presenting himself as a kind of a detective, Braithwaite in this chapter comments on the death of the author. In the final sentence of his narrative, he has to accept and acknowledge that there are too many stuffed parrots. In Hutcheon's words,

> postmodern novels like *Flaubert's Parrot*, *Famous Last Words*, and *A Maggot* openly assert that there are only *truths* in the plural, and never one Truth; and there is rarely falseness per se, just others' truths. Fiction and history are narratives distinguished by their frames. (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 109)

The postmodern novel, which challenges concepts such as totalisation, authenticity, and truth, sets new rules for itself. Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*, in this respect, uses the image of the stuffed parrot in constructing a multi-layered postmodern view on literature. The quest for the original stuffed parrot functions as a symbol for the narrator/protagonist's exploration of his own past; and hence the narrative, as well as Braithwaite's quest, ends only two chapters after he declares why and how his late wife dies. Similar to the fact that there are multiple "original" stuffed parrots that may have influenced Flaubert in creating Loulou, there are multiple roles that are attributed to the stuffed parrot in Braithwaite's narrative. As a reminder of Gustave Flaubert's life as an individual and an author, it reminds the reader of the quill pen. With its plural existence, the stuffed parrot demonstrates that there is no single truth in postmodern world. As such, the quest for authority and authenticity proves to be in vain. Braithwaite's quest for authenticity and certainty, ironically, creates a multi-layered narrative involving multiple points of view. What is more, at the end of the narrative both Braithwaite and the reader acknowledge that there is no such thing as authenticity.

The final chapter opens with an Holmesian declaration: "And the parrot? Well, it took me almost two years to solve the Case of the Stuffed Parrot" (180). Yet, the solution of the case lacks certainty: "*perhaps* [the original stuffed parrot] was one of them" (190, my emphasis). The emphasis on the concept of probability and multiplicity in this sentence reflects the postmodern characteristic of the novel. Moreover, since Braithwaite verbalizes the assumption that the original stuffed parrot may be one of the Amazonian parrots he sees at the Museum of Natural History, Braithwaite finally seems to embrace uncertainty, multiplicity, fragmentation, and lack of authenticity. The search for the original stuffed parrot, which, as far as Braithwaite is concerned, symbolizes the real Flaubert, results in the acceptance of multiple truths and

identities. While celebrating fragmentation and disorientation, Barnes's postmodern novel proposes questions concerning concepts such as verification, relativism, and narrative, which play a significant role in defining our current age of post-truth.

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The Portrayal of Death and the Fear of Death in Julian Barnes' *Nothing to be Frightened Of*

Julian Barnes' ın *Korkulacak Bir Şey Yok* Adlı Eserinde Ölüm ve Ölüm Korkusu

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Abstract
Published in 2008, *Nothing to be Frightened Of* deals with the universal fear of death from a variety of angles and perspectives. The book defies easy categorisation since it is a profoundly hybrid text which consists of a family memoir, meditations on death and the fear of death, as well as Julian Barnes' conversations with his brother who is a philosopher, there is also the reckoning of religion and of afterlife. The book also offers a powerful celebration of art and literature as attempts to achieve 'symbolic immortality'. Drawing on the insights offered by terror-management theory, this article aims to examine the humorous and witty treatment of death and the fear of death in Julian Barnes' *Nothing to be Frightened Of*. In the course of my analysis, I will particularly focus on the ways in which the writer engages with a number of alternative coping mechanisms people utilise while dealing with the fear of death. In doing that, I will also argue that *Nothing to be Frightened Of* itself can be seen as Barnes' way of confronting his own mortality and tackling his own fear of death in order to relieve emotional tension engendered precisely by his own fear.
Keywords: Death, fear of death, terror-management theory, Julian Barnes, *Nothing to be Frightened Of*

Öz
2008 yılında yayımlanan *Korkulacak Bir Şey Yok* evrensel bir korku olan ölüm korkusunu çeşitli perspektiflerden ve açılardan incelemektedir. Bu kitabı kategorize etmek kolay değildir zira aile anıları, ölüm ve ölüm korkusu üzerine tefekkür, Julian Barnes'ın bir felsefeci olan erkek kardeşiyle söyleşiler, din ve ölüm sonrası konuları üzerine incelemeleri kapsayan oldukça melez bir metindir. Kitap, aynı zamanda, "sembolik ölümsüzlüğe" ulaşma araçları da olabilen sanat ve edebiyatı yüceltir. Bu makale, korku yönetimi kuramının önermelerine atıf yaparak, Julian Barnes'ın *Korkulacak Bir Şey Yok* isimli eserinde ölüm ve ölüm korkusu konularının ele alınışını incelemektedir. Makale boyunca yazarın insanların ölüm korkusuyla baş etmeye çalışırken sıklıkla başvurdukları çeşitli savunma mekanizmalarına yaklaşımı üzerinde özellikle duracağım. Bunu yaparken aynı zamanda, *Korkulacak Bir Şey Yok* kitabını yazarken Julian Barnes'ın kendi ölümlülüğüyle nasıl yüzleştiğini ve yazım sürecinin ondaki ölüm korkusunun yol açtığı duygusal gerilimin yatıştırılması yönünde ona nasıl yardımcı olduğunu açıklayacağım.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Ölüm, ölüm korkusu, korku yönetimi kuramı, Julian Barnes, *Korkulacak Bir Şey Yok*

Introduction: Terror as an Adaptive Response to Death

> "People wait decades until something scares them into finally letting go, being present and loving fully, all the while not realizing that life itself is a near death experience." Cory Allen

"I don't believe in God but I miss him," remarks the celebrated British writer Julian Barnes. In his novels as well as short stories, Barnes frequently questions and examines how people feel about the inevitability of old age and death. His overall conclusion is that although people display different attitudes towards death, they generally fear it. Published in 2008, *Nothing to be Frightened Of* deals with the universal fear of death from a variety of angles and perspectives. The book defies easy categorisation since it is a profoundly hybrid text including family memoir, meditations on death, conversations with his brother who is a philosopher, and the reckoning of religion and of afterlife. The book also offers a powerful celebration of art and literature as it attempts to achieve "symbolic immortality".

Early on in the book, Barnes talks with his mother about the concept of death and she says: "What's all this about death, by the way?" Barnes responds by saying that he doesn't like it. His mother then says: "You're just like your father" adding: "Maybe it's your age. When you get to my age, you won't mind so much. I've seen the best of life anyway" (7). This exchange clearly shows how the appraisal of death and consequently how one feels vis-à-vis death is a deeply subjective phenomenon. Unlike her mother, who seems to have cultivated a sense of acceptance in the face of impending death, Barnes appears to be strongly upset and profoundly concerned with death. It is possible to suggest that the writer's lack of religious faith has had a strong bearing on his strong and constant preoccupation with death throughout his life. Regarding the subject of religion and faith, Barnes states:

> Faith is about believing precisely what, according to all the known rules could not have happened. The virgin birth, the Resurrection, Muhammad leaping out to heaven leaving a footprint in the rock, life hereafter. It couldn't have happened by all we understand. But it did. Or, it will. (Or, of course, it certainly didn't and assuredly won't) (78)

Although the subject of religious faith, and lack thereof, figures predominantly throughout the book, Barnes depicts the subject of death from a variety of different perspectives and tries to express "the complex relation between memory, emotion, postmodernism and Englishness" in his exploration of death (Callus 55). Drawing on the insights offered by terror management theory, this paper aims to examine the humorous and witty treatment of death and old age in Julian Barnes' *Nothing to be Frightened Of*. In the course of my analysis, I will particularly focus on ways in which the writer engages with a number of alternative coping mechanisms people utilise while dealing with the fear of death. In doing that, I will also argue that *Nothing to be Frightened Of* itself can be seen as Julian Barnes' way of confronting his own mortality and tackling his

own fear of death in order to relieve the emotional tension and pain engendered by his fear.

According to Solomon et al. the ever-present potential for incapacitating terror caused by death is the "worm at the core" of the human condition (24). In their words: "Terror is the natural and generally adaptive response to the imminent threat of death" (23). In accordance with that, the really tragic part of our condition is that "only we humans, due to our enlarged and sophisticated neocortex, can experience this terror in the absence of looming danger [...] This realization threatens to put us in a persistent state of existential fear" (24). As a writer, Barnes is acutely aware of this particular form of "existential fear" and tries to deal with and dispel it through the act of writing. The book as a whole offers a very interesting and admittedly humorous thought experiment on a subject that the majority of people would regard as very serious and bleak. Moreover, it also has a remarkably conversational tone that invites the reader to engage with the material presented on a personal level. Early on in the book, Barnes says: "some of this book will strike you as amateur, do it yourself stuff... yet we are all amateurs in our own lives" (38). As this quote illustrates, the writer's authorial voice is quite impersonal and the writer addresses the reader almost as a friend he is sharing his observations and memories with.

Fear of Death and Subjective Response

In the course of their evolutionary history, human beings have often turned to religion and varieties of spirituality to deal with their deep-rooted fear of death. Terrified by the prospect of their imminent extinction, they have sought solace in the possibility of an afterlife. Fully aware of the ramifications of belief and faith in relation to the subject of death, Barnes questions the 'true' meaning of being religious and that of being a non-believer throughout his book. In an interview, Barnes observes: "I fear death and I believe there is nothing after it, but does this necessarily make it courageous of me not to believe in God? I just think he doesn't exist and that's it" (Guignery and Roberts 2009). He remarks that even amongst his close family members there were differences of opinion regarding the meaning attributed to the concept of religion.

Within this context, Barnes talks a lot about his brother Jonathan with whom he had intellectual disagreements on several subjects. When asked how wise the philosophers were in their own lives, his brother bluntly answers: "not a bit wiser for being philosophers" (126). Julian Barnes' brother also entertains very different views regarding the fear of death when compared with Julian. According to Julian Barnes:

> You come into the world, look around, make certain deductions, free yourself from the old bullshit, learn, think, observe, conclude. You believe in your own powers and autonomy; you become your own achievement. So, over the decades, my fear of death has become an essential part of me, and I would attribute it to the exercise of imagination; while my brother's detachment in death's face is an

essential part of him which he probably ascribes to the exercise of logical thought. (63)

Here, Barnes emphasizes the agency of the individual as the creator of his own selfhood in interaction with his environment. As he asserts, the individual is never fixed or static, he is rather an unfolding event always in the making, and never complete. Barnes also implies that we are complex creatures made by the world we inhabit as well as by our own thoughts. In this sense, Barnes' powerful imagination fosters a fear of death, whereas his more logical brother is more detached about the subject. His brother's stoic detachment in the face of the inevitability of death is something alien to Barnes, who has integrated the fear of death into his character. Barnes further observes: "My brother and I are now both over sixty, and I have just asked him a few pages ago - what he thinks of death" (62). When his brother replies: "I am quite content with the things as they are," Barnes wonders whether it is his brother's immersion in philosophy that has reconciled him to the brevity of life. (62). For his own part, his brother attests that he has simply made his peace with the certainty of an event beyond his control: "I know it's going to happen and there is nothing I can do about it," he says, adding that possibly at the best he may have fifteen years of life ahead of him (62). Unlike his brother, Julian Barnes can imagine various alternatives that would have been more welcome: "how about being given the option to die when you felt like it, when you've had enough: to go on for two or three hundred years and then be allowed to utter you own euthanasiastic: oh get on with it, then' at a time of your own choosing" (63). Although entertaining such thoughts could certainly be seen an exercise in futility, one cannot help but admire—and perhaps empathise with—Barnes' witty take on such an admittedly bleak subject. Reading between the lines, we might also be tempted to think that Barnes could also be rebelling against the helplessness of the individual who has no choice when it comes to the finality of his own life. We have not made the choice to be born, neither do we have any choice about death.

Coping Mechanisms: Religion, Science and Art

In the light of these preliminary observations, it is possible to suggest that human beings' constant preoccupation with death has engendered an existential crisis with far-fetching implications. Julian Barnes himself is a good example of the intelligent and deep-thinking individual who is tormented by his reflective capacity. Humans are endowed with a highly sophisticated prefrontal cortex that allows them to project themselves into the past as well as into the future. However, our heightened cognitive capacity is both a blessing and a curse: while it is thanks to our intelligence that we were able create civilisations, the same intelligence also breeds anxiety and terror in the face of the looming presence of death. As Solomon et al. maintain:

> Once our intelligence had evolved to the point that this ultimate existential crisis dawned on us, we used that same intelligence to devise the means to keep that potentially devastating existential terror at bay. Our shared cultural worldviews—the beliefs we create to

explain the nature of reality to ourselves—give us a sense of meaning, an account for the origin of the universe, a blueprint for valued conduct on earth, and the promise of immortality. (25)

Hence, "cultural worldviews" have historically served a very important function in the management of terror caused by death. As Solomon et al. further suggest, of primary importance amongst these cultural worldviews are the grand narratives offered by world religions: "cultural worldviews have offered immense comfort to death-fearing humans. Throughout the ages and around the globe, the vast majority of people, past and present, have been led by their religions to believe that their existence literally continues in some form beyond the point of physical death" (25).

Similarly, Barnes acknowledges that people are strongly motivated to turn to a higher transcendental source and the concept of an afterlife to deal with the fear and reality of death. While Barnes accepts that belief in God and eternity can certainly ease the fear of death, he cannot find any consolation for himself in religion or God since he is an agnostic. He thinks that we might consider several options: "God exists, God doesn't exist, God exists but has abandoned us. God used to exist, but does not exist at the moment, he has taken a divine sabbatical. One thing we may have overlooked is maybe God is an ironist and making fun of us" (21). This idea of a "trickster" God is a far cry from the Christian perception of God as a benevolent father figure watching over us. The idea of a God who "sports" with life reminds us of the anthropomorphic Gods and Goddesses of mythology who embody human traits and show human weaknesses. The absence of a benevolent, compassionate Almighty and the possibility that God uses as some entertainment tool is even more disturbing than an absent God.

In brief, Barnes himself is deprived of the consolations of faith in God and religion in dealing with death. Instead, his outlook is fundamentally based on his own learning and the findings of modern science:

Life is a matter of random chance, man and his/her psychic life are products of evolution and there is no reason to believe that with *Homo sapiens* the process of evolution has come to an end: in the future human beings might well be replaced by other species more adaptable to the environment. Human altruism is an example of adaptive mechanisms, like, incidentally human fear of death. Death itself in turn is pre-programmed in living organisms, whose basic function is not prolonged human existence but transmission of genes. (Teske 2)

This is a very cut and dry, unsentimental perspective on human existence. It is also very mechanical and leaves no room for a higher order of "meaning" that might provide a consolation for the brevity of life. A man may fear his death but what is he? A mass of neurons. We do not produce thoughts, thoughts produce us. The brain is a lump of meat and the soul is merely "a story the brain tells itself". This materialist perspective provides a very bleak view regarding the

prospects of the human subject whose existence is reduced to its bio-physiological activities. So, ultimately, there is no comfort for Barnes in science.

Julian Barnes remarks that "Fear of death replaces fear of God. But fear of God at least allowed for negotiation.... We can't do the same with death. Death can't be talked down, or parleyed into anything: it simply declines to come to the negotiation table" (69). As this quote aptly illustrates, the reader constantly feels the anxiety of the author who doesn't believe in God or in after life but dreads his own mortality. Had Barnes been a believer, his dread probably wouldn't have been so strong. Yet in the absence of any sustaining illusions, he can hold on to, Barnes repeatedly maintains that the human being is completely left to his own devices when dealing with death. The apparent powerlessness of the individual vis-à-vis death is terrifying but also profoundly humbling.

Barnes states that his lack of religiosity is partly a result of his upbringing. He reveals that he belonged to a liberal family; his mother was an atheist and his father was an agnostic. In his words: "I was never baptized, never sent to Sunday School, I have never been to a normal church service in my life... I am constantly going into churches, but for architectural reasons; and more widely to get a sense of what Englishness once was" (Barnes 2008: 25). For Barnes Christianity is a cultural narrative that has had universal appeal because its message has resonated with certain deep-rooted needs in people and it was a well-written and engaging narrative: "It lasted because it was a beautiful lie, because the characters, the plot, the various coups de theatre the over-reaching struggle between Good and Evil made up a great novel" (53). Hence, it has been the powerful appeal of a well-constructed narrative that spoke to mortal humans who perpetually suffered due to existential anguish. As an explanatory "Grand Narrative," Christianity not only spoke to people's never-ending anxieties and fears but also offered them the hope of salvation. It is thus the emotional appeal of the doctrine that has had a powerful grip over the hearts and minds of people that made them believe what Barnes considers a beautiful, well-constructed lie.

In this context, the turn to and dependence on religion has been intimately linked with man's eternal quest for meaning in a seemingly absurd universe. However, Barnes believes that meaning of life resides where religion is drained. Thus, Barnes tries to find a meaning in Art, in the God of Art. For him, turning to art, instead of religion, for meaning is more appealing. Our contemporary period is also experienced as the era of "post-religion" in many parts of Europe, including England. In an interview on the decline of religious faith, Barnes says: "When a great story ends ... we all miss it ... There were aspects of it that leave a sense of want" (qtd. in Deflory 5).

Solomon et al. make a similar point with their distinction between "literal immortality" that is promised by many religions and "symbolic immortality" that is immortality through socio-cultural constructs:

> Our cultures also offer hope of symbolic immortality, the sense that we are part of something greater than ourselves that will continue long after we die. This is why we strive to be part of meaningful groups and have a lasting impact on the world—whether through our creative works of art or science, through the buildings and people named after us, through the possessions and genes we pass on to our children, or through the memories others hold of us. (26)

Although forms of "symbolic immortality" have always had a powerful grip over the human psyche, their appeal has certainly intensified and found a wider following with the decreasing role of official religion, especially in the advanced capitalist countries of the west. As Solomon et. al. further suggest: "These cultural modes of transcending death allow us to feel that we are significant contributors to a permanent world. They protect us from the notion that we are merely purposeless animals that no longer exist upon death. Our beliefs in literal and symbolic immortality help us manage the potential for terror that comes from knowing that our physical death is inevitable" (26).

In this sense, Barnes himself dwells at some length on the subject of immortality through art—that is "symbolic immortality—which is a theme explored by many artists throughout history. Barnes too believes that through the act of writing, he can make his own death a bit more difficult, he can perhaps "postpone" it: people may remember him when he is gone through his works but one day, there may be one last reader that will put him completely in oblivion. So as long as his books continue to "exist," Barnes will also exist in some shape or form, at least in the minds and memories of his readers. It is only when the writer ceases to exist as a thought also that he will finally be "dead". This kind of "death" could perhaps be more appropriately called "extinction" because it carries a stronger sense of finality.

As these reflections suggest, there is a very close relationship between memory, identity and existence. As Kermode contends: "the imagination … is a form-giving power in relation to the creation of stories" (Deflory 8). During his introspection of his own life, Barnes - like any other person - also reconstructs and reinterprets certain events from his past. What we remember as well as how we remember it has significant bearing on our identity. Our identity, our perception of who we are, gives a shape to our memories. In the book, this is evident in the discussions on their grandparents where Barnes and his brother disagree on several points. Barnes, believing that his grandfather had favoured his brother, observes that when his grandfather died, he left him nothing whereas his brother disagrees saying: "he left you his gold watch". This little anecdote goes on to prove that we perceive everything, including past events, through our subjective mental filters. No matter how hard we try, our memories—just like our perceptions—are flawed and skewed. We cannot help but be biased observes of everything including the past.

Creative Transcendence

A good question that might arise is the following: Why does Barnes fear death since he does not believe in life after death? Can one fear nothingness? Thanatophobia—fear of death—certainly appears to be a fact in Barnes' life— the writer obsessively thinks about death all the time. He awakens from sleep bathed in sweat and sometimes shouts. He imagines himself on an overturned ferry, or locked in a car and driven into a river or being taken underwater in the jaws of a crocodile. In this regard, Barnes' vibrant imagination becomes a curse. It is because of his powerful imaginative faculty that he suffers the pain of a million deaths created in his mind's eye. So, it is not only the reality but also the contemplation of death that might figuratively 'kill' a person many times before the event of his physical (actual) death.

The obvious irony is that one cannot be truly alive and appreciate life if he does not confront the fact of death. *Carpe Diem* (seize the day) cannot be realized without *Memento Mori* (remember death). As Barnes maintains: "For me, death, is the one appalling fact which defines life; unless you are constantly aware of it, you cannot begin to understand what life is about; unless you know and feel that the days of wine and roses are limited, and the roses turn brown in their stinking water before all are thrown out forever—including the jug— there is no jug—there is no context to such pleasures and interests as come your way on the road to the grave" (126). As Barnes aptly suggests, how can one truly know and appreciate the value of something without contemplating its absence? What would be the value of life if we were immortals? It is, in other words, the inevitable finality of life and our recognition of this fact that helps us know the worth of life and the living. When we remind ourselves that nothing lives for ever, we learn to appreciate existence as long as it lasts.

In his well-known work on literary criticism, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction,* Frank Kermode argues that the main reason why people create stories is the desire to give order to the chaotic design of the world. They try to bring order to chaos by writing stories with beginnings, middles and ends. The past always influences the present. Barnes' desire to reconstruct a single true account of the past can be observed in his exploration of our understanding of, and relationship with, the historical past in such works as *Flaubert's Parrot, Staring at the Sun, A History of the World in 10 and ½ Chapters* and *Arthur and George* among others (Deflory 2). However, in his more recent works, Barnes has dealt with the more personal aspects of the past. Barnes had dealt with the topic of death in his earlier fiction such as *Metroland* and *Lemon Table.* However, in his more recent works, he writes about bereavement and sorrow from a more personal space. Undoubtedly, the fact that he lost his wife in 2008 may have had a serious effect on his decision to focus on these subjects. *The Sense of an Ending, Pulse,* and *Levels of Life* are some examples of this shift.

In this context, the death of his parents looms large in Barnes' book. The writer maintains that people don't usually die from the cause that they imagine they will die from. Doctors thought that his father would die of a stroke, heart

trouble or abscesses of the lung, whereas Barnes thinks he died of giving up hope and exhaustion. His father is portrayed as a man who was resigned to situations he could not change. His mother, on the other hand, seems to have been the bossy type. Barnes believes that his father feared death whereas his mother feared incapacity and dependence more. His mother said she was glad that Julian hadn't seen his father during his last days as he was very shrunken, stopped eating and drinking and didn't speak. However, on her final visit, when she asked him if he knew who she was, he answered with the following words, which were probably his last: "I think you are my wife" (162).

Barnes always thought that his father's death would be the hardest death, since he loved him more but it turned out to be just the opposite. His father's death was his death whereas his mother's death was their death: it was the crumbling down of the family home… Things to be given away, letters, photographs to be torn up or put aside, etc. Barnes looks at his mother's body for a long time after her death. He observes: "Well done, Ma" and further states: "she had indeed done dying "better" than my father. He had endured a series of strokes, his decline stretching over years; she had gone from first attack to death more efficiently and speedily" (11).

Barnes is a great admirer of the philosopher Jules Renard. In fact, his own philosophy and his own views on life and death reflect Renard's philosophy to a large extent. Barnes is constantly preoccupied with the notion of death and when his friend R asks how often he thinks of death Barnes answers at least once a day (23). Yet he adds that he has got friends in much worse condition than he is in. For instance, one friend's death fright started at the age of four and continued well into his maturity, getting worse and worse. In his adult years, this friend turned out to be in a much worse state than Julian, thinking about death all the time. Barnes suggests that maybe thinking about death all the time is a good idea since it may be better to familiarize oneself with the reality of mortality.

As Solomon et.al. suggest: "Creative transcendence is obtained by contributing to future generations through innovations and teaching in art, science, and technology" (69). Barnes also entertains the possibility of "creative transcendence" and that his fear of death may therefore be connected with his chosen vocation of writing. He remembers the case of a comedian who was urged by a psychotherapist to question why he had become a comedian. When the comedian found out the reason, he stopped being a comedian. Thus, Barnes does not want to think in depth about the reason why he eventually became a writer. He thinks maybe the psychologists after examining him might say:

> Mr. Barnes, we have examined your condition and we conclude that your fear of death is intimately connected to your literary habits which are, as for many in your profession, merely a trivial response to mortality. You make up stories so that your name and some indefinable percentage of your individuality, will continue after your physical death, and the anticipation of this brings you some kind of consolation. And although you have intellectually grasped that you might well be

> forgotten before you die, or if not, shortly afterwards, and that all
> writers will eventually be forgotten, as will the entire human race, even
> so it seems to you worth doing. (67)

These psychologists might also suggest that they have developed a new brain operation that takes away the fear of death and then add that it is a straightforward procedure which doesn't require a general anaesthetic—indeed you can watch its progress on the screen. The operation will of course take away the writer's desire to write but they continue saying. "Many of your colleagues have opted for this operation but found it most beneficial. Nor has society complained about there being fewer writers" (67). In his customary witty tone, Barnes thinks that maybe he can negotiate for a better deal: "How about eliminating not the fear of death but death itself? You get rid of death and I'll give up writing" (67).

Barnes writes not only about his fear of death but about his fear of dying while he is writing a book, without having the chance to complete it. He even suggests to the reader that the reader can die before he finishes reading the book. Barnes thinks that for the writer also there are two options: "Would you rather die in the middle of a book and have some bastard finish it for you or leave behind a work in progress that not a single bastard in the whole world was remotely interested in finishing?" (109).

As I have suggested throughout, there is a felt resistance to death as not only evident in the title but it is also felt in various discourses on death throughout *Nothing to be Frightened Of*. In an interview on the subject of this book, Barnes remarks:

> You mustn't turn death into a metaphor, a guy with a scythe, Death isn't
> a single stalking figure that cuts you down. Death is just a process. It's
> just like some terrible, heartless, bland bureaucracy at work, busily
> fulfilling its quota, as it always does. To personify death with too many
> grades of emotion is to do it too much honour. (Gholami 123)

As Gholami observes, Barnes tries to resist death through several means in his book. He tries to resist death through bodily experiences, through the narrative and through the discourse of literature.

On the other hand, "Englishness" is a topic that Barnes frequently elaborates on in most of his novels including *England, England*. *In Nothing to be Frightened of*, Barnes deals with the emotion of fear and dread in the face of death in a peculiarly English way. As Callus observes:

> And yet this emotion, dread, is throughout conveyed with wry elegance.
> It is an exquisitely controlled and faultlessly judged performance and
> contradictorily self-effacing, self-baring emotion: a quite English
> staging of wistfulness where the balance between surgical
> reminiscence and deprecating self-knowledge is abated by the suave
> irony that drives the narration, and which saves the text from being
> oppressive. (62)

Barnes himself drew attention to how he employs humour and wit "to deflate the pathos by introducing something comic that is a very strong strand of British literature from Shakespeare onwards" (Callus 62). It could be suggested that Barnes once again displays a typical characteristic of the English, by being restrained when expressing "emotions" in this book. The dread Barnes feels in the face of "death" is a private emotion and typically, Barnes deals with this emotion "discreetly". The method Barnes uses in this book specifically is "humour".

For Barnes, irony is an important tool when dealing with the gloomy subject of death. Barnes believes that death is a culmination of the process that begins with the moment of our birth. He also states that in Montaigne's time, for instance, living up to old age was something rare, whereas, in our day and age, we tend to assume that living a long life is our right (40). In the words of Oré-Piqueraes: "For Barnes, having death present and actually talking about it is a way of learning both about life and death, since he himself quotes from Flaubert: "Everything must be learned from reading to dying" (95). From this perspective, meditating one one's mortality can be perceived as a form of philosophical practice that brings wisdom. We cannot really understand life in general and our own lives in particular without pondering on our finitude. Hard as it may seem, coming to terms with human mortality is part of our personal growth and development.

Conclusion

Julian Barnes' *Nothing to be Afraid Of* provides a memorable illustration of many insights provided by terror management theory which argues that: "the combination of a basic biological inclination toward self-preservation with sophisticated cognitive capacities renders us humans aware of our perpetual vulnerabilities and inevitable mortality, which gives rise to potentially paralyzing terror" (215). As he reveals at many points throughout his book, Barnes himself suffers from this "potentially paralyzing terror" and he also argues that it is a universally experienced phenomenon. Like Solomon et. al., Barnes is also keenly aware of the various coping mechanisms people have utilised in order to deal with the terror stemming from the fear of death:

> Cultural worldviews and self-esteem help manage this terror by convincing us that we are special beings with souls and identities that will persist, literally and/or symbolically, long past our own physical death. We are thus pervasively preoccupied with maintaining confidence in our cultural scheme of things and satisfying the standards of value associated with it. (Solomon et al. 216)

As Barnes points out, an important subject that cannot be separated from the concept of death is the concept of life, especially with regards to the fact that when one dies, one will inevitably lose connection with the many blessings of life experience. In this sense, contemplating our mortality may become a means of appreciating the beauty of life. Barnes observes that we do not have to believe in God in order to marvel at the beauties around us: "the harmony of

the snow flake, and the complex allusiveness of the passion flower to the spectacular showmanship of a solar eclipse. If everything still moves without a Prime Mover, why should it be less wonderful and less beautiful?" (71).

Barnes maintains that there is one good news and one bad news. Better listen to the good news first, maybe you can die before you hear the bad news. The good news is that we indeed get wiser as we grow older. The bad news, on the other hand, is: for every decade of life after the age of fifty the brain loses two percent of its weight. Barnes remembers the well-known saying that "We have been given the miracle of life because trillions and trillions of living things have prepared the way for us and then have died- in a sense for us" (179). However, Barnes rejects this belief saying: "There is no logical reason why the continuity of our species should depend on my death, or yours, or anybody else's. The planet may be getting a bit foolish, but the universe is empty - Lots Available -, as the cemetery placard reminds us" (176).

In brief, *Nothing to be Frightened Of* entails Julian Barnes' meditations on death, the death of his loved ones as well as other writers he admires. Despite his considerable and apparently lifelong efforts to understand death, he has not been able to reach a concrete idea about what life and death are all about. Like the celebrated philosopher Renard, Barnes observes: "One does not grow old. Where the heart is concerned, the fact is accepted, at least in matters of love. Well, it is the same with the mind. It always remains young. You do not understand life any more at forty than you did at twenty, but you are aware of this fact, and you admit it. To admit it, is to remain young" (12).

The concept and reality of death has engaged the minds of greatest thinkers and ordinary people alike since the beginning of time. Julian Barnes brings his own unique attitude to this subject in this remarkable book. However, like many others who dealt with this subject, he has no clear solutions nor explanations to offer. What he basically does is to approach the concept of death from various angles and perspectives, fusing personal anecdotes and memories in his usual witty style. Barnes believes that to die is to be "nothing". How can one be frightened of "nothing"? So, he concludes: "There is Nothing to be Frightened of".

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An Address to the Old Inveterate Foe:
A Comparative Reading of Anne Finch's "Ardelia to Melancholy" and Sabahattin Ali's "Melancholy"

Eski Müzmin Düşmana Hitap: Anne Finch'in "Ardelia to Melancholy" ile Sabahattin Ali'nin "Melankoli" Şiirlerinin Karşılaştırmalı Okuması[1]

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Abstract
The present study explores Anne Kingsmill Finch's "Ardelia to Melancholy" and Sabahattin Ali's "Melancholy" in terms of prolonged melancholia that afflicts the creative psyche of the authors. The study aims to analyse melancholic moods of the speakers represented through self-narratives, which serve as a curative method and means of expression. Based on the critical terminologies offered by Robert Burton and Julia Kristeva, the study argues that the two melancholic poems by Finch and Ali are comparable in terms of melancholic experience and that the melancholic states of the authors renovate into a milder form of melancholia, eventually indicating an aesthetic transformation through discursive *poiesis*. The study shows that the personas directly or indirectly try to overcome the state of objectless and causeless despondency by producing poetic discourse, and both melancholic cases are theoretically subject to an aesthetic transformation, but melancholia is observed to linger on the present cases. The paper concludes that the authors attempt to cure melancholia through poetic expression, and the very poems signpost a temporal possibility of repaired connection with language. Yet, the speakers are seen caught up in the disease in the last lines indicating retreat rather than treatment.
Keywords: Anne Finch, Sabahattin Ali, melancholy, aesthetic transformation, Kristeva

Öz
Bu çalışma Anne Kingsmill Finch'in "Ardelia to Melancholy" ile Sabahattin Ali'nin "Melankoli" adlı şiirlerini sanatçı yaratıcılığını etkileyen kronik melankoli açısından inceler. Çalışma, şiirlerinde sağaltıcı bir ifade aracı olarak öznel anlatılar üreten karakterlerin melankolik ruh hallerini incelemeyi amaçlar. Robert Burton ve Julia Kristeva'nın kuramsal terminolojilerini kullanan çalışma, Finch ve Ali'nin iki melankolik şiirinin melankolik deneyim açısından karşılaştırılabilir olduğunu ve yazarların melankolilerinin üretilen söylem dolayımında daha hafif bir melankoli formuna dönüştüğünü ortaya koyarak söylem üretimi yoluyla deneyimlenen melankolinin estetik dönüşüme uğradığını gösterir. Çalışma, şiirlerdeki anlatıcıların

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yaşadıkları nesnesiz ve nedensiz umutsuzluk durumunu şiirsel söylem üreterek doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak aşmaya çalıştıklarını; her iki melankolik durumun teorik olarak estetik bir dönüşüme tabi olduğunu ancak melankolinin tamamen sağaltılamadığını gösterir. Makale, yazarların şiirsel anlatım yoluyla melankoliyi iyileştirmeye çalıştıkları ve bizzat dilsel bir üretim olarak şiirlerin anlatıcıların dil ile bağlantılarının mümkün ve geçici de olsa onarılmış olduğu sonucuna varır. Yine de, son satırlardaki ifadeler hastalığın kalıcılığına ve sağaltımdan çok teslimiyete işaret eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anne Finch, Sabahattin Ali, melankoli, estetik dönüşüm, Kristeva

Introduction

Each age manifests its view of melancholy, incorporating new signifiers for each subtype/subcategory of a particular experience. Having been considered a somatic illness, spiritual illness, and mental illness, melancholy, as a persistent and lingering mood, evolved from a settled emotion to a momentary feeling, from personality to a mode of expression. The term has also been conceived through its cultural associations, simply exploring a mode of perceiving the outer world/the inner self. Possibly, no other concept but melancholy has such an exclusively debated historical background, yet "despite the remarkable nature of the term's internal history, all these interpretations center on the subjective, psychological, and somatic nature" (Ferber 3) of the subjective endeavour.

Stressing the direct correlation between melancholy and black choler, Burton provided a definition of the term, even if not a strict and coherent explanation, for the malady, explicating it as sadness without [adequate] cause. He classifies two basic types of melancholy; melancholy in habit and melancholy in disposition (Burton 127) and distinguishes the former from the latter in terms of following "a chronic or continuate disease, a settled humour" (Burton 128), which accordingly constitutes the main topic of his work as he suggests. He highlights sorrow and fear as a particular cause and symptom of melancholy and establishes a connection between the illness and intelligence/diligence.

Melancholic mood, for artistic, philosophical or socio-political reasons, appeared to be a recurrent motif particularly after the 18th century. Men of letters are recurrently associated with a personality trait or a pretension of sensitivity, intelligence, solitary, naivety or depression. It was romanticised and idealised in the different circles of the authors and turned into a style of life and a public posture for them. Many writers clung to the melancholic narratives, primarily autobiographical, to find a form of therapy for their non-communicable and causeless despair. In contrast, the others made use of melancholy as a popular poetic subject. Melancholy fell within the scope of psychiatry in time and emerged as a new object of research. Hence, it was even categorised as a mental disorder and gave up on all romantic associations, now being regarded as a grave illness that at times required hospitalisation.

Melancholy as a Response to Loss and Lack

The critical difference between mourning and melancholia was explained in the early 20th century, which enabled the critics to analyse the melancholic agents or speakers, whose voice is heard through the lines in the texts. Describing melancholy and mourning as a reaction to a form of loss, Freud makes a clear-cut distinction between the two terms, stating that mourning is due to a conscious loss of the object of desire (in the case of the death of a loved person or any other thing that may replace that loved person, such as ideals or homeland) whereas melancholia is a pathological mood due to nothing conscious (the thing). The subject becomes unable to articulate the reason behind the "affect"[2] (inability of referring to the loss), but the feelings of dejection are indirectly indicated through verbal expression. The language represents the affect and effect interwoven with the symptoms of melancholy, yet "the thing remains" untold.

The loss the melancholic subject experiences leads to the loss in the ego/self of the subject in a way that the melancholic directs the urges of aggression into herself/himself instead of the object that is believed to be lost. The melancholic who is obsessed with/fixated on the lost object of desire becomes unable to give up on that object that is gradually destroying her/him, and fails to replace that object with another, eternally mourning for the loss and in the end losing also herself/himself amid that loss. Resisting against surviving in the world dominated by the actual or imaginary loss of the object, the melancholic subject creates a world for himself/herself as "the world of the living dead is the fantasy world of the melancholic subject that cannot accept the reality of death and refuses to bury the object of his/her desire" (Berthin 87). So, the subject becomes spiritually dead as well with the actual/imaginary death of the object.

The melancholic subject acutely experiences a kind of loss, but s/he becomes unable to classify and define what is lost, which grows into an ultimate loss of desire for a particular object. In other words, the persona no longer desires the unknown object itself. Hence, "if the love object, which cannot be given up, takes refuge in narcissistic identification, while the object itself is abandoned, then hate is expanded upon this new-substitute-object, railing at it, deprecating it, making it suffer and deriving sadistic gratification from its suffering" (Freud 161-162). This sadistic pleasure is redirected into the ego/self of the subject so that the melancholic takes a pleasure from the pain/agony of the sufferings caused by the loss. Therefore, the melancholic becomes at the same time a masochist. It might be said that the melancholic subject, in fact, might distinguish between the object and the image so s/he accepts the loss of the object even though he keeps the image/imago still buried within himself/herself. So, within time, the boundaries of the object's

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[2] Melancholic affect is frequently confused with melancholic effect; the former refers to an active (and creative) state of the mind while the latter refers to the inactive self-paralysed by the loss.

shadow and the subject are blurred, and the melancholic loses his/her subjectivity.

Kristeva reinterprets the Freudian theory of loss about melancholia and associates the mental state with the concept of lack, replacing the object with the Thing. Referring to melancholia as "a noncommunicable grief" (3), Kristeva explains the state as "the institutional symptomatology of inhibition and asymbolia that becomes established now and then or chronically in a person, alternating more often than not with the so-called manic phase of exaltation" (9). Comparing melancholia to clinical depression, she defines the state as melancholy/depressive composite, which comes to mean that the borders of both are in fact merged. The melancholy/depressive composite is characterised by two basic symptoms, such as "object loss" and "a modification of signifying bonds" (Kristeva 10), and the melancholic subject mourns for the loss of the Thing that is as a matter of fact nonsignifiable. This Thing is "the center of attraction and repulsion, seat of the sexuality from which the object of desire will become separated" (Kristeva 13). In this respect, Freudian melancholia causes regression in libido of the subject, whereas Kristevian melancholia affects the sexuality itself.

The melancholic subject cannot comprehend and articulate the Thing, which cannot be signified and represented on the symbolic realm. The Thing manifests itself only with the presence of the melancholic affect and "is inscribed within us without memory" (Kristeva 14). Moreover, the subject does not lose the Thing, but instead suffers from the lack of the Thing, which means that it cannot be replaced and turns out to be pathological. The melancholic identifies with the Thing through "incorporation-introjection-projection" (Kristeva 11) and, thus, fails to distinguish the borders of the self and the Thing. Therefore, the melancholia ends up with the loss of the self, transforming the state into a kind of eternal mourning for the lost self, losing the loss itself with the self.

Kristeva establishes a strong correlation between the melancholic author and melancholic writing, stressing the fact that literary creation becomes the verbal evidence of the melancholic affect that surrounds the melancholic authorial persona. Literary writing enables the subject to transform the unnameable and nonsignifiable lack into textual narrative so that the subject might comprehend and perceive what s/he suffers from and manage the state or the melancholy mood at least on the textual realm. The lack of the Thing that coerces the melancholic subject into asymbolia in real life provides a bond through literary creation for the subject to hold onto and verbalise the affect. Berthin states that the writers perform this through introjection which he explains as

> Introjection is traditionally defined as the process by which grief is overcome through the gradual replacement of the lost object by signs that symbolise it. It is the act that consists of putting the original void into words. Introjection occurs when death can be related and when the use of past tenses opens up the prompted prospect of future healing. Melancholy is precisely born of an impossibility to condole,

condone and acquiesce in the symbolic murder that accompanies the act of symbolisation. (95)

The melancholic subject refuses language and experiences denial of the signifier, emerging as a mutilated self, roaming in an asymbolic realm due to the permanent prevalence of the lack. Literature provides the author with a semiotic space so that s/he might hold on to the signs again. It offers a third form, except for the loss/lack of the object/Thing itself, for the subject to attach himself/herself to. Thus, it produces a space for the melancholic to be reunited with the Thing/object itself.

Kristeva associates melancholia with the failing matricide of the subject and emphasises that what the melancholic man loses is replaced with another female substitute as in the case of a wife or girlfriend, but the female subject becomes unable to replace the loss unless with the risk of insanity or at the cost of homosexuality. Literature maintains a maternal space for the melancholic female subject who has already experienced a symbolic breakdown. Through negation and sublimation, the subject transforms the affect into "rhythms, signs, forms" (Kristeva 22) and transposes the agony into works of art. Kristeva defines negation as "a process that inserts an aspect of desire and unconscious idea into consciousness" (45), and sublimation as a kind of defence mechanism helps the subject transmute desire, mostly self-destructive in this respect, into more sublime form, narrative within this context. Hence, melancholy writings, mostly self-narrative within this framework, constitute a curative effect for the self-inflicted authorial persona and the melancholic implied (and historical) readership. Through the textual representation of the affect, the masochistic drives take the form of creative energy.

Melancholy is additionally a way of perceiving the outer world and inner self, and the subject and the object are both amalgamated within themselves. Describing the act of writing as a way of self-actualisation, Sartre states that "writing is not an unconscious act, it is the actual structure of my own consciousness," and to write, Sartre suggests, is to "acquire the active consciousness of the words born into the pen point" (47). As a self-reflexive act, writing enables the melancholic authorial persona to be conscious of and overcome herself/himself so that s/he might hold onto the world again. Through writing, the subject becomes able to comprehend and perceive the object/the Thing, so in the final analysis, the subject transforms himself/herself following the act itself. Hence, we can basically distinguish two types of melancholia that may refer to passive or active sadness. Passive sadness or melancholia is a psychosomatic condition characterised by paleness, love of darkness and solitude, the need for silence and irritability. It requires the subject to keep going/surviving and be active without sufficient cause/inner motive, since "most of the potentials in the world (such as daily chores, people to meet, daily routine) remain the same, yet the instruments that are necessary for these things to be carried out, the paths that constitute the *hodological* space are wholly changed" (Sartre 55). The subject that resists

against or fails at adapting to the presence of a new mode falls into the grip of passive melancholia and pretends, in a way, to be dead. Active sadness/melancholia takes any form and shape and causes the subject to develop the delusion that so much is unjustly expected from her/him as a human being. Therefore, s/he perceives the world as both hostile and antagonistic towards herself/himself. This type of melancholia arouses restlessness, agitation, and an extreme amount of joy in the subject as "the desire of the subject is fuelled by the very sight and vision of the object of desire" (Sartre 57). Historically and theoretically, writing and authorship require an acute and active state of sadness associated with Kristeva's "melancholic affect". The subject, on the one hand, becomes unable to act and falls into a pensive mood, which, on the other hand, makes him/her express himself/herself verbally. The very palpable evidence for this expressive ability is the discourse (written product) of the writers. Thus, active and passive phases of sadness/melancholia can be characterised by inaction or overactivity, both tempting the subject into the verbal realm of poetic discourse.

Finch's "Ardelia to Melancholy": A Narrative of Illness

Anne Kingsmill Finch, Countess of Winchilsea (1661-1720), stands as one of the most prominent eighteenth-century woman writers of British literature. She adopts the pseudonym Ardelia in her verses, which textually serves as her poetic persona. In "Ardelia to Melancholy," she recounts her subjective experience of melancholy that afflicted her during lifetime[3] and which constitutes the basic theme of the majority of her works.

> At last, my old inveterate foe,
> No opposition shalt thou know.
> Since I by struggling, can obtain
> Nothing, but encrease of pain,
> I will att last, no more do soe... (1-5)

Finch starts the narrative with a direct address to the personified melancholy, referring to it as her eternal foe. The persona has come to accept the superiority of the disorder and provides an explanation for this complete submission. She has finally discovered that fighting against the illness brings nothing but "encrease of pain" (line 4). Therefore, she regards reconciliation as a technique, at least on the textual realm, as a way of soothing her melancholy fits. The persona assumes that the act of othering melancholia ends up her being othered by the disorder, which is then aggravated more and more. Denial of the problem and displaying contempt and hatred, even repulsion, for the

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[3] Analysing the works of Finch from a historical-biographical viewpoint, Rogers establishes a strict connection between her life and works, stating that "she suffered from periodic neurotic depressions, probably triggered by emotional losses. Like many depressed patients, she had lost her parents as a child: her father died when she was an infant, her mother when she was three and her stepfather when she was ten" (21). It was common for the authors of the period to reveal their personal experiences in their works and Finch also follows the same path.

disease that becomes a metaphor for her authentic selfhood and authorial persona does not relieve the agony. Hence, she believes that she should stop objectifying melancholia to keep her subjectivity from both within and without the narrative. What she negates on the symbolic is then confronted and reconciled within the semiotic.

> Tho' I confesse, I have apply'd
> Sweet mirth, and musick, and have try'd
> A thousand other arts beside,
> To drive thee from my darken'd breast,
> Thou, who hast banish'd all my rest.
> But, though sometimes, a short repreive they gave,
> Unable they, and far too weak, to save;
> All arts to quell, did but augment thy force,
> As rivers check'd, break with a wilder course. (6-14)

In these lines, the voice recounts the symptoms of her melancholia and which methods she applies to calm the attack that at times turns out to be severe. The persona experiences her melancholia as a psychosomatic condition she tries to alleviate with several techniques, such as musicotherapy and laughter, which in the end fail no matter what. The female speaker associates her disorder with her "darken'd breast" (line 9) or heart, which is mostly regarded as the common indicator of feminine melancholy of the period. As a sign of the assumption of the weak feminine personality, the female sex is afflicted with melancholia, or spleen, that surrounds mostly the heart unlike the male sex that becomes melancholic due to the pure genius and suffers from the type of melancholia that affects the head/reason.

> Friendship, I to my heart have laid,
> Friendship, th' applauded sov'rain aid,
> And thought that charm so strong wou'd prove,
> As to compell thee, to remove... (15-18)

The melancholic persona changes her mode; the disorder becomes a soulmate rather than an enemy. The speaker aims to persuade the personified melancholy in a coaxing manner to protect herself from the fits. She achieves that purpose, at least on the narrative level. As a matter of fact, she comes to accept the significance of the disorder in her subjectivity as a woman and female writer. Melancholy constitutes the essential part of her identity, and the best way to deal with the disorder is to be aware of the state as an object in her subjectivity. Hence, she tries to learn to live with this condition instead of wasting time and energy fighting against it.

> And to myself, I boasting said,
> Now I a conqu'rer sure shall be,
> The end of all my conflicts, see,
> And noble tryumph, wait on me;
> My dusky, sullen foe, will sure
> N'er this united charge endure.

> But leaning on this reed, ev'n whilst I spoke
> It peirc'd my hand, and into peices broke.
> Still, some new object, or new int'rest came
> And loos'd the bonds, and quite disolv'd the claim. (19-28)

The idea of reconciliation with the disorder is in fact a strategy followed by the speaker to cope with the causeless despondency, at least at the moment of writing/creating. Yet, it proves useless for the poet who is interrupted by the sudden attack. Within this context, the relationship between the disorder and the poet is compared to the two parties that fight at the battlefield. Hence, the persona thinks of establishing peace with no success. Till now, the speaker only reveals the symptoms and the impact of the disorder upon her personal and professional life as an author, yet she never provides the implied and historical reader with explicative content about the cause/origin of the disorder which she might be unaware or fully aware. This additionally suggests that melancholy is considered as a pathological disease within this context. It also seems to imply that for the poet, the cause of the disorder is lost as and with herself. The persona as a whole turns out to be extremely self-conscious and self-obsessed over the course of the narrative for that reason.

> These failing, I invok'd a Muse,
> And Poetry wou'd often use,
> To guard me from thy Tyrant pow'r;
> And to oppose thee ev'ry hour... (29-32)

The persona reveals that she makes use of poetry as a form of therapy in order to seek a cure for the disorder and regulate the order of thought that at times becomes extremely chaotic. This is the common notion of literature prevailing the era. Authors applied literature as an antidote to melancholy; thus, literature served both a symptom and cure for the self-inflicted melancholia. As a self-reflexive act, the writing provides the historical author to comprehend and perceive what afflicts him/her and how it might be managed on the textual realm. The pathos that coerces the poet into denial of the speech becomes the basic subject matter of their works which they prefer to talk about.

The poet's invocation of the Muse in the midst of the self-narrative is significant in terms of deconstructing the poetic tradition. Keith explains this by stating that

> Through a variety of approaches to the eighteenth-century writer's tropological heritage, Finch's poetry redefines the boundaries between the poet and the nonrepresentable object. Her poetry does this in part by revising the classical tradition's tropological structure for poetic utterance: the poet's invocation of the Muse. (467-468)

In classical literature, the male poets invoke the Muse, mostly described as female, comparing the relationship to a love affair between two persons. However, as a female poet, Finch invokes the Muse, deconstructing this tradition as "Finch's poems counter this masculinisation of the poet and feminisation of the object of representation by establishing the poet's

identification with these objects" (Keith 498). As a poet, Finch overidentifies with the object she represents, melancholy, and the Muse she addresses to.

> New troops of fancy's, did I chuse.
> Alas! in vain, for all agree
> To yeild me Captive up to thee,
> And heav'n, alone, can sett me free.
> Thou, through my life, wilt with me goe,
> And make ye passage, sad, and slow.
> All, that cou'd ere thy ill gott rule, invade,
> Their uselesse arms, before thy feet have laid;
> The Fort is thine, now ruin'd, all within,
> Whilst by decays without, thy Conquest too, is seen... (33-42)

In the last lines, the speaker confirms the absolute superiority of the disorder over her psyche and life, using this as a kind textual strategy to deal with the issue. Comparing the illness to a kind of victor, she states that she is possessed by melancholy even though she appears as serene and calm from outside but all rotten inside, referring to the spiritual aspect of the illness. Thus, prayers might help her regain a more tranquil mood.

The melancholic text as a whole serves as a narrative of illness for the self-inflicted melancholic persona. The speaker solely provides the psychosomatic symptoms of her illness which constitutes the essential part of her subjectivity as a female writer and woman, and gives no hint about the cause or probable origin of the illness. The represented object within the narrative and the representing subject are amalgamated within themselves so that "by the end of the poem, representation has given way to presentation, and imitation to identification" (Keith 470). The speaker overidentifies with, projects and introjects the personified melancholia so that it becomes a subject in her life in which she is turned into an object.

The self-narrative functions as a form of negation and sublimation through which the historical author aestheticizes her dark melancholia and transposes the agony into creative pleasure. The text, therefore, serves as literary evidence of the non-signifiable melancholy. The persona's never referring to the cause of the disorder might be interpreted as that it is in fact brought about by a pathological lack, rather than loss, even though the life of the historical author is filled with many losses which might take the form of lack. The female persona achieves recuperation and reconciliation in the semiotic realm through the textual representation. As a female individual who fails on the symbolic due to the illness, she reforms an identity as an author via literary creation and transforms the label of the patient into a bohemian with creative genius. Therefore, the narrative provides a maternal space for the persona.

The mode of representation within the narrative is significant in terms of revealing the relationship of the speaker with the disorder. The speaker starts the narrative in a milder mode that aggravates within the text and ends up with acute despondency and helplessness. The poetic persona fails at

overcoming the state of melancholia from both within and without the text as a result. Hence, it might be said that the semiotic provides temporary relief, as in the case of antidepressants but does not heal the persona completely. Therefore, the persona pleads for mercy and help from God, assuming that prayer helps the symptoms decrease.

The text as a whole signifies the melancholic affect that cannot be put into words in any other way or remains nonrepresentable, nonsignifiable or noncommunicable, not only for the common folk and medical authority of the era but also for the historical author herself. The speaker's address to the Muse and finding refuge on the semiotic realm might be interpreted that melancholy is caused by the lack, that is, by the failing matricide of the maternal figure. Hence, she achieves a temporary cure through the semiotic, unlike the symbolic she fails at as a human being and woman. In accordance with the classical notions of Melancholy as a female figure, the persona might be said to introject the maternal figure/body that resists being murdered. The subject and the objects (melancholy and Muse) being described as female confirms this situation, creating embedded melancholia for the persona. In addition to all these, it should be emphasised that melancholic destruction of her subjectivity as an individual paves the way for the ultimate lack of the Thing that constitutes her identity and subjectivity as a female poet.

Death of the Mind: Sabahattin Ali's "Melancholy"

Of all modern Turkish authors, Sabahattin Ali (1907-1948) is among the most excruciating figure, who remained one of the most eminent authors of the 20th century Turkish literature. Even though he was a prolific writer who produced works in various genres, including drama, he was specifically known for his novels. He was primarily concerned with aesthetics and psychology through the panoramic lens of society. His elegantly melancholic romance *Madonna in a Fur Coat* (1943) attracted paramount critical acclaim from the readers and critics (Arslanbenzer). Furthermore, Ali penned more than fifty poems, published in a single volume, *Mountains and the Wind* (1932), where his exploration of poignant themes continued. His poetry would exhibit an amalgamation of romantic aspirations with modernist distress and anxiety through somewhat pastoral and natural elements, and depression, mourning and melancholy were among his favourite themes as well as nature. The poem "Melancholia," which was performed as a song by a famous Turkish pop singer, was composed in 1932 and related the subjective melancholic experience of the implied author.[4] Recurring the theme in a different socio-political

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[4] Some scholars adopt a historical-biographical approach and suggest that the author in fact revealed the hysteria of his mother in this poem, devoting the work to her in this respect. Bezirci states that his mother, Hüsniye Hanım, suffered from hysteria, a hereditary disease, and that was why she was prone to melancholia. She did not get on well with her husband, often arguing with him for no apparent reason and attempted suicide many times. She was even hospitalized a few times during her life (11). Bezirci additionally claims that her mother was extremely fond of her other son, Fikret, and showed no love and affection for Sabahattin Ali. These feelings of inferiority and inadequacy might form the basis of Ali's melancholic personality in his later life.

modernist context, he explores and represents the melancholy of his isolated inner world and communicates with the previous authors in a timeless realm of melancholic discourses.

Research to date shows that the elements of the melancholic mood of the persona and possible biographical disappointments of the poet have so far been frequently recognised and stressed. There were critics diagnosing a kind of romantic inclination through isolated passiveness and contemplation or mystic overflow of powerful feelings in his poetry (Sağlam; Narlı). So are there remarkable critical debates as to whether his poetry can be conceived as a continuum of sûfî tradition in modern Turkish poetry (Kara 2000). Furthermore, the majority of the readers are attracted by social themes or modernist elements in his poetry. There appeared some comparative studies highlighting the melancholic symptoms in Ali's poem and explaining it through historical references (Yıldırım 2020). Yıldırım highlights the "unbearable grief" that drives the poetic persona into melancholy, and argues that "melancholia occurs during times when deep unresolvable thoughts are at a dead end" (84). The melancholy represented in Ali's poetry, however, calls for further critical and theoretical analysis. Ali's oeuvre became popular and achieved a wide readership but the underlying melancholia in his poetry did not receive critical and theoretical response adequately.

Ali's self-narrative poem, "Melancholy" is included in his single volume of poetry *Dağlar ve Rüzgâr* (*Mountains and the Wind*: 1932), a collection of poems with belated Turkish romanticism. The poem "Melancholy" is one of the most succinct representations of the melancholic persona experiencing a melancholic mood and exhibits it as mental suffrage out of intrinsically imposed self-restrictions and crippling of the cognitive skills of the speaker. The persona experiences melancholy as simply a passing mood as fuelled by nothing. He cannot comprehend nor explain his mental state to anyone, textualising his desperate mood punctuated with the symptoms of melancholy. His discourse is a manifestation of his desire to gain an accurate perception of what he experiences. The text as a whole, therefore, provides the reader with verbal indicators of the melancholic affect (not merely melancholic effect). Throughout the narrative, the persona is portrayed as attacked by the sudden fit of melancholy, exasperating more and more all through the text. The psychological death of the author is verbally hinted, but the abrupt death of the mind at the end of the text indicates a verbal recovery.

Ali's somewhat narrative text functions as a way of negation (Kristeva) and sublimation on the part of the melancholic historical and implied authors as well as the melancholic historical and implied readers. Through negation (Kristevian dissolution of the symptom but negation is also a defining symptom of melancholia) or sublimation, the speaker transforms and transposes his nonrepresentable/nonsignifiable agony into the sublime form of art, making the sadness visible to both himself and the others. He transforms the urges of aggression into creative skills, creating a new identity for himself as an author/creator instead of the madman, and protecting his Self and body

from these urges. The text, thus, protects the implied and historical authors from masochistic drives.

The melancholic text opens up with a desperate and questioning reference to melancholy, the old inveterate foe in Finch's terms. The paradoxical situation portrayed by the persona in the lines "grief and most blissful day" sounds as if giving the definition of melancholy. The persona's retrospective memory becomes active when caught up by the pointless and vain state of melancholia, which refers to the unconscious object, the Thing, in Kristevian sense. Finch's mention of the powerful and "uncontrollable" melancholy goes along with depression. This "grip" of melancholia shows that the persona cannot control it. From the very beginning, the speaker talks about the symptoms and implies that it is not due to external factors, rather it occupies and lurks inside, even in the very beautiful day:

> A pointless grief holds me
> On the most blissful day
> My whole life is in my brain
> A bitter residue remains. (1-4)[5]

The implied author is painfully aware that he experiences feelings of dejection and despondency without no particular reason amidst joy and pleasure. What he is afflicted with in fact turns out to be a transient mood instead of a personality and character determined by routine and habits even though the mood becomes a pattern in his life. Once he is under the influence of melancholia, his retrospective memory functions in a destructive way so that the persona re-experiences the burden of the past, which might be shaped by traumatic events or moments. Even if the past is filled with joys of moments and relatively moderate events, the memory fails to provide positive aspects, giving the delusion that the past is simply agony. The use of the word "brain" (line 3) for the implied author to reflect his melancholia is significant in terms of associating the mood with the head, giving the impression that the disorder is in fact, related to neurology/mental state. The adjective "bitter" (line 4) is related to the taste, creating a connection between melancholia and sensations, and signifies that the mood prevents the persona from taking pleasure in any activities as melancholia causes inhibition and loss of interest in everyday life. Within this context, it might be said that the poetic persona has melancholia as a way of perceiving the outer world and the inner self.

The power of agony, pain is compared to the fire on skin develops with the restlessness, inner turmoil, accompanying paranoia and anxiety. The literary critics so far generally interpret it as a reference to the aspiration for "freedom," but it seems that it is critically a misreading and lagging remark. Here, the sense of melancholia has little to do with the literal sense of imprisonment, rather the following lines represent the acute phase of depression and paranoia, which irritates the nerves of the speaker. His

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[5] Our translation.

isolation from the world, his strong desolation and anti-social behaviour, if not a personality disorder, is portrayed:

> I do not understand my grief
> A fire burns my skin,
> I find my place narrow,
> My heart roams in the hills. (5-8)

The speaker experiences his melancholy in a unique way that turns out to be solely special to him. He displays both bodily and spiritual symptoms. His melancholy turns out to be a more socially categorised concept. Due to the melancholic attack, he becomes both misogynistic and self-alienated. He runs away from the crowded places to the rural areas in order to hide and manage the mood that at times becomes impossible to deal with. His introjection identifies with the melancholic mood, reuniting with the "affect" in the landscapes.

The persona suggests that he cannot comprehend the mood or make it comprehensible to anyone without sufficient reason and a noncommunicable and non-signifiable state. Yet, he experiences the melancholic affect with bodily symptoms, such as a fever that surrounds the body. It should be emphasised that these physical symptoms might not be genuine or, in other words, delusive, or the persona compares the affect to fever in order to make it understandable to the implied and historical reader. Moreover, this sadness manipulates the perceptions of temporal and spatial time of the persona in a way that it brings about restlessness and anxiety. This leads to the search for a fresh outdoor place and a strong inclination for the landscape, which further implies the persona's reunion with nature. It all fails no matter what on the part of the poetic speaker, in no way aggravating the mood state more and more.

> Neither winter nor summer
> Nor a friendly face I would like,
> I just want a little light,
> Then comes pain, and agony. (9-12)

In the grips of the melancholic affect, the persona becomes extremely introverted, experiencing difficulty with interpersonal functioning. This causes denial of the speech and alterations in the perceptions of the persona. Therefore, he goes far away from people, even from the closest ones, to mourn for the lost self. He only dreams of liberation from his desperate mood and desires for space and freedom, the healing from the pathos that seems to never end and torment him forever. Yet, he suffers from a dull ache and feels a prick of agony.

> My arms fall numb besides me
> My paths become invisible,
> My wishful desires
> Lay dead in front of me… (13-16)

The paralysed speaker's deep state of despair is marked with confusion and anxiety and refers to hopelessness and ultimate passivity. Due to the melancholic mood, the speaker undergoes a self-estrangement in addition to social alienation during the fits of disorder. His constant references to himself through possessive adjectives (my) and object pronouns (me) indicate his isolation as well as estrangement. In other words, the introverted persona is redirected towards himself, wrapping upon himself, losing his sense of self and giving up all that he has. Güngör's research as to the statistics of Ali's poetry supports such arguments, which demonstrates that the subject pronoun is the second most repeated word in Ali's poetry. This state of self-isolation, self-alienation, self-consciousness and introjection seems due to his loss of hope to recover the desired object, which makes the persona suffer from lack resulting in an ultimately passive sadness in the given context. The self loses his capacity to overcome his mood and recurrently fails to have prospects for a better and bright future. He wants to succeed the things he aims for in the first place, but the reversal in the mood alters his perceptions and destroys the necessary instruments to carry out this goal. Hence, the plans he has made at times of calmer mood appear to be dreamy and are doomed to fail at times of melancholic attack. He thus feels dead and numb both from within and without. Melancholy sets up barriers to self-actualisation.

> Neither a friend, nor a lover,
> A madman away from the world...
> It's melancholy that wraps me:
> And my brains die. (17-20)

Melancholy destroys mental faculties such as thinking, fancy and imagination. The following lines where the persona cannot think, cannot imagine, cannot feel (numb) indicate the significance of "brain" in an author's life and implies a fear of "mental disorder". This is a critical reference to the "primacy of thought and imagination" in an artist's existence. The persona's self-diagnosed statement shows that he perceives himself from without. He is aware of his sheer state of anti-social behaviour and mere isolation from the outer world. The persona has a misogynistic outlook on life, rejecting social gender roles because of the permanent melancholy. He becomes unable to perform the roles ascribed to the male sex in society. In terms of self and style of life, he is distinguished from the others, feeling as an outcast in himself and for himself. Yet, as he cannot comprehend the reason lying behind such dejection, he calls himself a madman. Once again, in the narrative, he associates the mood with the head/brain, revealing that the mind of the persona is destroyed due to the attack.

The mode and the style of the speaker is significant in terms of revealing the melancholic affect. The speaker associates his melancholy with mostly physical and mental concepts, such as pain, agony and madness. He defines the experience as being dead from both within and without. He solely depicts and describes the affect, aiming to provide a vivid image, even though he fails to understand and rationalise it. It might be interpreted as that the speaker

suffers from the loss of the self and loss of the Thing instead of the loss of the object of desire. Yet, he loses both himself and desire itself as an object. He loses the speech as well at times of melancholy, turning out to be a social misfit. His desire is fixated chiefly on melancholy as an object, which in returns affects his sexuality/sexual identity. The text provides a bond with the language itself that, in fact, is destroyed due to melancholy. It generates a semiotic space for the persona who fails to exist in the symbolic realm.

Conclusion

Finch and Ali's poems (self-narratives of melancholy) indicate critical points of comparison and contrast in terms of the experience and representation of melancholy. Both texts imply that there is just a little gap between the historical and implied authors, then the personas appear to be female and male, respectively. Finch associates her melancholy with heart, whereas Ali associates it with head, which manifests the distinguishing characteristics between the historical periods they produced art as well as gender differences. It is additionally significant that the subjective experience of melancholy differs in two poems: In the first poem, the persona experiences melancholy as a disease, whereas the persona in Ali's poem experiences it as a kind of mood disorder. Finch's speaker directly addresses the personified melancholy, whereas Ali's merely talks about his melancholy. Finch's persona struggles and confronts melancholy on the textual realm, whereas Ali's persona just describes it. Two poems' attitude towards a cure is accordingly different: The former remains to be in search of recovery, whereas the latter never refers to any curative method. We can argue that Finch's discourse represents physical melancholy in Burton's sense, whereas Ali's discourse represents a mental case of melancholy in a Kristevian sense. Hence, the poems suggest that Finch deliberately and consciously uses poetry as a form of therapy, whereas Ali never implies it, but applies poetry in search of a therapeutic effect. Both accept the superiority of melancholy both from within and without the narrative. Finch's text, most probably under the influence of the era, exploits personification and allegory as an extended metaphor; however, Ali's poem describes melancholy indirectly, mainly focusing on its effect on the mind of the persona. In other words, Finch's speaker tells us about the stages of a figurative battle and the siege of melancholy while Ali's deals with the symptoms and results of melancholy. Finch depicts a persona struggling against melancholy, but Ali portrays a desperate persona numb and passive. Lastly, the only thing they can do is to alleviate the symptoms through language. They are suffering from lack; they are losers; yet not ultimately lost, for they still produce poetry, keeping connected to the verbal discourse and language (the symbolic).

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A Relentless Quest for a Paradoxical Normality:
Sally Rooney's *Normal People*
Mantığa Aykırı Bir Normalliğin Peşinde Amansız Bir Arayış:
Sally Rooney'nin *Normal People* Romanı

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Abstract

Sally Rooney's *Normal People* (2018) documents the complex, unstable, but, at the same time, passionate relationship between two young and intelligent individuals, Marianne Sheridan and Connell Waldron, from 2011 to 2015. While their stormy relationship goes through various separations and reattachments, Marianne follows a paradoxical quest to deal with her psychological wounds stemming from family violence and abuse in her childhood; she chooses to remain silent and adopts masochistic sexual practices. Accordingly, this study will first explore how Marianne's silence serves as a means of dealing with emotional and physical violence. It will then move onto analyse how Marianne's harrowing past of violence and abuse pushes her to adopt masochistic sexual practices that give her some relief even if temporarily. By demonstrating that Marianne's self-definition by keeping loyal to her wounds is a quest that can be defined as a paradoxical normality, this study will draw attention to one of the most important problems of our age; violence against women and their coping strategies to deal with violence.

Keywords: Sally Rooney, *Normal People*, violence, silence, masochism, self-definition

Öz

Sally Rooney'nin *Normal People* (2018) isimli romanı Marianne Sheridan ve Connell Waldron isimli iki zeki gencin arasındaki 2011'de başlayıp 2015'e kadar devam eden karmaşık, istikrarsız, fakat aynı zamanda da tutkulu ilişkiyi yazıya döker. Marianne, bir taraftan fırtınalı ilişkilerinde birçok ayrılık ve birleşme yaşarken, diğer bir taraftan da çocukluğunda yaşadığı ev içi şiddetle ve tacizden kaynaklanan psikolojik yaralanmalarıyla baş etmek için paradoksal bir yol izler; sessiz kalmayı tercih eder ve cinsel mazoşist davranışları benimser. Bu çalışmada, ilk olarak Marianne'nin sessiz kalmasının ne ölçüde duygusal ve fiziksel şiddetle savaşmaya yaradığı incelenecektir. Daha sonra ise, Marianne için hem kısa sureli rahatlık sağlayan hem de kendini tanımlamasına yardımcı olan cinsel mazoşist davranışların şiddet ve taciz tarafından nasıl tetiklendiği analiz edilecektir. Böylece, bu çalışma Marianne'in yaralarına sadık kalarak kendini tanımlamasının paradoksal normallik denebilecek bir arayış olduğunu göstererek, günümüzün en önemli sorunlarından biri olan kadına karşı şiddetin ve kadınların şiddetle baş etme yollarının altını çizecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sally Rooney, *Normal People*, şiddet, sessizlik, mazoşizm, kendini tanımlama

Introduction

Why be happy when you could be normal?
Jeanette Winterson (2012)

Though herself young, Sally Rooney (born 1991) is a highly praised Irish writer of two remarkable novels—*Conversations with Friends* (2017), winner of the 2017 Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year and *Normal People* (2018), winner of the Costa Prize for the Novel of the Year, Waterstones Book of the Year and An Post Irish Novel of the Year 2018. In her first critically acclaimed novel, the story revolves around the complex relationships among four characters; the narrator Frances, a twenty-one-year-old poet and student at Trinity College, Dublin; Bobbi, Frances's best friend and, at the same time, ex-girlfriend; Melissa, the photographer and journalist; and Nick, Melissa's actor husband. Frances and Bobbi have an interconnected relationship which helps them to understand each other's feelings and thoughts easily even if they remain silent. When, for example, Frances suffers from period pain and locks herself in the bathroom, Bobbi slides some painkillers under the door in a soothing silence. However, their unity is fractured when they meet Melissa in one of their spoken word poetry performances. They are gradually drawn into a *ménage à quatre*; Bobbi takes a liking to Melissa while Frances and Nick embark on an affair that puts their relationships with Bobbi and Melissa to a test. More importantly, Frances goes through a difficult journey; she starts to question her personality, suffers from inferiority complexes, fails to nourish her self-esteem and, above all, imagines and/or inflicts self-harm once and again.

This kind of self-destruction is likewise at the centre of *Normal People*, which dramatizes the intense but, at the same time, conflicted and unstable sexual and emotional relationship between two young and intelligent individuals, Marianne Sheridan and Connell Waldron, from 2011 to 2015. When they are first drawn to each other, they are both in the final year of high school in County Sligo, Ireland. Marianne comes from a wealthy but emotionally poor family; she lives with her abusive brother, Alan, and her widowed mother, Denise. While Alan physically abuses and frightens Marianne—like her father who would hit her when she was a child—her mother emotionally abuses her as she believes that Marianne is unlovable and frigid. What Marianne does in response to family violence is to keep silent. To make things worse, her mother finds violence against her daughter acceptable because she thinks Marianne is devoid of warmth. Not surprisingly, Marianne turns out to internalize such physical and emotional violence during her teenage years and adulthood; she is a loner who finds herself unlovable, damaged and worthy of abusive behaviour. In contrast, Connell, a good-looking, popular and well-liked student, lives with his caring and loving single mother who works as a cleaning lady for the Sheridans. Connell is reluctant to reveal his affair with Marianne as he is afraid of losing his popularity if his friends learn about their relationship. However, when they both move to Dublin for university, they change roles; Marianne gains popularity among her friends whereas Connell only gets "the

status of rich-adjacent" just because of his connection with Marianne (Rooney *Normal People* 99). At university, their relationship goes through a difficult journey as a result of misperceptions and silences between them. In the meantime, in her affairs with other men like Jamie and Lukas, Marianne discovers her inner need for abusive, demeaning, unloving, and sadistic partners who have the potential to inflict physical and emotional violence on her. Ultimately, she prefers to embrace her wounds although she finds the opportunity to have a healthy and normal relationship with Connell.

Since its publication in 2018, Rooney's *Normal People* has received critical reviews and analyses from various standpoints ranging from affect studies to globalism. In his review, Alan Eppel argues that Marianne and Connell experience their true selves only in their unique relationship which "keeps throwing them back together with feelings of love and sexual union" (n.p.). Similarly, Kate Clanchy states that the novel is a love story that shows the meaning of being young and in love at any time in one's life (n.p.) while Dwight Garner explores the intense love across social classes in the novel (n.p.). One step further, Annalisa Quinn looks into the possibilities of love under the effects of capitalism as represented in *Normal People*. According to Quinn, the novel presents the possibilities of a generous and fair country despite the inequalities and difficulties brought along by global capitalism and class differences (n.p.). Even though the novel has been analysed from these standpoints, little attention has been paid to how Marianne responds to violence exercised by her family and partners. Accordingly, this study will first analyse Marianne's silence as a source of empowerment against physical and emotional violence. In order to better understand Marianne's silent revolt, this study will reconsider violence against women, an issue that still needs to be solved globally. It will then explore how Marianne's dreadful childhood memories of abuse drag her towards masochistic practices in the long run that provide her with some relief once and again. Finally, this study will try to demonstrate that the way Marianne embraces her wounds is what defines her identity, a phenomenon that is widely recognised in twenty-first century British fiction. In doing so, this study will analyse *Normal People* as an exemplary contemporary British narrative that makes readers think critically about how women respond to violence and paradoxically define themselves through their wounds.

Silence as a Form of Nonviolence

As outlined above, one of the defining characteristics of *Normal People* is violence against Marianne, a vulnerable woman exposed to her family's and partners' physical and sexual abuse. In the *OED*, violence is defined as "the exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on, or cause damage to, persons or property; action or conduct characterized by this; treatment or usage tending to cause bodily injury or forcibly interfering with personal freedom" (n.p.). As the critics Jane Kenway and Lindsay Fitzclarence state, violence "occurs along a continuum and involves physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuses of power at individual, group and social structural levels" (117). What

deserves great attention is that violence that is carried out either through physical force or attitudes is not only concerned with physical damage to the body but also with the possible loss of personal freedom. For what purposes and by whom violence is defined turns it into a more complex issue though. As literary critic Sarah Cole explains, violence has been considered a point of origin not only by ancient cultures and religions but also by modern nations as seen in wars or large-scale events which have resulted in the killing or destruction of vulnerable people (3). Besides, although various nations have resorted to violence in order to protect their countries or obtain their freedom, the result is not always victorious, triumphant, or complete (Cole 3). To put it differently, violence that is used in the name of defending or founding one's country has unsurprisingly resulted in failure and destruction, especially when considering its implications for minorities and vulnerable groups.

Unfortunately, nothing much has changed in the twenty-first century that has been witnessing various forms of violence against vulnerable people including women all over the world. The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (2). According to a recent study by the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women are exposed to such acts of violence globally, which leaves a profound impact on their physical and mental health (WHO "Addressing Violence" 2). Women might be exposed to these violent attacks at any stage of their lives in different forms. In its report on violence and health, WHO divides violence into three broad categories depending on who commits violence; self-directed violence, interpersonal violence and collective violence (WHO "World Report"4). Self-directed violence is concerned with suicidal behaviour and self-abuse; interpersonal violence includes family and/or intimate partner violence and community violence; and collective violence is exercised by a group of people against another group of individuals (WHO "World Report" 4-5). Although any form of violence against women has been widely recognized as a human rights issue, it is still a pervasive and salient problem that needs to be solved as represented in twenty-first century fiction. These works include but are not only limited to those written by Irish women writers; Marian Keyes's *This Charming Man* (2008), Eimear McBride's *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* (2013), Anna Burns's *Milkman* (2018) and Rooney's *Normal People* are just to name a few.

As a solution to fight against violence, contemporary fiction has presented the strategy of silence, which can be taken as a form of nonviolence. In her recently published work *The Force of Nonviolence* (2020), Judith Butler argues that the only way of finding a life in our contemporary world saturated with inequities and violence is adhering to the principle of nonviolence which "requires a certain leave-taking from reality as it is currently constituted, laying open the possibilities that belong to a newer political imaginary" (10-11). In this context, silence might be considered as a means of nonviolence that provides the victims of violence with the possibility of detaching themselves from reality as

it is currently established. Although usually associated with the absence of speech, silence is regarded as a communicative and polyphonic mechanism against violence, especially by feminist scholars. According to Nancy Bonvillain, silence is an instrument of nonverbal communication, as it "transmits many kinds of meaning dependent on cultural norms of interpretation" and "conveys meaning, as does all communication, partly from the situational and interactional contexts of its use" (38). When considering its implications for feminist studies, silence is a discourse that conveys various meanings ranging from passivity and oppression to resistance, agency, persistence, subversion, defiance and transformation, depending on cultural, social, and rhetorical mechanisms. Social feminists like Marsha Houston and Cheris Kramarae argue that women's silence prolongs their oppression and passivity because silent women tend to remain disconnected from the rest of the society and face mistreatment and oppression in the long run (389-393). Therefore, as Adrienne Rich states, they might have to deal with "namelessness, denial, secrets, taboo subjects, erasure, false-naming, non-naming, encoding, omission, veiling, fragmentation and lying" (18). However, feminists like Debra A. Castillo and Jane L. Parpart or Swati Parashar underline the empowerment gained through silence. Drawing on a distinction between silence as a condition imposed from the outside and a freely chosen strategy, Castillo argues that women use "the mask of silence to slip away. Silence, once freed of the oppressive masculinist-defined context of aestheticized distance and truth and confinement and lack can be reinscribed as a subversive feminine realm" (40). Similarly, Parpart and Parashar argue that silence can be a choice, a coping mechanism to deal with toxic and/or dangerous situations as well as a source of agency and empowerment (4). Thus, critics like Castillo, Parpart and Parashar approach silence from a different perspective and underline its transformative potential, especially for women exposed to violence in any form in contrast to its oppressive effects on their lives.

In *Normal People*, silence turns out to be a coping mechanism for Marianne to deal with her family members' physical and/or emotional violence once and again. For example, when she is physically abused by her brother—he questions her insistently, holds her tightly by the upper arm and drags her back from the door—the only thing she does is to keep silent and put on a placid but, at the same time, insolent smile (Rooney *Normal People* 9-10). Similarly, she retreats into silence against her mother's emotional abuse: "Denise decided a long time ago that it is acceptable for men to use aggression towards Marianne as a way of expressing themselves" (65). Although Marianne tries to fight against her mother's attitude in her childhood, later on in her adulthood she "simply detaches, as if it isn't of any interest to her, which in a way it isn't" (65). Instead of trying to show any reaction against her mother and brother or speak about what she has gone through, Marianne prefers to isolate herself and keep silent.

As we learn in the following pages, Marianne's silent revolt against both her brother and mother is not imposed from the outside but is a freely chosen activity. For example, when she studies at university, her friends prefer to

celebrate Christmas with their families. In contrast, Marianne decides to keep away from them not only for Christmas but forever: "she imagines scenarios in which she is completely free of her mother and brother, on neither good nor bad terms with them, simply a neutral non-participant in their lives" (195). Marianne's scenarios of retreating into her shell are not only based on her imagination but originate from her real-life experiences:

> She spent much of her childhood and adolescence planning elaborate schemes to remove herself from family conflict: staying completely silent, keeping her face and body expressionless and immobile, wordlessly leaving the room and making her way to her bedroom, closing the door quietly behind her. Locking herself in the toilet. Leaving the house for an indefinite number of hours and sitting in the school car park by herself. (195)

In doing so, Marianne chooses to use her silence as a source of empowerment that helps her to escape from abuse and its aftereffects even if for a short time. As suggested by Castillo, Parpart and Parashar, silence is a coping mechanism for women. In this sense, silence helps Marianne to dissociate herself from abusive and violent behaviour of her family and provides her with a different realm of her own. However, her experiences of childhood and teenage abuse move Marianne from silence towards masochistic sexual practices in her adulthood as she believes her body is the only space to express herself and enjoy her individual freedom.

Childhood Abuse and Masochism

Since its conceptualisation in the nineteenth century by Richard von Krafft-Ebing, masochism has been a much debated issue. In his analysis of the sexual abnormalities of the protagonist Severin von Kusiemski in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* (1869) who willingly submits himself to abuses, mistreatments, and humiliations of the merciless Wanda von Dunajew, Krafft-Ebing defines masochism as "the wish to suffer pain and be subjected to force … the idea of being completely and unconditionally subject to the will of a person of the opposite sex; of being treated by this person as by a master, humiliated and abused" (131). Among people most prone to masochistic tendencies are those exposed to early childhood abuse. As Judith Lewis Herman argues, survivors of abuse in childhood "are particularly vulnerable to repeated harm, both self-inflicted and at the hands of others" (119). On the one hand, these children exposed to abuse inflict harm on themselves because this is the only form of love they know. As Bernhard Berliner states, "the dependent child … submits and accepts the suffering … In this way, the masochistic person has learned to gravitate toward punitive others because this is the only kind of intimacy that he or she knows" (461). Not surprisingly, when these children grow up, they adopt a pathological way of loving and tend to be involved in problematic relationships that repeatedly drag them towards self-destruction and victimhood.

On the other hand, some of these victims might have recourse to masochistic practices because they want to gain control over their harrowing childhood memories of abuse and try to relieve themselves, even if for a short time. Sigmund Freud traces the rationale behind masochistic practices in the subject's need to gain mastery over an unwillingly experienced event, especially in childhood. In this context, Freud draws a correlation between masochistic practices and his grandson Ernest's *fort-da* game in which he repetitively throws a toy out of sight because of his mother's abandonment of him:

> At the outset, he [the child] was in a passive situation--he was overpowered by the experience; but, by repeating it, unpleasurable though it was, as a game, he took on an active part. These efforts might be put down to an instinct for mastery that was acting independently of whether the memory was in itself pleasurable or not. (15)

Thus, the child masters activity and agency over his undesirable experience of being abandoned. Following in the footsteps of Freud and Herman, Glen O. Gabbard states that "[p]atients who re-create the abusive and humiliating experiences from childhood are re-working a traumatic experience, but this time on their own terms with themselves in the driver's seat" (104). One step further, Novick and Novick argue that "masochism is the active pursuit of psychic or physical pain, suffering, or humiliation in the service of adaptation, defence, and instinctual gratification at oral, anal, and phallic levels" (261). Similarly, Robert D. Stolorow emphasizes that masochism has the "function of restoring and sustaining the cohesiveness, stability and positive affective colouring of a precarious, threatened, damaged or fragmenting self-representation" (447). As suggested in these lines, masochism does not necessarily signify merely pleasure in pain but provides the subject with the potential for gaining mastery over an agonizing past and re-affirming self-cohesion.

In *Normal People*, Rooney presents a telling example of masochism stemming from childhood abuse through a portrayal of Marianne's precarious and fragmented self-perception. Under the influence of her childhood memories imbued with her father's, brother's and mother's abusive treatments, Marianne believes she is an unlovable and cold person who deserves to be treated badly (133). Besides, she is disconnected from life: "Marianne had the sense that her real life was happening somewhere very far away, happening without her" (11). She also feels that she is quite different from the people around her: "I don't know why I can't be like normal people ... I don't know why I can't make people [like her brother and mother] love me" (181). For example, when Marianne's brother tells her to kill herself as she has no friends, the only thing her mother does is to say "don't encourage her" (182). Feeling ostracized by her family, Marianne embarks on a relentless quest to find her real life and get closer to normality that she paradoxically identifies with adopting masochistic relationships. As she confesses to Jamie, she is submissive to her partners: "I like guys to hurt me" (138). Although she does not respect Jamie for tying her

up and beating her with various objects, she is motivated by "an overwhelming desire to be subjugated and in a way broken" (13). In line with Herman's arguments, Marianne, a victim of childhood abuse, is vulnerable to harm at the hand of others like Jamie; she cannot help submitting herself to his abusive treatments. Thus, she is inclined towards a punitive lover and adopts a pathological affair because this is the only form of intimacy that she knows.

At the same time, however, masochistic sexual practices provide Marianne with some kind of relief even if temporarily. In her next affair with Lukas, Marianne is engaged in severe and violent masochistic sexual practices: "He [Lukas] squeezes her throat slightly and she coughs. Then, not speaking, he lets go of her. He takes up the cloth again and wraps it as a blindfold around her eyes … and she feels sick" (197). According to Lukas, they are enjoying a game in which Marianne is not allowed to respond at all: "If she breaks the rules, she gets punished later" (190). Besides, Lukas repeatedly uses demeaning words to address her: "You're worthless … You're nothing. And she feels like nothing, an absence to be forcibly filled in" (190). Although she does not like the way he speaks, "it relieves her somehow…. She experiences a depression so deep it is tranquillising" (190). Echoing Stolorow's and Novick and Novick's promotions of masochism in the service of restoring a damaged identity and sustaining cohesiveness, Marianne gains some kind of relief and a way out of her depression by opting for a masochistic sexual affair with Lukas. Her choice confirms that masochism provides the subject with positive affects though for a short period of time.

Embracing Wounds of the Past

Along with their soothing effects, Marianne's masochistic tendencies are her self-defining features as reflected in her relationship with Connell. Marianne is submissive to Connell, but, unlike Jamie or Lukas, Connell refrains from getting engaged in masochistic practices with her. The passion between Marianne and Connell drives them towards a stormy relationship which goes through many separations and re-attachments. When they are reunited for the last time, Marianne asks Connell to hit her during their sexual intercourse. In line with Marianne's gradual transformation into a masochistic person, this is not surprising though. As Connell believes it would be weird to hit her, he declines Marianne's request, which makes her stop having sex with him and realize that they have become different people over the course of years:

> Connell has been growing slowly more adjusted to the world, a process of adjustment that has been steady if sometimes painful, while she herself has been degenerating, moving further and further from wholesomeness, becoming something unrecognisably debased, and they have nothing left in common at all. (238-239)

Thus, Marianne accepts the fact that it is impossible for her to change the person she has become; she is a masochist with a damaged and fragmented personality. One step further, Connell's patient, caring, affectionate and thoughtful attitude towards Marianne makes her question his love and their

relationship: "Was it just a game, or a favour he was doing her? Did he feel it, the way she did?" (258) What might be inferred from Marianne's questioning is that she finds it strange when she is treated well by her partner. As abusive behaviour is the only form of intimacy she knows, she cannot adapt to a healthy and loving relationship with Connell.

Accordingly, Marianne tends to embrace her wounds stemming from her abusive past instead of living a normal life with Connell that depends on mutual love and respect. When Connell openly and frankly shows his love of Marianne in public, she is disturbed as she feels that their relationship is about to metamorphose into an ordinary attachment:

> How strange to feel herself so completely under the control of another person [Connell], but also how ordinary. No one can be independent of other people completely, so why not give up the attempt, she thought, go running in the other direction, depend on people for everything, allow them to depend on you, why not. (261-262)

Although Marianne gets close to turning a new page in her life by continuing an interdependent relationship with Connell, she neither chooses to rely on him nor lets him do so. As the novel draws to a close, Connell is offered a place in a creative writing program in New York and Marianne decides to stay in Ireland and insists on him leaving her (265-266). Paradoxically, however, she accepts that the only person who has brought her happiness and goodness is Connell and "what they have now they can never have back again" even if Connell returns from New York in the future (266). Thus, she does not choose to have an interdependent relationship with Connell but keeps loyal to her wounded self.

Such behaviour of Marianne's can be better understood as an example of defining the self through the wound, a mode of existing in contemporary fiction that has been addressed by Susana Onega and Jean-Michel Ganteau in their co-edited work *The Wounded Hero in Contemporary Fiction: A Paradoxical Quest* (2018). As they brilliantly state, there is "a new type of (physically and/or spiritually) wounded hero(ine) immersed in a paradoxical life quest that involves the embracing, rather than the overcoming, of suffering, alienation, and marginalisation" (7-8). Among these heroes and/or heroines are anorexic, bulimic and hysterical characters as well as the members of the gay community during the rise of the AIDS crisis, tramps and outlaws "who willingly embrace marginalisation, exclusion, suffering, and paradoxical invisibility as a form of self-definition" (Onega and Ganteau 8). Similarly, in *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (2012) Jeanette Winterson states that "all my life I have worked from the wound. To heal it would mean an end to one identity-the defining identity" (223). In that sense, Onega and Ganteau list such wounded heroes and heroines in contemporary fiction as Lisa Genova's *Still Alice* (2007), Alan Hollinghurst's *The Stranger's Child* (2011), Jon McGregor's *So Many Ways to Begin* (2007) and Jeanette Winterson's *The Gap of Time* (2015) (12). However, this does not mean that the figure of the wounded hero(ine) is only visible in twenty-first literature. As Onega and Ganteau argue, "classical

literature is full of examples of incomplete, orectic characters, and so are the protagonists of Medieval, (early-) Modern, and contemporary romance who are systematically driven by an unending need for completeness" (Onega and Ganteau 12). What is mainly observed in twenty-first century literature is that these vulnerable characters are resurrected as in the example of Marianne in Rooney's *Normal People.*

Marianne's wounds stemming from physical and psychological abuse in her childhood and leading to her later masochistic affairs echo Winterson's statement; Marianne has always worked from her wounds that have ultimately defined who she is. For example, when she was in high school, "the boys had tried to break her with cruelty and disregard, and in college men had tried to do it with sex and popularity, all with the same aim of subjugating some force in her personality" (192). More importantly, the way she was treated by men in her childhood and adulthood gradually define the contours of her identity marked by her physical and psychological wounds that are not possible to heal. Although she knows that her life is abnormal, she does not do anything to change it because "so much is covered over in time now, the way leaves fall and cover a piece of earth, and eventually mingle with the soil. Things that happened to her then are buried in the earth of her body" (241). Her relationship with Connell brings her goodness, which she does not want to risk by joining him in New York (265-266). However, as she defines herself through her wounds, she does not openly do anything to heal them because this would mean ending her identity. Thus, she embraces her wounds in the past and present as they are instead of changing her life by going to New York.

Conclusion

Marianne's normality can be described as a paradoxical quest to define herself through her wounds. The novel documents how Marianne's harrowing childhood memories of abuse gradually trigger her masochistic practices. In her childhood, when she is exposed to abusive behaviour of her family, she retreats into silence that gives her the freedom to dissociate herself from the present reality and create a world of her own. As she grows up, her silence transforms into masochistic sexual practices; she enjoys submitting herself to her boyfriends. Her masochistic practices are not only a source of pleasure though. They provide her with some kind of relief even if temporarily. Accordingly, when she finds the opportunity to have a normal relationship with Connell that depends on mutual dependence and trust, she chooses to leave him. Although Connell is the only person that can give her happiness and goodness, she is faithful to her wounds. In doing so, the novel answers the question asked in the epigraph to this article. Instead of being happy, Marianne chooses to be normal that she identifies with espousing her wounds.

In that sense, Marianne's choice conforms to John Berger's famous description of art that "becomes a meeting-place of the invisible, the irreducible, the enduring, guts and honour" (9). The late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries have been widely marked by collective wounds of a global scale, provoked either by natural disasters or human agency, including terrorism,

radicalism, ethnic cleansing, and wars related to the process of decolonization as well as individual wounds stemming from violence and abuse against women, children, the underprivileged and the immigrants along with religious, racial, and sexual minorities (Pellicer-Ortín and Sarıkaya-Şen 315). Not surprisingly, contemporary literature has widely been concerned with explicitly presenting the predicament of such wounded figures as in the example of Rooney's *Normal People*. One step further, the novel brings to the fore the construction of self-identity and the possibility of paradoxical normality by relying on physical and/or psychological wounds. In doing so, the novel makes us reconsider the possibilities of leading a normal life in our contemporary world dominated by disasters and crises, especially the opportunities of life for women that are trying to find strategies to cope with violence both at collective and individual levels.

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Mystical Transgression of the Body in Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* and Elif Shafak's *Pinhan* (*Sufi*)

Jeanette Winterson'ın *Vişnenin Cinsiyeti* ve Elif Şafak'ın *Pinhan* Adlı Romanlarında Mistik Deneyim ve Beden Aşımı

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Abstract
Both English writer Jeanette Winterson and Turkish writer Elif Shafak are marked through their involvement with feminism. Considering their concern with mysticism as a reaction against the Orthodox religion which they believe gives support to the patriarchal oppression of women, this study compares Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* and Shafak's *Pinhan*. Winterson deals with Kabbala mysticism in *Sexing the Cherry* whereas Shafak adapts Sufism in *Pinhan.* Both authors depict, in their novels, fluid character identities who reincarnate in different times and spaces in different bodies. This attitude is considered, even though they adapt different types of mysticism, as the reflection of their concern with spirituality, which they develop against the discriminating patriarchal religion. By privileging spiritual reality over the physical reality, they both annihilate women's subjection to physical laws of patriarchy.
Keywords: Winterson, Shafak, *Sexing the Cherry*, *Pinhan*, mysticism, Sufism, Kabbala, feminism

Öz
Batı kültürünü temsil eden feminist yazar Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry* adlı romanında ataerkil kültürün bir ögesi olarak, dinin kadının ötekileştirilmesindeki rolünden yola çıkarak, eserinde Kabbala kültürü çerçevesinde mistik bir atmosfer yaratarak, kadını bedensel varlığının ötesine taşımaya çalışır. Türk yazar Elif Şafak da *Pinhan* adlı romanında benzer bir şekilde sadece toplumsal cinsiyeti değil insanın fiziksel gerçekliğinin ötesindeki varlığını da Sufi mistisizmi açısından ele alır. Bunu yaparken, her iki yazar da karakterlerini farklı zaman dilimlerinde farklı bedenlerde tasavvur ederler ve böylece aşkın gerçekliği ön plana çıkararak kadının ataerkil kültürde ötelenmesine temel oluşturan cinsiyet ayırımını hiçlerler. Bu çalışma, farklı beden, zaman ve mekanlarda yeniden tezahür eden ana karakterler üzerine kurgulanmış bu iki romanı mistik açıdan irdelemektedir. Her iki yazar da, kadının bedensel varlığı üzerinden ötekileştirilmesine tepki olarak birlik kavramını merkeze alan mistisizm üzerinde dururlar.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Winterson, Shafak, *Sexing the Cherry*, *Pinhan*, mysticism, Sufism, Kabbala, feminism

Christianity has naturally been targeted by feminist critics for centralizing God as an "ontological power … [that] has lent symbolic support to unequal power relations in society, which has resulted historically in the oppression of women" (Cooper 77). This discourse that sanctifies God unquestionably as the

patriarch of the universe and subjectifies humankind to God's will while privileging men over women. Mysticism offers, however, in recent feminist fiction a middle ground for the deconstruction of this hierarchical formation. Despite their different practices in different religions and cultures, many forms of mysticism conceive God as a dynamic power that is immanent in all universe. They privilege the unitary perception of God rather than the idea of God as an authoritarian power in a hierarchical structure. For its unitary nature, mysticism is "[i]n sharp contrast to classical theism [as it] rejects all language and understandings that suggest that God is in any way a distant or dominating other. He is not a king, a tyrant, a bully, or man of war" (Christ 165). Mysticism offers a ground, "on which the intellectual and the sensual, the spiritual and the mundane, the individual and the universal, the personal and the divine can be reconciled" (Lin 856). God stands, in most of mystic perception, for the whole universe. Depending on the holistic understanding of the cosmos, human beings as well as all animate and inanimate particles of the universe are believed to be manifestations of God in different forms. Affirming "all the bodies and the world as the body of God," holistic philosophy "thus forms ground for feminist understanding of mysticism" (Christ 166). Transgression of the physical reality's hierarchical and discriminating boundaries opens, for mystic feminists, a non-hierarchical and non-discriminating ground for the inclusion of women as well as all the underdogs.

With reference to the basic concepts in Christian, Islamic and Jewish mysticism that regard spiritual consciousness as the "zenith of human perfection" (Fishbane 9), this paper aims to compare two contemporary mystic novels, *Sexing the Cherry* (1989) by the English writer Jeanette Winterson and *Pinhan*[1] (1994) by the Turkish writer Elif Shafak. They both aim to transcend beyond the physical boundaries that subject individuals to social and cultural norms of patriarchy by depicting characters with reversed and fluid gender roles in their novels. Instead of normative physical bodies, their characters are enriched with a spiritual potential that enables them to survive through successive bodies on a cyclical pattern. Their spiritual potential is emphasized to such a scale that their physical bodies become "one-use-only units that crumble around us," in Winterson's words (90). By attributing this spiritual potential to a hermaphrodite in *Pinhan*, and by cross gendering feminine and masculine qualities in *Sexing the Cherry*, both Shafak and Winterson transgress not only gender boundaries but also open up space for the holistic conception of the universe, "all in one" in Sufi terms.

Shafak affirms her feminist motives while explaining her concern with mysticism in general, and Sufism in particular, as follows:

> Mysticism has in itself veins of expression that made it possible for people that were otherwise excluded from the main stream to express themselves. It is particularly significant for women because in the

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[1] *Pinhan* was written in Turkish. All the quotations from the text are translated by the author.

> mystical movements and formation women found a voice - a voice they could not raise in orthodox platforms. (Migration 79)

As "one of the most important authors in Turkish Literature," Shafak wrote about the Ottoman past as a multicultural resource with its various ethnic groups and religions (Çanaklı 65). With its varied principles embodied in numerous orders, Islamic mysticism, or Sufism,[2] which has a strong influence upon Turkish culture even today, was an important component of the Ottoman culture. Even though she admits to being an agnostic, Shafak reveals a deep interest in Sufism, first as an academic,[3] and secondly as the writer of novels all of which are constructed by a touch of Sufism. Set in the seventeenth century Ottoman countryside, *Pinhan,* reveals its hermaphrodite main character Pinhan's struggle for survival. The novel reflects the struggle of this nameless character, "neither male nor female or, either a man or a woman," for getting over his biological "duality" (*Pinhan* 51). Starting with his accidental arrival at a Sufi Lodge (Tekke) as a little boy, the novel develops on his interaction with the Sheikh of the Lodge, Dürri Baba, as his spiritual leader on his way to spiritual regeneration during which he transforms through different bodies. Like the dog breeding Dog-Woman in *Sexing the Cherry*, whose real name is long forgotten, Pinhan's real name, neither before nor after his being named as "Pinhan" by Dürri Baba, remains unknown.

Jeanette Winterson is a postmodernist writer who experiments with form and subject-matter in her novels. Her metafictional challenge to traditional norms of reality is the culmination of her defiance of traditional gender roles, which she, like other feminist writers,[4] believes are determined by patriarchal narratives. Rejecting her early religious education, she declared herself a lesbian at sixteen, and her novels, thus, discuss gender issues not only from a feminist perspective but also from the margins of heterosexuality. Set mostly in the seventeenth century, a transitional period in English history, *Sexing the Cherry* reflects detailed accounts of the Civil War period, the events related to the beheading of Charles I, as well as the discovery of new places that mark 17th century England, through two first person narrators, a male and a female, both of whom aim "to deconstruct the conventions of gender signification" (Andrievskikh 6). The first narrator and the main character in the novel, the Dog-Woman, is a gigantic woman, and ascribed masculine rather than feminine characteristics. The male narrator, Jordan, is the Dog-Woman's adopted son, who is feminised, reversely, through his search for love in imaginary

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[2] Sufism in Turkey is generally identified with the 12th century poet Rumi, whose concept of love emphasizes its unitary nature that connects not only all human beings but all existence from the animate to the inanimate. (For more detail see William C. Chittick. "Rumi and the Mawlawiyyah." *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations*. S. H. Nasr (ed.) SCM:1991).

[3] Mostly known for her fiction, Elif Shafak is an academic who has studied political science and women studies. She taught at many universities in the United States as well as in Turkey. Her master's thesis submitted under the name "Elif Bilgin" on women in Islam is also referred to in this study.

[4] For feminist perception of gender roles, see Catherine Keller. "Christianity." *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*. (Eds. A.M. Jaggar, I.M. Young, Blackwell, 1998 :225-235).

landscapes. Antosa defines the reversal of the feminine and masculine gender roles of the mother and son by claiming that "to the phallic connotations associated with Dog-Woman, whose factual narration gives an almost faithful account of events, the author opposes the feminised nature of Jordan, who records his journeys to distant lands as assistant to John Tradescant Jr., Charles I's Royal Gardener" (82). Both the Dog-Woman and Jordan's reversed gender identities and Pinhan's blurred sexual identity represent margins at which mainstream gender and sexual roles are problematized. By "reversing gender-specific expectations" and undermining social and biological significations, Shafak and Winterson deconstruct all Grand Narratives, including science, on which the modern perception of reality is based (Christina-Lazar 174). Offering a holistic spiritual alternative for dualistic and materialistic modern reality, they transcend, as will be discussed in detail, beyond physical reality. Both novels are marked by an attempt to defy time and space boundaries while reflecting their characters' passing from one body to the other (or from one physical existence to the other) in the process of their spiritual regeneration through a cycle leading up to unite with the cosmic One.

As a philosophical concept mysticism is defined as the "deified or ultimate consciousness" that "is the point at which highly developed people (i.e., mystics) totally transcend space and time, and are aware (at once) of all perspectives in the universe" (Schneider 196). Though Winterson and Shafak rely on different contexts in revealing their central ideas, they both indicate a similar truth in portraying their characters within an endless cycle of existence that reflects a cosmic consciousness, a mystic experience. *Sexing the Cherry* is considered Winterson's "most metaphysical work" and an attempt in mysticism[5] (Stanborough 58). The way that Winterson especially deals with "the light" in *Sexing the Cherry* - aligns her with Kabbalistic mysticism,[6] which considers light to be God's essence as follows:

> God 'emit[ed] beams of light' into vessels 'but the vessels could not contain the light and thus were broken.' Consequently, some light was scattered, some 'sparks of holiness' falling into the material world, where they 'yearningly aspire to rise to their source but cannot avail to do so until they have support'. (Smith 41)

Man is expected to give support for reunion by making this search as the only purpose for his existence. Sufi mystics conceive, in a similar way, all the forces of the universe as a reflection of God himself while explaining the creation of the cosmos as the consequence of God's desire to be seen. This is a hadith often used by Sufis, but not recognised as authoritative by the orthodox Sunnis: "I was a hidden treasure and I wanted (literally 'loved') to be known. Hence I created the creatures so that I might be known" (Murata in Bilgin 173). Thus, in both types of mysticism, God is immanent in man, who constantly desires to re-unite with Him.

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[5] See Carol Anshaw. "Into the Mystic: Jeanette Winterson's Fable Manners" *Village Voice Literary Supplement*. 86 (1990) :16-17.

[6] See, Gershom Scholem. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Schocken Books,1995).

While challenging the patriarchal discourse by reversing gender roles through the masculinised Dog-Woman on the realistic level, Winterson transcends to the imaginative world through Jordan's fantastic voyages to the fairy lands in *Sexing the Cherry*. The real name of the female character in the novel is long forgotten by even herself; she is called Dog-Woman because she breeds dogs in her small hut by the River Thames. Not only in name, but in all her features, the Dog-Woman is, with her gigantic and dirty body as well as her ugly face with "a flat nose, heavy eyebrows, only few teeth which are broken and black," anything but feminine (*Sexing the Cherry* 24-5). Her violent deeds conform to her huge body that enables her to kill many Puritans in her struggle on the Royalist side during the Civil War. As opposed to her un-feminine physical characteristics, however, she is identified with a naive personality, so she takes the Royalists' call for "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" literally and gathers in a sack the teeth and eyes of the Puritans she has killed. By de-feminising the Dog-Woman physically, Winterson empowers her spiritually through the motherly love she feels for her adopted son, Jordan. The Dog-Woman regards Jordan[7] as a son, even biologically, by taking his coming to her through the river Thames as a metaphor of a woman's giving birth to a child: "When a woman gives birth her waters break and she pours out the child and the child runs free. I would have liked to pour out a child from my body but you have to have a man for that and there's no man who's a match for me" (*Sexing the Cherry* 11). Through this denial of her femininity, the Dog-Woman's spirituality is expanded.

In mystic thought, love in fact is the basic concept fuelling spiritual dynamism that enables man's rise from worldly existence to union with God. Kabbalistic mysticism defines love as "the primary force of attraction in the soul, whereby an individual is drawn to other souls, situations or objects, each one needed to rectify and complete some aspect of his purpose in the world" (Ginsburgh n.p.). Love in Winterson's novel, however, is revealed both as an abstraction that is real despite its un-physicality and as a referent to women's potential for spirituality through the motherly love that is dissociated from biological mothering. Motherly love, in other words, functions as a metaphor for mystical transcendence through the example of the Dog-Woman's own parents. She recalls, as a child, how her father rejected loving her after he was physically injured by her huge body:

> When I was a child my father swung me up on to his knees to tell a story and I broke both his legs. He never touched me again, except with the point of the whip he used for dogs. But my mother, who lived only a while and was so light that she dared not go out in a wind, could swing me on her back and carry me for miles. There was talk of witchcraft but what is stronger than love? (*Sexing the Cherry* 25)

Love is presented as a magical power that defies the laws of physical time and space.

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[7] Jordan is also the name of a river in the Bible known to be the river of baptism. One other connotation here is to Moses who was taken from a river (Nile) when he was a baby.

The way that the Dog-Woman begets Jordan, her love for him, his journeys in search of Fortunata, an imaginary dancer, all associate *Sexing the Cherry* with Jewish mysticism. Antosa also associates Winterson's concern with Kabbala, by allying the scene in which Jordan is found with Judaism, as "reminicent of the Biblical finding of Moses by the river Nile. Like the Biblical prophet, he is fated to wander in the deserts of the soul in order to accomplish his mission" (92). The river in this reference does not function just as a means of Jordan's identification with Moses, (thus Judaism), but works as a referent to water in general, as an important metaphor for love. As revealed by Ginsburgh,

> [t]wo major characteristics of love are revealed in its constant comparison to water in Kabbala. The two aspects of water that establish it as an appropriate symbol of love are its property of adhesion, by which water causes elements to cling together, and its nature to descend. [...Thus,] on an individual basis, love is the essential force bringing people together and the 'glue' that keeps varied relationships on course. (n.p.)

The Dog-Woman's motherly love for Jordan and Jordan's desperate love for the imaginary Fortunata are both developed in *Sexing the Cherry* as the referents of the finiteness of the physical reality, and thus also the gendered as well as sexual identity. Smith claims that "Winterson's 'points of light,' like the Kabbalic 'sparks of holiness,' index a realm of pure light, a utopic realm glimpsed in the 'time of the now.' Winterson … strives to imagine a historical practice constantly guided by visions of a radically different relationship to matter, space, and time" (42).

Jordan's actual voyages are to exotic places, from where he brings the first pineapple and introduces grafting to England. The journeys that he relates to the reader, however, are not about these places but about fantastic fairy tales of the "Twelve Princesses," whose stories defy not only the laws of physics but the cult of heterosexual love as well. Jordan's imaginary voyages are used as "a convenient trope" that "conveys the dissolution of gender boundaries," and sets the reader "on a journey across space and time" (Antosa 61). Jordan asserts the metaphysical context of his fantastic voyages by blurring the boundaries of time and space: "[e]very journey conceals another journey within its lines: the path not taken and the forgotten angle. These are journeys I wish to record. Not the ones I made, but the ones I might have made, or perhaps did make in some other place or time" (*Sexing the Cherry* 10). Jordan's internal adventures, related to flying princesses as well as floating cities, defy physical laws while transforming the narrative into a transcendental one. He is in search of Fortunata - supposedly the youngest sister of the twelve Princesses, "who may or may not exist" (*Sexing the Cherry* 80). She merges, in fact, the real and the fantastic in a way to bridge the physical and spiritual reality in mystic terms. Fortunata is allied with light through her dancing and ability to resist gravity. Jordan is astonished watching her dance with her students as "[t]here appeared to be ten points of light spiralling in a line along the floor" (*Sexing the Cherry* 93). Rapid motion while dancing enables her to

transgress beyond physical existence by destabilizing the boundaries separating non-material existence from the material one. Fortunata's claim that "for the people who had abandoned gravity, gravity had abandoned them" reassures the relativity of human conception of not only reality but also physical laws (*Sexing the Cherry* 97).[8]

As Roessner asserts "*Sexing the Cherry* expresses a drive to escape the vicissitudes of history and locate a transcendent ground for its lesbian-feminist critique of patriarchal culture" (112). The novel focuses on mysticism as a reaction against patriarchal heterosexual oppression. Jordan's tales deconstruct, on the surface, the idea of happy ever after heterosexual relations in favour of lesbian ones, while discussing love as a concept that is not bound with the physical laws of time and space. He is in search of a moment "when we will know … that we are a part of all we have met and that all we have met was already a part of us" (*Sexing the Cherry* 90). Here we seem to have in Winterson the idea of "re-birth". Jordan's love for Fortunata provides him with the means of a spiritual quest, a mystic journey, targeted at unification with the whole. He refers to mysticism while claiming that "[t]ime has no meaning, space and place have no meaning on this journey. All times can be inhabited, all places visited. The journey is not linear, it is always back and forth, denying the calendar, the wrinkles and lines of the body" (*Sexing the Cherry* 80). As opposed to chronological time sequence, mystic time considers that the "now" covers all past and future, and space loses, accordingly, its validity in mystic experience. As Jordan asserts through his experiences in these voyages, "we do not move through time, time moves through us" (*Sexing the Cherry* 90). Spiritual existence is eternal, thus timeless, whereas "our physical bodies have a natural decay span, they are *one-use-only units that crumble around us*" (*Sexing the Cherry* 90). The capacity of both Jordan and Dog-Woman for love elevates them on a higher level of consciousness that enables them to encounter their incarnations by transcending beyond the boundaries of chronological time and physical space. Jordan encounters his incarnation while walking back home on a foggy night: "arms outstretched he had suddenly touched another face and screamed out. For a second the fog cleared and he saw that the stranger was himself" (*Sexing the Cherry* 143). The Dog-Woman, on the other hand, even though she does not realize it, sees "someone standing beside him [Jordan], a woman, slight and strong," who vanishes afterwards while she is looking at Jordan standing in the prow (*Sexing the Cherry* 144). Their incarnations are developed in the novel as two twentieth century characters, Nicholas Jordan and an Environmentalist Woman – nameless like the Dog-Woman. Appearing over a period of three hundred years' time from the seventeenth century on, Nicholas Jordan is recruited to the navy for his fondness of sails, which is the reminiscent of Jordan's fondness for water and

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[8] The Kabbalistic concern with light finds a parallel in New Age philosophy that depends on the scientific findings in quantum physics in bridging the material with the spiritual in the Modern Age. For more information, see Boaz Huss. "The New Age of Kabbalah: Contemporary Kabbalah, the New Age and Postmodern Spirituality" *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* (Vol.6, No.2 July 2007, 107-125).

his consequent voyages overseas. Like Jordan's encounter with Nicholas through the fog, Nicholas transcends back to the seventeenth century, which happens to be the day of Charles I's burial, while watching stars on the deck on a dark night:

> I rested my arms on the railing and my head on my arms. … I heard a foot scrape on the deck beside me. Then a man's voice said, 'They are burying the King at Windsor today.' I snapped upright and looked full in the face of the man, who was staring out over the water. I knew him but from where? And his clothes … nobody wears clothes like that anymore. I looked beyond him, upwards. The sails creaked in the breeze … I heard a bird cry, sharp and fierce. Tradescant sighed. My name is Jordan. (*Sexing the Cherry* 121)

Starting with Nicholas's narration, the quotation ends with Jordan by blurring the line between the two times as well the two characters, Nicholas and Jordan. Jordan, inspired by this experience back in the seventeenth century, reveals that "perhaps I am … to be complete" (*Sexing the Cherry* 143). The expiration of the physical body is conceived as not an end but a transformation only in form. Jordan realizes internally that "we are multiple, not single, and that our one existence is really countless existences holding hands like those cut-out paper dolls, but unlike the dolls never coming to an end" (*Sexing the Cherry* 90).

The Dog-Woman, identified with her huge un-feminine body and active struggle against the Puritans, is re-incarnated in the twentieth century Environmentalist Woman, struggling against the authorities not on religious grounds but for feminist and environmental issues. She wishes to gather them all in her sack to re-educate them in feminism and environment. As opposed to her small body, the Environmentalist woman feels huge, reminiscent of the Dog-Woman as follows:

> I imagine I am huge, raw, a giant. When I am a giant, I go out with my sleeves rolled up and my skirts swirling round me like a whirlpool. I have a sack such as kittens are drowned in and I stop off all over the world filling it up. Men shoot at me, but I take the bullets out of my cleavage and chew them up. Then I laugh and laugh and break their guns between my fingers the way you would a wish-bone. (*Sexing the Cherry* 122)

She is fond of the river and tends to spend much of her time there, just like the Dog-Woman who lives in her small hut on the banks of the river Thames. She is also attributed a spiritual capacity, like Jordan-Nicholas, to travel beyond time. While leaning on a wall and looking towards St. Paul's Cathedral, she reveals that

> I looked at my forearms resting on the wall. They were massive, like thighs, but there was no wall, just a wooden spit, and when I turned in the opposite direction I couldn't see the dome of St. Paul's. I could see rickety vegetable boats and women arguing with one another and a regiment on horseback crossing the Thames. (*Sexing the Cherry* 128)

She receives a vision from seventeenth century London, before the construction of St. Paul's Cathedral. Moreover, she and Nicholas feel, as incarnations of the Dog Woman and Jordan, an unconscious affinity towards each other. Jordan and the Dog Woman regenerate in Nicholas Jordan's unconscious attraction at the Environmentalist woman. Seeing her photos as an environmentalist activist in the newspapers, Nicholas Jordan admits that he "felt [he] knew her, though this was not possible" (*Sexing the Cherry* 138). He joins her by the River Thames to support her in her concern with the future of the world: "I wanted to thank her for trying to save us, for trying to save me, because it felt that personal, though I don't know why" (*Sexing the Cherry* 142). Together, they decide to burn down the factory that pollutes the river Thames.

This kind of experience that gaps centuries of time as represented by Nicholas Jordan-Jordan and the Environmentalist Woman-the Dog-woman incarnations reveals the manifestation of the universal soul, the God. God is conceived in Kabbala as an immanent "life-force" rather than "a Creator from beyond". Depending on this fact, Green suggests that "[e]very human being is the image of God. Every creature and life-form is a garbing of divine presence. The One seeks to be known and loved in each of its endless manifestations. We need to help all humans to discover the image of God within themselves" (85). Winterson's characters, in this sense, achieve this "life-force" through their personal wisdom. Green also suggests that "this truth may be depicted differently in the varied religious languages of human culture," which refers to the example of Sufism (85). As opposed to practical mysticism in Winterson, Sufism in Shafak follows a more symbolic pattern. Sufism defines man's spiritual journey in the metaphor of a cycle which consists of two main arcs: "The arc of descent indicates how and through which routes human beings in specific and the universe in general came into being, through the arc of ascent the human being gradually comes closer to the Creator, so much that at the very end the creator and the human being become united" (Bilgin 213-214). The upward spiritual progress in Sufism follows certain steps: "The Sufi who sets out to seek God calls himself a 'traveller' (salik); he advances by slow stages (maqamat) along a 'path' (tariqat) to the goal of union with Reality (fana fi 'l Haqq)" (Nicholson 28). This journey symbolizes the completion of the cycle representing separation from God with the beginning of life on earth, the arc of descent, by re-union with God through the arc of ascent. Circularity, as represented by the Sufi dervishes' dance in *Pinhan*, metaphorizes not only the perennial cycle but also interconnectedness and unity. Sufi dervishes in *Pinhan* chant of oneness: "all bugs and insects/all birds and wolves/all creation" while representing, at the same time, the interconnectedness of the cycle that repeats itself through their cyclical dance hand in hand (*Pinhan* 58).

Pinhan reflects the spiritual progress of its hermaphrodite main character, Pinhan, who suffers during his search for self-integration in 17th century Ottoman countryside. His earliest memories are marked by his efforts to hide his ambiguous sexual identity:

> As for the boy, when he was done with his struggle with his sadness, he would run his hands over his body with hope but each time, realising that his nightmare was real, he would curl up and recoil into himself. At such moments how he would wish the earth to open and swallow him and his two-headed problem haunting him since the day he was born. (*Pinhan* 12)

At the beginning, Pinhan's accidental arrival at Dürri Baba Lodge,[9] one of the Sufi lodges which were widespread in the Ottoman period, provides him with a refuge from his tormenting secret, and initiates him with a gradual process of spiritual enlightenment. His chase of a bird with a huge pearl on its neck that he sees while playing with his friends in the fields around their village begins his spiritual journey on the Sufi Path. When seven boys intrude into the orchard of Dürri Baba Lodge to catch this mysterious bird, only Pinhan is left behind on an apple tree while the other six boys escape just after being inspected by the Lodge inhabitants. Renaming him Pinhan,[10] the old mentor of the Lodge, Dürri Baba,[11] accepts this boy into the lodge as a novice. The name Pinhan (replacing his real name, which is never mentioned in the novel) indicates on one level Pinhan's personal secret, which Dürri Baba intuits as soon as he sees him; on the secondary level, it refers to the spiritual secret that Dürri Baba himself guards, which Pinhan is going to discover. In Sufism, every disciple dedicated to the path[12] is a "traveller," who needs a guide, a mentor (Sheikh, Mürşit) in order to succeed in his spiritual journey. The mystery that Dürri Baba harbours as a mentor is symbolized by the bird with the pearl,[13] in chase of which Pinhan gained access to the lodge.

In a Sufi order, the novice joining a lodge to get on to the path, "with the purpose of renouncing the world," is subjected to "spiritual discipline for the space of three years. If he [cannot] fulfill the requirements of this discipline … they declare that he cannot be admitted to the 'Path.' The first year is devoted to the service of people, the second year to the service of God, and the third year to watching his own heart" (Nicholson 33). In the process of serving others at the lodge, Pinhan proves himself, accordingly, worthy to enter the path. He is initiated with the essential Sufi principle that the physical world is a

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[9] Sufis lived in secluded lodges/monasteries (tekke) where they dedicated themselves to contemplation and remembrance of God as a means of avoiding the temptations of their worldly existence.

[10] Pinhan means "hidden/obscure" in Ottoman Turkish, i.e., the knowledge of the spiritual reality that is hidden from the ordinary man.

[11] Dürri Baba's name is another symbol related to the Ottoman Turkish word "dürre" which means "pearl," i.e., he who owns the pearl of divine knowledge.

[12] Path (tariqah) refers to any one of the Sufi orders adopted by the spiritual seeker.

[13] The pearl's symbolic significance in Sufism is revealed through an anecdote related to the great Sufi master, Junayd of Baghdad, and one of his disciples who asks Junayd to give or sell him "the pearl of divine knowledge" that he is said to own. Junayd's reply to his disciple is that "I cannot sell it, for you have not the price thereof; and if I give it to you, you will have gained it cheaply. You do not know its value. Cast yourself headlong, like me, into this ocean, in order that you may win the pearl by waiting patiently" (Nicholson 34).

screen veiling the truth that is "hidden" beyond it, through a metaphor revealed by Dürri Baba as follows:

> Observable reality gives you only the chrysalis. But as unattractive is the chrysalis, it does not attract you. If you want to go beyond the observable reality, if you want to lift the cover and see with the eye of the heart, you find the butterfly. As the butterfly is beautiful you are attracted to it. Still, your heart loves not the butterfly but the chrysalis if you can use your heart to see. (*Pinhan* 22)

The physical reality represents the form only whereas the reality that is perceived by the heart is the essence beyond this form. Pinhan needs further training and experience until he is able to see the essence with the eye of the heart. The spiritual journey from physical form to divine essence, Baldick reveals, is a long and hard one consisting of different "stations":

> Sufism ... constitutes a path (tariqa), which begins with repentance and leads through a number of 'stations' (maqamat), representing virtues such as absolute trust in God, to a higher series of ecstatic 'states' (ahwal). These culminate in the 'passing away' (fana) of the mystic (or perhaps just of his lower soul, or of his human attributes) and the subsequent 'survival' (baqa) of his transformed personality (or perhaps just of his higher soul, or alternatively of his essence now adorned by the attributes of God). (3)

The initial stage that follows Pinhan's acceptance in the "tariqa" occurs to him through a dream[14] in which he sees himself on a threshold dividing two seas, one blue and the other brown: Dürri Baba calls Pinhan to come to him on the blue side, and Dulhani, another dervish from the same lodge, calls him from the brown side. This adolescent dream, anticipating Pinhan's sexual awakening is interpreted by the nearby stream, to which he confides next morning, as the symbol of the threshold separating the physical world from the spiritual:

> As the Water says, Dulhani's boldness, his gaiety, his deep devotion to life and death, and the enourmous joy he gets from a single drink, a single breath, a single smile, was seducing one of his two heads. As the Water says, there was more to it. Because Dürri Baba's soft, quiet steps, his minding and caring for the ants and stones on the ground he walked on and treating them as equals while walking; his carrying the powerful smell of flowers and wild grass from afar as he blew like a blue wind himself, the tranquility of his speech, the tenderness in his eyes would attract the other head, and invite it to his own world. (*Pinhan* 32)

When Pinhan feels trapped at the threshold between the worldly life and spiritual existence, the same mysterious bird symbolizing the blue-eyed Dürri

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[14] Dreams have great significance in Islam. Associated with the afterlife, dreams, especially in Sufism, are considered as windows to the supernatural. (See Kevin Kovelant, "Peering Through the Veil: Death, Dreams and the Afterlife in Sufi Thought" *Academy of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies, Inc. Annual Conference, 2007 Proceedings*).

Baba, owning the pearl of divine wisdom, appears to Pinhan for the second time. This intrusion of Dürri Baba signifies, in Sufi terms, Pinhan's upward progress on the arc of ascent. His heart pours itself out to Dürri Baba and the recognition of its implications paralyses Pinhan. Confused and embarrassed, Pinhan bites his little finger until it bleeds, and the blood drops on the earth and makes a spot on the soil, "a spot that smelled of violence and passion. He wanted to hide it. He surrounded it with a circle. It was not enough; another circle, then another one. He built castles within castles, walls within walls, secrets within secrets" (*Pinhan* 33). Pinhan writes Dürri Baba's name at the center of the circle, then a drop of blood falls from the bird's beak onto the spot of Pinhan's blood. The encircled mix of the drops of Pinhan and Dürri Baba's blood work as an important metaphor that refers to either the cyclical pattern of existence and spiritual progress or the love that is the main force which drives the circle.

As in Kabbala, love is the central concept that runs the cycle of existence in Sufism. Sufism defines the operation of love as follows: "since the parts in a cycle which is ceaselessly changing and moving are connected to one another, love for a specific subject is in a similar way connected to love for any other thing, even for God … there is nothing outside the great cycle, [so] there is nothing that cannot be connected to love" (Bilgin 182, 183). The circles represent, similarly, the stages of consciousness on the Sufi path to the ultimate annihilation in the existence of God. The gradual unveiling of each stage requires an internal struggle against the physical existence, until "God is [realized as] not a supreme, unattainable, uncomparable deity beyond our comprehension, [but] the beloved who is continuously desired and longed for" (Bilgin 172). Love, at this stage, acknowledged in Dürri Baba's person thus, transmits Pinhan to the third stage of Knowledge, in his quest for Truth. The unveiling of each stage that he has not been conscious of before transmits Pinhan to upper stages. Schuon defines the simultaneity of these stages as follows: "Each path comprises procedures that can be consecutive or synchronic at the same time. These are the stages in Sufism. … The main stages consist of three layers. Fear (Mehafet), Love (Muhabbet) and Knowledge (Marifet)" (147). Now on an upper stage in the process of spiritual enlightenment, Pinhan becomes able to discover the parts of the Lodge which were hidden from him before. While trying to hide from the crucial spot he gets through a door that closes behind him: "In all those years he spent in Dürri Baba Lodge, he was confident that he knew the place inside out, but this place he had neither seen nor heard of before. Then, how could he explain his failure to imagine where he was, or how he arrived there or what was beyond it" (*Pinhan* 47). He can neither go back nor go forward as he is faced with another door that is decorated with poems and miniatures. A closer look at the miniatures on the door, which looked hard to open, however, terrifies Pinhan as they depict his first arrival at Dürri Baba Lodge: "There were pictured seven boys, an orchard, slingshots, perched on a branch a bird with pearl and an apple on the ground. Pinhan took a step back in fear" (*Pinhan* 48). Pinhan feels terrified at first, then menaced and finally helpless before this mysterious door,

which is the metaphorical door that will open to a further stage in his journey. Pinhan resists it at first, then defies it until he is humiliated enough to ask the door what it would like him to sacrifice in order to be let out. The door wants him to sacrifice all the hair on his body. Pinhan obeys and pulls off all the hair on his body, including his head and his eyebrows. His transformed appearance attracts the door and it opens and lets Pinhan out (*Pinhan* 51).

The pulling off of the hair from the body is an important Sufi tradition that represents de-gendering as one of the initial steps on the way to total denial of the physical body, and Pinhan's passing through the door after de-gendering himself is a "conversion" that "marks the beginning of a new life" (Nicholson 30). This new life is defined, in Nicholson's words, as "the awakening of the soul from the slumber of heedlessness" that leads to the final stage of "forgetting everything except God" (Nicholson 30-31). Passing through the door consequent to his self-renunciation, Pinhan is let into a graveyard, with a new awareness that enables him to see his own grave. He knows the graveyard is a part of Dürri Baba Lodge from the fences surrounding it, but he cannot spot which part of the Lodge he is in. The graves there belong to Sufis from different orders, both male and female. Then he spots one with "a tiny hole on its marble stone" (*Pinhan* 53).

> As if his feet were dragged to that direction on their own…. Without understanding why he was bewildered on seeing the grave of someone he had never known […he] failed to understand why this hole was made. Perhaps someone had pulled out something hidden in the hole. Or perhaps that thing had not been placed there yet. A thick red plait made a wide circle around the hole. It was sending out red rays of light as if in defiance of the sun. (*Pinhan* 53, 54)

The hole on the grave is, in fact, for the huge pearl that is going to be given to Pinhan by Dürri Baba before Pinhan leaves the lodge to go out to complete his quest, during which he is going to be transformed into a red-haired beautiful woman. Through Pinhan's rediscovery of the space of the tekke and his future grave, the concepts of physical space and chronological time are blurred. Like all other forms of mysticism, Sufism defies the chronological concept of time and physical space. Parallel to the rejection of the concept of hierarchical existence in favour of the One, the chronological hierarchy of before and after is dissolved in the now. So, the present covers both past and future. Schuon defines this principle in Sufi terms as "Sufi sees himself as the 'Son of the Present Moment' (İbn ül'vakt). That is, regardless of the before and after, he locates himself in god's 'now,' and this 'now' is nothing other than the reflection of Oneness. Oneness in time is God's now and it corresponds to eternity" (150-151). Pinhan is able to see the ceremonial Sufi dance only after this stage.

He hears drums beating but cannot see what is happening, "[s]ometimes man can see slowly and gradually" (Shafak 58). Then, he sees, beyond the fog and vapour, all the inhabitants of the Lodge gathered in a circle and dancing in the graveyard. This cyclical dance of the dervishes commemorates the connection

of all existence from the inanimate to the animate. While whirling around they sing that "the circle keeps turning round and round/what we call the circle is love from/Top to bottom/this is such a circle that it includes everybody/tell all bugs and insects,/tell all birds and wolves/all creation we are all siblings" (Shafak 58). Pinhan's education at the Lodge is accomplished when he sees the red spot of his and Dürri Baba's mixed blood on Dürri Baba's face, in the middle of his two eyebrows. Transformed thus, he is directed by Dürri Baba, who hands him an oil lamp advising Pinhan to stop where it extinguishes, and also gives him the huge pearl in a leather purse. Pinhan leaves the lodge to accomplish his quest. Both the light and the pearl are symbolic. This journey, guided by Dürri Baba, which is internal in essence, ends in İstanbul where Pinhan falls in love with a young Greek boy, Karanfil Yorgaki. Pinhan meets Karanfil Yorgaki while trying to take Dürri Baba's pearl back from a thief who has stolen it from him. Pinhan and Karanfil Yorgaki are attracted to each other on their first encounter in a tavern. "Pinhan felt the echo of every single step he took deep in his heart. Until now, only Dürri baba's cloudy eyes had made him experience such a storm" (*Pinhan* 148). Pinhan's love finds its echo in Karanfil Yorgaki:

> He had never seen this hairless and beardless dervish dressed in black before. Not in his dreams, either. He couldn't help his hands shake while looking at him. They looked at each other in the light of the candle. Big, black eyes tinged with kohl by birth were on one side of the flame, green eyes with long eyelashes were on the other side. They looked at each other without moving, even breathing at all. 'See me', whispered Pinhan's eyes. His whisper became a scream coming up from the depths of his heart. A scream that carried pieces of flesh and blood with it. (*Pinhan* 149)

Their worldly love, however, transforms in nature by also transforming Pinhan's self-perception. Transcending beyond his physical being, Pinhan's little finger swells up when Karanfil Yorgaki's is burnt by the light of the candle that he is holding. Pinhan "was not feeling ashamed, since he told to Karanfil Yorgaki the things that he thought should not be told, since he surrendered his little finger and all his body to him" (*Pinhan* 200). The love he feels for Karanfil Yorgaki transcends beyond physical being as well as heterosexual love.

At the basis of the Sufi mysticism that dominates Elif Shafak's novel there is the idea "that everything is a manifestation of God, and consequently, every form of love is a reflection of God's love" (Derin 233). Spiritually regenerated through his love for Yorgaki, Pinhan volunteers to sacrifice himself to save a neighbourhood from a curse that has fallen upon it because its name had been changed from its original. The dual name of the neighbourhood parallels Pinhan's biological duality. Seven old women sages of this neighbourhood believe that they need a hermaphrodite to sacrifice to get rid of the evil that befell on them. In the process of sacrifice Pinhan transforms in body. In his dream, Pinhan sees himself falling out of a window, but his long red hair, which is caught on the sill of the window, holds him in the empty space:

> Then Pinhan checked his head with his hand in surprise. He had long, very long hair. His hair was sending out red beams of light. First his eyes were dazzled by the light. [then he looked up and saw Karanfil Yorgaki] He was so beautiful so fascinating as ever. He was holding a candlestick in his hand. 'Wait' said Karanfil Yorgaki 'Wait'. (*Pinhan* 161)

His spiritual journey follows a cyclical pattern that begins and ends in the same place, Dürri Baba Lodge, where Karanfil Yorgaki finds his dead body:

> He found the dead body of the red haired woman by the stream … he carried her to the graveyard in the back of the Lodge. He dug the earth with his hands. Each time he took the soil out he felt as if he was tearing off something from his heart. He made a tombstone too. He placed the pearl that he never managed to give Pinhan, shining now brightly in the sun, into the hole of the tombstone. [Dürri Baba's pearl which Yorgaki had succeeded to take back from the thieves, but failed to give to Pinhan before his death]. (*Pinhan* 218)

He waits at the grave all night and morning, then he sees a bird "circling in the sky. This mysterious bird once flew so low that Karanfil Yorgaki saw his eyes, his cloudy blue eyes and the tears gathering in his eyes" (*Pinhan* 218). Having the eye of his heart opened to divine reality first by Dürri Baba's love and wisdom, then his love for Karanfil Yorgaki, which ends with his sacrificing himself, Pinhan then achieves the final stage of reunion, in Sufi terms, with the divine soul. Nicholson claims that "the whole of Sufism rests on the belief that when the individual self is lost, the Universal Self is found, or in religious language, that ecstasy affords the only means by which the soul can directly communicate and become united with God" (59).

In conclusion, the British novelist Jeanette Winterson and the Turkish novelist Elif Shafak are feminist writers who criticize suppression of women by the patriarchal culture. Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* and Shafak's *Pinhan* are compared in terms of their common concern with mysticism as a realm that is neutral of gender discrimination. Winterson deals with Kabbala mysticism in *Sexing the Cherry* while Shafak adapts Sufism in *Pinhan.* Winterson depicts, in *Sexing the Cherry*, the Dog-Woman and her adopted son Jordan with reversed gender roles while their incarnations as the Environmentalist woman and Nicholas Jordan in the twentieth century indicate the transcendental dimension of human existence. Shafak's *Pinhan* defies, similarly, gender boundaries by centering on a hermaphrodite like its main character. She points at gender identity as culturally constructed by attributing her main character with both male and female organs. Pinhan's reincarnation as a beautiful red-haired woman symbolize his spiritual regeneration through reincarnation. Both authors depict, in their novels, fluid character identities who are reincarnated, in different times and spaces, in different bodies. Blurred gender boundaries and confused sexual identities are used as feminist strategies as well as mystical commitments indicating a cyclical existence that transcends beyond physical boundaries in both novels. Despite their concern with

different mystical formations, they both privilege spiritual reality over physical reality, which work through love for others.

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Spiritual Growth in Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*
Arthur C. Clarke'ın *Çocukluğun Sonu* Romanında Ruhsal Büyüme

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Abstract
The relationships between all human and non-human characters in Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* can be analysed as that of parents and their offspring, which, in return, will bring forth the contention that all these characters, including humanity in the broadest sense, can be considered children in a never-ending process of growth. Though such a contention stems from the similarities between the attitude of children and adults in the relationship of each with their own literal or figurative parents, contrastingly it is also enhanced by the differences of perspective between children and adults. The use of the words "children" and "adults" here should not be taken solely in their literal sense, but as referring to the characters' position in each particular relationship. In that sense, "children" would refer not only to actual human children in their relationship with their human parents, but also to the adult human characters in their relationship with God/the alien Overlords/the Overmind/the Universe. The aim here is to offer an in-depth analysis of these relationships between humans as children of the universe and the Overlords as their guides towards the path of spiritual growth, as well as to portray the current relevance of this science-fiction novel which was first published in 1953.
Keywords: Arthur C. Clarke, childhood, growth, spirituality, Buddhism

Öz
Arthur C. Clarke'ın *Çocukluğun Sonu* romanında insan ya da uzaylı tüm karakterler arasındaki ilişkileri bir ebeveyn-çocuk ilişkisi bağlamında ele almak mümkündür ve böyle bir bakış açısı tüm bu karakterlerin ve en geniş anlamıyla insanlığın hiç bitmeyen bir büyüme sürecindeki çocuklar olarak değerlendirilebilecekleri tartışmasını beraberinde getirecektir. Böylesi bir tartışmanın kaynağı hem çocukların hem de yetişkinlerin kendi gerçek ya da simgesel ebeveyn figürleriyle ilişkilerindeki tavırlarında gözlenen benzerlik olsa da çocuklarla yetişkinlerin bakış açılarındaki farklılıkların da bu tartışmaya katkısı olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Buradaki "çocuk" ve "yetişkin" ifadeleri yalnızca sözlük anlamlarıyla değil, bir karakterin belli bir ilişki içindeki konumu bağlamında anlaşılmalıdır. Bu bağlamda "çocuk" ifadesi yalnızca yetişkin bir insanın ebeveynlik ettiği çocuğu değil; Tanrı, uzaylı Efendiler, Üstbilinç ve evren ile ilişkileri içerisinde yetişkin insanları da kapsayacaktır. Burada amaç evrenin çocukları olarak insanlık ile onlara ruhsal büyümeleri esnasında kılavuzluk eden Efendiler arasındaki ilişkileri ayrıntılı olarak inceleyerek, ilk basımı 1953'de yapılmış olan bu bilim kurgu romanının insanlığın güncel durumu ile ilgisini gözler önüne sermektir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Arthur C. Clarke, çocukluk, büyüme, ruhsal büyüme, Budizm

In the literature classroom when the professor lectures on the *bildungsroman*, they always underline the *growth* of the protagonist.[1] The conclusion usually reached would be that the protagonist gains maturity and grows into adulthood at the end of a long series of life experiences which function as a means of highlighting the flaws of a given society or system. In this process of growing up the presence of both parents is considered essential, hence their frequent absence in the *bildungsroman*. In the absence of the birth parents usually surrogates are provided in the form of teachers, aunts and uncles, friends, partners, foster parents etc. One way or another, from such a perspective parental figures are an indispensable part of the process of growth; but do human beings *really* grow? Is it as simple as a mathematical equation – whereby the presence of some sort of parental figure would pave the way to growth – or is it as complex due to the requirement of many more variables? The answer is: neither. Growth is neither as simple nor as complex as one deems because the way we generally approach the concept of growth is troublesome to begin with. As Clarke portrays in *Childhood's End*, growth is not the final destination of a quest; as an on-going process it rather resembles a quest for the Holy Grail since the ultimate accomplishment of the task is forever delayed – much like the structure of the language we use to give meaning to life.[2] It is, therefore, the argument of this paper that what matters is not the final destination, that is the completion of growth, but establishing a solid basis for the whole process which in this context has resonances with the Buddhist perspective on the path to wisdom.

Mintz explains that "human development is an ongoing process" and that "it was only in the eighteenth century that human development began to be understood in terms of a process of maturation" (2). This fact that human beings at some point began to redefine their concepts, letting go of absolute judgements and boundaries as they have been gaining new perspectives during their process of growth, in itself, is proof that it is an ongoing process. Another remark that complements this view is made by Arnett: "the transition to adulthood has become so prolonged that it constitutes a second period of the life course in developed countries, lasting about as long as adolescence" which he calls "emerging adulthood" (XV). It probably lasts that long because growth is a painful process whether it is physical, mental or spiritual; in fact, a total human growth encompassing all three planes of existence *requires* pain as taught by the Buddha in the form of the four noble truths. The Dalai Lama explains that achieving happiness and overcoming suffering "is our natural state of being, and our natural quest" as humans (35). What leads a person towards the path of fulfilling that quest is an understanding of the four noble truths: 1. suffering exists, 2. it has its origins in the relationship between causes

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[1] In the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms,* Baldick defines the term as "a kind of novel that follows the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity. ... Many outstanding novels of the 19th and early 20th centuries follow this pattern of personal growth" (24).

[2] See Jacques Derrida's (1986) theories on the freeplay of signifiers according to which language is an endless chain of signifiers and the ultimate signified can never be reached.

and their effects, and a fundamental ignorance of this relationship which leads to afflictive emotions and thoughts, 3. cessation of suffering is possible, 4. there is a path that leads people to the cessation of suffering. As the Dalai Lama puts it, "the path that leads to cessation is the cause of cessation" (36). What Clarke presents us in his novel is the parental figures of the Overlords nudging the humans towards this very path as will be explained in the following pages.

It is no coincidence that Clarke's narrator highlights Buddhism as the only remaining religion in the World State despite Clarke's persistent emphasis on his own secularism and atheism: "Of the faiths that had existed before the coming of the Overlords, only a form of purified Buddhism – perhaps the most austere of all religions – still survived" (*Childhood's End* 80). In his foreword to *The Buddha's Teachings on Prosperity*, Clarke draws attention to the "incongruity" of a "lifelong secularist" introducing such a book. Though he refers to religions as "a form of mind virus," he also declares that "Buddhism stands apart in being tolerant, accommodating, and pragmatic" (ix). This is completely in line with the Dalai Lama's call to all those who are in search of the path to understanding the human condition. For those of other faiths he suggests that the path might be found through different means and "for those who are radical atheists, then the Buddhist way of explaining things may hold some attraction" (2) which resonates with Clarke's view of Buddhism not as a religion but as some sort of a path: "Though I sometimes call myself a crypto-Buddhist, Buddhism is not a religion" (*God, Science, and Delusion* 37). Of course, a full discussion of the teachings of the Buddha would be too broad a subject to be provided here but suffice it to say that it is the most painful experiences in life that help human beings gain a much broader perspective and thereby grow into true maturity.

It is the spiritual aspect of growth that is emphasized in this particular analysis of Clarke's novel since that aspect of the relationship between the Overlords, the Overmind and the humans has been undermined by critics over the years as "a myth of progress," "a transcendental vision" (Huntington 155) or as "sentimental mysticism" (Samuelson 8). Huntington claims that Clarke created a "myth of progress"; the progress of humans in a stage of "transcendent evolution," as well as a "technological progress" (155). According to Huntington it is the former kind of progress that distinguishes this particular novel from Clarke's other works making it "incomprehensible". In the face of the unknown that the whole world is experiencing at the time that this article is being written, it would be safe to assume that many people are reaching for a similar transcendental vision to make sense of life *per se*. I would argue that sixty-seven years after it was first published, Clarke's novel still offers us guidance. Just as Clarke's characters struggle to adapt to the new ways of life that progress entails, the humans of 2021 also painstakingly find themselves having to leave certain things behind and acquire new habits in order shake off the pandemic disease and move forward to a brighter future. Huntington regards the myth of progress as "part of the fictional reality" of the novel, objecting to it "as an interpretation of actual reality" (156). My aim, on the contrary, is to portray its similarities with actual reality. After all, Clarke

himself declares in an interview: "there is the possibility that humankind can outgrown [sic] its infantile tendencies, as I suggested in *Childhood's End*" (37). Edward Conze defines Buddhism as "a part of the common human heritage of wisdom" and suggests that "[i] t is easier to state by what means one gets to the spiritual realm than to say what it is in itself" (11). Clarke's novel is a portrayal of the whole process of encountering the means to get to the spiritual realm, human beings' various responses to this encounter, as well as their journey towards this realm. It might be interpreted as an attempt to push humanity towards uncovering their own common heritage of wisdom and putting it to good use. As Clarke points out over and again, the main reason he stands against any form of organized religion is because they all become tainted by material concerns in the end. Perhaps, despite Clarke's arguments against religion, his work resonates so well with certain religious doctrines especially because it also stems from an untainted common human heritage of wisdom.

Elizabeth Anne Hull addresses the problematic criticism towards the novel in her article entitled "Fire and Ice: The Ironic Imagery of Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*": "Repeatedly Samuelson interprets *Childhood's End* as making a religious statement about 'man's perfectibility' (8). It is not. It is, however, about the certainty of change and about our possible improvability" (20). Hull also draws attention to the novel's emphasis on the necessity of growth: "a central idea of the book is that living things must change; they must grow or they stagnate and die. The growth is not always in the directions which we might wish, either; nevertheless, growth is an intrinsic quality of life in the universe" (18). Within the context of change, Hull argues that the arrival of the Overlords signals at the inevitable metamorphosis of the human race which might turn out to be either good or bad, however one thing is certain: "the process will be a painful one of growing up" (24). The painfulness of the process of growing up stems from the losses and the proximity to death that it entails. As the Dalai Lama puts it, "the very cause that led a thing to arise is also the cause of its destruction … the birth of things comes together with the seed or potential for their dissolution" (55-56). In that sense, the instant a human being is born, they begin to move towards death, hence the fundamental causes of suffering are "birth, sickness, ageing and death" (The Dalai Lama 50). Growth, in that sense, precludes grief at the loss of youth and health, and suffering along the path towards the end. The hardest seems to be the loss of childhood during adolescence as explained by Arnett: "One of G. Stanley Hall's ideas that is still debated today among scholars is his claim that adolescence is inevitably a time of storm and stress. According to Hall, it is normal for adolescence to be a time of considerable upheaval and disruption" (12). Arnett himself calls the period between ages 18-25 "emerging adulthood," adolescence taking place between ages 10-18. He defines it as "*the age of instability*" (10, emphasis original), "a transitional phase of life, on the way to adulthood but not there yet" (11) in which he agrees with Bond et al. and Petersen et al. that a "depressed mood is more common … than it is in childhood and adulthood" (13). In *Childhood's End* this is especially obvious in the relationship of the adult characters with the Overlords and the whole

narrative, which covers a century of humanity's journey under the guidance of their *foster parents,* can be seen as a road map towards an acceptance of the process of growth with all the depression, pain, and suffering it entails. While Clarke criticizes organized religion for hijacking what is really needed, that is morality (*God, Science, and Delusion* 36), Edward Conze defines Buddhist Scriptures – which are grouped under the headings of "*Morality, Contemplation and Wisdom*" (13, emphasis original) - as "advice on how to act, statements about modes of behaviour, and the experiences connected with them" (16). In that sense, one might argue that the Overlords function in a similar way as Buddhist teachers guiding humanity towards such morality and wisdom in their journey of growth.

The title of Clarke's short story published in 1950, which forms the basis of the first section for *Childhood's End*, is indicative of the relationship that will be established between the characters of the novel: "Guardian Angel" (Clarke v). Hull comments on the relationship between the humans and the Overlords as follows: "[I]n the narrative authorial voice Clarke describes the Overlords as "shepherding" ("Fire and Ice" 2) us; midwives or babysitters are also appropriate images consistent with the title of the book - but their mission is to preserve the natives of Earth until homo sapiens reaches maturity" (26). The novel begins with the presentation of two opposing views in the face of the dominion of the Overlords: Stormgren, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, regards the Overlords as wiser and more mature than humanity, admiring and appreciating the "security, peace and prosperity" they have gifted the world with, whereas the members of the Freedom League see it as a "superimposition" and an "interference in human affairs" which cost them their freewill and liberty (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 9). The way Karellen, the Overlord Supervisor for Earth, disciplines humanity when they refuse to act as they have been told is through punishment as when he takes away the heat and the light of the sun from South Africa in order to make them end discrimination (13-14). In that sense, the Overlords would fall under the category of "authoritarian parents" as described by Arnett:

> Authoritarian parents are high in demandingness but low in responsiveness. They require obedience from their children, and they punish disobedience without compromise. None of the verbal give-and-take common with authoritative parents is allowed by authoritarian parents. They expect their commands to be followed without dispute or dissent. Also, they show little in the way of love or warmth toward their children. Their demandingness takes place without responsiveness, in a way that shows little emotional attachment and may even be hostile. (182)

Such an authority might be considered as a requisite of the guidance towards morality and wisdom which, despite the punishment that is exerted, from Stormgren's perspective nevertheless conveys compassion. Stormgren, who is the only human being allowed direct communication with Karellen via an empty screen, thinks that behind the screen "lay power and wisdom, an

immense and tolerant understanding of mankind – and, most unexpected of all, a humerous [sic.] affection for the little creatures crawling on the planet beneath" (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 15). From the viewpoint of others, the omnipotence of Karellen is nothing but a threat against the liberty of humanity, hence a cause for rebellion, whereas Stormgren, who has real interaction with the Overlord, chooses to act like an obedient child looking up to the experience and wisdom of these guiding parental figures. The former projects denial and anger, while the latter is already at a stage of acceptance which is explained through his wider perspective and maturity compared to the other characters in the novel. When Hull refers to the immaturity of certain adult characters in the novel, i.e., George Greggson and Rupert Boyce, she makes the observation that "[h]uman beings, even the best of them, seem still to be in their childhood emotionally" ("Fire and Ice" 27) which gets in the way of their spiritual growth.

Samuelson contents that "[t]he technological power of the Overlords may be totalitarian, but their dictatorship is benevolent and discreet" (6). Karellen, resenting to be regarded as a dictator by some, defines himself as "a civil servant trying to adminster [sic.] a colonial policy in whose shaping [he] had no hand" (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 16). There is a higher power that he too serves. The relationship between Karellen and the humans resonates with their relationship with God, in which context Stormgren might be considered as representing a prophet, since Karellen communicates only with him and never reveals himself to any human. He sends messages from his vessel in the sky through the mediation of Stormgren, messages the purpose of which are to dispel "abuses, follies and evils" (22). The rebellious ones are those who refuse to believe, obey, and follow a *so-called* presence that they cannot actually see with their own eyes. Although Stormgren explains this reaction as caused by a lack of understanding resulting in annoyance, Karellen thinks it is based simply on fear; with their representation of reason and science they pose a threat to humanity's pre-existing belief systems. Karellen explains this as people's fear that the Overlords "will overthrow their gods," however, there is a possibility to look at this outside of religious concerns and, instead, consider it in a larger context as a fear of change. Growth requires transformation, "the transformation evidently being the mature form of our species after metamorphosis" as Hull puts it ("Fire and Ice" 18), letting go of the old beliefs and a willingness to accept new ones in order to keep up with the changes that the world itself inevitably goes through.

As parental figures the Overlords nudge humanity towards change and growth, but as any such guiding figure would do, they do not reveal the whole truth at once. Karellen patiently waits until human beings begin to take the presence of the Overlords and the peace they have brought to the world for granted. Perhaps due to his close interaction with Karellen, Stormgren is the first human to easily accept the change believing that the plans of the Overlords are beyond human understanding, therefore his gradual identification with the Overlords (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 23) might be interpreted as his growth in morality and contemplation moving fast towards wisdom. Soon many others join Stormgren in his belief, yet the narrator refers to the rule of the Overlords

as "the greatest challenge Man had ever faced" (25). Defining what is, after all, an alien invasion as "a challenge" to be faced by humans again recalls growth; it is not mere blind faith in the Overlords or a desperate surrender, but is substantially based on an understanding of and trust in their use of reason and science as well as an admiration for the peace and prosperity they have provided to Earth. Through the guidance of the Overlords into morality, contemplation and wisdom, humankind learns to prioritize reason and science with the sole purpose of eliminating discrimination, corruption, oppression, and injustice. As they learn to share and respect, they stop fighting and competing; thus, they begin to fulfil their potential as human beings growing into mature adults not just physically but mentally and spiritually as well. As soon as the arrival of the Overlords one thing humanity can clearly understand about them is their "hatred of cruelty," especially to animals, and "their passion for justice and order" (42). This alone convinces Stormgren on the benevolence of the Overlords and makes him see them as spiritual guides working for the welfare of all humanity. Stormgren believes that what the Overlords did was merely speeding up the process of human growth, hastening the end of the sovereign state and the establishment of the World State (44). In the context of human growth, all this suggests a widespread unity, solidarity and cooperation based on love, kindness, compassion and mercy. Since human beings take a long time to get there, a divine intervention in the form of the Overlords is needed.

The mystery surrounding the Overlords, the main barrier against humans' total surrender to their guidance, according to Karellen's explanation is due to the fact that "most of the world is still uneducated by any reasonable standards, and is riddled with prejudices and superstitions" (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 55). Therefore, the Overlords, or apparently their superior(s), have decided to wait fifty years before they make themselves visible to humanity; only then would humanity be mature enough to look at them without prejudice. As revealed later in the novel, the reason behind the mystery is due to thousands of years old misconceptions based on human prejudice of which the Overlords are aware. They are the embodiment of the Devil as portrayed in an abundance of human lore, which suggests a previous encounter between the Overlords and the humans dating back to the dawn of human history, that is, the earliest stages of their growth. Clarke's choice of the Devil as the outer appearance of the benevolent Overlords might be considered a subversion of the doctrines of organized religion inviting the reader to reconsider everything they'd been taught from a non-religious viewpoint focusing solely on the morality and wisdom behind it. Now that humanity is closer to the final stages of development, the Overlords take cautious steps towards a revelation. As Karellen explains, "the change will be so imperceptible that few will notice it" after which "there will be a period of slow consolidation while [the human] race becomes prepared for" them (62). Though Karellen never openly admits a previous encounter, when he reveals the plan to Stormgren the implications are obvious: "the men of that age [fifty years into the future] will be more stable than their grandfathers" (63). When viewed as a child-parent

relationship, one might suggest that it is first the physical absence of the Overlords, the mystery surrounding their appearance that creates a sense of distrust in humans. They are "shadowy figures" as Larson and Richards define the fathers of adolescents (qtd. in Arnett 179). When Karellen walks out into the daylight, what is revealed is the earliest insecure attachment that the humans as children of the universe had made with their foster parents, having coded them in their collective unconscious as Devils. In the context of human growth, then, the grandfathers represent babyhood, whereas their grandchildren are potential candidates for true maturity and complete growth. A waiting period of fifty years suggests that Stormgren's peers are yet at the stage of puberty which, as has been suggested earlier, is implicated in the rebellious attitude of the Freedom League and its supporters. In that sense the Overlords act like kind and loving parents patiently waiting for their offspring to reach a stage where they can be set free out into the world as independent individuals: "We will always have been part of their lives, and when they meet us we will not seem so – strange – as we would do to you," says Karellen to Stormgren (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 63). Stormgren interprets the task of the Overlords as "tidying up our world and civilizing the human race" (63) not knowing to what end. What he knows for sure is that they had failed once before and that the echoes of that first failure continue "to roll down all the ages, to haunt the childhood of every race of man" (66). Therefore, the adolescent phase of denial and anger lingers on before human beings are ready to move on to the next phase, that of *contemplation* in the Buddhist context, which Karellen refers to as "a period of slow consolidation". The transition from childhood into adulthood becomes possible only through surrendering to a higher authority accepting the part humans play in the complex, intricate and vast structure of the universe.

The second part of the novel, entitled "The Golden Age," begins on the day of the great revelation of the leathery-winged, barbed-tailed, and horned Karellen shielded from "the ancient terror" of the human crowd by a "boy sitting on his left arm" and a "girl on his right" (73). It is this new generation of children that the final part of Karellen's plan is based on; ironically, it will be children who bring the end of humanity's childhood. As Karellen explains to Stormgren, the tools and their application had been inefficient in the hands of humanity; the Overlords, on the other hand, with "the correct application of power" were able to socially engineer the whole world in fifty years, so that "the shock of revulsion" does not last too long (75-76). In fifty years, the Overlords had helped humanity obliterate war, crime, slavish work, "ignorance, disease, poverty and fear" (78). Thus, the *morality* part of their spiritual growth is complete, and it is time for *contemplation* on the path to *wisdom.* A more conscious approach to education is emphasized where people choose to go back to college after broadening their minds with "travel and experience," therefore, in the absence of psychological and/or material concerns, human beings find the opportunity to focus on their mental and spiritual growth which they had neglected for so long either because they did not want to "face the challenge" or simply just ignored the need for it (79). The narrator refers to

this development which "had given rise to many social changes" as an "extension of human apprenticeship so far past the beginning of physical maturity" (79). As a result of such realization, education turns into a much longer process: "At twenty-seven, Jan still had several years of college life ahead of him before he needed to think seriously about his career" (103). In proportion to the centuries-long growth of humanity in the larger sense, a-thirty-odd-year-long education of an individual only makes sense. When power and possession become causes for discontent rather than a life goal whereby the rush to leave the nest and start in life fades away, human beings manage to grasp how long it actually takes for an individual to mature. Thus, instead of rushing into a career, they take their time to make more educated decisions. Clarke refers to this utopian state as the true "age of reason," which had been "prematurely welcomed by the leaders of the French Revolution" (126); they had needed to learn more and grow more, leave their childhood with all its unreasonable desires behind. Thanks to such an extended education, the people of Clarke's World State manage to overcome the boredom caused by too much leisure and "for the first time everyone was given the fullest opportunity of using what brains they had" (127).

The reformed approach to education is achieved thanks to the Overlords who guide people in the right direction and take punitive measures if necessary, until people learned their lessons. In that sense, they act very much like parents educating their children on life by making *them* experience both the positive and negative consequences of their actions, instead of simply solving all the problems on their behalf like a *deus ex machina.* Thus, they teach humanity to open themselves up to a new perspective rather than committing to their long-established ways of the world, with seeing the Overlords as devils, fearing them, hence conflicting with them. Therefore, by the end of this fifty-year-long educational process, humanity finally becomes ready to move on to a stage of contemplation, leaving behind all the old conflicts and dead-ends that had been circulating viciously throughout human history. Humans finally become mature enough to put an end to their childhood and to take the final step towards independence from their guardians, which in terms of family relationships would correspond to leaving the nest. However, leaving the nest requires full maturity to which only the last generation will reach. That is why, they are yet forbidden to explore the space. This ban on space flight is a constant means of tension and curiosity in the novel, however, at one point it is explained in terms that resonate quite well with the argument of this paper:

> [I] have always felt frustrated because we've never been allowed to go to the other planets … If they had never intervened, we might have reached Mars and Venus by now. I admit that it is equally probable that we would have destroyed ourselves with cobalt bombs and the other global weapons the twentieth century was developing. Yet sometimes I wish we could have had a chance of standing on our own feet. Probably the Overlords have their reasons for keeping us in the nursery, and probably they are excellent reasons. (141)

Here Clarke underscores the destructive tendencies of humankind, drawing an explicit analogy with children under the care of their parents. After all, one does not hand their little children tools that might be destructive for them or for their environment, knowing that the child would not be able to consider the consequences. This is how Clarke portrays humankind: little kids playing with fire until their (foster) parents arrive and set certain rules. When Karellen explains the reason for the ban to newspaper reporters, he emphasizes the lethal potential of technology in the hands of the unprepared making, in his words, "a slightly unflattering analogy" with a man from the Stone Age encountering a modern city (156). As he further explains it, their intervention is meant to educate human beings to a point of wise maturity where they would be able to run the Earth without assistance. After all, as Huntington points out, "man's potential for self-destruction should be the mark of his potential for transcendence" (160). The Overlords protect the people not only from themselves – keeping them through their prohibitions from turning the Earth into "a radioactive wilderness" - but also "from the powers and forces that lie among the stars" (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 157). In that sense, the Overlords are to be taken as role models for tolerance and altruism for the greater good:

> They must preserve us from war to insure that we do not destroy ourselves before our rebirth. Because they do not know where the breakthrough will come from, all humans must be nurtured. So the Overlords must promote racial tolerance, distribution of health care, universal education, and access to the creature comforts modern technology can provide without prejudice to all humanity. This allows Clarke to make a plea by analogy for the benefits of tolerance here and now. (Hull, "Fire and Ice" 22)

Once again, human beings are portrayed as children in need of protection, education, and parental guidance until they are wise enough to walk on their own, and their obedience to the Overlords is rewarded by a lifetime of inconceivable happiness which creates a lot of room for contemplation in the Golden Age of humanity.

However, the Wheel of Fortune dictates that once one reaches the top, a downfall is inevitable; hence the title of the final part of the novel – "The Last Generation". Thus, the falling action begins when the humans of the World State grow into a state of acceptance without knowing what it was they had accepted, having trusted the wisdom of their parental figures. There are exceptions of course, those who refuse to let go off their old ways, but they are given the freedom to continue living their lives as they wish on an island they call New Athens and their biggest complaint about the new way of the world is that there is no struggle anymore but only leisure and entertainment as a result of which culture and creativity dies away: "people are becoming passive sponges – absorbing but never creating" (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 164). Together with the old and familiar way of things with all the pain, the struggle, the chaos, they have lost the creativity and the arts as a consequence. In a way,

this means the loss of life as they knew it, the loss of their world. The final straw is the loss of their children which leads some of them from depression to suicide. The mass suicide that takes place in "this elite community, the cream of humanity" is not only because they lost their horizons, but also due to their "despair when their children take the next evolutionary step without their parents" (Hull, "On His Shoulders" 109). This final setting of the novel is significant not only because it is the last domain of resistance, but also because it is here that the Greggson family resides with their two children who are the keys to the Overlords' plans for the final destination of humanity. The human parents are inadvertently headed towards practicing the Buddhist doctrines of not-self and non-attachment as they will have to let go off their children and off the world. Thus, Clarke offers a pragmatic portrayal of the Western philosophical theories of transcending the ego. As Conze explains,

> the belief in a 'self' which makes us make statements such as 'I am' or 'I have' is the cause of suffering and it is the kind of belief that are transferred into our children ironically through the strong attachment that is installed: the idea of belonging and owning, and consequently establishing the 'self' as a sum total of these. (18)

Under the guidance of the Overlords, the humans of the World State are obligated to put the theoretical negation of the ego into practice by letting go off everything they assumed they had.

George and Jean Greggson are parents trying to raise their children responsibly and with the least possible damage. Yet these children are the last generation, so they gradually change the dynamics of the relationship by beginning to control the parents and their environment. In this matter, the human parents do not follow the example of the Overlords, but instead keep struggling to exert their own authority over the children as well as the events. The Overlords, on the other hand, though they are in a rather superior position, choose not to interfere in any way: "in these matters our curiosity is of no importance. It is no more important, even, than the happiness of mankind" (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 198). In the face of what may be described as supernatural, the parents react with anxiety and fear, whereas the children, Jeff and Jennifer, after the initial shock and fear of the novelty and the strangeness of the incidents, quickly adapt to their new evolved state of being, as in the case of Jeff Greggson: "Now he went alone and fearless into the universe that was opening up before him" (198). This last generation of humans as represented by children in fact experience the final awakening of humanity; an awakening that necessitates the courage and open-mindedness to move forward as well as to let go – of their parents, of materiality, of the past, of the past habits. With this last generation it is no longer a matter of rebellion versus obedience; there is only experience and acceptance at this final stage of transformation. Until reaching this final phase, what the Overlords have been trying to do with the humans was exactly the same thing: to have them let go of their toys of possession, power, war etc. In the end these same humans give birth to a new generation that is ready to take the final step, however, just like the last

generation of children letting go of all these things, the parents would have to let go of their offspring for that to happen as Rashavek explains to George: "Enjoy them [your children] while you may ... They will not be yours for long" (207). Only those who reach the required wisdom are able to do that and the last generation of children are already at that stage.

With the new awareness that the children begin to acquire, their senses become superfluous: "She [Jennifer] was aware of the world that surrounded her: indeed, she was aware of much more than that" (203). The uttermost difference between the new generation and their predecessors is that they have "so much less to unlearn" (204) which clearly indicates the wisdom they already have. In all kinds of development – mental, psychological, physical – the concept of unlearning is the key to success; that is how old habits are broken and new perspectives are gained. Clarke refers to what happens to this new generation of children as "Total Breakthrough" which might as well be read as a psychological term referring to the development of the whole of humankind[3] (204). It is a huge leap forward for the human race. The Overlord Rashevak likens this to a difficult birth in which they themselves play the part of midwives: "We are helping to bring something new and wonderful into the world" (206). However, parents become afraid of their own children due to the supernatural powers the children begin to manifest, and it is described as a "metamorphosis for all kids around the world" (210). The word "metamorphosis" *per se* reminds one of Kafka's renown novella, thereby charging the word with a myriad negative connotation while at the same time underlining the estrangement of the parents from their offspring, which is rather more unsettling than a mere generation gap. Their perception of the human condition in its totality becomes so different due to the completed state of the children's transformation as the last generation of the human race that, for the parents understanding is not even one of the options; they either accept this thing they don't have the wisdom to understand or they become destitute in the face of change.

Above the Overlords is the *Overmind* which has sent the Overlords to Earth "to prepare [humans] for the transformation that is now at hand" (215). The bit of information about the Overmind that is significant to this paper is that although the Overlords do not know much about it, it is something that is "trying to grow, to extend its powers and its awareness of the universe" (215). Therefore, the process of growth continues infinitely for all, regardless of their position in the hierarchy. It is a growth of consciousness and when the growth of the human race will be complete, "the last generation of *Homo sapiens*" (215) will go extinct and the new generation will rise and join the Overmind, only to continue growing with it which Samuelson likens to "the mystical return of the soul to God" (6). Physical transformations such as aging might mislead human beings into thinking that their growth is completed, however Clarke's

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[3] The American Psychological Association defines breakthrough as "a significant, sometimes sudden, forward step in therapy, especially after an unproductive plateau" (dictionary.apa.org).

symbolism suggests that it is a never-ending process. The explanation Karellen gives to the parents is also noteworthy in terms of its relevance to the central idea of this paper: "For what you have brought into the world may be utterly alien, it may share none of your desires or hopes, it may look upon your greatest achievements as childish toys – yet it is something wonderful, and you will have created it" (216-17). Such an explanation not only reverses the parent-children roles, but it also creates a deconstruction by means of the paradox that the parents' own creation outgrows them. Although in appearance they are still children, "these who were leaving were no longer children, whatever they might be" (219). They represent what humanity has grown into and the fact that they are yet children themselves is indicative of this being a new beginning, rather than an end. When Jan Rodricks is about to return to Earth from the planet of the Overlords, he has understood why human beings had been forbidden to reach for the stars: "Humanity still had very far to go before it could play any part in the civilization he had glimpsed" (222-223). When Jan sees how the children live on their own private island, he is disturbed by the empty look on their faces, their indifference to anything around them, and the apparent lack of emotion or feeling. However, Karellen's explanation reveals that there is a greater purpose to the children's lack of individual identity: "linked together, they are something much greater than you" (238). Physically they are still children, but their united consciousness has grown so much that they begin to destroy everything else around them. From the perspective of the above arguments, I would read this destruction of the physical world as a metaphor which functions to foreground what goes on behind the destruction: the unity of the children almost like a Nietzschean *Overman* on a higher plane of existence. What is destroyed, therefore, is not humanity *per se* or its home, but the old way of things, the old ways of thinking and being, the lack of awareness, the lack of wisdom.

From such a perspective, Clarke's narrative gives the reader hope. As Jan begins to understand it, after having a glimpse of the immense universe, the real growth of the children brings about the end of homo sapiens with its "human hopes or fears" and its material concerns (240). The children who complete their growth are about to become part of the Overmind and Jan sees it as "not tragedy but fulfilment" (241). In the end the human race transforms into a different entity getting ready to unite with the Overmind. Although it is the end of homo sapiens, Clarke's tone is not a pessimist one: "It was all so peaceful. It might have been thus at Man's birth as it was now at his ending" (250). Bringing together the beginning and end of humanity as such again resonates with the Buddhist understanding of life as a constant cycle of death and rebirth – constant until a transition takes place from the Form Realm into the Formless Realm which again is quite similar to the transformation of humanity as described in the novel:

> Buddhism talks about the infinite process of the universe, coming into being and going through a process of dissolution before again coming into being. This process has to be understood in relation to the Three Realms of existence … it is from the Third Level of the Form Realm

> downwards that the world is subject to the continuous process of arising and dissolution. From the Fourth Level of the Form Realm upwards, which includes the Formless Realm, the world is beyond this process which we could call the evolution of the physical universe. (The Dalai Lama 46)

The last generation of humans in the novel thus complete the evolution and move towards the Formless Realm of the Overmind. It is not a tragedy because the destruction of the physical world is in fact a metaphorical destruction of worldly concerns and the illusory achievements, a means of letting go so that childhood may come to an end. As Huntington also agrees "the novel as a whole does not preach despair…. The Overmind is both a mysterious transcendence and an expression of qualities potential in mankind" (159). The childhood in the title, therefore, refers to human beings in general; *they* were the children and it is *their childhood's* end. Jan, witnessing the end of the world and the end of homo sapiens, is not grieving but is in a state of pure acceptance: "It wasn't joy or sorrow; it was a sense of fulfilment, achievement" (Clarke, *Childhood's End* 254). That is because, it is not the end of *humanity*; rather, it is a new beginning in a transformed state of existence – a rebirth. Growth is inevitable and as Karellen says "no one of intelligence resents the inevitable" (242). Thus, the novel becomes a road map for the reader towards real spiritual growth, pointing out the futility of many human concerns and acting as a reminder of the smallness of human beings in the face of the infinite universe, thereby highlighting the extreme significance of unity and a sense of oneness. In these times when we are all forced to reconsider the ways in which we run our lives and the world, Clarke's novel proves to be more relevant than ever. The global pandemic is our Overlord, showing us that it is time to let go, to accept change, and grow up. 2021 may well be our childhood's end and the beginning of our true growth.

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The Ideal Ego vs. the Ego Ideal: Fictionalization of Lacanian Perversion in Poe's "The Imp of the Perverse"

İdeal Ego Ego İdeal'e Karşı: Poe'nun "The Imp of the Perverse" Hikâyesinde Lacancı Perversiyonun Kurgusallaştırılması

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Abstract

In Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "The Imp of the Perverse" (1845), the narrator/protagonist gives us his account of how he commits a murder, but he does not provide a fully defined, convincing reason for his vile action. He speaks like a commonsensical man when he philosophizes on "perversity" in a clinically distanced tone of voice. He makes inferences and highlights the implications concerning perversity. With the same tone of voice, he also gives the readers a cold-blooded account of how he killed an old man. The insanity in the act and the way he narrates it are complicated enough for us to make sense of his situation. However, to make the issue more complicated, he gives himself away and is imprisoned to be hanged. The co-existence of these triangular dynamics has triggered a zealous hermeneutic process by/for the critics. However, none of these readings can exhaust the narrative and hermeneutical implications embodied in the story. Each of them can cover some aspects of the narrative while leaving some others untouched like the psychodynamics of the main character. In that sense, this essay attempts to make a psychoanalytic interpretation of the story by giving a Lacanian hearing to it as it might offer an explanation for certain details which otherwise remain as a rupture like the narrator's drive to give himself away or his impulsive act of killing the old man. Using the Lacanian concepts of the ideal ego and the ego ideal, jouissance, perversity, the imaginary, and the symbolic as the conceptual backcloth, this essay claims that Poe fictionalizes Lacanian psychoanalytic concept of perversity, which refers to the partial accession to castration, in "The Imp of the Perverse".

Keywords: The Imp of the Perverse, the ideal ego, the ego ideal, jouissance, perversity, the imaginary, the symbolic

Öz

Edgar Allan Poe'nun "Zıtlık Şeytanı" ("The Imp of the Perverse") hikâyesinde, anlatıcı/ana karakter, bize bir cinayeti nasıl işlediğini anlatır ancak bu menfur eyleminin ardındaki nedeni tam olarak tanımlamaz ve ikna edici bir neden sunmaz. Klinik olarak mesafeli bir tonla "perversiyon" üzerine felsefe yaptığında sağduyulu bir kişiymiş gibi konuşur; perversiyon ile ilgili çeşitli çıkarımlarda bulunur ve bunu örneklerle açıklar. Daha sonra benzer tonla yaşlı bir adamı nasıl öldürdüğünü de okuyucuya soğukkanlılıkla anlatır. Anlatıcının gerçekleştirdiği eylemdeki çılgınlık ve bunu anlatış şekli, onun durumunu anlamamız için oldukça karmaşıktır. Anlatıcının kendini ele vermesi ve asılmak üzere hapsedilmesi meselenin okuyucu için daha karmaşık hale gelmesine sebep olur. Bu üçgen dinamiğin bir arada bulunması eleştirmenler açısından zahmetli bir hermenötik süreci tetiklemiştir. Fakat, bu

okumaların hiçbiri, hikâyede yer alan anlatısal ve hermenötik çıkarımları tüketememiştir. Çalışmaların her biri anlatının bazı yönlerini ele alabilmiş ve kahramanın psikodinamiği gibi bazı konular derinlemesine incelenmemiştir. Bu bağlamda makale, hikâyenin kahramanı Lacancı psikanalitik yaklaşımla analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım bizim belirli ayrıntıları daha iyi anlamlandırmamıza katkı sağlar, aksi takdirde anlatıcının teslim olma güdüsü ya da yaşlı adamı öldürmek gibi dürtüsel eylemi okuyucuda bir muamma olarak kalır. İdeal-ego, ego-ideal, zevk, perversiyon, imgesel ve sembolik gibi Lacancı kavramlarını kavramsal arka plan olarak kullanan bu makale Poe'nun "Zıtlık Şeytanı" başlıklı hikâyesinde Lacancı anlamda kısmi kastrasyona denk düşen perversiyon kavramını kurgusallaştırdığını iddia eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: The Imp of the Perverse, ideal-ego, ego-ideal, zevk, perversiyon, imgesel, simgesel

Introduction

Poe's stories offer fertile ground due to his employment of intricate plot structure and psychological depth, therefore, a psychoanalytical reading of his stories embodies as much material to explore as a generic analysis of them. As Olivera and Indrusiak argue, "the very narrative structure of many of his [Poe's] tales mirrors a psychoanalytical method," and they continue, "the interference of the protagonist's unconscious leading him towards an unwanted and dreaded path of self-destruction" appears as a recurrent theme in his short stories (48). Poe's fiction systematically explores the inner working mechanisms of the mind to such an extent that, as Scoot Peeples suggests, "he dramatized to a starting degree a number of the concepts Freud would name and establish as the fundamentals of modern psychoanalysis" (38). In *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1926), the psychoanalyst Otto Rank even claims further that Poe employs "the theme of the double" in his short story "William Wilson" in such a way that it becomes "a model for several later treatments" (25). More recently, in 2009, Daniel M. Wegner has revisited "the imp of the perverse," borrowing the term from Poe's story, under the light of "ironic process theory." He conducts a bulk of laboratory research and demonstrates that as people want to suppress a thought, it pops out into the consciousness, which he terms as "ironic errors" (Wegner 48). So deeply entangled with psychology, Poe's stories offer a highly fruitful ground to make a psychoanalytic inquiry, and this essay is another attempt to make a psychoanalytic interpretation of Poe's another well-known story, "The Imp of the Perverse" (1845).

"The Imp of the Perverse"[1] begins with a long passage allocated to the philosophical discussion on an undefinable human impulse which is, as the narrator states, the "*PRIMA MOBILIA*[2] of the human soul," perverseness (Poe

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[1] All the references to "The Imp of the Perverse" are taken from *Edgar Allan Poe: Fiction and Poetry* (2006).
[2] *Prima mobilia* means "a constitutive feature of existence" (Cleman 639).

720). As the narrative reveals later, the unnamed narrator, who is in jail in present moment, aims to convince the audience that he is "one of the many uncounted victims of the Imp of the Perverse" (Poe 723). After telling how he has committed murder with the help of a poisoned candle, a case which has long remained uncovered, the narrator relates how he inherits the rich victim's estate and enjoys his wealth for years. However, this peaceful condition is disturbed due to an unidentifiable reason. Pleasure that he increasingly enjoys gives way to "a haunting and harassing thought" after a certain point, and he finds himself repeating the phrase "I am safe" (Poe 723). One day while he is strolling through the street, he murmurs, half-aloud, that "I am safe – I am safe – if I be not fool enough to make open confession!" (Poe 724). However, he eventually publicizes the crime he committed just as he abstains from and is put into jail to be hanged.

The narrator/protagonist gives us his account of how he commits a murder, but he does not provide a fully defined, convincing reason for his vile action. He speaks like a commonsensical man when he philosophizes on "perversity" in a clinically distanced tone of voice. He makes inferences and highlights the implications concerning perversity. With the same tone of voice, he also gives the readers a cold-blooded account of how he killed an old man. The insanity in the act and the way he narrates it are complicated enough for us to make sense of his situation. However, to make the issue more complicated, he gives himself away and is imprisoned to be hanged. The co-existence of these triangular dynamics has triggered a zealous hermeneutic process by/for the critics.

An early analysis of "The Imp of the Perverse" focuses on the creative aspect of it because the introduction part of the story brings the question of Poe's failure of craftmanship into discussion. Zimmerman asserts that "the essay-like introduction" is not a failure but an indication of Poe's craftmanship (37). Kanjo scrutinizes the story through the lens of a romantic tale in which creativity and destructiveness are paradoxically intertwined (41). Drawing on what Stanley Fish suggests, Bieganowski dwells on the narrator of "The Imp of the Perverse" and reads it as an example of "self-consuming narrator," where the attention is transferred from the content of art to its effects (175). Koçsoy compares Poe's and Kant's ideas of the sublime by discussing "The Imp of the Perverse". In relation to the crime the narrator commits, Koçsoy argues that the narrator in "the Imp of the Perverse" "crave[s] for self-transcendence by experiencing the terror of the sublime" through pleasure while doing evil (146). The critic John Cleman takes the narrator's account as "the insanity defense" in his study on Poe. As it is foregrounded by Cleman, in the first half of the nineteenth-century, insanity defense was among the most controversial issues of the legal system (624). A number of critics has approached the text as a tale of confession. Arthur A. Brown, for instance, by relating the act of telling to death, argues that "[a] tale of a murderer's confession gives us two deaths – the victim's and the murderer's – both inextricable from the act of telling" (198). Lorelei Caraman, on the other hand, focuses on the narrator's confession by using Peter Brooks's concept of the "narrative desire." She notes that the text incorporates a force of ambivalence within itself: on the one hand, there is

the desire of the narrative which is "the confessional urge to tell," and on the other, there is "the desire to conceal" which causes the "'undecidability' of meaning," which, in the last analysis, resembles the structure of the unconscious (Caraman 106). In a similar line of thinking, Sandra Whipple Spanier analyzes the paradoxical formal structure of "The Imp of the Perverse" that is, the narrator's exaltation of "*inductive* reasoning" as opposed to his method of deductive narration (308) in order to explain Poe's emphasis on "Unity" (307).

None of these readings can exhaust the narrative and hermeneutical implications embodied in the story. Each of them can cover some aspects of the narrative while leaving some others untouched like the psychodynamics of the main character. The narrator leaves such a small textual space to the crime story that it seems hard to elaborate on the reasons behind his vile action. The reader is only provided with scarce details about how he kills the victim and how he confesses his crime and, consequently, gets himself caught. The story bears some suggestive piece of evidence which justifies a psychoanalytic approach in relation to the protagonist's seemingly unreasonable acts. For instance, there are some loopholes in the flow of plot which need to be deciphered. There arise many questions in the mind of the reader concerning the reasons why the protagonist wants to murder the rich man, or why the protagonist develops an anxiety after some time which will lead him to shout the testimony of his crime. Since the story does not offer satisfactory answers to these questions on the surface level, some story elements remain as an enigma to the reader. There are two important studies which give a psychoanalytic hearing to the protagonist of "The Imp of the Perverse". One of the early analyses of Poe's stories is offered by Mary Bonaparte in her work *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (1949), in which she psychoanalyzes Edgar Allan Poe himself against the backdrop of his work drawing on Sigmund Freud's theories. In relation to "The Imp of the Perverse," Bonaparte mentions the "confessional urge" which refers to the simultaneous action of "the pressure of conscience which demands punishment for our sins" and "our instinctual urges towards criminal activities" (463). In addition to that, comparing Freud's and Poe's understanding of perversity, Oliveira and Indrusiak explores "The Imp of the Perverse" by using the Freudian concept of the uncanny. They suggest that while one's struggle to scrutinize what is concealed within one's mind is "a road to destruction" in Poe's fiction, the same movement is "a key to sanity, provided it be conducted by a skilled psychoanalyst" (Oliveira and Indrusiak 55). According to them, the reason for the protagonist's vile action is that the murderer is not able to confront the unconscious successfully or dare to face what is repressed in his mind, so he falls prey to the imp and is surrendered to the self-destructive impulses in the end (Oliveira and Indrusiak 56). Diverging from these psychoanalytic studies, the current study aims to look at the complicated psychodynamics of the narrator (the main character) and aims to give some possible answers to the questions raised in the story from a Lacanian vantage point. My intention is not to offer a totalizing frame of reading but to offer just another alternative

reading that might help the readers dig up further resonances in the story. Reading the story by taking all the elements on a rational ground cannot exhaust some of the implications of the narrative. That is, the story spills over the interpretive frame and demands more in-depth analysis. A Lacanian vantage point might offer an explanation for certain details which otherwise remain as a rupture like the narrator's drive to give himself away or his impulsive act of killing the old man.

In "The Imp of the Perverse" there are two distinct voices coming from the narrator, which dramatizes an inner conflict. In Lacanian epistemology, this conflict can be taken as the lack of convergence between one's ideal ego identifications and the ego ideal in the symbolic, which is the vantage point we view ourselves. There is lack of convergence between them as one is an element of the imaginary and the other is constituted in the symbolic. That is, they work through two different logics: logic of the images and of the signifiers, respectively. In the story, the unnamed narrator kills the old man who obviously assumes a position of power in his eyes after a long process of planning and enjoys his wealth in the aftermath of his murder. This old man triggers in him an uncanny anxiety, which we might associate with Oedipal rivalry and castration anxiety as he is a man of power and as after killing him, he relocates himself in the position of the old man. Rather than acknowledging his authority, the narrator overpowers him, which is the reversal of the Oedipal drama and a form of psychic regression. However, the drama does not end there as this regression takes place after being positioned in the symbolic, which implies the constitution of the ego ideal, though in a weak form. As the sense of omnipotence, he enjoys through the old man's wealth gets weaker, his ego ideal, which is also an abstraction of the Law, gives him away and he is in prison in the living present. From a Lacanian vantage point, the feeling of omnipotence that the murderer experiences can be claimed to be an instance of *jouissance*, "painful pleasure". After killing the fatherly figure, the protagonist suffers from excessive *jouissance*, but it should be regulated. The reason why he gives himself away to the authorities can be read as his desperate attempt to set limit to *jouissance*. He, the pervert, wants the Law to come to his aid and desperately attempts to make the metaphorical father accomplish the paternal function in order to restrain *jouissance*. Due to the significance attached to the conflicting voices in the narrator, this paper aims to look at the story from a Lacanian vantage point using the Lacanian concepts of the ideal ego and the ego ideal, perversity, *jouissance*, the imaginary and the symbolic as the conceptual backcloth.

Theoretical Framework

A brief look at the Lacanian view of subjectivity would prepare a better ground for a thorough analysis of the story. Rewriting Freud from a structuralist perspective, Jacques Lacan mentions "three fundamental dimensions of psychical subjectivity"; namely the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. Although these registers do not allow us to make a neat and rigid classification, they have certain characteristics. In a Lacanian formula, the infant moves from

the imaginary register to the symbolic register through the resolution of Oedipus complex. The symbolic refers to the register in which the infant enters into the domain of language, accepting "the Law of the father". In a sense, the infant gets involved into the cultural and the social life through language. This is a crucial entry for Lacan because, if the infant does not accomplish this transition properly, there may occur some problems ranging from psychosis to perversion.

The imaginary register is crucial in Lacanian epistemology because it is central to the ego formation. This register is the pre-linguistic, pre-Oedipal state of being. This is the realm in which the infant is in a symbiotic relation to its mother's body. The main feature of this dyadic child/mother relationship is that "the infant makes no distinction between self and other, itself and the outside world" (Elliott 103). As Elliott states, "the imaginary is a peculiar realm of ideal completeness, merging all that is inside with which is outside" (103). The basis of imaginary register is the mirror phase because the ego is formed by identifying with its specular image. The infant sees its image in the mirror and develops an illusionary identification with "the imago of the counterpart," as Lacan contends in his essay called "The Mirror stage as Formative of the Function of the I" (4). Its image in the mirror is the first constitutive image for the infant, therefore, its first imago. The infant conceives itself as a unified and autonomous being by looking at its image in the mirror. It is a phase where the subject moves from a feeling of incompleteness into a vision of totality. On the one hand, this is a "*misrecognition*" for "it gives him the illusion that he has control over his body when he has not" (Sarup 65-66). As Lacan claims, "alienation is constitutive of the imaginary order" (Seminar III 146). On the other hand, the infant attains this sense of unity in the other, the other in the mirror, which explains its dependency on the other. "Lacan's point is that the ego is constituted by an identification with another whole object, an imaginary projection, and idealization, the 'Ideal-I,' which does not match the child's feebleness" (Sarup 66). Therefore, the ideal Ego, "the Ideal-I" originates in the "jubilant" relationship established between the ego and its specular image (Lacan, "The Mirror" 2). It gives the infant a sense of narcissistic omnipotence. It comes into being through the narcissistic identification with his first constitutive image, Imago, in which we appear to be likeable to ourselves representing "what we would like to be" – the ideal in the mirror. The primary narcissism is always accompanied by certain amount of aggressivity as well. Lacan contends that "The mirror stage is far from a mere phenomenon which occurs in the development of the child. It illustrates the conflictual nature of the dual relationship" (Seminar IV 17, qtd. in Evans 115). Unlike its reflection in the mirror as a whole being, the infant feels threatened by a sense of disintegration/fragmentation and a lack of control in its real body, which, in turn, makes way for the feeling of aggression.

This identification with the mother which is established in the imaginary register is disrupted by the father as the third element and the infant's acceptance of his castration marks the resolution of his Oedipal complex. However, the father here is not the biological father as in Freud's formula,

rather it is what the father symbolizes, a position, "the Law of the father," or "the Name of the father". The infant understands that what satisfies or orders the desire of the mother is not something physical, rather it is ordered by a Law. The father symbolizes a body of social conventions. When the infant accedes to castration and accepts the sovereignty of what the father represents, he is positioned symbolically into the logic of language: "Accepting his authority and phallic status is the precondition of the child's having a place within the socio-symbolic order, a name and a speaking position" (Sarup 127). At this point, the imaginary identifications are supplemented by symbolic identification. The symbolic identification is achieved through the words, norms and directives of its given cultural collectives. It is at this time that the infant enters into the domain of the language, "the social world of Law, morality, religion and conscience" (Habib 589). In a sense, language, or rather the logic of language, castrates the male infant and regulates the desire in the Oedipus complex, so the infant is positioned in the Symbolic and identifies itself with the father. The infant forms the ego-ideal at the time when castration complex is surmounted and, in corollary, the male infant starts to identify himself with the father. The ego-ideal is the very place from where we are being observed, from where we look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likeable and worthy of love – the position from which we look at ourselves through the gaze of the Symbolic. It is through this "secondary identification" that the aggressivity the infant experiences in the mirror phase is transcended (Lacan, "Aggressivity" 17).

In Lacanian understanding, perversity does not carry any derogatory connotations such as abnormal sexual behavior, "an aberration in relation to social criteria, an anomaly contrary to good morals" (Evans 141), it rather appears as a clinical structure. It is described as one of the three psychoanalytic categories i.e., neurosis, psychosis, and perversion, all of which concern the paternal function. "Whereas we see an utter and complete absence of the law in psychosis, and a definitive instatement of the law in neurosis (overcome only in fantasy), in perversion the subject struggles to bring the law into being" (Fink 165). Paternal function has two important moments of interference. The first refers to "the father's prohibition of the child's pleasurable contact with its mother (prohibition to *jouissance*)" (Fink 179) while the second indicates "the symbolization of the mOther's lack – that is, its constitution as lack due to the fact that it is given a name" (Fink 179). The first function is called "alienation" while the latter is "separation." Reading Lacan, Bruce Fink puts that although pervert undergoes alienation, he does not surpass separation (179). In first instance of paternal function, the father, or the fatherly figure other than the mother, prohibits the infant from the *jouissance* it gets from its physical connection to its mother, which can be called "primal repression" (Swales XIV). However, the infant should also separate himself from his mother with the help of father as the paternal metaphor, the Law, the name of the Father. When it fails, the infant imagines itself as being the imaginary phallus for his mother's *jouissance*, which is associated with "secondary repression" (Swales XIV) or "symbolic castration"

(Fink 176). If the infant cannot surpass separation, it cannot attain a symbolic position. Thus the infant, the pervert, assumes that it is what the mOther lacks, making itself the object of her desire. Therefore, he is not claimed to "make a name for himself" (Fink 176). As a result, he terribly needs the Law come into being to set the limit to *jouissance*.

Fictionalization of Perversion in "The Imp of The Perverse"

If we locate the narrative elements of Poe's "Imp of the Perverse" within a Lacanian frame of thinking, the loopholes in it make more sense. The biggest question lingering in the story is: Why does he kill the old man? If one can answer this question, the story reveals itself more coherently. In the story, the unnamed narrator kills the old man who obviously assumes a position of power in his eyes after a long process of planning and enjoys his wealth in the aftermath of his murder. The protagonist is acquainted with his victim and knows the place where he lives. He knows that the man has "the habit of reading in bed" (Poe 723). He also knows that his apartment is "narrow and ill ventilated" (Poe 723). The narrator easily substitutes the candle with the poisoned one he made. The rationale behind his murder seems to be the victim's estate. Having inherited his [the victim's] estate, all went well with me for years," says the narrator (Poe 723). By possessing the old man's estate, the narrator, as Arthur Brown puts it, takes "the victim's place, assuming his identity and possibly his name" (201). From a Lacanian perspective, it is possible to argue that this old man triggers in him an uncanny anxiety, which we might associate with Oedipal rivalry and castration anxiety as he is a man of power and as after killing him, he relocates himself in the position of the old man. The narrator sees the victim as a rival, wants him dead, and finally achieves it. The gaze of the old man triggers an uncountable feeling in the narrator and leads to a psychic regression in him. The protagonist in the story kills the old man because the old man reminds him of the imaginary father, not the symbolic father. The imaginary father is an imaginary construct that the infant builds the images around the figure of the father (Evans 64). In his fourth seminar, Lacan states that it bears little resemblance to the father in reality; it can be an ideal or a monstrous figure. It is an "omnipotent" figure which imposes limits to the infant such as incest taboo (qtd. in Evans 63). The protagonist in the story reduces the symbolic father, which is a position imposing the Law, to the imaginary father. Therefore, he takes the old man as a threat, a source of aggression. He cannot see that the old man too has submitted himself to the Law, thus, is castrated. Once he relocates himself in the position of the old man by killing him, saying that he has "inherited his estate" (Poe 723), the narrator enjoys the place he now occupies:

> It is inconceivable how rich a sentiment of satisfaction arose in my bosom as I reflected upon my absolute security. For a very long period of time, I was accustomed to revel in this sentiment. It afforded me more real delight than all the mere worldly advantages accruing from my sin. (Poe 723)

The "absolute security" he feels is significant in psychological terms as it implies relief from something disturbing, like castration anxiety. This seems to be the reversal of the fall from grace for the narrator because he enjoys pure bliss for a while. The word absolute also implies timelessness and universality of the experience. In the process of Oedipus complex, the male infant is constantly under the threat of the Law because he is afraid that he will be castrated by the Law of the Father. Realizing that it cannot defeat it, he submits himself to the Law. However, in case of "The Imp of the Perverse" the narrator reverses the Oedipus drama because he overpowers him. That is, he literalises the biggest infantile phantasy of a male infant. The narrator, by assuming the place of the old man, thinks that he has relieved himself of castration anxiety.

In a similar line of thinking, the fact that this murder gives him more delight than anything else brings to mind the Lacanian concept of "*jouissance*." The French word *jouissance* means basically enjoyment. In the castration period, the infant is in the pursuit of *jouissance* in its attempt to be the imaginary phallus for the mother. Once the infant moves into the realm of the symbolic, s/he acts in accordance with the pleasure principle and the initial *jouissance* is rejected. "Castration means that *jouissance* must be refused so that it can be reached on the inverted ladder *(l'échelle renversée)* of the Law of desire" (Lacan, "The Subversion" 247). However, the subject constantly attempts to transgress the limits imposed on him/her by the reality principle, the logic of the signifiers, or the Law, in order to experience the feeling of *jouissance*. However, going beyond the reality principle does not bring more pleasure; it turns into pain: "*Jouissance* is suffering" (Lacan, Seminar VII 184). The simultaneous existence of pain and pleasure is what Lacan calls *jouissance*. Therefore, it is possible to claim that the extreme form of delight that the protagonist experiences corresponds to what Lacan terms as the *jouissance*, the transgression which injects a different kind of energy to the subject.

However, this blissful, secure, and omnipotent state does not last long as the protagonist experiences this "delight" after being positioned in the symbolic. "There arrived at length an epoch, from which the pleasurable feeling grew, by scarcely perceptible gradations, into a haunting and harassing thought" (Poe 723). He has a vague awareness of the reality principle or the dictates of the Law. *Jouissance* has to remain elusive, otherwise it loses its status as *jouissance*. This is exactly what happens in this case. As there is no other limitation to his delight, or in the absence of a barrier that requires transgression, his delight loses its status as a source of "absolute" delight. This pleasurable feeling that he enjoys by overpowering the man after a point awakens in him another odd feeling again. The narrator becomes estranged from the idea of being secure, therefore he repeatedly utters the phrase "I am safe" (Poe 723). "In this manner, at last, I would perpetually catch myself pondering upon my security, and repeating, in a low undertone, the phrase, 'I am safe'" (Poe 723). This word "safe" can be interpreted as the narcissistic omnipotence felt in the absence of the symbolic dictations. Narcissism is closely related to the mirror stage in a Lacanian thinking. The infant's imaginary identification with its own image in the mirror is a form of imaginary mastery. "[The infant's] joy is due to his

imaginary triumph in anticipating a degree of muscular co-ordination which he has not yet actually achieved." (Lacan, Seminar I 79). Identifying with its specular image, the infant experiences a sense of narcissistic omnipotence, a sense of wholeness, or "the illusion of autonomy" (Lacan, "The Mirror" 5). In the story, the protagonist tries to establish an imaginary plane of "safety" through the repetition of the word itself. Since the narrator is in the symbolic register, his ego ideal is already constituted. It is his ideal ego that constantly tires to assure himself of being secure. He is able to look at himself from his position in the symbolic but because of his troubled position or troubled identifications in the symbolic, he cannot repress the pull of his imaginary drives. Lacan claims that in perversion "the subject positions himself as object of the drive, as the means of the other's *jouissance*" (Seminar XI, 185). The excessive repetition of the phrase "I am safe," in other words, the voice of the ideal ego, creates the feeling of uncanniness in him. It seems that he has to resort to his imaginary consolations to turn the gaze (symbolic) back on itself.

This uncanny condition that he experiences for the second time can also be explained by relating it to the reversal of Oedipal drama. By taking the old man's place, the father's, the narrator cannot adapt to this place. In a Lacanian context, after surmounting the Oedipus complex properly, the boy becomes a gendered and acculturated being who submits himself to the Law of the Father and the logic of the signifiers. However, in "The Imp of the Perverse" the protagonist does not submit to the Law but rejects it by killing the old man who he takes as the incarnate form of the Law. Therefore, taking the father's place does not bring him an ever-lasting state of bliss that he awaits so this situation creates another uncanny condition in him. If the expression, "I am safe," that the narrator repeatedly chants is read in the light of all this, it is possible to reread it as follows: "There is not any threat of castration anymore because there is no Law, so you are secure." However, the *jouissance* he experiences cannot last long and he has the reminiscences of the dictates of the Law in his consciousness.

No matter how hard he tries, the narrator is not able to resist the excessive pressure coming from his consciousness. He publicizes the testimony just as he was afraid of confessing the crime by himself. "I am safe – I am safe – yes – if I be not fool enough to make open confession" (Poe 724). The narrator does not know why he chants the same phrase, so he names it "perversity." As Charles May asserts, "by thinking that he is safe if only he does not confess, he is perversely drawn closer and closer to making a confession.… The man confesses only because he knows he should not, not because he feels guilty. He is caught only because he says, 'I am safe'" (74). In the long philosophical discussion at the beginning of the story the narrator comments on the nature of the perversity which is "an innate and primitive principle of human action … a *mobile* without motive, a motive not *motivirt*" (Poe 721). Therefore, he relates this condition to his perversity because he is not capable of giving any rational explanation to his paradoxical act:

> At first, I made an effort to shake off this nightmare of the soul. I walked vigorously -- faster -- still faster -- at length I ran. I felt a maddening desire to shriek aloud. Every succeeding wave of thought overwhelmed me with new terror, for, alas!... I still quickened my pace. I bounded like a madman through the crowded thoroughfares. At length, the populace took the alarm, and pursued me. I felt then the consummation of my fate. Could I have torn out my tongue, I would have done it, but a rough voice resounded in my ears -- a rougher grasp seized me by the shoulder. I turned -- I gasped for breath. For a moment I experienced all the pangs of suffocation; I became blind, and deaf, and giddy; and then some invisible fiend, I thought, struck me with his broad palm upon the back. The long imprisoned secret burst forth from my soul. (Poe 724)

The narrator is terribly afraid of this uncontainable feeling which is caused by the clash between his ideal ego and his ego ideal. He cannot stop himself from running in the street aimlessly because he has transgressed the Law, which means that he has experienced the narcissistic omnipotence of the imaginary, on the other hand, he is aware of the absurdity of the situation. But the *jouissance* he experiences does not last long; he does not have any limit enabling him to move beyond the pleasure principle. In addition to that, the dictates of the Law, which are in communication with his ego ideal, force him to get punished for his "inhuman" act. As a result of this frightening and opposing experience, he tells what he has done to the public gathered around her. Thus the conflicting voices coming from his ideal ego and his ego ideal give himself away and he is in prison in the living present. Although the narrator cannot exactly name what he experiences, it can be argued that this is the fictionalization of perversity in Lacanian sense. The protagonist is not claimed to be fully acceded to castration. By annihilating the Father, he imagines that he will be what the mother lacks, that is the phallus. However, suffering from excessive *jouissance* which must be prohibited, he wants to the Law to castrate himself so that limit can be set to *jouissance*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in "The Imp of the Perverse" if what the narrator does is taken as the actualisation of the biggest infantile phantasy, the story opens itself up for a more comprehensive reading. In such a context, the old man who symbolizes power in his eyes reminds him of the imaginary father which forbids him the initial *jouissance*. He therefore sees the old man as a source of threat, thus, a source of aggression, which hinders him from attaining narcissistic omnipotence. By killing the old man, he experiences a short term *jouissance*, for he transgresses the Law. However, he cannot cope with this new condition because there is not any limitation to his extreme delight which may enable him to have *jouissance* once more. The dictates of the Symbolic pose a threat to this omnipotence. The ending of the story also testifies to the Lacanian idea that *jouissance* has to remain elusive, it is the paradox it embodies. When it becomes constant, it loses its position as *jouissance*. As a result of his double consciousness which becomes a psychic battleground between the imaginary

drives and symbolic dictations, the protagonist gives himself away. In this battleground, his ego ideal dominates, but interestingly the narrator is still mystified about what is happening in his (un)consciousness and tries to theorize on his "uncanny" practice. Moreover, although Poe is fictionalizing the dictates of his imagination in this story, he seems to dramatize what Lacan means by perversion. Indeed, he actualizes what is supposed to stay as a "drama".

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Thackeray's Children:
Laughter, Childhood, and Disenchanting The Fairy Tale
Thackeray'in Çocukları:
Gülme, Çocukluk ve Peri Masalının Büyü Bozumuna Uğratılışı

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Abstract

This paper aims at excavating the use(s) of mid-nineteenth century English laughter in relation to the conception of Victorian childhood in William Makepeace Thackeray's rarely studied fairy-tale, *The Rose and The Ring* (1854). Defining the cultural coordinates of Thackeray's Victorian sensibility towards children and locating the root of this sensibility in its contemporary novelistic discourse, this paper assumes a connection between the Victorian child as a narrative chess-piece and her/his involvement in the development of novelistic strategies. This connection, it is contended, naturally results in the 'employment' of the child as a narrative explorer of narrational possibilities in *TRTR*, which builds up an argument against the *fairy-tailisation* of fairy-tales. It is argued that the child herself/himself and ideas pertaining to childhood in *TRTR* function as sources and manufacturers of laughter/ humour which tarnishes the conventional magicality of a fairy-tale. In this context, not only does the child's laughter relocate her/him as a narrative auxiliary in accordance with Thackeray's realist mission, but also it centralises the child's laughter and the child herself/himself as a narrative wanderer. In this context, it will be argued that Thackeray's child's encounter with laughter and her/his involvement in laughter-evoking instances further both the mission of novelistic realism *contra* fairy-tale magicality and emerge as directors of the narrative tone and course. In conclusion, it will be maintained that although Thackeray's children are formally at service of the author's inner strategies, the narrational attitude empowers them.

Keywords: *The Rose and The Ring*, Victorian laughter, 19th century childhood, realism, fairy-tale, Dickensian laughter

Öz

Bu çalışma Viktorya dönemi çocukluk anlayışı bağlamında on dokuzuncu yüzyıl ortalarında İngiliz gülmecesinin kullanım alanı / alanlarını, William Makepeace Thackeray'in pek az çalışılan peri masalı *The Rose and The Ring* (1854) örneğinde bulmayı amaçlar. Thackeray'in çocuklara olan yaklaşımının altındaki Viktoryan eğilimin kültürel yaşamdaki yerini tespit ederek ve bu yaklaşımının kendi çağının roman söylemi içerisindeki karşılığını bularak, bu çalışma Viktorya dönemi çocuğunun/çocukluğunun anlatısal bir araç oluşu ile aynı zamanda romansal anlatım stratejilerinin de bir geliştiricisi oluşu arasında bir bağlantı kuracaktır. Bu bağlantının ise doğal olarak, çocuğu yazınsal olanakların bir keşfedicisi olarak konumlandırarak peri masalı türünün *peri-masallaştırılmasına* karşı duran bir argümanın geliştirdiği fikri savunulacaktır. *TRTR*'da, çocuğun/çocukluğun gülme/ mizah odağı olarak kullanıldığı ve bu yolla peri masalının alışılagelmiş büyüselliğinin

bilinçli şekilde yıkılmaya çalışıldığı ifade edilecektir. Çocuğun gülmesinin ya da çocuk tarafından başlatılan gülmenin Thackeray'in realist ajandasının bir yansıması olarak onu hem bir anlatısal araç olarak kullandığı ve hem de çocuğun gülmesinin Thackeray tarafından anlatının merkezine konulduğu ifade edilecektir. Bu bağlamda, Thackeray'in çocuklarının gülmesi hem yazarın romansal realizm yoluyla peri masalının büyüselliğini bozmasına yardım ettiği hem de romanın edebi büyüselliğe karşı olan pozisyon alışının sınırlarını belirlediği tezi sunulacaktır. Sonuç olarak, Thackeray'in çocuklarının bir yandan yazarın anlatısal stratejilerinin hizmetine sokulmasına rağmen; diğer yandan da anlatısal tavrın onları güçlendirdiği fikri savunulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *The Rose and The Ring*, Viktorya döneminde gülme, on dokuzuncu yüzyılda çocukluk, realizm, peri masalı, Dickenscı gülmece

"Laughter grew so fashionable that even Mihailo and Jakov were forced to take it up. They didn't do it very well but they practised at it conscientiously. Whenever people talked about Stefan, they always pushed forward importantly and said:
"Ho! Ho! Ho! Do you mean Stefan, the Laughing Prince? Ha! Ha! Ha! Why, do you know, he's our own brother!"
As for Militza, the Princess had her come to the castle and said to her:
"I owe all my happiness to you, my dear, for you it was who knew that of course I would laugh at Stefan's nonsense! What sensible girl wouldn't?"
-*The Laughing Prince: A Book of Jugoslav Fairy Tales and Folk Tales* (1921)

Introduction: Unexpected Leaps of Laughter and the Child

Humour theory has traditionally identified laughter as a declaration of superiority, as an assertion of incongruity, and as an expression of psychological relief. However, the Slavic folktale *The Laughing Prince* introduces its reader to an alarming narrative turn which is of great shock value. The protagonist, Stefan, does not give a conventional true love's kiss in hope of curing the Princess. Instead, he tells a non-sensical story which makes her roll in tears. This unexpected narrative turn presents the reader with a two-fold argument: the first argument is built on the idea of the loss of *eudaimonia.*[1] "I want to laugh!" (Filmore 9) she says and threatens her father by starving herself to death. Upon Stefan's arrival, however, she recovers tremendously and acquires her well-being. From this point of view, the laughter invoked by the non-sensical tale functions as a *eudaimonic* force which relates itself to the cathartic function of laughter. The second argument, on the other hand, is unconventionally built on the premise that the child's laughter possesses the power of disenchantment. Initially, Stefan's joviality makes him an object of scorn and the tone of the narrative underlines that any

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[1] I use the term in a definitively Aristotelian sense as defined in *Nichomachean Ethics* esp. XIII, 1102a-b where *eudaimonia* (well-being; sometimes translated as happiness) is a matter of virtuous activity which contributes to proper human functioning. Since the Ancient Greek form fully captures the meaning of well-being, I took a Nussbaumian position here. For this discussion see Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

hilarious enterprise is deemed as superfluous in the eyes of an agrarian society which naturally seeks to perpetuate the estate. Ironically enough, though, it is Stefan's laughter which breathes life into the usualness of the story which functions as a disillusioning force. In a fairy-tale context, this could seem peculiar since in Formalist terms laughter in folktales has been solely conceived as a rejuvenating force. In *Theory and History of Folklore*, Propp maintains that laughter "is endowed not only with the power to accompany life but also with the power to call it forth" (131). The Roman festival of the Lupercalia which, he informs us, dictated the young to dip their knives in sacrificial blood and touch their foreheads required them to laugh afterwards while the Greco-Eyptian creation myth of Psyche's birth occurred after god's seventh and final laughter (133), suggesting the role of laughter in rebirth and creation. These two stories can explain why the Princess laughs at Stefan's foolish tale. However, they barely explain how the tale positions child's laughter as non-typical in nature. It is certainly remedial in that it rejuvenates the object of laughter. The subject of laughter, on the other hand, emerges as a narrative anomaly as he skilfully defies readerly expectations. He does not rush for help with a kiss such as in *Snow White* or *Sleeping Beauty*. He rushes for help with his unusual laughter which manages to break with the rules of hereditary succession and weakens magicality's inordinate claim to the narrative structure of the wonder tale (Tatar 31). Contrary to expectation,[2] *The Laughing Prince* unprecedentedly employs child's laughter as a realist force which unmasks the artificiality of fairy-tale magic. In other words, the child's laughter does not subvert reality but it rescripts our epistemological categorisation of truth and transcendence. By way of doing so, the child subject offers a unique study in narrative disenchantment which laughs off the traditional balderdash surrounding the genre.

It is noteworthy to mention that the disenchanting force of child's laughter in fairy-tales has been more extensively broached in fiction—one only needs to think of another prominent folk tale protagonist Gingerbread Man's derisive "run, run, as fast as you can" who runs away from his pursuers by humorously mocking the societal need for child protection although he is doomed to be the bait of his own story and is eaten by a fox—and scarcely in literary criticism due to a handful of reasons. First, it appears that the non-canonical status of the fairy-tale facilitates a self-evolvement due to "the entanglement of fairy tales and literary self-consciousness" which "goes beyond the coincidental" ("Underdog in the Vanguard" 6-7). Since the fairy-tale has been approached as an intellectually irreproachable subject for fear of tampering with its magicality, its content has managed to self-evolve with the help of the literary self-consciousness that produces it. This can be observed in the transition from medieval fairies who are interruptive, ironically grotesque, and abnormal

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[2] In this context, I do not necessarily assign a certain subversive role to fairy-tale imagination in the manner contemporary fairy-tale criticism in general appears to do so. I prefer to imagine the tarnishing effect of laughter as an epistemological shift in understanding which need not necessarily imply a topsy-turviness since an epistemic shift may not have to imply a revolting sort of a speech act and can suggest instead a new ontology.

figures to the Victorian fairy tale which does not often include an actual fairy but borrows from the Middle Ages the narrative scheme so as to create "the self-conscious *Kunstmärchen* (an authored and imitative fairy tale)" (Newton xii). Thus, while the medieval fairy was put forward as the obtuse anti-hero (Lewis 134-38), the Victorian fairy-tale makes a passing reference to the marginality of the fairy although it preserves its contemporary mission of didacticism. Second, since it has been considered that the fairy-tale genre has suffered from a non-history which implies a literary history stripped from literary canonisation (Zipes 1), the production and transmission of the fairy-tale "is preserved by constantly re-creating it" ensuring that "a culture of silence cannot descend on us" ("Introduction" 29-30). The fairy-tale genre, then, derives its power from its openness to embracing forms of textual experimentation.

Because the narrative body of the fairy-tale itself allows "formal suitability for reflexibility and experimentation" ("Underdog in the Vanguard" 7), it should be only natural that it appears to have benefited more from its literary creators than it has had from its critics in consolidating its position as an exploratory genre. This, in return, could explain why the child is of central importance in fairy-tales since the child herself/himself is often situated as a surrogate explorer for the searchful adult author. In this sense, it is assumed here that *The Laughing Prince* works within the genre's culture of embracing textual mutation, alternativity, and resurgence by concentrating on the disenchanting force of childhood laughter. In accordance, this paper acquires from the non-English context of *LP* the sense of fictional re-negotiation which re-negotiates the standards of the genre via the child's laughter. In this respect, it aims at looking into the narratorial adult desire imposed on the child in the Victorian period which marked "the arrival of a golden age for the literary British fairy tale" (Hearn xix) characterised by a growing literary interest in the child.[3] For, it is quite interesting to find out that the Victorian literary imagination which considered the child both as a model of purity and an untidy piece of clay awaiting to be moulded showed a considerable amount of interest in fairy-tales.[4] Moreover, since the Victorian fairy-tale borrows much from the Lockean eighteenth-century children's literature which with its drive for secular story-telling differentiated itself from Puritan tales of *a priori* experience ("Rise of

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[3] It could also be considered that the emergence of children's literature invoked an alignment between the child heroine/hero and the fairy-tale as Peter Hunt maintains that "children's literature in its modern form is largely a nineteenth-century phenomenon. For example, at the end of the eighteenth century in the Netherlands there was a rapid growth in fiction for children; whereas in Spain, despite translations of Grimm, Andersen, and Perrault, 'true' children's books did not emerge until the end of the nineteenth century" ("Introduction" 5).

[4] For instance, Lydia Murdoch refers to Lewis Carroll's opposition to the Victorian ideal of childhood which emphasised "work, discipline, and essential sinfulness" and the introduction of "education, play, and innocence" which points towards a new "child agency" in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. See Murdoch, *The Age of Alice: Fairy Tales, Fantasy, and Nonsense in Victorian England*, Vassar College Libraries, 2015, p.17. In addition, Ronald Patkus considers the Victorian era as "The Age of Alice" since it "witnessed a great outpouring of fairy-tales" with "increasing success and impact". See Patkus, *The Age of Alice*, 21.

the Moral Tale" 464), it suggests the possibility for *a posteriori* literary experience even if it diverted the child's attention to a desired morale. In this sense, the Victorian literary conscious may not have particularly valued an experimenting child as Sarah Fielding vaguely suggested in *The Governess* a hundred years earlier, but it will be implied that it had inherited the notion of the child as a literary experimenter. To put it more clearly, as the fairy-tale genre was beginning to be considered an appropriate site of literary experimentation, the child became the nucleus of this sort of writing during the nineteenth-century.[5] In accordance, this paper aims at exploring the disenchanting force of child's laughter in W.M. Thackeray's fairy-tale *The Rose and The Ring* as a means of narrative experimentation. To this end, I will pay specific attention to the tale's main subjects of laughter, Rosalba and Giglio who humour the reader by exposing incongruities in human nature and also re-negotiate the literary standards of the genre. The anticipated conclusion draws on the point that since these two missions run parallel to each other, the text not only empowers the child but also uses the child's laughter as an instrument of fictional unveiling.

The Unexpected Laughter of the Child in *The Rose and The Ring*

W. M. Thackeray's only fairy-tale, *The Rose and The Ring* which is "one of the best loved literary fairy tales of the last century" ("Novelist's Fairy Tale" 37) emerges as part of an experimental enterprise built around the child. It narrates the inter-linked fortunes of four young royal cousins, Princesses Angelica and Rosalba, and Princes Giglio and Bulbo in the semi-imaginary kingdoms of Paflagonia and Crim Tartary. It narrates a fairy-tale where the child protagonists later grow into young adulthood towards the end of the story. In its entirety, the form of the tale responds to the changing outlook of children's play in the nineteenth-century which "changed with the appearance of mass education" (Jordan 196). For, in an age where "toys became less ambiguous and more representational, which was probably a loss for creativity and imagination" (Jordan 196), Thackeray's tale serves as a site of poetic creativity for the fictional child where playfulness rather than formality reigns. While allowing the child to play a literary game, the narration also employs the child as a disenchanter of fairy-tale magic. For if *TRTR* is "decidedly not a traditional fairy tale and instead the handiwork of Thackeray the novelist" ("Novelist's Fairy Tale" 37) who rejects "all anti-realistic tendencies" (Stommel 36) in fiction, the tale responds to the disenchanting force of the novel as well; a genre which in Terry Eagleton's words, "has nothing to learn about baffled desires and recalcitrant realities" although it is possible to find "vestiges of 'premodern' forms such as myth, fable, folk-tale and romance" (Eagleton 9). In

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[5] Charles Dickens in his *Frauds on the Fairies* defended the view that fairy-tales were "nurseries of fancy" and they "should be preserved in their simplicity" directly seeking for the continuation of the experimentalised fairy-tale. But it is clear that the fairy-tale and the child were not only used for literary causes but were also used so as to further the political convictions of the nineteenth-century media. For a detailed analysis of the relation between the fairy-tale and the press see Caroline Sumpter, *The Victorian Press and the Fairy Tale*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

addition, it involves an onto-ethical response to contemporary novelistic strategies which in Thackeray's opinion were built around the notion of a *prima facie* statement of truth "employed to credit as truth material that was in fact romantic rubbish, false to the realities of life" ("Truth and Authenticity" 56). The novelistic realism of *TRTR*, then, embodies its author's objection to the idea of representing the absurd and the grotesque as playing along the line of realist verisimilitude. In doing so, it veers away from the progressive undertones of the nineteenth-century narratorial attitude promoting instead what might be called a Victorian Swiftism. In this regard, it exposes the Victorian reader's illusory expectation of juvenile amusement in fairy-tale discourse. For as early as in the preface, Thackeray "the undersigned" author warns the reader against a fairy-tale interpretation of the story (9). From this point onwards, the author directly blocks the pleasure the reader could possibly acquire from a fairy-tale by reminding us that it is designed to be a "fireside pantomime" (10) for a group of English children in Rome. This is highly reminiscent of the "Author's own candles" (ix) which illuminates the performance before the curtain in *Vanity Fair* and he takes "the reader into his confidence about his characters" which in E.M. Forster's view leads to "a drop in the temperature, to intellectual and emotional laxity" (Forster 84). But the unfairy-tale like fairy-tale still emerges as a powerful experiment where the literary façade is capacitated to unmask its own genre-related absurdities. In an effort to "convey as strongly as possible the sentiment of reality" (Thackeray *English Humourists* 772-73), then, the narrator builds a microcosm of common human experience without undermining the virtues of realist representation.

The tale stands as an acerbic take on thinking too well of one's own self, which the author believes is "the fault of people of all ages and both sexes" (38). In accordance, the shape of the narration functions as a fictive apparatus of fictional levelling by faithfully describing the scandalous events in the ancient Paflagonian and Crim Tartarian royal courts to expose human follies. The narrator constantly reminds us of the non-magicality of the story and his obligation "to tell the truth" (19) where the single figure of wondrousness is a Fairy Blackstick, daughter of a necromancer (20). Not only is she capable of conjuring but also of blessing or cursing royal children with a magic wand. But even the fairy is a rationalist-ethicist. She refuses to bless the royal children of King Savio, the former monarch of Paflagonia who had been overthrown by the current monarch King Valoroso XXIV and Duke Padella of Crim Tartary. She finds it inconceivable that their wives have become "ill-humoured, absurdly vain" (21) although she had protected them as their godmother. In the end, she allows things "to take their natural course" (21) and declines to perform further magic by finally sending Prince Giglio of Paflagonia and Princess Rosalba of Crim Tartary a little misfortune and not attending their christenings. It later turns out that the rose and the ring which she had entrusted to the care of Mrs. V and the Duke's lady function as magical devices which suddenly beautify their possessors in the eyes of their beholders. As a result, Prince Bulbo, heir to the Padellan throne, owns his mother's magical rose and Prince Giglio owns the ring. The exchange of the ring between Giglio

and Angelica, Giglio and Angelica's governess, Mrs. Gruffanuff, and the exchange of the rose between Bulbo and Angelica, humorously create false impressions of physical allure. Funnily enough, the loss of the magical object does not marvellously unmask its possessor's vanity; the reader and the fictional members of the two dynasties are already knowingly aware of these vanities. Similarly, obtaining these objects does not guarantee ever-lasting beauty since nearly all of the characters fail in acquiring immortal beauty. In this manner, the magical object is denied a good amount of other-worldliness. It is particularly emphasised that the so-called object of magic is nothing but a physical object stripped off its magicality while complaints of ugliness in the absence of the object become instant markers of short-sightedness. Therefore, in offering an amusing story for his juvenile listeners, the narrator offers a scornful fable of foolhardiness in which a little portion of other-worldliness is involved. In doing this, the tale enforces a sense of realism and the author openly plays with the limits of representability of fairy-tale magic.

The child in *TRTR* lies at the heart of this literary play. S/he is instrumentalised in Thackeray's non-preternatural survey of the fairy-tale genre which adds up to the narrative's realist mission. Not only that but also the tale shows "a high level of critical self-consciousness about the whole problem of representing, writing for, looking at, interacting with, and adoring children" (Gubar viii). Accordingly, the child subject is dealt with at two interconnected levels. Firstly, the preface acknowledges that the story is intended for "the amusement of our young people" while the narrator also expects them to "learn everything that is useful, and the under eyes of careful ushers continue the business of their little lives" (10). It makes a major claim for the attention of the child reader under the pretence of demanding the attention of the elderly reader. But it is also interesting to find out that the fairy-tale does not treat childhood as a distinct category. It claims to appeal to the readerly expectations of the elderly although it also aims at speaking to the child's infant mind. Secondly, however, the child is minified, almost robbed of her/his childhood "since anything which falls outside the realm of functionality seems to a utilitarian to fall outside the domain of morality too" (Eagleton, *Sweet Violence* 258). Therefore, the child is situated almost as a sinister being "because they are uncanny, very like adults but not at all like them" (258). In accordance, Angelica emerges as a facetious young lady who is the living embodiment of "absurd pretensions" (18) and the reader is warned that Bulbo is a fraudulent public figure whose image is the making of an unfaithful artist, Tomaso Lorenzo and his only aim is to flatter his commissioner.[6] For reasons as such, the child characters are usually crammed with adult biases and the vainness of adult society is projected unto the child, commonising or universalising human fallacy. Therefore, the tale's

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[6] Lorenzo's false pictorial representation of Bulbo insinuates a Platonic scepticism with regards to art's representation of truth and reality. Later, Angelica is so impressed with Bulbo's painting that after Bulbo arrives at the Paflagonian court, she immediately falls in love with him although Giglio instantly spots the discordance between representation and reality and "from behind the throne" he bursts out "into a roar of contemptuous laughter" (52).

commitment to poetic truthfulness assigns a subsidiary role to the child which overlooks physiological differences but also its realist persistence opens up the fictional child as a major point of Thackerayean art criticism.

Since Thackeray carefully locates the nature of his textual politics in the designated nature of the Victorian child, s/he remains a subject. In this respect, s/he is represented as "inside and outside the book as a literate, educated subject who is fully conversant with the values, conventions, and cultural artifacts of the civilized world" (Gubar 6). However, s/he is the subject of a literary genre which solidifies its position by virtue of its textual mutability. In this respect, it can be argued that Thackeray knowingly makes a distinction between two different types of children: the ordinary and the laughing child. While the ordinary child and the fairy-tale is soaked with realist underpinnings, the laughing child in *TRTR* triumphs in the matter of experimenting with (or deconstructing) genre-related myth-making as the laughing child exposes the macrocosmic sense of incongruity between reality and appearance. The ordinary child, however, makes only a fantasised claim to reality. In one sense, the laughing child seems on par with the ordinary child in tarnishing the magicality of the fairy-tale and introducing an argument contra the so-called nineteenth-century realist's use of phantasmal elements. However, the ordinary child is not a narrative wanderer; s/he has a cardboard cut-out identity which is evocative of the stock characters of the European medieval morality play. As a reflection on that point, Angelica emerges as an emblematic representation of the frivolous female while Bulbo is the mock-heroic cavalier yearning for romantic love under false pretences. Even more so, the ordinary child's laughter appears to be derisive as a result of her/his genericness. When King Cavalfiore of Crim Tartary is overthrown by Duke Padella and his only daughter Rosalba's life is spared under the false assumption that she must have died already, she toddles from room to room "and thence into the wilderness" (24) only to arrive at Valoroso's court where she meets Angelica. Out of habitual mental blindness, Angelica already feels superior to the little Princess whose true identity is not revealed until Rosalba is banished from the Paflagonian court and fate crowns her the rightful Queen of Crim Tartary. Angelica cannot help but laugh at Rosalba's worn-out garments and later takes her "as a pet" (32). She renames her Betsinda and appoints Rosalba as her handmaiden to take advantage of her intellectual brilliance. Giglio's fate does not appear to be any different than Rosalba's as the niece of Valoroso who has overthrown the late Savio. He is silenced by the ordinary child since Angelica mocks him occasionally and scorns him for being stupid (39). Here, Angelica's blind laughter magnifies the satirical impact of Angelica's counterfeited superlative talents which unveils the fact that her laughter unmasks her blindness. The superlative but blind laughter of the ordinary child, then, supports the realistic mission of unmasking the ordinary child's mental myopia. However, the laughing child is put forward as a narrative explorer whose mission is to promote the adult novelist's realist trajectory in a conventionally 'unrealist' literary genre through the laughter s/he produces outside and inside the text. The laughing child, in a sense, does

not simply promise a faithful representation of reality as the ordinary child does. S/he tests the limits of realist representation of the fairy-tale if s/he does not condescendingly sneer at it and re-negotiates the mimetic value of *fairy-tailisation*. But to make this point clearer, I would like to turn to the incongruity theory of laughter.

According to a long tradition which John Morreall traces back to a passage in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, 3.2 (11), overcoming the boundaries of the logical has been considered as naturally evocative of laughter although the amusement derived from such incongruity has been defined as an impossible one at the *fin de siècle*.[7] However impossible it might seem to the analytic philosopher of early nineteenth-century, the Scottish common-sense philosopher James Beattie had earlier stressed the function of laughter as a semi-corporal response to two or more irreconcilable mental and physical assets in 1764. In his *Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*, Beattie offers an extensive overview of the Aristotelian, Hobbesian, and Hutchesonian understandings of laughter. Initially referring to the fifth passage of *Poetics*, he considers Aristotle's definition of comedy as directed towards the representation of "vices or meanness only which partake of the ridiculous" (590) while Thomas Hobbes's views on laughter, in his opinion, "would hardly have deserved notice" (591) were it not for the nod given to him in Joseph Addison's articles in the *Spectator*. Obviously, he does not approve of Hobbes's theory which draws on the prideful comparison a human being makes with his fellow companions and gives way to sudden glory upon finding that he is superior to them. Beattie does not understand why a person should laugh upon a discovery of this sort as in that case "one would never recollect the transactions of one's childhood, or the absurdity of one's dreams, without merriment" (594). On top of this, he is even suspicious of his contemporary, Francis Hutcheson's notion of risibility as an aspect of "the contrast and opposition of dignity and meanness" (597) on the grounds that Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night*, Dr. Harrison in *Amelia*, or Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* "mimic the peculiarities of a fellow as significant as himself, and displays no opposition of dignity and meanness" (598). However, he concludes that the jocular aspect of the incongruous unite these theories of laughter since

> [a]ll these accounts agree in this, that the cause of laughter is something compounded; or something that disposes the mind to form a comparison, by passing from one object or idea to another. That is in fact the case, cannot be proved *a priori*; but this holds in all the examples hitherto given, and will be found to hold in all that are given hereafter. May it not then be laid down as a principle, that "Laughter arises from the view of two or more objects or ideas, disposing the mind to form a comparison? (601)

Beattie's approach to laughter is a common-sensical one and is typical of his overall tendency to ascribe almost Judeo-Christian principles to philosophical

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[7] For this point see George Santayana's *The Sense of Beauty*, Scribner's, 1896.

observation which allegedly infuriated Hume.[8] He openly favours common-sense over reason and believes it points at self-evident truth. His conception of laughter as a reaction to the incongruous is also a common-sensical one which simply proposes to draw comparisons between commonplace incompatibilities. From this perspective, his method is heir to Horace's laughter-provokingly incongruous fish which has an incompatible human head in *Satires*. However, Beattie's common-sensical incongruity leaves his reader with a logico-literary dilemma: how is it that people find the inconsistent humorous? What makes the discordant laughable in the eyes of the observer?

In the Victorian context, this dilemma is an easy one to solve since the literary function of laughter appears not to have flown far away from Beattie's late eighteenth-century conception of risible incongruities. Also, it appears that what made the discordant laughable for the Victorians was related with its eccentricity. Although "the most prevalent kinds of Victorian laughter did not intend and require judgement" ("Uses" 148), in Donald J. Gray's words, the nineteenth-century novelist usually made use of "the humours of eccentric characters, odd settings, and whimsically simple motivation" ("Uses of Victorian Laughter" 145) which is to say that instances of eccentricity, oddity, and whimsicality were not only suggestive of logico-literary incompatibilities but were also entangled with textual fits of laughter. If so, Thackeray's laughing child in *TRTR* is assigned with the task of exposing the eccentricities of the Victorians and of the universal human character. For instance, after Rosalba crawls into the Paflagonian court as a survivor, Angelica asks her whether she is a pretty girl or not and Rosalba replies "Oh, pooty, pooty!" (30). Her response is suggestive of a baby's prosodic modifications of adult language and contains a hidden insult to Angelica's constant yearning for flattery as there is not a single reference to Angelica's beauty in the text. Rosalba's act of laughing, dancing, and munching in the presence of the King and Queen even further contribute to this point to the extent that her mocking laughter makes her a substitute for the royal parrot so that she can amuse Angelica. Funnily enough, after Rosalba becomes a handmaiden to the Paflagonian Princess and becomes the newly named Betsinda, she invents new ways to amuse her at a daily basis until a monkey, a little dog, and a doll is presented to her pretentious master and she refuses to care for Betsinda any longer. However, Betsinda does not fall into despair and instead amuses herself by listening "to the wise professors when Angelica was yawning or thinking of the next ball" (33). At this point, Betsinda's laughing strategies lay bare the dissonance between the ideals of royal mannerism and Angelica's unroyal nature. It is not a mere coincidence that Angelica's drawing of a warrior's head almost caricaturises a traditionally heroic model while Betsinda's drawing is fully true to it:

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[8] Hume responded to Beattie's *Essay on Truth* as the writing of "that bigoted silly fellow". Beattie not only challenged Hume on the matter of racism but also on his epistemological views. For the reception of Beattie's *Essay* in Britain, see R.J.W Mills, "The Reception of 'That Bigotted Silly Fellow' James Beattie's *Essay on Truth* in 1770-1830," *History of European Ideas*, vol. 41, no. 8, 2015, pp. 1049-1079.

Fig.1. Angelica's drawing of a head of a warrior (p.33)

Fig.2. Betsinda's drawing of a head of a warrior (p.34)

Betsinda's drawing not only 'laughs at' Angelica's eccentricity which stems from her incongruent nature (and drawing) but also it prevents the reader from perceiving her as the princess of a fairy-tale land. Does Betsinda's laughter provoking experiment with Angelica also help the narrator in testing the limits of fantastic representation? It can be said that it does since the laughing child amuses herself at the other's (and the genre's) expense and the ordinary child's laughter gradually grows futile and ingenuine towards the end of the tale. In addition, the stereotypical fairy-tale amusement which the elder sister draws from the younger sister's so-called state of 'petness,' ridicules the fairy-tale-like distress stemming from idleness. Moreover, it implies that the logical inconsistency of Angelica, i.e., the discordance between theoretical virtue and its everyday application, is a humorous one. Thus, the tale asserts that the disharmony between form and function creates a humorous instance. In other words, while Betsinda experiments with the stereotypical fairy-tale princess, the narrator allows her to laugh off the very stereotypicality of fairy-tale characterisation. As a further point of comparison, this tale of disharmony is later weighed against Betsinda's coronation scene. After she is expelled from the Paflagonian court on false accusations of seducing Bulbo and Valoroso, she is portrayed as a fully human character who displays genuine feelings of unhappiness. Not knowing where she is headed to, she is "very cold and melancholy" (81). She meets an old carter who turns out to be Marquis Degli Spinachi, a nobleman loyal to the late Cavolfiore and after he realises that she is the long-lost Princess Rosalba, he immediately holds a coronation ceremony with his fellow nobleman. The "the party of Fidelity" (86) quickly cuts out "a little crown of gilt paper, a robe of cotton velvet" (87) for their liege and the following scene is tremendously humorous: the rightful Queen of Crim Tartary starts knighting the members of the party and even when she has no sword to knight them properly, she uses "the pewter spoon with which she had been taking her bread-and-milk" (84). The coronation is lacking in grandeur and the former lords, earls, and marquises receive a comical accolade. Still, however funny the circumstances and her regal ornaments might seem to be, "the army of Fidelity" (90) remains true to the mission of taking the throne back from the usurper Padella. Rosalba does not indeed need the consecrated royal garment to assert her heirship; she has every moral claim to the throne. The humorousness of the coronation and knighting scenes, on the other hand, strengthen the idea that Angelica may be in constant need of someone to remind her of her royal status, but Rosalba already possesses the royal attire. Thus, it appears that she is indeed full of fun but also is "the blushing sun of

perfection" (103) as Giglio thinks to himself reading about what has befallen to Rosalba in the *Bosforo Chronicle*. Not only is she proven to be free of eccentricities and risible incongruities, but also her capability to feel genuine sorrow secures the genuineness of her laughter inasmuch as Angelica fails to do so.

It should be noted that laughing off incongruities does not necessarily mean that the narrative force in *TRTR* offers a piercing satire. However, the laughter which the laughing child evokes in the reader throughout the text is reminiscent of Swift's acquaintance with human nature "both in the highest, and in the lowest scenes of life" (131). From this perspective, the laughing child tends to be useful in exposing the incongruities of human characters from different walks of life. For instance, through Giglio—and his name already promises a phonological guffaw—the reader is invited to peep at the humorous consequences of human inconsistencies. He is mostly represented as a silent boy who does not regret the fact that Valoroso has usurped the throne since he does not "envy his uncle [for] the royal robes and sceptre, the great hot uncomfortable throne of state, and the enormous cumbersome crown" (15). It appears that his silence is a deliberate act as the voice-over admits he "shouldn't like to sit in that stifling robe with such a thing as that on my head" (16) pointing out the absurdity of Valoroso's royal manners. As the story advances and Angelica occasionally scolds at him for his ignorance (47), Giglio understands that he is "played only second fiddle" (48). His ignorance emerges as an authentic one unlike Valoroso's or Angelica's but he makes a genuine attempt to intellectually train himself at the university town of Bosforo. It is little surprise that towards the end of the story, he is even presented with a cautionary note hidden in a magical bag provided by Fairy Blackstick which reads: "Clothes for the back, books for the head: / Read and remember them when they are read" (98-9). He is aware of his own ignorance and is determined to excel in all the classes he takes. However, since Angelica's ignorance belongs with the species of inauthenticity and Giglio cannot tolerate her, he grows resentful of the fake manners of Angelica and the Paflagonian court. Eventually, his meek attitude in the face of condescending behaviour is transformed into a rather powerful one. Once he finds in himself the courage to laugh at the absurdities of the Paflagonian nobility, he manages to unmask its intellectual inanity. At this very moment, Giglio starts acting out the role of a "satirical prince" (56) as the old and ugly Mrs. Gruffanuff remarks, responding to his fake compliments "from behind the throne," bursting into "a roar of contemptuous laughter" (52). As Bulbo makes his way into the court during a visit, he instantly spots the incongruity between Lorenzo's false depiction of an exceedingly good-looking prince and the real person. Not a single soul understands why he laughs at Bulbo for which he brings to the others' attention the inconsistency between representation and reality. While Bulbo's almost Gargantuan table manners and flippant giggles are constantly "out of place" (57), Giglio's laughter stands out as a cognizant one. In the end, the narrator awakens the reader to the fact that it is this cognizant laughter which will prevail. For not only does Giglio's laughter defame Bulbo but also in a

romantic competition to win Betsinda's heart, Giglio calls her an "artless maiden" (63) while Bulbo pretentiously cries out and says "You peri, let me be thy bulbul" (60). Betsinda "who was full of fun" (61) shuts up Bulbo with the touch of a pan with the intention to marry Giglio, her guileless companion. In the end, the non-magical Fairy Blackstick arrives and stops the wedding ceremony into which Mrs. Gruffanuff has tricked Giglio. The 'artless' Giglio and Rosalba sign the church book, joining hands in a poetically just matrimony with the aid of an ethereal creature who defeats the seemingly logical arguments of the opposers with the power of words and not of magic. Having defeated the purpose of a fairy, she is heard of no more while the marriage of true minds frees the traditional fairy-tale reader's mind from the societal illusion of an ideal marriage.

Conclusion

In viewing the laughing child as not "immune to their environments" and beings "shaped-often warped-by their environments" ("Angelic, Atavistic, Human" 120), Thackeray shares with other nineteenth-century realists the notion of child as a modelling clay. In accordance, both Rosalba and Giglio in *TRTR* emerge as grand laughers laughing at the 'royal' throwback's claim to social and political superiority. Thus, they do not seem to "provide promised escape from the seamy and degrading materialism of their era" using the "mystical and irrational genre of fantasy" ("Angelic, Atavistic, Human" 120). Instead, by the hand of the narrator, they often seem to escape from the 'irrationality' -or unreality- of fantasy. They are instrumentalised as narrative chess-pieces in search for a rational route for the fairy-tale. However, they are not designated as mythical heroes of a normative character as well. The mutability of the child aids the author in bringing down the curtain of magicality so as to re-structure the child as "the fairy-tale hero, a *normal* one" (Moretti 189). In exposing oddities, eccentricities, and logical incongruities of the genre through the child's laughter, the body of the text anneals the traditional fairy-tale hero who is destined for a supernaturally mythologised end. The tarnishing impact of the child's laughter, then, could be argued to have a charitable function in the sense Thackeray defines it in his "Charity and Humour":

> I am sure, at any rate, that the best humour is that which contains most humanity, that which is flavoured throughout with tenderness and kindness. This love does not demand constant utterance or actual expression, as a good father, in conversation with his children or wife, is not perpetually embracing them, or making protestations of his love, [...] That collision of ideas, which provokes the one or the other, must be occasional. They must be lie papa's embraces, which I spoke of anon, who only delivers them now and again, and can't be expected to go on kissing the children all night. And so the writer's jokes and sentiment, his ebullitions of feeling, his outbreaks of high spirits must not be too frequent. (196-7)

Tying the fates of Rosalba and Giglio at the end of the tale while distancing them from the overarching sense of royal inauthenticity stands as a charitable act. The laughter evoked by the child experimenter uncloaks both the traditional narrative's and ordinary characters' incongruity. It is not a stingy projection on human follies nor a 'realistic' representation; it is rather full of humanity. It puts to display the commonality of human short-comings and also the short-comings of fairy-tale discourse. What is left to Rosalba and Giglio is to examine them in the manner of a logico-ethical explorer. But at this point it could be asked: should this mean that Thackeray's laughing child is empowered although s/he largely remains a narrative wanderer at the service of her/his adult author?

The laughter of Thackeray's children is vitally important in the sense that Thackeray does what the anonymous narrator does for Stefan. His late nineteenth-century English fairy-tale marginalises the magical and turns to reality for wonder-seekers as *The Laughing Prince* does for its eighteenth-century Yugoslavian audience. The reader is caught unawares as the fairy-tale no longer fulfils the reader's traditional expectations nor is it any longer a site of subversive expression. Instead, it becomes an inflammatory expression of the fairy-tale's pointless, unrepresentable wondrousness. The genre in which the story is delivered, then, becomes an ironically self-destructive literary medium. But more importantly than that it is the laughing child who sets this tone of insurgence which does not suggest a ludic revolt but a charitable Beattian reformation at whose core lies a protestation of the risible incompatibility between appearance and reality. In conclusion, the child becomes the cup-bearer, the apparatus of joy while exploring for the adult reader the hilarity of this odd contrast. S/he uses laughter as a confounding force to the effect of exposing the *ad nauseam* argument of the traditional conception of the fairy-tale. It might be traditionally acceptable that the "fairy tales depict magical or marvellous events or phenomena as a valid part of human experience" (Jones 9). However, in the novelistic context of Thackerayan realism the fairy-tale creates a disillusionment with regards to the readerly tendency to perceive a larger-than-life situation as a property of the fantastic. Therefore, *TRTR* does not validate the magical as a component of common human experience. Instead, it humanises the marvellous so that the marvellous can be understood at a rational basis. This does not mean that Thackeray's technique robs the fairy-tale of its magicality. Instead, it revises the underlying assumptions of the genre and discusses the possibility to consider it as a habitual phenomenon people often live by. For, if ordinary life includes a great deal of perceptive illusion, why not consider the possibility that fairy-tales offer a misrepresentation of reality itself? If illusions of perception are ordinary occurrences, why not make a literary joke of the separate chapter devoted to the wonder tale in literary history? Does this also foreshadow a secularly empowering mission by implication? Thackeray hides the answer in "the sweet confiding smiles" (qtd. in Andrews 16) of the laughing child. For it is the confiding smile of the child which laughs off the cult of generic narrative convention by means of a mock *fairy-tailisation*.

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Fictionalized Accounts of African Migrant Mothers in *And Breathe Normally* and *Anchor Baby*

And Breathe Normally ve *Anchor Baby* adlı Filmlerde Afrikalı Göçmen Annelerin Kurgusal Hayatları

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Abstract

Representations and discourses about migrants have excluded the narratives of African migrant mothers. Often, discussions about these group of women tend to rely on stereotypes, which consequently trivializes the complexities and nuances that characterize the lives of these women. Adopting an intersectional approach, this article centers the African immigrant mother by exploring the narratives of African migrant mothers in two films. In this article, I explore how institutional systems combine to oppress African migrant mothers in their host nations. While *And Breathe Normally* (2018) challenges the notion of female passivity—which shapes numerous mainstream Hollywood films—*Anchor Baby* (2010) perpetuates some patriarchal norms associated with motherhood. However, both films demonstrate the multiple layers of oppression that African migrant mothers encounter in the host country. Through the individual narratives of all the female characters (black and white) in both films, we can see each one of them has personal battles imposed on them by their societies, thereby highlighting how interconnected the lives of women are.

Keywords: African migrant mothers, Hollywood stereotypes, *And Breathe Normally*, *Anchor Baby,* Intersectional feminism

Öz

Göçmenler üzerine olan yansıtmalar ve oluşturulan söylemler Afrikalı göçmen annelerin anlatılarını dışarıda tutar. Bu kadınlar üzerine olan tartışmalar, onların hayat hikayelerini özelleştiren ayrıntıları önemsiz kılan stereotipler üzerine kuruludur. Bu çalışma, Afrikalı göçmen annelerin anlatılarını iki film üzerinden irdeleyerek onları merkeze alır. Ayrıca, Afrikalı göçmen annelerin yerleştikleri ülkelerde endüstri tarafından sistemsel olarak nasıl baskılandıklarını araştırmayı amaçlar. *And Breathe Normally*, Hollywood filmlerinde sıklıkla karşılaşılan pasif kadın algısına karşı çıkar. Öte yandan, *Anchor Baby* ise annelikle ilişkilendirilen erkek-egemen normları pekiştirmektedir. Ancak her iki filmde de Afrikalı göçmen annelerin maruz kaldığı baskıcı yapı farklı boyutlarıyla sergilenir. Kadın karakterlerin bireysel hikayeleri üzerinden her birinin kişisel mücadeleleri bu iki filmde de aktarılır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afrikalı göçmen anneler, Hollywood stereotipleri, *And Breathe Normally*, *Anchor Baby*, keşisimsel feminizm

Introduction

Contemporary feminist film critics such as Anneke Smelik and Jane Gaines have argued that a film theory based on a psychoanalytic framework is not sufficient

because it fails to take other differences, such as race, class, age and sexual preference, into account. These critics contend that leading feminist film theorists like Laura Mulvey, are just as culpable as the Hollywood producers who project women as passive sexual objects in their films. Mulvey's male gaze theory, which is founded on Freud's concept i.e., scopophilia, shows that mainstream cinema typically provides pleasure for male spectators. According to Mulvey, the pleasure offered by mainstream cinema is merely a reinforcement of "pre-existing patterns of fascination already at work" (57) in societies, in such a way that "pleasure in looking" in cinema "has been split between active/male and passive/female" (62). Cynthia Freeland, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston, Texas, alleges that Mulvey gives little possibilities for critical engagement. Freeland argues that Mulvey does not raise issues that demonstrate the differences existing among women. Given the nature of the films chosen for this essay, Mulvey's theory on visual pleasure may be inadequate to fully analyze the films. Since the protagonists of both films are African migrant women, Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectional theory which centers minority women, will be beneficial in the discussion of the films. A rhetorical analysis of the films will also be valuable, especially as Flo Leibowitz, a feminist film critic, observes its effectiveness. Leibowitz in her essay entitled "Apt Feelings or Why Women's Films Aren't Trivial" argues, in her analysis of several melodramatic films that "films evoke emotions by means of their narratives" (225). The film critic contends that these emotions, as depicted through a film's narrative, enables the audiences identify with characters—which Leibowitz refers to a "cognitive model of film" (226). While the intersectional theory will highlight the lived experiences of the women—as portrayed in both films, a rhetorical analysis of spoken and unspoken narratives is equally significant in order to fully understand the complexities of the lives of these women.

In light of this, I turn to the intersectional theory which illustrates how gender, race and sex intersect with other aspects of a woman's identity that combine in a unique way to oppress women (most especially women of color and black women). African migrant women, are faced with a harsh reality, resulting from power dynamics (ranging from racial, economical to patriarchal). One striking similarity across many films and literary works that address issues affecting migrants, is that they tend to depict ways in which an immigrant's fear could also be fears that citizens may be familiar with. In other words, the fear of the unknown, which can play out in many ways, becomes a general theme that both the undocumented migrant and the citizen can relate to, thus making the immigrant's fear a familiar one. This paper aims to explore the representations of migrant mothers, more specifically African migrant mothers in two films. The two primary films that will be at the center of the discussion in this article are *Anchor Baby* (2010) and *And Breathe Normally* (2018).

Intersectional Feminism

Kimberle Crenshaw, who coined the term "Intersectionality" contextualizes the definition of the concept, as the theorist asserts that because of identity

politics, it has become apparent for many women to see how their identities intersect or interlock and that "the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism" (1243). Crenshaw further argues that "because of their intersectional identity as both women and of color within discourses that are shaped to respond to one or the other, women of color are marginalized within both" (1244).

Intersectional feminist critics, Kathy Davis and Michelle Flood agree that intersectionality is increasingly gaining traction, as more women continually identify with the term. In her article titled "Intersectionality as Buzzword," Kathy Davis affirms that intersectional feminism has become so prevalent that it has been reduced to a "buzzword" (75). Similarly, Michelle Flood in the publication titled "Intersectionality and Celebrity Culture" notes that several celebrities have endorsed intersectional feminism, consequently making the term a "mainstay term in celebrity discourse" (422). Flood concludes that intersectionality has lost its real theoretical value because of how celebrities use the term as "a self-congratulatory sticker on a laptop" (423). Robby Soave, an editor at *Reason,* argues that the consequence for the adulteration of the ideology is that it decentralizes the issues of minority women, who are often overlaid with inequalities in multiple intersecting domains (race, class, place of residence etc.). Essentially, while it is true that intersectionality embraces the need to understand individual lives in order to identify intersecting and overlapping identities, this can sometimes be difficult. Hence, Soave cautions that the focus of this ideology must be centered majorly on those whom the theory was created for—Black, poor women. The films discussed in this paper take Soave's argument into consideration, because the protagonist of both films are Black women.

While white middle class women face oppression from patriarchy, numerous African American women must battle with social class inequality, sexism, and racism. bell hooks, an African American feminist critic writes: "white women who dominate feminist discourse, who for the most part make and articulate feminist theory, have little or no understanding of white supremacy as a racial politics, of the psychological impact of class, of their political status within a racist, sexist, capitalist state" (35). In other words, intersectional feminists are critical of mainstream feminists, a largely white middle class group, for excluding black women, as well as women of color who have diverse intersecting identities. Immigration, as a power structure, oppresses the migrant woman, perhaps in the same way patriarchy and racism do, but migrant women, who make up over half of the population of all immigrants are oppressed by the three systems (racism, patriarchy, and immigration). Annie Phizacklea, notes that women "constitute half of the world's migrants and 80% of the world's population" (321). Relatedly, the *United Nations Populations Fund* report that not only do these migrant women suffer sexual exploitation, trafficking, and violence, but they also encounter multiple discrimination as women and as migrants mainly because of the negative depictions of

immigrants in the media.[1] Apparently, the African migrant mothers must deal with a triple dose of oppression than their white, middle-class counterparts.

Although the African American woman and the African migrant are of the same race, what sets them apart goes beyond the immigration status of both women. Soave states that the multiple experiences that can co-occur for an African woman, and in this instance, an African migrant mother is what he refers to as a "unique experience" of oppression. Accordingly, an African migrant woman's experience is a cumulative one that transcends that of an immigrant, because such a woman has distinctive experiences that she brings with from her home country to the host country. As such, these experiences (past and present) may create some sort of disorientation for the African migrant mother. For Soave, "experience" is significant in understanding intersectionality as an ideology. Heather Hewett, author of "Mothering Across Borders: Narratives of Immigrant Mothers in the United States," argues that while most authors have acknowledged "the full complexity of mother's lives and experiences" few have addressed the difficulties migrant mothers face (121). As such, Hewett's argument further establishes the claims of intersectional feminists, which makes a case for the inclusion of all women in the activism promoted by mainstream feminists. Ana- Maria Deliu and Laura Ilea, reecho Hewett's assertion as they affirm that "intersectionality decenters the universal woman" and consequently maintain that "there are more particular groups of women within the dominant model" (11). Fundamentally, while mainstream feminists exclude the narratives of the African American woman, it also ignores the African migrant from the feminist agenda. Intersectional feminists attempt to include all women with different identities in the fight against patriarchy. As a result, it is significant that the voices of African migrant mothers are heard, and their stories are told.

Isold Uggadottir, *And Breathe Normally*

And Breathe Normally (2018), written and directed by Isold Uggadottir addresses many of the concerns of intersectional feminists. The film foregrounds issues that border on race, immigration, and identity, most especially for women with children. Uggadottir's film gives an account of Lara, an underprivileged Icelandic mother, who meets a Guinea-Bissauan mother named Adja in an airport in Iceland. The accidental meeting of these women depicts how inevitably linked they are, even though they appear to be seemingly different. The film begins with Lara, a Caucasian woman, financially incapable of paying for her groceries, but rejects help from a stranger wanting to assist her. Lara's anxieties become apparent as she intentionally ignores her mailbox, only to be reminded by her son. Eldar, the awe-inspiring child, unlocks his mother's mailbox and hands Lara a deluge of mails, a reminder of the financial burden she bears.

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[1] United Nations Population Fund. "Five Reasons Migration Is a Feminist Issue." 9 Apr 2018. unfpa.org/news/five-reasons-migration-feminist-issue. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

Adja, Uggadottir's second protagonist, a Guinea Bissauan refugee, on her way to Canada from France meets Lara, an immigration officer training on the job with a superior immigration officer. As Lara's boss stamps Adja's passport, Lara, notifies her boss of what she suspects to be a fake passport. Adja's challenges begin to unfold at this point as they detain her at a facility for further questioning. However, Adja's daughter, accompanied by Adja's sister, gets past border security. Evidently, the lives of Adja and Lara reveal that although both women have seemingly different lives, they share very similar difficulties. Isold Uggadottir, humanizes the African migrant, by depicting her woes as a familiar one to the European, consequently demystifying the challenges migrants' battle. Lara empathizes with Adja because she can envision how her greatest fears, may get the best of her, and perhaps result in uncertain outcomes like the immigrant's. Lara's impoverished life unfolds throughout the greater part of the film. She receives frequent phone calls from her landlord, reminding her of unpaid rent. With no roof over their heads, Lara abandons her home and says to her son, "we are going on a secret adventure where people like us go" (*And Breath Normally*), leaving her with no option but to make her car, a home. Through these scenes, viewers can make connections between the battles of immigrants and that of citizens. These representations make it apparent for viewers to see how Uggadottir effectively moves away from the male gaze to focus on female spectatorship, since viewers can see themselves in either one of the protagonists and empathize with the characters. According to feminist film theorist, Laura Mulvey, these depictions counter the portrayals of female characters in mainstream cinema. Mulvey in her groundbreaking essay entitled Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema argues that films tend to perpetuate the patriarchal society such that "socially established interpretations of sexual difference" controls how female characters are framed in films (57). Contrasting these mainstream films that objectify and eroticize women, the protagonists, Lara and Adja challenge these stereotypical representations of women in mainstream cinema.

Unlike most Hollywood films, *And Breathe Normally,* can be described as a counter-cinema or what Mulvey calls "alternative cinema" (61) that challenges the notion of female passivity, because the protagonists are female. Female passivity hinges on Mulvey's theory that women in mainstream American films exist only to please the male protagonist, consequently they do not act on their own accord but serve as appendages to the male protagonist. The case is quite different in *And Breath Normally.* On very rare occasions do we see any male characters through-out the entire duration of the film. More importantly, Isold Uggadottir gives room for female subjectivity where women depend on other women and not men for support. Lara sees herself in Adja's position as a deprived mother battling oppressive forces that we may consider to be two sides of the same coin (i.e., racism, capitalism, sexism). Subsequently, it is obvious to see how the film adopts an intersectional approach to tell the story. As an immigrant, Adja faces double the oppression Lara encounters. The oppressive forces Adja grapples with outside of her home country are multilayered. Adja's identity as a woman, a mother, an immigrant and an

African intersect to marginalize her in a unique way that only she can express. Adja, who rarely speaks throughout the entire film, seemingly appears to be a complex character, and this challenges the notions of mainstream cinema that the lives of women are simple (or that women are a monolithic group). From her first appearance we can tell that Adja is holding back onto some unspoken difficulties. One critic describes Adja as "a less well-defined, more mysterious figure… who has learnt the wisdom of keeping her true feelings under wraps" (Hunter). Even before her encounter with border control, Adja's physical and facial expression demonstrates that she is overwhelmed by deep insecurities. Although no information is given about where she arrives from, we can conclude that she was either migrating from Guinea or France (where she was also an immigrant). As the film progresses, we get to understand that not only is Adja a mother, as her daughter and sister successfully get past border security with fake passports on a flight to Canada, but that Icelandic immigration officials separates Adja from her daughter.

Most migrants experience liminality as they struggle to integrate socially, economically, and mentally in the host countries. As is the case with most immigrants, Adja appears to occupy double liminal spaces as a migrant and a mother. According to Courtney Wittekind, who undertakes an anthropological study on the liminality and landscape across the Thailand-Burma Border, contends that the "liminal is neither here nor there but is betwixt and bet/ween, existing outside of standard social expectations that order behavior" (182). Another author agrees that liminality is a period of transition between the "old way of being and the new" and that during a liminal period a person is a person is "stripped of their social status and they experience a sense of ambiguity and disorientation" (Archos). Archos reiterates that an immigrant mother is more likely to experience a multiplex form of disorientation, especially regarding raising a child. Archos's description undoubtedly describes Adja's position as a migrant mother. As a migrant, Adja is trapped physically –in Iceland—and mentally since she is on the verge of realizing her dream of successfully migrating to Canada. Adja is stripped of her sense of self as they detain her and put her with other migrants, like criminals. In her attempt to gain a sense of control of her life, Adja asks the detention officer, "do you know how long I have to stay here" (*And Breath Normally*) to which the officer responds, "No, I do not know, it is just the system. Good luck to you" (*And Breath Normally*). Adja witnesses the Icelandic Immigration officials jostle and force another immigrant into a car at midnight, and she wonders if that will also be her fate and asks her "detention mate," why they deport immigrants in the middle of the night. This scene frightens Adja and possibly disorientates her psychologically as she considers escaping from the detention facility. As a mother, Adja also experiences liminality, as she wonders if she would ever get to see her child again.

Iceland exists as a liminal space for Adja, in the sense that she is in the transition to her destination, which is Canada. Space, according to Arvanitis et al, is constructed through its "physical, mental, and social dimensions" (136). In other words, Adja's liminality exists on three levels, mentally, physically (as

stated earlier) and socially, and they all work together to destabilize Adja. Her lived experiences in the detention facility as well as her social interactions with other immigrants, intensify Adja's "in-betweenness" as she becomes conscious of the necessary steps she must take to escape from detention. Eleanor Paynter, who recognizes immigrants like Adja, as transit migrants, says that transit migration "does not correspond to a set of laws or rights … it is not a recognizable legal category" (41). In other words, Adja, lives "in an ongoing state of non-arrival" since the Icelandic immigration authorities keep her in detention indefinitely because of her status as a transit migrant (Paynter 41). For a transit migrant like Adja, the detention facility creates contrary emotions, as she has to grapple with both ambiguities of her situation and the new possibilities of integrating into the host country (i.e., Canada). During one of her visits to her immigration lawyer, Adja asks the lawyer if there are any other options for her to leave Iceland. Adja's desperation to leave Iceland becomes visible as she assumes that she will be allowed to leave Iceland to file for asylum in Canada. Unfortunately, the lawyer says to her, "without a valid Guinea Bissauan passport, this is not a viable option" (*And Breath Normally*). Not only does Iceland represent a stumbling block for Adja, but it also prevents a unification with her daughter in Canada.

Additionally, Uggadottir, successfully integrates subtle motifs critical of the immigration policies of the Trump administration in the United States. Lara takes her son to a home for abandoned cats. Eldar, who is confused to see cats living in cages, asks his mum, out of curiosity, why there are numerous caged cats, to which she responds, "there is no one to look after them" *(And Breath Normally)*. Eldar, in a state of utter bewilderment, asks Lara why the cats cannot look after themselves, but she responds, "because someone decides so" *(And Breath Normally)*. This scene concludes with Eldar stating that "it is strange to live in a cage" and then he picks one of the cats to adopt (*And Breath Normally*). Symbolically, through this scene, we can infer that Uggadottir, not only humanizes immigrants as individuals who have rights to freedom but also as people who are deserving of a warm welcome.

Lonzo Nzekwe, *Anchor Baby*

Anchor Baby (2010), written and directed by Lonso Nzekwe, tells the story of a Nigerian couple, Joyce, and Paul Unanga, whom in the hopes of securing a better life for their unborn child, decide to remain in America illegally, four months after their visas had expired. The Unangas planned to return to Nigeria, once they have their baby on American soil because they believe that their child will have limitless opportunities as a US citizen. Arising from this desperate desire to have their unborn child become a citizen of America, they ignore ICE's notification for voluntary removal. Unfortunately, ICE immigration officials raid the restaurant where Paul works. ICE arrest and eventually deports Paul to Nigeria, leaving Joyce to survive by herself on a foreign land.

Unlike Adja, whose child is separated from her, Joyce carries her child inside of her, thus making Joyce's motherhood situation intricate. Sarah Garcia, author or "Maternal Communication Concerning Immigration Status," identifies

discussions of immigration status as "a stressor to immigrant families" (284). Garcia, whose research objective centers on the implications of parental immigrant status on early childhood education to adolescence, affirms that a "mothers' undocumented immigration status negatively impacted their U.S. citizen children's early development" and that these children have a higher anxiety level (285-286). *Anchor Baby* sheds light on the implications of motherhood and its intersection with displacement and migration. Joyce, who is a mother-to-be, strongly believes that an American passport for her child is all she needs to have to provide a good life for her child. While Joyce's husband wishes for a bright future for their unborn child, he has a more positive disposition, even after his deportation. Joyce, on the other hand, has nightmares because of the concerns she has about her undocumented status. Joyce appears constantly burdened and worried that she may be unable to fulfill their desires for their child as she says, "we have four more months before the baby comes and we are hiding from ICE" (*Anchor Baby)*. Although Joyce desperately wants the US citizenship for her child, she contemplates returning to Nigeria without fulfilling her aspirations, but her husband jolts her back to reality, reminding her of the endless opportunities they run the risk of losing.

Paul's absence exacerbates the struggles that Joyce faces as a mother in a foreign country, but his absence certainly gives Joyce agency. We can see a parallel in *And Breathe Normally,* as there is a conspicuous absence of a male/father figure for Adja's daughter. Like Adja, Joyce struggles to deal with the harsh realities of navigating her host country without immigration papers. Joyce is unable to rent an apartment and settles for a motel temporarily since she has no source of identification. Bureaucracies seemingly make the lives of both women more difficult as immigrants living in a foreign country. Crenshaw, who understudies women of color immigrants in a women's shelter, reiterates a similar thought: "intersectional subordination need not be intentionally produced; in fact, it is frequently the consequence of the imposition of one burden that interacts with preexisting vulnerabilities to create yet another dimension of disempowerment" (1249). In other words, the various aspects of a woman's identity serve "as preexisting vulnerabilities" which intersect with institutional structures thus rendering such a woman helpless (1249). In the cases of Adja and Joyce, their identities as mothers "interact with their preexisting vulnerabilities" as undocumented immigrants (1249). On the one hand, Joyce, who appears to be heavily pregnant, can neither get a rented home nor see a doctor for prenatal visits because she has no insurance or identification card. On the other, immigration officers at the facility where they detain her, deny Adja access to some accessories belonging to her daughter, which may ease the pain she feels from being away from her daughter. There are a couple of other instances where the officials repeatedly say to Adja, "these are just the rules," thus suggesting that the rules, which appear to be discretionary, can never be broken under any circumstances.

In both cases, Adja and Joyce experience difficulties because of the immigration policies and bureaucracies. The bureaucracies prevent both mothers from

being close to their children, even in the least manner possible. For Joyce, she, unlike any other mother, cannot experience the joy of examining her baby's health or even determine the gender of her child, through an ultrasound scan. Also, Icelandic officials prevent Adja from holding onto items which remind her of her child. As such, it becomes apparent that not only do these women have to deal with the complexities associated with motherhood, they do so with other anxieties related to their immigration status and their economic status, since they are both unable to work legally, neither do they have men providing for them.

Hewett notes that many discussions about the complexities of motherhood challenge "cultural narratives about what it means to be a good mother" (121), thus implying that from a traditional motherhood perspective, migrant mothers like Joyce may be stereotyped as bad mothers because of the choices they make. In the same vein, Joanna Dreby, who conducts a study on the emotional consequences of transnational motherhood and fatherhood, contends that Mexican mothers—the focus of her study—as well as transnational mothers tend to demonstrate "emotional intimacy from a distance" (34). The idealized notion of what a good mother should be, is also central to Lonzo Nzekwe's *Anchor Baby*, perhaps in a more nuanced manner. While it is apparent that Joyce is willing to go to great lengths to secure a better life for her unborn child, she puts the life of her child at great risk for going several months without prenatal care. The question that arises then is, at what point does a mother draw the lines between doing what is best for the future and what is good for the child, momentarily? Lynda Ross's *Interrogating Motherhood* provides answers to this question. Ross, in her text addresses the struggles of mothers who do not fit into the western ideology of motherhood. The critic argues that these kinds of mothers can be categorized as "other mothers" and that they vary typically, ranging from mothers who "combine work with mothering, mothers who mother in poverty, disabled mothers...single mothers, lesbian mothers, and fathers" (103). Ross contemplates that although the universal concept of motherhood, which is emblematic of the "wonders and joys of motherhood," is celebrated in the contemporary western world" (2), but the reality is that not all women can have the same experiences or disposition about motherhood. The lived lives of many women are marked by complex realities (social, political, economic, cultural), which may have consequences on the child's wellbeing. In other words, although Joyce's decision to remain in the US illegally, separates her from her unborn child metaphorically, the mothering decisions of Joyce as well as Adja, from Ross's perspectives, precludes them from the "bad mother" stereotype. Though her decision to remain in the US illegally has dire consequences on the child's wellbeing, as she puts the child at risk , Ross argues that the decisions that mothers like Joyce makes, principally results from the social, economic, political situations in their home countries, so in the grand scheme of things, they are not bad mothers. Both mothers are "good" because they love their children and make decisions that they deem necessary for the comfort and benefit of their children.

The absence of men in the lives of the major protagonists indicate that the women have agency and as a result, are empowered. Sutherland and Feltey, in their article titled "Here's Looking at Her: An Intersectional Analysis of Women, Power and Feminism in Film" which discusses distinctive features of feminist films, provide a framework that highlights how women are empowered in film. The "powers" highlighted include: 1. power-over, defined as power gained by a female actor, where she carries out her will over another through domination and exploitation, 2. power-to, described as a woman's struggle to defy "social norms as they attempt to establish independent, autonomous identity outside of societal institutions" (Sutherland and Feltey 8) 3. power-with, characterized as an alliance built among women to "enact social change" (Sutherland and Feltey 10). There is a manifestation of power-with in both films since we see women who build coalition against oppressive forces. In the absence of father figures, other women rise to support Joyce and Adja. Joyce, who attempts to get health care at a doctor's office, meets an African American named Susan. Susan offers Joyce accommodation for the duration of her pregnancy and she seemingly appears to be unbelievably kind, until we later find out that she has dubious intentions. The interests of both women intersect on the topic of motherhood, as Joyce is heavily pregnant while Susan battles with infertility. Susan's infertility and desperation for a child bears its foundation in pronatalism, a belief that promotes the idea that women must procreate. Pronatalism is another oppressive force that many African women battle with, but this subject is outside the purview of this article. Similarly, Adja receives overwhelming support from Lara, who eventually assists Adja in getting past the border control officers at the airport. Lara, a single mother, also receives sympathy from an unnamed woman who is sexually interested in Lara. Each one of these women understand how oppressive the institutional systems are, so they collaborate to challenge the oppressive systems. Susan in her desperate desires to become a mother, demonstrates the power-over since she uses her privilege as a US Citizen to exploit a helpless immigrant mother, and kidnaps Joyce's newborn. It is important to state that, it appears that the director, who is male, punishes Joyce for supposedly being a "bad mother". It is precisely for this reason that feminist film critics advocate for more female directors who can direct feminist films.

Conclusion

And Breathe Normally and *Anchor Baby* depict the underrepresented narratives of migrant mothers in the American popular culture. These women, who are African, mothers and immigrants experience multiple forms of oppression resulting from the intersection of these identities. Even though both films foreground the struggles of African migrant mothers, they also project how capitalist, patriarchal societies oppress all women, regardless of immigration status or race. It is for this reason that Rebecca Clark notes that black feminism is all-encompassing as it is inclusive of all identities. In other words, the black race represents the dividing line that cuts across all oppressive power structures. Although characters in both films are not conspicuously racially oppressed, the protagonists of both films are Africans thus implying the racist

tendencies of immigration enforcement bodies. Other underlying issues explored, beyond immigration, include infertility, as previously mentioned, lesbianism and cyclical poverty. Through the individual narratives of all the female characters in both films, we can see each one of them have personal battles imposed on them by their societies thus highlighting how interconnected the lives of women are. While these films—to a great extent—effectively demonstrate the lived experiences of African migrant mothers, who have been excluded from the mainstream media cinema, it is important that more women of color and African women are given the opportunities to produce and direct these films, because they bring their experiences as women of color in the way the stories are told and more importantly, they become empowered by such roles.

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Unweaving the Shroud of Mourning:
Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*
Yas Kefenini Sökmek: Don DeLillo'nun *The Body Artist* Adlı Romanı[1]

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Abstract

Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist* (2001) presents Lauren Hartke's (36), a body artist, work of mourning in the form of a stage performance called "Body Time". The experimental narrative of the body performance reflects the collapse of the boundaries between subject and object, internal and external, body and mind, time and space, and memory and art. Lauren cannot overcome the shock over her husband's, Rey Robles (64), loss because he tragically commits suicide. After her husband's death, she discovers an uncanny stranger, Mr. Tuttle, in her house, who mechanically repeats words in a nonsensical context, dissolves the boundaries between space and time through confusing grammatical tenses, and reanimates the conversations between Lauren and Rey by mimicking their voices. Signifying simultaneously an external and an internal other, Mr. Tuttle exhibits Lauren's subjectivity-in-crisis. When Lauren's work of mourning is analysed by using Jean Laplanche's psychoanalytical theories, it is observed that Lauren is not detaching herself from her lost other, as is in Freudian definition of the work of mourning, by healing herself through art. On the contrary, she detaches herself from her lost other to re-attach herself to the other in order to construct a new form of subjectivity. Laplanche discusses this process by drawing an analogy between mourning and Penelope's weaving/unweaving a shroud for her father-in-law, Laertes. For him, Penelope is weaving/unweaving this shroud to mourn Ulysses, not Laertes. By identifying a similar relation between Lauren's mourning and her body art, this article argues that what renders Lauren's mourning traumatic is the feeling of guilt she represses in the face of loss. Through the use of Laplanche's theoretical concepts such as "enigmatic message," "afterwardsness," and "weaving/unweaving," this article further discusses how Lauren's body art unweaves her childhood trauma, her mother's early death, to weave her subjectivity in relation to her dead others.

Keywords: Don DeLillo, Jean Laplanche, mourning, *The Body Artist*, trauma

Öz

Don DeLillo'nun *The Body Artist* (2001) başlıklı romanı, bir beden sanatçısı olan Lauren Hartke'nin (36) yas sürecini, "Beden Zamanı" adlı bir sahne performansı biçiminde sunar. Bu beden performansının deneysel anlatımı özne ve nesne, içsel ve dışsal, beden ve zihin, zaman ve mekan, bellek ve sanat arasındaki sınırların yıkılışını yansıtır. Lauren, eşi Rey Robles'un (64), kaybının şokunu atlatamaz çünkü Rey trajik bir şekilde intihar etmiştir. Eşinin ölümünden sonra Lauren evinde, Mr. Tuttle adında, anlamsız bir bağlam içinde ve mekanik bir şekilde kelimeleri tekrar eden, fiillerin

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[1] An earlier version of this article was presented at the 16th International Cultural Studies Symposium: Narratives of Trauma, Ege University, Izmir, Turkey, May 10-12, 2017.

zamanlarını karıştırarak konuşup mekan ve zaman arasındaki sınırları yok eden, Lauren ve Rey'in seslerini taklit ederek aralarında geçen diyalogları yeniden canlandıran tekinsiz bir yabancıyla karşılaşır. Aynı anda hem içsel hem de dışsal ötekiyi simgeleyen Mr. Tuttle, Lauren'ın öznellik krizini sergiler. Lauren'ın yas süreci Jean Laplanche'ın psikanalitik kuramları ışığında incelendiğinde, Lauren'ın kaybettiği ötekine olan bağlarını, Freud'un yas süreci tanımında olduğu gibi, sanat yoluyla kendini iyileştirerek koparmadığı gözlemlenir. Aksine, kaybettiği ötekinden kendini, ona yeniden bağlanarak yeni bir öznellik kurmak için koparır. Laplanche bu süreci yas tutmak ve Penelope'nin kayınpederi Laertes için dokuduğu kefenin ilmeklerini örmesi ve çözmesi arasında bir benzerlik kurarak tartışır. Laplanche'a göre Penelope, Laertes'in değil, Ulysses'in yasını tutmak için bu kefeni örmekte ve sonrasında sökmektedir. Bu makale Lauren'ın yas sürecini travmatik hale getirenin, kayıp karşısında duyduğu suçluluğu bastırmak olduğunu iddia eder. Bu bakış açısına ek olarak, Laplanche'ın "bilmecemsi mesaj," "sonradan etki" ve "örme/sökme" gibi kuramsal terimlerini kullanarak, bu makale, Lauren'ın beden sanatının, kaybettiği öznelliğini ötekiler üzerinden yeniden kurabilmek için çocukluk travmasını – annesinin erken ölümünü – nasıl çözdüğünü tartışır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Don DeLillo, Jean Laplanche, yas, *The Body Artist*, travma

Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist* (2001) is a narrative of working through traumatic loss. The protagonist Lauren Hartke's traumatic experience of her husband's, Rey Robles, tragic suicide turns into a body art performance that reflects Lauren's loss of subjectivity entailing the loss of language, memory, spatiality and temporality. Lauren is a 36-year-old successful body artist, who "is acting, always in the process of becoming another or exploring some root identity" (DeLillo 111)[2] and Rey is a 64-year-old awarded film director whose decline in his professional life is attributed to "alcoholism and intermittent depression" (*TBA* 27). Lauren's performative process of bereavement during the course of the novel and its simultaneous representation as body art are conveyed to the reader through two framing passages: Rey's obituary and Lauren's close friend Mariella Chapman's review of Lauren's performance on stage in Boston. Rey's obituary presents the cause of Rey's death, which is "a self-inflicted gunshot wound" (*TBA* 25) taken place in his first wife's apartment. On the other hand, the review on Lauren's choreography reveals that the mourning process depicted in the novel, which involves Lauren's discovery of an uncanny figure in her house and her experiences with him, is also a preparation for her upcoming body performance. This performative mourning is a reflection of Lauren's trauma that depicts her confrontation with alterity.

According to Freud, the unbearable pain felt through the work of mourning is a mystery. Jean Laplanche, in his critical reading of Freud's metapsychology, *Essays on Otherness* (1999), highlights that Freud does not provide a reason why it becomes so. He quotes Freud's remarks on mourning as follows:

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[2] Hereafter cited as *TBA*.

But why it is that this detachment (Ablösung) of libido from its objects should be such a painful process is a mystery to us, and we have not hitherto been able to frame any hypothesis to account for it. We only see that libido clings to its objects and will not renounce those that are lost even when a substitute lies ready to hand. Such then is mourning. (Freud 307; Laplanche, *Otherness* 254)

For Laplanche, this is a very "abrupt" and even "impatient" conclusion for a definition of mourning.[3] He criticizes this definition by questioning the subject's resistance to give away the lost object when there is already a substitute to cling to. He asks: "Why not change the object, as soon as the old one has gone [?] [...] Why is all this work required to change object? Why so much palaver?" Thus, emphasizing that it is necessary to "re-open the question of morning in its entirety," Laplanche offers a "route that is both poetic and linguistic" (*Otherness* 254). Very much like Freud does, he also uses Greek myths to present his critique of Freudian metapsychology. He refers to Homer's Penelope's weaving and unweaving not only in relation to mourning but also to describe how psychoanalysis works. Analysing Lauren's performative process of mourning through art in relation to Penelope's in the light of Laplanche's reformulation of mourning reveals that the mourning subject does not have to detach itself from the lost object in order to end the bout of pain.

Laplanche claims that Freud discards an important aspect of the mourning process that works through the function of the other. According to him, mourning is not a subjective process in which the subject finally constructs its subjectivity by demarcating its borders between itself and the mourned other. On the contrary, for the subject-in-crisis after the death of the other, it is necessary to embrace the other in order to form its subjectivity anew which is already always decentred. In order to explain the role of the other, Laplanche gives the example of Penelope's work of mourning for her husband, Ulysses, who may never return, and draws attention to the generally accepted but, in his view, problematic interpretation of "her weaving with the sole aim of unweaving" her father-in-law's, Laertes, shroud to get rid of her suitors until her husband returns. By examining the Greek word, "analuein" used by Homer, which means not only "to unweave, to undo, to untie" but also "to analyze," Laplanche offers an analogy between analysing and undoing the knots that leads him to read Penelope's work in a reverse way. Penelope does not weave to unweave so that her shroud will never finish. He says, "Perhaps she only unweaves *in order* to weave, to be able to weave a new tapestry. It would thus be a case of *mourning*, mourning for Ulysses. But Penelope does not cut the threads, as in the Freudian theory of mourning; she patiently unpicks them, to be able to compose them again in a different way" (*Otherness* 256). Laplanche

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[3] In "On Transience," Freud is perplexed by the pain felt for the lost object in the mourning process because libido, inclined to avoid pain, should replace the lost object with the new one in the economic model of psychoanalysis. He discusses impossible mourning later as a pathological case of melancholy in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917).

claims that since Freud cannot see mourning "as a work of unweaving," it becomes "a prototype of melancholy" (*Otherness* 257). However, although Penelope never cuts off her ties with her husband, she is not suffering from melancholia. She unties the knots that have been already woven with the aim of composing them again, but in a different way, by the formation of new knots. She detaches herself from the lost other in order to attach herself again and construct a new subjectivity in relation to the other. When Penelope forms a new subjectivity in relation to the other through her work of mourning, she will stop unweaving.

Laplanche states that, according to Freud, the threads that are unwoven in the work of disentangling of the libido from the object are the "memories" and "expectations" that attach the subject to the other. He quotes from "Mourning and Melancholia": "Each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hyper-cathected, and the detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it" (Freud 245; Laplanche, *Otherness* 257). In Laplanche's opinion, Freud, however, disregards "the *context* of these memories and expectations" which is, in fact, formed by the other because the "context" is the place that preserves the message of the other which is unknown to us. "For the person in mourning, that message has never been adequately understood, never listened to enough. Mourning is hardly ever without the question: what would he be saying now? What would he have said? Hardly ever without regret or remorse for not having been able to speak with the other enough, for not having heard what he had to say" (*Otherness* 258). Therefore, what remains unsolved behind after the loss is the enigmatic message of the other. This is what Laplanche means by the otherness of the other. This otherness refers to the other's unconscious, which is itself an otherness to the other itself.

Within the framework of this discussion, *The Body Artist* also provides its readers with a representation of Penelope's mourning process. Like Penelope, Lauren also continuously unweaves and then weaves her ties to her husband through her body's repetitive actions and repetitive utterances. That is, she weaves her bonds to him by clinging onto him through reliving her memories with him, and then she unweaves these bonds, and within a Laplanchean perspective, she analyses and decodes these memories in order to weave a new tapestry, a new self. This repetitive work, which represents the work of mourning, requires time, but it will end somehow. As Laplanche states, "One can imagine that one evening the new cloth, for a while at least, will not be unwoven" (*Otherness* 256). Thus, Lauren's mourning for her husband also ends when she cures her trauma reflected by her repetitive actions and repetitive conversations with the imagined other by the means of her body art performance called "Body Time". In other words, Lauren cures herself of her trauma when she "force[s] her trauma into representation" (Di Prete 484) and constructs her subjectivity anew on the enigmatic message of the other.

The novel starts with the narration of the last morning Lauren has spent with Rey which turns out to be a memory repetitively replaying on the screen of

Lauren's mind throughout the novel. Lauren reenacts this last moment she spent with her husband in her mind's eye because their everyday ritual of having breakfast turns into a traumatic scene after Rey commits suicide. The conversation they have during the breakfast over the nick Lauren sees on Rey's face reveals that Rey has already planned to commit suicide on that day because when Lauren advises him not to shave as soon as he wakes up; Rey answers, "I want God to see my face" (*TBA* 11). However, Lauren cannot understand the importance of this ironical remark at that moment. Lauren's reliving this scene again and again indicates that Lauren is unweaving, that is "analysing," the final memories she has had with Rey. She is trying to confront the enigmatic message of the other that she could not understand before. Then, Lauren remembers the rest of this scene based on a conversation about an uncanny noise she frequently hears in the house and wants to learn whether Rey hears it too. Rey asserts that he has not heard it lately; the noise is gone, but when Lauren insists that she still hears it, he says: "Good, I'm glad. You need the company" (*TBA* 16). This is another ironical remark Rey makes implying that Lauren needs company when he is dead. And when Rey implants his absence into Lauren by his suicide, this noise attains a ghostly form, and starts to accompany Lauren during her mourning process.

Another uncanny incident that takes place during the breakfast in their final morning is Lauren's picking a hair out of her mouth which belongs to neither her nor Rey and her wondering about how a hair from someone else's head has reached her mouth. Rey implies humorously the possibility of Lauren's carrying the hair since her childhood. Rey's reference to Lauren's childhood by the image of a stranger's hair also indicates the erasure of the demarcation between the subject and the object due to "the intimate passage of the hair from person to person" (*TBA* 9). Lauren also relives this incident several times in her mind during her mourning process because it is also symbolically related to her childhood trauma, the loss of her mother, which can be addressed only after she finishes her work of mourning because this "early trauma [is] not completely worked through and [implies] the possibility of transgenerationally transmitted secrets, conflicts, and traumas within the mother" (Di Prete 489). In Laplanchean terms, the hair represents the otherness (the unconscious) of Lauren's m/other.

In the first days after Rey dies, Lauren performs a liminal subjectivity attended with disruption of temporality and spatiality. Everything for her is "slow and hazy and drained […] days moved so slow they ached" (*TBA* 29-30). She feels that her body is "[s]lightly foreign and unfamiliar" (*TBA* 31). Eugenie Brinkema states that "[g]rief is derived from *grever* (afflict, burden, oppress), from the Latin *gravare* (to cause grief, make heavy)—hence, the etymological intimacy of *grief* and *gravity,* both from *gravis* (weighty)". This argument indicates that grief has a gravity and "the effect of [its] force as a pull into the stasis of the pose, this weighting on the corpus in bent tense limbs and joints, involves a formal orientation of posture toward the grave" (109). This effect of grief can be observed throughout the novel in Lauren's repetitive movements in slow motion and in frozen time. Her feeling like she is sinking in the ground and

forgetting how to stand is an image which shows an orientation toward the grave. Her unbearable pain due to her loss is also seen in the following expressions: She "want [s] to disappear in Rey's smoke, be dead, be him" (*TBA* 32) and she wakes early every morning to "the first murderous instant of lying in bed" (*TBA* 35) without Rey. However hard she tries to make plans "to organize time until she could live again [...] the world was lost inside of her" (*TBA* 36).

One day she suddenly hears the unidentified noise she has heard when Rey was alive. When she follows it, she finds an uncanny figure in one of the bedrooms of the house and she later names him after a science teacher in her high school, Mr. Tuttle. The novel is basically founded upon Lauren's experiences with Mr. Tuttle that take place "in a perennial present that is both past and future at the same time" (Kontoulis and Kitis 223) and this distorted temporal structure causes the collapse of the conventional language as is observed in the quotation below:

> "Then when it comes to me."
> "What?"
> "A thing of the most. Days yes years."
> "Do you know what that means? A day. A year. Or did you hear me use these words?"
> "Say some words."
> "Say some words."
> "In when it comes."
> "In when it comes. What?" she said.
> "Leave into leaving."
> "Who is leaving?"
> "This is when you, yes, you said."
> "What did I say?" [...] He talked in his own voice, which was reedy and thin and trapped in tenses and inflections, in singsong conjugations."
> (*TBA* 86, 66)

The novel presents several conversations between Lauren and Mr. Tuttle similar to the one quoted above, which can be analysed within the framework of Laplanche's definition of the mourning subject's dependence upon the enigmatic message of the dead other. As Laplanche says: "the enigma of mourning takes us to the function of the enigma in mourning: what does the dead person want? What does he want of me? What did he want to say to me?" (*Otherness* 259). These enigmatic messages of Mr. Tuttle (otherness of the other), directed at Lauren (subject-in-crisis), destabilize Lauren's life while she is trying to hold onto her daily routines and create gaps in her reality which intensifies her sense of loss and melancholy (Hinton 641). She cannot understand what Mr. Tuttle, who is also representing the return of the other, says or does.

According to Ladson Hinton, enigmatic experience destabilizes and provokes the development of the ego that seeks to stabilize these messages. However, it is the unsayability of those things which form these gaps in the subject's

reality. Since the other is dead, these messages will remain enigmatic forever. No matter how Lauren may ponder upon the last words her husband uttered and try to know the reasons that have led him to commit suicide, she will never be able to get an answer. Her talk with Isabel Corrales, Rey's first wife, on the phone after the funeral presents an additional perspective on Rey's personality, but it still does not provide a substantial explanation for his suicide. Isabel admits that she had been expecting a suicide attempt from him. "We all knew this about him. For years he was going to do this thing. It was a thing he carried with him. It was his way out. He wasn't a man in despair. This thing was a plan in his mind. [...] This man hated who he was" (*TBA* 61-2). For Isabel, it is not a depression, but self-hatred that has killed Rey. Lauren does not want to listen to Isabel anymore because she cannot process Rey's death yet. She is in a liminal state in which time and place, therefore, cause and effect relationship does not function anymore. She immediately retreats into her "bubble world" (*TBA* 50) with Mr. Tuttle. Within this world, she is not forced to confront Rey's death and imprisoned by rigid boundaries.

Obviously, the otherness of the other constitutes an absence which is hard to acknowledge. In this respect, Mr. Tuttle can be approached as a representation of Laplanchean enigmatic other that embodies the enigmatic messages of both an internal and an external other. As Michael Naas also suggests: "Mr. Tuttle is a kind of cipher between the living and the dead, the present and the past, what is inside and out" (101). This enigmatic other in the form of Mr. Tuttle represents the internal "'psychical other' or the 'other thing'" in the subject, the unconscious of Lauren, which is also an enigma to the self. The other resides in the subject's experience, but it evades representation and the ego is formed around it. Laplanche defines the unconscious as follows: "Far from being my kernel, [the unconscious] is the other implanted in me, the metabolised product of the other in me: forever an 'internal foreign body'" (*Otherness* 260). This internal foreign body first shows itself to Lauren, when she recognizes the elements of her own voice in Mr. Tuttle and starts to observe herself being spoken by a stranger. Di Prete defines Lauren's experience as follows: "Put repeatedly in a position of witnessing herself from without, Lauren faces her internal divisions, struggling to confront the insistently ungraspable fact that Mr. Tuttle/Rey is a psychic formation within her own unconscious - is, indeed, herself speaking what she cannot know" (488). Besides, as is emphasized before, Mr. Tuttle represents also the external dead other, Rey, Lauren is attached to. In the course of the novel, Lauren sees to her surprise that Mr. Tuttle not only does imitate her voice but her husband's voice as well. The embodiment of the dead other through Mr. Tuttle shows

> how traumatic memories that occupy the psyche without being absorbed or assimilated compulsively return. Mr. Tuttle's presence is marked not only by the mysterious materialization of his body, however, but also by his continuously returning voice. Simulated, repeated, recorded, doubled, Mr. Tuttle's voice insistently addresses Lauren in her struggle for survival. (Di Prete 485)

Thus, the other both in internal and external terms, is like an enigma persistently speaking to the subject as is perceived in Lauren's relationship to Mr. Tuttle. Subjectivity and the unconscious emerge due to this otherness. As Hinton states, "For Laplanche, enigmatic experiences lie at the core of the subject" (642).

If the analogy between weaving and mourning is taken into consideration, while Lauren is talking to Mr. Tuttle and attempting to replay her memories with Rey, she is weaving her ties to her lost other. When she simultaneously unweaves these ties, that is, analyses her experience with this stranger, she has already started to design a new show as a body artist through her work of mourning. Lauren's body is her shroud of mourning. Like Penelope weaves, unweaves and reweaves her fabric on the loom day and night, Lauren, in a similar repetitive cycle, works on her body and voice.

> [T]he poses she assumed and held for prolonged periods, the gyrate exaggerations, the snake shapes and flower bends, the prayerful spans of systematic breathing, life lived irreducibly as sheer respiration. She did […] her slow-motion repetitions of everyday gestures, checking time on your wrist or turning to hail a cab, actions quoted by rote in another conceptual frame, many times over and now slower and over […] and your eyes shut tight against the intensity of passing awareness. (*TBA* 60)

During her work of mourning, Lauren actually learns how to become the other. Towards the end of the novel, it is revealed that Lauren's conversations with Mr. Tuttle is surrounded by the fragments of the tape-recordings of Rey's voice. She is replaying these recordings continually in order to be with Rey and eventually she starts to imitate his voice. Actually, these tape-recordings compose a part of Rey's project of writing his own autobiography. Due to her traumatic loss, Lauren erases herself and becomes a blank space which Rey and the other bodies that surround her during her mourning process insert themselves into. For instance, she imitates a Japanese woman she sees in the street, the landlord who comes to take a piece of furniture from the house, and the answering machine she hears when she calls her friend, Mariella. She develops plural subjectivities and imitations of the gestures of other people, particularly Rey, through her talent of acting. Her body and her voice can alter and represent the exact bodies and voices of the others while she is performing. The novel discloses this aspect through Lauren's close friend Mariella's review on the show which includes her interview with Lauren as well. Mariella writes:

> Hartke is a body artist who tries to shake of the body – hers anyway. […] I have no idea how Hartke alters her body and voice. […] The last of her bodies, the naked man, is stripped of recognizable language and culture. He moves in a curious manner, as if in a dark room. […] He wants to tell us something. His voice is audible, intermittently, on tape, and Hartke lip-syncs the words. […] Then she does something that makes me freeze in my seat. She switches to another voice. It is his voice, the naked man's […] Not taped, but live. Not lip-sync'd but real

> [...] I search my friend's face but don't quite see her. I'm not sure what she is doing. I can almost believe she is equipped with male genitals. (*TBA* 110-11, 113-15)

As is observed, the transformation of Lauren's body on stage shows how she moves from one material body into another one by merging herself with other voices by ventriloquizing. Throughout the novel, her conversations with Mr. Tuttle, her bathing him, her feeding him, and her sleeping by him attain a meaningful context when it is announced in this review that all these experiences belong to a performative piece of art. "By erasing all the distinguishing characteristics of her own body, Lauren [...] allows herself to conform to these other identities, no longer imply imitating them but becoming different through these alien presences within her" (Naas 103). Mr. Tuttle, who represents Lauren's external and internal other in her mourning process, is simultaneously a product of her artistic creation. Her body art becomes a representation of her trauma which indicates that she has cured herself of it because trauma, when it is experienced, has no representation. However, the novel does not end with Lauren's performance on the stage. After presenting Lauren surrendering to the healing power of creative art, DeLillo surprises his readers on the very last page when he reveals Lauren's double-sided trauma. It is on this very last page it is learned that she has also solved her initial trauma that has been implanted in her since her childhood through her body art. Lauren's focalization reveals her initial loss: "Her mother died when she was nine. It wasn't her fault. It had nothing to do with her" (*TBA* 132). This significant final information the reader receives unveils Lauren's vulnerability. When Lauren's initial loss is analysed within Laplanche's understanding of trauma with a particular focus on "afterwardsness," the traumatic function of her feeling responsible for her mother's death and its role in disrupting Lauren's subjectivity can be understood.

According to Laplanche, an unbearable event disrupts subjectivity and positions the subject in the double temporality of trauma. A traumatic initial event, which is not understood as traumatic by the subject at the time it happens, forces itself into the subject's psychic life by the experience of a second event through repetitive actions and dreams after a period of time. Since the initial event is not consciously registered by the subject due to their lack of necessary cognitive tools to grasp the traumatic nature of the event, this event is not processed at the unconscious level of the subject by being repressed either. It is "the implantation of something coming from outside" (Caruth n.p.) which forms an otherness in the subject as is discussed earlier. Thus, the initial event implants the message of the other into the subject. This message remains enigmatic because the subject does not have the cognitive ability to recognize it at the time it occurs. It is the subject's refabricated memory of it that acquires a meaning afterwards and repressed when the primary event is triggered by a second event. Thus, the enigmatic messages coming from not only the external other but also the internal unconscious-other construct a decentred subject "dependent upon the otherness that one always already is" (Hinton 640). This is the reason why, in Laplanche's opinion,

"the trauma is never locatable in either scene alone but in 'the play of deceit producing a kind of a seesaw effect between two events'" (Caruth n.p.). This process is called "nachträglichkeit" by Freud and "après-coup" by Lacan, which is translated into English as "afterwardsness" by Laplanche. "Afterwardsness" emerges in relation to double temporality and the enigmatic message of the other.

In the light of this discussion of trauma, it can be claimed that the death of Lauren's mother, the initial traumatic event, is cut off from Lauren's memory due to her experiencing of it at an early age and therefore inhabits a realm distanced from her experience. The experience of her mother's death is not repressed by Lauren because it is too shocking to be registered in a meaningful way by a child who is nine years old. Repression can take place only when the experience attains a meaning for the subject to confront. That is, the early loss of the mother cannot be understood as meaningful but might be only registered by Lauren in a partial way. However, this traumatic event, which had not been available to experience, surfaces in the second traumatic loss, Lauren's husband's death. It must have been imposed itself on Lauren's psyche through Rey's death and reminded Lauren of her partially forgotten trauma.

It is mostly thought that the uncovering of the earlier traumatic event is essential to understand the nature of trauma. That is, if Lauren talks about her mother's death and relates what happened to her mother in her early childhood, then the nature of her trauma would be discovered. However, as Di Prete states, "The silence around the death of her mother seems to frame the other, more central silence around the death of her husband" (489). Lauren, as it turns out, is experiencing the symptoms of the traumatic loss of her mother along with the traumatic loss of her husband because she has severely been reminded of her initial loss of mother other when she loses her husband. However, as is observed in the above quotation, it is not her mother's death which is repressed but her belief in her being guilty for, her memory of having fault in her mother's death which is repressed. In other words, her refabrication of her memory about her mother's death following her loss functions as a potential cause for trauma. After her performance on stage, after being healed, she can see things clearly and she recognizes that she was not responsible for her mother's death. The possibility of an initial traumatic event implied in the ending of the novel may generate the following questions: Does Lauren hold herself responsible also for Rey's suicide? Does she think she feels guilty because she could not see it coming like Isabel did and prevent it from happening? She remembers how Rey "had told her that she was helping him recover his soul" (*TBA* 65). Now he is dead she confronts her failure in helping him to heal his soul. Then, does she think she could have saved him or could have healed him? Did her mother also commit suicide? Is this the reason why her repressed memory of having fault in her mother's death has emerged along with the trauma of Rey's suicide? The answers to these questions are not available to the reader. They remain enigmatic to the readers as well as to Lauren. What is observed at the end of *The Body Artist* is that "afterwardsness" is no longer affecting Lauren. She is cured of her trauma by fully representing

it. During her conversations with Mr. Tuttle, Lauren was in a state of "afterwardsness" in which the past and the future merge, not only at the linguistic level in the conversations but also at the experience of temporal order. At the end of the novel, Lauren finds neither Rey nor Mr. Tuttle in the house and she understands that she has to feel "the flow of time in her body, to tell her who she was" (*TBA* 131).

In conclusion, Lauren's returning to the temporal order is an indication of the end of her mourning and her rebuilt decentred subjectivity on the enigmatic messages of all others which are represented through performative art. In order to survive this unbearable loss, she has to build her boundaries that have dissolved. And since subjectivity can be formed around the enigmatic other, the unconscious, she has to go through the process of being the other. "Mourning provides the opportunity (a demand) to reorganize a new vision of oneself that can encompass both the loss of the loved person and one's memory of that person. But before a new tapestry—the new vision—can be woven, an unweaving must take place" (Browning 789). And this is what Lauren's work of mourning and her performative art have presented to the reader. "Bereavement forces [her] through the agony of thinking, to unravel the fabric of [her] existence, a fabric woven on the loom of the lost other" (Browning 789; Laplanche, *Foundations* 215). Due to her painful grief, Lauren "unravel[s] the fabric of [her] existence" (Laplanche, *Otherness* 255) as Penelope did. This is how Lauren's work of mourning unweaves the binds of her utmost traumatic loss – her mother's death at the age of nine – to weave her ties anew to her dead loved ones by means of her body art.

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Research Notes

Literary Theory, Stylistics and Cognitive Poetics
Edebiyat Kuramı, Biçimbilim ve Bilişsel Şiirbilim

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Abstract
The desire to understand and interpret the underlying mechanisms involved in the creation and reception of literary texts, and the influence of these mechanisms on human cognition goes back at least to Aristotle's *Poetics*. However, the last century has witnessed a vast variety of approaches to the understanding of literature: a plethora of theories such as feminist, post colonialist, queer and reader response theories as well as some practical ways of analysis and interpretation such as formalism, new criticism, stylistics, cognitive poetics have shown themselves at the opposite end of the continuum. Stylistics and its evolved form, cognitive poetics have been significantly influential in the understanding of the processes involved in the creation and reception of literature. Although stylistics and cognitive poetics have usually been covered under the broad heading of literary theory, it has been observed that the divergence in the ways they operate makes such claims invalid because, unlike theory, empirical evidence is at the heart of stylistics and cognitive poetics. This paper aims to provide an overview of stylistics, and cognitive poetics and illustrate how they differ from literary theory.
Keywords: Stylistics, cognitive poetics, theory, criticism, linguistics

Öz
Edebi metinlerin yaratılması ve algılanması ile ilişkili temel mekanizmaları anlama ve yorumlama arzusu ve bu mekanizmaların insan bilişi üzerindeki etkisi Aristoteles'in Poetika'sına kadar uzanır. Bununla birlikte, edebiyatı anlamaya yönelik çok çeşitli yaklaşımların ortaya çıktığı geçen yüzyılda; feminizm, sömürgecilik sonrası, queer teorisi ve okur tepkisi kuramı gibi çok sayıda teorinin yanı sıra biçimcilik, yeni eleştiri, biçimbilim, bilişsel şiirbilim, gibi bazı pratik analiz ve yorumlama yolları, bu sürecin karşıt temsilcileri olarak belirmişlerdir. Biçimbilim ve geliştirilmiş formu olan bilişsel şiirbilim, edebiyatın oluşum ve algılanma süreçlerini kavramada önemli ölçüde etkili olmuştur. Biçimbilim ve bilişsel şiirbilim genel olarak edebi teoriler başlığı altında ele alınmış olsalar da, işleme biçimlerindeki farklılığın bu varsayımları geçersiz kıldığı görülmüştür. Çünkü teoriden farklı olarak, deneysel kanıt, biçimbilim ve bilişsel şiirbilimin merkezinde yer alır. Bu makale, biçimbilim ve bilişsel şiirbilime genel bir bakış açısı sunmayı ve edebi teoriden hangi açılardan ayrıştıklarını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Biçimbilm, bilişsel şiirbilim, teori, eleştiri, dilbilim

Introduction

Literary theory, which has also been called culture theory, may be defined as various ways, methods, and philosophical standpoints to the understanding of all sorts of literary works such as poems, plays, novels and short stories. Theory has gained a significance place in shaping the perceptual frames of the societies by addressing critical issues such as power relations, gender, ethnic issues etc., mostly since Frankfurt school, which consciously attempted to change social order in real life by directing literary arts. Two prominent figures of this school, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, criticised the conformist aspect of literature for helping pursue the social order that was based on inequality. Adorno rejected Lukacs' idea of literary realism and proposed that by deviating from the absolute representation of reality literature could critique and change the social order (Selden et al. 91-92). Not much different from Frankfurt school of literary criticism, in terms of their ideological standpoint, various other schools of theory and criticism such as "Soviet Socialist Realism" and "New left Marxism" have focused on literature in terms of the reflection and creation of power relations among socio-economic classes by taking Marxist ideology as their base.

Feminist literary criticisms and various other forms of criticism such as "gay theory," "lesbian theory," and "queer theory," which were inspired by the feminist movement, have been highly influential not only in decoding gender representation and construction in literature but also in creating a social awareness of gender issue in real society. Various forms of gender criticism have proliferated in the late 20th century and some of them have sided with other schools of criticism and philosophy such as Marxism, poststructuralist, postmodernism, etc. and they are still in practice today having a significant place in literary theory (Newton 210).

As the aforementioned cultural and literary theories have been flourishing and gaining strength in the analysis and creation of fiction and social reality, a new philosophical standpoint that questioned all the conventional ways of perception and challenged the idea of objective reality has shown itself in the form of postmodernism. The frontiers of postmodern philosophy, not much different from feminist and Marxist critics, have asserted that the ownership of power has been solidified through institutions, and literature, without a doubt, constitutes one of these institutions with its power to shape and pursue social order. Not surprisingly, postmodernism has merged with schools of criticism that were based on gender and social order, and; this has paved the way to the emergence of such theories as postmodern feminism and postmodern Marxism. Linda Hutcheon's A *poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988) has been probably the first attempt to solidify poetic framework of postmodernism, which was mostly based on the ideas of French intellectuals such as Jean Baudrillard, Jean François Lyotard and arguably Michel Foucault. Hutcheon describes the nature of postmodern literature as:

> (postmodernism) it is usually accompanied by a grand flourish of negativised rhetoric: we hear of discontinuity, disruption, dislocation,

decentring, indeterminacy and antitotalization. What all of these words literally do (precisely by their disavowing prefixes –dis, de, in, anti) is incorporate that which they aim to contest-as does, I suppose, the term postmodernism itself. (Hutcheon 3)

Literary theory has not always been based on ideology and culture as it has been the case with the schools mentioned above. Of the three aspect of literature; writer, text, reader, some schools of theory and criticism have particularly focused on the text itself, ignoring the autobiographical traits of writer and the psychological and cultural elements that are brought into the play by the reader. Formalism, as its name suggests, was the precursor of these schools that came to be divided into schools such as Russian formalism and its western version New Criticism. One of the founders of New Criticism Allen Pen Warren states the significance of the text by asserting that: "Poetry does not inhere in any particular element but depends upon the set of relationships, the structure, which we call the poem" (Cited in Dobie 33).

Despite the fact that all these schools of theory and criticism, and some others that are not mentioned here because of space problem, have been highly influential and are still widely practiced by professors and students of literary studies, literary theory has been criticised for being too subjective in decoding literary works because it does not have any systematic methods of analysis. S. A. Saif Abdulmughni, in his article on the comparison of literary theory, stylistics, discourse analysis and linguistics, points to this problem by stating that: "The only difference between stylistic analysis and literary criticism is that literary criticism goes directly to its text evaluation subjectively and is impressionistically independent from the linguistic form of the test" (Abdulmughni 417).And, for this very reason stylistics, and cognitive poetics, which is a newly emerging field of literary studies as a result of the developments in stylistics, cognitive linguistics, cognitive psychology, corpus linguistics and discourse studies, have been increasingly used in the analysis of literary works in the recent years.

Cognitive Poetics should not be confused with cognitive sciences. "Whereas cognitive science research in general focuses on features common to all human cognition, cognitive poetics focuses on ways in which human cognitive processing constrains and shapes both poetic language and form, and readers' responses to them" (Freeman 451). The main tenets of, and currents developments in stylistics and cognitive poetics as well as their difference from literary theory will be analysed in the following sections of this paper, and it will be argued that the scientific tools of analysis developed by these two fields of study should be integrated into literary criticism.

Stylistics

Stylistics is the study of literary texts in the light of scientific findings of linguistics. Although stylistics as a field of study was developed in the middle of the 20th century by Leo Spitzer, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, it is rooted in the studies of rhetoric that ware based on Aristotle's tripartite "ethos," "logos,"

and "pathos," which respectively focused on the speaker's authority, the emotional state of delivering the speech, and the logical organization of language (Stockwell, "Cognitive Poetics and Literary Theory" 135). Later, in renaissance period, a broader framework was proposed by Peter Ramus that consisted of "inventio," "memoria," "pronuntiatio," "disposition," and "elocutio". While the first three parameters placed emphasis on the production of speech, the last two were basically concerned with its delivery. The field of stylistics took its base from the parameter "elocutio," and also put emphasis on the content of the text (Stockwell, "Cognitive Poetics and Literary Theory" 136).

Though stylistics has been used to analyse literature for a long time now, it is not confined to the understanding of literature. Political speeches, news articles, advertisements and other modes of language, spoken or written, can be the subject of stylistic interrogation as well. It is well known that there have been strong arguments between stylisticians and literary theorists in terms of the extent to which stylistics can discover the hidden meanings that are socio-culturally created in the text, and the shortcomings of literary theory to provide objective criteria for the analysis and interpretations of literature. Literary critics mostly blame stylistics of being merely a formalistic approach that ignores reader and writer as indispensable parts of the creation and interpretation of literary meaning. However, it should be noted that, with the developments that have taken place in linguistics in last few decades, stylistic analysis has moved far beyond the boundaries of close reading, and it is able provide accountable explanations for the claims it puts forward (Berenike et al. 27; Hall 139).

Peter Barry draws three distinctions between stylistics and close reading: The first distinction is about how they view literary language. While close reading starts with the assumption that literature has its own peculiar language that markedly differs from other texts, stylistics does not make such a distinction and strives to better understand language as a whole. The second difference is about the terminology used in close reading and stylistics. Critics employing close reading use bookish vocabulary to interpret text. Nonetheless, this vocabulary is not specialized or technical. Stylistics, on the other hand, uses technical and scientific vocabulary which is also used in other branches of linguistics to describe language. And the last difference is about objectivity and methodology, which is closely related to the first two differences. Close reading consciously avoids bringing in a particular methodology and calls for sensitivity towards the text under analysis, whereas stylistics offers a set of tools that can be used by anyone to achieve the same results (Barry 201-202).

Stylistics is markedly different from literary theory in terms of its applicability. For example, literary theories such as Marxist criticism, feminist criticism, queer theory, postmodernism etc. can only be employed to explicate certain works created in certain periods. One cannot analyze *Beowulf* with the poetics of postmodernism; even if an attempt was made, it would probably be rather unrealistic. To further illustrate, it is curious how gender theories could be

applied Craig Raines poem *A Martian Sends Home a Postcard* because it does not bear any traces that might be associated with gender representation. For that reason, it can be argued that theory, except for the formalistic ones such as Russian formalism, new criticism, structuralism etc., just provides certain perspectives in terms of the representation and creation of ideology in certain text. This does not necessarily mean that theory is fruitless and should be avoided in the analysis and interpretation of literature. Contrarily, it might be more useful to develop certain schemes concerning certain literary periods, genres and social issues in the understanding of literature. However, the problem lies in the fact that these philosophical and political assumptions that are put forward by literary theory are being rather subjectively evaluated by individual critics. At this point, stylistics might be viewed as a tool kit to confirm or refute the assumptions made by literary theory.

While literary critics have advocated close reading, they have consciously rejected to use the tools proposed by stylistics. As a result, the term close reading has remained too vague, lacking any systematic framework to be applied. Even literary critics such as Terry Eagleton have stated that students of literary criticism need to be educated in linguistic features and "slow reading," a term he borrows from Frederic Nietzsche, with almost the same meaning as close reading, in the preface to his book *How to Read Literature* (2003) and on various other occasions. However, it has not been stated how students of literature will be able to gain a better understanding of linguistic features in literary texts without having any systematic ways of reading and evaluation. It should be noted that the integration of stylistics into literary theory might address this pivotal problem.

Cognitive Poetics

As a field of literary analysis and interpretation, cognitive poetics is a relatively new area. The term cognitive poetics was first used by Reuven Tsur, the professor of Hebrew literature from Tel Aviv University. Although, Tsur's use of cognitive poetics was first confined to the analysis of poetry, it has gained popularity as a way of analyzing all literary genres. Cognitive poetics aims to bring a new perspective into literary criticism, claiming that literary theory has been short of providing solid explanations for the processes involved in the creation and perception of literature, the latter being of utmost importance. Gerard Steen expresses this paradigm shift in literary theory by asserting that: "We are in the middle of a genuine revolution in literary studies: a revolution because it renders almost every aspect of the discipline questionable, and genuine because it is greater than the numerous false generated crises that have defined literary study for the past half century (Steen as cited in Stockwell, "Literary Resonance" 25).

Cognitive poetics is closely related to literary disciplines such as stylistics, rhetoric and formalism. What is new in cognitive poetics is that it tries to bring in new perspectives from different fields of study such as cognitive linguistics, cognitive psychology, text linguistic etc. to account for the questions of literary theory such as what is literature, what are the common patterns in genres,

what kind of processes are involved in the creation and the reception of literature. In so doing, cognitive poetics, endeavors to create a new mode of understanding by re-conceptualizing and assimilating the terms that have been used in the analysis of literary and non-literary texts. The use of metaphor is a fine example to this re-conceptualization. While metaphor has been seen just as a figure of speech in the study of literature, cognitive poetics takes it one step further by trying to account how our mental faculties represent one domain or entity in terms of another (Middeke et al. 248). To illustrate, we might think of the proverbial phrase "If life gives you lemons, make lemonade" in terms of this new approach. In this phrase, it is known that lemon has been metaphorically used for "unpleasant," "bitter" experiences. Cognitive poetics does not suffice with this explanation: it tries to understand how the "target" domain (unpleasantness, bitterness) is understood in terms of the "source" domain (lemon). By analyzing such literary devices and mental processes involved in the creation and reception of these devices, it tries to make the study of literature more scientific and accountable.

Peter Stockwell's *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (2002) might be thought of as the first step of theorizing the main tenets of cognitive poetics. In this book there are twelve chapters, and each of eight chapters introduce the framework for one aspect of cognitive poetic criticism, some of which will be overviewed in the following sections of this paper. One year later after the publication of Stockwell's book that drew the theoretical frame, *Cognitive Poetics in Practice* (2003) edited by Johanna Gavins and Gerard Steen accompanied it. Gavin and Steen provide sample literary text analysis using cognitive poetics methodology developed by Stockwell, and provide further insight into how cognitive poetics view literature. "Cognitive poetics, too, sees literature not just as a matter for the happy few, but as a specific form of everyday human experience and especially cognition that is grounded in our general cognitive capacities for making sense of the world" (Steen and Gavins 1).

One of the most important tools used for the analysis of literature in cognitive poetics is the idea of "figures" and "grounds". The proposition that human brain perceives the world as figures and grounds is not a new one, having its root in Gestalt psychology. The basic fact underlying this theory is that our brains selectively choose the entities, objects, or concepts that are more relevant to our lives or that are different from their supposed representations, and ignore the rest. When we think about literature in this way, we can see that there are some universally used techniques in the creation of literary texts to attract our attention. Some of this effect is achieved by the use of literary devices such as deviance, defamiliarization, foregrounding, imagery, attractors, trajection, etc. By tracing the use of these devices, and the way they affect our perception and reception of the literary text, cognitive poetics, explains and interpret mental process involving literature.

Another important argument made by the proponents of cognitive poetics is that of "embodiment". It has been argued that traditional literary theory has evaluated reason as something separate from human body, which cannot be

supported scientifically. Considering the wide range of variants involved in human perception and reason, cognitive poetics, regards all mental processes such as reason, emotion, beliefs etc. to be innate, biological processes that are continuously shaped by the environment. Thus, the term embodiment is used to refer to the significance of both nature and nurture in reading literature. Stockwell, argues that our perception of literary text, just as we perceive any other piece of information is processed in a radial way; meaning that mental networks are created with different levels of relevance; good examples at the center, then secondary and peripheral ones. Having this argument as basis, cognitive poetics brings the terms and concepts such as genre, mode, sources, intertextuality, point of view, modes of writing etc. into question and tries to understand how we divide literary texts into genres and sub-genres and how this mental principle of prototyping is violated in different genes to create an effect in readers' mind.

The question how the use of deictic expressions influences our understanding of the text has covered an important space in text linguistics and philosophy. Cognitive poetics tries to understand and re-conceptualize literary concepts such as narrator, narratee, implied author, perspective, point of view, voice etc. in relation to the use of deictic expressions and it goes beyond the prototypical deictic theory that takes its reference from "zero-point" by focusing on the projection of perceptual, spatial, temporal, relational, textual and compositional deixis in literary text, and the literary effect created as a result of this projection.

Cognitive poetics aims to combine the philosophical aspect of literary theory with the practical aspect of stylistics and create a scientific base for the analysis of literature. In so doing, it also integrates various techniques from critical discourse analysis, practical criticism, rhetoric, corpus linguistics, cognitive linguistics etc. into the understanding of literature. As it may be observed from the terms, this is an interdisciplinary way of looking at literary text. While cognitive grammar has been highly theoretical and abstract in linguistics, literary studies have ignored the stylistic and formal features of literary text for a long time and focused on the thematic elements mostly. By applying these theoretical methods of the analysis and understanding of language to literature, and interpreting the findings with the philosophy of literary theory, cognitive poetics gives us a far better understanding of literature.

The questions raised by context and reader effect have covered an important space in literary studies. While some approaches such as formalism has been accused of ignoring readers' experiences of meaning making and interpretation, others such as reader response theory have been criticized to focus on readers psychological world rather than the text itself. It is widely accepted that the historical context and author's biography have significant implications for the understanding of literary texts. However, the terms such as background knowledge etc. which have been vaguely used to describe these implications cannot provide scientific evidence in how a poem written one

thousand years ago can interact with modern readers' mental faculties. Cognitive poetics aims to apply the scheme theories that have been used in artificial intelligence and other areas of linguistic studies, firstly to describe the common patterns and schemes of literary texts and genres, and then to interpret what kind of effects are created in readers mind by the use of these schemes and scripts.

In order to assess and evaluate the truth value of a given sentence, people who have been working on the semantic aspect of language, have proposed the "theory of possible worlds" in which it is claimed that the truth value of a sentence can only be assessed within a particular possible world. For example, if we think of Kurt Vonnegut's *The Slaughter House Five* as a possible world, in this possible world the sentence: "then he opened his eyes in 1942" would not be wrong because time travel is possible in this world. However, when we assess the truth value of this sentence in relation to our actual world, which is a richer possible world in terms of contextual elements, then the truth value of the sentence would be wrong because in our world people do not travel in time. Cognitive poetics, by adapting this theory to the study of literature, and taking the theory of "mental spaces" offers an explanation for the possible worlds created by fictional literature.

By applying analysis techniques that are developed in various branches of linguistics, cognitive poetics have come a long way from being just a theoretical approach. Stockwell and Mahlberg's 2015 article "Mind modeling with corpus stylistics in *David Copperfield*" by using CliC, a tool developed by corpus linguistics for the analysis of literature, shows how mind modeling strategies in the novel can be decoded within a scientific frame (Stockwell and Mahlberg 144).

Conclusion

Although it has always been an indispensable part of life in all human societies, literature has mostly been regarded as something sacred and mysterious that cannot be understood mechanically. Literary theory, which gained a noteworthy impetus in terms of the variety of perspectives it brought into the interpretation of literature, has attempted to decode the meanings hidden in literary works by focusing generally on one of the three dimensions of literature: writer, text and reader to interpret various social issues such as gender, social class, the distribution of material, racism etc. However literary theory has been criticized for not being able to offer any solid and accountable explanation for the propositions it has put forth.

Even if stylistics and cognitive poetics have been generally covered under the broad umbrella of literary theory, it has been illustrated in this paper that these two fields of literary study should be considered as practical ways of analysis that can provide literary theory with the tools to test its philosophical and ideological assumptions concerning literary works. The argument that stylistics and cognitive poetics ignore the socio-cultural elements that are involved in the creation and perception of literary works have been answered

by the recent developments in these two fields. And the developments in these two cross disciplinary fields have shown that linguistics as the study of language can shed light on process of uncovering the underlying mechanisms of literary production and perception by providing literary theory with a frame of reference to analyze its hypotheses systematically.

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Cognitive Lexicography:
Reimagining English Manner of Motion Verbs

Bilişsel Sözlük Bilim: İngilizce Devinim Fiillerinin Yeniden Düşünülmesi

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Abstract

The present paper draws on cognitive lexicography, a relatively new amalgamation of lexicography and cognitive linguistics, to approach the curation of manner of motion verb entries in online bilingual Turkish-English dictionaries. Following Dalpanagioti's methodology and analysis (651), the study adopts the following steps in creating an online dictionary entry, as used by Dalpanagioti (651): (a) compile a pre-lexicographic database (Atkins and Rundell 100-101), (b) employ Corpus Pattern Analysis (Hanks 404), and (c) utilize Frame Semantics (Fillmore 373-400), the Conceptual Metaphor and Metonymy Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 12) and the Principled Polysemy approach (Evans and Green 342-352) to interpret the data for *glide*, a manner of motion verb. To this end, this paper is an attempt to improve bilingual dictionary entries for manner of motion verbs using cognitive lexicography and suggesting the use of GIFs to accommodate individual differences in language learning, to contribute to the Turkish lexicography literature by addressing the research gap, and lastly to contribute to the field of cognitive lexicography.

Keywords: Cognitive lexicography, motion verbs, online dictionary, cognitive linguistics

Öz

Bu makale, çevrimiçi iki dilli Türkçe-İngilizce sözlüklerdeki devinim fiili girişlerinin biçiminin iyileştirilmesine yaklaşmak için, sözlükbilim ve bilişsel dilbilimin nispeten yeni bir karışımı olan bilişsel sözlükbilimden yararlanmaktadır. Dalpanagioti'nin metodolojisi ve analizini (651) takiben, çalışma, Dalpanagioti (651) tarafından kullanılan çevrimiçi bir sözlük girişi oluşturmada aşağıdaki adımları benimser: (a) sözlük öncesi bir veritabanı derlemeyi (Atkins ve Rundell 100-101), (b) Derlem Örüntü Analizini (Hanks 404) kullanır ve (c) Çerçeve Semantiğini (Fillmore 373-400), Kavramsal Metafor ve Metonim Teorisini (Lakoff ve Johnson 12) ve İlkeli Çokanlamlılık yaklaşımını (Evans ve Green 342-352) kullanarak İngilizce bir devinim fiili olan *glide* için verileri yorumlar. Bu amaçla, bilişsel sözlükbilimini kullanarak hareket fiillerinin tarzları için iki dilli sözlük girişlerini iyileştirme ve dil öğrenmedeki bireysel farklılıkları barındırmak için GIF'lerin kullanımını önerme girişimi olan bu çalışma, aynı zamanda Türk sözlükbilim literatürüne ve bilişsel sözlükbilim alanına katkı sağlamayı hedefler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Devinim fiilleri, sözlükbilim, çevrimiçi sözlük, bilişsel sözlükbilim

What is Cognitive Lexicography?

It is hard to imagine lexicography without the influence of linguistics. Nevertheless, why should we include yet another branch of linguistics in

lexicography? The main reason is that a cognitive linguistics approach can improve certain processes of lexicography, especially with regard to typological differences across languages, one of which being addressed in this paper (i.e., how languages encode manner and path of motion). As Ostermann points out, cognitive lexicography can assist speakers and learners of a language with "the understanding of dictionary entries or definitions due to a faster activation of the underlying concepts" (67). Furthermore, cognitive linguistics assumes a rather individualistic understanding of semantic concepts in the human mind and that our linguistic-meaning-making processes cannot be separated from other parts of our cognitive processes (e.g., past experiences and previous exposure to a certain concept). In this vein, one may mention how language is an embodied experience, which is one of the central tenets in cognitive linguistics (Divjak 2019). To this, another important tenet of cognitive linguistics can be added. Namely, the salience of frequency (Divjak 130-131) and how it aids language learning. Frequency can aid lexicographers as to which sense of the word is used more frequently. This can help learners learn the language in a more authentic way. In other words, it makes more sense to include *to dust* in the sense of cleaning in an entry first and in the sense of covering a baked good with powdered sugar second if the cleaning sense is more frequently used. Clearly, use of frequency and corpora in lexicography is not something new or noteworthy. However, using corpora provides insight into the real-life usage data of a word. This paper follows Dalpanagioti's methodology and analysis to propose a cognitively-oriented dictionary entry for to glide for Turkish speakers of English (651). In doing so, this approach will mitigate the adverse effects of the typological difference, which is discussed further below.

Frame Semantics

In addition to employing Pattern Dictionary of English[1] (PDEV) in the study, Frame Semantics, being a product of Frame Net (Fillmore 373-400), also provides lexicographers with tools to disambiguate the use of words from one another. The difference between the two is the fact that FrameNet focuses on the context in which the word is used and PDEV identifies the phraseological environment of the word (Hanks 729). Frame Semantics basically assumes that every word is connected to a semantic frame within which the word can be explained. These semantic frames consist of what is called frame elements (FEs). FEs include information on the detailed aspects of meaning and the syntactic behavior of words and hence Frame Semantics has been considered to be a vital tool by many corpus lexicographers (Atkins et al. 251–280). Furthermore, context-dependent semantic roles in FEs are connected to their syntactic roles which helps lexicographers identify valence patterns. Nevertheless, one criticism FrameNet has received over the years is the project's methodology of randomized selection of FEs and lexical units (LU), following a top-down

[1] This dictionary will help lexicographers identify and compare the usage patterns of a verb. In other words, it helps the lexicographer to start off of a base.

approach rather than a bottom up one (Johnson and Lenci 42). Therefore, as Dalpanagioti argues, combining the Corpus Pattern Analysis (CPA) approach with FrameNet is an important step in order to overcome this criticism and embody a bottom-up approach to profiling and analyzing the words (651).

Metaphors and Metonymies

It is important to outline where and how metaphor and metonymy join this approach. First proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their book *Metaphors We Live By*, conceptual metaphor theory provided much of the evidence available in cognitive linguistics nowadays and proposes that metaphor itself "is not a stylistic nature of language" (Evans and Green 286). What metaphors do, however, is that they show how they can shed light into our "'deep correspondences in the way our conceptual system is organized" (Evans and Green 303). To give an example with an implicit target domain, one can think of "I don't see the main point of this paper" which assumes the fact that if one sees, they know (Gibbs 531).

Like metaphors, according to Croft (161-205) metonymy has been regarded as conceptual in its nature. Barcelona demonstrates and argues the plausibility of metonymy laying the foundation for metaphors and suggests "metonymy and metaphor should be regarded as two poles in a continuum, rather than as separate categories" (53). Evans and Green explain the two terms as follows: "While metaphor maps structure from one domain onto another, metonymy is a mapping operation that highlights one entity by referring to another entity within the same domain (or domain matrix)" (321).

In other words, the two terms can help lexicographers discover and pinpoint the real-life uses of a word more specifically "as they can show the relationship between multiple synchronic uses of a given form" (Dalpanagioti 651). With this in mind, it is safe to assume that the organization of central and peripheral meanings of a word is far from a randomized event, but rather aligned with systematic cognitive processes. As foreign language educators and lexicographers, it is salient to show learners the relationship between the uses of a word, specifically if that word is a conceptually perplexing one, like a manner of motion verb in English for Turkish learners of English.

Principled Polysemy

As all speakers are aware, polysemy in words is something speakers experience every day. To define and analyze the polysemy of a word in an "objective and verifiable" (Evans and Green 342) manner, Principled Polysemy is an approach proposed by Evans (33-75). The approach suggests that in order to identify the distinctive meanings, one needs to place the prototypical sense in the center and according to relatedness levels, place the distinctive meanings in the periphery (Evans and Green 342). A summary of how Principled Polysemy approach can be applied is summarized by Hanazaki (415-416). It is important to briefly mention that although this approach calls for both a synchronic and a diachronic analysis of the selected words, this study opts for a synchronic analysis due to word limitations. Nevertheless, the amalgamation of both analyses would

certainly provide more in-depth information for lexicographers and advanced learners of English.

Manner of Motion Verbs and Cognitive Lexicography: The Convergence

The connection between the previously mentioned approaches and the typological difference between Turkish and English lies within how the dictionary entries can be improved using cognitive lexicography to mitigate the adverse effects of the typological difference on the vocabulary size of L2 learners of English. If applied linguists in Turkey are trained within a cognitive lexicography frame, they can better account for the discrepancies that Turkish speakers of English encounter in their language learning journey.

The typological difference between Turkish and English has been pointed out repeatedly (Talmy 311-345; Özçalışkan and Slobin 259-270). Namely, English belongs to a group of languages called satellite languages and these languages are more prone to encode the manner of a verb into the verb itself and encode path (direction) information in particles/satellites (Talmy 2000). Turkish, on the other hand, has been identified as a verb-framed language, a group of languages that prefer the encoding of path information in the verb itself and provide the manner of the verb by means of further syntactic clauses (e.g., adverbials, converbials to name a few) (Özçalışkan and Slobin 269-270). This variation between the two has been shown to affect the mental lexicon of motion verbs in Turkish learners of English (Özçalışkan and Slobin 270). In other words, the typological difference between the two languages has been identified to influence mental conceptualizations of manner of motion verbs of English learners with a Turkish L1. The following sentences exemplify this difference:

(1) The rat ***scurried away*** when it saw the cat.
(2) Fare kediyi görünce *hızlı ve küçük adımlarla* **oradan uzaklaştı**.

As seen in sentence (1), scurry away bears both the manner information (short and fast steps) and also the path information (away). In the Turkish translation of that sentence (2), the italicized section provides the manner, and the bold section provides the path information. To restate it, what one can encode in two words in English is encoded in almost five words in Turkish. What is of importance for applied linguists is how Turkish speakers of English might be at a disadvantage when it comes to English manner of motion verbs. Özçalışkan and Slobin (269) report that Turkish speakers of English are more likely to suffer from a restricted manner of motion lexicon compared to native speakers. If as student never came across the usage of scurry away in their learning material, it is likely that the student will use previous linguistic knowledge, that is how this sentence can be uttered in Turkish, to communicate their message. This, however, might result in cognitive overload and other discrepancies (Gedik 2020). Thus, this study seeks to offer a new way forward for Turkish-English bilingual dictionary compilers and teachers in regard to mitigating the detrimental effects of the typological difference explained by Özçalışkan and Slobin (2003).

Procedure

The study analyzes the verb *glide* by utilizing the ukWaC corpus and following Dalpanagioti's methodology to compile an entry (650-653). The verb was selected via randomization from a curated list of English manner of motion verbs based on Levin's (111-137) and Talmy's study (311-345). The ukWaC corpus was chosen for this study as it is mostly based on the present-day use whereas the BNC was overlooked as it consists mostly of narrative fictions (Dalpanagioti 657; Ferraresi et al. 47-54). There were 4,640 occurrences of the verb. Throughout this section, the approaches explained in the above sections are applied to the corpus data, following Dalpanagioti's steps (650). In the following section, the study curates a pre-lexicographic database for the verb and then combines CPA and FrameNet to disambiguate the different senses of the verb. Then, the study reconfigures new definitions for the verb using the Conceptual Metaphor and Metonymy Theory and the Principled Polysemy and contrasts the use of the verb in the big four[2] dictionaries and a Turkish-English bilingual dictionary (namely the online versions of OALD, LDOCE, COBUILD, CALD, and Zargan Turkish-English Online Dictionary). As a final step, the curated definitions are translated into Turkish by keeping the same FEs to complete the online bilingual dictionary entry.

To this end, the same methodology can be applied to a Turkish corpus to exhaustively compile an online bilingual dictionary entry for the verb. Nevertheless, as of now, there are two reasons why the study opts out for translating the entries: (i) as Turkish and English differ from one another regarding the use of manner of motion verbs, it is difficult to capture all the verbs (and converbial/adverbial combinations) that Turkish employs across different semantic frames in a single study and (ii) Turkish learners of English already cognitively face issues with the manner of motion verbs in English. Therefore, explaining those verbs exhaustively should be prioritized if applied linguists wish to reduce the workload on the side of the English language teachers and ease the lives of the students.

Getting Started with Creating an Entry

Dictionary Format: A Suggestion

Kövecses (179) argues that "universal embodiment" of the metaphors and concepts are (re)configured by "the culture-specificity of local culture in the course of metaphorical conceptualization". In other words, one should not overlook the contextual forces of speakers (e.g., culture, physical and social aspects) which may or may not reshape the universally acknowledged metaphors. In order to mitigate the contextual forces and to create a common ground for the users of the dictionary entries used here, this paper suggests using other semiotic sources (specifically GIFs) to help users embody the experience of a manner of motion verb which may not readily exist in their native language, Turkish. Furthermore, if one follows cognitive linguistics and

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[2] Due to space issues, only the big four MLDs were taken into account. However, a detailed analysis of other MLDs can also be considered in further research studies.

assumes that language learning is an individualistic process (Dąbrowska 2012), changing from one person to the other, lexicographers should be able to provide a common ground for learners. While Lew (290-306) discusses different ways of creating a multimodal dictionary definition using semiotic sources (e.g., animations, sounds and so on), no study to the researcher's knowledge has proposed using semiotic resources for manner of motion verbs in the literature. Therefore, the study, based on the assumption that an animation (a GIF) might help learners embody the core meaning of a manner of motion verb, suggests using GIFs and embodies the use of GIFs for the core meaning in English and Turkish entries. However, the effectiveness of GIFs should be further studied in future studies. To accommodate the use of GIFs, the dictionary entry needs to be online.

Corpus Data and Word Sense Disambiguation

Employing the Word Sketch feature of SketchEngine, it is possible to deduce preliminary assumptions about the pattern usage of *glide*. Word Sketches demonstrate that the verb is mostly succeeded by a prepositional phrase (e.g., *glide+through/over/into+NP*) or a particle (e.g., *glide+along/around/down*). Another contextual cue that helps lexicographers comprehend the basic senses of the verb is the information on adverbs. Word Sketches display that *glide* is usually surrounded by adverbs such as 'effortlessly, silently, smoothly' to name a few. One important thing to note is *glide* is also employed in non-motion based word senses (e.g., *you glide to a successful conclusion in a project*). Using these preliminary assumptions and remarks about the verb, the study uses a randomized sample of the corpus data (i.e., 80% of the corpus examples were analyzed).

As Atkins and Rundell (256) demonstrates in their analysis, each sense assigns a different FE to LUs. Therefore, table 1 demonstrates the assigning of semantic frames to corpus examples. According to FrameNet, *glide* only consists of the [Motion] semantic frame, however, in order to capture all the semantic frames the verb bears, the study applies a frame-semantic analysis of LUs to identify semantic frames that might be missing from FrameNet. While FrameNet only provides the user with [Motion], there are 4 other semantic frames captured in the study in the sample material. Using the Principled Polysemy approach, it is also possible to separate the figurative uses of the verb from the literal (see section 3 in table 1 for instance). Table 2, employing the Metaphor and Metonymy Theory, shows how the arbitrary arrangement of LUs and semantic frames correspond to one another. In other words, by identifying the relationship between the semantic frames and the motivation, the lexicographer can find out more in-depth information on the conceptual metaphors and metonymies of *glide*.

FrameNet, as mentioned before, only provides the [Motion] semantic frame which assumes the theme to be a "some entity" (FrameNet) or a theme. However, as seen in corpus attested examples down below, FrameNet's semantic framing of the verb falls short in capturing the use of glide in the [Self_Motion] frame. According to this frame, "a living being" (FrameNet) is the

doer of the action. Despite this difference in framing, in table 2, both the [Motion] and [Self_Motion] semantic frames are categorized within the same column as their core meaning is the same.

Table 1

1. Semantic Frame: Motion Definition: "Some entity (Theme) starts out in one place (Source) and ends up in some other place (Goal), having covered some space between the two (Path). Alternatively, the Area or Direction in whichthe Theme moves or the Distance of the movement may be mentioned" (FrameNet, 2020).
(1) And the blue flood^{THEME} is **gliding** by^{PATH}, as bright as Hope's first smile. (2) Instantly thereafter the mouth of the cave darkened and the fog^{THEME} **glided** silently^{MANNER}toward^{PATH} them. (3) Green fields of ripe mealies^{THEME} **glided** by^{PATH}. (4) The curtains^{THEME} would **glide** back^{GOAL} to the whine of an electric motor. (5) The camera^{THEME} **glides** through^{PATH} check-in and the departures lounge, lingeringbriefly^{MANNER} on stewardesses as they board the craft. (6) Within minutes the convey^{THEME} is on the move again **gliding** to a halt a hundred yardsaway^{DISTANCE} from the target location. (7) The wolf confidently **glided** toward^{PATH} him, his fangs bared, a low snarl in his throat. (8) A dhow^{THEME} **glided** silently^{MANNER} past^{PATH}, the beautiful asymmetry of her sail cutting throughthe sunset.
2. Semantic Frame: Self Motion Definition: "The Self_mover, a living being, moves under its own direction along a Path. Alternatively, or in addition to Path, an Area, Direction, Source, or Goal for the movement may be mentioned" (FrameNet,2020).
(9) On the last day of sledging, we^{SELFMOVER} **glided** as one. (10) I finned as hard as I^{SELFMOVER}could and **glided** closer^{DISTANCE} to the ray^{GOAL}. (11) They were **gliding** slowly^{MANNER} down^{PATH} in a very uniform cluster. (12) Stay low and **glide** gracefully^{MANNER} through^{PATH} the turns because you're in a race against the clock.
3. Semantic Frame: Self Motion (Figurative)
(13) It could be thatyou^{SELFMOVER} **glide** to^{GOAL} a successful conclusion in a project. (14) The rumours^{THEME} were ceaselessly^{MANNER} **gliding** in^{GOAL} and out^{SOURCE} of the crowd, and minglingtogether in order to seduce you into bewilderment. (15) I^{SELFMOVER} **glide** through^{PATH} my thoughts over^{AREA} the pages without pausing to double-check or criticise overuse of similes. (16) On stage the impact was perhaps even greater as the band^{SELFMOVER} seemed to **glide** effortlessly^{MANNER} through^{PATH} the performance. (17) It^{AGENT} ultimately will let you^{THEME} virtually **glide** through^{PATH} a triathlon swim of any distance^{DISTANCE}. (18) Again the narrator is positive: "She was a worthy woman all her life" and he^{AGENT} **glides** quickly^{MANNER} over^{AREA} the five husbands that later outlines in such detail in her prologue.

(19) Mike touched so many with his warm gentlemanly good humour and easy going manner, he^{AGENT} effortlessly^{MANNER} **glided** through^{PATH} his many routines, as if he could do them for a hundred years.

4. Semantic Frame: Motion Directional
Definition: "In this frame a Theme moves in a certain Direction which is often determined by gravity orother natural, physical forces. The Theme is not necessarily a self-mover" (FrameNet, 2020).

(20) This sack^{AGENT} would let your hands^{THEME} **glide** freely^{MANNER} against^{DIRECTION} each other without agreat deal of friction.

(21) Wind surfing is a thrilling blend of surfing and sailing as you^{THEME} learn to **glide** across^{DIRECTION} thewater on a specially designed surfboard.

(22) Its calm peaceful demeanour^{THEME} invites you to just lazily **glide** around^{AREA} in its soothing blackwaters and after.

(23) I^{AGENT} could balance on the board, pull up the sail and even **glide** a little^{DISTANCE} out into the bay ^{GOAL}.

(24) Not only does it mean you^{AGENT} can **glide** around^{AREA} the rink hand-in-hand, but skating along tosome of the hottest tracks of the moment lightens the mood and ensures a buzzing atmosphere.

5. Semantic Frame: Motion Directional Figurative

(25) Time^{AGENT} had **glided** on very happily^{MANNER} till I was sixteen.

(26) She^{AGENT} **glides** through^{DIRECTION} the day which begins at 8.30am in the gym.

(27) But as we^{AGENT} **glide** through^{DIRECTION} to^{GOAL} the 21st century, fully 'enlightened', such sentimentsare shouted down as almost fascist.

(28) The armorial sculptures over the portals of Ragdale Hall^{AGENT} can with ease, in reverie, **glide** backto the days^{GOAL} when Charles the First still spent his happy leisure at Hampton Court.

(29) She^{AGENT} might appear to be **gliding** through^{DIRECTION} lives like a Society dame; but inside she wasfiercely, creatively acting.

6. Semantic Frame: Speak on Topic
Definition: "A Speaker addresses an Audience on a particular Topic. The Audience is generally passive,although for many types of address (including academic talks and press conferences), a discussion or question-answer period is virtually always required" (FrameNet, 2020).

(30) The talk fell, as it did often, on the exiles in France; so it^{AGENT} **glided** to^{GOAL} the matter of their songs.

(31) They^{SPEAKER} **glide** effortlessly^{MANNER} onwards and upwards through^{PATH} all the politics, the back stabbing, the system, the nonsense that goes on

(32) Having said all that, if we^{SPEAKER} **glide** over^{GOAL} the last chapter of this book and the occasional infelicity of language, we can capture much more than what we know right now.

(33) She^{SPEAKER} then **glides** effortlessly^{MANNER} into^{GOAL} the real issues that affect elderly people and describes therapies such as touch, massage, aromatherapy and reflexology which may aid their treatment, self-esteem and well being

Table 2

Semantic Frame	Corpus Examples	Metaphor[3] & Metonymy
Motion **Self Motion**	A dhow **glided** silently past, the beautiful asymmetry of her sail cutting through the sunset. I finned as hard as I could and **glided** closerto the ray.	Meaning: to move with a smooth, quiet continuous motion.
Self Motion (Figurative)	It could be that you **glide** to a successfulconclusion in a project.	Metaphor: Manner of action is manner of movement. Metonymy: Reach a desirable goal.
Motion Directional	This sack would let your hands **glide** freely against each other without a great deal of friction.	Metaphor: Action is motion.
Motion Directional (Figurative)	Time had **glided** on very happily till I was sixteen.	Metaphor: Time is a movingobject.
Speak on Topic	They **glide** effortlessly onwards and upwards through all the politics, the back stabbing, the system, the nonsense thatgoes on.	Metaphor: Improving a state is achange of location. Metonymy: Discussion without aggression.

The Usage Pattern of Glide

Table 3 is a collection of the usage patterns based on the corpus data. Although the syntactic pattern for each frame remains the same, the use of surrounding words renders each frame different from the other. To exemplify, as agents and themes change in different frames, the level of figurativeness of the prepositional phrase also changes (e.g., *she glides through the day which begins at 8.30am in the gym* or *it could be that you glide to a successful conclusion in a project*). Comparing table 3 and the pattern entries in the PDEV for *glide*, there seems to be an overlap between the two (visit https://pdev.org.uk for the pattern entries in the PDEV). While the PDEV distinguishes between inanimate objects (e.g., birds and planes), the analysis here combines all inanimate objects under one frame [Motion]. Another point is how the PDEV specifies a usage pattern for sounds. It can be combined within the frame [Motion] in table 3, even though the usage did not appear in the analyzed material in this study.

One thing that arises is how the semantic prosody of [Motion] and [Motion_Directional] are the same. Semantically, FrameNet identifies [Motion_Directional] as a movement "often determined by a natural force" (FrameNet). Therefore, based on this distinction, table 3 also distinguishes

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[3] Metaphors were retrieved at https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/ Category:Metaphor

between the two frames, even if the usage pattern and the semantic prosody remain the same.

Table 3

LUs	Semantic Frame	Usage Pattern
A	**Motion**	***Mover***: inanimate entity *glide*+(Adverbial Phrase)+Prepositional Phrase ***Semantic prosody implication***: the entity iscapable of moving effortlessly without abruption
B	**Self Motion**	***Self Mover***: human, a living being (less frequent) *glide*+(Adverbial Phrase)+Prepositional Phrase ***Semantic prosody implication:*** the human/living being is capable of moving effortlessly without abruption.
C	**Self Motion Figurative**	***Self Mover***: human, inanimate entities (e.g., rumors) → not actual movement *glide*+(Adverbial Phrase)+Prepositional Phrase ***Semantic prosody implication***: reaching a desired outcome/thing without much effort.
D	**Motion Directional**	***Mover***: human, inanimate entities *glide*+(Adverbial Phrase)+Prepositional Phrase ***Semantic prosody implication:*** the human/livingbeing is capable of moving effortlessly without abruption.
E	**Motion Directional Figurative**	***Mover***: human, inanimate entities→not actual movement *glide*+(Adverbial Phrase)+Prepositional Phrase ***Phrasal verbs***: glide+on→ continue glide+through→ move in/through ***Semantic prosody implication***: time passes bywithout much problem/effort /difficulty.
f	**Speak on Topic**	***Agent***: human *glide*+(Adverbial Phrase)+Prepositional Phrase ***Semantic prosody implication***: move acrossideas or concepts without effort/problem/difficulty.

Curating Definitions

In this section, table 4 demonstrates the curated definitions. Then, these definitions are translated into Turkish with respect to senses and different semantic prosody implications available in table 3. What is of importance in creating these definitions is using words and structures that are easily understandable by low-proficiency learners. The same considerations apply to the translations as these definitions should be as accessible by a wide range of audience as possible. Therefore, the definition style of COBUILD, namely full-sentence definitions, is selected for both English and Turkish as it seems to be the most user-friendly out of the major monolingual learner's dictionaries (Andersen 565). Rundell (323-337) also claims that full-sentence definitions can

provide a better picture of the item(s) by using them in real-life contexts. Table 5 is a collective translation of these definitions.

Table 4

LUs	Definitions
In English *to glide* means:	
A	Something moves quietly without difficulty
B	Someone/something moves quietly without difficulty
C	Someone reaches their goal without difficulty
D	Something is moved by natural forces continuously
E	Someone moves through time without difficulty
F	Someone moves through ideas in their speech/thoughts without any problems

Table 5

LUs	Definitions
İngilizcede *süzülmek* şu anlamlara gelir:	
A	Herhangi bir şey sorun yaşamadan sessizce hareket eder
B	Herhangi biri/bir şey sorun yaşamadan sessizce hareket eder
C	Herhangi biri sorun yaşamadan ulaşmak istediğine ulaşır
D	Herhangi bir şey doğal güçler tarafından hareket ettirilir
E	Herhangi biri sorun yaşamadan zaman harcar
F	Herhangi biri konuşması sırasında veya düşüncelerini akıcı bir şekilde tecrübe eder

Glide in Other Dictionaries

In this section, dictionary entries curated here are cross checked with the previously mentioned dictionaries. Namely, these are the online versions of OALD, LDOCE, COBUILD, CALD, and Zargan Turkish-English Online Dictionary. Table 6 is a collection of the LUs and the usage pattern across the dictionaries.

All the dictionaries, except for Zargan, display the basic usage pattern for glide which overlaps with the information sketched in this study. However, most dictionaries ignore the following semantic frames: [Motion_Directional], [Motion_Directional_Figurative], and [Speak_on_Topic]. What is important to note is that all dictionaries provide the definition for glide as a means of using an equipment *to fly effortlessly* in the air. While this was available in the corpus data in this study, it could be combined under the [Motion] and [Self_Motion] frames. Therefore, the curated definitions already appeared to be inclusive of this. While all English dictionaries point out to the action being done effortlessly and quietly, Zargan also adds qualities such as "unnoticed" in LU (e).

As seen here, although it is easy to capture the most frequently used senses of a verb, most manner of motion verbs can be assumed to contain multiple semantic frames. Moreover, in order to identify and represent these usages, it seems as if using a more comprehensive approach (i.e. cognitive lexicography), like in this or previous studies, appears to yield more lexicographic information for both lexicographers to work with and students to acquire. This was also the case in Dalpanagioti's study (658) where the study uncovered that the usage information for the selected item was mostly missing.

Table 6

LUs	COBUILD	OALD	CALD	LDOCE	Zargan
A	+ intransitive (verb+prep/ adverb)	+ intransitive (+adv/prep)	+ intransitive (usually+adv/ prep)	-	+ No usage information
B	+ intransitive (verb+prep/ adverb)	+ intransitive (+adv/prep)	+ intransitive (usually+adv/ prep)	+ intransitive (always+adv/ prep)	+ No usage information
C	-	-	+ intransitive (usually+adv/ prep)	+ intransitive (always+adv/ prep)	-
D	-	-	-	-	-
E	-	-	-	-	+ No usage information
F	-	-	-	-	-

Reimagining an Online Bilingual Dictionary Entry for glide

Based on the analyses above, a cognitively oriented dictionary entry, and Dalpanagioti's proposed entry (659), the study proposes the following features for the entry:

> (i) the core semantic feature (*effortlessly/quietly/continuously/without difficulty*) is given in each subsection
> (ii) similar senses are grouped together
> (iii) no particular usage pattern is given as there is practically no difference in the way the verb collocates with prepositional phrases
> (iv) examples are taken from the corpus
> (v) Turkish equivalents are given in the right column
> (vi) to accommodate for individual cognitive instantiations, a GIF for the core meaning is provided.

While features (i), (ii), and (iv) overlap with Dalpanagioti's (659), (iii), (v), and (vi) diverge from theirs. These features and the design of the entry, however, is only preliminary. Their user-friendliness and actual aid in language learning

should be ideally tested in an English as a foreign language classroom to validate the robustness of the entry. Table 7 puts the entry for *glide* together.

Table 7

To glide	Süzülmek (her zaman süzülmek olarak çevrilmez)[4]
English	**Türkçe**
a) Movement If someone or something glides, they moveeffortlessly and quietly in space. Example: The fog **glided** silently toward them. GIF: https://images.app.goo.gl/f5dFZL HfTofHp148 A	**a) hareket** Eğer biri ya da bir şey süzülüyorsa, o boşlukta sessizce ve efor sarfetmeden hareket eder. Örnek: Sis onlara doğru sessizce ve akarcasına hareket etti. GIF: https://images.app.goo.gl/f5dFZLHfTofHp14 8 A
b) reaching a desirable goal If someone or something glides, they work toward a goal they want to achieve without difficulty. Example: It could be that you **glide** to a successful conclusion in a project.	**b) istenen bir amaca ulaşmak** Eğer biri ya da bir şey süzülüyorsa, o kişi/şey ulaşmak istediği amaca doğru sorun yaşamadan yaklaşır. Örnek: Belki de projede artık güzel bir sona yaklaşıyorsundur.
c) movement by natural forces If someone or something glides, they move continuously by a natural force (e.g., gravity orwater). Example: You learn to **glide** across the water on a specially designed surfboard.	**c) doğal güçler tarafından hareket ettirilmek** Eğer biri ya da bir şey süzülüyorsa, o kişi/şey devamlı olarak doğal bir güç tarafından (mesela yerçekimi ya da su) hareket ettirilir. Örnek: Suyun üzerinde kaymayı özel olarak dizaynedilmiş bir sörf tahtasında öğrenebilirsin.
d) movement through time If someone or something glides, they move through a period of time without difficulty. Example: Time had **glided** on very happily till I was sixteen	**d) zaman içinde hareket etmek** Eğer biri ya da bir şey süzülüyorsa, o kişi/şey belirli bir zaman süresi içinde hareket eder. Örnek: Ben onaltı yaşıma gelene dek zaman akıp geçmişti.
e) movement through concepts/ideas If someone or something glides, they move through concepts and/or ideas without difficulty and smoothly in their speech or mind. Example: They **glide** effortlessly onwards and upwards through all the politics	**e) fikirler/konseptler arasında geçiş yapmak** Eğer biri ya da bir şey süzülüyorsa, o kişi/şey konuşması sırasında ya da aklında takılmadan ve zorluk çekmeden fikirler/konseptler arasında geçiş yapar. Örnek: Onlar siyasetin her alanı hakkında hiç sorun yaşamadan konuşurlar.

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[4] English translation: to glide is not always translated into Turkish as *süzülmek*.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated, following Dalpanagioti's (650) methodology and analysis, how using a cognitive lexicographic to define an online Turkish-English bilingual dictionary entry for an English manner of motion verb can be carried out. By using this approach, a new set of semantic frames of the verbs can be captured where most monolingual dictionaries ignore them. Furthermore, by translating these previously unavailable new sets of semantic frames into Turkish, users can comprehend the manner of motion verbs in more detail and face less difficulty in meaning learning (see for instance the example sentence in the Turkish entry (d) and (e). Furthermore, by using semiotic resources such as GIFs, lexicographers might help learners to ease their cognitive instantiations of the selected item. Such a proposal, if done for a multitude of English manner of motion verbs, can mitigate the adverse effects of the typological difference. Ideally, this might help both teachers and learners with word sense learning, which in turn might help learners to increase their motion lexicon. As mentioned before, the proposed online dictionary entry here is preliminary in terms of its design and should be tested for its validity and user-friendliness. However, the main promise of the entry is its cognitively oriented definition curation.

The study here has several limitations. Namely, these are: (i) the corpus used is limited, (ii) the Turkish entries are translated and not based on a corpus, and (iii) the use of GIFs (or other semiotic sources) and their efficiency in online dictionary entries is yet to be discovered. Future studies should take these into consideration and test the validity of such proposed dictionary entries in classrooms and test them for their meaning retention/acquisition efficiency levels.

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